Counter-Cultural Perspectives of an Organic Intellectual: Selected Works of Rudolf C. Heredia

Volume V

ECOLOGICAL

CONCERNS:

ENVIRONMENTAL

SUSTAINABILITY

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ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO COUNTER-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF AN ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL: THE SELECTED WORKS OF RUDOLF C. HEREDIA

This collection brings together essays and presentations that span some five decades of my work. These are in the overall discourse of the social sciences and though I have trained as a sociologist my perspective is more interdisciplinary. This is really the only way contemporary social issues and questions can be approached if they are to have any relevance today.

A continuing thread that runs through this collection. It represents an on-going venture to bring a critical reflection on social issues that engage activists in the field. Thus, rather than indulge in 'ad hoc' responses, they can create a praxis of action-reflection-action in the tradition of Paulo Freire. Hopefully this interaction between the 'desk and the field' will enrich both, activists to more effective action on the ground and theorists to a more critical appreciation of the underpinning ideas.

The collection is divided by common overall themes into separate volumes to provide a coherent unifying perspective to each volume. While each essay has its own specific context and topic, yet given the time span they cover, some overlap and repetition across these volumes is inevitable. However, we have tried to exclude this within the volume itself, unless there is a different nuance in the presentation that justifies its inclusion despite the overlap.

The articles selected for a particular volume follow in the order of the date of their publication (or of writing, if the piece wasn't published). This is to give an idea of how the theme developed in my discourse on it. Hopefully the discourse itself is open-ended, so the reader can take it forward in various directions, that are only implied in this selection.

The following are the subdivisions of the collection.

I.   Socio-Cultural Perspectives: Pluralism and Multiple Identities

II. Socio-Political Perspectives: Contradictions and Complementarities

III. The Development Debate: Growth and Equity

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME V
ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS:
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In this volume, the articles address the human impact on the environment ever since the beginning of the Anthropocene. With industrialisation and the rapid developments in its wake, the changes have been increasingly unsustainable and endangered all life on earth. Unfettered economic growth, the increasing levels of consumption, the production of unmanageable waste, the loss of biodiversity, and catastrophic climate change urgently require not just to be contained at sustainable levels, but to be reversed to regenerative ones before we reach a tipping point of no return. This demands more than new technologies. It makes a change mind-set imperative.

We must develop a worldview that considers ourselves as a part of the ecological system, not apart from and outside of it. From Pope Francis's *Laudato Si* (2015) to Amitava Ghosh's *The Great Derangement* (2018) the imperative for such a critical worldview has now been recognised, and a legally binding international agreement attempted (UNFCCC, Paris 21 COP). However, equity is an international response that would require the wealthier nations to take responsibility proportionate to their historical contribution to the crisis, as also to their commensurate to their present means available. And there's the rub! We seem to forget we all have 'only one earth; share and care'. (Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992)

The recent UN conference in Glasgow on climate change has pointed to new urgencies, but we must follow through with new and more generous commitments. Or else we will leave the future to inherit a world beyond the point of no return, plagued with environmental disasters and ecological breakdown. The essays here add up to appeal, especially to richer nations in solidarity with the poorer ones, to anticipate and overcome such a future.

1.
TOWARDS AN ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: RELIGIOUS, ETHICAL AND SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

Abstract

The three essential dimensions of a religious understanding of ecology. These can be put together in the cosmotheandric perspective, where human fellowship, cosmic evolution and divine in-dwelling make up the integrated vision of total reality.

After a brief sketch of creation, redemption, and monastic spiritualities, the scattered fragments of insight and institution are collected within a cosmotheandric synthesis.

I. Introduction: The 'Immediate' Crisis

The global ecological crisis we have precipitated today is more than just an environmental one. It is really the culmination of the many unresolved crises of our world, struggling to be born into a new age—a world fragmented and divided, discontented and disoriented, hardly ever at peace with itself. Little wonder, then, that the irrationality of war so easily engulfs us in violent conflicts which threaten to career out of our control, even as the saner elements among us watch helplessly. Certainly, the alienation we endure and the violence we visit on ourselves cannot but be reflected in our violation of nature and the degradation of our environment.

We cannot ignore or escape from the severity and depth of this crisis. For if it deepens further with neglect, if we fail to address ourselves to it responsibly now, the sustaining capacity of the earth could be irreversibly depleted to the point where the struggle for survival could well become a Hobbesian 'war of all against all.' Indeed, we are at the very brink of a downward spiral, which may well put into question our survival as a species and that of the entire biosphere itself. Life as we know it may be changed beyond all recognition, or life itself may be ended.

For we have now the power to destroy our world in a big bang of an ecological disaster, or the slow-motion whimper of environmental degradation. Hopefully, we will have the wisdom to avoid both and renew our earth., We have shocked ourselves into realizing how critically and crucially dependent we are on our fragile and fine-tuned environment, and how false and arrogant our presumed subjection of, and dominance over it, really is. But we still have to

quite grasp the deeper implication of this crisis, namely, that if we do not live in harmony with our environment, we will not live at peace with each other.

For exploitation and greed *ad extra*, towards the ecological community, cannot but precipitate the same *ad intra* towards the human community. And vice versa the same is true. Indeed, today it can be argued that it is the oppressive exploitation and dehumanizing alienation in the human community that is at the root of the degradation and disintegration of the ecological one.

There is much convincing evidence of this from earlier civilizations. Many have been swept away by time into the dustbin of history because they suicidally undermined the environment on which they depended for their very sustenance. Often, they leave behind a wasteland in muted testimony to human folly and greed as well. They collapsed from within even before they were destroyed from without.

Ecological crises were not unknown in ancient societies. All classical civilizations exploited and degraded their environment.[1] Lynn White has a point in his accusation against the Christian one,[2] but long ago Plato was already complaining in the *Critias* about how deforestation and overgrazing had degraded the environment and reduced Attica 'to the bones of a wasted body.' There is now growing support for the view that Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa in the Indian subcontinent eventually declined due to environmental degradation.[3]

And yet we seem to condemn ourselves to repeat such history, on an even grander scale. For never before has human society had such an unprecedented and so disastrous an effect on its environment as ours.[4] The ecological crisis, then, poses a radical question to a human society's relationship to its sustaining environment—one that has become crucial for all of us on this planet, bound as we are in a common destiny, our future together.

The relationship of human societies to their environments is always a mediated one, firstly through their technology which interfaces directly with the environment. However, though it does indeed have a dynamic of its own, at a deeper level, technology is

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[1] Rene Dubos, *A God Within, New York,* Charles Scribner and Sons, 1972,

[2] Lynn White, Jr., 'Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis.' *Science*, 155/3767 (19 March, 1967).

[3] S.R. Rao, 'New Frontiers in Archeology', Heras Memorial Lectures 1990, to be published by the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture, Bombay.

[4] Ref. Riley E. DunlaP, 'Environmental Sociology' in *Annual Review of Sociology*, ed. Alex Inkeles, Palo Alto, Annual Reviews Inc., 1979, Vol, 5, 243. p.

oriented by other socio-cultural systems of society that together make up a design for living. This must implicitly or explicitly orient us towards issues of ultimate concern, in function of which we cope with more immediate ones. To be authentically human, the 'world view' *(Weltanschauung)* of a society cannot but face such ultimate issues, and survival is just one of them, forced to our attention now by the ecological crisis. Indeed, the present dimensions of this crisis question most radically modern society with its technology and culture. We cannot escape by merely tinkering with parts of these. What is required is an equally radical response which will make intelligible and validate our encounter with reality, and take us beyond mere survival, to find our place in, and accept our responsibility for the world.

II. Responsive Movements

The global ecological crisis we are faced with today is a multi-dimensional one, which confronts us at many levels. Numerous movements have arisen in response. Some of these will be considered here within the limits of this paper.

Environmentalism

Among the earliest responses to the present ecological crisis are those from the environmental scientists who underscore the physical scale and moral scope of the impending disaster. [5] These have undermined any naive confidence in a quick technological fix. What they are essentially concerned with is the creation of a new ecologically sensitive science, not an extension of the old manipulative technology. But such a turnaround would be mere wishful thinking without a whole new orientation to science and technology, which is more a socio-cultural question than a scientific-technological problem.

Indeed, the alienation of modern man has been traced precisely to his aggressive science and the destructive technology consequent on it. [6] Emmanuel Monnier eloquently captured the paradox of the

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[5]   Rachael Carson*, The Silent Spring,* Cambridge, Mass., Riverside Press, 1962.

Theodore Roszak, Person'Planet: The Creative Disintegration of Indus trial Society, New York, Doubleday, 1978, and Jacques ELLUL, The Techno logical Society, New York, Random House, 1964.

twentieth century when he wrote that 'anguish had become once more man's constant companion through the very means he thought to banish it forever.' [7]Hence, while the environmentalist critique is valid and helpful at one level, it does not cut deep enough even to sustain itself. This would require a. new model for science that is more holistic and organic, a new purpose for technology more humane and harmonious. For this, the very socio-cultural basis of our science and technology needs to be examined.

Deep Ecology

Those wanting to make a radical critique of the underlying assumption of environmentalists and push for a deeper ecological one, characterize themselves as 'deep ecologists', in contrast to the earlier 'shallow' ones.[8] In neglecting such a necessary critique of the scientific enterprise, 'ecology has in fact been perverted—perverted in the interest of making it acceptable to the scientific establishment and to the politicians and industrialists who sponsor it'. [9] 'For only shallow ecologists think that reforming human relations towards nature can be done within the existing structure of society.'[10]

Ever since the 'deep ecology' movement was founded by the Norwegian Arne Næss, in 1972, it has drawn on very diverse inspirations to the point where 'it is very hard to follow the script.'[11] However, there seems to be a central intuition: 'This is the idea that there is no firm ontological divide in the field of existence.... Rather all entities are constituted by their relationships. [12] The mystical resonance here can hardly be surprising, especially when even the 'new physics' seems to echo the same theme.[13]

Based on this foundational insight, Næss brings together the disparate approaches of deep ecologists onto a platform which he

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[7] Emmanuel Mounier, *Be Not Afraid: Studies in Personalist Sociology*, London, Rocklift Pub. Corp., 1951, p. 148.

[8] Bill Duvll and George Sessions, Deep Ecology, Salt Lake City, Peregrine Smith Books, 1985. Also Michael Tom1As (ed.), Deep Ecology, San Diego, Avant Books, 1985.

[9] Edward Goldsmith, 'Gaia: Some Implications for Theoretical Ecology,' *The Ecologist,* 18/2 (1988), p. 65.

[10] Arne Næss, 'The Basis of Deep Ecology,' *Resurgence*, 126 (1987), p.5.

[11] William Godfrey Smith, 'Environmental Philosophy,' *Habitat,* June, 1990, p. 24.

[12] Warwick Fox, 'Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy of Our Time?', *The Ecologist*, 14/5-6 (1984), p. 96.

[13] Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, New York, Bantam Books, 1977.

summarises in eight points:[14] the intrinsic value of all life, human and non-human, and its richness and diversity, which must not be reduced except for vital human needs, even if this may require a decrease in human populations; the need for less human interference, and deep social changes, as well as an appreciation of life quality, not a higher, standard of living; and finally an obligation to action consequent on all this.

Now, while the deep ecology movement certainly does well to point beyond a quick fix for our present crisis, it is so diffuse and amorphous that even its unifying threads tend to get lost between Earth First activists and animal rights enthusiasts, new age therapists and romantic nature poets. No wonder, then, it has been accused of befuddled mysticism and political ineffectiveness. Evidently, it would seem that deep ecology is not deep enough, it 'claims too much and delivers too little.' [15] While it rightly strains at the limitations of scientific environmentalism and encouragingly stresses the need for a reconceptualization of our relationship with nature, it does not really offer a coherent basis for this, more than perhaps a generalized emphasis on the need for reorientation and reform.

But possibly the most trenchant criticism of the deep ecology movement has been its de-emphasis on the human dimensions of the ecological dilemma, and its disturbing distance from the issue of social justice. For if there is to be environmental peace it can only be peace with justice or rather, peace as the 'work of justice,' peace as our 'permanent task, peace as the 'fruit of love.'[16] This is an issue that cannot be wished away. It must be treated in some depth.

Social Ecology

Hence a step beyond the preoccupations of deep ecology needs to be taken seriously. This is what social ecology attempts. It 'emphasizes the embeddedness of human consciousness in nature, a radical critique of hierarchy and domination in society, and the historical

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[14] Arne Naess, Deep Ecology and Ultimate Premises,' *The Ecologist,* Vol. 18/4-5 (1988), p. 130.

[15] Henryk Skolimowski, 'Eco-Philosophy and Deep Ecology', *The Ecologist,* 18/4-5 (1988), p. 124.

[16] . Ref. Pope Paul VI's message, of 1 January 1968, quoted by the Second Conference of Latin American Bishops, Medellin, 1968, and cited by John Desrochers, *The Social Teachings of the Church*, pub. by author, Bangalore, 1982, pp. 232-234.

unity of ecological and social concerns.'[17] Its approach has little in common with the technocratic managerial approach of mainstream environmentalism and its mechanistic assumptions. Nor has it any patience with deep ecology's excessive celebration of 'things natural, wild and free,' either. For it views the ecological crisis as essentially a socio-political one, and therefore demanding a correspondingly structural-cultural response.

Its sensitivity to issues of social equality and justice sets it to the left of the political spectrum. But its concern for human rights and freedom sets it apart from the mainstream political left as well. Its perspective reaches out beyond the exhausted ideologies of industrialism of both the right and the left. [18] It seeks to replace hierarchical domination of any kind with fully participative forms of a 'humanity-in-nature,' where 'freedom would no longer be placed in opposition to nature, individuality to social coherence.'[19]

Social ecology has thus become the ideological inspiration of the green alternative, creating an ecological future as urged by some.[20] Briefly, this green politics rests on four pillars: 'ecology, social responsibility, grassroots democracy and non-violence'.[21]

Green Politics

Little wonder then that the green movement, while distancing itself from shallow ecologists', has also been hostile to the biocentrism of deep ecology, which Bookchin rather summarily dismisses as 'an 'ideological toxic dump'.[22]

However, the greening of other movements is a remarkable testimony to the empathetic cord the greens have struck across a wide range of people. Feminists have become its natural allies with 'eco-

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[17] Brian Tokar, 'Social Ecology, Deep Ecology and the Future of Green Political Thought,' *The Ecologist,* 18/4-5 (1988) p. 132. Ref. also Murray Bookchin. The Ecology of Freedom, Palo Alto, Cheshire Books, 1982.

[18] Hazel Henderson, *Politics of the Solar Age: Alternatives to Economies*, Indianapolis, Knowledge Systems, Ine., 1988, p. xxi.

[19] . Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, p. 318.

[20] Brian Toker, *The Green Alternative: Creating an Ecological Future,* San Pedro, California, R. and E. Mills, 1987.

[21] Robin Eckersley, 'The Road to Ecotopia? Socialism Versus Environ mentalism,' *The Ecologist,* 18/4-5 (1988), p. 146.

[22] Murray Bookchin, 'Social Ecology vs Deep Ecology--A Challenge for the Ecological Movement,' *Green Perspectives*, 18/4-5 (Summer 1988), p. 132.

feminism' or 'gyn-ecology'. [23] In developmental theory too 'eco development' as 'sustainable' growth is gaining currency. Eco socialism is committed to integrating the green into the red. [24]Even consumer movements are now identifying environment-friendly products. There is of course, the danger of the Green movement being co-opted by other interests. But so far it would seem that by and large, this has not happened. Rather it is the greens who are infiltrating the others, and bringing about a new cultural solidarity.[25]

In its aversion to the broad biocentrism of deep ecology, there is always the possibility of social ecology falling into the narrow anthropocentrism of so many radical humanists. Green politics too could easily get preoccupied with the human community to the exclusion of the larger biological one. An Eco-centrism has been urged to reconcile anthropocentric and biocentric values, by finding more inclusive ones in the ecological community of humans and nature, so that 'the natural evolution of the planet and the social history of the species' [26]can have a common destiny, a future together.   But then once again this would, in our view, necessitate an understanding and vision beyond the framework of green politics and the paradigm of social ecology.

In sketching these approaches to the ecological crisis, we have tried to point out how their inherent limitations restrict them to one or another level of response. The present crisis cannot be comprehended in depth within the constraints of their 'horizons'. For at its deepest, our response must deal with this question at the level of ultimate issues, in function of which more immediate socio-cultural or more immediate scientific-technological ones, can be contextualized and validated.

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[23] Ref. Mary Daly, *Gyn-Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism,* Boston, Beacon Press, 1978.

[24] Ref. Eco-Socialism in a Nutshell, London Socialist Environment and Resources Assiation, undated, for a delightful comic strip Introduction!

[25] Thierry Verhelst, *The Cultural Crisis of the West and International Solidarity* (International Foundation for Development Alternatives), IFDA Dossier 61, 1985, p. 51-56.

[26] 26. Ynestra king, ''Eco-feminism: On the Necessity of History and Mystery', *Women of Power,* 9 (Spring 1988), p. 44.

III. Seeking a Religious Understanding: Some Limited Approaches.

Now if we accept Paul Tillich's description of religion as 'what ultimately concerns man,' then we place religion at this most fundamental level of human concern as something essential to our collective human endeavour, even when we are not faced with a crisis of survival but are rather on a quest for fulfilment, some might call

salvation

If our relationship to the environment and our place in the biosphere has not been perceived as a 'religious' issue by modern society, this is because it is not regarded as one of ultimate concern as yet. It still is a rather taken-for-granted, matter-of-fact, instrumental relationship from a position of dominance. This was not always so in pre-modern societies. But now the ecological crisis is challenging us to a religious response, in the sense we have just defined. Moreover, a religious understanding, must be authenticated by ethical commitments, and both these integrated into a spiritual vision. This is what we will now address ourselves to in this paper.

A relevant response at the religious level to the ecological crisis must comprehend an understanding of the inter-relationship of all reality, and locate humankind within it. Such an understanding cannot be derived from rationalist thought, with its substantive and methodological prejudgements. Moreover, if indeed we hold that the human transcends the deterministic Newtonian world of matter, motion, time and space, then it cannot be meaningfully situated exclusively within this. However, even a religious approach to the ecological crisis can well be more or less comprehensive in its perspective, more or less integrated in its understanding. Here we will examine some less adequate approaches before outlining a framework for what we would regard as a more adequate one. For if, as some would claim, the existing religious traditions are inadequate to the present ecological crisis,[27] then surely we need a new interpretation to create a new understanding.

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[27] Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, San Francisco, Sierra Club Books, 1990, 87. p.

Biblical Stewardship

To begin with the well-worn Biblical ideal of stewardship, represents, at its best, an anthropocentric understanding of our relationship to nature. The blessing in Genesis, to 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue ....,' has been given an eco-sensitive interpretation in the context of a wider Biblical history. [28] Actually, the Hebrew *'ebed'* translated as 'cultivate' could be better rendered as 'serve', 'care for',.[29] Furthermore, the 'royal humanness' we are called to in the Bible has three essential aspects: God-dependence, nature-caring, and human community.[30]

More recently, much ink has been spilt to establish the ecological credentials of Biblical stewardship, but much scepticism still remains. For until very recently the Church has hardly protested environmental degradation even when it reached alarming proportions with 'the industrial assault of the earth.' [31] Christian theology and Scripture scholars too are still by-and-large unaffected by an eco-sensitivity, as Thomas Berry laments.' [32] Indeed, given 'Western theology's obsessive anthropocentrism,'[33] and the instrumentalization of nature in the Bible itself, [34] it is not surprising that Biblical stewardship does not break through to a non-instrumental relationship with creation. Nature still remains for human use and under various other pressures from the market and elsewhere, this too easily tilts over . . . . . into abuse'!

Even Teilhard de Chardin's enchanting vision of the cosmic Christ is still unashamedly anthropocentric though his mysticism of matter mitigates this somewhat. Yet for Teilhard, man' is ultimately 'the meaning of the world' [35] 'the spearhead of life.' [36] In sum, the

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[28] Ref. Wendell Berry, *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural,* San Francisco, North Point Press, 1981, Part V. Ch. 24, pp. 267-81.

[29] Helen K. keir, 'Towards a Biblical Basis for Creation Theology', in Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes, ed. Matthew Foy, Santa Fe, Bear and Co., 1981, p. 53,

[30] Keir. P.54

[31] T. Berry, p. 80

[32] T Berry, p. 122

[33] George Soares-Prabhu, 'The Sacred in the Secular,' *Jeevadhara, 17/98* (March 1987), p. 136

[34] Soares-Prabhu, p. 137: Genesis 1:28-29, Wisdom 9::2-3, Sirach 17:2-5,.

[35] D. Gareth-Joes, Teilhard de Chardin: An Analysis and Assessment, Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B Ledermans Pub. Co. 1970, p.62

[36] 36. Henri de Lubac, The Faith of Teilhard, London, Burns and Oates, 1965, p. 193

separation of humanity and nature, that Biblical stewardship implies, gives to creatures an instrumental, not an intrinsic value. And this is not a very good basis for an eco-theology.

Creation Mystique

Breaking away from such anthropocentrism is a creation-centred theology which is at times premised by a touching, almost Teilhardian, faith in 'the world (its value, its infallibility and goodness).'[37] There is a mystical element here that seeks to repossess the numinous psychic dimension of creation, so alive in primordial society, and to recapture our lost sense of revelation in nature, so central to the non-historical cosmic religions of the East. There is a deep feeling too for the organic realness of the world, a sense of unity and communion underlying and inherent in all creation.

The affinity of this biocentric, or rather cosmocentric approach to deep ecology and the Gaia hypothesis should be apparent, and so too will our corresponding critique. For once the human is reduced to a mere dimension of the universe and not central to it, a part of nature not transcendent to it, then its privileged place in the universe and its corresponding special relationship of responsibility for it are also abandoned. Biblical stewardship has been at pains to emphasize both these aspects. But now in rejecting anthropocentric chauvinism for bio- or rather cosmo-centrism, it would seem that the baby has been thrown out with the bath water!

Again, the affirmation of the symbiotic association of all creatures is a well-founded ecological insight as Barry Commoner's first law establishes: 'Everything is connected to everything else.'[38] Some would even insist that such symbiosis is the sine qua non of all life.[39] But when this is carried by some to a 'biospherical equalitarianism' where the right to life is equally claimed by all the living,'[40] then human concerns are sacrificed to non-human interests. Human

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[37] 37. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *How I Believe,* New York, Harper and Row, 1969, p. 19

[38] 38. Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology*, New York, Bantam, Books, 1972, p. 29.

[39] 39. Ref. Andrew Brennan, *Thinking about Nature,* Athens, Univ., of Georgia Press, 1988, p. 129.

[40] 40, W. Fox, loc. cit. (note 12), p. 198.

integration with nature is not thus promoted, rather it is human alienation from life that is eventually accentuated.

Further, the only way the affirmation of the relative can find some point of reference for transcendence of itself, is by absolutizing some part of this reality. But if what is absolutized is the human person, then our world becomes anthropocentric, in a way that can instrumentalize the rest of the cosmos; if it is not, then our world gets readily dehumanized.

