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Introduction

It is clear from the confirmation of our five shared senses that humanity is facing a planet-wide ecological crisis. All the various traditional and modern forms of communication, all tell the same story of the adversarial effects on nature and human beings. Climate change is increasingly affecting every living and non-living thing. Air, water and land pollution are all getting steadily worse. Forests, especially the tropical forests are continually being destroyed. Technological and scientific advancements have resulted in the mass dumping of toxic waste resulting in multiple crises in agriculture and wildlife. The interference in nature by human being is diminishing the future outlook and equilibrium of the coexistence between them. Gary Braasch described such a situation in alarming words.

Our planet is warming rapidly and changes are spreading faster than we realize. For ten thousand years the Earth nurtured human life and fostered the development of civilization but it is now becoming less hospitable. Everyone, in every nation, will feel climate change. The global warming is causing glaciers and ice sheets to melt at an accelerating rate. [...] The disruption of the ecosystems caused by global warming is affecting all living creatures, such as this polar bear which has been forced onto dry land in search of food.[...] As the ice melts at the poles and in high mountains and the ocean warms and expands, low-lying areas are inundated by the rising sea.¹

In such a frightening situation we ought to ask ourselves some serious questions. Why is there such an imbalance and tension between individual members of the cosmos? Who is responsible for such a threatening and alarming reality? Where and when did we as human beings go wrong? What role should reason, ethics, philosophy or theology play in such Earthly crises and concerns? Could man not use his cultural advancement to strike an equilibrium between himself and the environment?

In recent years there has been much discussion focusing on just these questions. Most of these debates have centred on man's relation to nature, with particular reference to ecology or the environment. But prior to this, areas of discourse that are now strongly related to ecological concerns had never tackled the subject head-on. These debates and interest were non-essential

¹ Braasch, *Earth under Fire*, 2007, comparing photos of the Athabasca Glacier in Canada between 1917 and 2005.

from the beginning of studies which were consistent with the ecology. The study was not implicit as an area that needed serious attention or study.

On the one hand history has helped man to trace his roots and to establish the chronology of his achievements. Positively history has assisted him in searching for the causes of his failures and to suggest how he might overcome similar challenges in the future. However, in the history of mankind there is little trace of nature or ecology as a field of study. Henry Odera Oruka was one of those who first noticed the absence of environmental or ecological studies from ancient times until the 20th century. Equally there has been no systematic handling of ecology or the environment since the advent of civilization but a few authors have treated the relationship between human and non-human beings in a piecemeal way.

Chapter 1 is an historical view of how the concept of ecology has developed over the centuries. These concepts could be used to explain the relationship between human beings and nature. I have identified a number of scholars within the historical phases as pointed out by Donald Worster.² These authors have directed their intellectual powers towards uncovering and explaining the interrelationships, (the interconnectedness) between the human being and the cosmos.

The tension between people (humanity) and nature is assumed by most scholars to have begun with civilization. Some of the postulated reasons why this tension first arose and why it has continued to widen is to look back to an era of myth when the first civilizations were being shaped. It is during these periods that the human being perceives his unique characteristics, endowed with reason, which other members of the Earth do not have. Ancient communities developed a great interest in the academic study of right and wrong, of what constitutes reasonable and unreasonable behaviour or of scientific and unscientific practice, cause and effect.

Until today ethics and morality have remained the guiding principle of judging the relationship between human and non-human – so that what is good and what is bad depends exclusively on human judgement. The ethics used by philosophers and religious groups was supplementary to the causes and effects that were encountered in the ecological crisis. To be more precise, Western philosophy, science, technology and Judeo-Christian religion are ‘well-known’ as among the main culprits in causing the tension between human and non-human beings. Their achievements – such as rationalism, anthropocentrism, individualism, domination, utilitarianism, among other -isms – are postulated to be the primary causes of

² Worster, *Nature's Economy*, ix-xiii, 1994.

concern and conflict in the ecology. Chapters 1, 2 and 4 discuss such themes and attempt to offer some solutions which include the challenge to traditional ethics by new/extended ethics and the use of concepts that eschew dualism. The old values and dualism were criticised for being too exclusive and the new value has sought to be more inclusive. Oruka is one of the protagonist on the assignments of value and on dualistic view.

Chapter 3 attempts to paint a complete picture of the ecological catastrophe by focusing on the situation in Mwanza, Tanzania. There is a documentary film, *Darwin's Nightmare*, which elaborates the concerns and conflict caused by Man who is indifferent to the suffering he causes, the ecological damage caused by the poisoning of the soil, the survival of the indigenous people who had initially enjoyed environmental stability through subsistence farming before the invasion by the Europeans traders and explorers. Man through his selfish wish to dominate his insecurity and irresponsibility has ended up deeply unhappy for not loving and respecting the other human beings and non-humans. The concept of the ecological crisis is perceptible in *Darwin's Nightmare*, 2004, a documentary film directed by Austrian Hubert Sauper. ecophilosophy is a new sphere of knowledge which attempts to harmonise the conflict, tension and crisis that exists between both natures. It is the study of the general problems that exist in the intersection of ecology and philosophy. This relatively new knowledge paradigm seeks an intellectual solution to the conflict that is immediate and mediates between the human being and nature. The conflicts and options are analysed at length in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

The second part of the dissertation, by scrutinising unusual questions, endeavours to correct the whole system of thinking and the ways in which ecological questions are handled. Is there anything good, reasonable that Man ought to learn from nature? Ought Man to learn from the environment and other cultures? Only two answers are possible: No and Yes. I have opted to investigate the authors and themes that answer in the affirmative. This yes becomes possible with the usage of inclusive concepts that accommodate all members of the cosmos rather than exclusively targeting human beings. The basis for this discussion is laid out in Chapter 1.

These specific questions have given rise to different sets of ideas. These sets have coalesced into the various streams of ecophilosophy which are well-defined in Chapter 4.

In the process of selecting different authors and themes I had to break the barriers that blocked each stream in order to achieve a harmonious understanding by means of various concepts from several authors and cultures. Using the more inclusive methodologies of intercultural philosophy, polylogue, it became possible to find an opening into resolving the ecological quagmire and its multiple concerns. Its potential lies in its ability to accommodate the views

and concerns of others. The intercultural paradigm is a new approach to philosophy, a new model of view was initiated by Franz Martin Wimmer in 1988 this I have discussed at length in Chapter 5. Learning from nature and other cultures is essential in ecophilosophy and so we need not only conventional and dialectical philosophy but also intercultural philosophy. This is because of its necessity when appreciating nature other cultural views and individual ideas. Intercultural philosophy is a potential way of reaching diverse cultural understandings. However, I have suggested that some preliminary steps might be necessary before the intercultural process becomes possible. These steps I believe will create the atmosphere of respect, mutual understanding etc. which will enable many important goals to be achieved.

Finally to affirm the Yes answer, I believe, traditional ethics should change its pole from pure individualistic approach that privileges the human perspective to a wider one that includes all other inhabitants of the cosmos. This shift is what Oruka called a new ethics while Leopold Aldo, Val Plumwood and Arne Naess termed it extended ethics. Both views in my assessment are directed towards the same end, the all-inclusiveness of the planet. I discuss these in Chapters 2, and 3.

The famous Socratic dialectic process was initially used to gather new ideas and to guide an individual logically from what is well-known towards the hypothetically unknown. The new modern Socratic dialectics, as I call it, was used by Oruka in order to identify the sages from the different cultures of Kenya. I use it again here to collect more knowledge and concepts from those sages who exist among various peoples. Chapter 6 elucidates the Socratic modern approach by interviewing individuals, with sensitivity to gender, in order to collect and add new themes and ideas to philosophy and in particular ecophilosophy. It is very rewarding to discover how much knowledge and how many ideas exist in the minds of those whose lives are connected and related to nature. Henry David Thoreau was appropriate when he wrote; “nature looking into nature.”³ Sages interviewed had a day-to-day physical spiritual and even moral care with nature. Through a period of time individuals had to be engulfed to very ears, in the odour and textures of sensible reality. The sages aphorism of nature is seeing nature with all senses cleansed and alert being alert to the values the natures offers.

The future of ecophilosophy, I firmly accept as true, lies in employing and taking up other concepts and ideas from different individuals and cultures. The ecophilosophy notion is defined and elaborated more fully in Chapters 3 and 6. It should employ rich proverbs, myths, etc. which move beyond the exclusive conceptual views of the world to a relational

³ Thoreau in Worster, *Nature's Economy*, p. 78, 1994

viewpoint such as the Parental Earth Ethics developed by Oruka. Ecophilosophy should always have the potential to overcome the traditional systems of occidental thought. The new discipline should try to embrace new views without losing sight of its philosophical substance (i.e. without conceding to philosophical relativism). Wimmer wrote:

If philosophy will not be able to surpass its occidentation by going forward to a true globalization, it will fail to give answers to humankind in the future. It is mainly the story of a unique and developing human reason whose main representatives happen to be male, White and Occidental.⁴

This dissertation is the development of my personal curiosity and interest in nature. From my family background, I had always been lucky that when I used to plant trees, vegetables and pyrethrums, surprisingly all would survive. I have also dedicated the farm I acquired to forestation rich in fauna and flora. During my holidays and when I have a chance I mostly visit the forest to enjoy the beauty and relatedness that I have with nature. In my neighbourhood in Fischamend, which is partly forest, I also enjoy an aesthetic relationship with nature and the different melodies of the birds. With my colleagues who are friends of nature we usually walk together to the Mariazell, Styria Austria, pilgrimage centre through the forest. We normally walk for three days once a year in order to have contact with our neighbour, the nature and ourselves. Our future outlook for both the cosmos and the human being, I am strongly convinced, should be guided by new ethics and concepts that are friendly to nature.

⁴ Wimmer, *Essays in Intercultural Philosophy*, p, 9, 2002

Chapter 1. Historical development of Ecology

1.1 Preamble

We read in books, on the internet and in newspapers, hear on the radio and see on television, see with our own eyes and even feel that there is a substantial change in the environment. The irrefutable message from these forms of communication is that some of the world's oldest and most important fisheries, the tropical rain forests,⁵ their species and agricultural land are all in danger of irreversible destruction. Such changes are being felt mostly in the country and developing nations but city dwellers do not yet feel the full burden of the hazards since they are sheltered by scientific and technological achievements. One might ask: Can such scientific and technical achievements be considered advancements? Are these science and technology achievements a blessing or a curse upon our nature? The climate change is rapidly affecting each member of the planet. Are we living according to the standard of mutuality whereby we as human beings belong to and form part of the visible and invisible geocentric?

In my opinion we are making no progress at all but rather de-progressing. This argument can be qualified through an empirical logic, observation for there is a sharp increase in pollution on farms, in water and the air is truly remarkable. The destruction of tropical and other forests and the weakening of the ozone layer are leading to global warming⁶ as is the discarding of contaminated waste, as well as the numerous crises of efforts to rationalise agriculture and wildlife. We as human beings seem to be making the world a worse place to inhabit and our lives within it more difficult. We cannot deny the existence of an environmental crisis nor can we negate the fact that the influence of persons on nature and the environment is accelerating and having a worrisome effect on the Earth. Each sphere of knowledge poses its questions in regard to the crisis. Philosophy, science, theology or even the environment studies themselves, do all these spheres of knowledge have substantial and potential in finding solutions to rectify these questions and problems? Why and where did we as human beings, endowed with reason, go awry? Who is responsible for such a terrifying reality?

We need, I think, theoretical solutions which translate into practical actions that are both philosophically and ecologically oriented and advocate vital change. Fidel Castro suggested that humankind itself is an endangered species because of environmental changes are

⁵ Maathai, *Replenishing the Earth*, p. 57-58, 2010.

⁶ Maslin, *Global Warming, a very short introduction (Summary)*, Chapters 1 & 2, 2002.

drastically altering faster than we can recognize. He wrote in his opening address to the world leaders at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992:-

Enough of selfishness. Enough of schemes of domination. Enough of insensitivity, irresponsibility and deceit. Tomorrow will be too late to do what we should have done a long time ago.⁷

The destruction of nature challenges man to develop a new outlook and to search for new knowledge. It challenges him to stop the selfishness, domination, insensitivity, irresponsibility and deceit and instead to start anew in order to protect the whole of creation, nature in particular. A side effect is that the extinction of species, plants and animals would ultimately lead not only to the endangerment of human beings but even more so to the Earth that belongs to everyone and everything, thus, people, plants, animals, rocks, insects, etc. are interconnected. A human being who is invested with reason is challenged to humble himself and to face up to these new challenges that are so strong as a result of his advancing civilization and its technological achievements.

In recent years there have been numerous debates and studies in the field of collective knowledge about man's relation to nature with special reference to ecology and the environment. These discussions and studies have put into question our intellectual claims to have made achievements and advancements at the expense of our duty to environmental care. Kenyan philosopher Oruka [1997] made reference to this concern in his introductory address to the participants at an ecophilosophical conference in Nairobi: -

There is today a growing concern all over the world with the issue of the study and preservation of the environment. Given this concern, it is not difficult to foresee that environment will sooner or later be recognized as one of the conventional disciplines of study in schools and universities.⁸

The current state of the environment puzzles anyone who is aware of it and gives rise to a number of objective questions:

- Why was the environment/ecology as an intellectual discipline never taught in schools or universities?
- Why was nature never taught as a subject even though it is the first stage of knowing? (We begin our learning primarily by being in touch with reality and nature, by seeing people, domestic animals, trees, rocks, by touching fruit, etc.)

⁷ Castro, *Tomorrow is Too Late*, p. 4, 1993.

⁸ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p, 234, 1997.

- Why are treatises/discussions on nature not found in the writings of earlier great thinkers, such thinkers and philosophers as Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, theologians like St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas or Pope Benedict?

In his essay *Ecophilosophy* Oruka posed such questions though he didn't offer a substantial reason as to why the subject was not taught. Oruka was able to point out that the lack of teaching was a consequence of the absence of the study of nature in the sphere of knowledge especially from the beginning of civilization. The lack of attention the human mind paid to other members of this planet became noticeable with Egyptian and Greek scholars following intellectuals who have adopted their views of nature without further critique. The absence of study of nature for a period of time by intellectuals never gave way to a systematic approach to it as a discipline of research. Philosophy has not historically encouraged or promoted the study of nature and thus not explicitly advocated the equilibrium among all members of the planet. Oruka amongst other thinkers has noted that the historical omission of the study of the environment is one the causes of the ecological crisis. He wrote: 'the environment hardly gets treated as a subject of systematic and intensive study of philosophy. [However] there are scholars who have argued that the history of philosophy has not helped to encourage preservation attitudes to the natural world.'⁹

Such disturbing and puzzling ecological questions are evident in the thinking of Edward Osborne Wilson who argued that humanity lost its way in the course of history and has changed its way by ascending from nature rather than ascending to nature. Man has destroyed nature in order to improve his life without considering that his life depend on other members of the cosmos. Wilson was of the opinion that mankind's loss of direction might have begun at the inception of civilization when it started to part ways with nature. The history of civilization according to him was purchased by betraying nature:

According to archaeological evidence, we strayed from nature with the beginning of civilization roughly ten thousand years ago. That quantum leap beguiled us with an illusion of freedom from the world that had given us birth. It nourished the belief that the human spirit can be moulded into something anew to fit changes in the environment and culture and as a result the timetables of history desynchronized.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid, p. 243, 1997.

¹⁰ Wilson, *The Creation*, p. 10, 2006.

The possible answers to the above questions, why man has strayed from nature, started largely when humanity perceived that it, as human beings, has another nature called culture.¹¹ People have considered themselves to be more civilized than nature and have developed the logic and value of ascending away from nature rather than ascending to it through dualism, especially cognitive power. In the history of knowledge and the historical development of civilization nature as a discipline was never appreciated nor conceived as something that required its discourse. As it developed and advanced with great interest and desire in commercial and industrial democracy the study of nature never became of academic interest in either of these ancient societies. Men in both of these old communities (Egypt und Greece) were trained and elected to run commercial and industrial offices; they were expected to do the right thing, were controlled and evaluated by reason. Reason was a tool felt to be unique to the human race, it became a guide in helping man to decide for himself what is worthy and what is evil. The causes and effects that brought happiness to man were considered to be good and for this reason targeted and cultivated and the actions with adverse effects on man, which were wrong, consequently were avoided. Societal norms were established guided by reason in order to guide man to act against what would bring him pain especially physical pain.

In short, the history of philosophy especially of ethics developed a gradual division in favour of reasoned norms that could be taught or learned which was in opposition to nature whose physicality tended to be absent. The reason that is only found in human beings was cultivated as a tool for achieving all that pertained to his standard right i.e. as means of reducing the physical pain and was also used to isolate things that were not safe for human beings. Reasonable things were vital and natural things were left out as less important. The less important was later translate to include different races, gender etc. Val Plumwood quotes Hartsock (1990: 161) about the negative use of reason.

¹¹ Bookchin, *Philosophy of Social Ecology*, p, 31-32, 1990. He made a valid distinction between nature and culture which are both inherent in human beings. 1st nature is composed of the natural world, biological nature, and complex life-forms. [...] It is in the first nature, in the primal sense of a fossils record that clearly leads to mammalian, primate and human life. It is in the first nature that exhibit a high-degree of orderly continuity in the actualization of potentialities that made for more complex and self-awareness or subjective life forms. 2nd nature is known as culture or synonymous with society. The human species has these capacities (intelligibilities, self-reflexive and communicative) to an extent that is unprecedented in any existing life form. Man has awareness of himself and his ability to generalize.

The structure of reason/nature dualism and its variants is the perspective of power; it represents ‘a way of looking at the world characteristic of the dominant White, male, Eurocentric ruling class, a way of dividing up the world that puts an omnipotent subject at the centre and constructs marginal Others as sets of negative qualities.’¹²

In the course of history, especially from the 20th century, a conflict between reason and nature arose whereby man started questioning the objectivity of nature. The vivacity of human beings, the connection to nature was designated by the constant realization of our reliance on it; the oxygen we breathe, the water we use, the food we eat, the nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the soil, etc.. Most questions that arose during this period were both speculative and practical in character: 1) Can man survive without depending on all these? 2) What percentage of water, air, food, etc., is in our bodies? 3) What percentage of nature is in my body or our bodies?

These are biological question and themes which I don’t intend to venture into such organic and other related issues and questions in this dissertation but instead, the ideas I am working with suggest certain other concerns that don’t have immediate solutions: a) Is there anything good, orderly and rational in nature? b) Can human beings learn anything from the natural order? c) Can humanity ascend or perceive the interconnectedness to or nature instead of the contrary d) Where and when did humanity disregard his first nature at the expense of his evolution? e) Which systems of thought were used by man in his approach to reality/the environment? f) Is there another system of thought that can be used to approach the ecological crisis? g) Are there any groups of human beings who are still connected with nature and can formulate their wisdom from other members of Earth?

The economy of nature has been defined by different thinkers at various times as an unevenness of causes and in a variation of ways and each theorist has sought its understanding and interpretation of nature. In the same fashion it became a guide, a set of rules, an order or a law that they could follow to establish a better way of living and of relating to nature. These thinkers and their different reasons, understandings and interpretations of nature have led to numerous ethical/ecological arguments and solutions. Others like Oruka [1997, p, 243] termed this understanding and interpretation of environment, ecophilosophy.¹³ These different views of reality and on nature in particular have resulted in a broad range of ecological arguments and even contradictory solutions.

¹² Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 44, 1993

¹³ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p, 243, 1997.

These ethical arguments have persisted throughout the history of ecology.¹⁴ These discussions began with a fundamental question, if I may use the words of Worster ‘whether nature has an order or a pattern that we human beings are bound to understand and respect, [or] whether the human being must assign such value to nature.’¹⁵ The answer to such question depends on the objectivity of nature or the subjectivity of humanity. The question can be countered in an affirmative way, objective – yes, nature has an order and a design. Thus, nature has its values. Contrarily, in a negative way, subjectively – no, nature has no intrinsic value and we human beings must for this reason assign a value to it.

Let me begin by analysing the arguments of those who prefer a negative response to the whether question. The advocates of no answer believes that nature has no order and pattern and thus no intrinsic value. They look at nature as a storehouse of resources or a black box to be structured and be used by human beings as they wish for it has no values in itself other than those values assigned by human beings. This view is usually referred as instrumentalism and promoters of these views have tried to achieve scientific and theological mastery over the non-human world through technology, ethics, philosophy, economics, politics, etc.

Those who prefer an affirmative response claim that the order in nature has an intrinsic value that exists independently of human beings and these values and laws are not anything that we people bestow on nature. We can only acknowledge the patterns and then are we obliged to understand, preserve and respect them. Paul Taylor a leading proponent of this view sums up its complexity as follows:

We must keep in mind that inherent worth is not some mysterious sort of objective property belonging to living things that can be discovered by empirical

¹⁴ Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, p. 15-26, 2003. The central ecological and environmental arguments or debates could be summarised in the following; what is considered valuable in nature? What is the intrinsic value of nature? Two concepts can be differentiated: instrumental and non-instrumental. a) The instrumentalist assigns a value to something because of its usefulness and as a means to an end and b) the non-instrumentalist, who doesn’t assign a value but sees nature as a means and an end in itself. The origin of such a value is the human being or it is something else already in existence in the world which human beings recognize rather than bring into being. These different points of view lead to great debates which are viewed from two perspectives: the value subjectivist argues that the intrinsic value is something which humans create and attach to their own lives, the lives of others or even of things, while the value objectivist argues that non-instrumental values are not something which humans create but something already in the world and particularly in things. Thus, values in nature are not our creation; we have to recognise, respect and understand these values as already present in nature. This is the main domain of my research and the centre of this dissertation.

¹⁵ Worster, *Nature’s Economy*, ix, 1994.

observation or scientific investigations. To ascribe inherent worth to an entity is not to describe it by citing some features discernible by sense perception or invariably by inductive reasoning, nor is there a logical connection between the concepts of a being having a good of its own and the concept of inherent worth. We do not contradict ourselves by asserting that an entity has a good of its own but lacks inherent worth. In order to show that such entity has inherent worth we must give good reasons for ascribing that kind of value to it. Although it is the human, who must do the valuing of the ethics of respect for nature the value so ascribed is not a human value, that is to say it is not a value derived from consideration regarding human well-being or human rights. It is a value that is ascribed to non-human animals and plants themselves, independently of their relationship to what humans judge to be conducive to their own good.¹⁶

This is the centre and the idea that I intend to build my dissertation upon that the value of non-human beings is attributed to them independently of our relationship with them. The ideas entail being more a human being objective rather than subjective especially on the outlook on nature.

The affirmation or negation of the whether question has intrinsic value and order in nature has dominated the history of ecology for a long time. On the positive side, reason, as an instrument found only in human beings, has been used to discover and rediscover the intrinsic value in nature. Negatively, reason has also been used to exploit nature. In the history of ecology, one can between affirmation trace a continual shift and negation of order in nature, but this shifting from affirmation to negation and back again did not ultimately corrode the ecological thought. Worster used a good metaphor to describe this constant shifting back and forth. "The environmental persistence, [the ecological thought, my expression] is like a man who has lived many lives and not forgotten any of them."¹⁷

Oruka also affirms that there are scholars who have contributed positively to the awareness of the order and value of nature. I think it is essential that such intellectuals become better known [who were they] and apart from this reason we should make use of their contributions, especially their concepts, in order to uplift and restore the relationship between human beings and nature. The scholar's contributions would help create awareness and the importance of biological questions and the urgent attention we need to allot to the other inhabitants of the

¹⁶ Taylor, *Environmental Ethics, the Ethics of Respect for Nature*, vol. 3, 197- 281, 1981.

¹⁷ Worster, *Nature's Economy*, x, 1994.

planet. In this view, “the contributions of these classical scholars are a useful contribution to the awareness of the value of the environment and nature.”¹⁸

From the above quotation one is inclined to pursue the question: Who are these classical philosophers or scientists? What were their backgrounds in decision making? What role and influence did their education, their families/societies or the environment play in their way of thinking? The aim of this chapter is essentially six-fold.

Firstly, to identify some classical philosophers and scientists who have developed different concepts and understanding of nature as an attempt to answer the whether question from the outlook of the 18th century. Secondly, to indicate author's background and environmental influence as a way of trying to be as objective as possible especially in an attempt to show how people and nature are interrelated if not interconnected. Thirdly, to show that concepts originate from an individual who exists at a particular time and place. It is through a singular culture that ideas and concepts first develop even though they might continue to be implicit beyond the boundaries and horizons of the original thinking and living culture. Fourthly, to demonstrate how reason, as a powerful instrument in human beings, is used to justify and affirm an order of nature that man is obliged to respect and obey. Fifthly, to identify concepts that are both suitable and useful in the positive view of the ecological crisis from various individuals who are not well known. Lastly, for the sake of my curiosity and knowledge, I have never before had the opportunity to study and venture into the realm of ecophilosophy a new paradigm and canon in the field of education.

The chapter, historical in nature, acts as the primary basis for understanding the other chapters of the dissertation and in the line of thought of Oruka who was sure that there are some scholars who have written about ecophilosophy or environment. Who are they?

¹⁸ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 243, 1997.

1.2 Phase 1. The Naturalist Phase, Gilbert White: ¹⁹

White was born in Selborne in 1720 and died in 1793. He became a vicar and worked in the church in Selborne, England. In the Selborne Parish he had good contacts with other Christians as their pastor and took great pleasure from the natural environment. His remarkable contribution to ecology and nature lies in his book *The Natural History of Selborne* published in 1789. I will attempt to highlight some of the concepts he used that might be of use to ecological understanding and in trying to answer the whether question. Most of his ecological notions are articulated in his pastoral and private letters.

From the various letters that White wrote to his friends Thomas Pennant and Daines Barrington one can ascertain the different ecological themes that he was trying to put across. From his programme which he followed on a daily basis various issues, topics and advice about nature and life can be observed and deduced. White might not have been systematic in his thinking but some of the themes that arise in ecology today are visible in his writings. In describing his parish life in a letter addressed to Pennant, White showed an appreciation of the aesthetic value of nature: -

When I used to rise in the mornings last autumn and see the swallows and martins clustering on the chimneys and thatch of the neighbouring cottage, I could not help being touched by a secret delight, mixed with some degree of mortification: With delight to observe with how much ardour and punctuality those little birds obeyed the strong impulses towards migration or hiding imprinted on their mind by their great Creator, and with some degree of mortification when I rejected that after all our pains and inquiries, we are not yet quite certain to what regions they migrate and are still further embarrassed to find that some do not actually migrate at all.²⁰

In the parish life programme White was able to write down what he observed daily and in his observations on nature White was able to see how human beings merged in an interrelated way with all other creatures and the seasons. It was through his empirical knowledge that he inferred the interrelatedness of creatures. A good example of this interrelatedness according to

¹⁹ Mabey, Gilbert White, *A Biography of the Author of the Natural History of Selborne*, 1999

²⁰ Ibid, p, 116, 1999.

his view is his observation of “oxen and cattle cooling themselves or insects as being indirect food for the fish.”²¹

Such empirical observations and knowledge allowed White to conclude that nature is a great economist for it converts the reproduction of one animal into support for another. From the biography²² of White, one cannot deny that it was White’s religious upbringing that moulded his thinking especially his outlook on reality and the role of Divine Providence in nature. White saw how the Divine had planned everything to create a stable and unitary equilibrium especially in his home rural village. The following passage seems to demonstrate that his general understanding of the intrinsic value of all inhabitants of the planet even those as lowly as the reptiles, insects and Earthworms, was consequent upon his religious upbringing.

The most insignificant insects and reptiles are of much more consequence and have much more influence in the economy of nature than the incurious are aware of, and are mighty in their effect, from their minuteness, which renders them less an object of attention, and from their numbers and fecundity.²³

In another letter White wrote to encourage and to urge his friends, Pennant in particular, to take up the study of nature and to first habituate his mind by attending to the migration of the birds. Intellectual advancement and discipline should be incorporated, according to White, since it enriches one’s activeness on nature instead of remaining passive. White called this activeness a moral virtue:

Happy the man who knows, like you, how to keep himself innocently and usefully employed; especially where his studies tend to the advancement of knowledge and benefit the society. And happy would it be for many more men of the fortune if they know what to do with their time; if they knew how to shun ‘The pain and penalties of idleness,’ how much dissipation riot and excess would escape; not without the complacency of finding themselves growing still better neighbours and better Commonwealths men.²⁴

Most members of White’s parish were Commonwealth men who could appreciate, accept and re-discover nature. In doing so they were in a situation to re-establish an inner sense and harmony between themselves and nature through outer physical reconciliation. The climate of

²¹ Ibid, p. 116, 1999.

²² Ibid, p. 1, 1999

²³ Ibid, p. 117, 1999.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 116, 1999.

Selborne was so conducive to the extent that it created an intimate unit of human social life and in this social life one could look at the natural world in close quarters and generate from it an understanding, respect and an insight into kind tenderness of living things.

We could ask ourselves if the industrial and economic upheavals of White's time had any effect on his life and way of thinking. Was he as a leader of the Church in any way inclined to accept scientific achievements? Did he display any utilitarian inclination? Did nature play an advantageous role in supporting and improving the lifestyle of his parishioners? White could respond to such questions as follows:

Instead of examining the minute distinction of various species of each obscure genus, the botanist should endeavour to make himself acquainted with those that are useful. [...] The botanist that could improve the sward of the district where he lived would be a useful member of the society. To raise a thick turf on a naked soil would be worth volumes of systematic knowledge; and he would be the best Commonwealth's man that could occasion for the growth of "two blades of grass where one alone was seen before."²⁵

1.2.1 Observations

White in his writings as well as his life advocated a denial of pure reason and science but he aimed at a simple and humble life. The ordinary life was to re-establishing the individual to a peaceful coexistence with other organisms and in order to establish communion with nature in general.

According to his biography White returned to his rural village and lived there until his death. He believed that all harmony with nature was found, not in Selborne town per se but in his rural and up-country life. He felt that others could find his personal realization of the Selborne dream of reanimating man's loyalties to the Earth and nature in rural life in general. A man living in his rural life, according to White, could quickly rediscover his relatedness to nature and in studying nature the individual can find his inner sense, peace and harmony.

How many people in our modern time still admire the countryside way of life? With modern technology and scientific advancement who is still interested in having contact with nature?

²⁵ White in Worster, *Nature's Economy*, p. 9, 1994.

The harmony, peace, etc. with and in nature in our time, I do firmly believe, will definitively require another outlook, a new definition of how we can harmoniously live with nature.

According to White man belongs to the whole organic system. The new Oxford Dictionary of English defined organism as:

Any complex thing or system having properties and functions determined not only by the properties and relations of its individual parts, but by the character of the whole that they compose, and by the relations of the parts to the whole.²⁶

We can say, therefore, that in the view of White human beings are part and parcel of the whole natural system. He belongs to the larger community of nature thus being mostly related with them as part and to the whole but White never revealed the meaning of the concept organism.

White never directly used concepts such as vitalism, holism, moral epitome relatedness, etc, however, such expressions such as “Man must know his neighbours, or I could not help being touched with the secret, the delight” could lead one to conclude that he was egalitarian. White had a tendency to value all things in nature equally.

We can for this reason conclude that with White, new concepts that confirm our whether question of order and reason are visible in nature. Concepts such as peaceful coexistence with other organisms, communion with nature from the human being’s perspective is a demand. The personal realization of people (the inner self) exists in nature and we are interrelated even with the smallest living beings such as insects and earthworms. Man, therefore, needs to see or open his mind to the order in nature to try to understand and respect thereby recognizing the intrinsic value of the others. It is modest when man observes this rational order in nature that he can be in harmony with himself and his non-human neighbours, hence, moving to nature instead of alienating himself from it.

Earthworms, though in appearance a small and despicable link in the chain of nature, yet, if lost, would make a lamentable chasm ... worms seem to be the great promoters of vegetation, which would proceed but lamely without them.²⁷

²⁶ Pearsall and Hanks, *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2001.

²⁷ Linnaeus, in Hagberg, *Curriculum Vitae* (summary), 1952.

1.2.2 Carl Linnaeus²⁸

The second naturalist was Carl Linnaeus was born on 23rd May 1707 who grew up in the province of Smaland, a kindly and beautiful part of the country rich with flowers. His father had a good knowledge of botany both in theory and in practice and a good botanical garden in his vicarage, and the activities he undertook there would become an important factor in Linnaeus's future life. In Boerhoaver, Linnaeus was able to study and produce his famous book *Systema Naturae* which contains his revolutionary systematization of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms. In 1758, he bought a country estate at Hammer outside Uppsala and preferred to live on this land because of its profuse flowers.

In 1791 Linnaeus wrote an essay on *Oeconomy of Nature* a summary of his ecological point of view. In it he presents a thoroughly static portrait of the geobiological interaction in nature where all movements take place in a one by one confined sphere. The primary movements which define the natural economic system of this area are a cyclical pattern that keeps returning to its original point of departure. At the foundation of the natural orders is the hydrological cycle i.e. the continuous circulation of water, from the exhalation of seas and rivers into the form of rainfall and snow and hence back to the sea; this flow takes place in the terrestrial kingdom (fossils, vegetables, and animals). The round of seasons, the birth and aging of man, the course of a day, the formation and wearing away of every rock are all caused by the characteristics of the terrestrial kingdom. It all takes three types of unending, interlocking processes: propagation, preservation and destruction. In this rotating Wheel of existence everything is evolving but nothing ever changes. Linnaeus argued that the methods of renewal and preservation contrived by God serve to perpetuate the established course of nature to exist in a continuous state. Linnaeus also saw God as a supreme economist who had designed the Earth as a household and as a housekeeper. Worster quoted Linnaeus's reasoning:

By the economy of nature, we understand the all-wise disposition of the Creator in relation to natural things, by which they are fitted to produce general ends and reciprocal uses. [...] Whoever duly turn his attention to the things on this our terraqueous globe must necessarily confer duly that they are so connected, so chained together that they all aim at the same end, and to this end a vast number of intermediate ends are subservient. [...] and it seems to me that a greater

²⁸ Ibid. 1952.

subject than this cannot be found, nor one on which laborious men may worthily employ their industry[...] ²⁹

Under the influence of his religious upbringing Linnaeus thought that the Creator was the cause of rational order and harmony in nature and believed that the food chains of what we would now call ecosystems demonstrated this. The example he gave was that of the system of plants and animals; each animal has a particular plant to eat, what is edible to a horse is not appetising to a goat or a sheep. The weather and the environment also have a role in determining which foods an animal can eat. The peculiarity and uniqueness of each animal and plant are well-ordered by its instincts and its smell. “On plants, some are made to be impatient of cold and to live in the tropics while others in the frigid climate. A wise Creator has endowed each organism with clothing, seed, roots or migratory instinct needs to perform its role best.”³⁰

Linnaeus could therefore conclude that every creature or species partakes in a rational order. Each creature has its own allotted place that is both its location in space and its function (or work) in the general economy. All these areas and services in creatures create harmony in nature. Through God’s hierarchical arrangement each species serves to support others as it earns its living.

Thus, the tree-house lives upon plants. The fly called Musca - aphidovora lives upon the tree-house. The hornet and wasp fly upon the Musca - aphidovora. The dragonfly upon the hornet and wasp, the spider upon the dragonfly, a small bird on the spider and lastly, the hawk on the small birds.

Linnaeus did not treat human beings like any other species living on the planet. In the Divine Order human beings occupy a special place of dignity and honour but man has always been ambitious in relation to nature and its surroundings. Man could utilize his fellow species for his sake and advantage and use his faculties responsibly and with an aim of eliminating the undesirable and multiplying desirable species as he saw suitable. He wrote:

All these treasures of nature, so artfully contrived, so wonderfully propagated, so providentially supported throughout her three kingdoms seemed intended by the creator for the sake of man. Everything may be made subservient to his use, if not immediately not so to that of other animals. By the help of reason, man

²⁹ Linnaeus in Worster, *Nature’s Economy*, p. 37-38, 1994.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 34, 1994.

tames the fiercest animal, pursues and catches the swiftest; nay, he can reach even those which lie hidden in the bottom of the sea.³¹

Linnaeus was inclined to think that a man may use all things in nature for his sake and enjoy them as a way of admiring the good works of his Creator. This admiration of the good works of the Creator could compel a human being to exploit his fellow species to his own advantage. In such discerning Linnaeus betrayed a utilitarian element in his thought.

1.2.2.1 Observations

From the above articulated examples it is apparent that Linnaeus conceived nature as a unified whole. The Creator, the supreme economist, has arranged the internal structures of all that exists. He has designed an integrated order of nature and all Creation or nature aims at the same end; the whole of nature is teleologically oriented. This decree functions like a single universe, a well-oiled machine. The harmony of economy/creation was meant to serve as evidence of the existence of a Provident Creator. The economy metaphor was used by Linnaeus to describe the harmonious balance that exists in nature which meant each member of the natural community had a function and a role to play in life as a whole.

The metaphor of a well-ordered and a well-oiled machine in which each member has a particular function and role in the natural community was rediscovered later and put to use by many different schools of thought. Modern fields of knowledge have also discovered this metaphor and put it to work and later it became a method of analysing nature as a whole. Guided by the questions of his time, what nature is and what it ought to be, Linnaeus affirmed that nature has a goal or an order. For this reason man can learn from the metaphor in handling the environment and himself. But he can also use the metaphor to distort or organize his affairs in such ways that run counter to the harmonious balance that exists in nature. Nature is commonly observed as an external object and not as an integral part of the being human.

Many scientists who came after Linnaeus picked up on the mechanical artefacts of nature and they found ways of rationalizing natural phenomena on one hand and the products of human labour on the other. These scientists and engineers were concerned with the image of detachable and replaceable mechanical parts that could be joined smoothly together by the external skill of the artisan. Nature therefore was echoed as only another machine by them and human being

³¹ Ibid. p, 37, 1994.

can and was allowed to control and manipulate nature for his betterment.³² Negatively, one can view this as an instrumental attitude towards the cosmos, whereby nature was observed by man with scientific and technological achievements for his comfort and happiness. Isaac Newton is an excellent example. He regarded nature as an instrument for man's betterment: "Nature as a universal system of mathematical reason and orderly created and administered."³³ For Newton, God was the crucial motive force behind the cosmic machine, the unexplainable source of energy that is needed to keep its order perfect and regular.

Another group of scientists developed their understanding of Linnaeus's concept of nature in the following way, like Linnaeus, they accepted the existence of a Supreme Being who was responsible for all creation and opted to collect and classify the facts of nature. For them however, instead of accepting the authority of the Supreme Being, they transferred the power of the economy of nature from the Supreme Being to nature itself. A good example is Charles Darwin in his famous book, *The Origin of Species*, 1859, by means of Natural Selection.

We can identify in Linnaeus's argument an element of instrumentalist who hold that nature is a store from which we as human beings can withdraw what we want for our use regardless of the equilibrium of nature. The consequence of such a view leads one to a consideration of the anthropocentric ethics of human thinking which puts people above other creatures. Many critics accuse environmentalists of having a short-term outlook. The environmental usefulness varies with its importance, the trees for herbs ensures water supplies and purifyies the atmosphere, absorbing the carbon dioxide, preventing soil erosion, providing fundamental human basic needs, food, firewood, building materials, textiles, providing habitat for small animals and birds, etc.. This usefulness is addressed in a temporary technique rather than looking for lasting solutions to the imbalance in the ecosystem.

The Divine Intervention of God's hand on nature was interchanged by reason as a new utilitarian group. This functional group could have emerged from reading Linnaeus writings about the role of man in nature. God in his bountiful goodness created every animate and inanimate thing in nature for the benefit of man³⁴ a good example is Judean Christian thought which from a wrong interpretation has given man freedom and responsibility to demythologize

³² Kirkman, *Sceptical Environmentalism*, p. 55, 2002.

³³ Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 611, 1999.

³⁴ *The Bible*, Genesis, 1,

nature for his advantage. The human being is unique with reason and should use it as a means in order to conquer the natural world

“Man must use nature to be happy politically.”³⁵ The pleasure was the common saying of a clutch of politicians whose arguments were on national productivity and harnessed the efficiency of nature. Instead of wishing to preserve the environment as a source of natural resources for all in the community and not as a commodity this group saw their mission as exploitation. They started exploiting the forest, livestock, farms and fisheries as their view of nature as a whole especially the land was as a means of supporting the economy, a sight of man’s management of the cosmos for political and economic survival. Each nation needed a factory and an industry, a plant for processing raw material and an industry for manufacturing chemicals (hence the need for chemical science) was presented as a step in human development.