In sum, while making an urgent case to displace human dominance over nature, this approach fails to make a cogent enough one to establish human responsibility for it. Nor does it succeed in doing this for the human community either. For in the final analysis, it is a mistake to try and affirm the intrinsic value of all creatures, while negating the unique position of human persons.

Transcendent Monotheism

Beyond anthropocentric 'stewardship' and cosmocentric naturalism, the theocentric approach attempts to subsume both these in a more comprehensive perspective. Here the transcendent referent that founds the intrinsic value of creation is outside it, and so no one part of creation can be absolutized so as to instrumentalize another, since all are relativized by one absolute transcendent extrinsic to all.

This has been the traditional understanding of the Biblical God, even though transcendence here is moderated and counter-poised by immanence. Yet the lordship of this monotheistic God cannot be compromised. Certainly, such an understanding will demystify nature and de-absolutize the human. But in making humans responsible to God for his creation it does not go beyond the stewardship model and once again instrumentalizes the relationship of humans to nature.

Furthermore, this monotheistic lordship implies a dominance-dependence relationship between Creator and creature which is projected into other relationships in society- and its relationship to nature, with drastic consequences. For 'monotheism was and is the religion of patriarchy, just as pantheism is probably the religion of earlier matriarchy.' [41] This religiously legitimated and supported patriarchy, either in its authoritarian or in its paternalistic form, gets expressed in political and clerical institutions [42] which are not noted

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[41] 41. Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, London, ECM Press, 1981, p. 165

[42] 42. Cf. ibid, p. 191, and also T. Berry, op. cit. (note. 27), p.145

for their eco-sensitivity to say the least. For such 'Promethean male mastery,' [43] and the consequent dominance-dependence relationships, do not make a sound basis for symbiosis in the kind of ecological community we would want.

IV. Evolving a Religious Understanding: Collecting the Fragments

What we have tried to establish so far is that each of these three approaches taken singly do not provide us with an adequate religious approach to the ecological question; taken together they do not add up to a satisfyingly comprehensive perspective either. For they are all both partial and misleading. But each does point to an essential dimension in any genuine religious perspective on ecology: the human, the cosmic, the divine. Before we can bring these together in an integrated understanding we will briefly examine each of these three to find therein the essential elements for this integration.

Human Fellowship

Beginning with the human dimension, a shift from the ideal of 'stewardship' to the reality of 'fellowship' is essential. In the two creation stories in Genesis (Gen 1:1-2:4a and 2:4b-25) besides the theme of dominion on which the stewardship ideal is based, there is also the idea of relationship on which companionship can be founded.[44] Elsewhere too, the relational dimension of human beings is certainly a well-founded Biblical theme and one that can be extended beyond just the human community.

Thus God creates human beings in the divine image as male and female (Gen 1:27). And again, because 'it is not good that man should be alone' (Gen 2:18), God gives man not just the beasts and the birds but one like himself, woman, as a companion. Human beings, then, are necessarily made for companionship, for relationship with each other and all creatures, in a covenant that, like humans themselves, is but an image of God's own covenant with his people and his creation.

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[43] 43. Murray Bookchin, *Towards an Ecological Society*, Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1986, p. 64

[44] Michael J. Himes and Kenneth R. Himes. 'The Sacrament of Creation: Towards an Environmental Theology.' Commonweal, 118/4(26 January 1990), p. 43

Moreover, God's covenant, his *berit* with his people, is always associated with his loving-kindness *(hesed)*, his righteousness *(sadaqah),* and his fidelity *(emeth)*.[45] It is primarily concerned with the community of persons, not individuals in isolation. And rather than found this relationship on a monotheistic 'lordship' as much of Christian theology, with Karl Barth, does, Moltmann insightfully suggests that trinitarian fellowship is the more appropriate basis. For 'the triune God reveals himself as love in the fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.' [46]

Thus 'thinking in relationships and communities is developed out of the doctrine of the Trinity, and is brought to bear on the relation of men and women to God, to other people and to mankind as a whole, as well as on their fellowship with the whole of creation.' [47] Hence, 'trinitarian thinking' must necessarily mean 'to think ecologically about God, man and the world in their relationships and indwelling'. [48]

Cosmic Evolution

With regard to the cosmic dimension of reality, an inclusive evolutionary understanding must displace an exclusive creation-centredness. What is essential here is to establish the fundamental unity in the continuous differentiation and integration of the evolutionary process, the comprehension of the cosmos in trinitarian terms as coming from the Father through Christ, and going back to Him through Christ in the Spirit.

The philosophical problem of the one and the many is not resolved by positing a monistic unity of one substance in which the diversity and uniqueness of creatures, the individuality and personality of humans, are lost in a basic uniformity. Rather these can be preserved in the unity of the 'great chain of being', [49] within the

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[45] Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament,* London, SCM Press, 1969, p. 287

[46] J Moltmann op. cit., p. 56

[47] Ibid. p. 19

Ref. Arthur Q Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea,* Cambridge Mass, Harvard Univ. Press, 1936

Sri Aurobindo, *Evolution,* Calcutta, Arya Pub. House, 1944, p.11

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ref. Arthur Q Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea,* Cambridge Mass, Harvard Univ. Press, 1936

evolutionary process, going beyond Darwin and converging in a Teilhardian Omega point.

In the Hindu context, Sri Aurobindo elaborates a dynamic view of cosmic evolution, where 'a mechanical, gradual, rigid evolution out of indeterminate Matter by Nature-Force' is rejected for 'conscious, supple, flexible, intensely surprising and constantly dramatic evolution by a super-conscient knowledge.' [50] And in the Christian, already now spirit and matter have converged in the human person and community in the people of God, Creator and creature in Christ. This cosmic evolution carries over into human history and both meet and are carried forward in the Incarnation, where the mystery of creation and the history of salvation converge into the future of God.

Rahner's teaching on 'active self-transcendence' places 'Christology within an Evolutionary View of the Worlds' [51] in bringing out clearly the inner affinity of these two doctrines.[52] The holistic and historical affirmation of the Bible does provide a scriptural basis for this evolutionary convergence. For in the Bible, 'spirit is not the negation of matter but its integration and vivifying principle,'[53] the person cannot exist in isolation but is fulfilled and saved only in community, the Creator is not known by us except in his covenant with his creatures, which reaches its climax in the incarnation and the cosmic Christ already in St Paul.

Human beings are part of this cosmic evolution, not in opposition to it. For Brian Swimme, 'humanity is the heart and mind of the earth,' [54] and we would add, of the whole universe, the 'green dragon', as well. For cosmic evolution becomes conscious of itself with humans, who give it voice and sing its praise, give it direction and are responsible for its care, and so bringing all of creation and themselves in it to fulfilment in the Parousia of 'a new heaven and earth' (Rev 21:1), so 'that God may be everything to everyone' (1 Corinthians 15:28).

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[50] Sri Aurobindo, *Evolution,* Calcutta, Arya Pub. House, 1944, p.11

[51] 51. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966, Vol. 5, Ch. 8.

[52] 52. Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, D. 158.

[53] George Soares-Prabhu, op. cit. p. 126

[54] 54. Brian Swimme, The Universe Is a Green Dragon: *A Cosmic Creation Story,* Santa Fe, New Mexico, Bear and Co., 1984, p. 35

Divine In-dwelling

Finally, the transcendent divine must be counter-poised by an immanent in-dwelling. This will establish the fundamental unity of the world, even more than cosmic evolution and human fellowship. Indeed, these two are validated and brought together precisely by this in-dwelling of the divine that suffuses them both.

There is certainly adequate scriptural support for the closeness and intimacy of God with his creatures in the Old Testament. But more especially in the New does the divine presence engulf us all within and without, for 'in him, we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28). The indwelling Spirit prays in us, drawing us to our Abba, Father, in his Son (Rom 8:15).

Neither transcendental monotheism nor immanent pantheism seems to capture this in-dwelling adequately: the first misses the basic unity of Creator and creature, by focusing only on their otherness, and the second reduces this to an identity by negating the differences. Hence, some would urge a 'pan-en-theism' to escape the dilemma and comprehend 'a way of seeing the world sacramentally. Indeed... the primary sacrament is creation itself.' [55] The Creator's continuing action to keep the creature in existence and the creature's intrinsic contingency on this action are the two complementary aspects of Christian panentheism, where, according to Moltmann, 'creation is a fruit of God's longing for his Other and for that Other's free response to the divine love.' [56]

'The commanding Hindu metaphor of the world as the body of God, deriving from the ancient Rigvedic myth of the cosmic person (Puruṣa), dramatizes this in-dwelling with the forceful symbolism of a body-soul relationship, making of the cosmos the primary address, the dwelling place of the divine, St Thomas Aquinas, too, is daring enough at times to use the same imagery; *sic est anima in corpore, sicut Deus in mundo.* [57]

In trinitarian terms, this can be beautifully expressed as: 'God in-Himself, God-for-us, we-in-God.'[58] In the final analysis, what this in-

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[55] 55. Matthew Fox, Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality, Santa Fe, Bear and Co., 1983. p. 90.

[56] 56. Moltmann, op. cit., p. 106.

[57] 57. *Sum. The0l.* I-II, q. 17 a. 8ad 2.

[58] 58. Jon Sobrino, 'Christian Prayer and New Testament Theology. A Basis for Social Justice Spirituality,' in Western Spirituality, ed. M. Fox, (note 29), p. 84.

dwelling expresses is this: God at home in his creation and with his people [59]and they in turn at peace with him and each other.

The Cosmotheandric Perspective

We have now established a threefold foundation for the integration of the three essential dimensions of our religious perspective on ecology: human fellowship with the world and God; cosmic evolution as inclusive of all creation and reaching back to the Creator; divine indwelling as a most intimate presence of God to his creatures. Putting all three together we have what Raimundo Panikkar would call 'the total integrated vision of the seamless garment of the total reality: the cosmotheandric vision [60] Panikkar also refers to this as 'the anthropocosmic' reality.[61]

For Panikkar, there are three 'kairological moments' that lead up to this: 'a) the primordial . .... in which Nature, Man and the Divine are still amorphously mixed and only vaguely differentiated; b) the humanistic...in which the discriminating process of individuation proceeds from the macro- to the microsphere; and c) of the catholic or cosmotheandric moment which would maintain the distinctions of the second moment without forfeiting the unity of the first.[62] There is no regressing into the past here. For it 'is not a question of regaining the innocence we had to lose to become who we are, but of conquering a new one.' [63]

What we are attempting here is to resolve the dilemma of the one and the many with 'the positive (and not merely dialectical) middle way between the paranoia of monism and the schizophrenia of dualism. [64] For 'reality is neither mere variations or modes of one substance, nor it is made up of unbridgeable elements with only extrinsic and ultimately accidental links. Rather the cosmotheandric principle affirms that the inter-penetration of the three irreducible dimensions which constitute the real... are neither three modes of a

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[59] 59. Moltmann, op. cit, p. 125.

[60] 60. Raimundo Panikkar, 'Colligite Fragmenta: For an Integration of Reality' in *From Alienation to At-oneness,* eds. F.A. EIGO and S.E. FITTIPALDI, Villanova, Penn., Villanova Univ. Press, 1977, p. 19.

[61] 61. Panikkar, p. 21, nt. 8, and pp. 68-.69, where he explains his preference for the term 'cosmotheandric'

[62] Panikkar, *Colligite Fragmenta*, p. 68

[63] Panikkar, *Colligite Fragmenta*, p. 71

[64] Panikkar, *Colligite Fragmenta,* p. 73

monolithic undifferentiated reality, nor are they three elements of a pluralistic system...' [65]

Rather, everything that exists has this 'triune constitution', this 'trinitarian structure'. For everything that exists shares in the mystery of being, is within the range of human consciousness, and stands in relation to the world. The cosmos is not just matter-energy but it constituted as well by its intelligibility and its numinosity. The human is not just body-soul but consciousness that embraces the cosmos and reaches out to the infinite. The divine is not the utterly other apart from the world but an intrinsic creative presence in the cosmos and an intimate salvific one in human beings as well. Each dimension is what the other is not, and it is not any the less for being so intrinsically linked together, 'because the real is precisely the crossing of these dimensions. Every real existence is a knot in this threefold net.'[66]

Panikkar symbolizes the cosmotheandric intuition in the circle. 'There is no circle without a centre and circumference, The three are not the same and yet not separable.... The circle, only visible from the circumference, is Matter, Energy, and the World. And, this is so because the circumference, Man, Consciousness, encompasses it. And both are what they are because there is God, a centre, which alone, i.e., *qua* God, as the ancients loved to say, is a sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. [67]

It is our contention, then, that the cosmotheandric vision is a new interpretation and a more comprehensive religious understanding of the inter-relationship and basic unity of all reality, and our unique place in it.

V. Critiquing Ethical Perceptions: Problems and Misconceptions

Consequent to a religious understanding are ethical implications. However, since the ecological crisis and the questions it raises are essentially social issues touching the whole ecological community, our concern here will be with social ethics rather than just individual morality, Based on our cosmotheandric religious understanding, once we have established an intrinsic and non-instrumental relationship

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[65] Panikkar, *Colligite Fragmenta*, p. 24
[66] Panikkar, *Colligite Fragmenta*, p. 89
[67] Panikkar, *Colligite Fragmenta*, p. 89

between the three dimensions of reality, we seek to extend our moral sensitivity beyond the individual to the entire ecological community and the evolving cosmos as well, so that our ecological ethics will comprehend not just human survival but an ecologically sustainable development, responsible for the well-being of the cosmic whole and sensitive to the gift of the divine dwelling in it.

Here our first task within the constraints of this paper will be to clear the ground by exposing and rejecting some misconceptions. Often these are founded on pre-judgments that have become so integral a part of the conventional wisdom now that rejecting them may threaten to bring the whole edifice down. However, in moments of great crisis such risks may be unavoidable if authentic wisdom is to be distinguished from conventional prejudice.

Moreover, powerful interest groups have institutionalized such prejudices and have confused rather than focused the debate, obfuscated rather than clarified the issues. In questioning such fallacies we are, threatening these interests, We need hardly be surprised at their opposition.

The Myth of Progress and Primitivism

All too often Western society has been rudely awakened from its dream of building authentic human community with the nightmare of the crisis and catastrophe, precipitated by a civilization which now encompasses the global village. Yet the myth of progress is still very much alive among us. In expressing itself in the illusionary promise of limitless growth for today, it is no longer 'religion but growth that has become the opium of the people'. [68]

This myth of progress, however, has nothing in common with the cosmic evolution we sketched earlier. The present ecological crisis has poignantly underscored how disturbingly 'regressive' such a myth really is. For once the environment is degraded beyond the point of regeneration, our survival itself will be at stake. Already a reaction has set in and its 'back to nature' romanticism only represents a disillusionment with the idea of progress, and an attempt at a re-enchantment of nature.

To be sure a regression back into the stone age is not seriously urged. Yet certainly a primordial people's ethic can serve to critique and 'call the entire civilized world to a more authentic mode of

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[68] 68. Fritzjof CAPRA, *The Turning Point,* London, Worldwide House, 1982, p. 224

being.'[69] But the homeostasis of 'zero-growth' can hardly justify the inequalities of the present that would get frozen into the future. To suggest that nature knows best, and that the earth will eventually heal itself, is to express a native optimism that only the affluent and the privileged can afford. The poor and the underprivileged are only too aware of how easily famine, pestilence and violence become natural phenomena in situations of national scarcity.

Nature must be harmoniously humanized by an appropriate technology and culture, not further mythologized by a regression into primitivism. For, while inequalities must not be frozen in a no- growth status quo, it is still the poor who suffer the most from a degraded environment, [70] and all too often they are the ones, as well, who are asked to pay the price when solutions for its restoration are made. [71]

The Invisible Hand and the Tragedy of the Commons

The next fallacy concerns the invisible hand, that is supposed to unfailingly reward the selfishness of each to the good of all. At the root of this perspective is a utilitarian individualistic conception of the human being as a mere 'economic man', *homo economicus*. More recently such economic utilitarianism has been extended by psychological behaviourism. But surely there is more to being human than the rational calculation of costs and benefits, or the deterministic response to the stimulus of pain and pleasure, as Abraham Maslow and David McClelland have convincingly demonstrated. [72]

Further, the invisible hand is premised on the functioning of the free and equal competition of the market. But such a model of the market obtains only in the minds of some economists and their number is decreasing rapidly. [73]

[69] 69. Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth,* San Francisco Sierra Club Books 1990, p. 4

[70] 70. Darryl D'Monte, *Temples or Tombs? Industry versus the Environment,* New Delhi, Centre for Science and Environment, 1988 p. 26. Also Walter Fernandes, et al., Forests, Environment and Tribal Culture, New Delhi, Indian Social Institute, 1988.

[71] 71. Richard E. Sherrel, *Ecology: Crisis and New Vision,* Richmond, Va., John Knox Press, 1971, p. 32. Also Susan G. HADDEN 'Environmental Protection and Economic Development in India' in *India 2000: The Next Fifteen Years,* ed. James R. ROACH, New Delhi, Allied Pub., 1987, pp. 194-214.

[72] 72. Ref. Abraham Maslow, *Towards a Psychology of Being*, Princeton, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1962. and David C. MCCLELLAND, *The Achievement Motive,* New York, Praeger, 1983

[73] 73. Ref. Kenneth Boulding, Beyond Economics, Univ. of Michigan, 1968.

Utilitarian individualism and psychological behaviourism, then, cannot be an adequate basis of an environmental ethic, because they fail to grasp the essential difference between the individual's good and the collective one. Without this no social ethic is possible, and an environmental one is necessarily social, since it involves the relationship of the community, as a whole, to its habitat, and not just the individual in isolation.

The market mechanism in classical liberal capitalism abuses the environment when costs are passed off to be absorbed by it in order to be more competitive. The cumulative damage is now catching up with us. Once again, the long-term common good of the community, human and ecological, is beyond the purview of this perspective, where 'freedom in community brings ruin to all'.[74]

Perhaps this essential social dimension of the environmental ethic is best illustrated by what has come to be called 'the tragedy of the commons' first articulated by an English political economist in 1833. [75] When the common grazing grounds of the village are close to their carrying capacity, then an individual increasing his livestock will still gain an individual advantage. But if the overall increase results in over-grazing, then the degradation of the common land will result in the decrease of everyone's livestock. And on this regression, individual increases in livestock would only increase overall losses without any sure returns. However, if some cut their livestock for the common good, and others did not from self-interest, the former would be at a disadvantage vis-a-vis the latter.

Clearly, the invisible hand fails, while utilitarian individualism destroys the commons. Even contractual utilitarianism has proved inadequate to protect or promote the common good, with mutual restraint mutually agreed on. For, the very individual self-interest this is premised on prompts people to break the contract, especially if they can get away with it before they all die in the long run.

The Consumerist Trap and the Scientific Enterprise

If the invisible hand cannot provide us with an environmental ethic, it would be naive to assume that centralized planning could. For while this perspective does well to emphasize the social dimension of the human community, it does not do as well with the ecological one.

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[74] 74. G. Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics for Survival*, New York, Viking 1972, p. 254.

[75] W. F. Lloyd, Two Lectures on the Checks to Population, Oxford, 1833

Moreover, it fails to overcome the materialist consumerism of the earlier perspective, or to develop an ecologically sensitive consciousness.

Increasingly we are realizing that centralization of decisions and the concentration of resources serve large-scale vested interests, economic, political or bureaucratic, and function within a frame of reference that too easily discounts any environment and all ethics. A more participative decentralized approach has been far more successful.

For both, the free market societies and the command economy ones, seem to have fallen into the consumerist trap, which eats into our environmental resources without replacing or renewing them. Surely, such consumerism is a formula for ecological suicide in the long run. But it is decidedly dehumanizing even now in the short one.

The commercialization of modern society has so programmed us to consume, that we too easily have confused the standard of living with the quality of life. At the subsistence levels, these are directly related, but at increasing levels of affluence, the relationship becomes more tenuous, until it can be actually reversed, as when the ecological crisis forces its recognition on us and our over-consumption truly becomes a wasting disease. Consumption levels need to change, the lower ones raised at the bottom for the poor and the higher ones reduced at the top for the rich.[76]

Such a consumerist understanding of human beings is far too inadequate for an environmental ethic because it radically confuses superficial ways of 'having' with more fundamental levels of 'being'. [77] Consumerism, then, does not even overcome the alienation and anomie of the human community, let alone make for harmonious relationships in the ecological one.

If people have not been more alarmed by the consumerist trap; it is because they have an implicit faith that science and technology will free them from it. What was so much a part of the problem, now they hope will become part of the solution. But this turnaround will require more than just hope.

For one thing, so much of our scientific enterprise is commercialized or militarized, and geared to a consumerist and aggressive culture. For another, technology today has its own

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[76] 76. Vaclav Smil, 'Planetary Warming: Realities and Responses'
Population and Development, 16/1 (March, 1990), 221.
[77] 77. Eric Fromm, *To Have or To Be?*, New York, Harper and Row,

powerful run-away dynamic, qualitatively different from the simple craft of earlier times. The tool is, indeed, an extension of the limb, and is still subject to the rhythm and pace of the body. But the machine imposes itself on humans. And now with the automatic machine and the computerized one, not to mention the ones with artificial intelligence and synthetic feelings being planned, it would seem that even more drastic impositions are presaged, a development that hardly seems to be freeing or fulfilling for human beings.

What is required is not just a new agenda for the scientific enterprise, but a shift to a new paradigm: from high tech to appropriate technology, from capital-intensive inputs to people's participation, from being so professionally exclusive to being more humanly inclusive. It needs must begin to be more respectful of, less aggressive with, the subject it studies; more in harmony with, less in domination over the environment it intervenes in. We need a science that will reveal, not disguise, the downstream effects of technology, that will make transparent, not opaque, our intervention in the eco-system.

We do not want scientists to 'torture nature' to reveal her secrets as Francis Bacon urged, and so to 'hack and rack the growing green' as Gerard Manley Hopkins painfully described. We need a new metaphor for the scientific enterprise, not the one of aggressive domination and omnipotent hubris that we are so accustomed to. Perhaps women scientists will give us this new orientation — if they are not 'emasculated' by a macho feminism!

It can only be from such a new paradigm, supported by a new metaphor, that our science can be oriented in constructive ways towards a viable environmental ethic. The scientific establishment at present seems rather unprepared for this, though some dissident scientists do give us cause for hope.

VI. Explicating Ethical Commitments: Cosmotheandric Implications

Having now debunked the myth of progress, demystified the invisible hand and exposed the consumerist trap, hopefully, we have cleared enough ground to set up some principles for an environmental ethic derived from a cosmotheandric understanding of reality. Our starting point is the intrinsically valued and non-instrumental relationships that this understanding posits between all three dimensions of reality, so that no reality, nothing which exists, is ever

purely a means, and all reality, everything real, has value in itself as an end. This will imply human rights for every member of the human community, and correspondingly their cosmic duties which will encompass the entire ecological and even the cosmic one.

It is our contention that neither utilitarian calculations, nor individualist constraints, neither the vain hopes of progressivism nor the false values of consumerism, neither the presumptions of science nor the romanticization of nature, can find any really ecologically sensitive ethic. But in a cosmotheandric understanding of human rights and cosmic duties, we can avoid the exaggerations of both anthropocentric as well as biocentric ethics.

Human Rights: Western 'Jus'

Going back to, the Roman idea of 'jus', the concept of rights in the West has evolved in a decidedly anthropocentric—even in an individualist-context. [78] However, going beyond a rationalist positivism and a bourgeois individualism, human rights must fundamentally mean the right to be fully human. In the cosmotheandric perspective this would comprehend the cosmic and divine dimensions of the human and so encompass all other authentic human rights as well.

 Now if the common good in its broadest sense is defined as for the total of those conditions that make it possible the members of the community to achieve the fulfilment of their nature, then extending our sense of community, or rather communion, beyond the human will provide sound foundation for an ecological ethic; not one based exclusively on the rights of claimants, as most biocentric ethics are, but rather inclusively founded on the duty of the agents morally responsible for this common good, for expressing the communion between the cosmic and the divine in the human.

Hence in establishing a basis for human rights, it is necessary to extend human moral sensitivity beyond a Kantian anthropocentrism to include the non-human as well. However, extending such sensitivity on the basis of moral rights for the entire biosphere would imply imputing moral responsibility and consequently moral freedom to non-human beings, which would then have ethical obligations to

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[78] 78 Aloysius Pieris, 'Human Rights Language and, Liberation Theo-Logy', *Vidyajyoti,* 52/11 (Nov: 1988), p. 527. Also Bernard Schwatz, *The Great Rights of Mankind: An History of the American Bill of Rights,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1977.

each other and to humans. There is more than a little anthropomorphism here. Rather it would seem more appropriate to speak analogously of the cosmic claims that the non-human would make on us, because of their intrinsic value and of our moral responsibility for it. In other words, human rights and cosmic duties are correlative.[79]

Cosmic Duties: Eastern 'Dharma'

Deriving from the ancient myth of the cosmic person *(Puruṣa)* in the Rigveda (x, 90), and the world as God's body, is the Hindu understanding of *dharma (dhamma)*. It is a most fundamental yet multivocal word in the Indian tradition. Quintessentially, 'dharma is that which maintains, gives cohesion and thus strength to any given thing, to reality and ultimately to the three worlds *(triloka)*'. [80]

In this emphatically cosmocentric understanding, all the parts of God's body have rights or rather claims of their own. What is distinctive of human beings is their duty, their dharma. The Gita develops this further with the idea of *svadharma,* one's own duty, specific to one's own context. Dharma is expressed in ritual *(rit)*, in sacrifice (*yajñá*) and in righteous behaviour *(nīti)*, which together keep the world in right order and harmony.

We can now see how dharma is not so much a foundation for individual rights of human beings, as it is for their cosmic duties. The *svadharma* of humans is precisely to maintain the cosmic community in its right order and harmony. For, 'the Jus to be human is always already founded on the Dharma of being cosmic.'[81] Thus the rights of the human and the dharma of the cosmos are intrinsically and inseparably bound together in the divine cosmic person of the Puruṣa.

We have here, then, rich possibilities to break away from an overly anthropocentric or a cosmocentric ethic, or even an exclusively

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[79] 79 *Ref.* Francis X: D'Sa 'The Right to be Human and the Duty to Be Cosmic; Cross Cultural Reflections on Human Rights and Cosmic Duties,' mimeograph, Pune, De Nobili College, 1990.

[80] 80. Raimundo Panikkar, *Inter-cultural*, 17/1, issue 82, (Jan-March 1984)

[81] 81. Francis X. D'S, loc. Ci*Ref.* Lester R. Brown, op. cit., p. 323.

86. Emmanuel Mounier, op. cit. p. 137.

theocentric one, into a genuinely ecological one, founded on a cosmotheandric vision.

A New Paradigm: Cosmotheandric Integration

Such an ecological ethic cannot be effective merely as a matter of personal preference. To be viable it must be articulated in the structure and values of a society, in a new paradigm that is maintained by and within this ethic, so radically alien from the present one, as indeed the ethic of unrestrained growth must be different from an eco-sensitive one. We cannot detail such a paradigm in depth within the restraints of this paper, but we will try to delineate some of its more essential parameters, within our cosmotheandric perspective.

 On the human dimension, this would mean the primacy of the common good as we have broadly defined it earlier. It is more than the aggregate sum of the good of all individuals or the utilitarian 'greatest good to the greatest number', or even the corporate good of the community. As the sum total of all those conditions which make for the possibility of fulfilling one's nature, it goes far beyond all these, and the discredited ideologies they have spawned.

For this common good, a society must be structured on the principle of subsidiarity and its obverse, i.e., neither abrogating authority upwards for what can be done at lower levels of society nor abdicating responsibility downwards for what must be done at higher ones. The values supportive of such subsidiarity are best expressed by 'solidarity', a term that encompasses our inter-relationship, and our dependence; and 'individuality', a term expressing our need for autonomy and uniqueness. Ideally, it would be an egalitarian and participative society on a human scale, concerned, in Eric Fromm's terms, with 'being' rather than 'having', a community of free persons in communion with each other, the world and the divine.

On the cosmic dimension, in the new paradigm, the primacy—would be for sustainable development in the larger context of the cosmic evolution we have sketched above. This would mean more than just economic growth up to the carrying capacity of the environment, more than merely 'Accommodating Human Needs and

Numbers to the Earth's Resources,' [82] more than a reduction of the environment to 'common property' and then optimising its use. [83]

Rather, if sustainable development is to be part of the cosmic evolution, then it must be concerned with organic harmony and integration, with qualitative growth not quantitative change, with 'the limitation of the empire of necessity and widening the sphere of freedom.' [84] The Taoist 'frugality' of 'grace without waste' will be the supportive value here, and not just an ethic of accommodation. [85]

Finally, if this new paradigm for society is to be complete, it cannot avoid taking into account issues of ultimate concern which every human society must encounter. This would call for a paradigm, not closed in on itself, but at its very core, open to a beyond, a quest, for self-transcendence, immanent in the depths of the human, even as it subsumes the cosmic. For the human being is indeed *ens finitum capax infiniti* (a finite being open to the infinite). There is no room here for the metaphysical pessimism of the myth of the eternal return; rather, what we have is the spiritual optimism of a purposeful teleology. For we do not need a paradigm that underscores 'the empty possibility of a future without finality,'[86] but one that challenges us to believe in one of eschatological hope.

In sum, then, our ethical commitments must include human rights and cosmic duties in a new paradigm for society, delineated in terms of the common good, sustainable development and purposeful teleology.

VII. Articulating a Spiritual Vision: Insights and Intuitions

A religious understanding and the ethical commitments consequent on it must be expressed in an integrated vision and way of life. This is our understanding of spirituality here. However, it will be

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[82] 82. Ref. Lester R. Brown, The Twenty-Ninth Day, New York, W.W. Norton, 1979

[83] 83. Ref. Matthew Edel, Economics and the Environment, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1973.

[84] 84. Christopher DAWSON, The Judgement of Nations, London, Sheed and Ward, 1943, 47. p.

[85] *Ref*. Lester R. Brown, op. cit., p. 323.

[86] 86. Emmanuel Mounier, op. cit. p. 137.

no more than a mere conceptualization, until it is internalized by persons and socialized in society, as a lived reality.

Such a spiritual response to the ecological crisis must not exaggerate one or other specific aspects of it. The challenge is rather to strive for a holistic integration in our historical context, not one that merely resolves dilemmas and reconciles contradictions, but going beyond would hold opposites in creative tension and transcend dichotomies in a higher unity—a *'coincidentia oppositorum'* as Nicholas of Cusa has said.

After a brief sketch of other less comprehensive versions of an eco-sensitive spirituality, we will attempt to collect the scattered fragments of insight and intuition into a broader and deeper vision within the cosmotheandric perspective of our discourse.

Cosmic Re-enchantment

Creation spirituality goes back to humankind's first religious awakening to the 'enchantment' of their world. It is still alive in most tribal and many agricultural societies, and in most traditions of Eastern spirituality. Nature-mysticism is the primordial human response to encountering the world. However, as Max Weber has shown, the 'iron cage' of our rationalized modern society leads to a 'disenchantment of the world', particularly within the 'Protestant ethic' in the West. [87]

In the Eastern Church the idea of *'theosis'*, or the divinization of all creatures, kept alive this creation-centred spirituality, but in the Western Church, even much before the Reformation, it was displaced by a redemption-centred one. Some historians of Western spirituality [88] would trace this shift to the trauma of the Black Death, the plague that wiped out a third of Europe's populations between 1347 and 1349. Some cities like Florence lost one-third of its citizens in three months! One response to this was a drive to a greater control over nature that developed into an aggressive science, the other more immediately was a quest for redemption out of a tragic world.[89]

The wheel has come full circle now, with creation-spirituality adherents urging the need for a 're-enchantment with the earth' as for

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[87] 87. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York, Charles Scribner and Sons, 1958.

[88] 88. T. Berry, op. cit. (note 69), p. 125.

[89] 89. Ibid. p. 125.

the condition our preserving it 'from the impending destruction that we imposing on it,'[90] Some even call for a moratorium on redemption spirituality to force it to 'quit its hegemony for a while' so that creation-spirituality can involve itself 'in re-understanding the meaning of redemption in different cultural and historical periods.' [91]

The revival of creation-spirituality today represents to some, the most important development in this century. [92] Its emphatic cosmocentrism relinquishes *The Tragic Sense of Life* [93] that has for so long dominated Christian spirituality in the West. But as the focus shifted from a pessimistic anthropocentrism to an optimistic cosmocentrism, the idea of original sin was displaced by the one of original blessing. And yet, as long as tragedy and sin, suffering and injustice, are part of the human experience it is difficult to see how creation- spirituality can be anything but a partial and unsatisfying response to this human predicament, unless of course one is uninvolved in and uncommitted to it.

Redemptive Vision

The traditional redemption-centred spirituality grappled squarely with this, sometimes to the point of being almost obsessive about sin and compulsive about atonement. But in spite of some of its undeniably negative features, to summarily dismiss it as irrelevant in favour of an exclusive creation spirituality or nature mysticism only ends up trivializing both. For, if estrangement from God and from creatures go together, then communion with them must also do the same.

Moreover, it is 'belief in redemption which dominates the whole of the Old Testament.' [94] The creation motif 'is but a magnificent foil for the message of salvation,' [95] The doctrine of creation emerges historically much later and is essentially a 'soteriological

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[90] 90. T. Berry, op. cit.,p.21.

[91] 91. M. Fox (ed.), *Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes,* Santa Fe, Bear and Co., p. 4.

[92] 92. Wayne Teasdale, ·Nature-Mysticism as the Basis of Eco-Spirituality', *Jeevadhara*,20/119 (Sep. 1990) p. 403.

[93] 93. Miguel Unamuno, Princeton Univ. Press, 1972.

[94] 94. Gerhard von Rad, 'The Theological Problem of the Old Testament
Doctrine of Creation', in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. B.W Anderson, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1984, p. 53.

[95] 95, Ibid., p. 56.

understanding of creation.' [96]   The New Testament is not less redemption-centred as the very name Jesus indicates. It would be difficult to discount this theme without rejecting something very essential in the tradition itself.

With liberation theology, the fundamental experience of the Exodus is recaptured and reinterpreted to liberate oppressed and marginalized people today. To our thinking, this is surely the most relevant and inspiring version of redemption-centred Christianity today, unless of course, one chooses to ignore the oppressive poverty and rank injustice of our world. Matthew Fox attempts to co-opt liberation theology as 'a species of creation spirituality' [97] but rather unconvincingly. A deeper synthesis is required if what is valuable in both is not to be lost.

The Monastic Way of Life

However, if redemption spirituality counter-balances some of the exaggeration of a creation-centred one, its anthropocentrism is as likely to lead to exaggerations of its own: an insensitivity to the biosphere and the cosmos more generally, and more lately, a naturalist humanism, to the exclusion of the divine.

A theocentric spirituality will of course avoid this, particularly as it is epitomized by the archetype of the monk, the one who seeks God alone, Deus Solus, with 'singlemindedness' *(ekāgratā)*, the exclusivity of a goal that shuns all subordinate though legitimate goals.' [98]

And yet the monk and his monastery lived in symbiotic harmony with their environment. There is convincing historical evidence of this wherever the monastic tradition has been found, both in the East and the West. Different religious traditions may have had a variety of understandings of the human relationship to the world and its final purpose. However, more immediate concerns, like the environment, were creatively and constructively integrated into the more ultimate ones, like the quest for the Absolute. Even when they were not logically derived from them, a certain harmonious integrity prevailed within a lived myth, if not in an articulated theology.

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[96] 96. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1968, Vol. I, p. 138.

[97] 97, M. Fox, *Western Spirituality*, (see note 91), p.4.

[98] 98. Raimundo Panikkar, *Blessed Simplicity: The Monk as the Universal Archetype*, New York, Seabury Press, 1982, p.10.

Moreover, together with sin and atonement, the monastic tradition did emphasize forgiveness and reconciliation, and 'by the sanctification of work and poverty it revolutionized both the order of social values which had dominated the Empire and that which was expressed in the· warrior ethos of the barbarian conquerors' [99]. *Mutatis mutandis,* much the same can be said of the spiritual influence of monasticism in the East.

However, monasticism, especially in the West today, finds itself marginalized in modern secular society. On the one hand, the religious worldview on which monasticism is based has been critically undermined; on the other, its contemplative dimension distances it from an active involvement in this-worldly human struggles. On both counts then, traditional monasticism has not addressed itself to 'the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes.'[100]

Other theocratic spiritualities went the same way. They all have a tendency to an other-worldliness that seems to undermine a commitment to the earth and its inhabitants in this world.

A Cosmotheandric Synthesis

None of these spiritualities are exclusive to the Christian tradition. Eastern mysticism and tribal religions are unmistakably creation-centred, as the saviour-god cults and the bhakti traditions are committedly redemption-centred. The monastic tradition with its theocentrism is still as alive in the East as in the West. They are all living traditions even today, though in our secular-materialistic this-worldly society, they may not be as dominant as they once were.

Once again then we must bring together in a more comprehensive whole the partial contributions of these three approaches to the spiritual life; the celebration of the universe, the reconciliation and healing of redemption, and the single-minded commitment to the divine.

Here our tentative synthesis will be attempted within the Christian ethos and more particularly the cosmotheandric perspective we have specified. Co-opting the contribution of one spirituality into the perspective of another can produce only an artificial juxtaposition not

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[99] 99. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1950, p. 56.

[100] 100. *Documents of the Thirty-second Congregation of the Society of Jesus*, Decree 2, No. I1, Anand, Anand Press, 1976, p. 91.

a genuine synthesis. What we are seeking here, beyond even the creative tension of a dialectical opposition, is a dialogical integration.

Moltmann's understanding of creation as the beginning of God's 'kenosis''', which is completed in the Incarnation, [101] provides a promising starting point for such a synthesis, the end point of which, we would add, must be the consideration of redemption as the second creation, beginning with Christ and perfected in the resurrection, 'already now but not fully yet'. Thus, creation and redemption are not opposed polarities, but mutual modalities of divine activity that embrace the cosmic and the human.

In trinitarian terms, creation and redemption are inseparably joined in Christ. The cosmic evolution, as we have already said, comes from the Father through his Son and goes back to the Father through the Son in the Spirit. Even when this creative process is disrupted by human freedom and sinfulness, human weakness and ignorance, still an ever-faithful God redeems his people and the world he created.

In our cosmotheandric perspective, if it is the cosmic dimension that inspires a creation-centred spirituality, then the human will motivate a redemption-centred one, and the divine will hold them together in the Kingdom of God, already now among us here and coming in its fullness hereafter. In Hinduism the cosmotheandric perspective is integrated into the threefold yogic marga: 'Karma-Yoga puts us in touch with the Cosmos; Bhakti-Yoga manifests the specific calling of the human person; and Jñāna Yoga opens us to the mystery of the Divine.' [102]

Personal Models and Symbolic Rites

Spirituality, as a vision and way of life, is best expressed in living models. Here we present two widely accepted, yet deeply challenging ones to concretize our cosmotheandric synthesis.

St Francis of Assisi's mystical intuition saw in the precariousness of our existence the loving self-gift of the Creator. 'In this fundamental poverty of creatureliness there is equality.' [103] But Francis does not answer the Heideggerian question as to why there is being rather than

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[101] 101. J. Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, London, SCM Press, 1981, p. 118.

[102] 102. Francis X. D'SA, 'The Yogi as a Contemplative in Action', *Studies in Formative Spirituality, The Journal of Spiritual Formation*, 11/3 (Nov. 1990), p. 299.

[103] 103. M.J. Himes and K.R. Himes, 'The Sacrament of Creation,' Commonweal 118/4 (26 Jan 1990), p. 45.

non-being with angst. His response is joy! For he finds in this poverty a communion with all creatures in an inspiring I-thou community. [104] Not undeservedly, then, is he the patron saint of the environment.

But this does not make him any the less Christocentric, to which the crib he first blessed and the stigmata he bore give witness. The world becomes the sacrament of God's salvation for us, and Christ our encounter with God. All this makes for a profound eco-sensitivity within a holistic vision and integrated way of life.

St Ignatius of Loyola is less obviously associated with ecology. The 'Principle and Foundation' of his *Spiritual Exercises* with its very rational 'tantum quantum' seems to treat creation as but a means for human ends, which are in turn subjected to the purposes of God.[105] However, others have convincingly rejected such an interpretation, to show that the elegantly sparse prose is based on Ignatius's own mystic experiences and is meant to elicit 'in each exercitant the experience of God creating—not creating *in globo*, but continually creating myself, in concrete particulars even down to my authentic desiring.'[106] We have here, then, a founding of creaturehood on the personal providence of God.

At the end of the retreat, in the 'Contemplation to Attain Love,' this becomes patently evident. [107] Ignatius recalls the 'blessings of creation and redemption', 'how God dwells in creatures', and 'works and labours' there as the source of all blessings. In the context of the *Spiritual Exercises*, then, the Ignatian injunction in his *Constitutions*—'to seek God in all things and all things in God'— provides the basis for a mystic-prophetic spirituality of action, if 'things' are understood within the inclusive cosmotheandric vision as Ignatius himself would. For Ignatius, from the littlest flower on earth to the furthest star in the heavens, from the most routine action of the day to the noblest deed of one's life, in encountering God in consolation or desolation....in all this human and cosmic world, God is the validating reality, not instrumentally but providentially. And our response is not the monastic '*contemplata alilis tradere*' but the Ignatian '*contemplativus in actione.*'

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[104] 104. *Ref.* Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, New York, Charles Scribner and Sons, 1958.

[105] 105. *Ref. The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Louis J. Puhl, Bombay, St Paul Pub., 1965, p. 24, N0. 23

[106] 106. Joseph A. Tetlow, S.J., 'The Fundamentum: Creation in the Principle and Foundation', *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits*, 21/4, (Sep. 1989), pp. 2-3.

[107] 107. *The Spiritual Exercises*, Nos. 230-237, pp. 87-89.

This is regarded as the favoured formulation of the Ignatian ideal. Nadal's original phrase was '*simul in actione contemplativus*' —contemplative in his very action. The ideal remains Ignatian, though differently expressed. But to our mind, Ignatius's own articulation 'seeking God in all things and all things in God,' is the richest. [108] Certainly, ecological consciousness can draw inspiration from this 'broader and more inclusive synthesis.'[109]

Spirituality as a vision expresses a theological understanding; as a way of life, it expresses our ethical commitments. But spirituality itself needs to be concretized and expressed if it is to be internalized by persons and socialized into the community. This is done with rites and rituals, a liturgy which symbolizes and sustains, reinforces and recreates, both personally and socially, this vision and way of life, our beliefs and relationships; our faith and our hopes.

There is much irrelevant religious ritual today that needs reinterpretation and even recreation. Much of it has become a tired routine which adds little meaningful rhythm to our lives. We do not as yet have adequate natural ecological symbols and myths and we are surely a long way off from an eco-liturgy expressing an eco-spirituality.

But a useful starting point might be the universal significance and symbolism of bread produced corporately and consumed in communion, shared together and broken for each other. It can become 'Bread: the Symbol of Cosmotheandric Communion.' [110] For 'bread is the product of the human community with the cooperation of the cosmos.' [111] The common meal (*sahabhojan*) builds up the life of the common weal. And in the Eucharist of the Christian tradition, it becomes 'God with us,' the life and person of Jesus creatively and redemptively present, loving us into loving one another.

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[108] 108. Parmananda, Diwarkar, S.J., *The Path of Interior Knowledge: Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola*, Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1990, p. 151.

[109] 109. Peter Schineller, 'St. Ignatius and Creation-centered Spirituality,' *The Way*, 29/1 (Jan. 1989), p. 57.

[110] 110. Francis X. D'SA, '*Bread and Communion,*" mimeograph, Pune, De Nobili College, undated, p. 8.

[111] *Ibid.*

VIII. Conclusion: An 'Ultimate' Response

The immediate urgency of the ecological crisis, which must certainly weigh on us, should not be allowed to displace the importance of the issues of ultimate concern we have discussed in this paper. For if our ecological concern does not come to this level, for then anything in less depth will only make a superficial fix, not a creative solution of the crisis.

Hence if our cosmotheandric perspective is to be effectively accepted in its three essential dimensions, then our ultimate response must also be correspondingly threefold. Panikkar suggests 'that myth, faith and hermeneutics belong to the cosmic, divine and human dimensions respectively'.[112] Thus 'myth is precisely the horizon over against which any hermeneutic is possible' [113] 'faith is understood as that dimension in Man that corresponds to myth', [114] and the 'hermeneutics is art and science of interpretation.' [115]

In the final analysis, the numinosity of the cosmos is grasped by myth, not by science; the mystery of the divine by faith, not theology; the relevance of the human by hermeneutics, not ideology; and each complements the other in a holistic comprehension of reality, in an integrated vision 'which neither destroys diversity nor forgets that the world is inhabited, that God is not alone and that knowledge is based on love.'[116]

However, if this cosmotheandric reality is essentially dynamic, then our response cannot be in any way static. Hence, we feel a further step is demanded in our response: cosmic myth must be interpreted by salvation history; mystic faith finds expression in ethical prophecy; scientific hermeneutics lead to a liberating truth.

Further, our response to the ecological question must find a social expression that impinges on structures as well as values in our society. That our ecological consciousness cannot be a purely personal matter, should be apparent by now. Whether this is expressed in terms of a more formal organization or an informal movement could be a matter of personal preference. However, even as we address ourselves to the ecological alienation and anomie of our society we must also

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[112] 112.R. Panikkar, Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics. Cross-cultural Studies, Bangalore, Asian Trading Corp., 1983, p. 10. 113. 4. Ibid. p. 114. Ibid. p. 5. 115. Ibid. 6. - p. 116.

[113] Ibid. p. 4
[114] *Ibid.* p. 5
[115] *Ibid.* p. 6
[116] Ibid. p. 10

overcome the fragmentation and compartmentalization of our personhood into warring divisions of body, mind and spirit. For any integrated response can only come from integrated persons.

And so in both our personal and social responses to the crisis, a deeper ecological consciousness will then send us forth as struggling seekers on a quest for an ever-opening future—a quest that excludes none, a future that includes all. The ecological crisis will then have been a source of enrichment and renewal, helping to heighten our eco-sensitivity and impel us on a pilgrimage towards cosmic evolution, human fellowship and divine in-dwelling.