The White mans’ development was the objective of missionaries, explorers, colonialists and all the others who scrambled for Africa between 1880 and 1900. Today we are faced with a new colonization in an economic era under the umbrellas of UNO, IMF, WHO, Free Market trade, etc. The foreign debt, IMF, for example, has become a way of controlling developing Nations and little attention is given to their ecological problems. In developing countries the biosphere is still relatively in contact as compared to developed and yet they, developing, continue to fuel the expansion of the richer countries at the cost of their present and future. Free Market Trade, I think, would never invest in the developing nations on equal terms of business with developed nations. The price paid for raw materials in developing countries, for example, is an equally small percentage to what it costs in their own developed countries. In the process of these imbalanced trade activities natural resources, deforestation, agricultural improvements, etc. are left in devastating conditions. The consequences of such imbalance are caused by a political and economical view on nature and nations. This imbalance in the political and economical view create a negative side effect on climate change the destruction of the basic elements in the soil and water just to mention a few.

Linnaeus from his *Oeconomy of Nature* was able to see that all things are interconnected and that in these links nothing exists in isolation from anything else. “Human beings, plants, birds, insects, worms, [...] are all dependent upon one another for their survival and existence.”³⁶

³⁵ Leopold, *For the Health of the Land*, p. 47-54, 1999.

³⁶ Linnaeus in Worster, *Nature’s Economy*, p, 35, 1994.

1.3 Phase 2. The Romantic Phase: Henry David Thoreau - Biographical note³⁷

Thoreau was born in 1817 in Concord, Massachusetts, USA and he was able to learn Greek, Latin, French, German and Spanish at the same time and he also took other courses such as Mathematics, English, History, Natural and Intellectual Philosophy. In 1841, Thoreau lived with a neighbour called Ralph Waldo Emerson who was the leader of the Transcendentalist movement. At Emerson's Thoreau immersed himself in both reading and writing, studied books about nature and he occupied himself with his writings especially the *Journals*. In 1845, Thoreau returned to Walden Pond, built a cabin on the land owned by Emerson and concentrated further on writing the *Journals*. Among his other writings were books, essays, poetry and letters. Thoreau wrote where he lived and what he lived for:

I went to the wood because I wished to live deliberately, to front the essential facts of life and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, to discover that I had not lived.³⁸

The Transcendentalist movement was significant in Thoreau's time.³⁹ Emerson wrote an article in the Transcendentalist *On a right relation between the generation of him and nature*, whereby previously God and nature lived together as they had in Paradise, face to face, but now in their generation the relationship had fallen apart. The conviction of the imminence or indwelling presence of God in the soul of human persons was the fundamental principle of Transcendentalism. This sentence transformed Thoreau's perception of nature for he was dismayed by his ancestors who had maimed nature and distorted the relationship. The past generation displayed an imperfect understanding of nature and has destroyed their relationship with it. It was during the time of his ancestors that the environment lost its paradise phase. Thoreau wrote, therefore:

I take infinite pains to know the phenomena of the spring, for instance, thinking that I have here the entire poem and then, to my chagrin, I hear that it is but an imperfect copy that I possess and have read, that my ancestors have torn out many of the first leaves and grandest passages, and mutilated it in many places. I should not like to

³⁷ Witherell and Dubrulle, *Life and times of Thoreau*, p, 19, 1995. See also Thoreau, *Walden, an introduction and a chronology*, 1996.

³⁸ Thoreau, *Walden*, p. 85, 1996

³⁹ Worster, p, 473, 1994

think that some demigod had come before me and picked out some of the best of the stars. I wish to know an entire heaven and an entire Earth.⁴⁰

Here he was describing the natural phenomena that surrounded his home, a description led him to the conclusion that nature was a single and interrelated whole that arranged itself in perpetual balance. His human ancestors had already interfered with nature in that before Thoreau's time or during the time of his forefathers the entire heaven and the whole Earth enjoyed a non-dualistic glory since both were one. This unity of heaven and the Earth where God and nature lived together, in my view, became the basis and the ground of his perception of ecology.

Thoreau was able to carry from his childhood into his adulthood an instinctual openness that left him sensuously aware of the heaven and the Earth. In an entry in his *Journal* (July 16, 1851) Thoreau described how sensuousness grew as an essential part of his life, which he called it child experience. Thoreau saw this as history because the ancestors and scientists had forgotten the role of past experiences that we carry along our whole lifespan:

Methinks, my present experience is nothing; my past experience is all in all. I think that no experience that I have today comes up or is comparable to the experience of my childhood. And not only this is true but as far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experience of the previous state of existence. My life was ecstasy. In my youth, before I lost any of my senses; I remember that I was alive and inhabited my body with inexpressible satisfaction; both its weariness and its refreshment were sweet to me. I can remember how I was astonished. I looked in books for some recognition of a kindred experience, but strange to say, I found none. With all your science can you tell how it is, and whence it is, that light come into the soul? ⁴¹

Thoreau had romantic feelings towards the cosmos which were so powerful to him that he had to compare them symbolically with the act of creating more friends and diminishing the number of foes. All creatures should create in us a sense of viewing all things as essential and useful for our existence and all creatures are appealing to human beings in a way that is independent of human allocations. Thoreau used the common sense description to demonstrate the intimacy that exists between man and other members of nature. People ought to use this common sense relationship in order to have a better relationship with nature. An example of

⁴⁰ Thoreau in Worster, *Nature's Economy*, p. 66, 1994.

⁴¹ Thoreau, *Journal*, 1837-1861, VI, p. 60, 2009.

such common sense concept is: “I should be at least equally pleased if I were to find that grass tasted sweet and nutritious. It increases the number of friends. It diminishes the number of my foes. How easily at this could I feed me in the wood?”⁴²

Thoreau’s motivation and purpose as an ecologist are well-defined in words full of dreams and ambitions. His dreams and aspirations were devoted to the season and the landscape in which he lived. These inspirations filtered into his lived reality and became a mere rule of daily life:

I dream of looking for summer and winter abroad with free gaze, from some mountainside, while my eyes revolve in an Egyptian slime of health - I to be nature looking with such easy sympathy as the blue-eyed grass looks in the face of the sky.⁴³

Thoreau’s amended his reaction to nature as a visceral sense of belonging to the Earth and its organic cycle. The senses of smell, touch and sight connected him to the vast alliance and universal relatedness that constituted nature. Thoreau was not able to feel himself extended beyond the limits of his individual physical body, but he was able to achieve access to the vital energy that resides in nature. Thoreau grew up knowing that day-to-day physical intimacy with nature was essential and more experiential and tangible than abstract. Moving in a different direction, a mile or a halfmile, going South or North, visiting towns or villages, mountains or ponds, lakes or land, even in the change from night or day, gave Thoreau a profound sense of his freedom with the cosmos.

[...] small lake was of the most value as a neighbour of a gentle rainstorm in August when both the air and water being perfectly still. [...] All the serenity of evening and the wood thrush sang around. [...] A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time and the clear portion of the air above. It's being shallow and darkened by clouds the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself, so much the more important. There is none happy in the world, but beings who enjoy a vast horizon freely.

Thoreau not only advocated the gathering of empirical knowledge about nature as a source of relatedness but also as an aid in the search for truth. By contemplating on nature so he

⁴² Ibid, VIII, p. 88, 2009.

⁴³ Ibid, VIII, p. 79, 2009.

believed, abstract universal concepts could be anecdotal as Thoreau process of inference he thought of in terms of putting nature into the stomach.

I feel I could eat the very crust of the Earth. I never felt so terrene, never sympathized so with the surface of the Earth. [...] Very few men can speak of nature of any truth. They confer no favour. They do not speak a good word for her. Most cry better than speak. You can get more nature out of them by pinching than addressing them. It is naturalness and not simply good nature that interest. I like better the surliness with which the woodchoppers speak of his woods, handling them as indifferently as his axe, than mealy-mouthed enthusiasm of the love of nature. Better that the primrose by the river's brim is a yellow primrose and nothing more than the victim of his bouquet or herbarium, to shine with the flickering dull light of his imagination. How alone must our life be lived? We dwell on the seashore and none between us and the sea.⁴⁴

Thoreau was much more concerned about the Native American's emphasis on knowledge gained through nearness to nature than the approach of science. Thoreau not only respected from afar the Native American's firm self-reliance and entirely harmonious relationship to the wilderness but it also inspired him to live a similar life himself. To be closer to nature is to be closer to the creative and the generative forces of life. The Native American's total immersion in the wilderness was for Thoreau highly enviable. In his *Journal*, he wrote:

We could fail to know something more about these animals, stones and trees around us. Our scientific names convey very partial information only; they suggest certain thought only. It does not occur to me that there are other names for most of these objects, given by a people who stood between me and them, who have better sense than our race. [...] It is not a tree of life. But there are twenty words for the tree and its different parts which the Indian gave which are not in our botanies, which imply a more practical and vital science.[...] No science does more. [...] But generally speaking how much conversant was the Indian with the wild animals or plants than we are, and in his language is implied all that intimacy, as much as ours is expressed in our language. The Indian stood nearer to the wild nature than we. [...] A dictionary of the Indian language reveals another and wholly new life to us.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Thoreau, *Journal*, 13/3, 1841, p. 18- 19, 2009.

⁴⁵ Thoreau, *Journal* 5/3/ 1858, 2009.

Thoreau was attempting to bring man close to nature, which – as in the quotation above – he often referred to as his neighbour. Achieving this closeness to nature however involved more than just knowing nature first through empirical knowledge and then by abstract means but it was also necessary to draw nature into the self as well as the self into nature. Thoreau saw the proximity of man to it as a relatedness that he never hesitated to describe in the form of a mystery.

The mystery of the life plants is kindred to that of our own lives and the physiological must not presume to explain their growth according to mechanical laws or as he might explain some machinery of his own making. We must not accept to probe with our fingers the sanctuary of any life whether animal or vegetables; if we do, we shall discover nothing, but the surface still.⁴⁶

In Thoreau's view human beings are mysteriously related to and intricately bound up with nature. The individual can see only one life, one force, a vital energy that courses through everything and that man cannot stand outside them. If he endeavours to do so, he becomes a stranger to his self – the deepest source of the mystery for him and the challenge is to see and accept the vital energy that requires a better relationship with the ecosystem.

1.3.1 Observations

The romantic phase wished to initiate a return to the old pagan intuitive approach to nature in which everything is alive and pulsing with energy or spirit. Human beings, according to Thoreau, should look for a holistic and integrated mode of perception that emphasises the interdependence and relatedness of man and environment. This relational argument is Thoreau's, an attempt to reinstate man to his original state of oneness with nature at a time when he was hastily uprooted from his land and tradition. The romantic phase, in my view, sought to restore man to his original connection with the vast organism that constitutes the Earth. This is well-known in an expression of his: "Isolated from the world, man is naked, like a bird lost from its flock."⁴⁷ The purpose of a romantic period thought about the nature was to imprint a sense of friendliness and respectfulness to all members of the ecosystem, i.e. every member of the planet should coexist in harmony and mutual respect.

⁴⁶ Thoreau, *Journal*, 7/3/1857, p 546, 2009.

⁴⁷ Thoreau in Worster, *Nature's Economy*, p. 84, 1994

From the above ideas it is clear Thoreau never elevated human beings to a special place above the rest of the Earth's ecosystem. He never assigned extra unique rights beyond those of other members of the Earth and one can deduce that Thoreau never accepted the biblical assignment given to human beings to dominate or reshape the world to suit his tastes and to use resources of the Earth to his advantage and betterment. He denied Man's superiority and advocated that his moral authority be extended to cover all members of the cosmos. Such denial of human superiority and affirmation of the rights of non-human beings became the basis of the biocentrism argument which morality was not dualistic but a movement towards eliminating anthropocentric differences with other creatures. This view of nature as biotic should yield a love for the whole of creation and thus acknowledge the natural kinship that exists in the cosmos.

All knowledge according to Thoreau is essentially ethical and there can be no understanding of the environment without engaging love and compassion. Love is the recognition of interdependence between spirit and matter while sympathy is the capacity to feel the bond of identity, or of kinship that unites all beings within a single organism deeply. From the point of view of traditional epistemological inquiry one cannot reach the objectivity of the truth or genuine truth through love and sympathy. The principle of objectivity demands that in understanding the cosmos the observer must be released from all the emotional and spiritual qualities that it inspires.⁴⁸ But Thoreau denied the scientist the authority of truth because science had interfered with the mystery of life, he concluded, you cannot find anything but surface still.

Dogmatism – the dogged insistence on the rightness of your own favoured -ism – has been one of the factors restraining the expansion of knowledge in most cultures in different parts of the world throughout history and other disciplines such science, philosophy and theology are not exceptions. This –ism factor is more visible when two cultures meet through invasion, when the foreign invading culture believes that it knows more than the indigenous culture. The native culture was recognised during the colonization periods when Europeans underestimated African cultures. African culture exists and to assume that there is no such a thing as a unified African culture, is unjustified, however, the African culture has been characterised as primitive,

⁴⁸ Kwasi, *Cultural Universal and Particulars*, p. 21, 1996. He contradicts the above principle when he wrote: we are not born with a mind, not even with one that is a tabula rasa; we are only born with the potential of a mind (in a form of a nervous system). This potential is progressively actualised in a certain way through the barrage of sensory stimulation emanating from the purely physical (i.e., non- social) environment.

uncivilized, and other related metaphors. The European opinions are visible in all spheres of life, in religion, epistemology, etc, but in contrast, Thoreau wanted to point out the limitations of the invading European culture especially the limitations of science when approaching nature. The scientists and philosophers could themselves learn a lot from the Native Americans or other indigenous cultures. The concepts of the Native American culture can be functional universally but the biggest challenge to humanity is to seek knowledge where it can be found and avoid or reduce the -isms outlook as much as possible. All the cultures in our world need to be interpreted and upgraded to the level of the universal without giving room to relativism and this calls for an open hermeneutical mind in order to expose the hidden knowledge present in each culture that might be useful in solving the ecological crisis. We, the scholars, have to search for knowledge in every culture to improve our perception of nature no matter how primitive the culture seems to be. What unites those advanced and simple cultures are betrayed not so much by their differences but their unity, or in the philosophical concepts, the unity in diversity?⁴⁹

Thoreau was interested in the mystery of life throughout all nature and he thought that most scientific studies treated animals as dead matter or less than human beings, without anima or vital spirit. There is a mysterious force found in animals and even plants and vegetation and this mysterious dynamism that pulses throughout nature cannot be disregarded. This idea has its roots in what is known as cosmological mythology. Myths in general were conceived to have a fourfold function: explanatory, justificatory, descriptive and effectiveness which meant that their duties were irrefutable. The best-known mythologies were intended to explain the origin, the existence and even the meaning of things that were mysterious. But the whole purpose and the aim of the mystery of any living or non-living thing is an awareness of man's first mode of universal knowledge that consists of an understanding of the totality of the universe. Thus I agree with A. E. Ruch Omi and C.K. Anywanwu who wrote:

⁴⁹ Ibid, p, 22, 1996. Kwasi confirmed this statement by asking what unifies us. It is our biological cultural identity as *Hominess sapiens*. At the very minimum this status implies that we are organisms that go beyond instinct in the drive for equilibrium and self-preservation in the specific, namely by means of perception, abstraction, deduction and induction. By reflective perception I mean a kind of awareness that involves the identification of the objects and events through the conscious application of concepts and which entails consequently the power of recall and re-identification. Any being capable of reflective perception is already possessed of a concept of particulars together under general concepts and the latter themselves under still more general concepts and so on. Both deductive and inductive are already presupposed in rudimentary forms in reflective perception, for to recognise something as an X is to perceive it as an X rather than a non-X, which implies that it is not both X and not X.

I, thou, we, the universe, the past, present, and the future, God and the world mythical man does not make so many analyses of these entities in the details of their constitution. He is much more concerned with their interrelationship that binds them into one meaningful whole. *Synthesis proceeds analysis*: the myth is first and foremost a return to the cosmic order.⁵⁰

We all usually start to know through sight, touch, pain or by any of the other acknowledged modes of sensory perception. Thoreau demonstrated the importance of empirical knowledge as the basis for understanding the past, present and the future, but also nature. He carried his boyhood experience through to adulthood was the foundation for a real encounter and a reminder of the relationship with nature. The actual contact with nature is not inscribed in the language of logic or science but of the mind, especially in the memories that man carried with him his whole life. I think to sum that up in a romantic phase, Thoreau was interested in the natural process of attachment to nature. He sought to reintegrate man's consciousness into the physical world rather than to remove him from it and to divide the world into two spheres. To be impartial to Thoreau's thought the empirical knowledge is still essential as the basis of abstract knowledge, i.e. knowing and apprehending who Man is and what nature is.

⁵⁰ Ruch, and Anyanwu, *African Philosophy, an introduction to the main philosophical trends in contemporary Africa*, p. 35-37, 1981.

1.4 Phase 3. The Scientific Phase; Charles Robert Darwin - Biographical note⁵¹

Darwin was born on 12th February 1809 in Shrewsbury, England and died on 19th April 1882, was the second son of an extremely successful physician and poet of nature, Erasmus Darwin. He lived in many different locations and travelled widely and had numerous interests and his intellectual study of nature is distributed in biographically recorded travels. Here are the stages of his life and what he did in each of them: 1831-1835: Voyage period: the Beagle Voyages (empirical stage) in which Darwin made several trips to various islands. The purpose of these voyages was to collect rocks, plants and animals and he sent samples of the different species he discovered back to Oxford University in his homeland, England. In this period Darwin managed to write down what he found during the voyages, especially the many species that were not indigenous to and could not survive in his native land. Besides collecting different types of species, Darwin was able to acquire some knowledge of the geographical distribution of plants, animals, rocks and different species thus becoming a real geologist.

1836-1838: The botanist/scientist stage. Darwin describes this period as the classification of his collection. Darwin sought the classification of species with the assistance of scientists and elites such as Lyell, Josef Hooker, Robert Brown and writers such as Thomas Carlyle and Thomas Macaulay. In this period and stage, Darwin was able to classify his collections in a more scientific and in an intelligible way especially on his *Voyage of the Beagle*. Thus:

Immediately on his return home in 1836, Darwin threw himself into the enormous task of sorting out through his collections, finding scientists who could undertake the classification and writing up the records of his travels.⁵²

1838: The economic order of Nature-Web-Nature stage. Darwin settled upcountry in Down. It was here that Darwin occupied himself with the study of the species he had collected. At Down Darwin also formulated the inescapable Law of nature that he had learned on his voyages. In this period, he read an essay by Thomas Malthus in which he tried to find an explanation of the chaotic instabilities in the world.⁵³ Three problems were visible in the chaotic disturbances

⁵¹ Hutchins, editor in chief, *The Great Ideas*, p, 1-9, 1952.

⁵² Darwin in Worster, *Nature's Economy*, p 146, 1994, see also Hutchins, *The great ideas*, p. v, 1952.

⁵³ Malthus, *Essay on population*: Malthus was trying to explain the severe famine and social displacement of the mid-18th century by attributing it to rapid industrialisation and the swelling numbers in population.

of the world according to Malthus. These are the ratio of population to food, to evil, and fertility levels in a given society. Malthus explained the problem of the population and food in the following way.

- Food may increase only arithmetically in the ratio: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ...
- Population grows at a geometrical rate; 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32.....
- Therefore it follows necessarily, Malthus concluded, that the population must eventually overrun the supply of food, bringing intense competition for wages to meet the rising prices and finally to misery and starvation;

On the second problem of evil in society, Malthus explained.

- Evil was premeditated by God, not for people to despair but in order to make them creative. According to this argument it is God who is responsible for the imbalances.
- God created the imbalances or evil in society on purpose in order to make us his creatures, who hustle and work hard and so that we never become lazy.

The experiences Darwin had on his exploratory voyages opened his senses to the possibility of a liberal solution to Malthus's conservatively framed problem. He ignored his predecessor's argumentative responses and instead he found a more rational explanation for these fateful discrepancies. For Darwin, such discrepancies were the result of a long pragmatic process of selection whereby species become more perfectly attuned to the demands of the environment.

Fertility was one of the factors that caused human problems. Malthus had also seen fertility as one of the chief causes of the problem, God as the cause and determinant of fertility and its patterns. God had established it as part of nature before it entered into a relationship with other species. Man cannot be in a position to adjust fertility to suit different environments. Darwin viewed the productivity of every organism as axiomatic. But the question which remained unanswered was: what exactly determined productivity itself? Unlike Malthus, his teacher, Darwin did not want to make God responsible for such a fixed force, instead, he attributed the answer to the observations of natural phenomena. According to Darwin, fertility was never subject to any unvarying permanent force nor subject to modification by the individual's will nor the community's influence. Fertility is a characteristic upon which natural selection has operated towards the benefit of the species or organism.

All the aspects of reproduction, namely sex, libido, the mating seasons, gestation, the size of the clutch or litter, must reflect ecological circumstance. A species overruns its food supply by producing too many young ones, for instance would not survive. The selection would favour similar animals (or animals of the same species) with smaller litters, thus over time harmonizing this aspect of its fertility with its surroundings. Darwin saw the survival on the Earth of all

creatures as being determined by the other animals and plants in their neighbourhoods. All animals are necessary for the welfare of the species that cohabit side by side and they are all essential components of something like a society that we would now call an ecosystem. For Darwin, nature is a web of complex relations and “no individual organism or species can live independently of that web.”⁵⁴

4.1.1 Observation

Evolution is the product of natural selection and in his book *On the Origin of Species* Darwin built numerous theories such as embryology, comparative anatomy, palaeontology and animal breeding. It is clear that Darwin would have known nothing of modern genetics and had no notion of causes of individual variability but he based his evolution theory on ecology. After a long discovery voyage and his scientific study Darwin came to realize that evolution was as a consequence of geographical distribution and economic struggle in nature.

This dissertation is an ecological statement that presupposes that all organisms are in a complex relation with one another. Every entity exists in an intricate web and so its evolutionary course has reciprocally been determined by its interactions with the other members of that web and we, as creatures, cannot independently survive outside this complex web. A good example is the “parasitic mistletoe that must take its nourishment only from certain species of trees. Its seeds are dispersed only by individual birds and its flowers are pollinated only by a particular group of insect.”⁵⁵ We can, for this reason, conclude that in nature there exists a social relatedness and on the same concept, ecologically, all species are interdependent i.e. dependent on each other.

⁵⁴ Oruka in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 122, 1997.

⁵⁵ Darwin, on *Natural Selection*, p. 2-3, 1859.

1.5 Phase 4. The Word /Concept ecology; Ernest Haeckel – Biographical note⁵⁶

Haeckel was born on 16 February 1834 in Potsdam, Germany. In 1852, he completed his studies at the Domgymnasium of Morserburg. He studied Medicine in Berlin followed by a degree in Biological Sciences at Würzburg. In 1857, he attained a Research degree in Biology, specializing in Zoology. From 1866 until 1867 Haeckel made an extended journey to the Canary Islands with Herman Fol and it was during this period that Haeckel met Darwin. He suggested many terms including anthropology, phylum, phylogeny and ecology which are now commonly used in various fields of study. Haeckel later became a leading German disciple of Darwin especially his theory of evolution. In his resolution to bring a sense of order to a scientific world that was splitting off into many different lines of inquiry, Haeckel suggested that one branch might be given the name of *Oecologie*. He conceived it, ecology, as the study of all the environmental conditions of existence. This new paradigm, he advocated for the term, was a science of the relations of all living and non-living organisms to the external world, their habitat, customs, energies, even including their parasites. This new concept and its usage are derived from the word's etymological similarity to economy.⁵⁷ Since Haeckel's time ecology has entered into the world's lexicon although it took a while for its significance and meaning to stabilize to what we understand by the term today. Leonardo Boff has written:

Nowadays the term's reference has been extended to cover all living things. Ecology stands for the relations, interaction and dialogue of all existing creatures things (whether alive or not) among themselves and with all that exists. Nature (all living things as a whole), from elementary particles and primordial energy all the way to more complex forms of life, is dynamic; it comprises an intrinsic network of connections on all sides. Ecology encompasses not only nature (natural ecology) but culture and society (human ecology and social ecology, and so on).⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, p. 9 ff, 1996.

⁵⁷ The Greeks used the concept, *Oikos*, in referring to the family household keeper's budget and larder. Logos means reflection or study. It acquired a later meaning of 'economy of Nature' after the International Biological Congress in the 20th century. See also Boff; p. 9, 1996 and Worster, p. 192, 1994. This is a quotation from the Haeckel lecture presented at the University of Jena in 1869.

⁵⁸ Boff *Ecology and liberation*, p 9, 1996.

1. 6 Phase 5. The Ethics Extended Phase

Leopold's Maxim:

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

Leopold was born in Burlington, Iowa on 1 November 1887⁵⁹ the son of a prominent producer of fine quality walnuts and a grandson of a German-educated landscape architect who had designed a number of public buildings and parks in Burlington. Leopold grew up in Burlington and attended a scientific school in Lawrenceville. It was there that Leopold developed a lively interest in the field of ornithology and natural history. In Burlington, he began his lifelong practice of recording his observations and being keen on listening.

In 1906, Leopold began his studies of a forestry career at Yale, advanced with a Master's degree in 1909 and was appointed by the Forest Service as an Assistant Forester in Arizona and New Mexico. In 1912, Leopold became the supervisor of the Arizona national forest in Northern Mexico, in April 1913, while settling a range dispute in a remote area of the forest, Leopold was caught in a flood and he had to sleep in a wet bedroll and as a result he developed a knee inflammation. While recovering Leopold had enough time “to read and to think, and develop some interest in fishing.”⁶⁰

The general Anglo-American attitude in Leopold's time might be considered as ‘sympathy’ for wild animals. This attitude of ‘sympathy’ had two dimensions, one the intellectual and the other emotional. There was a distinction in their rational reaction to wildlife or about animals in general which were chosen as either favourite or were singled out as enemies. The Anglo-American mind exhibited a peculiarly intense moral sensibility whereby every species was allotted an absolute ethical category of right or wrong. A few animals and birds such as songbirds, cats and dogs were pronounced good but everything else of use was targeted only as bad.

⁵⁹ Flader, *Thinking like a Mountain* p, 7, 1974, see Aldo, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 296, 1996

⁶⁰ Flader, wrote that Leopold was reading the books of Thoreau which were his wedding gift. He married Esther Bergeret, a daughter of a land-rich family which was originally from Spain, p. 10, 1974.

In 1933, Leopold's work on *Game management* appeared and these pamphlets were written down after he assumed the Head of Game Management of the University of Wisconsin. In Leopold's mind nature was seen as a resource which must be recognized as such and be exploited to meet human demands. The objective purpose of management, especially of Game Management which was guided by science, was "for greater productivity of the natural resources."⁶¹

A scientist's view of nature, according to Leopold, was of an object that could be predisposed for the purposes of economic stability. The scientist had to seek to discover and understand nature in order to provide the biological facts that would in turn become the source of new techniques of manipulating it and from his point of view the ambition of game management, guided by science, was to make the Earth better for living by being more productive. Leopold died in 1948 after fighting a bush fire in Wisconsin; he died the father of Wildlife Management in America. And from his writings,⁶² one can identify a transition from the 'utilitarian' approach towards nature to one of 'ecological conservation' then the extended ethics. The entire difference outlook on nature is notable in his writings, for the *Health of the Land* (1999) and *A County Almanac*, a chapter, *The land ethics* (1949), works which demonstrated his conversion from utilitarianism view to the new outlook of ecology. Leopold intended in this new ecology to show appreciation that all members of Earth are responsible for its equilibrium and all members of cosmos have equal rights. In the introduction to his first book, *For the Health of the Land*, J. Baird Callicott and Eric T. Freyfogle wrote about the conversion in Leopold's thinking:

The overall aim of conservation was a matter that Leopold pondered all his life. As a teenager he wrote a school essay on timber famine and the need for forestry. In the 1920s he focused on soil erosion and wilderness preservation. In the 1930s, his attention shifted to the restoration and management of the game farm populations. But during the last decade of his life he came to understand that sustainable forestry, erosion control measures, wild lands reservations and game management are not ends in themselves. They are part of a larger, broader, more vital end; the maintenance of a healthy land community, a community that fuses human and other forms of life into a beautiful, fertile and endlessly fascinating yet ultimately unfathomable whole. When late in his life Leopold spoke of the land and its

⁶¹ Aldo in Worster, *Nature's Economy*, p. 272, 1994.

⁶² Aldo, *For the Health of the Land*, 1999 and, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1966.

conservation, he had in mind the entire bountiful, riotous, biotic community. “Who is the land?” (he asked rhetorically in 1942) “We are but no less the meanest flower that blows.”⁶³

Leopold’s change of heart (the wise use of land and to be in harmony with it) from conservation to ecology has been the site of much controversy in the field of environmental ethics that started from his life and career. Leopold had developed all his ideas according to a utilitarian perspective on land use but the last essay contradicted this trend of thinking and acting:

Conservation means harmony between men and land. When land does well for its owner and the owner does well by his land, then both end up better by reason of their partnership and we have conservation. When one or the other grows poorer, we do not.⁶⁴

Leopold wrote afterwards in a forward to *A Sand County Almanac* (1949). “Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land.”⁶⁵ and in another text Leopold wrote “To learn the hydrology of the biotic stream we must turn at right angles to evolution and examine the collective biotic materials. [...] we must learn more and more about the whole biotic landscape.”⁶⁶

We could ask what lay behind such a radical intellectual change. Or we could ask, why did he show such inconsistency of mind? Susan Flader has identified three events that could explain Leopold’s shift from his original intellectual stance of utilitarianism to one of ecology. These three events are: *Wilderness Society*,⁶⁷ *The Wisconsin River Marshes*⁶⁸ and *A visit to Germany, Silesia*.⁶⁹ Of the three events let me make some reference to the last event.

In the autumn 1935, Leopold spent three months in Germany and his mission was to study Germany’s methods of forest and wildlife management which I think, it was an eye-opening experience for him. Leopold was challenged by the ecological and aesthetic costs of the highly artificial German system of supervision especially with respect to deer and forest. This

⁶³ Ibid, p. 4, 1999.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 161, 1999.

⁶⁵ Aldo, *A Sand County Almanac*, xviii, 1949.

⁶⁶ Ibid p 189, 1949.

⁶⁷ Flader, *Thinking like a Mountain*, p. 29, 1974, see also Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, xviii-xix, 1966

⁶⁸ Flader, p. 30, 1974.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 54.

confrontation challenged and changed some of his most basic assumptions about the ultimate possibility of environmental control and led him to re-evaluate the objectives of wildlife management. Flader sums up Leopold's mission to Germany as follows:

The impact of the Germany experience made Leopold look for a new definition of the wilderness ideas and the convergence of observation activity and reflection at the Sand County which became the signal in the important ways, the beginning of his mature philosophy.

Probably as a result of these three events Leopold was to change his intellectual orientation and in his essay *Biotic Land Use* (1999) he was in a position to demonstrate why and how ecology should guide land use practice. He wrote.

Many laboured arguments are in print that conservation pays economic dividends. I can add nothing to these arguments. It seems to me though, that something has gone unsaid. It seems to me that the pattern of the rural landscape, like the configuration of our own bodies, has in it (or should have in it) a certain wholeness. No one censures a man who loses his leg in an accident or who was born with only four fingers but we should look askance at a man who amputated a natural part on the grounds that some other is more profitable. The comparison is exaggerated: we had to amputate many marshes, [...], to make land habitable, to remove any natural features from representation in the rural landscape seems to me defacement which the calm verdict of history will not approve either as good conservation, good taste or good farming.⁷⁰

But Leopold's central point in *Biotic Land Use* is that the land requires coordinated goals for individual participants as well as for the community as a whole. These partakers should come together for the overarching purpose of understanding the stability of the land mechanism so that the soil can be reverted to full health. The stability of Earth's use requires that every member of the farming community should not be disturbed by what are called land mechanisms. Biotic land use aims at the balance of the Earth without human interference and secondly, human beings need to respect the diversity that is visible and inherent within the Earth's community. The variety of the Earth's community is an order that persons must uphold and not disturb. The members of the land should cultivate or seek, thus "the biotic community is diverse in composition, complex in organization and tends to become more so."⁷¹

⁷⁰ Leopold, *For the Health of the Land*, p. 166, 1999.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 199 - 200, 1999.

The achievements of science and technology which at the beginning of Leopold's thinking seemed to offer the best solutions and means for conservation are now looking uncertain. They have been vital in trying to control soil erosion, control floods, renovate pasture, rotate crops, manage wildlife, improve woodlot and nitrify soil with the use of legumes, however, the stability and diversity of the land can no longer be achieved by the use of scientific and technological methods. The sum of all technical or scientific achievements is still not 'equal' to the stability and diversity of the land. Technical systems might well produce noticeable benefits on particular land units but this was no guarantee that it was provided balance and stability for the entire area when considered as a whole. Leopold concluded:

When the technologies are applied to land, they achieve each within its own field various degrees of success. There is a tacit assumption that the sum of their success equals a stable land. It is assumed that if good agronomy, erosion control, flood control, pasture management, forestry and wildlife management be simultaneously applied to a given area stability will flow. It is admitted that this assumption is conditioned upon something which technicians in khaki call "coordination." Planners in tweeds call it "integration."⁷²

In *Biotic Land Use* Leopold argued that there is a definite relationship between the compound structures and the smooth functioning of the whole which is between the evolution of environmental variety and the size of the land entity for self-renewal. He went further and identified a crucial role and relationship between stability and diversity which he developed into a system of land ethics. Leopold clearly elucidated the role of the natural process in nature can alone, without the need for much scientific or technological manipulation, achieve its equilibrium.

In the *Wishful Essay* (1999),⁷³ Leopold insisted on readdressing the farmers who were seeking commercial gain to think anew and to work for the profit of the health of the land and at same time persuaded his fellow ecologists to offer the best ecological suggestion for the requisites of the land. Leopold had foreseen the environmental crisis and he made a special appeal to land doctors. In his wishful essay Leopold wished he could reverse the logical order of service to the society to a more social wisdom, the biotic use of the land. This appeal for land doctors grew out of his frustration that his original conservationist stance which he had held in

⁷² Ibid, p, 200, 1999. See also Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 193, 1949.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 220, & 47, 1999

the beginning had failed to ensure the health of the land and had made an ecological crisis inevitable.

In the essay *The Land Health Concept and Conservation*⁷⁴ Leopold showed the possibility that ecological instability might affect the destiny of human beings. His argument relies on the fact that we are members of the bio-community and any natural forces will definitively change our human destiny. Since people are members of this fundamental bio-community, the future of it is our destiny too. What we do and think about ourselves as people have far-reaching consequences on nature. What Leopold is putting across is that for humanity to continue in its present state requires land stability.

If we wish to see a stable future, we must therefore stabilize our ecological state that has already been critically affected by exploitation. The destiny of humanity that lies solely in the hands of human being's rests uniquely in improving the relationships within the bio-community. Thinking and doing then should be made within the inclusive overview of teleological perspective of all bio-community members. To use Leopold's words: "In any event it is unthinkable that we shall stabilize our land without a corresponding stabilization of our destiny."⁷⁵

What is common to all these essays that Leopold wrote before his death is the way they categorically placed man within nature in the same level. Ethics, since its conception, has guided man in developing and re-defining himself especially in relation to other human beings, to nature, animals, plants and other members of the planet. The earlier ethical norms about 'the concept of right and the idea of wrong dealt with the relation between individuals.'⁷⁶ But ethics later widened its horizons to include human-to-human relations and then human to other members of the cosmos. With such advancements man was in a better position religiously and even philosophically to think beyond the old tradition with a more advanced view of ethics in relation to land and its members. Leopold represents an excellent example of this in progress at the beginning of his ethical development whereby he embraced a conservation theory designed for economical or utilitarian profit in the Abrahamic mould. In *A Sand County Almanac*,

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 218-224, 1999

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 225-226, 1999. See also Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 137, 1949.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 240, 1999. He wrote. "Abraham knew exactly what the land was for, it was to drip milk and honey into Abraham's mouth." At the present moment, the assurance with which we regard this assumption is in inverse to the degree of our education. The ordinary citizen today assumes that science knows what makes the community clock tick; the scientist is equally sure that he does not. He knows that the biotic mechanism is so complex that its workings may be never be fully understood."

however, he adopted a different attitude towards the land, a shift from a utilitarian outlook to one that favoured the health of the land:

Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we use land as a community to which we belong, we can begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the impact of mechanized man or for us to reap from it the aesthetic harvest it is capable, under the science of contribution, to culture. The land is a community, is the basic concept of ecology but the land is to be loved and respected in an extension of ethics. That the land yields a cultural harvest is a fact long known but latterly often forgotten.

These essays attempt to weld these three concepts.⁷⁷ With new concepts commodity and community, Leopold developed his understanding of new ethics. The old values embraced land as a commodity and the individual was prompted by his 'instinct' to strive for his dwelling in the community. Contrarily the new ethics, which Leopold calls *Land Ethics*, enlarges its boundaries of man to include soils, water, plants and animals and this new ethics challenges man not only to compete but to cooperate. Leopold aimed objectively at changing the role of *Homo sapiens* from being a conqueror of the land community to being a plain member and a citizen of it. He wrote

All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise, that the individual is a member of a community of independent parts. His instinct prompts him to compete for his place in the community but his ethics prompt him also to cooperate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for), the land ethics simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, water, plants and animals or, collectively, the land. This sounds simple: do we not already sing our love for and obligation to the land of the free and the home of the brave? Yes, but just what and whom do we love? A land ethics, of course, cannot prevent the alteration, management and use of these resources but it does affirm their right to continued existence and, at least in sports, their continued existence in a

⁷⁷ Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, xviii, (commodity, community and cooperate) 1996.

natural state. In short, a land ethics changes the role of the *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land community to plain member and a citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow members and also respect for the community as such.⁷⁸

The proverb land is a community rather than a commodity denotes a shift of boundaries and decreasing man's traditional role as master or steward to that of a plain member of society. The new members of this community include all living and non-living organisms on, over and in the planet. This biotic order of which man is only one member is the source of balance that the Earth needs then this balance could be achieved if humans begins to respect and love the whole of creation. Man should not think so exclusively about what is only useful for him alone but inclusively pursuing to endorse the welfare of all members of the planet. The consequence of love and respect is harmony with all members of cosmos.

The new dimension of the ecology advocated by Leopold is a new notion of natural rights. Leopold in these essays was committed more than ever to man's need to recognize that the whole Earth is one single household. The general health of the land and the general survival of the environment is a necessary condition for the survival of human beings and so is intimately bound up with destiny. This type of science never became part of the educational mainstream, and so after a short period its ideas and projects were quickly forgotten. Man was influenced by his individual obligation for the health of the land. Leopold's outlook is deep-rooted by his shift of thinking which after a period of believing in conservation became a new ethics. The duty is to guarantee the rights of all and to care for the whole Earth.

Land Ethics then reflects the existence of an ecological conscience and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our own effort to understand and preserve this capacity.⁷⁹

In Leopold's evolutionary and revolutionary shift from Conservation Game Management to Land Ethics one bright idea emerges. He became aware that in modern experience economic strings were attached to all types of land use, whether from an ethical, scientific, religious (Abrahamic) or a philosophical perspective. He appealed to farmers and ecologists to think in a manner contrary to what they had been holding to be genuine and correct and he

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 239-240, 1996.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 258, 1996.

acknowledged that such a revolution in attitude that privileged the stability and the beauty of the biotic community would not easy. His advice was a ‘key-log’ release.

The divorcement of things practical from things beautiful and relegation of either to the specialized groups or institutions have always been lethal to social progress and now it threatens the land-base on which the soil rests. The fallacy has its roots in an imperfect view of growth. All sciences, arts and philosophies are converging lines; what seems separate today is fused tomorrow. Tomorrow we shall find out that no land unnecessarily mutilated is useful, (if indeed it is still there). The true problem of agriculture and all other land use is to achieve both utility and beauty and thus permanence. A farmer has the same obligation to help, within reason, to preserve the biotic integrity of his community as he has, within reason, to preserve the culture which rests on it. As a member of the community, he is the ultimate beneficiary of both.⁸⁰ The “key-log” which must be moved to release the evolutionary process for an ethic, is simply this: quit thinking about decent land use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.⁸¹

This new perspective, according to Leopold, wasn’t built on traditional ethics⁸² where land was treated as a (human) commodity but rather from extended values. The value required a new relationship with the Earth characterized by love, respect, harmony, organisms, the stability of the whole community, and a high regard for the value of land. Leopold understood that the intrinsic value of nature lay not in its potential as a resource but another more philosophical sense. The value of land is “broader than mere economic value.”⁸³ But what is the philosophical sense of nature’s value here? Elucidations of the writing of environmentalists, especially on

⁸⁰ Ibid, *For the Health of the Land*, p. 224, 1999.

⁸¹ Ibid, *A Sand County Almanac* p. 262, 1999.

⁸² Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 243, 1997. Oruka coined the concept traditional ethics and argued that they centre around *Homo sapiens* only. It judges what is good and bad to be what is good or bad for man, and is incapable of extending this sort of judgment to the rest of Nature. It follows then, that if we are to find ethics suitable for judgments beyond the domain of the human species, it is imperative that we go beyond traditional ethics.