Considering the urgency and scale of the ecological crisis pressing immediately on us, and the importance and scope of the cosmotheandric response ultimately demanded of us, we could easily lose heart in pessimism or plain inertia. But we know from James Gleick's *Chaos*, that the 'butterfly effect' can be gratuitously disproportionate in the consequences it precipitates. Perhaps, then, we can hope that, as we act locally, even though it may seem as inconsequential as the flap of a butterfly's wing, we may still be able to provoke people to 'think globally', and vice versa. With persistence, this could initiate a praxis of action-reflection-action to revolutionize our ecological consciousness and precipitate an ecological revolution in our cosmotheandric realm.

Lonergan insightfully remarks that our world is 'mediated by meaning and motivated by value.' [117] We would add that it must also be fantasized in images. To our mind, the most compelling image of our space age world is the one of our Planet Earth seen from outer space and hopefully mirrored in our inner one too. It is the image of our beautiful and fragile blue sphere floating precariously in the darkness of empty space, a planet to be healed and saved, where the 'laughter of the universe' can be heard, 'the dance of the redeemed' enacted, the 'perichoresis' of the triune God experienced, and our cosmotheandric reality celebrated with peace on earth, goodwill to all and God with us.

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[117] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, London, Longmans, Green, 1958, p. 672.

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2.
AN ECO-SENSITIVE SPIRITUALITY FOR TODAY

Abstract

This tries to examine spiritual responses to the environment and the ecological crisis. After a brief sketch of creation, redemption, and monastic spiritualities, the scattered fragments of insight and institution are collected within a cosmotheandric synthesis.

Introduction

A religious understanding and the ethical commitments consequent on it must be expressed in an integrated vision and way of life. This is our understanding of spirituality here. However, it will be no more than a conceptualization until it is internalized by persons and socialised in society, as a lived reality.

Such a spiritual response to the ecological crisis must not exaggerate one or other specific aspect of it. The challenge is rather to strive for a holistic integration in our historical context, not one that merely resolves dilemmas and reconciles contradictions, but going beyond would hold opposites in a creative tension and transcend dichotomies in a higher unity—a *'coincidentia oppositorum'* as Nicholas of Cusa has said.

After a brief sketch of other less comprehensive versions of an eco-sensitive spirituality, we will attempt to collect the scattered fragments of insight and integration into a broader and deeper vision within the cosmotheandric perspective of our discourse.

Cosmic Re-enchantment

Creation spirituality goes back to humankind's first religious awakening to the 'enchantment' of their world. It is still alive in most tribal and many agricultural societies, and in most traditions of Eastern spirituality. Nature-mysticism is the primordial human response to encountering the world. However as Max Weber has shown the 'iron cage' of our rationalized modern society leads to a 'disenchantment of the world', particularly with the 'Protestant ethic' in the West.

In the Eastern Church the idea of 'theosis', or the divinization of all creatures, kept alive this creation-centred spirituality but in the Western Church, even much before the Reformation, it was displaced by a redemption-centred one. Some historians of Western spirituality would trace this shift to the trauma of the Black Death, the plague that wiped out a third of Europe's populations between 1347 and 1349. Some cities like Florence lost one-third of their citizens in three months! One response to this was a drive to a greater control over nature that developed into an aggressive science; the other, more immediately was a quest for redemption out of a tragic world.

The wheel has come full circle now, with creation-spirituality adherents urging the need for a 're-enchantment with the earth' as the condition for our preserving it 'from the impending destruction that we are imposing on it'. Some even called for a moratorium on redemption-spirituality to force it to 'quit its hegemony for a while' so that creation-spirituality can involve itself 'in re-understanding the meaning of redemption in different cultural and historical periods' (Fox).

The revival of creation-spirituality today represents to some 'the most important development in this century'. Its emphatic cosmocentrism relinquishes The *Tragic Sense Of Life* that has for so long dominated Christian spirituality in the West. But as the focus shifted from a pessimistic anthropocentrism to an optimistic cosmocentrism, the idea of original sin was displaced by the one of original blessing. And yet as long as tragedy and sin, suffering and injustice, a part of the human experience, it is difficult to see how creation-spirituality can be anything but a partial and unsatisfying response to this human predicament, unless of course one is involved in, and uncommitted to it.

Redemptive Vision

The traditional redemption-scented spirituality grappled squarely with this, sometimes to the point of being almost obsessive about sin and compulsive about atonement. But in spite of some of its undeniably negative features, to summarily dismiss it as irrelevant, in favour of an exclusive creation spirituality, or nature mysticism, only ends up trivializing both. For, if estrangement from God and from creatures go together, then communion with them must also do the same.

Moreover, it is belief in redemption which dominates the whole of the Old Testament. The creation motif is but a magnificent foil for the message of salvation. The doctrine of creation emerges historically much later and is essentially a soteriological understanding of creation. The New Testament is not less redemption-centred, as the very name Jesus indicates. It would be difficult to discount this theme without rejecting something very essential in the tradition itself (Von Rad).

With liberation theology, the foundational experience of the Exodus is recaptured and reinterpreted to liberate oppressed and marginalized people today to our thinking this is surely the most

relevant and inspiring version of redemption-centred Christianity today, unless of course, one chooses to ignore the oppressive poverty and rank injustice of our world. Matthew Fox attempts to co-opt liberation theology as 'a species of creation spirituality' but rather unconvincingly. A deeper synthesis is required if what is valuable in both is not to be lost.

The Monastic Way

However, if redemption spirituality counter-balances some of the exaggeration of a creation-centred one, its anthropocentrism is as likely to lead to exaggerations of its own: an insensitivity to the biosphere and the cosmos more generally, and more lately, a naturalist humanism, to the exclusion of the divine.

A theocentric spirituality will of course avoid this particularly as it is epitomized by the archetype of the monk, the one who seeks God alone, *Deus Solus* with a singlemindedness (*ekagraha*) the exclusivity of a goal that shuns all subordinate though legitimate goals.

And yet the monk and his monastery lived in symbiotic harmony with their environment. There is convincing historical evidence of this wherever the monastic tradition has been found, both in the East and the West. Different religious traditions may have had a variety of understandings of the human relationship to the world and its final purpose. However, more immediate concerns, like the environment, were creatively and constructively integrated into the more ultimate ones, like the quest for the absolute. Even when they were not logically derived from them, a certain harmonious integrity prevailed within a lived myth, if not on an articulated theology.

Moreover, together with sin and atonement, the monastic tradition did emphasize forgiveness and reconciliation, and by the sanctification of work and poverty it revolutionised both the order of social values which had dominated the empire and that which was expressed in the warrior ethos of the barbarian conquerors (Dawson). *Mutatis mutandis* much the same can be said of the spiritual influence of monasticism in the East.

However, monasticism especially in the West today, finds itself marginalized in modern secular society. On the one hand, the religious worldview on which monasticism is based has been critically undermined; on the other, its contemplated dimension distances it from an active involvement in this-worldly human struggles. On both counts then, traditional monasticism has not addressed itself to 'the

crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes'.

Other theocratic spiritualities went the same way. They all have a tendency to and other-worldliness that seems to undermine a commitment to the earth and its inhabitants in this world.

A Cosmotheandric Synthesis

None of these spiritualities are exclusive to the Christian tradition. Eastern mysticism and tribal religion are unmistakably creation-centred, as the saviour-god cults and the bhakti traditions are committedly redemption-centred. The monastic tradition with its theocentrism is still alive in the East as in the West. They are all living traditions even today, though in our secular-materialistic this-worldly society, they may not be as dominant as they once were.

Once again then, we must bring together in a more comprehensive whole the partial contributions of these three approaches to the spiritual life: the celebration of the universe, the reconciliation and healing of redemption, and the single-minded commitment to the divine.

Here our tentative synthesis will be attempted within the Christian ethos and more particularly the cosmotheandric perspective we have specified. Co-opting the contribution of one spirituality into the perspective of another can produce only and artificial juxtaposition, not a genuine synthesis. What we are seeking here, beyond even the creative tension of a dialectical opposition, is a dialogical integration.

Moltmann's understanding of creation as the beginning of gods *'kenosis'*, which is completed in the Incarnation, provides a promising starting point for such a synthesis, the end point of which we would add must be the consideration of redemption as the second creation, beginning with Christ and perfected in the resurrection, 'already now but not fully yet'. Thus, creation and redemption are not opposed polarities, but mutual modalities of divine activity that embrace the cosmic and the human.

In trinitarian terms, creation and redemption are inseparably joined in Christ. The cosmic evolution, which as we have already said, comes from the Father through his Son and goes back to the Father through the Son, and in the Spirit. Even when this creative process is disrupted by human freedom and sinfulness, human weakness and ignorance still an ever-faithful God redeems his people and the world He created.

In a cosmotheandric perspective, if it is the cosmic dimension that inspires a creation-centred spirituality, then the human will motivate a redemption-centred one, and the divine will hold them together in the kingdom of God already now among us here, and coming in its fullness hereafter. In Hinduism the cosmic perspective is integrated into the three-fold yogic marga: 'Karma-Yoga puts us in touch with the Cosmos; Bhakti-Yoga manifests the specific calling of the human person; and Jñana-Yoga opens us up to the mystery of the Divine' (D'Sa).

Two Personal Models

Spirituality of vision and way of life, is best expressed in living models. Here we present two widely accepted, yet deeply challenging ones to concretise our cosmotheandric synthesis.

St. Francis of Assisi's mystical intuition saw in the precariousness of our existence the loving self-gift of the Creator. 'In this fundamental poverty of creatureliness, there is equality'. But Francis does not answer the Heideggerian question, why there is being rather than non-being, with angst. His response is joy. For he finds in this poverty a communion with all creatures in an inspiring I-thou community. Not undeservedly, then, is he the patron saint of the environment.

But this does not make him any the less Christocentric, to which the crib he first blessed, and the stigmata he bore, give witness. The world becomes the sacrament of God's salvation for us, and Christ, our encounter with him. All this makes for a profound eco-sensitivity within a holistic vision and integrated way of life

St Ignatius of Loyola is less obviously associated with ecology. The Principle and Foundation of his Spiritual exercise, with its very rational *'tantum quantum',* seems to treat creation as but a means for human ends, which are in turn subjected to the purposes of God. However, others have convincingly rejected such an interpretation, to show that the elegantly sparse prose is based on Ignatius's own mystic experiences and is meant to elicit 'in each exercitant the experience of God creating—not creating *in globo*, but continually creating myself, in concrete particulars even down to my authentic desiring'. We have here, then, a founding of creaturehood on the personal providence of God.

At the end of the retreat, in the Contemplation to Attain Love, this becomes patently evident. Ignatius recalls the 'blessings of creation and redemption', 'how God dwells in creatures', and 'works

and labours' there, as the source of all blessings. In the context of the Spiritual Exercises, then, the Ignatian injunction in his Constitutions ─to seek God in all things and all things in God─provides the basis for a mystic-prophetic spirituality of action, if 'things' are understood within the inclusive cosmotheandric vision as Ignatius himself would. For Ignatius, from the littlest flower on earth to the furthest star in the heavens, from the most routine action of the day, to the noblest deed of one's life, in encountering God in consolation or desolation... in all this human and cosmic world, God is the validating reality, not instrumentally but providentially. And our response is not the monastic '*contemplata aliis tradere*' but the Ignatian '*contemplativus in actione*'.

This is regarded as the favoured formulation of the Ignatian ideal. Nadal's original phrase was '*simul in actione contemplativus*'─contemplative in his very action. The ideal remains Ignatian, though differently expressed. But to our mind, Ignatius's own articulation 'seeking God in all thins and all things in God', is the richest. Certainly, ecological consciousness can draw inspiration from this 'broader and more inclusive synthesis'.

3.
ECO-ETHICS FOR AN ECO-CRISIS: A THIRD WORLD PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Abstract

This paper is in two parts: the first more generally will underline the need for an eco-ethic for an in-depth response to the present crisis, and then go on to sketch some of the basic features of a worldview that would underpin the need for such an ethic, as also the foundational values and community norms on which it must be built, and the rituals and myths that might sustain it. The second part will more particularly deal with the ethical implications of the environmental issues involved in the potential fallout from anthropogenic global warming: the burden of risk and the price of change; equity-led ecological development; inter-generational responsibility; environmental and financial debt; and environmental rights and ecological duties.

Introduction: Eco-ethics and Geo-politics

If there is one thing the Rio summit brought home to the third world, it was the Machiavellian primacy of politics over ethics. For in the final analysis, it was the more powerful noises that seemed to have prevailed, not the more reasonable and just causes that were heard. As yet the verdict is still not in on whether Rio will turn out to be 'an environmental Munich' or 'a Normandy beachhead.'[1]

For the third world, there is 'no doubt the Rio Summit had not produced tangible commitments and the results had been overall disappointing.'[2] The follow-up to the summit seems only to reinforce this. And yet the urgency to develop and promote an environmental ethic with a coherent value system, one that goes beyond taboos and prohibitions to be meaningful and motivating in our present crisis, cannot be dismissed.[3]

Nowhere is the need for an eco-ethic more urgent than for a response to global warming and the potentially disastrous changes it will precipitate. For this anthropogenic crisis illustrates par excellence the ethical dimensions of a global crisis and the imperative need for a

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[1]. Prodito Ghosh and Akshay Jaitly, editors, *The Road From Rio: Environment and Development Policy Issues in Asia*, Tata Energy Research Institute, N. Delhi, 1993, p.ix

[2]. Martin Khor,' A year after Rio, the CSD inches forward...' *Third World Resurgence*, No 36, p.12 (12-13)

[3]. Ref. Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth,* Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1990.

more than utilitarian response. The very uncertainties involved raise some 'unique questions about our responsibilities to future generations,'[4] for already now we know 'that the effects will certainly be long-lived, almost certainly large, probably bad, and possibly disastrous.'[5]

This paper is in two parts: the first more generally will underline the need for an eco-ethic for an in-depth response to the present crisis, and then go on to sketch some of the basic features of a worldview that would underpin the need for such an ethic, as also the foundational values and community norms on which it must be built, and the rituals and myths that might sustain it. The second part will more particularly deal with the ethical implications of the environmental issues involved in the potential fallout from anthropogenic global warming: the burden of risk and the price of change; equity-led ecological development; inter-generational responsibility; environmental and financial debt; and environmental rights and ecological duties.

Ecological Worldviews and Values

The Ecological Imperative

No human society, or for that matter no living species, can survive without drawing its sustenance from its environment. Indeed, every open-system is by definition environmentally dependent. This is the bottom line of the ecological imperative. However, a sustaining relationship to our environment is not just a necessity for survival, it is also a condition for living 'the good life', to use this phrase in its Aristotelian sense.[6] Moreover, for Aristotle, ethics is essentially about how to live this good life, about the values and norms that ought to be affirmed in it. Unfortunately, today for too many in our mass societies, the 'good life' seems to be quite divorced from any ethical or environmental sensitivity. Only more recently has the global ecological crisis forced us to radically review our taken-for-granted relationship to, and our much-compromised responsibility for, our environment.

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[4]. John Broome, *Counting the Cost of Global Warning*, The White Horse Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1992, p.1

[5]. ibid., p .12

[6]. Ref. Raziel Aselson and Kas Nielson, 'History of Ethics', in ed. Paul Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Macmillan, London, vol.3, 1967, p.85 (pp.81-117)

However, environmental ethics is still a problematic area, the more so when we realise that the ecological crisis, we have precipitated both globally and locally is really the culmination of the many unresolved crises of our world, a world fragmented and disoriented, violent and alienating. We have shocked ourselves into realising how critically and crucially dependent we are on our fragile and fine-tuned environment, and how false and arrogant our presumed subjection of, and dominance over it really is. But, to adequately respond to such a crisis, we must grasp the deeper meaning it implies: that if we do not live in harmony with our environment, we cannot live at peace with each other either.

For exploitation and greed *ad extra*, towards the ecological community cannot but precipitate the same *ad intra*, towards the human community, and vice versa. Indeed, it can be argued, that the root cause of the degradation and disintegration in the ecological community is the projection into it of the aggressive exploitation and oppressive alienation structured into our society. All human communities must live in and off their environment. Ecological crises were not unknown in earlier civilisations. However, we seem to repeat such history on a much grander scale. For the first time in human history, we seem capable of 'ecocide', destroying the entire ecological community altogether.

Now if the relationship of human societies to their environment is always a mediated one, this is firstly through their technology which interfaces directly with this environment. 'Technology' here is used inclusively, not just for the 'mode of production', as the Marxists have emphasised, but also for the 'mode of resource use' as ecologists have come to indicate.[7]

Technology does have a dynamic of its own, but at a deeper level it is oriented by other socio-cultural systems of a society. In 'simpler societies' this is readily apparent. For here their arts and crafts, which constitute their technology are still under the legitimising umbrella of the socio-cultural system. In more 'complex societies', the techno-scientific system has an autonomy of its own and its impact on the socio-cultural system is often more powerful and telling than vice versa.

What this adds up to in the final analysis has been called a 'design for living' that is sometimes more, or less explicit. It is here that ultimate human concerns are expressed in a worldview or

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[7]. Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*, Oxford Univ. Press, Delhi 1992, p.13 and f.

weltanschauung. The present ecological crisis, because of its scope and depth, is forcing us back to such ultimate concerns, and any viable ecological ethic must measure up to, and express these creatively and constructively.

An ethic, as we understand the term here, is a configuration of value preferences and behavioural norms, attitudinal orientations and motivating symbols, put together in an historical context for a specific people over time. The relationship between such an ethic to the structure and functioning of a society is certainly problematic, whether we speak of a religious ethic, like the Protestant or the Hindu one; or a secular one, like a work ethic or an ecological one. But to imagine that there is no relationship between the two is to espouse a superficial and mechanical analysis of society. Today the ecological imperative demands an ethic that will restrain us from ecocide, and orient us beyond to a more responsible relationship to our environment.

In this paper, we will attempt to sketch an eco-ethic which hopefully can restrain us from 'ecocide'. For no previous generation could say 'no' to creation the way we can today.[8]

Responses

Few people would argue that our response to the present ecological crisis has been adequate or effective. For, on the one hand, it is true that scientific environmentalism does not get beyond a technological fix, which is at best temporary and at worst superficial. On the other hand, deep ecology often gets lost in a muddled mysticism that is at best ideologically shallow and at worst politically ineffective.[9] Moreover, while the attempt of green politics to bring together 'ecology, social responsibility, grass-root democracy and non-violence,'[10] has in places developed into a movement, it is as yet very far from inspiring an ecological ethic for a society.

Some efforts have been made in this direction, especially where these 'ecological movement from the beginning have had their social

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[8]. Ref. Jurgen Moltmann, *Creating a Just Future: The Politics of Peace and the Ethics of Creation in a Threatened World*, SCM Press, Philadelphia, 1989, p.35

[9]. Cf. Murray Bookchin, *Towards an Ecological Society* Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1980. Also Murray Bookchin 'Social Ecology vs Deep Ecology--A Challenge for the Ecological Movement', *Green Perspectives*, Vol. 18, No.s 4-5, Summer 1988, p.132 and f.

[10]. Robin Eckersley, 'The Road to Ectopia? Socialism Versus Environmentalism', *The Ecologist*, Vol.18, No.4/5, 1988, p.145

base in peasant or farming communities, or among tribal peoples,'[11] as with the Gandhian Chipko Movement in India which began in 1973, or the Jungle Bachao Andholan of Baba Amte. But even these have not really been effective in clearing the ground of prevailing misconceptions let alone establishing a wider basis for an ecological worldview, a weltanschauung in society at large.

Thus the 'myth of progress' still seduces us by promising a utopia of limitless growth. Indeed, in our consumerist society, it is not 'religion but growth that has become the opium of the people.'[12] In reaction to this, there has developed a 'romantic primitivism', which idealises a 'back to nature' odyssey in response to our present problems. But neither of these can save us from the consumerist trap in which we are caught, or the downward spiral of poverty from which the poor seem to have no escape, or the 'tragedy of the commons' first articulated in 1833 and overtaking us now, or the free rider theorem which inevitably undermines distributive justice.[13] More recently with Garret Hardin, these ideas have been applied to all common resources and waste sinks.[14] His 'is a bleak and cynical vision: a war of all against all, where each person follows there self-interest down the road to social chaos.'[15]

Indeed, where the ethical understanding of a society is itself based on utilitarian individualism, it cannot be an adequate foundation for an environmental ethic, which must involve the relationship of the community as a whole to its habitat, and not just be concerned with individuals in isolation. This is precisely the basic fallacy of the market mechanism and the invisible hand: the assumption that the good of individuals separately, can be aggregated into the good of the community collectively. That is why such individualistic 'freedom in community brings ruin to all.'[16] For as Rousseau had argued, contrary

[11]. Gail Omvedt, ' Ecology and Social Movements', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.29, No.44, 3 Dec.1984, p. 865, (pp. 1865-690)

[12]. Fitzjof Capra, *The Turning Point*, Worldwide House, London, 1982, p.224

[13]. Cf. W. F. Lloyd, *Two Lectures on the Checks to Population*, Oxford, 1833.

[14]. Garret Hardin, 'The Tragedy of the Commons', *Science*, Vol. 162, Dec. 1986, pp. 1243-48

[15]. Paul Harrison, *The Third Revolution: Population Environment and a Sustainable World*, Penguin, London, 1992, p.263

[16]. Garret Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics For Survival*, Viking, New York, 1972, p.254

to Mill, 'the good of all as the sum of all the individual goods in the community' must be distinguished from 'the communal good'[17]

Dimensions of An Eco-Worldview

In our understanding, then, a value premised non-utilitarian ethic must be derived from a corresponding worldview. We would urge some essential dimensions for such an ecological weltanschauung to found an ethic adequate to our present crisis. Obviously, the worldview presented here will have a religious basis, but it is not necessarily tied to a particular religious tradition. Hopefully this will enhance a wider secular appeal.[18]

First, human fellowship, not just between us in the human community but extended to the entire ecological one as well, to include the biotic and even the entire cosmic community. For this, we must deal with nature as a 'subject' with intrinsic value, not as an 'object' for merely instrumental use; our relationship with her must be an 'I-thou' not an 'I-it' one.[19]

Second, cosmic evolution, in which all of creation plays its part, each created entity in its own appropriate way, and in which human beings, though still at the cutting edge of this evolutionary process, are always 'a part' of the cosmic whole and not 'apart' from it. For it is human destiny that is bound to cosmogenesis, rather than vice versa.[20]

Third, relationship to some transcendent or ultimate reality that will give meaning and value to our world lest we fall into the kind of anthropocentrism, that has been the bane of ecological thinking. We need to go beyond this without falling into a fragmented relativism that has little motivating force.

Popular religiosity too can play a constructive role. It need not always be an escapist escapade. The religious revival in our time has

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[17]. Cf. Andrew Brennam, *Thinking about Nature: An Investigation of Nature, Value and Ecology*, Univ. of Georgia Press, Athens, 1988, p.178

[18]. For a more detailed presentation of this ref. Rudolf C. Heredia, 'Towards an Ecological Consciousness: Religious, Ethical and Spiritual Perspectives', *Earth Ethics Forum`91*, Earth Ethics Research Group, Florida, 1991, pp. 119 -136; also in *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection,* Vol.55, No.9, Sep 1991, pp. 489-505, and No. 10, Oct 1991, pp. 569-587

[19]. Cf. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, Charles Scribner and Sons, New York, 1958

[20]. Jurgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation,* SCM Press, London, 1985, p. 197

demonstrated its political power, but unfortunately, this has been for the most part fundamentalist and obscurantist. However, its potential for creating an awareness of, and motivating a constructive response to a social crisis should not be underestimated.

In the final analysis, our ecological worldview must face up to the ultimate concerns of survival and salvation. And if by religion we understand, with Paul Tillich, 'what ultimately concerns man', then, our ecological *weltanschauung* must have some religious grounding if it is to be both popular and profound.   This does not mean that environmentalists must develop into a new religious sect with the complete spectrum or religious paraphernalia, as some 'new age' enthusiasts seem to urge.

For authentic religious traditions cut much deeper than even a committed political ideology or a mass-based social movement. And it cannot be produced by the dictate of some despot or party vanguard, or some superficial passing charism. Rather some radical and daring reinterpretations of our prevailing socio-religious tradition would be more appropriate here, in giving continuity with the old and also an orientation to the new.   Eco-ethics can thus still be scientific and secular even as they take on an enlightened and progressive religious motivation and support.

Thus, the story of creation in the Semitic religions, must be reinterpreted to mean not dominance, and subjugation of the earth, which only traps us in an ecologically insensitive anthropocentrism, but a companionship with, and a responsibility for all creation in our common 'creatureliness', which would be more biocentric. Indeed, the biblical command in Genesis to 'subdue the earth' has been interpreted as a dietary injunction in favour of vegetarianism![21]

The commanding Hindu metaphor of the world as the body of God, deriving from the ancient Rigvedic myth of a cosmic person (Purusha), can dramatise for us this reality as the very ground of our being, without the escapism of an 'other-worldly' moksha, or the fatalism of this worldly karma. Buddhism has a richly eco-sensitive religious tradition, as when it extends its call for compassion towards all living things,'sarvabhutadaya', and to the world beyond.

Certainly, the cosmic/mystical religions of the Orient have much to teach the aggressive/missionary ones of the Occident, which seem to have licensed the scientific rape of the environment.[22] Thus Francis

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[21]. Cf. Moltmann, op. cit. p.19

[22]. Cf. Lynn White, Jr., 'Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', *Science*, Vol.155, No. 3767, 19 Mar. 1967

Bacon urges scientists to 'torture nature' to reveal her secrets and Gerald Manly Hopkins painfully describes how we 'hack and rack the growing green.'

Ethical Values for an Eco-ethic

The weltanschauung, of human fellowship, cosmic evolution and transcendent reality, must indeed be spelt out into an eco-ethic which is both down-to-earth and meaningfully motivating. Such an ethic cannot be effective merely as a matter of personal morality. It must be articulated and structured in the values and norms, the attitudes and motivations of a society. It must be integrated into its 'design for living'. What we need, is a new paradigm for society, supported and maintained by such an ethic, with new moral values and a new 'mindfulness', as Dale Jamieson suggests elsewhere in this volume. For in the final analysis ecological values are not the same as exchange values.[23] Here we will indicate some of the essential parameters of such a paradigm corresponding to the three dimensions of our eco-worldview. Once again, while our presentation will be attempted essentially in terms of a secular ethic, its religious foundation is not directly treated here. This has been done elsewhere.[24]

Firstly, human fellowship must be expressed in the primacy of the common good, understood as those conditions that make it possible for the members of the community to achieve the fulfilment of their nature.[25] This goes beyond a utilitarian calculus of the greatest good for the greatest number, and must be foundational for our paradigm.

Further, to achieve this common good a society must be structured on the principle of subsidiarity and its obverse, i.e., neither abrogating authority upwards for what can be done at lower levels of a community, nor abdicating responsibility downward for what must be done at higher levels.[26] What this means, then, is both a devolution of authority and power downward, as well as an assumption of the responsibility for coordination and communication upwards.

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[23]. Cf. Vandana Shiva, *Ecology and the Politics of Survival: Conflicts over Natural Resources in India,* Sage Pub., N. Delhi, 1991, p.44

[24]. Ref. Heredia, 'Toward: An Ecological Consciousness', op.cit.

[25]. Cf. Daly Herman and John B. Cobb Jr., *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment and a Sustainable Future*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1989

[26]. Ref. Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane, editors, *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1987, also Theological Publications in India, 1993, p.986

The values supportive of such subsidiarity are expressed by 'solidarity', a term which here attempts to encompass our inter-relationships and inter-dependence, as well as each one's individuality, and uniqueness. Ideally, such a society would be egalitarian and participative, for it would not be a mass society but one on a human scale, concerned with 'being' rather than 'having', to use a distinction from Eric Fromm,[27] a community of free persons, where, as Marx has said, the freedom of each must be the condition of the freedom of all.

Secondly, cosmic evolution must mean a regenerative development. For such a society growth would be not just sustainable, but regenerative as well. This implies more than just leaving the environment uncompromised by degradation and pollution, but renewing it to create a new earth community--to reach beyond our grasp. Such development can of course only be in terms of a qualitative growth, not merely a quantitative change, a 'limitation of the empire of necessity and the widening of the sphere of freedom', in Christopher Dawson's words.[28] For this, we must learn from the Taoist ethic of frugality, of 'grace without waste', not merely a contractual one of accommodation, but rather a 'Gandhian ethic of restricted consumption.'[29]

Thirdly, a relationship to a transcendent or ultimate reality in the context of this human fellowship and the developmental process must leave no room for a metaphysical pessimism of the myth of the eternal return, or for an other-worldly resignation to fate (karma) or luck (kismet). Rather it must be expressed in terms of a purposeful teleology, that will help us to take responsibility for ourselves and our future. Ernst Bloch's *Principle of Hope* could be of help here.[30]

The common good, regenerative development and purposeful technology must be elaborated further into a charter of human rights and cosmic duties. The first deriving from Roman law and articulated in Kantian terms in the West is the foundation for the idea of inalienable rights.[31] But though these rights are indeed basic, they

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[27]. Ref. Eric Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, Harper and Row, 1976

[28]. Christopher Dawson, *The Judgement of Nations*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1943, p.47

[29]. L.C. Jain, 'Poverty Environment and Development and: A view from Gandhi`s Window', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 23, No.7, 13 Feb 1988, p.311, (pp 311-320)

[30]. Cf. also Ernst Bloch, *A Philosophy of the Future*, trans. John Cummings, Herder and Herder, New York, 1970

[31]. Ref. Bernard Schwatz, The Great Rights of Mankind: An History of the American Bill of Rights, Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1977

must be checked and balanced by the second, which can be found in the complex Indian tradition of dharma, as the performance of duty that keeps the world in right order and harmony. Further, these must be extended to collective rights and duties in a manner that does not alienate individual ones.

Later in this discussion the implications of the charter we are suggesting here will be drawn out more concretely in terms of environmental rights: and ecological duties. All this must add up to a breakaway from a one-sided ethic, be it anthropocentric, biocentric or cosmocentric, to a more holistic ecological one.

Norms for an Interventionist Response

Hence the value framework in which the issues above have been discussed and analysed needs to be further spelt out in norms for intervention, if there is to be an effective action response. Here we make a brief attempt at this, more as a challenging ideal, but hopefully not an impractical one. A more detailed treatment of both these values and norms must wait for a later paper. Some of these norms for interventions would be:

1. The Iroquois Convention

This will have us consider the effects of our decisions on the next seven generations. This would help us to save their future.

2. An Ecological Sabbath

This implies 'an ethic of restraint'[32] so that we can come to terms with our past, to pause, to take stock, to repent and make amends, and ever celebrate. This would help us to redeem this past.

3. Gandhiji's Last Indian

This was the Mahatma's advice to Nehru: bring before your mind the least Indian and consider the effects your decisions would have on him before you act. This would help us to fidelity in our present.

Ritual and Myths

Ultimately our relationship to our world, as Bernard Lonergan remarks, [33] is 'mediated by meaning and motivated by value'. But if such mediation is to result in a lasting and effective ethic, then it must be symbolically expressed in social rituals, and in common myths. For

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[32]. Moltmann, Creating a Just Future, op. cit., p. 61

[33]. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Longmans, Green, London, 1958

authentic symbols have a 'surplus of meaning', that is grounded in the experience of what we cannot fully grasp.[34]

Now if these values and norms are to be internalised by persons and socialised into the community, then they must be concretised in rites and rituals, which symbolise and recreate the worldview and the social ethic from which our values and norms derive. Unfortunately, we do not as yet have adequate common ecological rites and myths that could be evolved into relevant and meaningful rituals. And yet it is precisely such ritual expression and mystic images that gives popular religion its enduring influence.

We are not about to advocate an eco-religion. Better a sound secular ethic than a pseudo-religious one. However, we still are a long way from either. Perhaps the rite of a common meal, a '*sahabhojan*', building up the life of the commonweal could be the beginning of an ecological ritual that would symbolise and effect our common union with each other and the world around, a kind of 'cosmic reconciliation',[35] to mark a new covenant with nature.[36]

We need also a myth, a new creation story to re-enchant the world for us, to re-enact and dramatise our place in the cosmos and our relationship to it. Indeed, 'myths have always been the most efficient coding of human experience. One might say that myths are social DNA.'[37] Perhaps we now need some social genetic engineering! All this can be essentially secularly and rationally scientific without being pseudo or irreligious.[38]

If modern human beings have in fact demythologised their world, they have not as a result enriched our encounter with it. Indeed, we are sorely impoverished by the lack of any deep and sustaining common 'myth' to mediate meaning and motivate values for an ethical foundation for modern society today. And ecology is one of the worst of areas. But if we do not have an overarching ecological 'myth', we seem to live by lesser ones that underpin our ecological response to the present crisis.

If by 'myth' we mean a pre-conceptual grasp of our reality, the assumptions and pre-judgements that frame the horizon of our

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[34]. Ref. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, op. cit., 'Appendix: Symbols of the World', p. 290 and f.

[35]. ibid. p.60

[36]. ibid., op. cit., p.3

[37]. Hazel Henderson, *The Politics of the Solar Age: Alternatives to Economics*, Knowledge Systems, Indianapolis, 1988, p.11

[38]. Ref. Brian Swimme, *The Universe is a Green Dragon: A Cosmic Creation Story*, Bear and Co., Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1984

understanding,[39] then, we certainly do have such pre-understandings in our ecological thinking. But then again, all these do not seem to add up to something as creative or widespread as a cultural 'myth', which could be the basis of a constructive response to our common crisis.

If we do not as yet have a full-fledged ecological myth, we do have some commanding metaphors that shape our lives more or less implicitly. And now, as in times of drastic change, our eco-crisis has set us 'in search of radical metaphors'[40] Here we mention three: one unduly pessimistic, another over-optimistic, and a third hopefully more realistic. These are metaphors or rather images we seem to live by, even when we are not consciously aware of them of the three, we consider only last one to be viable and ethical.

1. People on a Life Boat

This derives from a Malthusian pessimism. Surely, this is the inspiration behind those who propose 'lifeboat ethics'.[41] Such persons see themselves as floating on a lifeboat, and so justified in leaving the swimmers in the ocean to their fate, in order to survive themselves.

The limits of such a perspective becomes apparent if we consider what might happen when the occupants of the 'lifeboat' meet an ocean liner at sea, and the passengers of the larger vessels begin to consider themselves as the lifeboat, and leave the smaller one to the mercy of the cruel sea. And further consider what might happen when the ocean liner comes to port, and the people on shore want no more boat-people to threaten their survival so they are put out to sea again, and again. These are not unrealistic images; we surely have seen them in the media already!

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[39]. R. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics: Cross-Cultured Studies*, Asian Trading Corp., Bangalore, 1983, p.4

[40]. Richard A. Underwood 'Towards a Poetics of Ecology: A Science on Search of Radical Metaphors, in ed., Richard E. Sherrel, *Ecology: Crisis and New Vision*, John Knox Press, Richmond, Va., 1971, Ch. 9, p.147 and f.

[41]. Cf. Garret Hardin, 'Living on a Lifeboat' , in ed., Jacob Needleman, A.K. Bierman, and James A. Gould, *Religion for a New Generation*, Macmillan, New York, 1977, also by the same author, 'Life Boat Ethics: The Case against Helping the Poor', *Psychology Today*, Vol. 8, Sep. 1974, pp.38 and f. See discussion in David C. Korten, *Getting to the Twenty-first Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*, Oxford Univ. Press, Delhi, 1980, p 135 and f.

2. Cowboys on the Plains

This derives from technological optimism. In this perspective we see ourselves with an open frontier, riding into the sunset, 'rifle and pony and me', with a rugged, 'can do' individualism facing an environment, 'natural, wild and free'.

But with such a perspective one never sees the sunrise! for one can circle the earth and come back to the starting point and still be pursuing the setting sun. In other words, the assumption of an always receding frontier needs to be questioned. It can only lead to an active pessimism. Indeed, the ecological frontier and the carrying capacity of the earth do have certain limits that cannot be exceeded or pushed back indefinitely with a technological fix.

3. Cosmo/Astronauts on a Spaceship

This derives from a realistic appreciation of our situation as 'spaceship Earth' to use Kenneth Boulding's insightful expression.[42] This is a perspective for an alternative, 'another development'.[43] Here the critical interdependence of all persons and all systems bound together in a common destiny is stressed.

For 'our planet is not much more than the capsule within which we have to live as human beings if we are to survive the vast voyage upon which we have been engaged for hundreds of millennia--but without noticing our condition. This space voyage is totally precarious.'[44]

A spaceship has no lifeboat! The survival of each depends on the survival of all. Resources must be recycled, energy must be renewable, growth and development must be qualitative not quantitative. But even a spaceship needs ground support. It cannot go on indefinitely on a star trek! And it is nature that provides this ground support, if indeed it is not destroyed, and we are then set adrift, hurtling homeless through empty space.

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[42]. Ref. Kenneth E. Boulding. 'The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth,' in Henry Jarret, ed., *Environmental Quality in a Grpwing Economy*. Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore, 1968, pp.3-14.

[43]. Ref. Bjorn Hettne, *Development and the Third World*, Swedish Agency for Research and Corporation with Developing Countries, Schmidts Boktryekeri AR, Helsingberg, 1982, p. 75; also the journal, *Alternatives*, Pub. by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, N. Delhi and the Institute for World order, New York

[44]. Barbara Ward. *Space Ship Earth*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1966, p.18

Building Community

Too often the immediate urgency of the ecological crisis, displaces issues of ultimate concern, with which we must come to terms for any creative solution to our present crisis, rather than merely a superficial fix, technological, political or otherwise. Of course, our response to the ecological crisis must find a social expression that effectively impinges on, and restructures our society. It cannot be just a matter of individual morality. For unless we overcome the alienation and anomie of our human community, we can hardly expect to live in peace and harmony in the ecological one.

In this section we have attempted to indicate the elements involved in building and sustaining such a community: we have outlined an eco-worldview, indicated a set of basic values and norms driving from this, and the rituals and myths that symbolically express it. It is in this context that we know to draw out the ethical implications of global warming and the climatic changes it threatens to precipitate. The international dimensions of this crisis and the response it demands, makes the need for some viable eco-ethics all the more urgent, even while the task of putting this together gets so much more complex.

II. Ethical Implications of Global Climate Change

The issues presented in this section of the paper are meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. But more importantly, the discussion is premised on the eco-values indicated earlier and the eco-ethic from which these derive. To recapitulate briefly, these we have spelt out as the primacy of the common good for the entire ecological community, structured on the principle of subsidiarity and committed to a solidarity that affirms the inter-dependence of people as well as the autonomy of persons; a community that is egalitarian and participative. Further, this is not a static social ethic but a dynamic one which must express itself in regenerative development that is purposefully goal-oriented. It is within such a discourse that we will discuss some of the ethical implications of the ecological crisis arising out of global warming.

Given the complexity of the factors involved in global climate systems and the very incomplete scientific knowledge we have about them, it is no surprise that we have not as yet been able to establish

with scientific certainty, how precisely global climate will change under the ecological impact of human societies today. John Lemons has carefully reviewed the scientific evidence on the question earlier in the volume. What can be established beyond doubt, however, is that the anthropogenic effect of increased greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere is already warming the earth and in future even more will this affect our global climate in ways that we cannot as yet predict. For we do not as yet know what feedback mechanisms will come into play, and how their interdependencies will operate.

One response would be to do nothing but collect data and analyse it in the hope that we can further reduce our uncertainty with regard to climate change, and only act when we have scientific certainty with regard to the effects our interventions may have. Obviously, such an option supports the present status quo and those privileged by it.

The second response would be to mount a global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, since we know that these are affecting global climate and the probabilities are that the resulting changes are most likely to affect adversely the poorer and more vulnerable countries, i.e., those with low-lying areas and rain-dependent agriculture, which will be least able to cope with such changes. Clearly, such an option favours these disadvantaged people.

Obviously, there will be winners and losers with regard to any change, but the question with regard to risk management in such situations, is whether or not the price to be paid should be borne by those most vulnerable and the least able to do so, or by the strongest and the ones already benefitting by the present status quo? Will it be the political rather than the ethical implications of the question that will decide our response?

Here we are opting for an ethical perspective consequent on the earlier part of this paper. The issues being raised in this section are of course not exclusive to climate change. Rather this is an area which helps to illustrate well the global dimensions of our manifold ecological crisis. In other words, when we have a global crisis, only a global response can meet it, and for this, we need to act as a global community. Ecological thinking forces us to this conclusion.

Moreover, the vantage point of this paper is that of the South. But we are quite aware that there is the South in the North as well as vice versa. The homeless shivering in the cold that one sees in New York, and the mansions gleaming in the sun in Delhi, are surely telling images of this anomaly. The discussion here could be further refined, to take cognisance of such ambiguities. However, within the limits of

this presentation and at the risk of over-generalisation, we are confining ourselves here to the broader aspects of the issues involved, so that they do not get lost in fine-tuned nuances, which sometimes blunt rather than sharpen our perspectives.

The Burden of Risk and the Price of Change

Who should bear the burden of risk, who should pay the price for change? If we wait for all the data to come in we are certainly not reducing the risk involved in climate change, rather we are increasing it. If we do act now it will be so much more difficult to reduce risk later. Although we do not understand the impact of all our interventions on the environment, we do know that the emission of greenhouse gases is increasing, certainly not reducing the risk of climate change. If we want effectively to reduce the risk, then we must limit the emission of our greenhouse gases already now.

The very complexities and uncertainties make a cost-benefit analysis of the risks involved inadequate and unfeasible. Costing many risks then becomes a matter of political priorities and not economic calculation.[45] The political resolution to risk and change, is dependent on the bargaining power of the parties involved, and usually ends up with the weakest bearing the burden of risk, and the poorest paying the price of change.

On the other hand, an ethical resolution of the question would be value-based and rather different. An ethical management of risk would require that, first risk be minimised, then redistributed equitably, if indeed we are to face risk as a community and not as isolated individuals. For a community can hardly be considered ethical if it protects the powerful to the neglect of the powerless. In reality, the most effective guarantor of equity in a community, is not --how the strongest fare, but rather how the weakest are able to cope.

Furthermore, risk reduction and its equitable distribution, in the context of the global climate systems, will obviously demand change: both in our consumption patterns, as also in our production technology. With regard to the first, for the poor this will mean an increase in consumption to meet their basic needs. Allowing these basic needs to remain at the subsistence level is not only ethically unjustifiable, it is also ecologically unsound. We shall return to this point latter.

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[45]. Ref. Broome, op. cit., pp 19-21

For the rich changes in their consumption pattern will mean a reduction or at least a restriction of affluent wants. This can actually lead to, or at least it has the potential for, an enhancement of their quality of life, even at the cost of a reduction in their standard of living! For as Charles Birch of the World Council of Churches has urged: 'The rich must live more simply so that the poor can simply live.'[46] Indeed, this is a crucial issue in the whole sustainability debate, but it would take us beyond the scope of this paper, though it does need to be developed elsewhere to deepen this discussion.

With regard to the second, changes in production technologies for the poor, who are surviving at subsistence levels, this must mean an increase in productivity. One can hardly in good conscience urge the South to turn back its development programmes, when this represents their only chance to escape from the grinding poverty, sometimes absolute poverty, to which they are subject. But if this is to be done in an environmentally friendly manner, without externalising the costs, as happened with the first industrial revolution that was the basis of the present development and affluence of the first world, then there must be a change towards more eco-friendly technologies. Unfortunately, at present the South does not seem to have the resources to buy such technologies from the West, or the R & D to develop and implement them on their own.

For the rich, changes in production technology are concerned more with decreasing waste, while at the same time expanding employment and other benefits. New technologies in these directions are being developed, but the transfer of technologies to the poorer South from the richer North still remains a much disputed and problematic area.

Globally sustainable development will very much depend on how such questions are resolved. And once again a power-based political approach will only postpone and accentuate an already urgent and multi-dimensional crisis. To our mind what is required really is structural adjustment on a global scale, not only of the economic structures of our societies, which might affect the South more, but more particularly in our lifestyles as well, and this concerns the North most urgently.

In other words, we need to change the manner and the kind of the goods and services that are provided, with regard both to the way they are produced, and also the way they are consumed. We must realise

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[46]. Cited by Ian G. Barbour, *Technology Environment and Human Values*, Praeger, New York, 1980. p. 289

that 'ecological productivity differs from productivity in the economic sense.'[47] For 'the economic utilization of resources through extraction may, under certain conditions, undermine and destroy vital ecological processes leading to heavy but hidden diseconomies. The nature of these diseconomies can be understood only through the understanding of ecological processes operating in nature.'[48] We need to develop a 'Socratic economy', and produce goods by playing midwife to nature in the way Socrates did in philosophising with the young men of Athens![49]

In concluding this first issue, then, we realise that we cannot cope with global climate change except as a global community bound together by a common destiny. We must act together now, least our delay will require even more urgent and drastic action later, if indeed it is not too late by then. Is it not curious, though, that some would want scientific certainty to be established before intervening in our climate system, while the same is never demanded of economic policy interventions, even though these are based on statistical probabilities? But then too often such interventions are dictated by the market, rather than ethically derived from commitments to fellowship and solidarity.

Equity-led Ecological Development

The emphasis on growth in earlier developmental strategies neglected the aspects of equity and very soon became problematic with regard to both political and economic considerations. But later policies of 'growth with equity' proved to be inadequate as well, to the realities on the ground. It is now rightly argued that in the developing world, equity is integral to sustainability. Indeed, if it is not the sufficient condition, it certainly is a necessary one, the sine qua non for sustainable development. In other words, development can only

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[47]. Roy A. Rappaport' *Ecology Meaning and Religion*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley Ca. 1979, p. 20

[48]. Vandana Shiva, *Ecology and the Politics of Survival: Conflicts over Natural Resources in India*, Sage, Delhi, 1991, p.44

[49]. Cf. Klaus Michael Meyer-Abich, *Revolution for Nature: From the Environment to the Connatural World*, translator, Matthew Armstrong, The White Horse Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1990. p. 95

be truly sustainable, when equity is made its leading edge,[50] and it can then even go beyond to be regenerative as well.