⁸³ Leopold, *For the Health of the Land*, p. 261, 1996.

Western philosophy and ethics have not sufficiently promoted the protection of the environment.

Western philosophy according to many has been unable to imagine the intrinsic value of the environment and to deal with it on its terms. To be more precise it had always treated the environment from an anthropocentric, mainly economic point of view. Such an anthropocentric viewpoint confers intrinsic value on persons and favours all other things, including all forms of life, only in terms of their instrumental value and this is not the philosophical sense intended by Leopold. What he meant was an overhauling of the old ethics of exclusivity in favour of a non-utilitarian approach that confers the same rights to other species as well. These ethics were normally and solely conferred on humans but the new values ought to extend its boundaries to embrace non-humans as members of this moral community.

The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the (moral) community to include soil, water, plants, and animals or collectively. [...]. It does affirm their right to continued existence and at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state.⁸⁴

Leopold's philosophical sense is that nature has its objective value, independent of any value given to it by humans. Nature has an order, a pattern that we humans are bound to understand, respect and preserve.

1.6.1 Observation

Science and technology have their limitations in relation to ecology. In his early explorations, especially in *Game Management*, *Helping Ourselves* and *Be your own Emperor*, Leopold seemed to have been convinced that man as the manager in charge of cosmic destiny was paying particular attention to what was good for him and him alone. The whole project was embattled at maximizing productivity and efficiency which he considered the only important values in man's relation to nature. All Leopold's policies before his conversion, crop conservation, agricultural planning or land manipulation, were regarded from a human-centered point of view. One can conclude that the ecological consequences of the human manipulations and interferences that Leopold referred to as progress management was to move away from nature rather than towards it. The moral value of nature in this scheme was more negative than positive, viewed more instrumentally than ecologically. Technological and scientific

⁸⁴ Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 239, 1999.

advancement and achievements have weakened the stability and diversity of the biotic community of which man is a member. Profit either from wildlife or agriculture is far from being a yardstick through which one can measure the stability of the biosphere. It is prudent to note that the role of science and technology as part of human advancement cannot be underestimated. Both possess its positive and negative side effects depending on their applications.

In his later work, by contrast, Leopold didn't emphasise the exploitation of nature for man's use but rather his relationship with the land that should be in accordance with harmonizing civilization. He invited humankind to appreciate the need to re-establish a personal co-existential relationship with nature and this could be in reference to a large-scale impersonal management of resources by professionals, elites, politicians, scientists, economists, etc. Leopold appealed to the intellectuals of ecology to realize the need for change that grows from mental alteration from an anthropocentric perspective to one that takes into consideration what is good for all members of biotic systems. This type of ethics invites man to stop attempting to be a conqueror of the Earth and instead become a co-operator.

Land is a community not a commodity and for this reason we need to love and respect it. The ecological climax of Leopold's thinking is the negation of the earlier message of *Game Management and Conservation*, I think, in his *Land Ethics* where he demonstrated his ecological insight by stressing what lies in the common interest for us all – both living and non-living things. The land should no longer be a commodity but a community for all its occupants and this would require circles of cooperation, communality, relatedness, love, respect, etc.. which ought to be extended to encompass and include all beings. In the lifestyle of the human being based on community rather than commodity man's role is no longer that of the master with dominion over nature but of an ordinary member and a citizen of the Earth.

The ability to live harmoniously on Earth can only come about by respecting the natural rights of each member of the cosmos. It involves respecting and loving all members, living and non-living, from the biggest down to the smallest, in, on, or below the surface of our planet contribute to an entirely harmonious coexistence. It is only possible by doing away with extreme anthropocentrism and utilitarianism and promoting of the rights of each inhabitant of the globe.

In my opinion Leopold introduced the concept of a new ethics as an outlook that would help to redefine and understand the role and the relation of human beings to the whole cosmos. Leopold illustrated the meaning of the concept through his intellectual shift, the old ideas never emphasized harmony among the various members of the planet but traded on imbalances. The new ethics that existed and was practiced in Asian communities should be engaged in different cultures from diverse countries. With this approach we shall achieve a better equilibrium in the cosmos for its own sake rather than the interests of humanity. Conservation figured land as a commodity but in reality we are members of a bio-community. Man behaved as if he were the master but he ought to see himself as a single member and more than that Eve the most integral member.

1.7 Conclusion and Critique

As I indicated at the start of this chapter the existing environmental or ecological crisis means that there is an obligation to which we must seek both theoretical and practical solutions. To repeat the words of Mark Maslin and Fidel Castro, we need to meditate and change our systems and modes of thinking and act straightaway because tomorrow might be too late. I think this can only be possible if we reaffirm the question that dominated the beginning of this exposition, namely the whether question. History has been friendly to us when we have humbly accepted its teaching and has been harsh to us when we have acted to the contrary. The ecological crisis can be solved objectively by learning from nature's wisdom, thus, understanding can only be gained from those who have studied the cosmos deeply and recorded the facts as they have seen them albeit mediated by their cultural and historical situations. We need to learn, analyse and critique those who have argued positively for the appreciation of our nature and taught us that we are members of an ecocommunity.

Looking at the writings of various scholars who have affirmed the whether question has led us to a new paradigm that aims at analysing our approach and deepening our relationship with other human beings and the whole planet. The main task is to have an ecological critical mind which challenges man to cease his self-centredness, superiority and his attempt to dominate the other members of the planet. I think we need to encourage and recognize those authors who have shown some interest and commitment in promoting the universe, that it belongs to us all, those whose concepts are global and can be applied locally too.

Such an approach calls for an objective mode of thinking and acting which is not a rule or a philosophy that originates from any one individual, one culture, one system of thought or one school of thought but rather it should be inclusive rather than exclusive. The broader view could simply mean thinking and acting beyond the boundaries of causes and ideas which have been erected only for the benefit of the human. Traditional ethics should guide not only our thoughts and actions but also a new ethic that promotes the intrinsic value of everything that exists on the planet. The new or extended ethics, which embraces the cosmos, must have its foundation at the intercultural level including all individual thinkers as well as different cultures.

The object of our values especially our extended ethics should be to affirm the whether question we raised at the beginning and that has been reflected at length in this chapter. 1) Is there anything worthy, orderly and rational in nature? 2) Can human beings learn anything from the natural world? The answers to these two questions and other related problems are now clear and positively confirmed. What we need is a variation in thinking or, better, a comprehensive

replacement of the major pillars of our old traditional ethical thinking and then we concentrate on the new concepts which promote the new way of viewing our cosmos. From each of the different phases explored above (naturalism, romanticism and science) thinkers have been found who have tried to extend ethics to embrace all beings.

Although I have identified various concepts and their role as a potential solution of the ecological crisis, it remains a question of critical concern whether such ideas can be accepted without objection. What I refer to is any logical adverse effects that they might cause disagreement in philosophy and particularly in ecophilosophy. From their inception the above concepts, in my view, were designed to dismantle the anthropocentric ethical view and formulate a new cosmological view. That meant a shift from rationalism to accepting the ecological wisdom found in the cosmos although some of the concepts introduced are ambiguous, confusing and lack categorical meaning.

Let me make a critique of organisms, holism and biocentrism, to show what I mean. Organism in reference to ecology as a concept has no boundaries. It derived from natural philosophy through the analysis of empirical and experimental data. Organisms are attached to the philosophy of biology and natural philosophy and can be seen in the embryological organism, in the genetic organism, the molecular organism and the ecological organism. As a concept in ecology or any other discipline, I think, it is used without boundaries. Does it have a scientific, philosophical, ecological or biological meaning? The same sort of ambiguity emerges about holism and vitalism.

Even though biocentrism is meant by most authors to be comprehensive in the sense that it attempts to extend its ethics to the whole of nature it is hard to capture its usage and meaning from its etymological origin. *Bio*, from the Greek, refers to a live or living organism and when the concept is taken from the etymological point of view, it restricts its meaning to entities which are biologically alive. That means thus, that the ethical shift from a human-centred outlook only goes as far as other life forms and omits non-human or living entities. On the contrary ecocentricism would be a better term since it would shift the centre from only living things to the *Oikos* (again Greek) symbolizing the house, in the sense of the whole Earth. The house is analogously a home for all and, I think therefore, that this Earth-centred term would imply an ethic that is centred equally on all members of the globe. The biocentred and other concepts employed in the historical development of ecology to me are not yet fully inclusive since they exclude things like soil, water, rocks, mountains, rivers, ecosystems, etc. In my view, most of the concepts used above should be extended analogously and applied to demonstrate

the interconnectedness of all nature. Murray Bookchin, while criticising these anti-humanist concepts wrote:

Humanity' currently so unfulfilled and divided against itself, has scarcely realised its potentialities. But much in current "ecological" thinking, the concept of humanity, is no less sucked into the ideological black hole. Ideologically the phenomenon of human self-hatred, [...], takes a number of forms; a logical ambiguous "biocentrism" and often strident anti-humanism are set against "anthropocentrism" and humanism - presumably the cardinal sins of an abstract "man" who is determined to despoil an equally abstract "Nature" [...] As a result, a simplistic biologism emerges, often structured around the "natural laws" that see "man" and humanism as a curse that afflicts "nature" with ecological degradation. As a result, some voices in the ecology movement call for a moral 'biospheric democracy' in which humanity's 'right' to live and fulfil itself is equitable with the same 'right' of butterflies, ants, whales, apes, and – yes - pathogenic viruses and germs.⁸⁵

I also see the danger from such extreme anti-humanism. What could happen if an author were only to use the wisdom-centred ideas and eschew the usual anthropocentric concepts altogether? What I am disturbed about is a situation where the concepts used are unclear, undefined and one-sided. The outcome, I could imagine, would be to place too much emphasis on a particular type of priority and end up failing to engage with the problems that the actual ecological crisis produces. It is essential not to become preoccupied with the environmental crisis that embraces an extreme self-hating and anti-humanism. When such extremes are not considered, then the objectivity of man's harmony with nature can never happen since man is viewed negatively. We human beings are members of this cosmos, endowed with the right to enjoy, a right to reason, a right to life and a right to happiness. These are our basic rights amongst many other rights, thus our unique dignity and our own contributions to the planet Earth need not be undermined at the expense of other members of the planet.

Critique arising from ecological wisdom, enlightenment and humanist knowledge are essential in leading us to an existential equilibrium. Ecological understanding fosters an enlargement of consciousness that encourages us to protect and sustain our ecology. The critique of reason is designed to soften humanity's belief in its superiority, a necessary first step in accepting the

⁸⁵ Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, p. 115, 1990.

uniqueness and importance of every member of the planet. But this does not negate the role of reason as a mind opener in thinking and acting.

It is also significant to know and underscore the importance and precision of these concepts I have been elaborating or else they would produce just the sort of dogmatism and prejudice that would severely hamper any attempt to find solutions to the ecological crisis. Plumwood [1993] was also uncomfortable with concepts such as identification, interconnectedness, sameness, etc. since such extremes and an absence of balance exists between both views:

[...] the importance of affirming both difference and continuity and of maintaining the balance between them. Respect for others involves acknowledging their distinctness and difference and not trying to reduce or assimilate others to the human sphere (or the contrary, mine). We need to acknowledge the difference as well as continuity to overcome dualism and to establish non-instrumentalising relationships with nature where both connection and otherness are the basis of interaction. The failure to affirm the difference is characteristic of the colonising self which denies the other through the attempt to incorporate it into the empire of the self, and which is unable to experience sameness without erasing differences.⁸⁶

Most of the authors I have chosen and discussed here have lived their advancing years in a village or rural life. They had a 'natural connection' with cosmos, i.e. in their locality, they managed to formulate concepts that one can term local ideas. Thoreau is a good example, in the way that he singled out the Native American wisdom to be better than scientific knowledge. The Native American's lifestyle connected them to nature which meant, for example, they knew the names of most of the trees in the surroundings unlike their scientist counterparts. How many communities in the modern era still have contact with their natural environment and know the indigenous names of their plants, animals etc.?

Let me take Uasin Gishu County in Kenya, my birthplace, as an example. In this vicinity most of the indigenous trees and vegetation have been replaced by Western imported trees which were for a quick and easy profit. The plantations had many effects on soil, water and air. The biodiversity and the loss of certain species and animals were of little importance. The caring for the ecosystem was shallow and not deep. For both the old and the new generation have been denied a natural contact with nature, thus a very minimum interaction with the natural environment. Another feature is that trees that were used as herbs or had traditional values were

⁸⁶ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p, 174, 1993.

destroyed. While man is always in need, the herbs have been substituted by Western tablets such as Aspirin or Panadol. In the absence of these natural contacts with nature, natural wisdom will be minimal. The White settlers have left terrible injustices to the indigenous by trying to benefit from the land for a short period of time. The fact remains the ecosystem is imbalanced now and in the future. This human intervention in the name of business utility and consumerism has made our Earth less rich and less beautiful for us. The basic reason of this argument is simple, the replacement of native trees, vegetation with agriculture, etc. is poorly, if at all, adequately analysed. The end consequence is the destruction of biodiversity and my concept of eco-diversity.

Another critique could base itself on the problem of how far local concepts mainly indigenous can solve the global ecological problems. How many aboriginal communities from anywhere in the world still have a close connection with their roots and even their neighbours or nature? Locally formulated concepts, and global ecophilosophical views, should try to find common ground in handling the ecological crisis.

The local ideas based on the wisdom of nature and the universal concepts based on man-centred principles should be critiqued as equally valid in an attempt to solve the problem in ecology. But how? I will treat the question better in chapter 6.

Chapter 2. Henry Odera Oruka

Oruka was a sober modern man who believed in and actually lived a simple life of quality and decency. [...], he believed in a progressive modernizing of our society's ideologies and institutions within an African culture framework. [...] Wisdom knows where one came from, where one is and where one is going.¹

Oruka was born in June 1944 near Lake Victoria, ten years before the Nile Perch was imported into Lake Victoria by the British Colonial Government (see chapter 3). He attended his primary and high schools in Kenya, travelling overseas for his tertiary education. In Sweden he studied science but took philosophy as an elective. According to Oruka such courses could not offer him an understanding of African problems and he decided to write such a philosophy himself: ethics, social, political and legal philosophy. From 1970 until his death on 9th December 1995 Oruka lectured at the University of Nairobi and for a period of more than two decades Oruka wrote many books, articles and gave seminars and shepherded interviews on different themes according to the challenges of his day. He wrote books and numerous essays pertaining to African philosophy and philosophy as a discipline. Now in the 21st century Oruka is a world-renowned philosopher. Kresse and Chaungo described him shortly after his death with the following:

[...] But we do want it known to the world and in fact visible for all to see that a philosopher of importance has died. [...]. We have set out to try and make visible as best as we can the importance of one of the most active African philosophers of our time. And there are indeed important signs left behind by him, still to be worked on and pondered about, landmarks of meaning which fill the air of philosophical discussion in Africa [...] He leaves a big agenda for philosophy and scholarship incomplete on his study desk. He has abandoned many intellectual widows and orphans across Africa, Asia, Europe and America, who looked up to him for sagacious intercourse, inspiration and mentorship into the 21st century.²

When one attempts to analyse the above passage, a plethora of ideas and thoughts comes to mind.

¹ Oruka, in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 21, 1997.

² Ibid, p. 11 & 19, 1997.

- There are plenty of signposts in his work that still need to be followed.
- There are plenty of philosophical agendas he started but still remain insufficiently explored and have not yet been exhausted.
- What role has his sagacious intercourse had since his death?

The above short bibliography will demonstrate what type of a person Oryia was. A man who believed in a progressive modernizing of our society's ideologies and institutions within an African culture framework. On top of that he regarded Wisdom as knowing where one came from, where one is and where one is going.

I will discuss in this chapter the themes in Oryia's speculative and practical philosophy that are of most importance and relevance to our time. We need to interpret, elucidate and even develop further both his practical and speculative philosophy primarily the focus of his study, ecophilosophy which is the theme of my dissertation. But before discussing his attempt of the concept and to solve the ecological crisis let me first give my view on how Oryia tried to end the African philosophical discussions.

In this background it is necessary to understand his philosophical framework which is not only speculative but also pragmatic. His famous 'six trends' views fall within the third of the phases through which the African philosophical debates should be understood. I will also discuss sage philosophy among his trends and I will explore it in chapter six. The sage philosophy attempt to expose the existence of local oral knowledge that can contribute to ecophilosophy. In the process of interview one idea will be categorical, 'all is not lost' and there exist concepts that confirm the whether question. This validates sagacious intercourse that was upheld by Oryia as one of the ways of understanding the African philosophy.

2.1 Speculative Philosophy

‘Wisdom knows where one came from, where one is and where one is going.’ That is the approach Oruka took to African philosophical discussions. As I have mentioned above Oruka wanted to study philosophy that will help him to attempt to solve the Africa problems and his first work was in African philosophical debates.³ Oruka made many contributions to these discussions and world philosophy in general, in a variety of fields (both speculative and practical philosophy). In his response and contribution to and what African philosophy is Oruka proposed that African philosophy need not be perceived in the same way as traditional Western philosophy (known canon).

African philosophy should be regarded not in one phase one canon but three stages. Oruka grew up as the son of a sage and then went on to become a trained Western philosopher, so he was in a better position than any other philosophers of his time to point out where African philosophical problems lay and what was the best way of explaining them. According to Oruka the solution was to classify, define and identify African philosophy as a unique new canon in the philosophical sphere. The discipline is wellknown from the Western canon but outside this standard according to our general view philosophy does not exist. Thus let me attempt to enumerate the three phases in understanding, defining and classifying the new African canon in philosophy according to Oruka.

The first phase is a period dominated by empirical or sense-derived knowledge that is essentially about seeing what could lead one to become prejudiced. It is a stage of two individuals who are strangers to one other and they meet each other for the first time. It was a period when foreigners came into contact with African people and their culture for the first time. The Black man’s culture and mind seemed and was claimed to be extremely alien to the European’s logic and reasoning. The Black man’s culture was in contrast to foreign religions, languages, housing and their whole way of living including various habits such as scientific inquiry. In this phase three groups are identifiable which hold such hypotheses that embody prejudices against the real African culture. According to the dictates of that time their theories were taken and accepted as universal in the academic spheres of learning. The three famous

³ Serequeberhan, *African Philosophy, the Essential Readings*, p, 3-87, 1991. (See also Oruka; *Sage Philosophy*, p. I-XXIX, 1990) African philosophical debates and questions raised by different thinkers in and outside the continent are a) the point in question, b) is there African philosophy? c) the question of African philosophy, d) on the defining of African philosophy.

groups in this phase are colonialists, anthropologists and philosophers, we can define this stage as a closed mind period.

The first group in this phase are colonialists who came to the continent of Africa to rule, explore, exploit and proselytise. The indigenous were intimidated and harassed by the colonialist in their own land which instilled fear in the minds of the citizens, subsequently it was a bad attitude shown by foreigners to the indigenous community. The indigenous systems or structures were interchanged with fears of their leaders, identity crises, brainwashing, political democracy, poverty, education and so on. Oruka wrote:

When the colonialists came to Africa, they were interested in the mass of Africans not in the individual creative persons. If there were such people, they were either exterminated or simply ignored because the colonialist did not want to admit that from a culture as 'primitive' as the African (as they are called) could come people with creative minds, either in a scientific or in a philosophical abstract sense. Thus, Africans were ignored. The colonist went with the mass culture, and the mass culture is always a culture which is indifferent to rationality, either in Europe or Africa.⁴

Each culture while remaining dominant or in flux has its primary ontological, epistemological and normative insight that guide its members to prosperity and to coexist in harmony. But the language that is universally acceptable as one of the ways of communicating needs not only to be learned but also be experienced. Whoever is not well acquainted with the language of a particular culture may not adequately and fully express the cultural insights even if they have the best qualification in ontology, epistemology, anthropology or theology; thus, the experience and situation of African culture when the European anthropologists with their entrenched culture came into contact with it. The result of such cultural contact in most cases led to misunderstanding.

Among the many known anthropologists, Oruka gives Lucien Levy-Bruhl as his archetypal example, (*Primitive Mentality*, 1923). He describes the African person/people as primitive and with a primitive mentality who was only capable of pre-logical, pre-mythical and pre-scientific

⁴ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p, 213, 1977.

thought. This conceptualization of the African person has led him to an identity crisis and a loss of values as described by Franz Fanon ⁵ and Julius Nyerere.⁶ Levy- Bruhl maintained:

The primitive mind did not recognize the principle of non-contradiction but operates according to an implicit idea of participation which allowed a thing to be itself and at the same time something other than itself. [...]. Again the primitive mind was indifferent to empirical verification.⁷

The third group is those philosophers who out of intellectual unfamiliarity and prejudice never had contact with the African people or their culture. Their writing about the Black mind and African culture tended to be disparaging. Immanuel Kant, for example, outlined a geographical and psychological classification of human beings which focused on inaccurate observation just as other biological phenomena such as animals are distributed domestically and in the wild, land, air and water, species, etc. Kant thought that different human races could also be divided according to biological or geographical origin and therefore formed distinct hierarchical classes. Taking skin colour as evidence of a racial category, Kant classified human races hierarchically into White Europeans, Yellow Asians, Black Africans and American Red Indians. Kant categorised races according to colour and climate with each race having its own environmental or climatic characteristics. Instead of seeing the advantages and disadvantages of damp cold and dry heat weather, Kant came to a fallacious conclusion in generalising ideas about maturity, perfection and talents. As a result of this generalisation fallacy, he was able to create or form a hierarchy of races. The pyramid began from 1st race to 4th race, White Europeans through to Black Negroes. The Negroes in the lowest race of beings had no potential for learning or ascending to a higher level in the ranking.⁸

From a psychological perspective, Kant viewed each race as having its particular type of knowledge that could be both reflective and non-reflective in nature. According to Kant the Hindu and the Africans seem to be incapable of moral maturity because they lack talent which is a gift of nature. The African as a person is without the ability to reflect and could only be trained as slaves and as servants.

⁵ Fanon, *Black Skin in White Masks*, p. 7, 1952. He cited Aime who wrote “I am talking of millions of men who have been skilfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair abasements.”

⁶ Nyerere, *Speech on the Island of Mafia*, in Eze, *African Philosophy*, p. 77, 1966.

⁷ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 213 1997 and also in Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, p. 41, 1990.

⁸ Kant, *On the different Races of Man*, in Eze, p. 118, 1997.

In den heißen Ländern reift der Mensch in allen Stücken früher, erreicht aber nicht die Vollkommenheit der temperierten Zonen. Die Menschheit ist in ihrer größten Vollkommenheit in der Rasse der Weißen. Die gelben Inder haben schon ein geringeres Talent. Die Neger sind tiefer, und am tiefsten steht ein Teil der amerikanischen Völkerschaften. (4, p. 15;) Die aufgeweckte Einbildungskraft macht aber auch, dass er oft Etwas wagt: aber die Hitze ist bald vorüber, und die Zaghaftigkeit nimmt abermals ihren alten Platz ein (4, p. 16-17).⁹

From these three phases it is impossible and illogical to understand the African person and his philosophy since it fails to adhere to the standard Western version of the discipline. These, the reason, the logic and white are the essential elements that belonged to the European legacy. And if one identifies these elements with philosophy then the African mind and culture has no philosophy, nevertheless, they do have traditions of songs, proverbs, myths, etc.

We know from African academic circles, especially from those trained in the West and those influenced by it, that African philosophy and the African culture exhibits all the signs of an inferiority complex. We can note that the arrival of the colonialists and the consequent encounter with African culture with their alien culture “have made it impossible to view African philosophy objectively from other cultural perspectives.”¹⁰

This first phase, in my judgement, could be used as an essential foundation for understanding African philosophical debates especially in the developmental process through which Western philosophy may arrive at a modern understanding of its concepts. Essentially, it is a better elaboration a more comprehensive view of the problems and the potential solutions that arise in these debates. The racial ranking of “African philosophical concepts has been negative,”¹¹ for it denied the African cultural mind the possibility of the same, on a par with that of the West. An open-minded person is optimistic that the so-called aboriginal, primitive or pre-philosophical mode “leaves the hope that this culture like other cultures might one day evolve into a scientific, reason and logical oriented culture.”¹² The point that there was no practice of writing in an African linguistic does not categorically deny the absence of thinking.

⁹ Neugebauer, *The racism of Hegel and Kant*, in Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, p. 264, 1990.

¹⁰ Oruka, *Practical philosophy*, p. 196-197, 1997.

¹¹ Hountondji, in Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, p 196, 1994. He wrote: The Black continues, from this fact, to be the contrary of the interlocutor; he is the one about whom others speak, a face without a voice that other people try to decipher among themselves, an object to be defined and not a subject of a possible discourse (especially with the existing prejudiced concepts and terms).

¹² Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, p. 41. 1990.

On the contrary sage philosophy was passed on through the spoken word to the next generation. In my view the critical re-examination of the colonial and anthropological racism could aid especially African scholars to reconstruct and rebuild our understanding of African traditions according to modern intellectual trends and orientations. It will reduce the incidence of prejudgment from one cultural view to another and allow a multicultural perspective in theory and praxis and this is possible in relation to the ecological crisis which is affecting the whole of humanity and the planet at large. Okot p'Bitek identified it:

The African scholar has two tasks before him. First, to expose and destroy all the false ideas about the African peoples and culture that have been perpetuated by Western scholarship. Vague terms such as *tribes*, *folk*, *non-literature* or even innocent looking ones such as *developing*, etc., must be subjected to critical analysis and thrown out or redefined to suit African interests. Secondly, the Africa scholar must endeavour to present the institutions of the African people as they really are.¹³

The primitive period discussed above provides a starting point for the second stage of understanding which is designed to explain the historical development of philosophy in Africa. Oruka described this period as follows:

The European myth that Africa was a 'dark continent' implies, among other things that Africa is inferior to Europe. Consequently, many have tried to show that Africa was or is as great as Europe. One group of these writers is the Europeans and Americans who are 'sympathetic' and patronizing to the Black man. Their position is that there is something morally and aesthetically interesting in the African culture that the White man should take seriously. The other group of these writers is the indigenous Africans. Their position consists of trying to find something in the African culture that the White world will recognize as great wisdom, religion, philosophy, art, etc. Their tendencies were to try to make what they write as African as possible, while at the same time maintaining and groping for the White world to judge that what they write is indeed African and that it is what the writers have said it is.¹⁴

The characteristics of the mind and culture of the African person in this phase are unthinking, spontaneous, collective systems of thought, common to all Africans. Such assessment is

¹³ p'Bitek in Imbo, *Oral traditions as Philosophy*, p. 4. 2002.

¹⁴ Oruka, in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 21, 1997.

qualified by the argument that proverbs are wellknown to all members of a particular community therefore labelled anonymous. The general characteristics of the mind and culture of the African were not taken to be universal, accepted as true i.e. no logical verification. The authors of this phase are Samuel John Mbiti and Tempels Placide. Placide for example wrote in his controversial book *The Bantu Philosophy* about such characteristics of the African mind and culture. The following sentences give a hint:

Let us not expect the first Black-in-the- street (especially if he is young) to give us a systematic account of his ontological system. Nevertheless, this ontology exists. It penetrates and informs all the primitive's thinking and dominates all his behaviour. Using the method of analysis and syndissertation of our own intellectual disciplines we can and therefore must do the primitive the service of looking for, classifying and systematizing the element of his ontological systems. [...]. We do not claim Bantus to be capable of presenting us with a philosophical treatise with an adequate vocabulary. It is our intellectual training that enables us to effect its systematic development. It is up to us to provide them with an accurate account of their conception of entities, in such a way that they will recognize themselves in our words and will agree to say: you have understood us, you know us now completely, you know in the same way we know.¹⁵

The above quotation shows with certainty the existence of a knowledge system in the Bantu community and if we may accept the fallacy that in the Bantu community exists no knowledge as an example to represent the African people or the whole continent, then we enter into the actual misinterpretation of the African mind and culture. Ontology exists and it becomes the insight for guiding and directing their moral ways of behaving.

Here is a positive description of a Bantu community the Black man who seems to be the main subject described as incapable of knowing what the product of his thinking is. The difficulty is that the Black man seems ignorant of his system of thought and therefore the European has to do justice to both the African person and the ontology. The provision to be given to him is to classify his philosophy by making it systematic, "we have to use our words so that we may say we know."¹⁶ He, the Black man, needs therefore an interpreter who can

¹⁵ Tempels in Hountondji, *Myth and Reality*, p. 113, 1983.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 113, 1983.

translate or formulate his ontology for him so that it can be better understood universally, be logical and reasonable outside the cultural/tribal boundaries of the Bantu.

Negatively viewed, we can call such thinking an exclusive centrism¹⁷ which advocates hierarchies in ontology, knowledge, theology, etc. This entails the denial of the potentialities and the worth of other cultures and thus their different ways of thinking and acting and because of such exclusiveness, a person or his tradition does not see any value in another person or culture. The art of conventional logic and reason govern the whole atmosphere and give no room for a dialectic that advocates what I know is not destroyed by what I am learning but instead it widens my horizon. Wimmer cites an excellent example of the Buddhists:

I can understand why you (Europeans) have come to India to study Buddhist philosophy. For our tradition is indeed deep and vast. But I frankly don't see what we have to learn from you. For the Western, philosophy is very superficial and addresses no important questions.¹⁸

I can therefore conclude that in the second historical phase various concepts existed and were commonly used by the community members. Most scholars could not distinguish between different types of wisdom but it is Oruka¹⁹ who enabled this distinction when he identified the difference between the sage and traditional wisdom, the communal, consensual and common beliefs of the people. But then again another fundamental difference of this phase is the impersonal aspect of it, who owns or who is the individual thinker who is responsible for such words or proverbs? Who can claim its authorship? Is it the philosophy of a person or is it collective? Why was it commonly understood and accepted by everyone without having to ask any of these critical questions?

Phase two comprises mythical elements or taboos commonly practiced by most members of the same community and this period indicates the existence of philosophy that is unwritten and the authors are unknown. One can formulate a sceptical question; does one need to reject wholesale the hidden philosophy of this phase? The basic Western definition of philosophy, of

¹⁷ Wimmer, *Essays on Intercultural Philosophy*, p. 62, 2002.

¹⁸ The Ven. Gen. Lobzang Gyatso, quoted by Jay L. Garfield, in *Wimmer Essay in Intercultural Philosophy*, p. 67, 2002.

¹⁹ Oruka, *Sage philosophy*, p. 53, 1990. We can compare this phase with Oruka's distinctions between sagacity as popular wisdom and sagacity wisdom. Sagacity as a popular wisdom consists of maxims, aphorisms and wise sayings associated with no particular persons yet they are popularly known and generally employed in the oral literature of the community.

written and known authors; is it the only source of philosophy? What are the contributions of the orally transmitted knowledge, ethics, psychology and so forth, to the definition of and of understanding philosophy? Such questions are explicitly the guiding principles in chapter 6.

The third phase²⁰ according to Oruka is the most important and essential stage in understanding the idea of African philosophy. It is the peak of his attempt to expound the historical development of African philosophical debates.²¹ Phase three unlike the first two phases is a period in which most of the authors were professionally trained and have written books or articles on various practical or speculative themes. Moderately they were influenced by the traditional Western understanding of philosophy and they employ the universally accepted methods in their approaches.

This phase also makes inquiries into the concepts and themes which in nature transcend geographical and cultural limitations. These concepts are everywhere subject to the field of study or all possible epistemological questions. This third phase uses logic and reason as a way of self-critique. Philosophy is apprehended as a mode of a self-critique through which their thinking or the thinking of others is pragmatically scrutinized. In this third phase Oruka was able to identify, classify and objectify the debates in African philosophy. The third stage is the reason Oruka changed his studies and eventually the one that made him such a renowned philosopher. Oruka mentioned six trends in African philosophy.²² These trends are 1) Ethnophilosophy, 2) Professional philosophy, 3) Nationalist - Ideological philosophy, 4) Hermeneutics, 5) Artistic and literary philosophy and 6) Sage philosophy.

I want now to engage my thoughts in the new way of theorizing philosophy using sagacious reasoning. The sage philosophy is the new Socratic dialogue that can be analogously linked with the orally transmitted thinking within the indigenous African philosophers. I think it is worth discussing here sage philosophy which is the main topic covered in Chapter 6. In it I appeal to various indigenous views in the search for ways of solving the ecological crisis as well as contributing to other philosophical disciplines.

²⁰ Ibid, 41, 1991

²¹ Serequeberhan, *African Philosophy*, 1991, mentioned the major African philosophical debates as a) *African Philosophy, the Point in Question*, (Serequeberhan), b) *Is there an African Philosophy*, (Onyewuenyi) c) *Question of African Philosophy*, (Bodunrin,) d) *On Defining African Philosophy*, (Wiredu), e) *African Philosophy, Myth and Reality*, Hountondji, f) *Sagacity in African Philosophy*, (Oruka,) g) *Contemporary African Philosophy; the Search for a Method*, (Keita).

²² Oruka, *Sage philosophy*, p 1-22, 1990

From 1974 onwards, Oruka began a project dealing with the ‘thought of traditional Kenyan sages.’²³ The project was called *Sagacity*. As a sage and professional philosopher brought up in a sage family and also trained in the Western understanding of philosophy Oruka was able to describe and at the same time theorize the concept of sagacity. In his definition of Sage Oruka identified two types of wisdom: traditional wisdom and wise judgement. The focus of Oruka’s project was to show that in the Kenya there exist individuals who were still ‘intact’ with original traditional knowledge despite the influence of Western culture brought by missionaries, colonialists and their educational system. In an approach to philosophy that aimed to cut gender bias the project was carried out in an ethnic culture where both men and women were considered wise. *Sagacity* also relies on the testimony of illiterate and semi-literate members of a given community since both were responsible for maintaining the old cultural outlook amid the Western influence.

Sage philosophy in my usage consists of the expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any given community and is a way of thinking and explaining the world that fluctuates between *popular wisdom* (well known communal maxims, aphorisms and general common sense truths) and *didactic wisdom*, an expounded wisdom and a rational thought of some given individuals within a community. While popular wisdom is often the conformist, didactic wisdom is a time critical of the common set-up and popular wisdom. Thoughts can be expressed in writing or as unwritten sayings and argumentations associated with individual(s).²⁴

Besides defining what sagacity is Oruka also stipulated the aims of the sagacity philosophical project and the purposes were threefold: 1) to show that there exist traditional African people who are logical and critical in their thinking, 2) that they have not copied the Western culture of technology and 3) that they cannot read or write.

To help substantiate or invalidate the claim that traditional African people were innocent of logical and critical thinking or simply philosophical thought, has no place in traditional Africa. Some of these persons might have been partly influenced by the inevitable moral and technological culture from the West. Nevertheless their own outlook and cultural well-being remains basically

²³ Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, p. 5, 1990.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 28 and p. 53, 1990.

traditional rural Africa. Except for a handful those, the majority of them, are illiterate or semi-illiterate.²⁵

From the above threefold stipulations of sagacity according to Oruka sagacity or sage-philosophy fulfilled the necessary criteria to be considered a philosophy according to the strict Western disciplinary understanding of the word, thus, in Africa there was and there is still an authentic thinking. The sage philosophy might not have been inscribed in books but it was and still is written in the minds of the indigenous African people in any given community and for this reason thinking exists in the African continent as much as in the Western written form. It is a fact in ordinary circumstances we think before writing and thus thinking is much more important for philosophizing than writing. However, this does not in any way negate the importance of writing and the ability of philosophers to give the background of their work or to lay out clearly the sequence of their thought using it.

The proverbs, wisdom, myths, songs, artefacts, etc., originated from sages who never had contact with the Western systems of reasoning and their techniques. They were illiterate and semi-illiterate wise men and women and this contradicted the idea that one must absorb the Western system of philosophizing to qualify as a genuine philosopher. In fact, one might argue that Western training imparts a great deal of conventional wisdom instead of a more dialectic approach. The traditional standard system means one must learn and adapt the systems from Plato, Kant etc., and then reason with them. Nevertheless, an argumentation system means confronting the actual situation or problem and then trying to come up with a solution. This methodology is more likely to lead to original and useful solutions than when one is absorbed in a fixed manner of thinking.

Sagacity as a philosophy also treats matters or issues that confronted communities, requiring individuals to discuss issues related to living morally in everyday life and some of the themes that Oruka draws attention to are also conferred in various Western philosophical circles. A good example is the idea that one might prefer inclusionary ethics over exclusionary ethics, i.e. ethics in which non-human members of the cosmos are given access in an analogous moral/worth recognition as humans. We saw in the work of the Western thinkers in the first chapter this and other familiar Western themes such as ‘freedom, equality’ and so forth and in addition, death mysteries are often discussed orally by sages.²⁶

²⁵ Ibid, p. 28, 1990.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 29, 1990.

African philosophy or sagacity is not an approach described above in the second phase as exemplified by Temple's view, namely that knowledge existed in every individual even when they did not realize they were thinkers, and only what is needed is hermeneutical studies. Instead, now – as in the West – there were and are specific individuals who could be considered indigenous sages. Without thinkers in a culture it is and it would be impossible to solve the problems that occur in society. It would not be possible to develop a man-made second culture. Therefore, it was Oruka's aim

[...] to identify people in African culture capable of the critical second order type of thinking about various problems of human life and nature. People that is who subject beliefs that are traditionally taken for granted to independent rational, re-examination and who are inclined to accept or reject such belief in the authenticity of reason rather than on the basis of communal or religious sense.²⁷

Every project has its own methodology. Sagacity used the interviews and recording as its method of collecting data and as a system that allowed thoughts to be articulated outside the author's experience. Oruka introduced sage philosophy primarily as a new way of ending the philosophical debates on African ideas and secondarily to offer a new way of reasoning that was not known to Western understanding. He suggested that one should approach sagacity in steps.²⁸

Oruka's *Sage philosophy*, I think, contributes significantly to African debates and theory at large. We cannot allow ourselves to lose such a rich heritage. We should be bringing its wisdom to the world especially those elements which speak to all cultures by transcending the particularity of the culture in which it originated. Therefore, one can agree with Oruka when he wrote:

Africa cannot, by the law of history, regain her dignity and make a contribution to the human civilization if she ignores her own past and tradition (her people and her culture). But she will be equally handicapped when she abandons Science and Logic, in the so-called Western sense because these things are un-African.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid, p. 28, 1990.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 29, 1990.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 56. 1990.

2.1.1 Critics

Sage philosophy being a new approach to African philosophy was put to the test. Evaluation was essential to every new area of knowledge not because things are not correctly reasoned but in order to confirm the explicit assumptions and more importantly to uncover some of the implicit ones thereby highlighting unchallenged and even unexamined modes of thought which the hypothesis takes for granted. I will mention some of the criticisms especially by those who never fully accepted sage philosophy as an alternative method of approaching African philosophy.

Dismas A. Masolo promoted the idea that sage philosophy is no philosophy,³⁰ and in his analysis Masolo showed how traditions and various types of opinions are founded upon insufficient reasoning. To him the right philosophy uses the Socratic method and is represented by properly researched knowledge with the truth independent of unwarranted opinion. Theory relies on definition, analysis and explanation. On the other hand pre-Socratic knowledge according to him has no place in strict philosophy and that is what he considered sage philosophy to be.

Both pre-Socratic and sage philosophy see an individual holding a discussion in order to produce the result of their thinking but both fail to provide a consistent mode of inquiry of explanation. It means that pre-Socratic and sage philosophies do not have a high degree of abstraction, conceptual analysis or rationality that, according to him, are the essence of strict reasoning. According to his conclusion Sage philosophy lies more in ethnophilosophy than professional philosophy.

Sage philosophy in the opinion of Oruka is a starting point in African philosophy which is similar to the pre-Socratic phase that laid the foundation for Western philosophy. It also points out that within the African context indigenous/original people, both men and women, existed who could think without the influence of the Western ways of philosophizing.

In his article on the inquiry of Sage philosophy especially with the method of interview used to tease it out of communities Peter O. Bodunrin is of the opinion that philosophic sagacity fails as philosophy on the ground of the necessity for literacy. For him learning is a necessary condition for philosophical reflection. His second objection is; whose work will it be if a philosopher interviews the sage? Is it a joint product of both or not? Who is the actual author³¹? Oruka responded to such an argument by urging that thinking is a prerequisite for writing and

³⁰ Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, p. 239-243, 1994.

³¹ Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, p. 46-50, 1990

so must precede it. In addition, secondly that the product of such interviews is only to produce raw material that may be used subsequently by the philosopher and to show that philosophy exists on African soil.