Granted that certain kinds of development can be unecological, we still have to face the stark reality that in the struggle for survival within a resource-poor environment, poverty is one of the greatest polluters. For indeed, if the poor have no sense of project in the future, then one can hardly expect that they will sustain and renew their environment in the present. When involuntary poverty becomes their prison, then, the poor have no tomorrow, they have only a today to survive, a struggle in which they often do not succeed! All too often they are caught in a downward spiral of marginalised people trapped in marginalised areas.

Once again, given our present capacities, technological and otherwise, we would be able already now to eradicate at least the absolute levels of poverty still prevailing, globally in our world, if only we could muster the necessary political will for this task. In these circumstances, poverty is also the greatest pollution! It is ethically unacceptable that our concerns for humans be displaced by inequitable distribution of the goods of this world, which surely are meant to be shared by all the children of the earth. Indeed, inequality only sharpens the sense of relative deprivation that the poor feel, when they find themselves in want in the midst of plenty.

Thus, if sustainability was imposed on the South at the cost of its development, then it would be nothing but a ploy to freeze the South in poverty in order to sustain the North in affluence! This kind of 'politics of sustainable development' is more a power game than an ethical response.[51] Sound ecological development must as a minimum meet the economic challenges of basic needs, sustainability and equity and other technological challenges of increasing the efficiency resource use, and the productivity of nature and man-made processes.[52]

It is also ethically unacceptable that our concern for nature, be allowed to negate our human rights, political or economic. Indeed, a true concern for nature cannot set humans and nature in opposition. Humans must be perceived as a part of nature, the conscious,

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[50]. David C. Korten, *Getting to the Twenty-first Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*, Oxford Univ. Press, N.Delhi 1992 and Kumarian Press, Conn., 1990, Ch. 8, 'Equity Led Sustainable Development', pp. 73 -90

[51]. Ref. K.R. Nayar, 'Politics of Sustainable Development' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 29, No. 22, 28 May 1994, pp. 1327-29.

[52]. Ref. Vandana Shiva, op. cit., p.52

articulate part that protects and enhances all of nature. We have attempted in the earlier section of this paper to sketch such an inclusive environmental ethic, where the rights of humans and the concern for nature are not in opposition. In fact, only when they are in harmony, can both be protected and promoted.

For ecological thinking, necessarily leads to an awareness of interdependent communities, as Gandhi envisaged, [53] in ever-increasing and inclusive oceanic circles, to include the human, the biotic and the cosmic as well, and yes even the transcendent! Of course, there is a danger of becoming anthropocentric. And yet it is ironic that generally the 'anthropoi' who are at the centre, that seem to be preoccupied with such anthropocentrism, rather than the human beings on the periphery!

Ecological crises, such as global climate change, do not respect national boundaries or boarders. Even if were possible to achieve unsustainable development in one nation at the cost of unsustainability in another, as happens all too often in exchange relations between the first and third world, this could do precious little for a global crisis, like climate change which will eventually engulf us all.[54] Unfortunately, national sovereignty is often used to thwart remedial action, infringe on environmental rights, and negate ecological concerns, as we witnessed at the Earth Summit in Rio. One might observe in passing, that national sovereignty was also used earlier in similar ways by some countries at Vienna in June 1993 on the issue of human rights.

Using national sovereignty to obfuscate ecological concerns or human rights, is not of course the prerogative of any single nation, whether of the first or the third world. But when the more powerful ones, who are least in danger of having their sovereignty threatened, indulge in such obscurantism it is all the more galling. Thus, when a national president of a superpower can say at an Earth Summit, that nothing will make him compromise his nation's way of life when that life style threatens the global environment, then such a statement may be good domestic politics, but it is from an international perspective grossly unethical, and from a third world one even obscene! Certainly,

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[53]. Ref. Acharaya Ramamurthy, 'Gandhian Perspective on the Reconstruction of Indian Polity', in ed., Ramashray Roy, *Contempory Crisis and Gandhi*, Discovery Pub., Delhi, 1986, pp. 146-164

[54]. Ref. David Pierce, Anil Markandhya and Edward B. Barbier, *Blue print for a green Economy*, Earthscan Publications, London, 1989

such positions cannot be the starting point for any coping with global climatic change.

For equity demands a reduction of the gap between the rich and the poor both intra- and inter-nationally, whether such differences be measured in terms of GNP, QLI, PPP, etc.. Now if the reduction of this gap is to be done within the carrying capacity of the earth, then further problems arise. If the poor in the South, aspire to reach the same consumption levels in the North, then this cannot be contained within the earth's potential carrying capacity as we know it, or at least can responsibly project, in spite of any technological advances or institutional changes we may realistically hope for.

It seems once again improbable, if not impossible to narrow this gap by reducing the consumption of the rich, though this would surely be fairer than restraining the development of the poor. Is it realistic to expect a person to be elected to political office in the North on the promise of reducing consumption? And yet the ecological imperative, and the demands of equity must be respected.

Some kind of redistribution, then seems to be inescapable. A more equitable distribution of consumption and production between North and South, in a manner that will allow both to grow sustainably, seems to be necessary. But just as such growth must meet the ecological necessity of containing itself within the carrying capacity of the earth, it must also meet the ethical imperative of equity between North and South. Some kind of planetary bargain, between the rich and poor nations for a more stable and sustainable world, as suggested by Harlem Cleveland would seem to be called for,[55] rather than waiting for poverty and environmental degradation in the South to pose a threat to the North before appropriate action is taken.

A beginning with regard to greenhouse gas emissions would be to consider them on a per capita basis and not on an aggregated national one. This would be an effective and equitable way of fixing the responsibility for change on the polluters who must pay the price for it. National emission quotas would then be fixed not in terms of present levels of pollution but in terms of population size on a per capita calculation, not an aggregated nation-wise one. [56] Those countries not using their quotas could then trade them in with those unable to limit themselves to theirs. While greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced in the long run, in the short run intermission such

[55]. Cited by Barbour, op. cit., p.289

[56]. Cf. Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, *Global Warning in an Unequal World: A Case of Environmental Colonialism*, Centre for Science and Environment, N. Delhi, 1991, p. 13

trade-offs could be used for a transfer of technology and resources that would lead to a more equitable development now and a more sustainable one later.

Moreover, such transactions would be a matter of trade not aid. This would make for less unequal exchange between industrialised and non-industrialised countries. Indeed, until such unequal and unfair exchange between rich and poor peoples, nations, and regions, both intra- and inter-nationally, is remedied, there seems little possibility of sustainable, let alone regenerative development on the global scale we so urgently need now.

In concluding this issue then, what the global climate change crisis seems to force on us is the need for structural adjustment both intra- and inter-nationally. For this, we need to create a sense of community not just within national boundaries but also across ecological ones and over geographic space as well, to guarantee all equitable and sustainable access to the global commons, so that as a global community we can all together develop and grow sustainably, and even reverse the environmental degradation we have caused, with regenerative development for all.

Inter-generational Responsibility

Our responsibility to future generations is now widely accepted, by most ecological thinking. This is what sustainable development is all about. Whether we consider this a matter of justice and the rights of future generations, or a teleological question about their wellbeing.[57] We have begun to feel acutely our responsibility to future generations, even to the seventh generation, as the Iroquois convention recommends. In the final analysis, such a responsibility must be based on a sense of bonding across generations.

Now, if we feel this bonding with the future should we not feel the same with past generations as well? If we are responsible for the future, are we not also responsible for the past? Not guilty for what our past ancestors may have done, but responsible for addressing the consequences of their actions that still affect us, especially when we have been advantaged by their misdeeds, can we accept the benefits left to us and not make remuneration for the harm this has done to others?

An ecological principle now gaining ground is that 'the polluter pays'. If the polluter pays for the pollution caused in the present, who

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[57]. Cf. Broome, op. cit., p.132

pays for the pollution caused in the past, and still affecting us now? While we may not be guilty of causing the pollution itself, can we accept the advantages obtained from such past actions without making remuneration for them? Would not this be like keeping stolen property though we have not actually been guilty of the theft? And, if as we know, some people's ancestors because of their unecological development, have in the past borrowed from our common future, can their descendants now refuse to make a return in the present to those who are being affected adversely by this?

The past is not past, as the World Resources Institute suggests.[58] It still lives in the present, for no present can escape its historical context. Indeed, there can be no inter-generational responsibility without such a context. We cannot just put paid to the burden of the past and escape into the future. The irony of course is that those nations, communities and peoples, whose prodigality in the past has degraded the environmental for all of us, are now urging restraint on those who have been frugal, out of necessity perhaps, but who now aspire to the same dream of higher levels of consumption and standards of living!

In fact, the North is using 'the economic levers of aid, trade and debt,' 'to enforce environmental discipline in the South,' which has little political clout 'against the powerful agents of environmental misbehaviour' in the North. [59] Such a situation could easily 'degenerate into a new sort of imperialism, a new sort of colonialism' as the Indian finance minister has cautioned.[60]

Thus, a certain alarm has been expressed at the rapid industrialisation of some developing countries in Asia. What if every Chinese has a refrigerator, what would happen to the ozone layer, especially if they continued to use the old technology? But when there were two cars in the American garage, often both gas-guzzlers too, adding carbon to the greenhouse effect, nobody seemed to raise the alarm then! Obviously, concern for the unecological development in Asia can only be authenticated by an equal concern for the unecological effects of the development in other countries, not excluding their prodigal past.

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[58]. Cf. Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, *Towards a Green World: Should Global Environmental Management be built on Legal Conventions or Human Rights?* Centre for Science and Environment, N. Delhi, 1992, p.28

[59]. ibid. p.v

[60]. Manmohan Singh, 'Valedictory Address' in Ghosh and Jaitly, ed.s, *The Road From Rio*, op. cit. p.16

We cannot build a community without coming to terms with a people's past. Unless we redeem our past, we can neither regenerate the present nor save the future. But if we do redeem the past, then we can go beyond sustainable, to regenerative development, an idea whose time has now come. But again, expounding this in more detail here would exceed the constraints of this paper, though it is a theme that should be pursued elsewhere.

In concluding this issue then, as emphasised earlier we need to think and act as a global community to meet a global crisis such as climate change. If, as we have stressed earlier, this global community must be extended across geographical and ecological space, then here we would now add that our sense of global community must also extend across time, to past and future generations. Only when we have such a global community that stretches across such a space-time continuum, will we be able to face our global ecological crisis effectively.

Environmental and Financial Debt

Financial borrowing mortgages the future of the next generation of a group by making them debtors to the creditors of this one. National financial debts are not written off if a government fails or a generation passes. The debtor pays, or their children, for such financial debts are inherited. The burden is forced onto the next generation by international financial agencies. This they often justify by the need to support the international global economic order, which they claim would otherwise collapse without such accountability. International financial bodies may reschedule payments, and make structural adjustments, but there is no reprieve from such debt. There is no free lunch!

Financial borrowing, then, is living beyond one's financial means, but there is an ecological parallel. There is an ecological borrowing, which involves living beyond one's ecological resources. That is, borrowing from the environment, externalising costs, polluting the global commons, and running up a debt to nature that future generations will have to pay for. It really amounts to 'a Faustian bargain between humanity and nature that leaves no possibility of appealing for debt relief, or rescheduling, nor default.'[61]

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[61]. Korten, op. cit., p. 21

Now if a financial debt is taken as seriously as we do, especially by international agencies, 'the debtor must pay', why not environmental debts too? 'The polluter must pay'! If indeed there is no such thing as an economically free lunch for anyone, why is it that there seems to be an ecologically free dinner for some? Why not structural adjustments for past polluters to help them undo the damage done by the pollution they have caused, and thus repay the environmental debt that they owe to the global community, especially the poor who suffer most from such environmental degradation? But then the poor of this world have little bargaining power on the not level playing field of international markets, where the financially powerful make the rules for a game they play to win.

An obvious way of paying this debt would be the transfer of technology and resources to the less developed countries from the more developed ones responsible for past pollution. This could be a feasible way of reversing the disastrous transfer of assets from the less developed to the industrialised countries, as is happening at present and perpetuating the debt crisis. This could also help the less developed countries to leap-frog over the polluting first stage in the industrialisation process, which the present industrialised countries went through, to environmentally cleaner, and ecologically more friendly technologies.   Such a transfer then is not a matter of aid, with all its political implications, but rather a matter of right, of ethical demands, and ecological urgency. 'To this extent, the resource transfers could be interpreted as 'polluters dues'.[62]

Some international agencies could cost the environmental debt of the industrialised countries, and suggest how this can be written off against the financial debt of the less developed countries. When it comes to financial debt, there has been no lack of finding and setting up such international agencies, and giving them the necessary teeth to be effective. If we do want to take the ecological crisis with the seriousness that its global dimensions demand, then we need to set up such international bodies for the environmental debt as well.

Doing these fifty years after Bretton Woods would seem to be an appropriate way of celebrating a still rather one-sided jubilee! But any new institutional arrangement must be more democratic and transparent than the present ones, with more equitable and balanced

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[62]. Neha Khanna and Anand Prakash, 'The Economic Issues', in Ghosh and Justly, ed.s, op. cit., p.95

voting rights, as in the UN General Assembly, and not controlled by big power vetoes as in the Security Council.[63]

In concluding this issue, then, on environmental and financial debt, it is important to realise that as we globalise the economy, we must also globalise our response to the environmental crisis. For if there is to be a single global financial community with greater interdependence, this must in turn call for a single global ecological community with correspondingly greater reciprocity as well.

Environmental Rights and Ecological Duties

What is then required by way of response to the issues we have outlined in this presentation, is the need for a new global social contract, not just to enforce legal conventions between nations, but also to create a global community for the global environmental crisis, and further guarantee environmental rights for individual persons and local communities. In other words, we need action not only at the national level but also some effective support for action at the local community level as well. For the only sound way of building an effective global community is with a bottom-up process, albeit this may need some top-down facilitation.[64]

Indeed Gandhi's decentralised logic of a 'consociational' democracy of interdependent but self-reliant local, communities make more sound ecological sense than the centralized pyramidal model so prevalent in modern nation-states.[65] It is here that the principle of subsidiarity expressed in a participative society becomes crucial. This is to our mind the most, perhaps the only effective way of affirming a correspondence between guaranteeing environmental rights and ensuring ecological duties. The nation will then have to devolve some of its authority to local communities while some of its sovereignty will be yielded to the global one.[66] For the nation-state is too large for effective local community management and too small for a global one.

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[63]. Ref. Akshay Jaitly, 'An Overview of Post-Rio Political Economy Issues', in ed.s, Ghosh and Jaitly, op cit., p. 35

[64]. Cf. Norman T. Uphoff, ed., *Rural Development and Local Organization in Asia*, vol. I *Introduction and South Asia*, Macmillan, Delhi, 1982, p.14 and f.

[65]. Ref. J.D. Sethi, 'Centralization, Decentralization and Parallel Politics', in R. Roy, ed.,op. cit., pp. 205-231

[66]. Ref. Agarwal and Narain, *Towards a Green World*, op. cit, p. 143

Now environmental rights must include not just the right to a clean, healthy and productive environment, which is the concern of the rich, but more importantly the right of survival and subsistence with dignity for all persons and communities, which is the preoccupation of the poor. [67] Further ecological duties must also include community obligations at the local, national and global levels. For this we need to establish through a global contract our citizenship at three levels: the global, the national, and also at the local community.

Legal conventions between nations not founded on human rights and civic duties at more local levels, only legalise injustice, and institutionalise ecological vandalism, which already is creating environmental refugees, and soon perhaps may spawn ecological terrorists out of desperation. So also does administrative control which is, not really sensitive to the needs of the underprivileged and the powerless in a country, eventually only regularises privilege and power rather than addressing human rights and needs. Indeed, the question of legal liability and/or administrative regulation with regard to environmental issues remains very problematic, especially at the global level.[68]

In conclusion then, with regard to environmental rights, which in our understanding does not exclude ecological duties, we need to establish and protect these rights at the three levels of community mentioned above: the local, the national, and the global one, by establishing a corresponding citizenship at each of these three levels. There will obviously be corresponding duties as well. Only a response to all three can be effective in a global ecological crisis, such as climate change.

Conclusion: Present Perceptions, Future Promise

To sum up then, what the ecological crisis, as exemplified in global climate change, is forcing us to face, is this quest for community, a community that is equitable, sustainable and participative, even as it stretches across space and time, and increasingly interdependent at the local, national and global levels. This becomes so much more

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[67] . Ref. Ramachandra Guha,'Ideological Trends in Indian Environmentalism,' *Economics and Political Weekly*, Vol. 22, No. 49, 3 Dec 88, pp. 2578-2581

[68] . Ref. Prodipto Ghosh and Akshay Jaitly 'Legal Liability versus Administrative Regulation: The Problem of Institutional Design in Global Environmental Policy', in *The Road From Rio,* op. cit. pp. 193-213

crucial in our anomic and alienating society, so unequally divided between the affluent and the impoverished.

Yet the answer to poverty is not property, but rather the alternative to both is community.[69] In fact, it is community that is the answer to both the alienation of poverty and the anomie of affluence. Given our ecological interdependence in ever-widening never ascending oceanic circles, this must be done for our global community, building it up from below, and extending it through a space-time continuum, that includes the geographic and ecological dimension of space, as also the past, present and future generations in time. And further, this extensive community must also have its intensive dimensions, embracing the human, the biotic, the cosmic, and even opening to the transcendent.

Towards this end, we have sketched an eco-ethic and the eco-worldview from which it derives. For it is our worldview that sets the limits to the horizon of our perceptions which in turn can sensitise us to ethical values and norms.

Jakob von Uexküll who first introduced the concept of environment, pointed out how the sense organs of a creature define its perceptions of the surroundings. Thus, the same surroundings differently perceived constitute different environments for different species, though in fact they all may occupy the same eco-system. Thus 'in the world of earthworms there exist only things which relate to earthworms.' [70] In other words, 'Uexküll's environments show themselves to be worlds of perception in a wider sense.' [71] A degeneration of our perceptions, then, cannot but lead to a degradation of our relationship to our connatural world and its consequent destruction.[72]

As we see it, this is precisely the root of our present global environmental crisis, and hence our insistence on a perceptive eco-worldview for a sensitive eco-ethic, to regulate and organize ourselves, or we might just be reduced to the life of earthworms, or perhaps even petrified into earth fossils! The difference between a perceptive, sensitive long-term response and a pragmatic, utilitarian short-term one could be decisive for our future.

Alfred S. Romer, a zoologist who studied self-regulating and self-organizing processes showed how these are subsumed in more

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[69]. Moltmann, *Creating a Just Future*, op. cit., p. 9

[70]. Jacob von Uexkull, *Bedentungslehre,* 1940, cited by Meyer-Abich, op cit., p.5

[71]. Meyer-Abich, op. cit. p.7

[72]. ibid., p.8

inclusive systems of which they are a part.[73] Some anthropologists have extended this into an evolutionary principle called 'Romer's Rule', according to which 'the initial effort of an evolutionary change is conservative in that it makes it possible for a previously existing way of life to persist in the face of changed conditions.'[74]

But small evolutionary changes in one system can eventually end up in a breakthrough in the larger inclusive one. This is how adaptation leads to the discovery or the creation of new eco-niches that newly evolved species can occupy. However, it is also possible that short-term adaptation leads to long-term maladaptation which can only presage an eventual breakdown in the degradation and destruction of the larger supporting eco-systems. Our present response to global warming seems to add up more to such a breakdown rather than a breakthrough!

The very flexibility of our modern industrial society makes its short-term adaptations seem adequate for the time being but blinds it to the long-term implications for its life-supporting eco-system in which it is subsumed. And sooner rather than later this must catch up with us so that one day industrial civilization could be considered to have been a failed experiment! Indeed, our response to our global eco-crisis may well be its litmus test already now.

At the World Conference on Climate Change in Toronto in 1988, the fallout from global warming was compared to that of nuclear war. Some estimate that the number of people affected will be even greater.[75] How we respond to this present crisis will inevitably define our future in irrevocable ways. Indeed, the present is but a parable of promise and anticipation for the future.[76]

The word 'ecology' is derived from the Greek 'oikos' meaning home or dwelling. In fact, it is all about being 'at home' in our world, but we seem to be 'homeless' neither at peace with ourselves nor in harmony with our environment. For as Barbara Ward has perceptively pointed out, as a community of nations we are not as yet a civilized world, even though we all have *Only one Earth*,[77] to share and care for, as we were reminded again at Rio. This must be a common home for all the earth's children,[78] and all her children,

[73]. Alfred S. Romer, *Man and the Vertebrates*, Penguin, London, 1954

[74]. Rappaport, op cit., pp. 229-30

[75]. Meyer-Abich, op. cit. p. 58

[76]. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, op.cit. p. 60

[77]. Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos, *Only One Earth; The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet*, Norton, New York, 1983

[78]. Barbara Ward, *The Home of Man*, Norton, New York, 1976

animate and inanimate; a home in which we all share the promise of *Our Common Future*,[79] together.

Unfortunately, as yet we do not have many common ecological myths or rituals that could re-enact and recreate such a community of peace and harmony, of hope and promise. But we do have a compelling image of our planet Earth in our space age today, one that could re-enchant our world once again: a beautiful and fragile blue sphere, floating free and precariously in the dark of empty space: this is our 'Gaia' whom we have violated and now waits to be healed, that we have degraded and now wants to be renewed, our planet that we are destroying but can still hopefully save! For as yet we have a chance to make this a place where children can play, where laughter can be heard, and where we can all dance to the music of the universe, and watch the earth-rise to, not the sunset on, our common promise, our common future!

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[79]. World Commission On Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford

4.
VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM: TRANSITION TO AN ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

(Keynote address for St Xavier's Patna, Seminar 1-2 Apr 2016)

Abstract

To address the environmental crisis, we need to reverse the negative impact the human community is having on the ecological one. Peace in our human community is the necessary condition for peace with the ecological one. The pursuit of a universal family, as expressed by the mantra Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum demands, can only be viable and holistic from such a social-ecological perspective.

Introduction

My thanks are due to the organisers for inviting me to address this gathering, and my congratulations as well for the choice of the theme they have chosen. The escalating environmental crisis in this Anthropocene begins with the negative impact the human community is having on the ecological one. This presentation is a critique of this human community that has precipitated the crisis. The pursuit of a universal family, as expressed by the mantra *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum* demands, can only be viable and holistic from such a social-ecological perspective. For the human community as the cause of the problem must now be responsible for a solution.

Setting the Context

'The world is my family' is a mantra that has become an ecological inspiration towards a cosmic harmony. In a scholarly article, 'the Indian contribution to ecology' Gispert-Sauch (1993: 922-929) traces this mantra to the *Panchatantra* (5:38) in the *Hitopaseta* (1:72), but also mentions other sources of such *subhasitas*, popular sayings. He quotes the full text:

> 'Is he ours? Or is he an outsider? –
> Such is the calculation of the small-minded (*laghucetas*)
> For people of noble character (*udarcaritra*)
> The whole earth is family.'