Both the traditional sage and the trained philosopher inevitably enter the dialogue with certain propositions. What they arrive at is a new creation out of their reflection previously held by them but, and this is I think, an important point to remember the philosopher and the sage are doing their own thing. They are speculating on African philosophy only because the participants are African or are working in Africa and are interested in a philosophical problem from an African point of view.³² To confirm the references the question in asking what qualifies a person to be a real philosopher was answered indirectly by Anthony S. Oseghare, who was a student of Oruka. Oseghare made a distinction between sagacity and knowledge in that Knowledge is information of which someone is aware and merely having clarity of facts and truths. Judgment or wisdom are different. Sagacity is the ability to make correct judgments and decisions, thus it is an immaterial quality gained through our experiences in life. “Both terms according [to Oruka] are not synonymous but sagacity and knowledge involves the acquisition and usage of skills. Sagacity proposes wisdom of a practical nature which is skilled and it increases with age. It has a broader meaning than information and within sagacity there is a sagacity that stops with common sense and the judgment that transcends common sense.”³³

There was also confusion about the difference between a prophet and a sage. The essential difference according to Oruka is that the prophet claims to be able to predict the future. And his predictions are motivated by revelations and knowledge gained from observation of repetitions in the past and the present. By contrast a sage in the philosophical sense is consistently concerned with fundamental ethical and empirical issues that are relevant to society. The sage can offer insights into the issues affecting society and point them in the direction of a solution. “Sages have existed in every society as overseers of the culture and values regardless of whether they are literate or not.”³⁴

As I mentioned above the only courses offered at the Wayne University during Oruka’s time were analytic philosophy, thus forcing him to continue his studies in Marxism, existentialism and phenomenology as well as political and legal philosophy under his own steam. The sort of ideas he pursued in his private learning were ones designed to him help to

³² Ibid, p. 254.

³³ Ibid, p. 254.

³⁴ Oruka, in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 62, 1997.

face the problems that occur in human life. Consequently this did not mean that the analytic theories were of no use instead they provided the necessary tools for research. I will discuss this further in the next chapter. He wrote in *A brief personal history and the current debate* why he opted for practical philosophy and why practical philosophy was so useful in solving the problems facing humanity especially on the African continent. To me, I think, ecophilosophy is not exceptional under this rule.

In Uppsala, I had specialized in what they called ‘Practical Philosophy’ under the late Prof. Ingemar Hedenius. [...] He made philosophy very interesting and practical. Philosophy, let me explain, is ‘practical when philosophical concepts and principles are not discussed just for their own theoretical interest but are discussed and applied to the understanding and the improvement of the condition of human life. But of course practical philosophy should be handled with care since many, especially those in power, are apt to confuse it with ideology and politics. I have been a victim of this confusion. [...] Both at Uppsala and Wayne, *African Philosophy* was never an issue. However, the analytic training I received from these institutions I believe could be used as a tool for carrying out research in the area of African philosophy.³⁵

³⁵ Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, 3-4, 1990.

2.2 Practical Philosophy

Oruka is better known worldwide for his speculative philosophy especially for his views on specifically African debates than he is for his practical philosophy. In his speculative philosophy, as I discussed above, Oruka identified the three phases through which the establishment of African philosophy as a new canon of knowledge unfolded. Before he died in 1995 Oruka had been engaged not only in African philosophical debates as such but also on practical themes and issues which were affecting humanity, both locally and globally. One can trace in his work a change of orientation towards the actual analysis of real questions as speculative thinking transformed into practical doing. This shift emphasis, I believe, was due to the dictates or the demands of the time especially when he realized how pressing the dangers posed to our entire planet were. Oruka described practical philosophy as the ‘most successful aspect of the Western culture, which includes philosophy, ethics, science, technology and Judeo-Christian religion. On practical philosophy Oruka wrote:

Beyond the Continent, I have had an association with such philosophical journals as *Social Theory and Practice* (Florida State University) and *Praxis International* (published by Blackwell, London). These are journals with great inclinations to make philosophy practical. Their aim, in my judgment, is the Socratic mission in the modern setting – the mission to engage in a dialectical search for the ethics of the just and a good life. [...] I am most interested in philosophy made practical.³⁶

Science, philosophy, religion and technology are products of man’s second nature or culture. Oruka used this second nature concept in order to demonstrate an apparent gap between the natural and the artificial, between nature and humanity, between God’s works and human hands. As I discussed in chapter one man’s second nature began with civilization and this second nature has caused him to drift away from his original home but in contradictory it has to bring him closer to nature or to himself and his nature. The process of civilization has isolated man so that it is as if he now lives on an island. He thinks of himself as an individual in utilitarian terms forgetting about other races, about women,³⁷ and about other members of the planet. i.e. including plants, animals, insects, etc. which comprise its biodiversity.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 6, 1990.

³⁷ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy* p. 197, 1997.

The focus of this dissertation is Oruka's ecophilosophy. I would like in this chapter to discuss his understanding of ecophilosophy what I consider is a new paradigm in the field of practical philosophy. How did Oruka view the relationship and tensions that exist between nature and the human, especially now Western man considers himself advanced or dominator? Oruka's contributions to these ethical questions are still relatively unknown. Most of his contributions are found in his book *Practical philosophy - in search of an ethical Minimum and Sagacious Reasoning*. The book *Practical Philosophy* deals with the issue of truth and truth in faith, questions of values, ideology and praxis, with African philosophy and the problems of culture, philosophy, ethics and the ecophilosophy. I will now discuss some of the essays that are unequivocally associated with this last theme, ecophilosophy. These essays focus strictly on poverty and the connection with the environment is clear: poverty has an enormous impact on man and in turn, man on his surroundings and in the final instance the ecology at large.

Oruka begins his discussion about the 'ethics of consumerism' by quoting Oketh Owiti's definition of what and who is to be a consumer: "A consumer is an individual member of the general public purchasing or using goods, property or a service for a private purpose. It can be an individual or a person, or even a party can be considered as a consumer."³⁸ Using his country, Kenya, as his example and also comparing it statistically with the rest of the world (UN), he discovered that:

Eighty per cent of the human population lives in abject poverty. One-third covers people who scarcely have anything worthwhile to eat and to consume. One-fifth of the human population or race is affluent and is prone to consume far more than its real need. From statistics and also from national (Kenya) and international (UN) point of view, there are no existing laws and rules to overcome such an imbalance of consumerism i.e. over-consumption and under-consumption. (According to him) there are no laws or rules that can help to reduce and can give a potential chance to under-consumers. Such rules should help the under-consumer to obtain the basic minimum or to be pragmatic, to obtain adequate food and water.³⁹

³⁸ Ibid, p. 264.

³⁹ Ibid, p, 265.

A lack of sufficient legislation both nationally and internationally has been responsible for abject poverty and imbalance in Kenya and in our world especially among nations and races. Poverty is the result of an ethical failure to be inclusive and instead of dwelling on the limitations caused by the old ethics we need a substitute that embrace new inclusive ethics. Who should invent the new ethics? How new ethics ought to look like? And what is the objective of the new ethics? It should be the thinker's job to reformulate ethics in order to eradicate hunger and poverty and raise the living standard of the other two-thirds of the human race. The one-fifth who are consumers, according to him, are living in an illusion not in reality. Oruka lamented:

The problem here is one of ethics and aesthetics. The ethics that encourages the scenario we have described above is one that treats such actions as glaring overconsumption, over enjoyment and a big-bellied appearance as good, while at the same time this sort of ethics treats the opposite of these given actions as bad or at least as miserable. What we need is a new sort of ethics. This would reverse the dominant perspective in our society and treat moderation in all our living as ethically desirable.⁴⁰

For Oruka, the critique of consumerism should aim at three things 1) The alleviation of hunger, 2) the enrichment of human life and 3) aesthetic enjoyment.

Such primary objectives of consumerism that are mainly national as well as international should be the goals of new ethics and reason that aims at a harmonious and balanced society for all. It is only when we reformulate our ethics and in doing so reverse the dominant perspective of traditional values that we can become more moderate in our day-to-day life.

In the same ethics of consumerism discussion Oruka introduces an environmental theme. The environment has been destroyed by traditional values and the destruction of our ecology has been pretentious by man's outlook on reality, especially how he has modelled thought, reason and belief. Man's modes of reasoning and thinking have moved him further away from nature instead of bringing him nearer to it and he has created systems of thought that guide his action. These systems ought to be able to assist humans to improve and change the environment for the better. The old ethics need to be revalued and new meanings assigned so that the familiar hypothesis by which we now live is renovated into another.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p, 266.

This conversant hypothesis embodies consumerism and utilitarianism, i.e. all that is within the Earth is meant for man's good, glory and development and it needs to be reframed to reflect a more ecocentric or biodiverse attitude. All that is within the Earth is predicted for those who are inhabitants of the Earth, irrespective of their position in the hierarchy. The first hypothesis is almost bound to stimulate over-consumption, while the second which points to an Earth-centred ethics or deep ecology is not exclusive but inclusive in approach. This new type of ethics does not advocate nor promote or assign one member of the Earth a greater advantage and privilege than any other, instead it must be an ethics of live and let live. This new paradigm which accords with deep ecology or holistic ethics should encourage all members of Earth to live together, to learn and to coexist because we are all linked to one another.

To end this discussion on consumerism and to relate it to ecophilosophy I concur with Oruka's thought that the one-fifth of humanity which is living the consumerist lifestyle should stop being so egoistic. The only possible way to come out of the trap of consumerism and anthropocentrism is to think more broadly thus seeking a balance and harmony between the various groups of humanity as well as the ecosystem. Holistic ethics would not just lift up the other four-fifths of the population, instead it ought to improve the lives of the richer one-fifth. In doing this human would be creating harmony between two extreme dualistic groups. Deep-ecology is a solution for the environmental crisis because it lifts the worth of non-privileged groups and at the same time prevents the domination and exploitation of nature by only one group and by that prevents humanity from employing instrumental rationality to destroy itself.

Anthropocentric ecology treats man as the beneficiary of the Earth and all the flora and fauna as meant to be good for human use. [...] Anthropocentric ecology is a stimulant for consumerism in its vulgar form. But the vulgar form of consumerism can be checked or at least moderated if we adopt *deep ecology* or *holistic ecology*. [...] This is an ethic that treats human species not as the benefactor of Earth but as just one of the member of Earth:[...]to be governed by a code of rules that demands that they all live and let live. Hence, it would be immoral, given the Earth ethic, vainly to destroy the life of any member of the biotic community [...]. In anthropocentric ecology, ethics and morality are restricted to human society alone. What is good or bad is good or bad according to human interests and rights. But with the Earth ethics what is good or bad is good or bad in the biotic community. What is good is what promotes the security of all members of the biotic community, whether they are human or non-human

members. And what is bad is that which tends to diminish the balance of nature in favour of some particular species. Thus overconsumption, for example, is bad insofar as it encourages the vain destruction of the life of some given members of the biotic community.⁴¹

Internationally we have concepts that are subjective in their daily usage and do not offer objective and universal truth. We hear in the areas of development and the environment that the pendulum swings continually between the North and the South, the rich world and the poor, etc. There is in this pendulum swing an accusation from the Polar to the South or vice versa of corruption, the effects of colonisation effects, population control and so on. When such accusations of blame are scrutinised thoroughly though, the individualism and anthropocentrism, which is their cause, becomes visible. Both -isms are cornerstones of the old ethics which does not solve the problem of consumerism but creates economic and ecological crises. In his essay *Can Life Survive* Robert Hart dismisses such international misuse of concepts, especially the swinging pendulum blame game, as mere ignorance of the facts and not grounded in reality.

Such attitudes betray gross ignorance of the true facts. Environmental degradation is overwhelming the responsibility of the North, its prodigious emission of polluting gases and other chemicals, with it the whole destruction of forests and chemical contamination of soils, combined with its ruthless economic and political exploitation of the South. The North's first duty is not to lecture the South and administer meagre charity but to get off its back. If the South were allowed to work out its own salvation, freed from the domination not only from the North but also by its own North-sponsored dictators and elites, there is ample evidence that it would find solutions to its economic and ecological problems from which the North could learn valuable lessons.⁴²

Another ethical theme that Oruka introduced and dwelt on at length in his *Practical Philosophy* is the Parental Earth Ethics. This issue is related to Foreign Aid and to ecophilosophy.⁴³ In my view, this theme has never been given enough consideration by politicians, economists, environmentalists and even ecologists and philosophers. Like so many

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 267-268, 1997.

⁴² Bookchin, *Deep Ecology and Anarchism*, p. 8, 1993.

⁴³ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 146, 1997. See also Oruka, in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 119, 1997.

other concepts in ecophilosophy Parental Earth Ethics attempts to defuse the tension between nature and human beings. I will revisit the topic in the next chapter but here let me just discuss its relation to foreign aid. It is, of course, an issue that is principally connected with the Rich Nations helping the poor Nations and how poor people's poverty affects the way they use the environment for their survival. On the topic of Parental Earth Ethics Oruka was responding to an article written by Garret Hardin on *Life on boats ethics*. I will begin then summarizing Garret's dissertation.⁴⁴

The rich nations ought not to help the poor countries because in helping the poor countries the First World will become overpopulated thus making all countries poorer. The best option would be to let the poor remain poor and the rich to continue to enjoy their riches. The few rich nations should not help the many poor countries. [...] The logical conclusion, therefore, is not to give aid. We shall all sink in the boat, the rich and the poor alike. To admit only a few (helping a few poor nations and leaving the majority poor), would require drawing up arbitrary criteria: why should this small group be chosen while the majority are without anything?"⁴⁵ It follows that to admit some to the boat and leave others out is unfair. So, because there is no fair way of determining the rules to be charted it is not logical to admit any group into the boat and thus the safety of the vessel is preserved.⁴⁶

A related view which runs contrary to Garret's is what Oruka calls the *Philosophy of foreign aids*. Garret argued against giving subsidies to the poor countries on the ground that nature knows how to achieve a balance between its members and the foreign aid should not be given to the poor nations. Odera disagreed with Garret and he changed the terms of the debate offering a justification based on why poor countries were entitled to foreign aid instead. His argument rests on four fundamental pillars and each pillar appeals to the idea of international retributive justice.⁴⁷ These pillars are: Firstly, International charity, an obligation of rich nations to help the poor countries on the basis of charitable and new ethics. Secondly, International Fair Trade whose objective is to reverse the unequal exchange trade. Thirdly, the international historical rectification in which rich countries are dependent on the developing countries, especially during the colonial periods. Fourthly, the right to a human minimum standard of living. This

⁴⁴ [www.garretthardinsociety.org/.../art_lifeboat_ethics_case_against_helping the poor](http://www.garretthardinsociety.org/.../art_lifeboat_ethics_case_against_helping_the_poor)

⁴⁵ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 146, 1997.

⁴⁶ [www.garretthardinsociety.org/.../art_lifeboat_ethics_case_against_helping the poor](http://www.garretthardinsociety.org/.../art_lifeboat_ethics_case_against_helping_the_poor)

⁴⁷ Oruka, p. 81-84, 1997.

human minimum is the basic right of every human and the world moral obligation as a sign of promoting the dignity of every human regardless of their countries, gender, race and even religion.

The right to a human minimum becomes the dominant theme and the basis of Oruka's argument expressed by the phrase the inherent rights of every person and as a consequence it calls for national and international rights for everyone. This right should become an obligation to human beings to all moral agents, i.e., the right of every moral agent to live his or her life with dignity the world owes each a life, a life worth living is the truth that goes beyond its cultural boundary. Beyond the pendulum swing from North to South to mean that a person exists in a web of networks that is complex and is interrelated regardless of how rich or poor the individual members are. It simply isn't possible to throw one country out of the boat and expect it to stay afloat and indeed the metaphor of a single boat doesn't – so to speak – hold water.

One problem with Hardin's exposition is that it is given as if there are no debts or commonwealth between the boaters and the swimming millions. A connected problem is that he assumes that there is just one boat but in the real world there are many lifeboats. A few are affluent while the larger majority of the boats are poor. Those affluent boats have pipes connecting their boats with the larger number of the other boats but indeed in the beginning all boats were poor. Then a number of the sailors of the now rich boats sailed in the now poor boats and by all means possible plundered the wealth of those boats and used the gain to cause economic and safety disparity between the boats. The rich boats owe part of their current self-preservation to the gains brought to them by the inter-boat pipes. If indeed the poor boats sank eventually all the rich boats will also sink.⁴⁸

With the concept of a web of networks and upholding the right to a human minimum Oruka was in a position to develop an ethical hypothesis. The hypothesis is about the Earth being a parent to all and all of us who are moral agents. Moral agents ought to be responsible for each other irrespective of individual success, talent or luck, which invariably happens at the expense of the less fortunate. In his argument which uses the example of a nuclear family consisting of both mother and father and six children, Oruka brings into play the parental debt principle. In it he designates Rule one and the principle of individual luck, Rule two; the parental debt always takes precedence over the individual success principle when a conflict arises. The priority of order is as follows:

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 147-148, 1997.

The parental debt is prior to the individual luck principle so that if any of the rules in one come into conflict with any of the rules in two then one takes priority. This is as it should be. The ethics of common sense shows that when in any given community matters of common wealth and security conflict with matters of personal possession, luck or one achievement, the former must prevail over the latter. [...] The reason for such would be that those achievements are personal and hence the personal superrogation rule is to prevail. The objection to this can be supported by invoking issues of common origin, common security and common wealth of the community of which the person was a member.⁴⁹

Oruka, therefore, demonstrated that an imbalance in human thinking and in how man acts in relation to others is a result of the distribution of earthly riches. Earthly riches are a pertinent theme in ecophilosophy. In his first application of parental Earth ethics Oruka offers a challenge to lifeboat ethics and one of the above four pillars of his argument became the title of his major treatise on practical philosophy *In Search of an Ethical Minimum*. The parental Earth ethics entails a shift from our traditional understanding and concept of individualism. The individual believed he had no relation to others to other children and most devastating of all, no connection to the source of his being, the parent. Symbolically the relation of the individual to the parents is understood by a community as the parent or the Earth that sustains our being. “The Earth is a Commonwealth of all humanity”⁵⁰ regardless of our continent, nation, wealth, poverty, race, age, etc.

The second reason for introducing a Parental Earth Ethics - I think was, Oruka wanted to show the importance of worldly interconnectedness and the interdependence of humanity. This idea or theme was overlooked or not realized by Garret Hardin. This aspect of Parental Earth ethics places a demand on all human beings, irrespective of race, colour, religion and celebrity etc., to embrace each other as fellow humans. This is true because whether our boats sailed, either from the developed or developing nations, they owe to one other a current of self-preservation. The historical injustices committed by colonialists, missionaries and explorers – especially in Africa and India – need to be discussed, particularly the case for the European’s historical arrogance, their systematic undermining of other cultures and worse still, the theft or destruction of the African and Indian heritage. Oruka puts it:

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 149- 150, 1997.

⁵⁰ Oruka in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 128, 1997.

Again, if the right of the first occupation or generally the veil of fate is to prevail over the principle of the Earth as a common good for all humankind, then all that was procured through colonisation of such places like Africa and India should have been returned to those former colonies a long time ago. [...]. On colonialism what we lament is the fact that those who developed themselves by it have turned back on those whom they colonised and now claim that they (the former subject) have no share in or claim to any of their current possessions. But given the organic constitution of life and the principle of the parental Earth ethics, the former colonies have a legitimate claim to such possession.⁵¹

From the above argument, especially the organic quality of nature it is my view that we human beings could learn from it. In fact, no particular species, persons, race or nation could survive and have more advantages than the other forever. Considering the world as a historic organism, no society, nation, empire or individual will remain stronger forever and because the whole Earth belongs to all of us, we should all learn to invest in equality and justice. In addition, “if rich and powerful nations behave compassionately towards the weak nations, in the service of humanity, they will be rewarded when history favours the poorer countries. The more if things shift, or historically turn, they will be remembered with compassion.”⁵²

Besides the need to correct our social and moral structures in order to reduce the imbalances between the rich and the poor, the South and the North, there is another meaning of parental Earth ethics. Its final aim was to show the disadvantages of and the side effects caused by traditional ethics or values. These traditional ethics/ values, according to Oruka, were advocated mostly by Western philosophers and Judeo-Christian theologians.

There is an advantage of the new ethics over the old values. The new standards encourage us to embrace all human beings and also other members of the planet. The ethics will entreat to our reason and will impel everyone wisely to adopt them. The Parental Earth ethics should motivate human beings regardless of their different views on nature, wealth, race, gender etc., to be more concerned with the global distribution of the wealth. In doing so we as human beings can enjoy equally the wealth of the land that is a product of our ‘parent,’ i.e. our collective wealth and we can use them equally.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 128, 1997.

⁵² Ibid, p. 129, 1997.

The application of *Parental Earth Ethics* in ecophilosophy as a new paradigm is possible for it will help us to approach the environmental crisis in a way that is more comprehensive. The parental Earth ethics should illustrate a change in our values and therefore how we relate better to nature and secondly, they should illustrate how we go about using our wealth and knowledge to solve the ecological crisis and bring stability and equilibrium in the cosmos. The new ethics ought to open our minds on how we view other nations and races.

Chapter 3. The Ecophilosophical Crisis and possible solutions

3.1 Darwin's Nightmare

Let me begin this chapter of my dissertation by analysing the documentary film *Darwin's Nightmare*. I intend to show the side effects of the ecological crisis reinforced by rationalism and the old ethics and the urgent need for adopting extended ethics. Hubert Sauper directed *the Darwin's Nightmare* film. Sauper was born on 17 July 1966 in Tyrol in Austria, he has produced more than five documentary films.¹ I was introduced to the film when it was presented on the local ORF 2 television in a programme called *Universum* on 17th January 2005. I watched it only once but I developed a great deal of curiosity of asking myself why such devastating reality is still real and is happening in 21st century, but it became apparent that the film had left me with a lasting impression of the misery and ecological disintegration suffered by the people of Mwanza in Tanzania.

The film begins with a cargo plane touching down at Mwanza airfield, near Lake Victoria. The plane had come from Europe in order to ship back processed Nile perch fillet, a species of fish introduced into Lake Victoria. The transport company running the cargo airplanes claimed it was aid but it was also bringing munitions and weapons from European arms dealers. The paradox is then that armaments and ammunition are in the same planes that transported food to European consumers. The locals, therefore, are unwittingly feeding the rich while the entrepreneurs are killing those they thought they were aiding. In a number of interviews, Sauper asks the question; what do the cargo planes bring to Mwanza and various answers were given. The factory managers claim that the planes' cavernous holds are empty when they land and one says it carries equipment. Although some of his colleagues and ordinary Mwanzans are certain what the plane transported, 'occasionally bring humanitarian food and medical aid,' more often bring weapons which fuel the continent's endless and destructive wars, (especially in Congo, Rwanda and Uganda).

Human beings are inspired by the principle of survival of the fittest and capitalistic exploitation can destroy what is seen to have been an Eden of animals. *Darwin's Nightmare*,

¹ Sauper, has produced other documentary films: 1993, *On the Road with Email*, 1994, *So I sleepwalk in the broad daylight*. 1995, *Lomographers Moscow*, 1998, *Kisangani Diary for Rwanda*, 2000, *Alone with our stories*, 2004, *Darwin's Nightmare*; 2014, *We Come as Friends*.

the title of the film has the connotation of survival. The film describes a raw animalistic ecosystem where survival of the fittest rules. In 2004, when the film was made, it was supposed to promote the hope that humanity could transcend this fundamental law of nature and human beings could work together for the common good of the ecosystem and especially for us the people. Some features of the relationship between people, plants, fish, etc. can be deduced:

The indigenous population, the workers at the fish processing plant, the prostitutes who serve the pilots and crews, the street children, the security guards, the teachers and others were unfit to survive. They are exposed to an open-air factory; ammonia-emitting, maggot-infested perch carcasses are dried and fried and repacked as a local subsistence food. The factory's leftover packing materials are collected by street children who melt down the plastic and inhale the fumes. The fittest are the foreign benefactors, the Europeans, the ones who manipulate the poor for the profit of the world's banks, for the merchants who import Nile perch and pay the workers poorly. The fittest, the first-world multinational corporations, use the weakest, the Tanzanian natural resources and indigenous peoples.

Animalistic survival. Apparently the Nile Perch was introduced into Lake Victoria as an attempt by British scientists, economists and explorers to replenish the overfished waters. The fish experiment brought more disaster than good; the introduction of a non-indigenous Nile Perch has consumed hundreds of indigenous species and the oily-fleshed fish can reach over six feet in length and has rapidly emerged as the fittest specimen in its new habitat. The survival of the Nile Perch however has meant an exhaustion of the lake's food supplies and its habit of preying upon the smaller indigenous fish including its young. The cichlids and haplochromines were an important part of the food-web in the Lake Victoria ecosystem. These both species were wiped out by the Nile Perch and the Tilapia, and they were non-economical, usefulness and being difficult to catch, the British administration had no interest in biodiversity. The feeding system of the cichlids and Haplochromis had made Lake Victoria a balanced ecosystem. The introduction of Nile Perch had other side effects; there was, for example, the multiplication of insects from the Perch processing which caused an increase in malaria and other diseases in the area. The global market demands have almost extinguished the Nile Perch and Tilapia fish themselves.

Only decades after the discovery² of Lake Victoria by British explorers the colonialists on the Kenyan side of Lake Victoria started clearing the watersheds. They destroyed the surroundings, the natural vegetation, denuded forests and drained swamps in order to plant cash produce like tea, coffee, sugar and maize and after several years all these plantations grew in size and number. The waste products from the agricultural and industrial chemicals were discarded into the neighbouring rivers which end up as tributaries of Lake Victoria, producing the unwanted, unsightly bloom, the water hyacinth. From the time when the Nile perch and Tilapia fish were introduced, the ecological health and equilibrium of Lake Victoria has been profoundly affected.

The interviews in the film reveal some dreadful conditions and facts about Lake Victoria. Once a stable ecosystem Lake Victoria is now unhealthy for all indigenous organisms in it and the surrounding area: indigenous people, native fish, plants, insects, etc. The capitalists who are supposedly more civilized and have a better ethical and philosophical system are at war with the weak and the poor. They are the ones who are enjoying the economical system from exploiting the rich ecological environment. After exploration and colonisation, a new style of colonization and imperialism began, only now it was called globalisation. The African raw materials such as oil, fish, minerals, flowers, tea, etc.. are bought cheaply by the owners of the airplanes and weapons in return other dangerous items are delivered in the name of aid to the continent.

The suffering and misery of the children and youth are caused by the arrogance of the rich. Drug consumption, prostitution and the resulting proliferation of AIDS has come to touch every family in the society. The arrogance of the wealthy Europeans who didn't want to know or just my job matters attitudes are creating immeasurable future dangers, logically not only for the people in the Mwanza village and Tanzania as a nation but also the continent as a whole and the entire cosmos.

Lake Victoria is plague-ridden with the deadly Water Hyacinth which deprives it of oxygen thus suffocating the other members of the lake and reducing further its biodiversity. In the name of improving the economy of the country and individuals, capitalist predators have caused the distortion of the whole ecosystem. They are the source of suffering of all, i.e. the human

² This is another fact that is not addressed in *Darwin's Nightmare* but from the *The Kenya Standard Newspaper* of 14 December, 2005. <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke>

exploitation as well as the destruction of nature. In consequence, if the current situation is unchecked it will cause the death of all members of the planet.

What has gone wrong with humanity? Where did we learn to care less about others and embrace pure capitalism and forget the socialist aspect of our being? Individualism has become the primary driving force of our thought and action. We can conclude this introduction of ecophilosophical crisis by framing some basic facts:

Man has used his reason, I think, to distort the natural ecosystem and bring suffering to himself and his fellow man, to his neighbour, plants, fish, etc. *Darwin's Nightmare* is a film that identifies the causes of poverty and imbalances especially amongst the rich and the poor people and countries, in the name of globalization, a new system of neo-colonisation.

Why Africa is still considered as third world and why is it the most affected continent in the ecological crisis? The whole ecological web of disturbances and distortion means that the causes of the crisis could be attributed to any one of its members. Where did these problems begin? Why is there no instantaneous discovery of the origin and the sources of these problems? What are the roots and properties of the ecological crisis? Who is creating, encouraging and promoting ideologies that create poverty, global injustice sicknesses such as AIDS and environmental disasters on our planet?

What role has individualism, utilitarianism, capitalism and other Western concepts found in traditional ethics played in Man's attitude and approach towards nature or his movement away from nature? The solutions or answers to such litanies questions lie in an ethics that has shaped Man's thought and action towards each other and away from nature, more exclusive than inclusive ethics or values (as discussed in Chapter 1)

Darwin's nightmare is the best way, I think, of demonstrating to us and the world the side effects of reason and the ecological crisis. As I have indicated in chapter one, Man has not developed after all especially not in his capacity to create harmony between himself and other human beings or animals, etc. The objective aspect of the film, in my opinion, is to demonstrate the inconsiderateness of Man amidst his claimed civilization. The aims of such film is to look deeper into the root causes of such imbalances in our planet. In the next section, I will discuss the underlying causes and hopefully some remedies for the ecological crisis such as in Mwanza in Lake Victoria.

3.2 Western philosophy and the Judeo-Christian view of Ethics

After analysing *Darwin's Nightmare* and in showing the real nature of the ecological crisis how it affects people on the ground in Mwanza and other neighbouring countries like Kenya and Uganda we could ask ourselves; what elements influence Man's thoughts and actions? Why do human beings behave in a way so detrimental to nature? Why do they bring suffering and destruction to each other, to animals, plants and such an imbalance to the ecology? Let me attempt to show in this section how Oruka Odera understood ecological problems, their causes and how he tried to offer some solutions.

Oruka provided convincing arguments for the African philosophical debates and I am inclined to believe that he can also give us some hints about solving the ecological crisis. I want show how Oruka offered some insights that might be of abundant help in eradicating if not minimizing the environmental or ecological crises affecting us locally, nationally and globally. The cause of the environmental or ecological crises, as I have shown, has a historical beginning. It is historical in the sense that thinkers from the beginning of Man's epistemological advancement never discussed or addressed ecology per se in either a speculative or a theoretical field of research.

The ancient scholars never thought widely or broadly enough to include the environment as a discipline of human study. In his ecophilosophical essay Oruka mentioned the blindness of the great thinkers, - the animators of civilization and founders of knowledge – as hardly treating the subject of environment in a systematic and intensive way. The founders of civilization, in the general meaning of the word, were the Egyptians and the Greeks.

Their ideas about religion and philosophy are the origins of Judeo-Christian religion and modern Western philosophy. Unfortunately, they neither laid the foundations for a sophisticated outlook on nature as they did in many other fields of study. Their blindness can be attributed to their not identifying the importance of nature as a field worthy of Man's intellectual endeavours.³

Judeo-Christian theology and the legacy of Western-style philosophy have supported all intellectual efforts in the West and this backgrounding of the attitude towards the environment is what has led directly to the environmental crisis. Traditional ethics – as it derives from Western philosophy and Judeo-Christian principles – might well have been a primary contributing factor in the ecological crisis as it is today. Neither philosophy nor Judeo-Christian theology systematically or intensively studies ecology as such but instead, both have

³ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 243, 1997.

traditionally seen nature as a bread basket from which Man might simply help himself. Such a mental attitude has had a significant influence on the way we think about, relate to and therefore handle the environment. Other ethical mental attitudes are individualism, anthropocentrism, utilitarianism, the hierarchy of values and things and the interpretation of the Divine Governance. I will pursue these pillars of traditional ethics and show their disadvantage between human and non-human relationships. And in mentioning philosophy, especially Western philosophical ethics, as a major contributor to the environmental crisis, Oruka quoted Creighton Peden W. (1994).

The environment crisis facing humanity is due in part to the philosophy of possessive individualism, a philosophy which is spreading in today's world of pluralistic democracy and a free market economy become the dominant political and economic norms for humanity.⁴

We could ask ourselves some difficult questions at this point, how have the concepts mentioned above guided by traditional ethics have contributed negatively or blindly to the ecological or environmental crisis? Has Man used these concepts only for his glory and his happiness without considering other members of the planet? How have these ideas isolated Man from nature and created a gap between Man and nature? The litany of questions goes on and on. Oruka believed that these concepts were the cause of the modern West's inability to strike an equilibrium between the human and the non-human. The Greco-Judeo-Christian tradition orients Man towards considering his interests before those of the other members of the cosmos.

If we accept Paden's concept of individualism as a system then an individual will definitively develop an adverse conception of nature and this becomes even worse when the person is being guided by traditional ethics, the individual, therefore places himself above the nature. Using his claims to superiority, being different from other creature by virtue of his power, reason and logic, Man seeks the ideal of individualistic life.⁵ Thus, it becomes the source of the diminishing importance of other members of the planet. Traditional Ethics has guided Man to use other fields of knowledge, biology, physical and social sciences, to the advantage of Man as an individual who has goals and ends that are egoistic in nature.

Individualism is a closed system of thinking with a wrong-headed methodology. It relates unequally to the other members of the planet and it sets up a misleading picture of human beings

⁴ Oruka in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 119, 1997.

⁵ Ibid, p. 120, 1997.

inhabiting a separate world. An individual is not only connected to the other members of the planet socially but dependent on them to meet all his basic needs and interests. His relation to others is not accidental and contingent but essential and meaningful.

The individualism argument has two overlapping consequences: the individual's behaviour towards nature and the institutional exploitation of nature. The latter is socially, politically and economically oriented. Both individual persons and complex societies operate within distinct intellectual and moral spheres. The shift from traditional ethics to new standards ought to mean that each bases its outlook on the fundamental philosophical question; how can we change our outlook on nature as individuals or as institutions, and what changes in behaviour would arise from the acceptance of wiser, more ecological values? How can we as individual persons and as a complex society instil in ourselves an environmental consciousness or an ecological conscience? The only possible way among the many is to articulate an ethics that values both individualism and the harmonious coexistence of all of the Earth's inhabitants.

Another problem with traditional ethics mentioned by Oruka is that of anthropocentrism. The *HarperCollins Dictionary of Philosophy* claims that anthropocentrism originated in Greek thought and that the word has the following meanings:⁶

- a) It refers to any view that maintains that Man is the centre and ultimate goal of the universe.
- b) It relates to the belief that Man's values are central to the function of the universe, and the universe sustains and progressively supports those values.
- c) Occasionally, the term is used to refer in a negative way to the belief that reality can be correctly explained only on the basis of the forms of subjective human experience.

Anthropocentric thought in this view, therefore, orients itself towards a self-centered and human understanding of the non-human and especially nature. Nature should be considered to be primary in human thought, a concept that makes the human being topmost, be imperfect in its scope and harmful from the point of view of nature. Those whose views are characterized by such a human-centric view possess a blind spot in their thinking. Plumwood describes the consequences of this:

People under their influence, such as those from the Western cultural traditions in which anthropocentrism is deeply rooted, develop conceptions of themselves as belonging to a superior sphere apart, a rational sphere of exclusively 'human'

⁶ Angeles, *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 15, 1992.

ethics, technology and culture dissociated from nature and ecology. This self-enclosed outlook has helped us to lose touch with ourselves as creatures who are not only cultural beings but also natural beings, just as dependent on a healthy biosphere as other forms of life. Though seeing ourselves in terms of mastery as primarily rational non-rational beings who are 'outside nature' we are subject to illusions of autonomy, service and control, taking the functioning of the 'lower' sphere, the ecological systems which support us, entirely for granted, needing some grudging support and attention only when they fail to perform as expected. [...] An analysis of human/nature dualism and some of the larger formations of human-centeredness (anthropocentrism) will show us why they are now, in the age of ecological limits, ecologically irrational, a danger to all planetary life.⁷

The other pillar of old ethics is utilitarianism. The *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* defines utilitarianism as: A moral theory that an action is morally good if and only if it produces at least as much good (utility) for all people affected by the action as any alternative action the person could take instead.⁸ Applying this definition to our scientific, politics, economics, philosophy, ecology or any other human endeavours we as human and moral beings must opt to decide what brings us more happiness than the contrary. An ecophilosophical view on utilitarianism would mean that it led Man to manipulate nature in order to exploit the welfare and happiness of the majority of people without any consideration at all for non-humans. The result of such a view is that some people may have to suffer extreme privation in the process. A good example is Lake Victoria in East Africa whose ecosystem was destroyed and it happened because the explorers and the British government wanted harvest more money from Nile perch. The Nile perch is easy to fish and a man can make a great deal of money. The moral standard set out by utilitarianism is: as long as the total happiness of those benefitting from the sale and feeding of fish is not exceeded by the misery of those people affected by pollution, and with no concern at all for the damage to the non-human biosphere, then the endeavour was allowed. With its blind-spot of the effects on non-human nature traditional ethics has allowed humans to develop an ethics that ignores conservation and preservation. In fact, Man has not forgotten about conservation and preservation, however, he has actively used all the means at

⁷ Plumwood, *Environnemental Culture*, p. 99 -100, 2002.

⁸ Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1999.

his disposal such as science, technology, reason and logic, in order to exploit nature exhaustively for his advantage and comfort.

Hierarchy is another cornerstone for Judeo-Christian ethics. Bookchin summarises the way in which hierarchy⁹ functions in every sphere of life but especially in a society as a whole. Bookchin showed that overcoming domination in human relations is not only possible but an obligation. In addition to that it would also be possible to overcome our feeling of superiority towards and our perceived entitlement with regards to other animals, plants and so on. Systems of hierarchy and domination are visible in all our thought and actions.

By hierarchy, I mean the cultural and psychological systems of obedience and command [...] I refer to the domination of the young by the old, of women by men, of one ethnic group by another, of masses by bureaucrats who profess to speak for their “higher social interest,” of countryside by town, and in a more subtle psychological sense, of body and mind, [...] Hierarchy is not merely a social condition; it is also a state of consciousness, a sensibility towards phenomena at every level of personal and social experience.¹⁰

Modern human beings, considered as individuals or as groups, have inherited a patriarchal hierarchy that still dominates the way we think and the way in which we relate to other human beings consequently, it includes other races, classes, genders, sexuality, slaves and consecrated objects or places. As a consequence of such thinking we have a hierarchical pyramid which initially placed God at the top, although 18th-century humanism has seen God replaced by the human subject and nature at the bottom. Thus, the structure is: 1. God/The Divine, 2. Man, his culture, and the use of reason, 3. Women, children, animals, plants, rocks and so on. Natural

⁹ Browne, *An Introduction to Sociology*, p. 10, 1998. There are other concepts which are widely used sometimes univocally with hierarchy but do not necessarily mean the same thing, such as: a) class could be a collection, group or members regarded as having certain attributes or traits in common. b) Status is the amount of prestige or social importance a person has in the eyes of other members of the group or society. Ascribed status is status which is given to an individual at birth and usually can't be change while Achieved status is status which individual achieves through his personal effort. c) a caste system is a stratification system based on the Hindu religious beliefs where an individual's position is fixed at birth and cannot be changed.

¹⁰ Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, p. 68-69, 2005. Bookchin's basic argument in reference to organic societies is not hierarchical but it is a belief that unity of difference or unity of diversity should be our ecological outlook. Rather than stressing our difference at the expense of unity, an ecological or ecosystems view should see all living things/organisms as interdependent and each playing a complementary role in perpetuating the stability of the natural order.

resources, amongst which women have also traditionally been located, are under God and Man's control, able to be used or disposed of as they have seen fit.

Then God said: "Let us make Man in our own image, after our own likes. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and all the animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground. God created Man in his image; in the divine image he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying to them; be fertile and multiply; fill the Earth and subdue it. Have dominion over [...] and all the living that moves on the Earth. ¹¹

Using a biblical foundation, especially the creation story, the advocates of Divine Governance urged Man to continue with the work of creation and to transform the Earth according to the Divine Will and Plan. This biblical foundation became the source of insight and revelation about us who were made in the likeness of the Creator. We are directly above all nature and they have to be governed by Man then according to the Creator's plan. When we read the Bible what we observe from the cosmos and what we as human beings are capable of doing should conform to the Divine Plan. The people should transform and improve the Earth and in so doing we would be fulfilling God's Will by subjugating the land to the glory of the Creator, subsequently, improving also our state and happiness. The Divine Plan manifested in our cosmos is brought to endure when human beings subjugate themselves according to his commandments.

The ideas discussed above, according to Oruka, are the cornerstones of traditional ethics. They have promoted human beings to be the top of nature instead of putting us on a level with it. They have made Man live a life of isolation and illusion, never in touch with himself and reality. The problem of Man being in isolation and not in touch with reality should dictate a new approach in which Man is not alone but a member of the larger community of nature. The shift to a new existential outlook is vital and necessary. But as much as we campaign and argue for a new approach, one problem remains, the impossibility of constructing a new ethics, *do novo*. We have created a new ethics which is new but at the same time it retains its continuity with the moral ideas and ideals of the past. The implication is; we need to create a new scholarly literature that approaches the ecological crisis by outlining, exploring and redefining these ideas

¹¹ *The Bible*, Genesis 1. 26-28, 1999.

according to the changes in time and space. The change is not a dream that can be accomplished overnight. Callicott¹² points out some possible ways in which this might happen.