But there is disorder and destruction too on a cosmic scale in our universe, not to mention fire, famine and flood on our planet. In the food chain, as the poet Lord Tennyson *In Memoriam* sees 'nature red in tooth and claw'. In the context of such a social ecology, a more *inclusive community* for our human family needs a more nuanced understanding of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. For instance, a non-vegetarian wolf in sheep's clothing included in a flock would be a disaster for the sheep as would a cat among a flock of nesting birds, or a lion among a herd of cattle!

Thus, the inclusiveness we aspire to as a familial human community must not be hierarchical but egalitarian: equal respect for persons and communities, even for their differences. It must not privilege power but fraternal solidarity in caring and sharing, mutually enriching, focused on the common good, where together all create the structures and cultures wherein each can develop their full potential, and fulfil their promise. Such a universal family must be the ideal we pursue on the ground, even if it remains beyond our present horizons. However, it must never be cynically used to co-opt and assimilate the 'other', to intimidate and uniformise our differences. Rather our an inclusive human community that gives 'voice and choice' to all as Amartya Sen has argued, in *The Idea of Justice*, (2009) especially to the last and the least, as Gandhiji has insisted.

The prevailing developmental paradigms privileging growth and insensitive to equity have precipitated a new barbarism of contradictions and conflicts. We are now *Living in a Revolution* (Srinivas 1992) The *Million Mutinies* that Naipaul found two and a half back (Naipaul 1990) have dangerously escalated, neither are they likely to disappear and dissolve by exhaustion or default. Attempting to contain this with an authoritarian majoritarianism compounds and exacerbates the crisis. The cultural nationalism being promoted is a contradiction in terms: of authentic humanist cultures are universal and inclusive, and chauvinist political nationalisms are ethnocentric and non-inclusive.

Indic cultures are universal, at least in their aspirations. The national freedom movement was grounded in this culture:

> 'over time the Indian freedom movement ceased to be an expression of only nationalist consolidation; it came to acquire a new stature as a symbol of the universal struggle for political justice and cultural dignity.' (Nandy 1994:2-3)

We must recapture this Idea of India projected in our Constitution that has been lost, or rather betrayed over the years, an India premised on a pluralist culture, and egalitarian structures.

Democratic Inclusion

Democracy cannot be effective if it is not premised on egalitarian inclusion, or else it is easily subverted by powerful vested interests and their well-funded lobbies. These co-opt voters and their representatives to causes and concerns, alien to their real interests and needs. Bourgeois democracies are prone to such politics, leaving people, especially the poor and marginalised, excluded and alienated. Adding 'socialist' to our Constitutional Preamble underscores this. Widening egalitarian inclusion and increasing democratic participation can break the 'reinforcing circle between social and economic inequality and political inequality that enables the powerful to use formally democratic processes to perpetuate injustice or preserve privilege' (Young 2000: 17).

While most Western democracies proceeded cautiously in incremental steps towards universal suffrage, the Indian Constitution promulgated it at the very founding of our Republic. For a country with shockingly high levels of illiteracy and poverty, this was a decisive commitment to an egalitarian and inclusive ideal of citizenship, a great leap of faith in the good sense of our own people. In retrospect, that has not been misplaced. Even compared with other major democracies, the overall electoral results bear testimony to the basic common sense and traditional wisdom of our people.

There have of course been aberrations, and the tensions and strains are often apparent at the fraying edges of our democracy. The National Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi in 1975- 76 is the most obvious and extreme example of this. Communal and criminal candidates do get elected. Yet overall, the unprecedented scale of Indian elections gives evidence of a robust electoral democracy. However, this is still at the level of procedure, it is not the substance of a mature democracy as yet, and we could lose our way. Today we are witnessing an alarming slide in this direction.

Western electoral democracy is based on the individual voter as the subject of democratic and civil rights. This has been redefined in the Indian Republic with communities as the subject of collective rights as well. Collective voting, or what has been called 'vote-banks', is a consequence of this communitarian emphasis. The hierarchical

structure of Indian society and the discursive traditions of *The Argumentative Indian* (Sen 2005) have facilitated this process. However, these are the same social structures and traditions that at times undermine the substance of democracy. Much of this is apparent in electoral campaigns which showcase the best and the worst in our democratic processes: the high voter turnout and the appeals to exclusivist identities and partisan motivations, obscurantist superstitions and irrational fears, foreground the worst in our caste, religious and patriarchal institutions.

Indic society found a niche for each community in society, but it was a hierarchical inclusion; it made no pretence to equality of status either of communities or of individuals. Vedantic philosophy and bhakti pants did not effectively impact caste structures. Further, the social hierarchy was replicated in the patriarchy of the extended joint family. This is the sombre obverse of traditional society in India, a huge deficit in social capital that still plagues us.

In our electoral democracy, caste and religious identities are readily used to mobilise people and consolidate vote banks, with little or no concern for the divisive fallout. Our Constitution legitimises caste quotas to delegitimise caste hierarchies and not strengthen them. But without other affirmative action policies for an inclusive and egalitarian society, quotas by themselves do the very opposite, i.e., heighten an identity politics of caste for short-term partisan gains. This is the real democratic deficit that precipitates enormous contradictions and anomalies at the heart of our political enterprise. Highly stratified and divided societies are very prone to this increasingly serious concern, which populist politics cannot but exacerbate.

This is the long dark shadow side of universal suffrage that undermines its democratic dividend, especially where social inequality and exclusion prevail. In hierarchical, plural and patriarchal societies inequalities are structural. In such societies, 'arrangements that accommodate contestation among a plurality of competing publics better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public sphere' (Fraser 1993: 14)

Moreover, such egalitarian inclusion affirms, reassures, motivates and draws on the resources of these participating groups.

Iris Marion Young, the political scientist, in exploring *Inclusion and Democracy*, argues that 'if inclusion in decision-making is a core of the democratic ideal, then, to the extent that such political

exclusions exist, democratic societies do not live up to their promise' (Young 2000: 13). She explains:

'Inclusion of differentiated groups is important not only as a means of demonstrating equal respect and to ensure that all legitimate interests in the polity receive expression, though these are fundamental reasons for democratic inclusion. Inclusion has two additional functions. First, it motivates participants in political debate to transform their claims from mere expressions of self-regarding interest to appeals to justice. Secondly, it maximizes the social knowledge available to a democratic public, such that citizens are more likely to make just and wise decisions.' (Young 2000: 115).

Sabka Vikas, Sabka Saath (Development of all, with all)?

With the liberalisation of our economy since the 1990s and the increased globalisation of our economy, South Asian development is ever more riddled with contradictions, which we still refuse to take as seriously as we should. The social order is even further skewed in favour of the rich and against the poor. Our upper class and caste elites are increasingly more cosmopolitan and globally cued in.

We have growth without equity and the relative divide between the rich and the poor, the powerful and marginalised widened and deepened. This is now threatening to become an unbridgeable chasm as extremisms of various persuasions, Marxists, Maoists, separatists, casteists, religious, communalists, … take ever deeper roots in our society. This surely represents the delicate underbelly of our much-vaunted development.

The haste to develop India into a strong prosperous modern nation, commanding a place of respect in the international community, picked up considerable momentum at the beginning of this decade. There is now an insensitive celebration of consumerism and smugness by the affluent and secure, in utter disregard of the 'other India', abandoned in the dark, desperate and deprived. This is a cynical attempt to co-opt the middle strata of society into an agenda of the elites, leaving behind the masses of the poor to their fate.

However, when the promise of *sabha vikas, sabka sath* (development for all, with all) flounders on entrenched vested interests, and the hope of '*aache din aanewale hai*' (good times are coming) turns to frustration, then a distorted identity politics is used to mobilise people to causes that betrayed their real interests. This compounds the crisis for the contradictions in our society of ethno-

religious divisions, class inequalities, caste antagonisms, gender divides and precipitates a disastrous scenario of political violence.

Identity and Difference

The 'Self' and the 'Other'

Identity and dignity are intimately connected. Identity answers to, 'who am I?'; dignity to, 'what respect am I due?'. The affirmation or the negation of one carries over to the other. The right to identity must include as well the right to dignity, and to recognition and respect. Both intimately concern the 'self', both necessarily implicate the 'other'. For one's identity is never developed in the isolation of a walled-in consciousness but in interaction with significant others. I discover myself, my horizon of meaning and value, with and through others. Who I am, is always reflected off, and refracted through others. What I am due, is always in a social context mediated by others. The denial of recognition and affirmation by others amounts to a negation of my human identity.

Modern development brings rapid and radical change. The strain and stress can precipitate a disorientation in personal identity. In such situations, a crumbling self can lean on group support as a dilapidated building is propped up by bamboo. In a world increasingly characterised by anxiety, uncertainty and disorder, there is an urgent need for the reassurance of security, trust and a sense of solidarity in a collective identity. Such identities become 'vehicles for redressing narcissistic injuries for righting of what are perceived as contemporary or historical wrongs.' (Kakar 1993: 52) Collective action is resorted to in order to redress individual insecurities. The group solidarity then becomes a substitute for lost attachments, a support to heal old injuries and right historical wrongs. Such collective remedies to individual trauma easily become totalising and aggressive. Leaders manipulate and mobilise groups, confirmed in their self-righteousness, disregarding the dignity of its own members or other groups. In any situation of societal breakdown, it is not difficult to see why extremist responses come into prominence.

Moreover, in this construction the sense of self in the context of a hostile other is necessarily in function of the needs of the insecure individual and the group. What is unconsciously disowned and rejected in ourselves is projected and demonised in the other, what is desirable in the other is denied and attributed to oneself: we are non-

violent, tolerant, chosen, pure; the other is violent, intolerant, polluted, damned; they may seem strong, compassionate, devote, but they are not, we actually are.

Inclusive and exclusive Identities

Identities that are defined negatively against others in terms of 'what one is *not*', will tend to be exclusive and dismissive of others. This creates in-groups and out-groups, stereotypes and scapegoats. Those affirmed positively, prescinding from others in defining 'who one *is*', will tend to be inclusive and not disregarding others. This allows for openness and receptivity. 'We *are not* like that', is less open to a broader inclusion in a larger common ground than 'this is how we *are*'.

Exclusive identities emphasise differences and set up oppositions and polarities with the other. Sudhir Kakar, the psychoanalyst, explains how they help increase the sense of narcissistic well-being and attribute to the other the disavowed aspects of one's own self. (Kakar 1992: 137) Inclusive ones are inclined to affirm similarities and complementarities with the other. These make for tolerance and flexibility. For example, identifying with one's language or religion need not negate or be hostile to other languages and religions and yet when used thus, language and religion have been among the most effective markers to divide a society into 'them' and 'us'.

In South Asia, the most prevalent exclusive and antagonistic collective identities are caste and/or religion-based. All claims to individual and collective rights are demands by the claimants to have their identity recognized and their dignity affirmed. The denial of one or the other as often happens to religious groups in secularised societies, is perceived as a threat of annihilation, whether intended or not, and inevitably this generates dangerous political passions. Religious nationalism and fundamentalism thrive on such negative politics, which have become so violent and destructive in the Subcontinent.

The greatest threat to our diversity today is not from any external threat but from our own internal traumas, with collective identities on a collision course, and basic human dignity, especially of the poor and the marginalised, sacrificed for partisan gains.

Pluralism and Relativism

Though they are often confused we must be emphatic about the difference between these two terms. Relativism, whether religious, ethical or political, when associated with non-commitment, ends up reinforcing the status quo, where all are equal but some more so than others. This is hardly compatible with an authentic humanism.

Pluralism, is the necessary consequence of 'recognising the contingency of everything that is human.' (Panikkar 1998: 120) The human is never the ultimate absolute but always in relationship to it. This does not as yet amount to relativism. For pluralism is not about the equality of differing and contradictory truths, but about the equal respect for others who hold different truths. We owe this respect to others, even as we expect the same for ourselves. For all humans are finite and can only hold a part of the infinite truth. Indeed, we are capable of grasping truth, but there is always more beyond our reach. Even among those we do comprehend, there is a hierarchy of truths and some are more critical and must be held more dearly than others, some truths more partial than others and more easily relativised. Equating all truths is to devalue them all. Mahatma Gandhi's truth cannot possibly be equated with Nathuram Godse's convictions, though he must respectfully be given a fair trial.

In our multi-cultural and pluri-religious society, pluralism is a psychological challenge, a cultural imperative, an economic-political necessity a theological given. We need a pluralism inspired by a humanist, liberating, this-worldly ethic, premised on tolerance and sustained by dialogue. For a genuine pluralism is possible only within a context of tolerance and dialogue. Indeed, tolerance and dialogue are defining ways of being human in our pluralist world. This surely does demand an *atamaparivartan*, i.e., a change of heart, that is also open to a *dharmantar*, i.e., a change in one's ascribed status.

Democratic Pluralism

Diversity and Difference

While minority communities, whether religious or linguistic, resist the 'homogenizing tendencies intrinsic to modern states,' (Seth 1992: 425), the majority community uses it to impose their group's

dominance on other collectivities in the state. (Nandy 1995) Uniformity is not the only, nor the most creative response to difference. It often forces differences underground and when divisions disappear at one level they reappear at another, often in even more divisive and volatile expressions. Nor is mere co-existence a viable answer in an ever-shrinking world.

We are coming to value diversity as something potentially enriching and even uniting at a higher level of unity. This is certainly true of the rich religio-cultural traditions of this land, when they are not manipulated for narrow political gain or subversive communal interests. Such an enriching unity must inspire us to reach out to each other in a common concern and in a shared faith, bringing us together with our differences into a unity in diversity, one that does not negate our peculiarities, but rather one that accepts and respects, even celebrates them.

As a positive response to such complexity and diversity, pluralism attempts to integrate rather than negate this plurality. For today, no single worldview can conveniently contain the diversity and differentiation of our complex world. In a free and open society such as we aspire to be, imposing a dominant perspective or worldview is no longer possible. Homogenising plurality by suppression or force can only make for an unstable and potentially violent situation. An open democratic society must be premised on consensus not coercion.

The necessity of pluralism today is not to be perceived as an unnecessary evil to be repressed before it engulfs us further; or tolerated as a necessary one to be constrained, since it cannot be dismissed. Rather it is an inescapable challenge that will not go away. It must be constructively and creatively met or it will disable, if not destroy us. For we cannot any more settle conflicting differences between groups and peoples by enforcing uniformity, for this only escalates the spiral of violence and too much blood and tears have been shed for this already.

Indic civilisation has served as a common meeting ground for the diverse communities and their diverse traditions, the different regional caste and language groups of the Subcontinent, as European culture is the basis for the European Union today. Some such common basis is necessary for socio-cultural integration, involving some basic, even if minimal, orientation towards cooperation rather than conflict, lest the common meeting ground becomes the occasion for misunderstanding and hostility. South Asia is a good example of such an implosion in our globalising world.

Diversity in Unity

In India unity in diversity was once official policy, today pluralism is under a menacing threat from rationalist secularism and religious fundamentalism. Admittedly, democratic pluralism is cumbersome and painful. It is no quick-fix solution to the rising expectations of people, but it seems to be the only feasible alternative if the reality of diversity and difference is to be accepted and not suppressed.

Our response to pluralism must begin with rejecting inequalities and accepting differences, affirming equal dignity for all and respecting the unique identity of each, reaching out to live and celebrate similarities and differences as parts of a larger organic social and cultural whole. Our pluralism is not so much to promote our unity over and above the reality of our diversity, but rather to protect our diversity in our quest for unity. Not unity in diversity so much as diversity in unity.

We need a politics of integration that does not amount to assimilation, in which collective identities are merged, and unity becomes uniformity. Our diversity in unity must accommodate not just a plurality of diverse communities, but also multiple ways of belonging premised on multiple identities. This is the 'deep diversity', that the social philosopher, Charles Taylor privileged (Taylor 1995: 75), and which the Union of India has constitutionally accepted far more than many other countries, and which our judiciary regards as part of its basic structure.

Identity and Integration

Structural plurality becomes the basis for a 'politics of interests', mobilising groups around 'what they want'. But if this is not integrated into a system that protects fundamental rights and promotes equitable distribution, it engenders class conflict. Cultural plurality is a fertile ground for the 'politics of identity', mobilising groups on the basis of 'who they are'. But if this is not incorporated into a pluralism that recognises cultural differences and affirms collective rights, it breeds collective passions. Exclusive identities, whether based on religion, caste, race, or any other common ethnic trait, once imposed easily become an effective basis for group mobilization and ethno-politics. The identity politics precipitated by religion has been among the most violent and destructive.

Unique identities are in the cultural domain. When these are aggregated from the individual to the group level, they can become more intractable and uncompromising than ever. This is precisely what happens with exclusive and total identities. They subsume all other individual identities into the group and oppose this to the identities of other groups. This is the death knell of any kind of cultural pluralism in society and religious nationalisms and fundamentalisms are very prone to this.

Rather we need inclusive multiple identities both for individuals and groups, identities that are layered and prioritised according to the context around a core identity that gives stability and continuity to the person and the group. This will demand flexible identities and overlapping porous group boundaries. Gandhi as we shall see is a remarkable example of such a rooted yet open person. (*Young India*, June 1921: 170)

I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them. (*Young India*, June 1921: 170).

Identity politics is an effective motivator for individuals and a powerful mobiliser for groups. But in recognising 'who we are' we have to discover 'what we want'. However, if the politics of identity is not rationalised by the politics of interests, it can oppress others and suppress its own. For both individuals and groups, we need an integrated and holistic approach that will recognise the universal demand of equal dignity for all, and comprehend the particular exigencies of the unique identity of each.

Democratic pluralism cannot exclude identity politics, though its relationship with politics of interest is certainly a problematic one. Collective identities mobilise group interests and vice versa, these interests consolidate corresponding identities. A constructive integration will demand that a larger concern and a deeper unity direct and subsume both. Caste communalism and religious fundamentalism have severely undermined such a politics of integration. These have deliberately exploited riots and civil disturbances to polarise our society for electoral gains. This only multiplies the divides and deepens the fissures in society.

The politics of integration must be a quest for an egalitarian, just and free society. In our quest for economic equality, creating class-consciousness is never merely to invert class divisions and perpetuate them, it is to mobilise a class struggle for a classless society, where social inequalities are abolished. In our quest for social justice mere

positional change in the caste hierarchy without an attempt to eliminate it, will only perpetuate casteism. Rather caste mobilisation must be for a casteless society, where caste hierarchy is demolished. And so too in our quest for religious freedom, if religious identities are activated in this quest, it must not be for dominance or isolation, but to create a free and inter-religious pluralism of harmony and peace, where religious differences are not antagonistic but complementary, a secular space where all communities have equal respect, and no one is more equal than any other.

Singular and Multiple Identities

In a diverse and complex pluralist society, where there are fuzzy boundaries between, and common characteristics across groups, there will inevitably be multiple identities. How these are contextualised and prioritised, and played out for both individuals and groups is necessarily a function of the situation.

The complications and contradictions arise when all other identities are collapsed into one solidary, totalising, exclusive one, which becomes the key identity dictating a single dominant role in any situation. When such totalising happens with collective identities serious clashes and conflicts can be precipitated. For such totalising identities, inevitably tend to be singular, not multiple, and consequently claim a single, comprehensive allegiance, a total and complete belonging. For example, with regard to one's caste identity, one can only belong to one caste. To try or claim to belong to two makes one an outcaste in the hierarchy. The same can happen with exclusive religious, caste, racist, of any *other ethnic* identities as well. Inclusive, flexible identities allow for multiple belongings. When the group boundaries overlap one can belong to more than one family without compromising oneself and find room enough to adjust to their various claims, e.g., of one's family by birth, by marriage, by adoption.

Tolerance and Dialogue
Levels of Tolerance

However, tolerance must be reciprocal and not skewed in favour of the less tolerant against the more intolerant. We must therefore distinguish four graded levels of tolerance across a continuous spectrum drawing the theologian Raymond Panikkar (Panikkar 1983: 20-36):

1. political: calculating its pragmatic limits as a matter of practical adjustment to the other, accepting the lesser of two evils;

2. intellectual: realising the need for the other, who can complement one's own limitations;

3. ethical: fulfilling the moral obligation of not harming the other by being unjust and unfair;

4. spiritual: reaching out to the other in mutual human fulfilment.

These levels of tolerance can best be clarified by situating Gandhi's *ahimsa* along the continuum. Gandhi's tolerance is never just political pragmatism. He realizes that the truths we grasp are necessarily partial and this needs to be complimented by the partial truths of others. Beyond this, he is sensitive to the moral responsibility for others we must own, and he reaches out to all in non-violence, which he describes more positively as love. In the final analysis, Gandhi's *ahimsa* is intelligible only as a mystical-spiritual union, a condition and presage of *moksha*.

The level of our tolerance is set by the way we perceive the other: at the first level the other is perceived as an obstacle or even a threat; at the second, as a useful complement; at the third, as a moral obligation; at the fourth, as a human enrichment. The level of our tolerance then, positions us before the other and so defines the limits of our solidarity, as either pragmatic, utilitarian, ethical, spiritual. Tolerance then is not just a matter between persons; it is as much a concern between groups. It is the precondition for solidarity, just as solidarity becomes the context for tolerance.

Limits of Tolerance

The antagonistic interactions between communities may be to an extent contained by legislation restraining it in view of public order. Yet, in spite of good intentions, the legislation itself cannot be a substitute for the tolerance within and between these communities. However, tolerance is to be an active and positive response to coping

with our differences, then it must be more than a passive acceptance. The limits of tolerance must be set up within a regime of human rights. The United Nations does this at an international level, the Indian Constitution for our citizens. They provide a reference point and context, normatively binding on both the state and civil society.

However, to be sustainable in strained circumstances, our tolerance must go beyond these norms. It must be founded on positive values, that are sensitive to the other and expressed in multiple ways in the diverse arenas of inter-personal and social encounters. To mention but a few: being non-authoritarian and non-judgmental in personal relations, a non-dogmatic and open, having a positive appreciation of cultures and languages other than one's own, a commitment to equitable gender relations, respect for egalitarian group rights and fundamental individual rights, an ecological awareness and aesthetic sensitivity.....

Domains of Dialogue

Unless the dialoguing partners begin at the same level of tolerance, dialogue will get grounded in recriminations. Moreover, the more comprehensive our tolerance is the more effective our dialogue can be. For dialogue is more than a verbal exchange. It implies a reciprocity between the 'self' and the 'other' that can take place in various types of encounters and exchanges between persons and groups. Here we will distinguish four domains of dialogue following an inter-religious model for Inter-Religious Dialogue (Pontifical Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue (1991) but this holds for any dialogue between diverse communities:

1. life: living together in close proximity and neighbourly spirit;
2. action: working together for a purpose;
3. experience: sharing our experiences of life and action;
4. articulation: critiquing our experience and understanding.

The first domain of dialogue involves a daily encounter, a sharing of others' joys and sorrows, of our human problems and pre-occupations; the second involves a deeper level of sharing and interaction and also requires a wider area for consensus and understanding and action; the third involves a still deeper level of encountering and understanding each other; the fourth brings them all together.

To begin, a dialogue may not be possible in one of other of these domains. This will depend on the level of tolerance of the dialoguing partners. But wherever it starts, the more inclusive of these domains, the more comprehensive and sustainable our solidarity will be. For a genuine dialogue in one or other domain will reinforce and open dialogue at the others.