- An invitation to other experts to join the effort in order to create an intellectually diverse global network of indigenous environmental thinkers. Each to adapt to his own cultural and ecological bioregion which he is then uniquely able to represent.
- To augment personal commitment and structural reform, developing a network of environmental ethics that will help set us on our way towards the goal of healing the biosphere.
- The need for some common environmental attitudes and values on which a shared vision of the whole and healthy world can be achieved.
- One significant obstacle that needs to be overcome is how to resolve the tension between the plurality of attitudes on the environment and values drawn from a multiplicity of independent intellectual traditions, but on the other hand, to forge a common ecological conscience learned from the contemporary international scientific worldview. There is a need for a genuine network for a whole and healthy Earth not just a patchwork of unrelated ideas.

¹² Callicott, *Earth's Insight, a Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*, Xvi, 1994.

3.3 A Possible Ecophilosophical solution.

We can conclude, according to Oruka, that revelation, hierarchy, utilitarianism, anthropocentrism and individualism are the cornerstones of the traditional ethics. This argument propagated by the Greco-Judeo-Christian theology and Western philosophy is assumed to be causes of the ecological crisis. All of these -isms are firmly centred on promoting the happiness of *Homo sapiens* while they have forgotten that they are only one of the many inhabitants of the planet. Western philosophy and Judeo-Christian thinkers sought only what was good for human beings and this limited their ethical outlook. The sort of questions that might help solve the environmental crisis then are: Why was traditional ethics so much more exclusive than inclusive in its outlook? Why has it taken Man so long to notice the limitations of reason?

Whether the why stems from the philosophy or theology ethics ought to serve as an objective guide on how to act to harmonize humanity best with its environment. Man must become consciously not only aware but also viscerally feel – and this could be conceived religiously, aesthetically or morally – that he is part of nature. Man always ought to be aware of the values that see him integrated into natural surroundings. Only by challenging the old ethical outlook and adopting the new can we ever hope to solve the ecological crisis.

By critiquing the moral and environmental views of a number of relevant thinkers and eventually designing his own parental Earth ethics, Oruka, was in a position to identify the steps that needed to be taken in order to uncover the root causes of the ecological crisis. He suggested further ways of progressing the root causes. These are:

- a) by learning from history and looking for scholars who have developed relational concept of nature,
- b) by shifting the Judeo-Christian ethics toward extended values,
- c) by learning from as many other cultures as possible,
- d) by the adoption of parental Earth ethics.

The study of history offers Mankind the opportunity to uncover the origins and reasons of current problems – something particularly salient in the case of ecology. Why did Oruka first look to the classical philosophers in this task? I think, in tracing the historical development of ecology, Oruka wanted us to appreciate how Man has gradually advanced in his understanding of nature. He wants us to do this because if we are developing a more insightful approach towards the universe then that allows us to have some optimism about the future. Just like the

tenacity he showed in the African debates, Oruka did not give up after discerning that the Egyptians and the Greeks never gave any special attention to environmental studies. He resolved instead to begin a new comprehensive study of nature. He first identified a number of philosophers who had made a serious and useful contribution to the awareness of the environment. He then used other sources outside the Western tradition which do have a richer tradition of such thinking.

The philosophers who Oruka identified and their contributions to theorizing Man's relationship with the planet have been discussed at length in Chapter 1. These few philosophers did adopt a more holistic outlook than their contemporaries and this now forms the basis of modern thinking about Man's relatedness to nature and the interconnectivity of all things. In his treatise on the classical philosophers Oruka identifies the big difference that exists between the ethics in ecophilosophy and that in environmental studies. Ecophilosophy as a new paradigm is more inclusive and broader while environmental standards are more exclusive and narrow.

We regard ecophilosophy as the totality of the philosophy of nature. In this sense, ecophilosophy is broader than subjects such as environmental studies and environmental ethics. Environmental studies have so far restricted themselves to the study of the Earth and the atmosphere. Environmental ethics has not gone much beyond the attempt to consider the possibility of extending ethics from the human being to the non-human creatures on the Earth. Ecophilosophy must include the totality of both human-made as well as non-human-made philosophy about nature and the totality of the universe.¹³

The second field of knowledge besides philosophy that promoted the traditional ethics as a way of shaping peoples' views of reality, is the Judeo-Christian tradition. From the biblical teaching which we have already cited it teaches that everything in nature and on Earth is just a means for the satisfaction of human needs, pleasure and whims.

Many people have assumed that the message of this famous quotation from Genesis has been accepted wholesale by the scientists and ethical philosophers who would never have agreed to its literal truth. They did that in order to justify their exploitation of nature for Man's political, economical, social etc., advancements. Good examples already mentioned in the history of

¹³ Oruka in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 122, 1997.

ecology are Leopold (see chapter 1) and Bacon. I would like at this point to correct the misconception that Judeo-Christian ethics has advocated the exploitation of Man with the other members of the biotic community.

When one reads the texts in the Book of Genesis one gets the impression that Adam is acknowledged as a master. His naming of the other created creatures could imply that he has the power over the animals, plants and birds.¹⁴ In this interpretation Man is created in the image of God and given power over the Earth and commanded to subdue it and all its creatures. The fact seems to grant Man the God-given right to exploit nature without moral restraint. Man's unique status among other creatures, conferred by the image of God, seems to have made Man a superior to other creatures on Earth. Man in this interpretation is to the rest of creation equal to God thus Man is greater than other creatures.

Philosophers like Oruka, scientists like Bacon, environmentalists like Mathai could easily interpret the account of creation found in Genesis as anthropocentric in its ethical approach towards nature. And indeed this interpretation did justify a human-centred, human-dominated, hierarchical and utilitarian view of the planet that would be reasonable in the promotion of a return to animism. Animism is a theory that gives every creature the life-force or subjectivity or agency in a materialist conception of the world, which was repudiated by the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The two traditional belief systems, Judaism and Christianity, ultimately derive from the same source. The Jews derive their ethical system from the Torah and the Old Testament while the Christians use the Old and the New Testaments. Besides the Torah there are other books in the Bible that teach about creation: the second Book of Isaiah, the Book of Job, Proverbs and what are famous as the wisdom literatures. Judaism uses Talmud commentaries¹⁵ as a means of expanding /interpreting the source material while the Christian uses the teaching of the Church fathers and the writings of theologians. Looking in the Talmud can help to provide other interpretations of the ones we are used to and help us see the Old Testament stories anew. For example, while it may be that when we read the creation story it seems to imply that God has designed nature to be ruled by Man. As He rules over the universe, a version of creation expounded in the Talmud is much closer to the modern biotic democracy advocated by

¹⁴ *The Bible*, Genesis 1.26-28.

¹⁵ Talmud is a collection of commentaries, stories and legal decisions bearing the core concern in Judaism and Torah, while the official teachings of the Church are found in the writings of the theologians or the encyclicals of the Popes, such as Vatican II council.

environmentalists. Talmud offers warnings that if we do not take care of other animals and plants, they might evade our hands.

Judaism understands the Creation story and gives Man a much more active understanding of Man's relation to nature. It challenges him to be responsible for handling the environment. The supposed superiority of Man conferred by the story in Genesis is counteracted by the Talmud in texts that temper the gift of authority with the burden of responsibility – *Till the soil and care*.¹⁶

Another important aspect of the teachings of Judaism is the emphasis on the belief that Man was created by God and in order for him to be happy he should seek peace with the Creator. Man has a special relationship with God and has been given temporary custody of creation so that, although he might be superior to the other creatures, he owes them a duty of care. The fall is the bitter story of a split between Man and his Creator and by that also between Man and nature. The consequence is not that Man is free to destroy nature for his pleasure but rather he must attempt to find a harmonious relationship with it in order to heal the rift between himself and God. "What is good has been explained to you. This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6.8).

Without a comprehensive study of Judaism individuals like Oruka and Mathai were able to misinterpret the Jewish ethical understanding of the environment. This misunderstanding originated from the old anthropocentric ethics which ignored the biblical emphasis on stewardship. The Talmudic teachings neutralize the Jewish tradition that imaginary promotion of Man above nature can be found in the literal interpretation of the Bible. The Talmudic teaching urged him to *Till the soil and care* and by doing so to become at peace with his Creator. Man cannot have dominion over nature if all his actions must be in accordance with the wishes of the Creator.

As well as using the Bible as the source of its teaching, the Christians and especially the Catholic Church has what is known as Catholic social teaching. The Catholic social teaching includes papal encyclicals from the top level and bishops' pastoral letters on a local level. The Catholic social teachings are statements and positions taken by the Vatican or bishops on the importance of specific issues of concern to Catholics and even to contemporary governments. Recently, more than ever in the Catholic Church, there has been much concern about ecology

¹⁶ Engel J. and Engel Gibb, *Ethics of Environmental and Development*, 57, 1993.

or the environment. Other subjects related to ecology and the environment are agriculture, land use, food systems, economical developments and above all social justice that grows out of the environmental use. Let me give some examples to demonstrate the nature of the Catholic Social teaching on ecology or the environment.

The New Mexico bishops pastoral letter, issued on 11 June 1998, was an attempt to remind people, especially the faithful of the Catholic Church, of the importance of recognizing the moral nature of the ecological challenge. They affirmed that here was a sacramental dimension to the universe (that affirms the intrinsic value of creation) and called for an activism that embraced the Church's social teaching.¹⁷

Although Oruka attributed the detrimental attitude towards nature to the Judeo-Christian approach to ecology he might not have read the Talmud nor even known about the Catholic social teaching, for both teachings are other possible sources of understanding the Judeo-Christian doctrine. Such prior knowledge, I think, could have made him more moderate in his views about the religions. Nevertheless, his critique of Judeo-Christian values and the traditional ethics that flow from them was still worthwhile because of the critique on the modern anthropocentrism, individualism and consumerism that it has produced.

The Catholic doctrine and social teachings advocated stewardship, cooperation with God, and a co-creative role of human beings with God. Both emphasized the belief that nature and humanity were both worthy of the same intrinsic respect. That meant, not only cultivating a love of God and fellow human beings but also a non-exclusive love of nature. The Catholic doctrine runs contrary to the instrumentalist premise that nature is a mere field to be beset at will or a museum piece to be preserved at all costs. We are mere stewards of the Earth and co-creators with the Creator. I can, for this reason, conclude that:

The literal interpretation of the creation story in Genesis means that thinkers like Oruka were bound to conclude that Judeo-Christian religion promoted traditional anthropocentric ethics. With the Talmud commentaries and Catholic social teaching the conclusion of Oruka

¹⁷ Barnhill and Gottlieb, *Deep Ecology and World Religions*, p. 177, 2001. The Catholic bishops of Mexico issued a pastoral letter, *Reclaiming the Vocation to Care for the Earth*, published on 11. June 1998. Other bishops' pastoral letters have different headings/concepts such as: *Bishops on Archbishops of Appalachia*; *At Home in the Web of Life* which addressed the environmental value with the title *The Land Is Home to Me*; Pastoral letter of the Bishops of Florida with the theme: *Renewing the Earth*.

and others that the Bible is the source of traditional values is grounded on a misunderstanding.

When the Judeo-Christian tradition is analysed it shows itself to have advocated the harmonious coexistence of all creatures. All living and non-living things were created equally and were equally good. We assume from the *Talmud* and *Catholic Social Teachings* that, besides accepting the influence of science, technology and culture, both inclusive and exclusive concepts exist. The Genesis story is capable of yielding an inclusive concept as a private interpretation and in the former it is now clear that the human being is challenged to care and to respect the rest of all Creation. Due to the pressing reality of the ecological crisis, all spheres of knowledge, religion, philosophy, science etc., should be mined for their potential in finding better and more comprehensive solutions.

Through his childhood upbringing by his father¹⁸ and his further studies, Oruka developed a concept of the world in which each culture is different and at the same time none can claim to have better moral values than any other culture. Is this a dangerous moral relativism? Is Oruka committing the fallacy of promoting particulars? No. The idea is, that each culture is different and at the same time the fact that no culture is superior to any other is exemplified by the inclusivity of his texts of the sages. Oruka relied on learned testimony from many cultures, including other indigenous Kenyan tribes in his abstract perception.

A prerequisite for making such a broad statement is the belief that each culture, however advanced it considers itself, must be humble enough to learn from other cultures no matter how seemingly primitive they might appear. This is only possible when each can free itself from its cultural mind set-up. Each community can free itself from its cultural prejudices and lay itself open to views that challenge its most jealously held beliefs, most notably ethical beliefs, being able to pick out what is essential and evidently amalgamating. Doing this allows some concepts to remain objective but only when there is clear evidence of them having the unifying characteristics of being shared universally by all cultures.

An open-mindedness towards and respect for the richness of other cultures is going to be necessary if we are going to come up with a collective solution to the ecological crisis. If the environmental crisis has its roots in Greco-Judeo-Christian philosophy and theology, then other cultures with different systems of thought should be able to offer alternative ways of thinking

¹⁸ Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, p. 117, 1990.

that might provide possible solutions. For example, when less stress is on the self, the human, (without undermining his reason) and more on the other society and even on other species, then they may have something imperative to offer to global collective humanity.

This broader more inclusive approach advocates justice for all members of the universe rather than dignity only for Man (or for a small elite subset of Man). This social ideal – summed up nicely by the Three Musketeers’ famous battle cry, *All for one and one for all* – encourages reciprocal justice for all members of the cosmos. Oruka cited the Indian dharma, Hawaiian cosmology and the Dogon cosmology as different approaches in which a potential solution may be established.¹⁹ I will take one example each from Asian and African cultures respectively in order to illustrate the need to view nature from an unknowing perspective.

The traditional way of viewing the family in the Hawaiian Islands formulae a system of social relations that incorporates all the elements of creation. Human beings and the rest of creation are embodied in the myth of environmental union between the Earth and sky. Both land (mother Earth) and the heavens (the sky father) have the same origin through which all things are intertwined.

The initial stages of island life, as told in the *Kumulipo* creation chant, is to parallel the modern scientific explanations. Living as close to nature as they did, the Hawaiians depended on keen reflection and a thorough understanding of how the world worked. In the *Kumulipo*, “The universe of darkness moves steadily toward light and completion. Land rises from the ocean, lower life forms fold on the shore, and larger beings begin to appear – fish, insects, birds, and amphibians. This and the evolution of forest plants and food plants precede the appearance of gods and men”²⁰

In the genealogical links which form the bulk of the chants (in *Kumulipo*), the early chiefs were connected to the stars and Mankind had strong ties to his brother Haloa who takes the form of the kalo or taro or plant. In this way a web of lineage links the Hawaiians of the present and of the past to the plants and animals of their environment, to the land itself and ultimately to the planets and stars in the sky. It is a vision of the universe as a united whole contrary to the dualistic universal approach.

¹⁹ Oruka, in Graness, and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 124-125, 1997.

²⁰ Beckwith, *The Kumulipo, A Hawaiian Creation Chant*, p. 1-26, 1951.

In another cultural understanding of ecology all things including human individuals belong to the same community. People, land, nature, society and even culture do not belong to the person per se but belong rather to the community, which consists of both visible and invisible powers. In Dogon cosmology community-based life begins with the person and moves through family, clan, society and to the whole community which includes visible and invisible members who all have powers. The community embraces individual human beings, animals, plants, nature and even the spirit of the ancestors. It is a communally-based practice.

In this practice, land, the most fundamental means of livelihood, belonged not to the individual but to the clan. The clan itself is regarded as consisting not only of those members currently alive but also those in the world of the ancestors and those yet to be born. All these categories of people have a psychological reality that significantly influences the thoughts, feelings, behaviour, judgements and relationships in the community. The Earth, or immediate environment on which our lives depend, is thus cared for the benefit of all including – importantly for our ecological thought – those not yet born.²¹ Oruka has crystallized some of the most salient ideas from the Dogon's cosmogony:

- i. All aspects of nature are integrated and ecological activities are a network. Domination, anthropocentrism or individualism has no philosophical purchase in this system since all creatures are considered together as a pan-organism which is then the essential truth for all creatures.
- ii. The Earth is viewed as a common wealth or common good for all visible and invisible creatures, including human beings.
- iii. Humans are psychologically stable with all their faculties, emotions and so on fully integrated with other members of the planet without any significant logical or judgmental paradoxes.

The communal understanding of the environment was discussed as well as lived in daily experience through myths, religion, morality, politics, economy, proverbs, songs, etc.. The explanations of nature given in everyday experience were an important part of guiding and directing the individual to conform to the communal ways of behaving and acting. The idea that Man might dominate or control nature is purely illusory and contain no wisdom. The abstract knowledge that originated from nature is what should be pursued by humans. The African perception of the world was seen in two parts, firstly the visible world, i.e. people, trees,

²¹ Oruka, in Graness, and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 125, 1997, and Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 251-252, 1997.

etc.. and secondly the invisible i.e. the dead, the unborn, the spirits of humans or other creatures.

Humanity is a member of the ecological system but humanity is not the master of the system; it is only a privileged member of the visible ecology. Humanity has the duty to refrain from careless and destructive use of the environment otherwise it will lose its privilege and endanger its fate. The invisible part of the ecology has the knowledge and the power to control Man's irresponsible behaviour on Earth. The world needs to be in balance only if the human creatures respect the non-human creatures as the unprivileged yet desirable members of the environment. The privileges of the human beings are given at a price. The price is that human beings must not leave the Earth worse off than they found it i.e., they are not to bring any of the ecological species to extinction.²²

From the commencement of this chapter I have tried to elucidate how Oruka attempted to show how five ways of thinking created the ecological crisis. Logical thinking that emerged from traditional ethics has mitigated against the ecological equilibrium of the planet. Indeed, these types of thought have caused gross misconceptions to proliferate in the West's understanding of ecology. These views have perpetuated, maintained and advocated the myth of the innate superiority and advantage of the human being whose interests are to be followed at the expense of other members, hence leading to a hierarchal dichotomy which places human above non-human.

I want to show at this juncture how the idea of *Parental Earth Ethics*, introduced in the last chapter represented the whole of ecology. This symbolism could then be used to develop a new ethics in an ecophilosophical approach to thought and action.

Parental Earth Ethics could help Man in formulating the new ethics that can replace the traditional ethics. The new values should provide the practical basis for solving the ecological crisis. The parental Earth ethics has one particular advantage when compared to other theories in trying to solve the environmental crisis. This benefit is 'it is the basis upon which different cultures around the world base their environmental perception.'²³ The Parental Earth Ethics is founded upon principles and rules that are widely respected by various families, cultures, nations and international institutions. The common good in communality, wealth and security,

²² Oruka, *Practical philosophy*, p. 253, 1997.

²³ Oruka in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 125, 1997, and Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 251-252, 1997.

should always be the aim of new ethics especially when conflict arises between personal possession and shared ownership.

The results of individual achievements and personal creativities need not be annulled by the Parental Earth Ethics theory. Its core principles are focused on the common good:

- 1) commonality,
- 2) collective security and
- 3) common wealth.

Let us take an example.

The Planet Earth is a common good that belongs to all and the right to individual possession or personal achievements do not deny the truth of the common good for all. The common good includes the good of the individual and single rights are not reduced from the common good which is inclusive but also includes every member of the planet. The symbolic example of a family of six members demonstrates a form of relational or kinship ethics which could form the basis of the new ethics. This relational or relationship ethics arises because all six children have common parents or because of the relationships between the children themselves. Applying the symbolic Parental Earth Ethics to ecophilosophy, Oruka argued:

The kinship issue is not being dragged into this matter just as a moralization of the virtue of declaring all human beings and all species in nature as ‘brothers and sisters.’ It is given here as an assertion derived from the ecological truth about the nature and the ultimate common fate of all creatures living on the Earth. Without the elements of kinship or organic unity of nature, none of the arguments of the current environmental protectionists would be valid for all peoples and nations. But given the organic unity of nature the arguments make sense for it is clear that the pollution and the degradation of sections of the Earth are likely to have the consequence for the rest of the globe. This concern is the concern that has led to the convening of the Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992. That meeting was a symbolic family gathering.²⁴

These sentences affirm the intrinsic question of value by acknowledging the fact that all members of the planet are interrelated and can work together for the sake of the cosmos. Unlike the hierarchy that placed the human being on the apex of creation, thus leading the way towards anthropocentrism, individualism and domination, the Parental Earth Ethics is contrary. It offers

²⁴ Oruka in Graness and Kresse, *Sagacious Reasoning*, p. 129, 1997.

the hope that nature can be seen simultaneously as both whole yet different, as both unity and diversity and everything exists in a biotically diversified way. Thinking in terms of diversity however invites domination and eventually imbalances in the ecosystem or the planet. All members of the world, living and non-living, visible or non-visible, above, on and below the Earth, are equally as important as the others in maintaining the balanced coexistence. Moreover, it is necessary to balance the idea of diversity and unity or cultural streams without distorting the way in which these values are observed. I qualify this argument with a quotation from Oruka.

The last objection we wish to consider, is the one which claims that we are placing creatures such as even Earthworms on the same moral level as human beings. Equality of human beings may be understandable, but how about equality (say) between the Head of State and the Earthworm? The Earthworm does not demand nor require equality with the Head of State. But nature requires that we do not extinguish Earthworms as a species. Earthworms are part of the biodiversity without which even a Head of State would be non-existent.²⁵

²⁵ Ibid, p. 129, 1997.

What is now intelligible from Oruka's ecophilosophy is that nature has its system of operation which we human beings must learn and respect. There is something reasonable in landscape that we ought to learn and follow. We can do this only with the enlightenment flowing from the new ethics (an idea he borrowed from Leopold, of extended ethics). We may relocate the genesis of the ecological crisis on the blindness of Man when he failed to recognize his essential relatedness to other members of the planet. All creatures, visible and invisible, have intrinsic worth but not at the same level. And the more we are blind to this fact the more likely we are to destroy our biodiversity and in the process jeopardize our existence as the most responsible stewards of Creation. Our common concerns and challenges are both local and global and every contribution to learn and to respect both human person and nature is logically the beginning of restoring the equilibrium that exist in the cosmos.

Ethics cannot change into something more than its objective reality but it can be manipulated by Man for his personal ends. Ethics needs incisive criticism especially along the lines of the five principle identified by Oruka and discussed above. It needs to be subject to rigorous critique and thoroughly overhauled, thus, it may be possible by substituting the most inclusive concepts for exclusive ones. We should start by viewing ourselves as members of the biotic system and not that we exist above it. New Ethics (extended) has to seek new concepts that can accommodate all members of the planet. Luckily these ideas already exist in many non-Western traditions where they have already been formulated as a means of understanding the Earth if not in trying to solve its ecological crisis.

Man is called or challenged to be open-minded thus embracing other cultural views on ecology and the position of Man in the cosmic reality. This open-mindedness approach is about thinking beyond the so-called Western cultural approach to nature and instead attuning our minds to the rich intellectual traditions of non-Western cultures. The intercultural view of ecology is not entirely the view of one culture since the solution to the ecological crisis can only be found by incorporating the multiple aspects of reality available, consequently it is not to advocate some ethical relativism but to attempt to find a culture of unity in diversity. With an open mind and critical attitude, we can reduce the traditional Western Judeo-Christian approach or our cultural philosophical approach to only one of many views that have equal validity when confronting the ecological crisis.

We need, for this reason, to remain open to new challenges and be academically honest in our search for knowledge. Wherever it exist such knowledge can help to restore the equilibrium of the planet and hence ensure our future common good for Earth's destiny and human destiny. This can only be possible if we attempt to use other cultural understandings of ecology. For me,

the only forum that can bring such cultural views together around the table, is the polylogue, the intercultural philosophy exchange. We, I think, need to embrace other cultural concepts no matter how 'primitive and modern' they may appear and critique them for a better stability and equilibrium in the planet.

Oruka's symbolic parental Earth ethics is the interconnectedness of all members of the planet. There is a continued acceleration of changes affecting not only nature but have negative side effects on the living situations of Mankind. The developed nations have more than enough for their survival, especially the basic needs such as water, food etc. and the ability to compact the global warming even though they are the leading producers of it. The developing nations are affected by local and global warming because their means of subsistence depends on natural resources and basic ecosystems. The South or the North, as they are called, are symbolically the two types of the children of the same parent, the Earth. The reality is that the people from the poor nations are forced to leave their countries in search of better jobs or the minimum human rights, food and shelter, away from wars, ecological crisis, etc. The international conventions and the old ethics do not recognise them but what we are and what we have originally are from our parent Earth. The parental Earth provides what is basic and minimum to all the Northerners and the Southerners, the human beings. This applies also to plants, animals, insects, worms etc., and a sense of moral responsibility not on the basis of charity but on necessity and obligation to every moral agent.

The survival of the fittest is the ultimate or organic end of nature and the human being. For human beings, nations or other members of the species, no matter how healthy or fit for survival they may seem, there is a historical organic shift in nature. The ecological truth arrived at by Oruka means that there is an element of kinship or organic unity between every living organism on planet Earth. Basic ethics promotes the common good basing itself on origin, security, communality and health, which neutralises the old principles' promotion of the individual into a position above nature. The rights and the good of the individual are confined within for the common good and the good of the whole community and the planet. The world or the planet is a family unit and a home for all and the Earth is a parent to all. We should embrace the concepts that redefine critique and advocate a dynamic approach to reality since nature is not static but dynamic. Oruka's ecophilosophical point of view, especially on intrinsic value, can be summarized in the words similar to those of Callicott:

Though the people of the Earth are all members of one species and share one ecologically integrated planet, we nevertheless live in many and diverse worlds.

Each person at once lives in a planetary culture united by economic interdependency, jet transport and satellite communications systems, and in a separate reality shaped by his or her formerly isolated cognitive, cultural heritage. The revival and deliberate construction of environmental ethics/ecological from raw materials of indigenous, traditional and contemporary cognitive cultures, represents an important step in the future movement of human material cultures towards a more symbiotic relationship, however incomplete and imperfect, with the natural environment.²⁶

²⁶ Callicott, *Earth's Insight*, A survey of ecological ethics from the Mediterranean basin to the Australian Outback, p. 5, 1994.

Chapter 4. The three streams of Ecophilosophy.

4.1 Preamble

In the first three chapters I have discussed man's relation to nature guided by the questions raised at the beginning of my dissertation. Most of the works I have cited were written by authors who have thought and reflected on ecological issues. They might not have been very systematically organized but their works can be used as a stepping stone for a more systematic dealing of the subject. Their concepts are being expounded at the present time in the face of the ecological crisis. The authors I have selected have concentrated on answering important questions; is there anything good, orderly or rational in nature? Can *Homo sapiens* learn anything from the natural ecosystem? Does any model exist that can be used as a guide that adequately describes the relationship between the human being and nature?

What emerges in the above discussions is the profound interconnectedness of *Homo sapiens* and nature? Naess minted the expression: 'all things hang together'¹ to illustrate the interconnectedness of all things. Multiple streams connecting man to nature have appeared from various different perspectives, observed and attempted explanations of the world and man's dwelling in it and his relationship with it.

Three of these streams are deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology.² In each of these individual ecophilosophers have tried to demonstrate how the Western traditional ways of thinking have contributed primarily to the ecological crisis, mainly thanks to human chauvinism. Each stream differs in its methodology and even in the proposed solution or remedies. In this chapter I will introduce some of the founders of these three streams, explore their arguments about the ecological crisis and evaluate the potential efficacy of their prescribed remedies.

Before we dip our toes into each of the three streams, let me pose the fundamental question that has been in my mind from the beginning of the dissertation. The first chapter dealt with the individuals who have confronted ecological issues in different phases of history. Individuals!

¹ Naess, *Environmental Ethics*, Light & Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, p. 269, 2003.

² Craig, general editor, *Routledge Encyclopaedia Philosophy*, Vol.3. *Descartes to Gender and Science*, 1998.

Who is an individual, if I may ask? In his book, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, Randal Collins³ defines an individual to be a responsible agent in our modern law and politics. How did Collins arrive at such a definition? Or to be more general, how does anyone arrive at a definition of anything? We can arrive, I think, at any concept formation by abstracting ideas from the existing reality that surrounds us. We can take elements of nature as an example. It seems natural that we mostly formulate our ideas from sensory contact with reality. The object of realities such as an animal, a tree, an insect etc. It is true because the world seems first to begin with ourselves and with what we come in contact.

But the social world with which we are frequently involved has to be mostly known for us to be able to arrive at the lonely individual consciousness. It is true that within a particular tradition if not in most intellectual and cultural practices, we encounter very few persons who have influenced us and their acts could have changed how concepts, visions, dreams are designed and understood. Thus, it is possible for one's outlook on reality to be fundamentally changed by another individual, for better or worse. To be more precise, in the history of philosophy,⁴ we find different philosophers who have influenced others intellectually by introducing new ideas and thus providing a different outlook on the fundamental philosophical questions.

Let me be precise in what I am trying to put a cross. Oruka introduced more than six ways of understanding the Africa discussion and the idea of incorporating sage philosophy into the African canon in order to show that both academically and practically the discipline did exist in Africa. Wimmer M. Franz introduced intercultural philosophy as a way of enriching philosophy with the vast knowledge of different cultures and thereby reducing if not eliminating dogmatism in philosophy. Arne Naess, introduced a new concept in the field of ethics, environment studies and even in philosophy. Naess presented a theory of "ecosophy T." as an open method of the discipline of knowledge designed to help explain and view the cosmos. We can agree with Collins and then that the individual, for this reason, begets ideas.⁵

We could ask ourselves at this juncture - what is ecophilosophy? Ecological Philosophy – usually shortened to 'ecophilosophy' – is a new paradigm in the field of philosophy, a branch

³ Collins, *Social Philosophies, a global theory of intellectual change*, p. 2-3, 2002.

⁴ I have in mind philosophers like Plato, Socrates, St. Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, Wimmer and Oruka, to mention some few among the many.

⁵ Ibid, p. 3, 2002.

of environmental philosophy that aims at some far-reaching objectives. The ecology is a new school of thought that attempts to tackle the root problems that currently beset the fraught relationship between man and nature. It began like this:

In the early 1970's, a small number of academic philosophers in the English-speaking world began to turn their attention to the questions concerning the natural environment. Environmental philosophy initially encompassed different types of inquiry including applied ethics, oriented to issues such as nuclear power and the deployment of toxic chemicals[...] and also, the far more radical project involving the reappraisal of the basic presuppositions of Western thought in the light of the implications for our relation to the natural world. The first two were extensions of existing areas of the philosophy and the third project – often described as ecological theory or ecophilosophy - which constitutes a distinctively new branch of philosophy. It is to environment philosophy in this third sense the present entry is devoted. Although the ecophilosophical project was explicitly normative in intent, it was quickly found to entail far-reaching investigation into the fundamental nature of the world. Indeed it was seen by many as entailing a search for an entirely new ecological paradigm, a new world view organized around the principle of interconnectedness with transformative implications for metaphysics, epistemology, spirituality and politics as well as ethics. Moreover, the process of elaborating a new ecological view of the world was found to uncover the contours of an already deeply embedded worldview organized around the principle of separation or division, underlying and shaping the traditional streams of modern Western thought.⁶

The essential characteristics of this new model are deep-rooted in the questions that I posed in the beginning. I argued that, unless we act now then the use of reason might not later save us or the planet's biodiversity at all. We have adopted and employed systems of thought and logic which has been so insensitive to our environment. The consequence of its misuse has been the pollution of the air, water, the forest etc., which either directly or indirectly destabilizes the human sphere too. The primary point of the argument is, no creature is an island we are all interconnected by different visible and invisible contours that keep each organic member alive. All inhabitants of the Earth are essential for the others' continued existence. The inherited

⁶ Craig, General Editor, *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 3. *Descartes to Gender and Science*, 1998.

streams of Western thought have been insensitive to nature and little academic attention might have been given to it or the non-human other.

Time and its problems provoke the mind to think beyond the existing systems and to search for alternatives. The human being can use reason to better his individual living standards but also non-egotistically to attempts to remain in harmony with the non-human without being utilitarian. This is possible only when the human looks for norms that are not exclusive but inclusive. In such new forms of thinking, ecophilosophy seeks to challenge other fields to employ ideas that are friendly and accommodative. In doing so, it reduce prejudice against race, gender and being non-human - the various kinds of other with whom one must share the cosmos.

4.2 Deep Ecology: Arne Naess ⁷

Naess was born in 1912 in Oslo and completed his studies at Oslo University graduating in 1933. After Oslo, he studied at Paris and Vienna and in 1939, at the beginning of World War II, Naess graduated from the University of Vienna, then he returned to his home country. Between 1939 and 1970 Naess taught at the University of Oslo and did a great deal to strengthen the field of philosophy and other academic circles in Norway. He participated in various peace movements; from 1940 to 1955 Naess was the leader of UNESCO. He was also a staunch supporter of the Greenbelt Movement. After his resignation in 1970, Naess became a proponent of a certain version of ecological philosophy. Naess' philosophical thinking demonstrated a dialectical growth of knowledge. It appears to cover the whole span of his life and includes several phases from experiential to sceptical to logical. The dialectical phase began in his childhood and continued through his adulthood until his retirement from public teaching. He died in 2009.

Unlike most known Western, American or even African sages who first had to be students or disciples of their elder or famous philosophers, the Naess situation was different. In the history of Western intellectual development one had to be a student of a particular philosopher for a period of time; after that period he would be awarded the responsibility or the authority to be a teacher or a scholar. We have many good examples.⁸

It is true that most of our knowledge and learning begins with experience and it is true that most of the students and teachers mentioned above would have for a period lived together in the same social core/house or even institution. They learned from their teacher's way of arguing, of seeing reality and of reasoning. But for Naess his learning was partly different from the traditional way of acquiring and obtaining the skills of the professional philosopher. It was and it is still uncommon for most philosophers even today except for Oruka⁹ who argued that intuition was a mental power and not taught. With the influence of Plato, most thinkers thought that intuition was attached to feeling and the body, thus affecting the reasoning and thus making one unable to make the right judgments. Naess believed so much in intuition as the source of

⁷ Naess and Rothenberg, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, p. 9, 1989

⁸ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. I-IV, & VI-VII, March 1994.

⁹ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, and p. 202, 1997. Oruka argued. "Intuition is a form of mental skill which helps the mind to extrapolate from experience and come to establish inductive truths, or it enables the mind to make a correct/plausible logical inference without any established or known rules of procedure"

knowledge that it became the fundamental cause of his arguments when defending and promoting his newly coined concept of *Deep Ecology*. His theory of self-realization and identification with nature was not the result of a philosophical or logical argument that followed on agreeably from the work of his predecessors but was the result of his intuitional experience. It all began in his childhood:

From when I was about four years old until puberty, I could stand or sit for hours, days, weeks in shallow water on the coast, inspecting and marvelling at the overwhelming diversity and richness of life in the sea. The tiny beautiful forms, which 'nobody' cared for or were even unable to see, were part of a seemingly infinite world, nevertheless feeling apart in many human relations, I identified with nature.¹⁰

It is true that the source of my abstract knowledge must originate from feeling, touching, seeing and so forth. And it is also true that the experience acquired through the senses in childhood remains the fundamental truth for the child and in the later stages of life, such data, which has been knowledgeable at the level of a particular, can be abstracted to cover universal knowledge. Wisdom and the whole sphere of knowledge originate in and is derived mainly from the reality of our senses and the abstraction that we make from it. I agreed with British empiricist John Locke when he wrote:

It is evident to anyone who takes a survey of the object of human knowledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the senses or are perceived by attending to the passion and operation of the mind. [...] By sight I have the ideas of light and colours. [...] By smelling I furnish myself with odour [...] by touch, I perceive hard and soft, [...] quantity and quality. By hearing, I convey sound to the mind. And through several of these senses knowledge is observed, they accompany each other. They come to be marked by one name and be reputed as one thing, senses.¹¹

As a youth, Naess was already in contact with other people. At the age of fifteen he guided by intuitive experience moved to the second level of knowledge acquisition by learning from other people's perception and apprehension of nature. He met a mountain guide who had an exceptional understanding of ecology garnered from a life lived in nature:

¹⁰ Naess, and Rothenberg, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, p. 2, 1989.

¹¹ Hutchins, *Great Books of the Western World*, No. 35, p. 413, 1952.

These reflections instilled within me the idea of modest - modesty in man's relationship with mountains in particular and the natural world, in general. As I see it modesty is of little value if it is not a natural consequence of much deeper feeling, a consequence of the way of understanding ourselves as part of Nature in a wide sense of the term. This way is such that the smaller we come to feel ourselves compared to the mountain, the nearer we came to participate in its greatness. I do not know why this is so.¹²

From these two, intuition and learning from the mountain man, Naess was in a position to build his philosophical understanding of nature. Nature is rich and diverse and our self-realization, which is never concluded but an active condition within us needs to be cultivated especially in a relationship with nature which is rich and diverse. He discovered and elaborated a philosophy that emanated from the self into a vast world of nature and vice versa. For him to be in touch with and to care for nature, the infinite world, one needs a method. Man needs a system that can allow him to relate well to nature. He identified his method through an 'intuitive act.' Naess called this process ecosophy T., which, in essence, is a system of approaching philosophical problems in ecology. Naess circumscribed the subject of study and the method used to study in the following words.

The study of ecology indicates an approach, a methodology which can be suggested by the simple maxim that all things hang together. This has application to and overlaps with the problems in philosophy: the placement of humanity in nature and the search for new kinds of explanation of this through the use of systems and relational perspective. The study of these problems common to ecology and philosophy shall be called ecophilosophy. It is a descriptive study. It does not make a choice between fundamental values, priorities but merely seeks to examine a particular kind of problem at the vast juncture between the well-recognized disciplines. [...] The word philosophy itself can mean two things. 1), a field of study, an approach to knowledge; 2), one's personal code of values and views of the world which guides one's decisions[...]. When applied to questions involving ourselves and nature we call this latter meaning the word philosophy and ecosophy. We study ecophilosophy but to approach practical situations involving ourselves, we aim to develop our own ecosophies.¹³

¹² Ibid p. 2-3, 1987.

¹³ Ibid, p. 36-37, 1987.

The purpose of ecophilosophy, in my interpretation of Naess, is to explore the diversity of perspectives on the relationships between human beings and nature. The new paradigm of ecophilosophy is to foster deeper and more harmonious relationships between place, self, community and the natural world. Deep ecology was initially devised by Naess for his personal usage but its use spread into environmental philosophy and even the wider public debate about green issues. What made it so attractive was its central theme of interconnectedness and the idea that humans are profoundly connected to nature. Without nature we would cease to be. Naess' usage of the term interconnectedness was influenced by Benedict Spinoza. Spinoza rejected the dualistic view that prevailed in his time for it placed man as living within a kingdom as standing apart or above the ordinary causality of nature. 'Man was guided by spirit;

Most persons who have written about the effects and man's conduct of life seem to discuss not the natural things which follow the common laws of nature but things which are outside her. They seem indeed to consider man in nature as a kingdom within a kingdom. For they believe that the man disturbs rather than follows her order that he has absolute power over his own action and he is altogether self-determined.¹⁴

Naess adopted Spinoza's idea that man should be treated as a part of nature because far from being above nature he is integrated with it and lives within it. Man is linked to all nature's entities as an essential component of what these entities are in themselves. "I do not know how the parts are interconnected and how each part accords with the whole, for to know this it would be necessary to know the whole of nature and all its parts. [...]. By the connection of the parts then, I mean nothing else than that the laws of nature, of one part, adapt themselves to the laws, or nature, of another part, in such a way as to produce the least possible opposition."¹⁵

Another person who had a great influence on Naess' understanding of the interconnectedness of nature was Gandhi, especially his non-violence relation view. We are part of nature that, in turn, is part of us and we cannot destroy it if we want to exist in its plenitude. We must see and appreciate the vital needs of the ecosystem and the value of the other species in nature. To live a better life is to be non-violent to nature. By loving nature we don't lose our identity but instead we gain a greater understanding of ourselves, our identity. Thus we recognize and promote both intrinsic and inherent value in the ecosystem and other species. If *Homo sapiens* could understand other creatures through Yoga – that they feel the same joy and pain as ourselves –

¹⁴ Hutchins, *Great Books of the Western world*, Nor, 31, 1952.

¹⁵ Spinoza in Naess and Rothenberg, *Ecology Community and Lifestyle*, p 10, 1989.

then they would not harm them and would promote non-violence between all creatures. The Bhagavad Gita inspired this way of life.¹⁶

Through his personal intuition and the influence of others Naess was in a state therefore, to formulate his views on the relationship between man and nature. Contemporaneous environmental debates influenced him, both the international discussions as well as his personal reflection. A new ecocentric ethics arose from these deliberations which embraced substantial environmental organizations which widely discussed all denizens of the planet. The names of these organisations are the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the United Nations Environmental Program and the World Wildlife Fund. Naess invented two new concepts to help in discussing the new environmental ethics. The first is the idea of a Deep Ecology which he introduced in a short article published in *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 16 in early 1973 and was contrasted with shallow ecology, the sort of weak environmentalism with which most people are familiar. The idea of Deep Ecology now enjoys widespread currency and prestige in the international environmental movement and also in the sphere of philosophy. Let me begin by considering shallow ecology before engaging ourselves with deep ecology.

Shallow Ecology is a physical rather than a metaphysical approach to ecology and it addresses the ecological problems caused by so-called developments in science and technology and is fundamentally an exclusivist approach to nature. The shallow ecology movement can be briefly described as follows; it fights against pollution and the depletion of resources. Its central purpose is reducing the impact of environmental damage on people in developed countries and safeguarding their health. Air pollution, resource depletion and other similar problems are the real concerns of all branches of the shallow ecological movement and consequently the way these issues are taken up in the industrialized world is not satisfactory for one main reason, it is short-term.

Priority was allotted to the symptoms without looking for the deeper links in the causal chains. The systems of production and consumption, the over-reliance on advanced technology, the lack of global and local solidarity and the consumerist lifestyle were not reasonably reflected. Those who belong to shallow ecology movements or organizations are concerned about and wish to raise awareness about the environmental damage that has been caused and they want to find solutions to these problems, however, they wanted to clarify it in such a way

¹⁶ Naess and Rothenberg, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, p. 194, 1989.

that allows them to continue with their consumerist lifestyles. Thus, their teleological belief that technological advancement means the steady improvement of the human lot. This inevitably means short-term sticking plaster solutions instead of tackling the ideological root causes of the problems.

What are the primary occupations of the shallow ecologist? Their main occupation is finding short practical solutions to existing problems, i.e. they try to prevent soil erosion, regenerate degraded land, assure water supplies, purify the atmosphere, provide food for the hungry, fuel and even building materials for those who need them. Naess in his essay *Deep Ecological* explained why those who carried out such activities should be regarded as shallow ecologists because they are always subservient to the wishes of their masters, and so the equilibrium of the ecosystem ends up as a secondary priority. In Kenya, such an approach to the environment – where such activity is allowed if it doesn't interfere with politics - is the order of the day.¹⁷ Naess on the shallow ecologist.

What is true of Mysterud, is also true of thousands of other professional ecologists and environmentalists. These people often hold responsible positions in the society where they might be responsible environmental policy but, given the exponential forces of growth, their publications, if any, are limited to narrowly professional concerns. Their writings are surely competent but lack a deeper and more comprehensive perspective (although I admit that there are some brilliant exceptions to this).¹⁸

The idea of a shallow ecology adumbrated here is bound to stimulate the curious into wondering what Naess' deep ecology would mean, that cuts across many conventional distinctions, the short-term, shallow and the long-range, deep movements in strict terms. He explained that the distinctive aspect of the deep ecology movement is its recognition of the inherent value of all other living beings and also the intrinsic value of the diversity of all kinds of beings. This awareness ought to be used to shape environmental policies and actions, especially those who work towards social change based on this recognition, are motivated by a love of nature as well as for human beings, they try to be caring in all their dealings. They recognize that we cannot proceed with human occupation as normal without making some

¹⁷ See Maathai, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and her Green Belt Movement in Kenya, started in 1977 *Replenishing the Earth, spiritual values for healing ourselves and the world* (2010) and the challenges of Africa (2008).

¹⁸ Naess in Light and Rolston *Environmental Ethics* on, p. 263, 2007.

significant changes to primary values and practices or we will destroy the diversity and beauty of the world. In doing so the ability of the Earth to support a variety of different human cultures terminates. Naess provided eight points which he later re-examined which describe and provide support for a deep ecology rather than giving a simple definition.¹⁹ I selected three to demonstrate my view.

Let me take only three principles from the eight to give my view of his understanding of deep ecology. Principle 1 above could mean every living being, human and non-human, has its inherent value and thus has its right to live and flourish. Essentially, everything has an individual to it and therefore has its irreducible right to live, to blossom and to reach its fullness in existing and reproducing. Each living thing is independent and separate from its worth to any other thing, specifically to humans.

Principle 2 could mean everything should have its value through an elucidation of interconnectedness. This point emphasises the importance of biodiversity in the world that everything is linked to everything else. There is no hierarchy that exists between existing things but only all are equals. There is a dependence of everything on everything. For this reason nothing can be less or more than everything else in the web of biodiversity.

Principle 4 above means the environmental problems stem from human interference. Essentially, human beings are part and parcel of nature. They are expected to hamper their environs to a certain degree. Naess explains that every physical action impedes on their

¹⁹ Ibid, P. 264 ff. I select three out of eight what Naess wrote:

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life has its own inherent value. This value is independent of the economic use-value of the non-human world. In his re-examination Naess bolstered the first point by introducing talking about an ecosphere, about ecocentrism, about a whole complete world, about the intimate relationship between all things, about a fundamental concern and respect for all inhabitants of the planet. The life of the whole ecosystem means the same thing for all living and non-living.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the understanding of these values and are also values in themselves. Concepts and his ideas - the diversity of each member of the ecosystem is essential for the richness and the diversity of life in the universe. Primitive or lower species are not for rational life purposes and principle but multifaceted equality; thus unity and diversity brings richness in the universe.
4. The development and flourishing of human cultures is only compatible with a substantially smaller human community. After re-examining this point Naess calls on materially rich countries to reduce their excessive interference with the non-human world, which will take a period of time but still interim strategies need to be put in place. Radical changes have to be made urgently otherwise many more species will certainly be extinguished.

environments such as a beaver building his dam or a bird building her nest. However, human intrusion has been going on excessively and must come to an end.

Deep ecology, according to Naess, is not philosophy in the academic sense of the word. It is because non-academics from a range of backgrounds, such as the politician, environmentalists etc., can all join the campaign and take part in direct action. Naess stressed that it was possible to support these principles from a broad range of perspectives.

4. 2. 1 Observation and critique

The concept of Deep ecology and shallow ecology are relatively new concepts. From the initial intention of the founder Naess the concepts were both nature- and human-centred. Deep ecology attempted to shift the environmental ethics from the human being to nature. Thus, employing some concepts such as interconnectedness, sameness and self-realization positively the Deep ecology could be viewed as an alternative to trying to solve the shallow and profound environmental crisis. It has created in human beings the awareness of caring for nature and it also seeks to critique how far reason alone can solve the ecological crisis. Nevertheless, the philosophical ideology has created more unresolved problems than the intended aim of harmonising human and other members of the cosmos.

Bookchin was firmly of the opinion that the environmental crisis rested upon a conflict between nature and society and how we as human beings appropriate the whole system. The solutions should be reasoned and critically argued; there is no room to opt for cloudy intuition and mysticism as an alternative. According to Bookchin, Naess' idea of 'interconnectedness' should not rest on the intuitive process of self-realization that began in his childhood but must be exposed to instrumental and analytic reasoning. Accepting such concepts only on the basis of intuition could easily lead to dangerous decisions being taken on the ecological crisis. Sentiment, passion and feeling according to Bookchin, 'rob us of the certitude of the truth' that is the base of our factual knowledge:

In our aversion to an insensitive and unfeeling form of reason we may easily opt for a cloudy intuition and mysticism as an alternative. Unlike instrumental and analytic reason after all, surrender to emotion and mythic beliefs yields cooperative feelings of "interconnectedness" with the natural world and perhaps even a caring attitude towards it, but precisely because intuition and mystical belief are so cloudy and arbitrary – which is to say, so unreasoned – they may

also connect us with things we really shouldn't be connected with at all – namely racism, sexism and an abject subservience to charismatic leaders. Indeed, following this intuitional alternative could potentially render our ecological outlook very dangerous [...]. But myths, mind-numbing rituals and charismatic personalities can also rob us of the critical faculties that thought provides. [...] Ultimately the real questions that confront us are not only how to feel ecologically but how to think ecologically.²⁰

Naess' deep conviction about the self-realisation grew out of intuitive experience and the apex was determined under the influence of others like Gandhi and Spinoza. For Naess, the traditionally accepted approach to self-maturity had three steps: from ego to social to metaphysics. But all of these omit and undermine the role of nature. Our home, our environment, our families, clans or other identifications with human groups, are largely ignored. The problem of who I am is a question about the self in all its intersecting human and non-human contexts. Expressions and sentences that I encounter as I grow up, the trees I climb, the attitudes of the clan to me, to each other and to others, is what turns me on me. It has ecological consequences: if a tree that I have climbed is destroyed something in me is destroyed; my relationship with the world is inaccurate. Gandhi articulated such a view connecting self and world:

I believe in *Advaita (non-duality)*; I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spirituality, the whole world gains with him, and if one man fails, the whole world fails to that extent.²¹

I also think that Naess was metaphysical as well as being traditional and practical. Pure love necessitated such thinking by the search for meaning, i.e. the meaning of our being and not of our existence. For Naess, the love of others and the love of the self are the same things and subsequently it is the same case for non-human creatures. If we love ourselves then we must also love the non-human. In this view of love, care, respect, responsibility and knowledge are applicable to human and non-human irrespectively.

Nevertheless, the Deep ecologists did not cite the boundaries between the self and the other. This means the Naess approach promoted the self-realization and identification without the

²⁰ Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, p. 3-5, & p. 101, 1999.

²¹ Naess, *Self-realisation, An Ecological approach to being in the World*, p 23, 2013.

organic difference between every inhabitant of the planet. Such discrepancies include women, children and animals. Plumwood faulted Naess:

But this expanded self is not the result of a critique of egoism, rather it is an enlargement and an extension of egoism (Cheney 1989). It does not question the structures of the possessive egoism and self-interest; rather it tries to allow for a wider set of interests by an expansion of the self. The motivation for the expansion of the self is to allow for a wider set of concerns while continuing to allow the self to operate on the fuel of self-interest.²²

Bookchin's critique of the above two concepts, in my view, was unfair. He criticized them for being anti-human because they deny humanity the uniqueness bestowed on it by nature itself. The biocentric approach to nature is negative for it reduces the anthropocentric view of humankind and advocates an equal value for all creatures of the planet. Biocentric conception also ignores the fact that the human being has evolved. Bookchin accused Naess of 'intellectual poverty' and claimed that his contributions to the ecological crisis was inadequate because it did not situate Man correctly according to evolution. Biocentrism cannot be accepted as the default position by ecophilosophy because it denies the human its natural attributes:

The ability to reason, to foresee, to will and act insightfully is to enhance nature's own development. In a sense, it depreciates nature to separate these subjective attributes from it as though they did not emerge out of evolutionary development and were not implicitly part of animal development. A humanity that has been rendered oblivious to its own responsibility to evolution – a responsibility to bring reason and the human spirit to evolutionary development, to foster diversity and to provide ecological guidance such that the harmful and fortuitous in the natural world are diminished – is a humanity that betrays its own evolutionary heritage and that ignores its species distinctiveness and uniqueness.²³

Another consequence of biocentrism is the equal worth or rights of all human and non-human members of the cosmos. Therefore, the first and second nature do have the same rights, without even accounting for self-awareness, intuition, species and the relationship between both

²² Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 178, 1993. (It is good to keep in mind that ecofeminism or feminism as a movement were more concerned with androcentrism than human centred debates)

²³ Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, p. 83-84, 1994.

human and non-human. The outcome of such thinking is ludicrous, cruel and even vicious in the words of Bookchin:

If all organism in the biosphere is intrinsically equally worthy of a right to self-realization as many biocentrists believe, then human beings have no right, given the full logic of this proposition, to try to stamp out mosquitoes that carry malaria and yellow fever. Nor does the logic of this proposition give humanity the right to eliminate the AIDS virus or other organic sources of the deadly illness.²⁴ [...] In the world from which human beings are absent, no ethics, no concepts of right, no notion of intrinsic worth could possibly exist. Human beings are required to be able to formulate such rights and to extend them to include women, slaves [...] to animals, plants or by a leap of faith into an intellectual abyss, to a cosmos with all its flaming stars [...] ²⁵

Not every argument of the deep ecologist was ambiguous and incorrect. With his ecosophy, T. conception, Naess, advocated different individual and cultures ways of thinking as helpful ways of approaching the ecological crisis. I would advocate that each person and culture with different ideas and views could be used to discuss and solve not only the philosophical global problems but also ecological crisis, thus enhancing the broad scope of ecophilosophy. Philosophers and activists should be requested with their particular or local findings of their enriched thoughts and reasons to create a system that is unique to that specific area which it can be adopted by other conventional developers of philosophy and ecology. In ecosophies, different concepts of various individuals are expressed and collected (see chapters 5 and 6). These ecosophies could at later stage be analysed and critiqued thus becoming an extra source of knowledge for ecophilosophy.

In accommodating different views from various thinkers and systems new concepts which are not only monologues are adopted and thus intercultural aspects can be acceptable. The effect of the numerous thoughts brought together becomes the store for future research. When critical analysis and hermeneutics methodologies are involved, ecosophy T., will improve the particular or regional view(s) to universal or global essences, thus, integrating another unknown discipline for the harmony of humanity and nature.

As mentioned above, the deep ecologist attributed all the environmental problems of human beings especially on population growth. Naess argued in principle four that the present human

²⁴ Ibid, p. 137, 1994.

²⁵ Bookchin, *Which way for the Ecological Movement*, p. 3, 1993.

interferences with the non-human are excessive, and the human population must be reduced to a better flourishing life for the non-human. As much as I agree that some of the ecological crisis can be credited to our human-less concern with nature and not purely population growth, there are other problems that are not humanly instigated. If we borrow the idea of Bookchin, 'that nature is harsh to human beings,' how can we attribute the ecological problems such as landslides caused by El-Niño to persons? The destruction of the ecosystem such as the hurricane, the tsunami, forest diseases, volcanic eruptions etc. are they human caused? I think deep ecologists should have assigned and ascribed to each situation its real cause.

It is firstly important to conclude by differentiating the terms shallow ecology and deep ecology. Let me make an assumption statement. The Western world and urban areas are familiar with shallow ecology. Shallow ecology is a much more anthropocentric point of view for it holds values of nature wholly on the ground that nature's sole purpose is for human needs. Shallow ecology ignores some of the aspects that deep ecology touches on the most important being that it neglects every living being the intrinsic right and value to live and flourish. Shallow ecology understands nature as being at the disposal of humans, whereas deep ecology identifies no right other than vital needs for persons to dispose of the environment.

Two terms can probably explain the operational aspect of each other, shallow and deep ecology. The two expressions are conservation and preservation. The conservation concept suits the shallow ecology in that it is of a control usage and organised protection of natural resources for the human being. We learn through agriculture, wildlife, etc. to conserve resources like water, forests and soil erosion for future generations. Preservation is more similar to deep ecology in that it is more along the lines of keeping safe or attempting to keep resources intact. Its intent is more of keeping nature in its original state, free from human interference and damage. With reference to us people, shallow ecology supports the anthropocentrism while deep ecology advocates the opposite, the ecosphere. We can approach the ecological crisis with Naess's dialectic method as an alternative to the Western philosophical, ecological approach especially when attempting to move from a monological approach which favours humans over all other species and an ecocentric approach which doesn't.

Knowledge acquisition begins in childhood and continues through to adulthood and we carry the experiences of our childhood into adulthood. The knowledge we have at our disposal increases over time as our capabilities increase. What we experience through our five senses is the most important for all our more abstract concepts and the possibility of universal concepts

that can tie different human groups and perhaps even human with non-humans together. Because it can lead from intellectual knowledge into the metaphysical unknown, it is the cornerstone of our view of the world and needs to be treated with appropriate reverence.

With his ecosophy T., Naess advocated different ways of thinking that might be helpful in thinking about the ecological crisis. Each person and culture with different ideas and views can be used to solve not only the philosophical global problems but also the environmental crisis thus widening the scope of ecophilosophy. Every philosopher and ecological activist should be invited to share their own particular local findings and their augmented reflections and solutions, thus particularly in trying to construct a system that is unique to that area and that can nevertheless, in its abstract form, be acknowledged by other standard developers of environmental philosophy.

In accommodating different views from various thinkers and systems new concepts that undermine the old monoliths can be acknowledged and thereby facilitate intercultural exchange. The result of using these different conceptual systems all together would be for the enlargement of our horizon of thought on nature. It includes the ability to be more critical of what we hold to be true as well as being honest about what we don't know. An example would be to implement practical measures for increasing the level of harmony between man and nature.

4.3 Ecofeminism philosophy: Val Plumwood

Plumwood was born on 11 August 1939 and died on 28 February 2008, was married to Richard Routley but they separated in the 1980s. She changed her surname to Plumwood after marrying for the second time Richard Sylva who was teaching philosophy at the same University. She took the name Plumwood after the Plumwood Mountain which is termed after the Plumwood tree, a beautiful tall rainforest species one of which grew next to her home. Plumwood was an Australian ecofeminist, the intellectual and an activist and she was active in movements dedicated to preserving biodiversity and halting deforestation and helped to establish the discipline known as the ecological humanities. She wrote many major works and articles on ecofeminism.²⁶ Much of her environmental philosophy was focused on studying, critiquing and providing alternatives to dualisms that she believed led to the domination of women, nature and others. The dualistic and logical approach to humans apart from nature has developed into an opposition between reason and nature in the Western and Judeo-Christian traditions. I intend in this section to view her feminism and ecofeminism approach of trying to eliminate the ecological crisis and give her alternatives. In the end I will show that what is vital to her is for the human and nature to have a consensus harmony rather than a feminism attack on masculinity or vice versa.

Plumwood wrote and concentrated her thoughts on different themes centred on feminism and ecology. She was engaged in critiquing the traditional concepts of nature and feminism. The fundamental theses of classical nature studies and feminism were that only human beings mattered and that nature was more or less insignificant. The morality encapsulated in such a view was so exclusive that it only considered an elite chosen few to be significant members of the cosmos. In her historical analysis, Plumwood traced a form of injustice towards nature that ran through Western culture. The Western culture, according to her, has its roots in dualism, where man's dominance has an adverse impact on the female as well as nature. She wrote:

The dominant and ancient traditions connecting men with culture and women with nature are also overlain by some recent and conflicting ones in which an unchangeable male essence is connected to nature no longer viewed as reproductive and providing but also as wild, violent, competitive and sexual [...] and the female is viewed in contrasting terms as insipid, domestic, sexual and civilizing. [...] The very idea of a feminine connection with nature seems to

²⁶ See her books in the Bibliography.

many as aggressive and insulting, summoning up images of women of Earth mothers, as passive, reproductive animals, contented cows immersed in the body and the unreflective experience of life.²⁷

The tradition of connecting women to nature and the dualistic approach of perceiving men and women differently both have a patriarchal historical origin. Both connecting and perceiving, became a means of oppression in which it allowed some to be superior and others to be inferior in all aspects of life. For a longer period such understanding was common sense, logical and reasonable. From then, the 1960s onward, many women have challenged such an oppressive and dualistic system; especially the male dominated female half of society as well as nature, but she sees the relic of patriarchy and its dualistic outlook in the present too, in the form of backgrounding and instrumentalisation which women must continue to render visible and challenge reality of injustices persists, by which women are denied certain roles in a systematically inferiorized way. Thus, the West's future view on women is inextricably bound up with the future of the world at large. Women are systematically backgrounded and instrumentalised as housewives, as nurses and secretaries, as colleagues and workmates. Traditionally, women are the environment, the background condition to which male achievement is referred, and what they do is not itself accounted for as an achievement.

The underlying problem is visible in the old characteristic way of describing humanity, from the Western tradition, reason was associated with the privileged domain of the master who saw his wife as part of and a representative of nature. And in a patriarchal, reproductive context the father is credited for and gains possession of the child, in a denial or at least devaluation of the maternal role.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there were a number strong feminist²⁸ waves that attempted to fit women into masculine patterns. The first wave went with the concept of liberal feminism and wanted to fit women to a masculine model of selfhood. The second wave tried to move from attempting to fitting the male mould to attempting at mastery, i.e. trying to emulate men within the masculine model which had formed the idea of Western culture and humanity. It meant that women should try to take over all-male or male-dominated institutions so that women too could be masters. Women were to join the elite men by participating in those areas where people

²⁷ Plumwood, *Feminism and Mastery of Nature*, p. 20, 1993.

²⁸ Light & Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, p. 279-286, 2003.

were especially able to exhibit their freedom, such as in science and technology. Women had been excluded from this type of sector and these areas are distinct for elite men since they require highly valued male traits of objectivity, abstractness, rationality and suppression of emotionality and also because they demand the struggle with and subjection to nature.

An equal admissions strategy has certainly meant that more women have entered science but science itself and its orientation towards the domination of nature (and the domination of excluded groups) has remained unchanged.²⁹ The problem is that such an approach has nothing to do with ending patriarchy. All that has happened is that the base from which the dominant class is selected has merely been broadened to include women, the non-whites and homosexuals, but, interestingly, still excludes those from poorer backgrounds. The two waves of feminism then, did little to undercut the dualistic approach to women or nature. Plumwood Val says:

Attention to the dualistic problematic shows a way of resolving this dilemma. Women must be treated as just fully human and as fully a part of human culture as men. Both men and women must challenge the dualised conception of human identity and develop an alternative culture which fully recognizes human identity as continuous with and not alien from nature.³⁰

Both feminism and the ecological crisis according to Plumwood began with a dualistic and patrician view of women and nature. Within the patriarchal view women and nature were both seen as passive and unreflective. The point of ecofeminism, therefore, is that the patriarchal injustices of nature are intertwined with the historical biases to women. The structural assumption inherited from the Greeks and the Judeo-Christian religion that have given rise to the human/nature contrast are also responsible for the male-female division and its consequent iniquities.

In her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Plumwood begins Chapter 2. by analysing two systems used predominantly by Western intellectuals, namely logic and dualism. Dualism positively understood is a method of conceptualizing contrary or opposite things. Plumwood pointed out the negative aspects of both concepts which have created an unbalanced view of reality, the dualism and logic end up assigning things with a positive or negative value. Dualism when understood negatively becomes the basis for constructing a view of others that can sharply

²⁹ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of the Nature*, p. 27, 1993

³⁰ Ibid, p, 36, 1993.

separate them from the dominant group. Plumwood's central point was an adverse value assignment is the perpetuation of dualism and logic. It divides things and then it assigns them values unevenly, i.e., different and contrary things do not have the same value if they do not belong to the privileged half in the separation. It includes members of the universe that have different race, colour, gender and religion. She expressed this:

The key exclusions and denials of dependency and conceptions of reason in Western culture include not only the feminine and nature, but also human orders treated as nature and subject to denied dependency. Thus, it is the identity of the master (rather than masculine identity pure and simple) defined by these multiple exclusions which lie in the heart of the Western culture. This identity is expressed strongly in the dominant conception of reason, and gives rise to a dualised structure of otherness and negation which I argue corresponds to that of the classical propositions of logic. If the prevailing power relations between Western culture have determined the selection of logical theories as they have scientific theories and technologies,[...] then to reject this classical structure of reason does not imply the rejection of all attempts to structure or systematise reason, but rather the rejection of those which promote dualistic accounts of otherness.³¹

The set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing dualisms is inherent in the whole sphere of the Western social system in the dualistic structures in the following forms: culture is contrasted with nature, understanding with nature, male with a female, mind with the body, master with slave, etc. Plumwood was very particular with concepts that are connected to gender, class, race and nature which she thought that the Western culture unknowingly devalued.

When one critically analyses the concept of dualism from the beginning of civilization until today one sees no substantial change in its use. The ancient forms have not necessarily changed but they are often reserved for the human conceptual framework so that they are "mined, refined and redeployed for a new use."³² to use one of Plumwood's expressions. Such hierarchical relationships in the conception of things are bound to arise when the dualism assigns value unevenly. How does dualism operate in its distribution of value, according to Plumwood? What

³¹ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 42, 1993.

³² Ibid, p. 43, 1993.

are the characteristics of dualism?³³ Plumwood identified five distinctive features of dualism which explain how it distributes values amongst the members of the cosmos that she called the Blindspots of centrism and human self-enclosure. I intend to demonstrate the negative contribution of values which causes imbalance of human outlook on reality³⁴

The denial or Bagrounding. Dualism is seen here as a resolvable conflict. In it the master attempts to make use of the slave (the other) on whom he depends and relies for his sense of identity as dominant. It is achieved by denying the dependency of the other, his essence, his contribution to the mechanism as a whole. The master's views are set to be universal, therefore being essential while the slave's views are particular and thus non-essential. The master believes in the non-essentialness of the slave, whereas, unavoidably, he is essential to his being a master. Thus, it appears to be the truth about reality. The dominant makes himself the superior and the centre, and the slave is regarded as inferior and made to accept that he is the dependent one, even though it is the master who is dependent on him. This structural denial can be seen at work everywhere in modern dealings with other cultures, races, genders, religions nature and even philosophical systems.³⁵

Although the second characteristic, radical exclusion derives from the denial of the master-slave duality it further stresses the extent of their difference. Here the colonizer uses dualism to try and magnify emphasise and maximize the number and importance of the differences and to eliminate the essence of the other. In radical exclusion, the inferior becomes powerless, discouraged and valueless. The expression used for this state of affairs is It is what it is because they are what they are, and neither one nor the other will ever change. The master or colonizer defines himself by excluding the other and so he needs to uphold hierarchies for the sake of his identity formation.

The colonialist stresses those things which keep him separate, rather than emphasizing those which might contribute to the foundation of a joint community. In those differences, the colonized is always degraded and the colonist finds justification for rejecting his subjects. But perhaps the most important thing is that once the behavioural features, or historical or geographical factors which characterize the colonized and contrasts him with the colonizer, has been isolated, this gap must be kept from being filled. The

³³ Ibid, p. 44-54, 1993.

³⁴ Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*, Chapter 5, 2002.

³⁵ See also Wimmer, *Essays in intercultural Philosophy, Cultural Identity*, p. 34-51, 2002.

colonialist removes the factor from history, time and therefore possible evolution. [...] immediately the colonial relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, founded on the essential outlook of the two protagonists, becomes a definitive category. It is what it is because they are what they are, and neither one nor the other will ever change.³⁶

The conclusion is in any of our favourite dualisms, colonizer /colonized, man/woman, White/Black, human/nature, the dominant party requires an outlook that excludes the other. However, logically it requires a corresponding and complementary set in the other and the dualistic polarization and elimination of pairs of things presents a false dichotomy that makes it possible for human beings to conceive them in oppositional terms.

In incorporation dualism is used to conceive the lower entity in terms of and relative to the higher. Plumwood uses a quotation from Simone de Beauvoir to explain this with relation to the male-female binary.

Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being [...]. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential, as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute, and she is the other.³⁷

This statement could be understood to mean the other is recognized only to the extent that it is assimilated to the self or incorporated into the self and its system of desires and needs, just to borrow Max Steiner's words.³⁸

The next Blindspot is instrumentalism. Its characteristic is what dominates the whole sphere of dualism and logic. Plumwood explains this by quoting from the *Politics* of Aristotle:

It is clear that the rule of the soul over the body and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate, is the natural and expedient; whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful. The same holds for animals in relation to men; for tame animals have a better nature than wild, and all tame animal are better off when they are ruled by man; for they are preserved. Again,

³⁶ Memmi in Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 51, 1993.

³⁷ De Beauvoir Simone (1965) in Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*, p. 104, 2002.

³⁸ Steiner, *Ego and its Own*, p. 9, 1995, wrote about the assimilation and destruction of the consciousness of the other to the self-starting from the child by parents, Christian by church and individuals by the society.

the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle of necessity extends to all mankind. Where then there is such a difference as that between soul and the body, or between man and animals the lower sorts are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. [...] It is clear then, that some men are by nature free and others slaves, and that for this latter slavery are both expedient and right.³⁹

The relationship in this dualistic approach is seen as that of the dominated as well as dominator, superior as well as inferior. But how does a dominator fit together with the dominated? The lower dominated or inferior side serves the upper side as a means to his ends and the relationship ensures that the services of the lower are not actualized for itself but for the purposes of the upper. The lower is useful as long as it remains dominated or made inferior. The relationship is based therefore on usefulness and this usefulness is moralized when everything is judged by a separate standard, being right or wrong, outside or inside the moral sphere according to whether they serve the interests of the masters of the slaves.

The fifth characteristic of dualism, homogenization, is the total denial of the diversity and multiplicity of language, races, tribes, religions and philosophies. The dualism leads to the formation of a mechanism of oppression, a loss of identity and a disruption or distortion of culture to the denied race or culture or gender. The majority takes the centre and the minority makes the status of a periphery, as little of importance. The majority acquires the status of universal while the marginal takes the status of particular. The whole complex results in the elimination of the diversity and multiplicity which is necessary as a source of knowledge. For example, the aboriginals of Plumwood's native Australia were for a long time considered or dismissed as alien, refugees, foreign just because they could not speak the English language.

Plumwood understood that these five modes of thought that characterize dualism have had an adverse impact on Western philosophy, therefore, this system has polarized into two orders of being things that should be conceptualized and be treated in more integrated and unified ways. Dualism as a system promotes centeredness and hierarchies and encourages unwarranted imbalanced ontologies that supplies the cultural grounding for a class centred hegemony, male centeredness, euro-centeredness and ethno-centeredness and human-centeredness.

³⁹ Aristotle Politics, book 1 chapter 4-5 in Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 46, 1993.

Consequently, it does not stop at human-centeredness but extends its boundaries to include also the entire ecosystem.

Such a culturally entrenched propensity, to carve the world, has left its imprint on our view of nature and helped to cause the ecological crisis. The ideologies it promotes prevent humans from seeing how exclusionary they are being, since by losing track of nature's insight, and may be in losing track of himself. The blindness is a result of the Western philosophical view of Platonic rationalism whose characteristics are timelessness, immaterial world of abstraction, numbers, the world of forms, genuine and real, perfect, gleaming, unchanging, etc. Plumwood's view is:

Rationalistic culture has fostered a version of human self-enclosure and human-centeredness: to the extent that rationality is taken to be the exclusive, identifying features of human[...] and that the rational is identified with what is worthwhile, reason-centeredness implies the human-centeredness and its correlate, human self-enclosure [...]. The concept of anthropocentrism is often rejected because it is not appreciated that not all effects fall on the 'nature' side of monological and centric relationships. Human-centeredness promotes various damaging forms of epistemic remoteness, for by walling ourselves off from nature in order to exploit it, we also lose certain abilities to situate ourselves as part of it.⁴⁰

Instrumentalism and the master-slave dichotomy are the two famous ideas frequently used by Plumwood in discussing ethical issues especially when she was referring to nature as the other. According to her, a culture of instrumentalism has justified the use of the Earth and its inhabitants as the other and as means to a human elite's ends. Man has created systems that elevate and assign him to be a master who does everything only for his own sake. With the use of reason, it became a regular and the traditional way of looking at and of conceiving reality especially in the West. Plumwood wrote:

The master model of egoism and instrumentalism in which the system of class, gender and colonial oppression have a heavy and connected investment, has been immensely influential in shaping the way the human relation to nature has been conceived in West. The dominant traditions of Western culture have viewed the relationship to plants, rivers, animals and the ecosystem as entirely instrumental and defined human relations to others in nature as in the same terms as the egoist defines his relation to others. Humans stand apart from a nature

⁴⁰ Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*, p, 98, 2002.

conceived only as means to satisfy essential self-contained human interests. In this model, nature is seen as only accidentally related to human identity and hence as something that can only be used as means to the self-contained ends for human beings.⁴¹

From the beginning of human existence most scholars and authors have attempted to address the human-nature relationship. One group has looked at the relationship from the human perspective thus allocating less value to nature and the other group cluster has assigned a value in the other direction. A neutral group has tried to balance the relationship not by denying a hierarchy of values but by exploring how those values have developed. Environmental philosophers have attempted since time immemorial to solve ecological problems by approaching them from an anthropocentric viewpoint. In this attempt, several possible solutions have emerged, the existential and assimilation.⁴²

Plumwood saw such ethics not as a solution but as a source of discrimination and for erecting barriers to the interspecies justice. This has prevented us from relating to the Earth others as fully and ethically as we ought to. Both values, the extensions and assimilation, have expanded the category of the human-centred outlook but have still not broken out of the human/nature dualism. Plumwood would not settle for such an alternative but she was prompted to think that there was a way of giving out the human/nature dualism in order to overcome discrimination by overhauling ethical norms. She did this by attempting to see the other in a way that was not centred on their instrumental value but instead to the idea of the human as guardian and carer with responsibility for looking after nature. This outlook offers people a way of reducing their rigidly dualistic value systems which results in the care of the non-human world as its corollary. She called her alternative towards a dialogical interspecies ethics.

The logic of Othering suggests that it is not the primitiveness and unworthiness of the other but our own species' arrogance that is the main barrier to forming ethical and responsive relationships with the Earth others. To defeat this logic, we must adopt a counter-hegemonic program to restore planetary partners of the sort that could enable us to survive in the long-term. [...] An important corollary of

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 147-148, 1993.

⁴² Ibid, p, 167-168, 2002.

knowledge gathering orientation is that alternative self-critical rationality of ‘studying up’ to find the resource of our problems and difficulties in nature.⁴³

Plumwood outlined how to eradicate if not reduce the obstacles to interspecies the justice and what might prevent us humans from relating to the Earth and others as fully as we ought. This particular programme will help to counter the dualist approach to our Earth other. The programme takes the following steps:⁴⁴

a) Denaturalizing and making available for critique those frameworks and methodological assumptions that Otherise the non-human.

b) Dealing with ethical hyper-separation, the highly influential legacy of hierarchical, exclusionist and rationalist modes of thinking in accounts of ethics, mind and communication. An example is the concept of human superiority in a Great Chain of Being and the myth of the lack of sentience of non-humans.

c) Avoiding unnecessary species-ranking othering behaviours and reductive stances, and establishing a framework for an interspecies egalitarian ethics.

d) Looking for and trying to eradicate obstacles to interspecies, the justice in our ways of framing the other and adopting methodologies and stances of openness rather than those of closure. Thus, is an essential preliminary to interspecies fairness and communication?

e) Opening up ethics, for example, by making the human/other species distinction less central to our ethical thinking, and decentring the human and the human-like in vocabularies and conception of ethics.

f) Developing conceptions of the human self and human virtue that can prioritize caring for the planet.

When philosophers attempt to implement the above Plumwood suggestions which are rich in variety of contextual particular ethics, then our interspecies relationship will increase its fairness and justice to the other. The abstract understanding of ethics especially on intrinsic value and moral considerations will no longer remain the source of prejudices. Instead of the old understanding of values, new knowledge ought to establish better relationships between man and other creatures. This relationship takes the form of the Great-chain-of-being on which her moral understanding is introduced.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 167, 2002.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 168-169, 2002.

Understanding the relationships between humans and non-humans will definitively sustain and deepen a right relation rather than the diversity. The human being can retrace his steps and find out where the misconception and prejudice originated and attempt to eliminate, if not eradicate the human arrogance, especially his outlook on Earth other thus minimizing his difference, thus it will increase human sensitivity and respect for the land other. She concluded that her ethics was not only about extension and assimilation but approached the subject anew with the counter-hegemonic understanding hence it can open the way for a culture of nature that allows for much more in the way of contextual and negotiated relationships of communication, balanced dialogue and mutual adjustment between species starting with our own in what could become a liberatory blending or mingling of nature and culture.⁴⁵ If interspecies ethics offers an opening to non-humans and creates an atmosphere in which humans recognize that each one is joined to all the others and all the other species then it should be adopted. The old traditional ethics should be updated and better standards employed to achieve a better equilibrium of the ecosystem.

Plumwood and the other eco-feminists wanted to know what role spirituality or spiritualities have to play in the devising of the ecological practice. Different spiritualities seemed to have begun with man's contact with nature no matter which religion one follows and even for the atheist, nature speaks a universal language that everyone can understand. It is a fact regardless of in which part of the Earth a person lives no matter what faith, nationality, political persuasion, age, profession, or income he has, nature holds the answers to life. The problems began, according to Plumwood, when spirituality was handled in the same way as ethics and reason are identified in traditional Western dualism and logic. The way human beings view spirituality differs from culture to culture and also differs according to the hierarchal distribution of values. Plumwood was able to deduce two oppositional types of spirituality.

The kind of spirituality is contradictory to the Earth and is radically dualistic. Judeo-Christian is patristic and takes its source material mainly from the Bible and its mode of operation is hyper-separation and it elevates the spirit above matter therefore human-centred spirituality sees the world's meaning originating from a man and designed only for human, even though in its discourse God is regularly substituted for Man. The material world, nature, the body, women and other species are devalued and considered coming to be and then passing away. Platonic materialism and spirituality play a significant role here.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 195, 2002.

The characteristic of dualism, as pointed out above, is that it devalues and backgrounds the other (materiality, in this case), identifying the human essence with spirituality. It is therefore a human centred spirituality which forgets entirely that he cannot survive or even exist separately from it. It is monological in practice since the mind/soul is aimed at the world of forms which is the destination of all immaterial entities. The Christian rationalistic account of both life and death, especially in its ritualistic aspects, is dualistic in form: happy heaven and an unhappy Earth, a place of suffering.

In this system, the dead are completely separated from the land of the living and all non-human life. Any return they might make is attributed either to miracles or to the corruption of the Earth, in which case it is normally represented in terms of horror, as demonic. This is a dualism of life and death, corresponding to that between the mind and body [...] the obvious choice seems to be the Earth itself and its communities of life.⁴⁶

The other type of spirituality is not human centred but cosmic centred and are found in many non-Western cultures offer a person creativity meaning and purpose in the world that was remote and centralized as follows:

But land ownership can be based on far more communal and narrative criteria that yield relationships that are two-ways and two-places in which you belong to the land as much as the land belongs to you. In these, it is not just a few exceptional pieces of land that are revered but the land of belonging generally that is meaningful, filled with history, stories and the presence of ancestors. An alternative paradigm is communicative making ownership out in the essentially narrative terms of naming and interpreting the land, of telling its story in ways that show a deep and loving acquaintance with it and the history of dialogical interaction.⁴⁷

Plumwood was suggesting that we should look for a spirituality that rejected pure dualism, i.e. spirit/matter dualism and embrace a spirituality that challenges human /nature dualism and allows for interspecies spirituality. For when nature is acknowledged with spirituality one can understand himself/herself and the other as both spirituals together. Western spirituality is more human centred than Earth centred and is in her contrast of Western and eastern theologies

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 226, 2002. See also Essay on her story *Prey to a Crocodile*.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p, 229-230, 2002.

Plumwood preferred the East because it tended to be more inclusive and it was “far richer and more exciting than the self-enclosed world of meaningless and silent objects of exclusionary, monological commodity.”⁴⁸

She believed that the correct form of worship could not be dedicated to a single transcendent God who subsumed all others and was mostly centralized and remote, rather it should be creative, helpful and relevant have multiple meaning and not be located above or beyond but found within many cultures. Its helpfulness and significances have validities when its practitioners acknowledge the worth of more than the human world alone. It means applying spiritual ethics in order to do good for humanity and also having good extended intentions to other creatures, plants, soil and so on. In adopting such spirituality we resist the blind spot that arises from human-centeredness and human exclusiveness, and instead embrace a new sacredness that permeates the daily life of both mankind and the other beings that are entitled to respect and reverence.

In the first chapter of her second book Plumwood ⁴⁹ tells the story of the death of the penguins along the Bass Strait coast of Tasmania. What she saw and the emotions associated with it were the consequence of a longer-term interference in the the oceanic food web that contained the penguins by the introduction of a pilchard species from South Africa. In the story Plumwood was able to make a difference between rationality, irrationality and ecological crisis which she called the environmental crisis of reason. Rationality as a system turns out to be highly irrational when looked at from a more encompassing perspective.

Plumwood debated various ordinary human tasks where reason has become a tool, a system, a vehicle of domination, a mean of arrogance and an insensitive structure that traps the human being. Reason has been originally cultivated as a love of wisdom, and as a source of a more harmonious coexistence with all the members of Earth. A lack of accurate knowledge is visible in politics, ethics, technology, economics, religion, agriculture and now in environmental philosophy in all of which man demonstrates his irrationality. The understanding of insanity is of dominant primary systems used for polarizations and as a mechanism for distributing ideas especially in valuing things. Human beings use rationality as a tool in order to dominate others and nature because of an inherited cultural mind which refuses to acknowledge other cultural

⁴⁸ Ibid, p, 230, 2002.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 13-37, 2002.

practices or wider interests. This mindset insists on promoting the self at the expense of other members of the ecosystem.