Finally, a constructive engagement on issues and concerns in discussion and dialogue must eventually culminate in consensual decision-making. Implementing these decisions will inevitably need the required political will, which is not always easy, especially, in regard to contested areas. But with an enriching and deeper tolerance and an inclusive and sustained dialogue, we will be able in solidarity to interrogate our present political and other preoccupations in order to open new horizons, to bring about a new politics, premised on justice as liberty, equality, fraternity. Indeed, this was the slogan that epitomised a revolution in France and echoed in our Constitution, but its promise has yet to be fulfilled for many of our citizens.

Equal, Open Dialogue

A Culture of Dialogue

Hegemony cannot but result in a culture of silence, leaving people voiceless while their leaders speak for them. Silence and suspicion are good neighbours! Each encourages the other, in a reciprocal manipulation, feeding stereotypes, encouraging falsehoods, spawning rumours, and spreading disinformation that, deliberately at times, is used to fuel odium and mistrust. Such a 'culture of suspicion' is the very contradiction of a 'culture of dialogue'. If we grant that dialogue is essential to the human condition then it must be a dialogue precisely, that breaks the silence and opens communication, discredits suspicion and creates trust.

There is always the danger of celebrating our own 'difference' in isolation and seclusion from others and not in dialogue with them. Such an inwardly turned dialogue eventually becomes a monologue, whether of individuals or of groups. This inbreeding can only lead to a genetic decline of the groups' cultural and intellectual DNA. In regard to others, the outsiders, it 'shades over into the celebration of indifference, non-engagement and indecision.' (Dallmayr 1989: 90) This further negates creative pluralism, undermines respectful tolerance and destroys any real possibility of a culture of dialogue.

If there is to be a constructive engagement at the four levels of tolerance identified earlier, a culture of dialogue must include both myth and ideology. For in their mutual encounter, myths are deepened and enriched, and in their reciprocal exchange ideologies become more open and refined. Such a culture of dialogue will demand a radical change, a *metanoia* of our hearts, to free us from the *paranoia* of each other.

Inter-Community Dialogue

Human beings are necessarily interrelated and interactive, never isolated and solipsist The imperative for dialogue can now be summed up in a few pertinent sutras:

to be person is to be inter-personal;
to be cultured is to be inter-cultural;
to develop is to participate and exchange;
to be religious is to be inter-religious;

Psychologists have convinced us of the first, while sociologists are trying to teach us the second, political economists are now promoting the third and theologians are coming to realise the fourth. Raimundo Panikkar rightly insists that 'dialogue is not a bare methodology but an essential part of the religious act par excellence.' (Panikkar 1978: 10) Tolerance and dialogue are defining ways of being human in our multicultural, pluri-religious society.

Intra-Community Dialogue

All this will demand a more liberal and humanist approach within each tradition, which is precisely what an equal dialogue challenges each one to do. Hence, an intra-community dialogue is a necessary condition for an inter-community one. At times this involves the pain of re-education. As St. Augustine of Hippo confessed: *Questio mihi factus sum.* (I am become a question to myself!) I must face the question I am if I am to face the question that the other is to me. Facing such questioning is surely even more problematic when it comes to groups and communities.

For unless the plurality within a community tradition is encouraged, differences celebrated, and tolerance sensitised, it is unlikely that any of these can be carried over to an inter-community dialogue. For a community tradition that is homogenising, insensitive

and intolerant to its own diversity from within is not open to being enriched by the diversity and difference of others from without.

What we need then is an intra-community dialogue so that we can see, each in their own tradition, what we can do for ourselves as a preparation for dialogue. If we can be non-defensive, then we will be able to initiate a non-violent and open dialogue with other ethno-religious traditions, and perhaps even with the extremists within them. Moreover, what holds for individuals holds equally for groups and communities as well. Hence, beyond a personal understanding of introspection, there is a need for a community or collective one, within a tradition between various groups across different perspectives.

An Equal Dialogue

An engagement in dialogue can be inspired by fidelity to one's own community tradition to rediscover at a greater depth through the encounter with other traditions, in the questions and responses, in the affirmations and negations that arise therein. This can only be honestly done in a dialogue of equal partners. An *equal* dialogue then is of the utmost importance to tap the resources of our rich heritage.

For any dialogue that starts with the assumptions of superiority on one side, or has a hidden agenda intending assimilation or absorption, propaganda or conversion of the other can never be an equal exchange. In the end, all unequal exchanges, whether between classes, castes, genders or even between communities, regions, etc., eventually become exploitative and oppressive. To be truly creative, dialogue must be open and free, beginning with a respect that is reciprocal to continue with an enrichment that is mutual. This is what an equal dialogue means.

Yet, dialogue between such exclusive community traditions becomes both more difficult and more necessary. The challenge is to move exclusive community traditions to being inclusive, or at least to find some common ground for a dialogue that opens rather than closes the space for dialogue. This demands a distinction between and a separation of the perspectives of the insider and the outsider. The challenge is for the partners in the dialogue to prescind from their

insider perspective and take an outsider one by positioning themselves on a common ground where all the partners to the dialogue can be equal.

This common ground requires that we bracket away our own convictions and commitments not to abandon or betray them but to hold them in abeyance as we reach out to each other, as happens in any attempt at a resolution of differences. In a pragmatic approach to conflict resolution, this makes eminent sense, it would surely not take a great leap of faith to do the same for a dialogue of equal partners. In a family quarrel the common good of the family becomes the appeal for harmony, and in gender debates our common humanity must be the accepted point of reference. For the purpose of an open, equal dialogue is to explore rather than resolve differences.

Inside/Outside

For given the multiple polarities delineated across sharp divides on contentious issues of collective differences, any attempt to clear a common ground for an equal dialogue must begin with a reciprocity of perspectives, i.e., seeing ourselves as others see us, a necessary exercise for individuals and groups, for communities and other agents as well. In turn, this will have its own problems but only on such common ground can all engage as equal partners and set the conditions for a deeper community dialogue between diverse communities.

White light includes the wavelengths of all seven colours, yet the rainbow has its own special beauty. So too, the polyphonic voices in dialogue make the symphony.

Democratic Participation

The Argumentative Indian

There has always been the extreme but hidden authoritarian temptation when faced with the democratic deficit, to allow the ends to justify the means. Most political parties have little internal democracy, preferring a more autocratic politics as long as it does not

immediately affect themselves or their own vested interests. Most senas and sanghs fall into this category. However, there is also a potential democratic legacy at the grassroots that India has drawn on.

Amartya Sen traces 'the historical roots of democracy in India' to 'a long tradition of public arguments, with toleration of intellectual heterodoxy' (Sen 2005: 12). *The Argumentative Indian* (Sen 2005) is a rich complement to, the social capital for liberal democracy that has been defined as 'government by discussion' (Buchanan 1954: 120). From abstract philosophic and contested religious differences to divisive social and political issues; from the debates of the Buddhist monks among themselves and at the time of Emperor Ashoka (304-239 BCE) with Hindu acharyas and Jain munis, to the inter-religious encounters between maulvis, Brahmins, dasturs, Jesuits, … in the Ibaadatkhana (House of Worship) that Emperor Akbar (1542- 1605) built at Fatehpur Sikri in 1575; from boisterous parliamentary debates among elected leaders to the endless discussions in village panchayats, from casual conversations in the marketplace to passionate political arguments in teashops across the country today, the Argumentative Indian is everywhere.

Hence social inclusion and political participation in the pursuit of a just society must be planned and implemented with commitment and care, lest they are displaced — unworthy means displace noble ends, as so easily happens with bureaucratic and centralised organisations. Indeed, the ideal of a just society at times seems as illusive as just means to it are elusive. Unless we are at peace with ourselves, at peace within and between our communities and across societies, there can be no sustainable peace in our world. Peace in our human community is the necessary condition for peace with the ecological one. Whatever else we do to address the environmental crisis, this is the only way to reverse the negative impact of the Anthropocene and build a truly harmonious ecological community.

Integrative Politics

Our Constitutional vision undoubtedly prioritises democratic inclusion over a strong centralised government, egalitarian participation over a compartmentalised society, an integrative politics over an assimilative state. Today the only way citizens can cope with an increasingly complex multicultural, pluri-religious world is with correspondingly multiple and inclusive identities. Group boundaries that are fuzzy and porous, and community traditions that are open

and syncretic foster such identities. In an imploding world, these become crucial for harmonious group and community life. Indic civilisation has a long tradition of this, which most unfortunately is being eroded today.

The sense of belonging to a community is a resource (Putnam 2000) but when it finds expression in the domination and oppression of the others as excluded outside, it undermines the unity and coherence of society at large, especially in a multicultural, pluri-religious one. The trajectory that begins here has now left us with a less secure and more dangerous world of violence and terror. To premise my identity on being a Muslim or a Hindu, a Dalit or a tribal first, last and always leaves little social space for those the 'other' non-Muslim, non-Hindu, non-Dalit or non-tribal. Such a binary categorisation of the world has at times also affected the gender divide. Such impervious divides inevitably spill over into antagonism and violence as we witness on an ever-large scale today, especially with religious, caste or ethnic groups in our society.

Forcing a nationalist assimilation on such polarised antagonism will escalate fear and terror and only up the ante on the violence. Such tensions and strains do not augur well for the future of India's democracy. Power politics and electoral compulsions are already beginning to compromise it. Democracy envisages 'government by discussion' (Buchanan 1954: 120) among equal and representative partners in the quest for the common good of all.

VIII. An Epic Saga

A Second Freedom Struggle

The patriotism that inspired our freedom struggle was inclusive even when it fell short of its own ideals seeking rather to reconcile the contradictions and conflicts of this country in a higher cultural order (Nandy 1994:2). For Gandhi and Tagore in 'this ideology of patriotism rather than of nationalism, there was a built-in critique of nationalism and refusal to recognize the nation-state as the organizing principle of the Indian civilization and as the last word in the country's political life' (Nandy 1994: 3).

If we do not learn from our history to address our anomalies and contradictions, we will condemn ourselves to repeat it, either as tragedy or as farce. Unfortunately, in the confusion of contested Constitutional ideals that must be respected, the contending

legislative priorities that must be set, and the confusing judicial interpretations that have been made, we easily forget how the promise of our freedom struggle inspired our ideals and oriented our hopes.

Our first freedom struggle was against colonial imperialists, our development model has internalised this very *Intimate Enemy* (Nandy 1983). We need a second freedom struggle against the internal colonialists and their covert imperialism against our own people, a struggle for the 'quality of life' for a happy people, not a nation craving for the 'standard of living' of a rich country; a striving to be an exemplary state rather than a great power. Such was the ideal of India in our first freedom struggle, of our leaders of Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru … which we must reach out to again and again before they slip beyond our grasp.

This is the real epic saga of Indian democracy: the dilemma between the democratic dividend from participative governance and the democratic deficit of electoral politics, i.e., the returns on a political investment and the fallout from election results. Choosing to develop and modernise within the scope of a liberal democratic state is an enormous challenge that runs counter to most conventional wisdom. Such a successful democratic transition, is a very rare exception, if ever. However, it is the only way to transform our human society into sustainable and even regenerative ecological community.

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5.
ECOCIDE OR ECO-ETHIC?

Abstract

The Rio summit showed the Machiavellian primacy of politics over ethics. Our
response to the ecological crisis must find a social expression that effectively
impinges on, and restructures our society.

Introduction

If there is one thing the Rio summit brought home to the third world, it was the Machiavellian primacy of politics over ethics. For in the final analysis, it was the more powerful noises that seemed to have prevailed, not the more reasonable and just causes that were heard and listened. The follow-up to the summit seems only to reinforce this.

If, as L. Balasubramanian observes, 'the current thinking in the Indian environmental camp seems to be to capture political power at various stages of the political system',[1] then it can hardly help to redress this balance in favour of ethics over politics. Again, if indeed 'there is very little evidence of Indian environmentalists having even begun to address the problem of evolving a value system for their movement',[2] it seems a little Quixotic to suggest that 'environmentalism which has so far been developing as a new scientific discipline.... has to transform itself into a modern religion....so encompassing and appealing as to make existing religions and their value systems superfluous.'[3] For authentic religious traditions cut much deeper than a political ideology, and cannot be produced by the dictate of some despot or party vanguard. And yet the urgency to develop and promote an environmental ethic with a coherent value system, one that goes beyond taboos and prohibitions to be meaningful and motivating in our present crisis, cannot be dismissed.

However, environmental ethics is still a problematic area, the more so when we realise that the ecological crisis, we have precipitated both globally and locally is really the culmination of the many unresolved crises of our world, a world fragmented and disoriented, violent and alienating. We have shocked ourselves into realizing how critically and crucially dependent we are on our fragile and fine-tuned environment, and how false and arrogant our presumed subjection of, and dominance over it really is. But, to adequately respond to such a crisis, we must grasp the deeper meaning it implies: that if we do not live in harmony with our environment, we cannot live at peace with each other either.

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[1] "Quest for an Environmental Value System", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.29, No.2, 28 May, 1994, p.1330

[2] ibid.

[3] ibid.

For exploitation and greed *ad extra*, towards the ecological community cannot but precipitate the same *ad intra*, towards the human community, and vice versa. Indeed, it can be argued, that the root cause of the degradation and disintegration in the ecological community is the projection into it of the aggressive exploitation and oppressive alienation structured into our society. All human communities must live in and off their environment. Ecological crises were not unknown in earlier civilizations. However, we seem to repeat such history on a much grander scale. For the first time in human history, we seem capable of 'ecocide', destroying the entire ecological community altogether.

Now if the relationship of human societies to their environment is always a mediated one, this is firstly through their technology which interfaces directly with this environment. Technology does have a dynamic of its own, but at a deeper level, it is oriented by other socio-cultural systems of a society. It is in this 'design for living' that ultimate human concerns are expressed in a worldview or *weltanschauung*. The present ecological crisis, then, is forcing us back to such ultimate concerns, and any viable ecological ethic, must measure up to, and express these.

An ethic, as we understand the term, is a configuration of value preferences and behavioural norms, attitudinal orientations and motivating symbols, put together in a historical context for a specific people over time. The relationship between such an ethic to the structure and functioning of a society is certainly problematic, whether we speak of a religious ethic, like the Protestant or the Hindu one; or a secular one, like a work ethic or an ecological one. But to imagine that there is no relationship between the two is to espouse a superficial and mechanical analysis of society. Here we will attempt to sketch an eco-ethic which hopefully can restrain us from 'ecocide'.

Responses

Few people would argue that our response to the present ecological crisis has been adequate or effective. For on the one hand, it is true that scientific environmentalism does not get beyond a technological fix, which is at best temporary and at worst superficial. On the other hand, deep ecology often gets lost in a muddled mysticism that is at best ideologically shallow and at worst politically ineffective. Moreover, while the attempt of green politics to bring together 'ecology, social responsibility, grass-root democracy and

non-violence,'[4] has in places developed into a movement, it is as yet very far from inspiring an ecological ethic for a society. Some efforts have been made in this direction, but they have not really been effective in clearing the ground of prevailing misconceptions let alone establishing the basis for an ecological worldview, a *weltanschauung*.

Thus the 'myth of progress' still seduces us by promising a utopia of limitless growth. Indeed, in our consumerist society, it is not 'religion but growth that has become the opium of the people.'[5] In reaction to this, there has developed a 'romantic primitivism', which idealizes a 'back to nature' odyssey in response to our present problems. But neither of these can save us from the consumerist trap in which we are caught, or the downward spiral of poverty from which the poor seem to have no escape, or the 'tragedy of the commons' that is already overtaking us now, or the free rider theorem undermining distributive justice.

Indeed, where the ethical understanding of a society is itself based on utilitarian individualism, it cannot be an adequate foundation for an environmental ethic, which must involve the relationship of the community as a whole to its habitat, and not just be concerned with individuals in isolation. This is precisely the basic fallacy of the market mechanism and the invisible hand: the assumption that the good of individuals separately can be aggregated into the good of the community collectively. That is why such individualistic 'freedom in community brings ruin to all.'[6]

An Eco-World View

A value-premised non-utilitarian ethic must be derived from a corresponding worldview. We would urge the following dimensions for such an ecological *weltanschauung* to found an ethic adequate to our present crisis.

Firstly, *human fellowship*, not just between us in the human community but extended to the entire ecological one as well, to include the biotic and even the cosmic.

Secondly, cosmic *evolution*, in which all of creation plays its part, each its own, and in which human beings, though still at the cutting

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[4] Robin Eckersley, "The Road to Ectopia? Socialism Versus Environmentalism", *The Ecologist*, Vol.18, No.4/5, 1988, p.145

[5] Fitziof Capra, *The Turning Point*, Worldwide House, London, 1982, p.224

[6] G. Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics For Survival*, Viking, New York, 1972, p.254

edge of this process, are always 'a part' of the whole and not 'apart' from it.

Thirdly, relationship to some transcendent or *ultimate reality* that will give meaning and value to our world lest we fall into the kind of anthropocentrism, that has been the bane of ecological thinking. We need to go beyond this without falling into a fragmented relativism that has little motivating force.

In the final analysis, our ecological worldview must face up to the ultimate concerns of survival and salvation. And if by religion we understand, with Paul Tillich, 'what ultimately concerns man', then, our ecological *weltanschauung* must have some religious grounding if it is to be both popular and profound. This does not mean that 'environmentalism must develop for itself … the complete spectrum or religious paraphernalia.' [7] Rather some radical and daring reinterpretations would be more appropriate here. Eco-ethics can thus still be scientific and secular even as they take on an enlightened and progressive religious motivation and support.

Thus, the story of creation in the Semitic religions must be reinterpreted to mean not dominance, and subjugation of the earth, which only traps us in an ecologically insensitive anthropocentrism, but a companionship with, and a responsibility for all creation in our common 'creatureliness', which would be more biocentric. The commanding Hindu metaphor of the world as the body of God, deriving from the ancient Rigvedic myth of a cosmic person (Purusha), can dramatize for us this reality as the very ground of our being, without the escapism of an 'other-worldly' *moksha,* or the fatalism of this worldly *karma.*

An Eco-ethic

This *weltanschauung*, of human fellowship, cosmic evolution and transcendent reality, must indeed be spelt out into an eco-ethic which is both down to earth and meaningfully motivating. Such an eco-ethic cannot be effective merely as a matter of personal morality. It must be articulated and structured in the values and norms, the attitudes and motivations of a society. What we need, is a new paradigm for society, supported and maintained by such an ethic. We here indicate some of the essential parameters of such a paradigm corresponding to the three dimensions of our eco-world-view.

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[7] Balasubramaniam, ibid. p.1329

Firstly, the human fellowship must be expressed in the primacy of the *common good*, understood as those conditions that make it possible for the members of the community to achieve the fulfilment of their nature. This goes beyond a utilitarian calculus of the greatest good for the greatest number, and must be foundational for our paradigm. Further, to achieve this common good a society must be structured on the principle of *subsidiarity* and its obverse, i.e., neither abrogating authority upwards for what we can get done at lower levels of a community, nor abdicating responsibility downward for what must be done at higher levels.

The values supportive of such subsidiarity are expressed by *'solidarity'*, a term which here attempts to encompass our inter-relationships and inter-dependence, as well as each one's individuality, and uniqueness. Ideally, such a society would be *egalitarian* and *participative*, for it would not be a mass society but one on a human scale, concerned with 'being' rather than 'having', to use a distinction from Eric Fromm, a community of free persons, where, as Marx has said, the freedom of each must be the condition of the freedom of all.

Secondly, cosmic evolution must mean a *regenerative development*. For such a society growth would be not just sustainable, but regenerative as well. This implies more than just leaving the environment uncompromised by degradation and pollution, but renewing it to create a new earth community--to reach beyond our grasp. Such development can of course only be in terms of a qualitative growth not merely a quantitative change, a 'limitation of the empire of necessity and the widening of the sphere of freedom', in Christopher Dawson's words.[8] For this we must learn from the Taoist ethic of frugality, of 'grace without waste', and not merely a contractual ethic of accommodation.

Thirdly, a relationship to a transcendent or ultimate reality in the context of this human fellowship and the developmental process must leave no room for a metaphysical pessimism of the myth of the eternal return.   Rather it must be expressed in terms of a *purposeful teleology*, that will help us to take responsibility for our future. Ernst Bloch's *Principle of Hope* could be of help here.[9]

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[8] Christopher Dawson, *The Judgement of Nations*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1943, p.47

[9] Enrst Bloch, A Philosophy of the Future, trans. John Cummings, Herder and Herder, New York, 1970

The common good, regenerative development and purposeful technology must be elaborated further into a charter of human rights and cosmic duties. The first deriving from Roman law and articulated in Kantian terms in the West is the foundation for the idea of inalienable rights. But this must be checked and balanced by the second, which can be found in the complex Indian tradition of dharma, as the performance of duty that keeps the world in the right order and harmony. Together these help to break away from a one-sided ethic, be it anthropocentric, biocentric or cosmocentric, to a more holistic ecological one.

Conclusion

Too often the immediate urgency of the ecological crisis, displaces issues of ultimate concern, with which we must come to terms with any creative solution to our present crisis, rather than merely a superficial fix, technological, political or otherwise. Of course, our response to the ecological crisis must find a social expression that effectively impinges on, and restructures our society. It cannot be just a matter of individual morality. For unless we overcome the alienation and anomie of our human community, we can hardly expect to live in peace and harmony in the ecological one.

James Gleick writing on *Chaos*, speaks of the 'butterfly effect'; an inconsequential cause precipitating gratuitously disproportionate consequence. Thus, he explains how the flap of a butterfly's wing in Tokyo might upset a delicate meteorological balance and precipitate a cascade of effects that finally result in a hurricane in Havana! In facing the overwhelming ecological crisis that confronts us today, we can still hope that we 'act locally', and even though it may seem as inconsequential as the beat of a butterfly's wing, we may still be able to provoke people to 'think globally', and so revolutionize our ecological consciousness precipitating a new ecological ethic.

Ultimately our relationship to our world, as Bernard Lonergan remarks,[10] is 'mediated by meaning and motivated by value'. But if such mediation is to result in a lasting and effective ethic, then it must be symbolically expressed in social rituals, and in common images. This is what gives popular religion its enduring influence. We are not about to advocate an eco-religion. Better a sound secular ethic than

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[10] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Longmans, Green, London, 1958

a pseudo-religious one. However, we still are a long way from either. Perhaps the rite of a common meal, a 'sahabhojan', building up the life of the commonweal could be the beginning of an ecological ritual that would symbolize and affect our common union with each other and the world around. We need also a myth, a new creation story to re-enchant the world for us, to reenact and dramatize our place in the cosmos and our relationship to it. All this can be essentially secularly and rationally scientific without being irreligious or pseudo.

As yet we have not many common ecological myths or rituals. But we do have a compelling image of our planet in our space-age world: a beautiful and fragile blue sphere, floating free and precariously in the dark of empty space. This is our Gaia that we have violated and now waits to be healed, that we have degraded and now wants to be renewed. Hopefully, we still have a chance to make it a place where children can play, where laughter can be heard, and where we can all dance to the music of the universe, and watch the earth-rise to, not the sunset on, our future!

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After a brief sketch of creation, redemption, and monastic spiritualities, the scattered fragments of insight and institution are collected within a cosmotheandric synthesis.

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