Rationalism is not the same as reason just as scientism is not the same as science, although rationalism has shaped our understanding of both reason and science, in the same way, that scientism shapes the understanding and the practice and agenda of science. Rather rationalism is a doctrine about reason, its place at the apex of human life, and the practice of the oppositional construction in relation to its 'other,' especially the body and nature which are simultaneously relied upon, but disavowed or taken for granted. Rationalism constructs dominant forms of rationality in terms of monological ways of organizing and exercising reason in the global free market that do not allow the non-human others of the Earth enough access to Earth's natural wealth to survive. These dominant rationalist forms of rationality not only doom the non-human world; they will leave humans themselves little chance of survival if they continue on their present course. Faced with the decline and disruption of the non-human sphere and its likely spill-over into our own species decline, we are entitled to conclude that rationalist rationality is irrational in the sense that it is maladapted to the environment it depends on. If forms of rationality that treat the Earth as the plunder, previously perhaps parts of the conditions for 'successful' Western domination of the planet have become a danger to us and to the rest of the inhabitants of Earth, we need to seek out higher order forms of reason that can reflect critically on these failures and develop new forms.[...] In choosing thus, we would not be acting irrationally; in the light of our fully ecological embodiment as human animals, our critical and corrective behaviour would be more not less rational.⁵⁰

The so-called cultural mind has its roots in antiquity and still produces the same sets of normative values and paradoxes for it holds that reason above other elements present in the human animal is supreme and that reason is linked with the dominant class. The universe should be viewed and ordered completely along rational and abstract principles while reason should be used to discover how the world works in order to dominate it for the advantage of one species, the human. This cultural mind is dogmatic in that it refuses to adopt – indeed refuses even to acknowledge the validity of – any other ways of viewing the world. An individual who

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 18, 2002.

has started or has grown up within the cultural mind, cannot accept the fact that he doesn't know everything, thus, there is no opportunity for him to swallow his intellectual pride and admit his ignorance that he is not capable of the humility through which real wisdom is achieved.

Because of the pride of the cultural mind reason is denied its potential of assessing and investigating. The cultural mind attempts to explain systematic patterns by distorting and confusing our minds that don't enable us to see and reflect as we ought to. This cultural mind employs universal or abstract concepts that have their basis in dualism and logic, stressing more the hierarchical nature of human relationships rather than demonstrating their unity. In the history of humanity there are many examples of how reason has been 'captured by the power and made the instrument of oppression'⁵¹ to use Plumwood's exact expression. In most spheres of human life reason has been captured and manipulated for the purposes of domination. Her moving and emotional story of penguins illustrates the functioning of the 'cultural mind.'⁵²

4.3.1 Observation

From Plumwood's point of view dualism and logic should be used to distribute values to all members of the planet instead of erecting barriers and prejudices. Both logic and dualism could improve the relationship between all members of the planet by reducing the uneven distribution of value. The polarization of values and the elimination of the unsightly should provoke a critique of the ways in which logic and dualism have been used to generate the five blind spots of centrism. The five blind spots, I believe, should be supplemented by tolerance, love, biodiversity and acceptance in an attempt to perceive our ecological crisis. So instead of domination, utilitarianism, human-centred Euro-centred thinking we should use and strive for values that are predominantly inclined towards an ecological equilibrium. The traditional Western ethics and reason has operated by mastering, dominating and utilizing the non-white-male human and non-human alike. Ethics should extend its boundaries to include and to accommodate the whole ecology or the full members of the planet. Thus it is only possible if traditional ethics outlook could be challenged by self-reflection to move to the actual wisdom of inclusiveness.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 14, 2002.

⁵² Ibid, p. 15-16, 2002.

Reason should be liberated from being a mere tool to become an instrument that releases the human being to develop wisdom and justice for all members of the ecosystem. The faculty of reason has been used as a tool, a system, a vehicle of domination, a means of arrogance or an insensitive framework. It should be used to spread love, peace, respect and equilibrium to all members of the planet. All these will lead us to find a respectful and reverential way of using our minds and the Earth to meet our daily needs as well as encouraging joy and happiness. Thus, with the help of reason, philosophical strategies and methodologies can be sought that bring balance and prosperity to all members of the planet.

The cultural mind operates, according to Plumwood, on the basis of dualistic and logical systems. Through it logical reasoning and ethical norms are used to dominate the other. The cultural mind persists in upholding the same principle thus being both intellectually and ethically dogmatic. But Plumwood recommends a change in the cultural mind from monology to a dialectic of interspecies concept formation.

The notion of humanity, rationality and masculinity have created a strongly contiguous part of the web, a set of closely related concepts that provide overlapping paradigms for domination. Namely, the human-nature, rational-material and masculine-feminine dichotomies which are the root cause of the unfolding ecological catastrophe that are all characterized by the same dualistic structure and exclusive master identity. Some ways are needed to be introduced for subverting and overthrowing them. In this view, different forms of feminist insight will integrate women fully into human culture. When women are 'incorporated' as fully human, then the ecological crisis can be adequately addressed.

Attention to the dualistic problematic shows a way of resolving this dilemma. Women must be treated just as fully human and as fully part of human culture as men. But both men and women must challenge the dualised conception of human identity and develop an alternative culture which fully recognises human identity as continuous with, not alien from, nature.⁵³

⁵³ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 36, 1993.

4.4 Socio-ecology, Murray Bookchin⁵⁴

Bookchin was born in New York City on 14th January 1921 and died on 30th July 2006 at the age of 85. At this early age and joined the Young Pioneers, a communist organization for children from one-to-nine years old. He attended a 'workers school' where he studied Marxism. Bookchin later joined a revolutionary force called Marxism-Leninism.

Bookchin wrote essays and books on various themes.⁵⁵ From the 1960s he started developing ideas about ecology through teaching and writing. From 1969 until 1970, Bookchin taught at Goddard College where he lectured on technology and it was at this location that he started mastering social ecology as an interest.⁵⁶ I will use his ideas which were central to the development of social ecology as my third stream of ecophilosophy.

Bookchin was brought up in a culture whereby myths and legends existed and were allegorically used. In the beginning existed in a real harmony and relation between gods, human, non-human and the spirits before the disintegration. Reason and science used by people could have contributed to this disintegration and at the same time dialectic reason and ecological discipline can be used to restore the ecological harmony especially reconciling and healing the nature. Like the other authors I will attempt to show how Bookchin understood the environmental crisis and how to resolve the conflict and tension that exist between the two natures by ascending to the ecological society of freedom.

The third stream of ecophilosophy I would like to look at is social ecology, a concept coined by and associated with Bookchin. According to Bookchin the ecological crisis originates from deep-seated social problems and these social issues produce natural catastrophes that then have adverse effects on environmental stability. He allegorized the origin of the ecological crisis in the myth of disintegration, a discord between gods and men, demonstrates how in the beginning social harmony was fused with environmental balance. The beginning of social disintegration was also the birth of the ecological crisis which is the outcome of historical, social trauma. Man's future wellbeing rests squarely on his ability to heal the split between himself and the gods – in other words, the social crises and the environmental crisis are one. He narrates the whole unfolding social crisis through legends of the Norsemen.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Bookchin and Levine, *Defending the Earth*, p, 27, 1991.

⁵⁵ Check on the list of his books in bibliography.

⁵⁶ Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, p, 80-82. 2005.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 80-83, 2005

Bookchin concluded that the origin of the ecological catastrophe originated squarely with deep-seated social problems. He advocated gaining a thorough understanding of the problems facing our society and the irrationalism that dominates it before venturing into socio-ecology. Most of these social issues are inherent in economic, ethics, culture, nature, a type of reason and logic used, gender conflict and domination, hierarchy, patriarchy and capitalism among many others. If Bookchin postulated deep-seated social problems as the origin of the ecological disaster, then, how did he define ecology and how did he relate the two different disciplines? Unlike other authors Bookchin understood ecology⁵⁸ to mean more than the typical definition given by environmentalists, that is the inhabitants of the Earth, including animals, plants, living and non-living lives and their interactions with being more passive than being active, thus,

By ‘environmentalist’ I propose to designate a mechanistic, instrumental outlook that sees nature as a passive habitat composed of ‘objects’ such as animals, plants, minerals and the like that must merely render more serviceable for human use. Given my use of the term, the environmentalist tends to reduce nature to the storage of ‘natural resources’ or ‘raw material.’⁵⁹

From Bookchin’s critique the limitations and failures of the environmentalist become all too visible. The horizon of their thinking is temporary and uncritical especially on the ecological crisis needs to be enlarged to embrace all the inhabitants of the planet.

After outlining the meaning, the environment, Bookchin gave his definition of ecology which has become its present usage and meaning ecology is more inclusive than exclusive not only in reference to first nature but also to the second. The second nature is what called the culture or society, a product of human evolution and the social factors mentioned above.

Put quite simply, ecology deals with the dynamic balance of nature, with the interdependence of living and non-living things. Since nature also includes human beings science must include humanity’s place in the natural world – specifically the character, form and structure of humanity’s relationship with other species and the inorganic substrate of the biotic environment. From the critical point of view, ecology opens to wide purview the vast disequilibrium that emerged from humanity’s split with the natural world.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 10, 2005.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 85-86, 2005.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 86, 2005.

There is a close connection between ecology and sociology for most of our social actions have an indirect or direct effect on the ecology. Bookchin was ardent that our natural world's setup is profoundly entangled with the method we organize the social world. Such deep entanglement is not exceptional to a nation, society, community, clan, caste or any kinship community where humans live. Communities construct pictures of nature to justify why and how they think and act in a particular ways and some of these thoughts and actions that grow out of a society's image of nature reflect some aspect of the truthfulness that varies from region to region or from people to people. We mostly apply our social definitions and meanings to nature without any real certainty about their universality and our social limitations in understanding another culture or tribe stem from our weakness in the perceiving nature. Unless we critique how we relate socially to each other then we cannot fully understand how ideologically saturated our models of the environment really are. Unless we develop an open, unlimited and non-oppressive attitude towards our and other cultures we will never reach the most comprehensive understanding of nature possible. Hence:

Social ecology challenges the image of an unmediated natural evolution, in which the human mind, society, and even culture are *sui generis*, in which the non-human is irretrievably separated from human nature, and in which an ethically defamed nature finds no expression whatever in society, in mind, and human will. It seeks to throw a critical and meaningful light on the phased, graded and cumulative development of nature into society, richly mediated by the prolonged dependence of the human young on parental care, by blood ties as the earliest social and cultural bond beyond immediate parental care, by the so-called "social division of labour" [...] and their role in the origin of hierarchy.⁶¹

Society and Ecology are intertwined and related so that it is impossible to tackle ecological problems without first simultaneously addressing social issues. Currently, society is engaged in trying to solve environmental concerns, those of urbanization, industrialization, exploitation and pollution and other related matters. In a sense these problems are indeed social because they are produced by and have an effect on society but they do not get to the underlying social causes of these problems. Ecology on the other hand seeks to enlarge our horizon rethink our past ideologies with the aim of being critical and integrating different disciplines in order to create a rounded relationship with the whole cosmos. If the two concepts, society and ecology, are correctly perceived then social ecology will have a driving force that will enable it to achieve

⁶¹ Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, p. 87, 1990.

desirable goals, a new consciousness of the relatedness of things. Bookchin outlines the power and the desirable goals of social ecology.

The power of social ecology lies in the association it establishes between society and ecology, in understanding that the social is, potentially at least, a fulfilment of the latent dimension of the freedom in nature, and the ecological is the major organizing principle of social development. In short, social ecology advances the guidelines for an ecological society. The great divorce between nature and society – or the “biological” and “cultural” – is overcome by shared developmental concepts such as diversity in evolution, the wide and complete participation of all components of the whole and the ever more fecund potentialities that expand the horizon of freedom and self-reflexivity. [...].⁶²

Bookchin warns however that despite the deep relationship between our first nature and our second nature is that they are not fundamentally the same and the coexistence of both species is rooted in one denominator, namely organic evolution. First nature is the source and base of the second nature; both have the same origin, the same ontological essence. Each creature on Earth has its potential to become what it should from its being what it is. Bookchin’s definition of first nature is:

Nature is not simply the landscape we see from behind a picture window, at a moment disconnected from those that preceded and followed it; nor is it a vista from a lofty mountain peak. Nature is certainly all these things – but significantly more. Biological nature is, above all, the cumulative evolution of ever-differentiating and increasingly complex life forms with a vibrant and interactive inorganic world. Following a tradition that goes back at least to Cicero, we can call this relatively unconscious natural development “first nature.” It is first nature in the primal sense of the fossil’s record that clearly leads to mammalian, primate and human life not to mention its extraordinary fecundity of other life-forms, and it is the first nature that exhibits a degree of orderly continuity in the actualization of potentialities that made for complex and self-awareness or the subjective life-forms.⁶³

With its organic natural evolution Bookchin did not deny the role of reason as among major factors that make the second nature unique. With the power of reason an individual or groups

⁶² Ibid, p. 87, 1990.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 31, 1990.

of human beings can conceptualize, understand and communicate in signs and language about less visible or invisible life-forms. Since second nature grew out of organic evolution it is a continuity of first nature. A self-awareness and self-reflection help human beings to be social beings by understanding their environment, thus, their being able and capable of formulating systematic thought that is then communicable to others, especially in the fields of ethics, philosophy, science politics and commerce, etc.. Such a unique quality in a life-form could be the source of a good relationship with humanity with nature rather than just using it as a store for his benefit. Bookchin argues that:

[the fact that] the second nature is the outcome of evolution of the first nature and can, thereby, be designated as natural does not mean that the second nature is necessarily creative or even fully conscious of itself in any evolutionary sense. Second nature is synonymous with society and human internal nature, both of which are undergoing evolution for better or worse. [...] The second nature as it exists today is marked by monstrous attributes notably hierarchy, class, the state, private property, and a competitive market economy that obliges economic rivals to grow at the expense of each other or perish.⁶⁴

Second nature is the highest life-form and very different from the first nature as Bookchin wrote;

In their most differentiated and fully developed forms, these self-reflexive and communicative capacities are conceptual thought and language. The human species has these capacities to the extent that is unprecedented in any other existing life-form. Humanity's awareness of itself, its ability to generalize this awareness to the level of highly systematic understanding of its environment in the form of philosophy, science, ethics, and aesthetics and finally, its capacity to alter itself and its environment systematically by means of knowledge and technology, places it beyond the realm of the subjectivity that exists in first nature.⁶⁵

It appears that the danger and tension emerge from the evolution of the second nature from the first nature and this danger is caused by the systematic subjectivity of the second nature. Human activity, especially his awareness of the power of reason (which is absent in other life-forms), technology and other scientific advancement may have been used to exploit first nature.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 32, 1990.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 30, 1990.

Bookchin's description of the first nature is observed as "a harsh realm of necessity, a domain of unrelenting lawlessness and compulsion"⁶⁶ by humanity. This fact is manifested in the ecological crisis when the dangers and tensions between the two natures remain unresolved.

Two major systems (dualism and monism) among others have been used in an attempt to solve the tension and conflict between first and second natures. Dualism tried to show that both natures are contrary to one other. And secondly, Monism sought to dissolve second nature into the first or vice versa. Bookchin's opinion is that the ecological crisis we face today stems from our social problems which are initiated by hierarchical domination based on race, class or even by an authoritarian perhaps ideologically motivated state. We need an ecological society in order to solve the tension and conflict that exists between first and second nature in order to help us arrive at the nature that is beyond and above both. In order to come to this ecological society, we need a system that does not attempt to fuse both natures or exaggerate their contradictions.⁶⁷

The ecological and ethical crises seem to originate from the Western perception that nature is "a harsh realm of necessity, a domain of unrelenting lawfulness and compulsion"⁶⁸ and such a statement demands reactions that aim to perceive the nature and how man should relate to it. Ecophilosophical thinkers have already tried to find a way of doing this in order to counteract the above ecologic crisis. The ecophilosophies that have argued in an intellectual linear fashion, in Bookchin's opinion, have produced subjective rather than objective solutions. The effort to bridge the gulf between the natural and the social world has yielded to biotic unification and a dualistic conception of both natures. Ironically, both intuitive and conventional approaches have not solved the problems of the ecological crisis but instead they misunderstood the wisdom that lies in the natural and social world. Bookchin wrote about two ecophilosophies that attempted to solve the environmental crisis but failed, and he proposes a third one. What are these two systems? Why did the other two groups fall short in Bookchin's mind? This group includes the deep ecology, quasi-religious quietism, anti-humanism and socio-biology. This intuitional group views the whole ecological historical crisis as resulting from man's failure to conceive the interconnectedness or interrelatedness of nature and society. Bookchin's opinion is that the deep ecologists and those of the same school of thought have revealed the academic

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 71, 1990.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 136, 1990.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 71, 1990.

deficiency of the predecessor of deep ecology and the stillness of the entire deep ecology movement. Bookchin's opinion rests on the following:

It literally dissolves historical development into an undifferentiated continuum and even into a ubiquitous, all-embracing "one." The mystical counterpart of mechanico-materialistic stratification is a reductionism that says that everything is "one" or "interconnected", that all phenomena originated from a pulse of primal energy [...]. Instead of apprehending things and phenomena as both differentiated and yet cumulatively related, the mystical alternative to conventional reason tends to see them, to use Hegel's famous remark, as a night in which all cows are black.

The second system is conventional in nature. We are generally used to instrumental and analytical forms of reason guiding our objective and subjective view of reality. We are used to concepts or principles that are characteristic of instrumental and analytic forms of reason. Such principles as identity, efficiency, causality and logical consistency can be practical to a particular common-sense view of reality in order to render it intelligible. The result is abstract in order to acquire the universal form and we abstract concepts from a particular thing, other characteristics disappear; e.g. when we abstract mass from a rock its rocky essence disappears.

The instrumental and analytical form of reason from Plato's time has created a dualistic view of reality what it is or a being rather than its development, what should be or *the becoming*. The whole problem of change and identity, or commonly in the Middle Ages unity and diversity, has haunted the great minds of the Western philosophers. The principle commonly known as the principle of identity is applicable only to something in a permanent state of *being* and not something that is *becoming*. Bookchin used conventional reason to mean instrumental and analytic forms of reason.

Conventional reason is based on analysis of phenomena as precisely defined, and whose truth depends upon their internal consistency and practicality. It focuses on a thing or phenomena as fixed with clear-cut boundaries that are immutable for analytical purposes. We know an entity, in this widely accepted notion of reason, when we analyse it into irreducible components and determine how they work as a functioning whole so that knowledge of the entity will have operational applicability. When the boundaries that define a developing thing change as, for instance, when sand becomes soil, then conventional reason treats sand as the sand and the soil as soil, much as if they were independent of each other. The zone of interest in this kind of rationality is a thing or phenomena's

fixity, its independence, and it is basically mechanical interaction with similar or dissimilar things and phenomena.⁶⁹

Bookchin demonstrated the limitations of conventional reason, in relation to ecology, that the principle of identity remains the same and the premise of deduction remains logically consistent. Therefore the process of phenomena of becoming cannot be explained and its potentialities are denied and unexplored. A thing is A and only A. A conventional reason is applicable to the Church dogmatic authority, the arbitrary behaviour of the absolute monarchy, frightening ghosts of superstition, mathematical thinking and mathematical sciences, in engineering, building of bridges and the nuts-and-bolts activities of everyday life. The truths of conventional reason, based on consistency, are useful in these areas of life and indeed traditional reason has contributed immeasurably to our knowledge of the universe.⁷⁰

Bookchin rejected the above two systems, intuition and conventional, for the simple reason, of being not understanding and unable to offer solutions to ecological problems. Both types of reason viewed first and second nature and their inter-relations differently while centrality with concepts borrowed from mainly Asian and African culture tend to think of an intellectual line offering a unity of things that fails to appreciate their differences. The latter understanding is commonly called monism and the former is called conventional. The Western conventional system of thinking has never achieved solutions for the eternal questions of identity amid change and change amid identity. Just consider an example of human beings in terms of life cycle in which a person is an infant at one time, another time a child, then an adolescent, a youth and an adult. Conventional reason accounts each stage dualistically but does attempt to explore the whole process of development of a child becoming an adult. Traditional reason has the practical function of describing the identity of an entity but it cannot explore the process of becoming. It can also demonstrate how a living entity is patterned naturally as potentially becoming, or developing into another stage or phase. If we think ecologically we need to accept the natural evolution of every member of the planet and not overemphasize unity at the expense of diversity.

With dialectical reasoning we can understand better the meaning of the first and second natures and their relationship to one another. Dialectical thinking is older than conventional thinking since it originated with Heraclitus who viewed reality/being as ever-unfolding thus

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 6, 1990.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 11, 1990.

becoming. While making the contrast between dialectical and traditional reason, Bookchin wrote:

Dialectical reason, unlike conventional reason, acknowledges the developmental nature of reality by asserting in one fashion or another that *A equals not only A but also not-A*. The dialectical thinker who examines the human life cycle sees an infant as a self-maintaining human identity while simultaneously developing into a child, into an adolescent, and from the adolescent into a youth and from youth into an adult. Dialectical reason grasps not only how an identity is organized at a particular moment but how it is organized to go beyond that level of development and become other than what it is, even as it retains its identity. The contradictory nature of identity – notably that *A equals both A and not-A*.⁷¹

In presenting the advantages of dialectic and explaining how it operates Bookchin was attempting to dispel the fears and incoherence brought by both by the anti-intellectual tendencies of intuitive and conventional understandings of the ecological crisis. In an effort to discover what is nature, what humanity's place in nature is and what the relationship is,⁷² Bookchin believed that dialectical reason offered the best hope because it "is simultaneously a way of reasoning and an account of the objective world, with ontological causality."⁷³ This type of reason should answer some of our first questions that I put across in the exposé of the dissertation.

Minimally, we must assume that there is order in the world, the assumption that even ordinary science must make if it is to exist. Minimally, too, we must assume the existence of growth and processes that lead to differentiation not merely the kind of motion that results from push-pull, gravitational, electromagnetic and similar forces. Finally, minimally, we must assume that there is some kind of directionality towards ever-greater differentiation or wholeness insofar as potentiality is realized in its full actuality. We need not return to medieval teleological notions of an unswerving predetermination or hierarchy of being to accept this directionality, rather we need only point to the fact that there is a generally orderly development in the real world, or to use philosophical

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 8, 1990.

⁷² Ibid, p. 1, 1990.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 17-18, 1990.

terminology, a logical development when a development succeeds in becoming what it is structured to become.⁷⁴

In his tenacious attempt to develop a rounded critical analysis of second nature's relationships with first nature or the natural world, Bookchin was forced to employ different concepts in which these concepts should be applied to the construction, liberation and if to the possible healing of the rift between society and the natural world. These ideas are essential, I think, in dealing with the dynamic balance of both, nature and society. What should be of crucial importance is the vast disequilibrium that has emerged since *Homo sapiens* claimed autonomy? Traditional sciences should no longer keep us captives to the ecological crisis especially when both first and second nature interact on the contrary we need to employ concepts that investigate and if possible try entirely to explain the yet poorly understood relationship between both characters.

Bookchin gave new and contrary meanings and usages to concepts more appropriate to tackling the ecological problems especially in his basic stand that the root causes ecological problems are inseparable from social issues. As social ecology tries to advance its critique of the tension between the natural world and society it also seeks remedies to heal them, thus more of the harmony that diminishes the hazards that lie ahead. Bookchin's understanding of holism and wholeness is apparent in the definition and the objective of social ecology. It aims at critique and healing the split between both natures.

The relationships and interrelationships of the ecosystem are not pyramidal in essence but more circular or web-like. From microorganisms, plants, animals up to a man, contrary to the Creation story in the Bible, the ecosystem is not hierarchal but a web. Each member of the ecosystem is knitted together in a network of interdependence regardless of the direct or indirect link it may have with the 'others'. This relationship of interdependence fosters ecological stability and demonstrates the enormous unity of existence in the ecosystem. All members of cosmos are connected like the web. "That plants and animals continually adapt to the unwitting aid of each other [...], has opened an entirely new perspective of the nature of ecosystem stability and development."⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ibid, 17, 1990.

⁷⁵ Ibid, *The Ecology of Freedom*, p. 91, 2005.

The phrases unity in diversity, universal and particular or similar concepts are not a new phenomenon in the sphere of philosophy. Their roots go back the hundreds of years in non-Western cultures such as original peoples in various communities in Northern America and Toa in 400-500 B.C. In pre-modern Occidental culture it has been implicit in the organic conceptions of the universe that have been manifest since the historical Greek and Roman developments through feudal Europe and into the idealistic era. In contemporary times, Bookchin amongst other authors has used it as an important tenet in understanding ecology.

Ecological wholeness is not an immutable homogeneity but rather the opposite, a dynamic unity in diversity. In nature balance and harmony are achieved by ever-changing differentiation, by ever-expanding diversity. Ecological stability in effect, is a function, not of simplicity and homogeneity but complexity and variety. The capacity of an ecosystem to retain its integrity, depends not on the uniformity of the environment but its diversity. [...] To assume that science commands this vast nexus of organic and inorganic interrelationship in all its details is worse than arrogance. It is sheer stupidity. If unity and diversity forms one of the cardinal tenets of ecology the wealth of biota that exists in a single acre of soil, leads us to another basic ecological tenet; the need to allow for a high degree of natural spontaneity.⁷⁶

Biocentrism from Bookchin's point of view has negative implications. His understanding of the concept is that it denies humanity its unique natural evolution from the first nature to the second nature and to add insult to injury *Homo sapiens* individual attributes are removed entirely. The human qualities derive from humanist theories and the facts of natural law. Those who advocated biocentrism attempted to dissolve the physical world as we have into a mystical world of oneness.

Thus, biocentric theory should be used carefully to bring harmony and not tension in trying to solve ecological problems. Thus, "It is grossly misleading to invoke biocentrism, natural law and antihumanism for ends that deny the most distinctive of the human natural attributes – the ability to reason, to foresee, to will, and act unsightily to enhance nature's own development."⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 88, 2005.

⁷⁷ Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, p. 83, 1990.

Bookchin's conception of hierarchy was meant to supersede Marx's traditional usage to describe the class struggle. Bookchin defined hierarchy to be "cultural, traditional and psychological systems of obedience and command not merely the economic and political systems."⁷⁸ The hierarchy and domination of humanity in contemporary understanding are quite different and alien to the outlook of so-called primitive and pre-literate societies. Bookchin opted for a social hierarchy and domination that was observed to be accomplished by primitive and pre-literate societies that constituted an almost human existence.

Their high sense of internal unity and egalitarian outlook extended not only to each other but the relationship with nature. People in preliterate cultures viewed themselves not as the "lords of creation" (to borrow a phrase used by Christian millenarians) but as part of the natural world. They were neither above nature nor below it but within it.⁷⁹

The harm previously inflicted on the environs and the side effects on the entire Earth are immediately felt by all members of the cosmos for it is initiated by humanity's claimed conventional powers, technology and scientific achievements. The gains have made *Homo sapiens* less conscious and more insensible than before. Becoming more aware and sensible would create a new and fresh awareness of how second nature evolved from the first and how both are interrelated thus enabling us to achieve the desirable goals of equilibrium on Earth. Social ecology consequently will ignite what is absent in human beings. "What we crucially lack is the conscious and sensibility that will help us achieve such eminently desirable goals - a consciousness and sensibility far broader than customarily meant by these terms."⁸⁰

Although Bookchin was critical of other proposed ways of theorizing in tackling the ecological crisis he eventually admitted that it would be necessary for all subjects to be brought to bear on the issue if man were to be liberated from the dominant narrow ways of thinking. Looking at how science emerged through the history of philosophy demonstrates how modern science developed from strong opposition from other spheres of knowledge particularly since the clergy monopolised knowledge. Social ecology must not work in isolation in trying to solve

⁷⁸ Ibid, *The Ecology of Freedom*, p. 68, 2005 and compare such a quotation with Oruka's, "the invisibles have a greater power and knowledge than the visible (*human beings*) [...] communism in the human society extended to the rest of ecological world, and it entails that the ecological balance is not a human creation and it is foolish for a man to pretend to be the master of environment," *Practical philosophy*, p, 252, 1997.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 69, 2005.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 83, 2005.

the ecological crisis but incorporate and relate to each discipline without losing its identity. Bookchin challenged us to view ecological problems from an intercultural perspective. We need to enlarge our horizons, rethink our past ideologies and integrate different disciplines.

Without renouncing the gains of earlier scientific and social theories, we must develop a more rounded critical analysis of our relationship with the natural world. We must seek the foundation for a more constructive approach to the grave problems posed by the apparent “contradictions” between nature and society. We can no longer afford to remain captives to the tendency of the most traditional sciences to dissect phenomena and examine their fragments. We must combine them, relate them and see them in their totality as well as their specificity.⁸¹

Although Bookchin was able to demonstrate the negative understanding of western dualism and conventionalism, he was positive on the power of reason that is endowed to man. This is a strong argument based on human beings’ ability to think conceptually and feel deeply in trying to reverse the damage already inflicted on the cosmos. Humanity remains a distinctive moral agent in the biosphere and he can play a significant role through his ecological stewardship of nature. A reasonable usage of the concepts would be to take the evolutionary and dialectical viewpoint. The competing argument of the ‘rights’ then, would become a source for the human to understand, appreciate and feel deeply for the nonhuman forms of existence which emerge from the process of evolution.

This evolutionary and dialectical viewpoint which separates the human species from nature as the embodiment of nature’s own trust towards self-reflexivity, changes the entire argument around competing ‘rights’ between human and non-human life forms into an exploration of the ways in which human beings intervene into the biosphere.⁸²

4.4.1 Observations and Conclusion

Bookchin associated the ecological crisis of the whole cosmos with the social crisis in the human realm. His allegory of the disharmony between gods, spirits, human beings and all other creatures – the ‘myth of disintegration’ - means that this equation or at least association rings

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 85, 2005.

⁸² Ibid, p. 140, 1997.

true for me. The struggle of the persons to control other humans began with distinctions of races, gender, etc., justified through a patriarchal ideology and repeated in the economic, religious and political spheres, can automatically be extended to nature or environment. Thus modifying our hierarchical social structures would logically lead to an adjustment of the human-nature binary. Attaining the reintegration that this would entail relies upon man's capacity to reconstruct his relationship with the gods, nature and his consciousness.⁸³

Bookchin made a clear distinction between the environmentalists and advocates of ecology thinking though each acknowledges man's relationship with nature and its inhabitants, the difference remains clear. Environmentalists operate within a mechanistic and the framework that sees nature as a passive habitat (i.e. an environment) and in such a conception nature is perceived as a stage for human action, passively waiting for man's decision on its use. The vocabularies and ethics of environmentalism are focused towards one end, man, while ecology, by contrast, aims at the dynamic balance of nature and acknowledges the interdependence of all living and non-living things. Humanity's relationship with other species is active. Both kinds interact with one other in an active way, nature is by no means a static background.

In reference to the dialectical view of society and ecology both are fundamentally entangled so that the environmental calamity is a social crisis and vice versa, and both are active and dynamic states of becoming. The environmental issues that arose from modern communal living, such as urbanization, industrialization, exploitation and other related issues, can be solved by man and without him having to indulge in critical practices that examine his relation to the cosmos, i.e self-reflexibility

Deeper ecological and social problems however require a critical analysis of this relationship and an enlargement of the horizon of thought which should recruit all disciplines to the service of finding a solution. The ecological and social crisis should seek a fresh awareness of the relatedness between human and non-human beings that inject a consciousness and sensibility that acknowledges the activeness of non-human systems.

Although Bookchin criticised other approaches to solving the ecological crisis my view is that each is indispensable in finding an explanation and a solution to the problem. An intuitive understanding of the ecological crisis should be embraced at the start of any investigation so that one can feel the interconnectedness between all members of the cosmos. Bookchin's two arguments against the deep ecologists' intellectual poverty on their side and the denial of

⁸³ Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, p. 10, 2005.

reasoning intellectual aspect on the part of humanity should be seen therefore as one step towards greater knowledge.

In the staircase of knowledge no, one step is superior to any other. Each step is an essential step towards knowing ourselves and our environment better. According to Bookchin, the conventional system of reasoning with its rigid type of logic which admits only the principle of identity is only useful in mathematical and mechanical thought. It can be helpful in ecophilosophy too, in order to formulate some useful concepts. Dialectical reasoning is superior to intuitive and conventional reasoning in dealing with ecological issues, however without intuitive and traditional thinking dialecticism would never attain its position of supremacy over the other two. The three types must be held in performance with each used when it is deemed suitable or right to do so in order to construct a new paradigm. Every type of knowledge has its value and should be judged and used on its merits.

Like most of those who subscribe to either deep ecology or the ecofeminism, including their founders Naess and Plumwood, Bookchin engaged concepts that were constructive, liberating and if possible healing. These were concepts such as holism and wholeness, the food web, and unity in diversity, which are all useful in treating the relationship between the first and second nature. The concepts aim to restore the dynamic equilibrium between nature, repairing the disintegration according to the prophecy foretold in the legend of the Norsemen as illustrated at the beginning of this stream. The traditional sciences should cease holding the relationship between first and second nature captive and should instead release each according to the evolutionary act and assist in advancing the link between the natural world and society.

Chapter 5. The Intercultural possibility of the three streams

5.1. Philosophy is the product of a culture but it not a culture.

Since its inception philosophy has never been a monolithic field. It has always followed different branches of inquiry and each branch has its systems or schools of thought. These have coherent ideologies and adhere to localized trends that inform how the people in each group answer the fundamental questions asked by their branch. These philosophical discourses and enquiries originated, given the environment stemming from an individual group of thinkers or an existing school of thought is in a known or unknown culture. In order to qualify as philosophy its contents and its methods must remain ‘somehow’¹ the same in all cultures. Philosophy is defined as a love of wisdom in thought and action and this is true from the Greek thinkers to African philosophers and sages and in regions as diverse as Europe, America, Asia and Africa. Philosophy as a conceptual, logical, self-critical discourse has never ceased to engage itself from fundamental human questions that range beyond any particular social or physical environment. Philosophy explores both natural and metaphysical questions and it challenges the human being wherever he or she may be to act according to objectively acceptable standards. Such an understanding could be summarized in the words of Wimmer M. Franz in his articles on the Polylog;

Ich verstehe unter "Philosophie" ein denkerisches Projekt, das sowohl durch inhaltliche als auch durch methodische Vorgaben gekennzeichnet ist. Inhaltlich handelt es sich beim Philosophieren nach meiner Auffassung stets um die Bemühung, einen oder mehrere von drei Problembereichen zu klären: die Frage nach der Grundstruktur von Wirklichkeit (in der Metaphysik oder Ontologie, auch der philosophischen Anthropologie); die Frage nach der Erkennbarkeit der Wirklichkeit (in der Erkenntnistheorie und auch der Logik); und schließlich die

¹ I use this ‘somehow’ because there exists philosophy that remains undiscovered or its method not yet objectively known. It is not known as the language used in its writings are still undiscovered, or it is simply being ignored. An example is the Kalenjin proverbial philosophy. Although they conform to the basic principles of philosophizing, methodology and are not written, it remains unknown

Frage nach der Begründbarkeit normativer Sätze (in der Ethik und Ästhetik). Dies sind die Kernbereiche dessen, was in der okzidentalen Tradition "Philosophie" genannt wird, und davon gehe ich aus. Spezielle Disziplinen – wie zum Beispiel Kulturphilosophie, Sprachphilosophie, Rechtsphilosophie usw. – befassen sich jeweils mit Teilaspekten dieser Grundbereiche.²

Before I proceed in this chapter let me describe my general understanding of the concept of culture. What is culture? And in what ways does it operate and affect us?

We come across and make use of the term culture all the time, every day and in very different contexts, without consciously being aware of its meaning. We attend cultural programmes, discuss cultural differences,³ read about the dangers of cults and cultivate right or wrong habits. Even when we go to college or shopping in the supermarket we are confronted with live and active cultures. The word's etymology, Culture,⁴ is from the word *cultus* of Latin origin, is the past participle of *colere* which signifies to inhabit, cultivate, nurture, worship or take care of. The term culture holds subtly different meanings in the various disciplines of sociology, cultural anthropology, biology, agriculture and now the newly-formed discipline of intercultural philosophy.

But if our goal, this chapter, is intercultural philosophical exchange then how would we best define culture and its influence on us? Does culture have anything to do with the way we dress? With the way in which we eat or prepare food? The way we think? The manner in which we pray? *Culture* is all these and much more and in fact almost in its entirety what we do and think is influenced by culture: the way we give and receive information, use time and space, view authority or nature. *Culture* is, therefore, the structure of behavioural arrangements, morals, assumptions and experiences, shared by a societal group. *Culture* is an unconsciously applied system of collective values which makes the behaviour of its members comprehensible and to some extent, predictable to each other. Culture is communication and it influences how we send and interpret messages.

Culture is something we learn and it acts as a kind of lens through which we view others. It affects the way we see them and different cultures have different perspectives of the same things. The intercultural exchange of philosophical ideas and the understanding that would engender enables us to make more informed evaluations of our global counterparts. This vision

² Wimmer, *Polylog No. 1*, p. 5, 1998.

³ Wimmer, *Essay in Intercultural Philosophy*, p. 35, 2002.

⁴ Ulfing, *Lexikon der philosophische Begriffe*, Köln, 2003.

will help us to avoid the sort of misunderstandings that waste time and needlessly damage relationships. Is intercultural philosophy about creating multiple lenses for viewing other cultures complete? At the moment I can say only maybe or maybe not. It all depends on one's perspective.

Awareness of my cultural conditioning and knowledge about other cultural systems can build a foundation for cross-cultural training while paving the way towards cross-cultural competence. The way each member of a group of us thinks and acts in a given situation depends to a certain degree on our cultural upbringing. In articulating, analysing and explaining how and why we believe and do certain things in a particular way and not otherwise is mostly due to the influence of our cultural background. Philosophically this affects our view of reality, how we think about it and consequently how we act in certain circumstances. Our thoughts and actions should be subject to critique analysing whether our reflex responses to things are culturally determined or whether they are universal. The hermeneutics is essential here. When the culture under examination uses indigenous language that is unknown outside its environment, i.e. when its traditions and norms are unintelligible to no one except members of the culture itself, then hermeneutics is necessary.

But what is the value of learning to understand other cultures if it does not produce (rationally) arguable ideas that can improve our way living? In an academic and practical sense, cultural investigation should be approached to get at the facts, firstly for the sake of knowledge, i.e., valuable in/of itself, regardless of its use value and secondly to allow us develop a deeper understanding of the human being. Imagine, for example, two people who are born and grew up in two different places, one in a village and the other in a town, or in various continents. How might their abstract concepts differ, for example, what about the 'I' and the 'We'? What is their conception of their identities? How is this understanding translated into daily living? Mathew Arnold was among the pioneers to translate the concept *caltus*. The English-speaking people had been prone to give two meanings to the concept of culture, theoretical and pragmatical. This was explicit in reference to themselves as indigenous and to the others, the foreigners.

The disparities of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing as intellectual as curiosity. It is valued either out of sheer vanity and

ignorance or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man will call this culture or attach any value to it as a culture. But there is of culture another view in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligible being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards actions, help and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it.⁵

Cultures can make human being act mechanically by holding what was said and taught to be the only true and correct ways of thinking and acting. The adverse effects of inheriting a culture that was once intellectually vibrant are that human beings within it often have closed minds. It also tends to formulate hypotheses that preserve the cultural thinking in aspic without thinking beyond its circumferences. The formation of the idea that Africans were primitive and an inferior group of humankind was sometimes held to be an eternal condition which justified Europeans in subjugating and ruling them. Other descriptions of the theory held that Africans could not develop but needed the Europeans to civilize and evangelize them and for this reason it was also acceptable to justify their domination and the theft of their labour and land and to seek to change their primitive culture and natural religion, as they were mostly so-called. If we take Bantu philosophy, according to Tempels such thinking is not necessarily contradictory.

Let us not expect the first Black-in-the-street (especially if he is young) to give us a systematic account of his ontological system. Nevertheless, this ontology exists; it penetrates and informs all the primitive's thinking and dominate all his behaviour. Using the methods of analysis and syndissertation of our own intellectual discipline we can and therefore, must do the 'primitive' the service of looking for, classifying and systematizing the elements of his ontological systems.⁶

We can say that the negative aspect of culture has brought more conflict than harmony to societies and to the world at large. The over-emphasis of the inherent goodness in what I know from my cultural setup at the expense of what I don't know of the other culture has resulted in

⁵ Matthew, *Culture and Anarchy*, p, 90-91, 1965.

⁶ Tempels in Serequeberhan, *African Philosophy*, p. 113, 1991.

the dualism of cultural chauvinism in addition to a failure to see the unity in diversity, which has justified actions that are far from being objectively right.

Running counter to this, as I have already mentioned, cultures have also made positive contributions to their societies and the whole world at large. These positive contributions can be grasped in the various epistemological, ethical, political, cosmological disciplines and indeed even in the new ecological model that arose in the previous decades. Cultures, when fully and positively investigated and explained hermeneutically can bring us to a higher level of understanding and appreciation of the richness of other cultures. In the same process it brings the unity in diversity of every culture without over-emphasizing unity at the expense of diversity or vice versa. In such an atmosphere human beings will always be able to actuate all the potential contained in the desire of wanting to know and understand rather than merely being contented with the heritage of the past. Mathew Arnold holds a similar view:

Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God to prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection and is no longer debarred by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new. The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavour to see things as they are, is to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world. ⁷

Culture and cultural experience shape the deep insight into all the various abstract and practical views on reality and the metaphysical realm and it is responsible for providing the form of the values which regulate thought and action. The formulated logical syllogisms unveil man's attempt to achieve perfection by ascending from what is particular to what is universal. The subjective is made more intelligible to all hence becoming objectively intelligible in thought and action. But such attempts to think entirely and correctly have often been logically flawed and steeped in prejudices. In the history of humanity when two cultures encounter each other conflicts have arisen more often than harmony. Hence it is attributed to the ongoing wars, many of which are tribal, racial and even when they are not are often based on ideological or

⁷ Matthew, *Culture and Anarchy*, p, 92, 1965.

religious differences,. These conflicts are currently being experienced in Europe, Africa, Asia and even the Middle East.

5.2. Conflict and crisis

If we accept a hypothesis that every human culture has developed specific ways of philosophising, it follows that we can trace numerous explanations such as the origin of man, who he is, how he perceives reality and how he ought to relate to others (both human and non-human). What we could ask then is whether there is one single form of philosophising, a universal philosophy if you like, that somehow encompasses them all allowing for a general method of approaching our philosophical studies? If we take one cultural view as the only way of philosophising and as a single acceptable way of understanding man and nature then we will fail to recognize the importance of the multiplicity of other cultures. Such a view connotes that one cultural interpretation is essential to constructing general norms. The implications of such a tendency are that one culture's form of reflection and argumentation should be recognised as the only correct and only acceptable model consequently omitting other potential contributions to philosophy.

Philosophy as a discipline of study has not always enjoyed the privileges offered by society. Let me give some examples to illustrate this opinion. Will Durant write in *The Pleasure of Philosophy* while questioning the future of philosophy:

Once the strongest men were willing to die for her: Socrates chose to be her martyr rather than live in flight before his enemies. Plato risked himself twice to win a kingdom for her. Marcus Aurelius loved her more passionately than his throne, and Bruno burned at the stake for loyalty to her. Once thrones and papacies feared philosophy and imprisoned her votaries lest dynasties should fall. Athens exiled Protagoras and Alexandria trembled before Hypatia; a great Pope courted timidly the friendship of Erasmus; Regents and Kings hounded Voltaire from their lands, and fretted in jealousy when at last all the civilized world bowed before the sceptre of his pen. Dionysius and Dionysius' son offered Plato the mastery of Syracuse; Alexander's Royal aid made Aristotle the most learned man in history; a scholar king lifted Francis Bacon almost to the leadership of England and protected him from his enemies; and the great Frederick, at midnight when all his pompous generals had gone to sleep, held

high revelry with poet and philosophers, envious of their boundless realm and their timeless sway [...].⁸

In his contribution to conflict and crisis debate of philosophy Raimon Panikkar pointed that out the dominance of the Western culture in the approach to all human studies has not given room and potency to the indigenous or traditional cultures. The side effects of such thinking for long has created more division than harmonious living amongst people and even other members of biodiversity, if I may incorporate the concept into the meaning in ecophilosophical.

The majority of studies on this theme have been more or less monocultural. This is due to the global predominance of Western culture during the last 500 years, and to the concrete fact that an Hellenic word has been used to formulate the question. The question: what is philosophy, was asked on the basis of what the Greeks originally understood that word to mean. It is on the basis of that one culture and with instruments of that same culture that we have approached those foreign lands, those foreign cultures. This is all the more meaningful since the majority of learned people from other cultures have hastened to show us that what we call by that name also existed in their respective cultures. Thus we have important studies on India, Chinese, Bantu, Japanese and other philosophies, as being so many branches that enrich the known studies on Ancient, Medieval, German, Spanish [...] philosophy. These experts usually tell us that their respective philosophies are oftentimes more rich in certain aspects that have been neglected by Western philosophy, and that they help us to broaden and deepen the very conception of philosophy. But it is rare that they have asked themselves in a critical and thematic way, what question they were asking when asking the question of philosophy.⁹

The belief that one's cultural practices, values, systems of thought and beliefs are pure and noble and that those of others strange and even absurd has demonstrably led to barbarity towards alien cultures, quite often justified with bastardized versions of the products of reason, notably social-Darwinianism. Therefore, the exclusion of other cultural values and individual thinkers is not an attitude that the nascent ecological thinking wants to emulate. Oruka's conversation with a college student in the United States led him to conclude that, in a cultural

⁸ Durant in Terry, *For the Love of Wisdom*, p. 79, 1994.

⁹ Panikkar, in *Polylog*, No. 1, 1998

framework and quality, philosophy is not the activity of Black Africans or women but it preserved for the White male mind. Oruka wrote:

In the history of philosophy in the West, beginning with the man alleged to have been the first philosopher, Thales, we pass through great names, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle [...] Thomas Aquinas and William Ockham [...] and Descartes, Locke, Kant, Marx and Hegel among others [...]. In the second half of the 20th century, a student of philosophy in the West could not be allowed to escape doing or at least knowing about the philosophies under names such as Russell, Wittgenstein, [...] and others of similar esteem and intellectual mystery. But one will hardly hear of a woman philosopher of comparable intellectual esteem. Should we believe that the philosophy is an activity reserved only for the male in Western civilization? No philosopher or anyone of fair mind would want to give an affirmative answer to this question. And the question raises a further question of whether or not there are obstacles in some or all cultures which unfairly keep off significant sections of humanity from the dialogue of philosophy. The historical omission or exclusion of women from the dialogue in Western philosophy parallel the omission of African philosophers from the realm of what has been entertained in the West as ‘philosophy’; we do find great treatises written to show the inability of the Blacks and women to think philosophically.¹⁰

The three authors I have cited so far in this chapter (Durant, Panikkar and Oruka) have questioned the essence of philosophical engagement. They have tried to approach the question of what a universal philosophy outlook is. Why should one culture, White male, the Western, have the ‘monopoly’ in philosophizing and other cultures remain dormant or be considered to be non-existent? The intellectual challenge facing the Occidental philosophy has to be re-evaluated within a broader outlook in order to update its relevant ideas – especially those that affect man’s relationship to man, man to the cosmos. This is a crisis in thinking and acting.

The philosophical crisis mentioned above has charged philosophers with a new trial to look for a new horizon of understanding of what philosophy is and how one goes about doing it. Should we continue defining philosophy within the circumferences of Occidental thought which excludes other culture’s philosophical views or should we include them? The emergence

¹⁰ Oruka, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 197, 1997.

of philosophical definitions and conceptions and even methodology within other countries/continents in and outside Europe raises new challenges that nobody ever thought of before, questions about the origins of philosophy, about the monopolization by one culture and one gender within it and about the future of philosophy.

Two possible future paths are expected from these new challenges. Either the view remains rigid to the Western way of philosophising in which case it will lack the richness offered by other cultures or it will open up its doors to the other views on philosophical themes thus enlarging the role of philosophy, and enabling it to seek wisdom everywhere it exists, especially by engaging other cultures in doing and philosophizing.

If the first method, (rigid) is utilised then philosophy will never be a matter of concern, concerns about the unity in diversity of our being, how we think, why other cultures think differently and why others have different methodological approach to philosophy, etc.,. Unity will dominate and overshadow diversity thus crippling the value of philosophy in every culture since the only philosopher will be the one who has grown up in the Western philosophical setup. Wimmer postulates a future problem caused by unity without accepting the diversity of other thinkers or cultures in the following words:

[...]. A contrary view holds that philosophy (in the strict sense) developed only once, namely within the European, the Occidental. The view however is based not on reflections of the content but rather of certain forms of thinking and argumentation. This view orientates - or rather Occidentals - until this day most discussions of professional philosophers all over the world. However it is not convincing. There are good reasons to hold that philosophy today and in the future will have serious shortcomings if it continues to discuss the global questions only within the framework of concepts and the methods derived from Occidental lore. If the philosophy will not be able to surpass its Occidentation by going forward to a true globalisation, it will fail to give answers to humankind in the future. So there is reason to accept the view that philosophy in a general sense has several and perhaps many origins.¹¹

The above quotation has created more questions in philosophy than answers. The Occidental philosophers are particularly working in and on the Western continent in the sense that outside the occidental system of thinking no other philosophy exists. The danger of the occidental

¹¹ Wimmer, *Essays on Intercultural Philosophy*, p. 8, 2002.

discourse is that it has been the dogmatic way of philosophizing since the ancient Greek philosophers. When philosophy fails to achieve its objective of addressing global problems and issues then its purpose, of demonstrating wisdom and giving correct judgements on how to act, will not be realised.

If the second path is engaged, if Occidental philosophy opens up its doors to other cultures then their diversity can be incorporated. The variety of different cultures will enrich its conceptual outlook and methodological approach and amicable solutions to various global problems will be half-solved or understood. The incorporation of other cultures will not eliminate the uniqueness or diminish the worth or the contribution of Occidental, African, Asiatic or any other form of philosophy. On the contrary, each view will maintain its identity and at the same time reach out to the new ideas while respecting the other's cultural perspective.

My understanding of unity and diversity is that it represents a challenge to listen and to learn from the other cultures without negating my view of ontology, etc. It is an endeavour to seek and uphold the truth which is the potency of our being. When we strive to search, to know and try to understand what lies beyond the known, we are indulging our minds in the diversity of the unity. At the same time in the search we confirm our identity especially by pointing out the contrasts and similarities between our entrenched concepts and the concepts we come into contact with from other cultures.

I must stress here that understanding one's identity (culturally/opinion/view) is essential to understanding another culture or someone else's way of thinking. One's identity is a condition of being able to communicate since you cannot impart what you do not know or possess intellectually. The identity and the difference, unity in diversity, two sides of the same coin, will be better understood. In addition such process has the virtue of being willing to understand the foreign culture but also of wishing to be known by it. This idea, of needing to know one's identity first in order to be able to comprehend the others is précised in the notion of identity introspection. It usual to know one's identity and it is enriching and challenging to recognize the diversity of your identity. However, it is also enlightening and challenging to confront the unknown that exists in different cultures, their philosophies, their religions, their ecologies, etc., than simply sticking to what is well known. It is intellectually stimulating to know what was unknown. In every minute humanity in all its spheres is moving towards globalization. It is no longer a taboo as a Catholic to learn the basic teaching of Muslims or

Buddhism or vice versa, indeed it is to be actively encouraged. In his contribution to the relationship between different fields of human endeavours, Mall wrote:

The present day communication between cultures, philosophies, religions and political world views is of a wholly different quality from what it was in the past. The renewed call upon Asia, Africa and Latin America by Europe and upon Europe by Asia, Africa and Latin America is characterized by a specific situation in which the non-European continents take part in a conversation with voices of their own. This new kind of communication is characterized by a four-dimensional hermeneutical dialectic. First of all, this is about an understanding of Europe by Europe. The inner disparities notwithstanding, Europe has – largely under the influence of factors exterior to philosophy – presented itself to non-Europeans in a unitary image. Secondly, there is a European effort to understand the non-European cultures, religions and philosophies. The institutionalized scientific fields of oriental studies and cultural anthropology bear witness to that. Thirdly, there are the non-European cultural spheres (Kulturkreise) which now also present the way they see themselves rather than leaving it to others. Fourthly, there is the understanding of Europe at present in the non-European cultures. This situation raises the question as to who understands whom, why and how, in the best way. It may come as a surprise to Europe that in our day Europe itself has become interpretable.¹²

The whole hermeneutic activity is not in vain for it is a product and the challenge of our times. The world is at every second becoming more globalized to the extent that we need to re-examine our meanings and definitions without losing the focus on the truth. In our modern times the challenges and the radical changes we are going through generate and persuade us to philosophize in a more global way, contradictory to our previous monocultural way or even in an intercultural way. Thus, it means that Occidental Philosophy needs to enlarge its concepts, methods, conception and so on and adopts the system that is used to confront the new information without losing or reducing its identity in the face of otherness needs also to be enlarged. These challenges are what Wimmer called “the story of a unique and developing human reason whose chief representatives happen to be male, White and Occidental. The first task will be to evaluate and to revise this kind of story.”¹³ The Occidental philosophical

¹² Mall, *Polylog No. 1*, p. 54. *Das Konzept einer Interkulturellen Philosophie*, 1998.

¹³ Wimmer, *Essays on Intercultural Philosophy*, p. 9, 2002.

understanding of the mind and the heart, man and nature, among other dualistic conceptions, can be chronicled back to ancient times. However, such beliefs are still valid in our modern times logically lead us to a quagmire. In this state of mind, there is an urgent need to evaluate and revise this philosophical outlook.

Wimmer's words above are the genesis of this new perspective that the long-praised Occidental system has had its visible shortcomings chiefly by excluding others rather accommodating other systems in its global vision. Plato introduced dualism to the realm of philosophy. Dualism is one way of looking at reality. Occidental philosophers who originated in the Greek and especially Platonic tradition ¹⁴ drew a sharp contrast between things and even between people, mind vs. heart, male vs. female, cultural vs. global, etc. From the time of Plato, scholars have drawn a clear distinction between thinking and feeling. Cognitive psychology has tended to reinforce this divide: human emotions were purported to be interfering with the faculty of understanding. The best life to be lived is a life outside the senses. If I take the famous saying of Socrates 'unexamined life is not worth living' to illustrate the traditional view of reason and sensibility, I am sure that it is impossible to understand how we think without knowing how we feel. But in most cases we are inclined to say that decisions or logical conclusions must be made by the head/mind and not by the heart. When someone is criticized for being emotional or being led by the heart, this could imply an insult. Such statements/words entail a traditional idea thought of as characteristic of the feminine attitude, i.e. women are associated with the heart and similarly emotions and the heart have traditionally been thought of as of no value in the attainment of wisdom.

The second example which is connected to my dissertation, is a Man and nature dichotomy. Since the ancients, Man and nature, culture/reason and non-human/animal have been thought of as contrary opposites. The natural world has been reflected as a means to human ends or an object for human utility. In the Western tradition, the human/nature relationship has been examined in a utilitarian light so that nature is there to be used instrumentally in order to make the most people possible happy. The human being has treated the non-human as a dump, as something that exists outside civilized human life. The biosphere cannot be thought of as existing purely for man's utility. Such a dualistic approach to the human and nature, encouraged further by reason, has placed the human being in a different category above everything else in nature. The reason for this is that the differences that exist between Man and nature have been

¹⁴ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 69-102, 1993.

omitted and the similarities played down. Human and nature is differentiated subsequently to exclude non-human nature. A Human being is defined to exist outside of nature and nature is viewed as alien to people and when people are placed outside the circumference of nature they end up becoming master, dominator, utilitarian, egoist, anthropologist, etc and the failure of Human beings to see how they are interrelated with non-humans leads us quickly to use the non-humans according to our whims.

It is a fact that Occidental Philosophy has a strong tradition of forming useful and productive concepts to explain the epistemological basis of science or the political development of the state, however, in my view, it is weak in describing the interdependence between Man and nature. The contemporary view is that non-human nature can be subjugated by Man as an inessential constituent of the human world. Since this is justified using Occidental value systems those same systems have to be considered to be fundamentally inadequate in dealing with the resulting ecological crisis.

But other modern world views are concerned with striking a balance between the similarities and differences between human and non-human. What could be missing in Occidental philosophy? Can Occidental philosophy learn from nature? Is it prepared to accept and adopt other views that lie outside its traditional ways of thinking? Will it approve the kind of dialectical thinking it has been missing? What should be done to correct the impressions made in the course of the history of Western philosophy? Plumwood shed some light on these questions:

These responses include, for example, developing narrative and communicative ethics and responses to other, developing care and guardianship ethics, developing alternative conceptions of human virtue that includes care for the non-human world, and developing dialogical ethical ontologies that make available richer and less reductive ways to individuate, configure and describes the world that 'make the most' of the non-human other.¹⁵

¹⁵ Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*, p 169, 2002.

5.3 Possible alternatives

After spelling out the philosophical and ecological crisis that exists due to the exclusiveness of Western philosophy, what is then the remedy? After demonstrating the need to evaluate and revise the Occidental definitions and methodology of philosophy (to use Wimmer's expression) we need to ask ourselves a few elementary questions. Which other methods can liberate us and allow philosophy to attain its original philosophical objectives? Furthermore, what can we do to make philosophy endure and be relevant as a discipline that seeks to listen and learn? To seek wisdom (abstract) and help to solve the global problems (acting)? This problem is new in the sphere of philosophising, historically, numerous philosophers have experimented with different ways of escaping the traps set by Western philosophy. Some scholars¹⁶ still argue that Greek-originated philosophy remains the only way of philosophizing. I am not interested in discussing those who advocate this view here; I shall comment on those who have struggled to liberate philosophy from the captivity and barbarianism of Occidental philosophy. Accordingly, they have tried to evaluate and revise it in an attempt provide answers to mankind's global problems. Thus, it should be helpful at the present time to look into the future with hope that the future will not be too late. In singling out few people among many, I am demonstrating the nature of philosophy from the beginning until the contemporary time. The nature of philosophy within a given actual historical cultural paradigm, with its political milieu, has come at the notion of truth under different conditions and circumstances.

Man has in his civilization and developmental struggle tried to solve the imminent and unexpected problems facing him by adopting different systems in an attempt to look for the solutions. These systems, logic, epistemology, ethics etc., seemed to solve the immediate issue. Nonetheless, it ended up falling back on the Occidental perspective which became one-sided and in it some members became passive and other members became very active and ultimately became manipulative and dogmatic. These systems never rose beyond the subjective in view even though they were put forward as universal. Let us analyse now some systems that seemed to have brought some solutions. These systems are hermeneutics, dialogue and polylogue.

The term hermeneutics comes from the Greek god *Hermes*, the messenger-interpreter God of ancient *Hellas* – called 'Mercury' in the Roman system. In the same way that Hermes

¹⁶ Gyekye, *An Essay on African philosophical thought, on the denial of traditional thought as philosophy*, p. 3-12, 1987.

rendered and translated the message of the Gods, so is the idea used in theology and philosophy. With the intellectual handmaid hermeneutics, human finitude and limitations are enlarged beyond the circumference of the already-known to the unknown. In hermeneutics the truth in ancient myths, in unfamiliar traditions and culture, are studied and it becomes part of philosophical, theological or other humanistic disciplines and discourses. The objective purpose of hermeneutics was to seek for the universality of ontology, metaphysics, ethics, theology, etc. Martin Heidegger wrote in *Sein und Zeit* about the objective purpose of hermeneutics in the following terms:

Phänomenologie des Daseins ist Hermeneutik in der ursprünglichen Bedeutung des Wortes, wonach es das Geschäft der Auslegung bezeichnet. Sofern nun aber durch die Aufdeckung des Sinnes des Seins und die Grundstrukturen des Daseins überhaupt der Horizont herausgestellt wird für jede weitere ontologische Erforschung des nicht daseinsmäßigen Seienden, wird diese Hermeneutik zugleich ‚Hermeneutik‘ im Sinne dem Ausarbeiten der Bedingungen der Möglichkeit jeder ontologischen Untersuchung.¹⁷

The goal of hermeneutics is interpretation and in achieving its purpose it allows for better understanding of philosophy and other social sciences. Throughout the process there is an unresolved danger of trying to duplicate one's knowledge of the unknown. Hermeneutics is the tradition of defining the truth and other concepts in an exclusive view, thus, the erroneous understanding of the others. The unknown is inferred through what one does know. Hermeneutics promotes, we can say, the interpretation of what is hidden within its modes of understanding. Hermeneutics discovers the identity through a paradigm that is proprietary by dogmatism and absolutism regarding both knowledge and perception. It enables translation and communication within a given field of study, be it religion, biology, philosophy, literature, poetry, proverbs or myths. For many years hermeneutics has enjoyed its place as the universal methodology in most human sciences, especially in defining and giving meaning to what was unknown in terms of what was known and understood. In his contribution to Polylog Mall argues that hermeneutics is not the only means of trying to understand the unknown with the known. I agree with him because the hermeneutics incorporates everything into the interpreting culture allowing the one culture to dominate and without drawing any insight from the unknown culture.

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 38, 2001.

Das Identitätsmodell erhebt das Selbstverstehen einer Kultur, Philosophie, oder Religion zu einem exklusiven Paradigma und verleiht dem sonst richtigen phänomenologischen Einsicht einen zu strengen Sinn: Das Unbekannte muss im Modus de Bekannten Verstanden werden. Diese Hermeneutik lässt sich von der identitätsphilosophisch orientierten Fiktion einer totalen Kommen-surabilität leiten. In einer angewandten Form besagt sie: Nur ein Buddhist kann einen Buddhisten, nur ein Christ einen Christen, nur ein Platoniker einen Platoniker, ein Hegelianer einen Hegelianer verstehen. Da aber den Platoniker nicht gibt, führt diese Hermeneutik sich selbst *ad absurdum*.¹⁸

I don't intend to deny the role hermeneutics has played in the history of human sciences or ontology. I oppose its dogmatism and arrogance which doesn't accept other concepts according to their traditional insight or native use. Hermeneutics maintained the status quo, allowing one cultural view to remain the universal viewpoint in all understanding and that is not going to solve the global human problems or reformulate them to suit our contemporary time. Kwasi Wiredu in his essay *The need for conceptual decolonization in African philosophy* encouraged other cultures to assert themselves through their linguistic diversity especially African philosophy. Hermeneutics should be more active in thinking through old traditional concepts in indigenous languages where subtle changes in meaning are liable to occur.¹⁹

The second possible alternative is dialectic, a concept that has remained used from ancient times until today in most spheres of learning. The word dialogue comes from the phrase *dia* and *logos*, together they mean to speak across or to converse by way of exchanging ideas or meanings. Consequently the implication is that such an exchange of ideas across a cultural divide, for example, will help to arrive at a state of mutual understanding. (also note that *dia* means *across* or *between*, and not *to* as many people mistakenly believe, a dialogue, in this sense, can involve multiple voices and dialectics can involve more than two terms.) *The HarperCollins Dictionary* gives various definitions from numerous philosophers from the history of philosophy. Dialogue as a system began the periods from Zeno until Hegel. Angeles designated the term to mean the "art of obtaining real knowledge on a topic by the use of a

¹⁸ Mall, in *Polylog*, No. 1, p. 56, 1998.

¹⁹ Wiredu, *Cultural universals and Particulars*, p. 136-137, 1996.

formal reasoning process, as a method of arriving at a definition of a concept by means of examining the communal features found in a particular example of that concept.”²⁰

Let me take Socratic dialectic as presented in the *Timaeus*²¹ to illustrate the point. Throughout the whole dialogue Plato kept to his basic premises the distinction between two orders of reality, Being and Becoming. What we have through ordinary perception, the world of Becoming, is dismissed not entirely as real but because it keeps changing. What is recognised through rational understanding, the operation of mathematics and logic – the world of Being – is the actual reality. The world of being is perceived only through reason and logic and so is pure and true. The world of Becoming is pragmatic through the senses and so the knowledge in that way obtained is investigated with uncertainty and doubt.

Plato in the whole dialogue process dismisses the world of ordinary perception as not entirely real for it is the world of Becoming for it keeps on changing. Thus the real world, the world of Being, contains the Platonic forms, the object of rational understanding. In contrast between both worlds, the world of Being is perceived only through reason and logic while the Becoming world contains all things perceived by our senses that are not certain and do not have accurate knowledge.

An example is theological dialogue or ecumenism. The Catholic Church, since the Vatican II Council²² of 1965, has tried to emphasise the dialogue in its various documents. It encourages discussion with the world at large; *Gaudium et Spes*, other religions, *Nostra Aestate*, other Christians, *Unitatis Redintegratio*. Ecumenical dialogue, according to the Catholic perspective is more than words, actions and conversations that are little more than a theological or academic exercise. It embraces individuals, nations, religions and cultures. It attempts to avoid accusing any side of dogmatism.

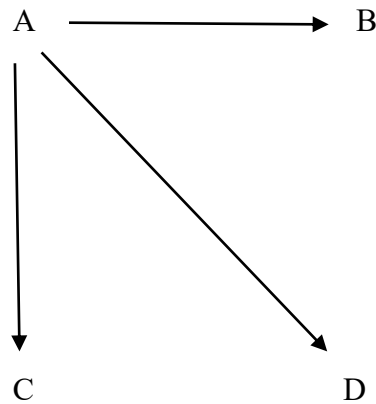
The two examples I have singled out (Platonic philosophy and Catholic theology) aimed at open discourses that first attempt to understand the fundamental problems that exist. Secondly, it ventured to look for a consensual and collective solution that tries not to exclude any of the participants completely. These give-and-take discourses in most cases are not entirely engaged in by all of the involved parties. The Platonic thinking, the dominance of the Catholic Church and its tendencies to initiate, control and manipulate any dialogues in the interest of its own requires the other participants to be as active as possible in making their side to be perceived.

²⁰ Angeles, *The HarperCollins Dictionary of philosophy*, 2nd Edition, 1992.

²¹ Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, p. 40-44, 1965.

²² Flannery, *The basic Sixteen Documents, Vatican II Council*, 1995.

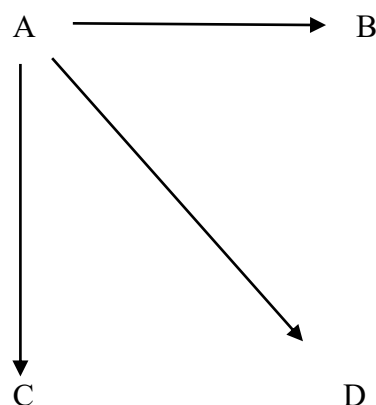
I can equate this process with what would happen with the three streams of ecological thinking when one member is side-lined. Wimmer called this stage ‘partially bilateral influence,’ a period of dialogues between A, B, C and D.



Between each of these models, several stages can be distinguished [...] Partly bilateral influences are processes of selective acculturation. For the tradition some traditions are not “barbarian” any longer but became “exotic.” The same holds true for B, C and D in an increasing manner but the mutual influence is never complete. The stage symbolised in the last paradigm represent a polylogue between all relevant traditions with the partial exclusion of D. In this situation comparative philosophy is firmly established.²³

We can explain the Catholic ecumenical dialogue by taking a symbol of:

- A. represents Catholic doctrine/theology
- B. represents Protestant doctrine/theology
- C. represents Islam doctrine
- D. represents Buddhism/ Natural religions



²³ Wimmer, *Essay in Intercultural Philosophy*, p. 26, 2002.

After analysing the two examples above as a possible way out for philosophy and other fields of study, the chances of accommodating, learning and listening to other cultures is still minimal. These two examples may not advance theory or equip it to be better at solving the global problems facing humanity and the environment at large. With hermeneutics, the consequence has been that conceptual frameworks that underpin other cultures have been translated to suit one monolithic cultural outlook. This methodology has altered other cultural views to suit the vested interests of the one cultural view that is universally accepted and the only recognised system., thus duplicating the understandings by finding itself reflected in other cultures. An alternative system could help us out of this quagmire.

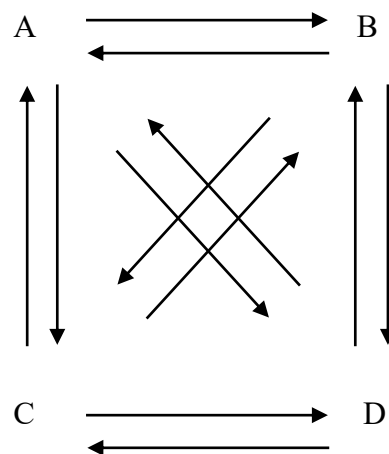
Dialogue which guides individuals to arrive at a universal truth is also in danger of being manipulated by a stronger party in order to be a thesis, synthesis and antithesis, consequently an apparently conventional truth that had a minimal input from some parties and with the dominant party not fully engaged with an open mind. An open mind is ready to learn, listen and look for a mature and comprehensive dialogue and in hermeneutics or dialogue there can be no mutual communication between different philosophical thoughts or themes. This is visible even in rational cultures, individuals or groups in an entirely exhaustive manner.

Neither of these methods offers sufficient mutual and harmonious understanding. We have to employ polylogue as the third new frameworks and methodologies that will be more inclusive than exclusive. Intercultural communication thus needs to engage the polylogical approach between different points of view, individual thinkers or cultures, could be a possible way of philosophizing. It supplements other fields of knowledge that would provide ways of solving global problems without ignoring local issues on the ground. In other words, intercultural communications ought to tackle universal problems but in the process not mastermind particular human and natural problems. The questions to be attempted are both universal and particular in nature, i.e. the questions within a particularly given environment ought to contribute to the global interest. I have already highlighted the existence of an Occidental philosophical crisis stemming from its incapability to transcend its entrenched methods of problem solving, in addition the consequent need for an intercultural approach when those problems occur at a global level. It is inconceivable bordering on the absurd to suggest that there are cultures on the planet which lack the conceptual apparatus to understand the current crisis and themes. Themes like ontology, what being a human being means, describing inter-human relationships and the relationships of the human with other beings, the interactions between the material physical

realm and the metaphysical, are common to all cultures even if the way in which they understand them can be very different.

I don't intend to explain here how different cultures and traditions from various parts of the world can harmonise their differences and arrive at a shared understanding, using common, overlapping or contradictory concepts. I think it would be wise to accept as a fundamental premise that every culture has its system of explaining and transmitting ideas about ontology, metaphysics, epistemology, ecophilosophy and ethical norms. Accordingly, it means more precisely submitting to regional or traditional ways of thinking. Then it must formulate rules that remain characterized by open-mindedness, respect and readiness to listen and to learn from the established views and ways of doing things represented by different cultures.

Wimmer illustrated how intercultural philosophy such as polylogue²⁴ could operate with the following diagram.



For every tradition when any differences with other cultures become 'exotic,' then the desired state of polylogue has been achieved, and intercultural philosophy is then possible. Every tradition has influences on all sides: every tradition is interested in every other; all of the influences work with equal intensity. This doesn't depict any extant state of affairs and it is doubtful whether it could ever be completely achieved. Nevertheless, it is important to ask whether this system might at least serve as a regulatory ideal for practising philosophy

²⁴ Ibid, p. 25; 2002

on a global scale. It seems preferable to a system based on logical reason since there will be no presupposition that there is some absolute truth and that one party among the different views is 'right.' The presupposition here merely is that activating human reason simultaneously in as many directions as possible will be effective.²⁵

After noting the presuppositions given by Mall in advocating and laying the foundations of intercultural philosophy as a new paradigm, one is inclined to ask: what are the objectives of the intercultural philosophy? Various reasons can be planned in an effort to justify the aims of the new paradigm especially in philosophy. Many authors especially the principal advocates of intercultural philosophy would equate the goals of intercultural philosophy with the fundamental problems that today face philosophy as a discipline. Others authors would base their arguments on philosophical injustices, questions that have lingered throughout the history of philosophy such as the problem of unity in diversity. Others have attempted to solve the issue of the relationship between the particular and the universal.

Intercultural philosophy can progress minus recourse to Platonic forms for solution. To philosophize in an intercultural situation is less about dealing with the separation from the unity and diversity of thought it involves more cooperation not only with the Occidental tradition past and present, but also with the multitude and the variety of non-occidental traditions and cultures.

Histories of philosophy have been inscribed as if the majority of philosophical concepts had originated in Western culture, i.e. they have been almost entirely monocultural in their outlook. With intercultural philosophy an alternative is emerging in which an intercultural view replaces the monocultural view of philosophical problems and their solutions. In allowing other cultures to participate in philosophical discourse, philosophy is enriching its approach not only locally but also globally more than ever before. From the outset, philosophy was always and still is an activity in which man attempts to bring his critical consciousness to bear on questions involving the self and about his surroundings. It uses logic and reason to understand his relation to his environment which includes the other non-human beings, in order to orient himself towards the future and his goals.

²⁵ Wimmer, *Essays on Intercultural Philosophy*, p. 28-29, 2002.

In every culture there exist men and women who have consciously engaged their minds in trying to solve ontological, philosophical, ethical and even religious problems that confront them as individuals and their societies at large. Intercultural philosophy especially ecophilosophy ought to seek to incorporate as many of these conscious minds as possible in its philosophical endeavours. It can be attempted in developing new concepts that are inclusive rather than exclusive in their outlook. The initial meaning and purpose of philosophy is therefore reserved. It was and is the essence of our conscious thinking mind to be curious in seeking out and establishing accurate, valid and logical knowledge wherever it can be recognized. Wimmer divides this objective into three tasks (thinking, examining and fairness).

To reflect on the culturality or regionality or kind of thinking on every level, to search for universally valid arguments and concepts and to do justice to the respective regional philosophic traditions.²⁶

My perception and understanding of the consequences of the above objective by Wimmer are twofold; unity (universal) and diversity (the particularity/uniqueness). Intercultural philosophy will aim at deconstructing the standard universal concepts in every culture and regions that are found in the ontology, metaphysics, religion, politics, ethics or morality and so on. This deconstruction could mean highlighting the misunderstandings, misconceptions, ignorance and prejudices that are applied to other cultures in order to eliminate or reduce them. I have in mind here the conceptions that are discernible in the writings of Oruka and Fanon. Logically, in order to arrive at a universal understanding without relinquishing diversity, each culture ought to have and create an attitude of an open-mindedness and while construction is the capacity to listen and learn, thereafter to engage themselves in self-critique and outwardly directed constructive, educative conversation or polylogue. We have to create the atmosphere where each person, each member of a culture or tradition, has the right to speak and be heard. To establish the environment adequate preparations should be made to ensure that each participant is encouraged to talk, contribute or share without fear of their potentially profound insights about what is unknown to their interlocutors.

With an intellectual openness that seeks to do justice to other traditions, the limitations of our culture and its mode of thinking will be 'minimized. By understanding the diversity of other cultures, the polylogue will enrich all participatory cultures through mutual respect and

²⁶ Wimmer, *Essays on Intercultural philosophy*, p. 15, 2002.

tolerance thus bringing new ideas into philosophy that might be engaged in designing its` orientation. The premise that ought to guide this attempt towards seeking unity from a diversity of cultures is:

Die Interkulturelle Philosophie Sicht hat deutlich gemacht, dass es den Absoluten Anspruche des einen nicht gibt, es sei denn, man zeichnet aus Vorurteilen und/oder Unkenntnissen einen Ort, eine Zeit, eine Sprache, eine Religion oder Philosophie aus. Die begriffliche und inhaltliche Klärung der Interkulturellen Philosophie hat ferner gezeigt, dass die Philosophiegeschichte selber ein unendliches Reservoir unterschiedlicher Interpretationen ist.²⁷

Due to the differences in views situations and responses human beings who are faced with different local problems can potentially form systematic resolutions. These recommendations ought to be logical and reasonable enough to handle the specific issues in a given situation and time. Through unity in diversity intercultural philosophy ought to be able to present philosophers with values that could give the world hope for a new dawn.

Ecophilosophy as a new paradigm is inclined to employ the methodology of intercultural philosophy to promote harmony amongst environmentalist and ecophilosophers. Through a process of polylogue the unity and diversity could become a source of potentiality. With it most thinkers would agree on the global nature of the problems affecting the biodiversity beginning from their milieu. It will motivate them to find the common points of reference in their approaches. The polylogue can be extended to cover man`s relation to the environment and even to the world of spirits, in which man has no absolute power, despite being empowered by reason. Man, the only creature endowed with reason ought to use it to create harmony and equilibrium with other members of the planet. The world is at least reasonable enough to imprint in a man a sense of it through purpose. The criteria for deciding what is right or wrong for a man is influenced principally by his view of the outside (i.e. non-human) world especially its usefulness and non-usefulness. Each culture seems to have some standards that are exclusive rather than inclusive. What does that mean? What is termed good and evil can be exclusive only when it applies to a human being. Ethics became inclusive when it extended its boundaries to include other members that are non-human.

²⁷ Mall in *Polylog*, No. 1, p. 67, 1998

African ethics, as an example, could become more inclusive than exclusive. In it, human beings seek peace and they remain human for they are not superior in their interactions with any other member of the planet. Oruka wrote about the contribution African sagacity could make to ecophilosophy which, according to him, should be well-preserved as one of the disciplines of knowledge that needs to enter the ecological polylogue.

I see ecophilosophy as the science about reality and truth of ecology in totality. Ethics can come in to help give standards of interaction among the species of the ecosystem. But the interaction must or should be subjected to the general truth or the reality of the system. What is good or right need not be what can actually be done. Traditional African wisdom on ecology offers an ecophilosophy that throws some light on the problems that confront modern civilization on ecology. Traditional African wisdom, the world is basically in two major parts: the visible part (human beings, trees, soils, animals, mountains, water, etc.,) and the invisible part (the dead, the unborn, the hidden stars, planets and the spirits, whether of human beings or other creatures). The two together form the totality of the environment [...]. This belief is that the environment is a community whose members are both human beings and non-human beings visible and that although the human beings have privileges (reason) they have no right to destroy any other visible except on consultation with the members of the invisible. [...] Communalism in human society is extended to the rest of the ecological world and it entails that the ecological balance is not a human creation, and it is foolish for a man to pretend to be the master of the environment.²⁸

Intercultural philosophy does not only offer the hope of a new human dawn. It also attempts to reduce continental prejudice and the idea that philosophy needs be the exclusive pursuit of the White male and it will encourage both intercultural and interspecies communication from all sides and all traditions. It will replace the monological, one-sided anthropocentric outlook, with a transcultural, interspecies sight. Therefore, improving our potential receptivity and responsiveness to other human groups, irrespective of race/tribe, gender or religion, other natural beings and supernatural/metaphysical beings. When viewed positively, this kind of

²⁸ Oruka. *Practical Philosophy*, p. 251-252, 1997.

communication will improve the chance of attaining equilibrium in nature and hence of surviving the disaster caused by exclusively mechanistic models.

My dissertation is an attempt to reduce the purely anthropocentric and utilitarian idealistic outlook on nature and try instead to learn from nature, to heal the rift in the relationship between human and earth.²⁹ The dissertation attempts to resolve the tension between the diversity in second nature with the unity in first. It is an attempt to build bridges between culture and nature, create norms that avoid pure instrumentalism and cultivate intercultural sensitivity towards all inhabitants of the Earth, hence a move from a monological to a polylogical conception of the ecology. This means a shift from the Western cultural view to the potential of relationships designed from others cultures (non-Western) and to non-humans (Earth).

²⁹ Maathai, *Replenishing the Earth (Spiritual Values for Healing Ourselves and the World)*, p, 17, 2010. "In the process of helping the Earth to heal, we heal ourselves. [...] The planet will help us in our self-healing and indeed survival. [...] The same values we employ in the service of the Earth's replenishments work for us, too. We can love ourselves by loving the Earth; feel grateful for who we are, even as we are grateful for the Earth's bounty; better ourselves, even as we use that self-empowerment (the reason, mine) to improve the Earth; offer service to ourselves, even as we practice volunteerism for the Earth

5.4 Possible intercultural view of the three streams of Ecophilosophy

The three streams of ecophilosophy I discussed in chapter four were deep ecology, ecofeminism and socio-ecology. I will try in this section to demonstrate their potential for intercultural integration and what will guide my argument is the unity-in-diversity of their views. I will attempt to show how it is possible to combine the three approaches (intercultural) without diminishing their uniqueness in views and methodologies. I will attempt this on four levels:

- i. Favourable atmosphere and adequate preparation.
- ii. Reconciliation and mutual respect.
- iii. Common ground or same boat, i.e. unity.
- iv. Complementary difference, i.e. diversity.

For any dialogue or any polylogue a right atmosphere is essential to being able to listen, learn and think from a different perspective. A healthy environment gives room for both giving and receiving. The spirit of giving and taking – to give one's view and to learn from another – is necessary to a conventional debate or dialogue and so it is for polylogue. This stage is more one of psychological preparation for without opening one's mind, the individual is never going to be able to transcend his own type of thought. So, to get beyond the form of monological prejudices that make it impossible to access unexpected ideas, or cause them to (mis)interpret the ideas through their home-grown conceptual apparatus.

The Favourable and adequate preparation will allow participants to be more receptive to each other's arguments and be prepared to cede to them when presented with sufficient justification. Mall talks about the importance of a favourable atmosphere and appropriate preparations for a genuine dialogue or polylogue:

Das Motto einer interkulturellen Hermeneutik lautet daher: Das Verstehenwollen und das Verstandenwerdenwollen gehören zusammen und stellen die zwei Seiten derselbe hermeneutischen Münze dar. Wo alles nur dem Wunsch, dass man verstanden werden will, untergeordnet ist, dort wird das Andere in seinem Eigenrecht erst gar nicht Wahr- und ernstgenommen. In diesem Sinne studierten die Missionare und auch manche Ethnologen mit viel Mühe fremdem Sprachen wie z.B. Chinesisch oder Sanskrit weniger, um die

Fremden zu verstehen, als um von ihnen verstanden zu werden. In dem Verstehen des anderen ist zwar der hermeneutische Zirkel nicht ganz vermeidbar; er darf jedoch auch nicht dogmatisiert werden, als wäre man nur noch dessen Gefangener.³⁰

Favourable and adequate preparations involve reading or being given access to plenty of information prior to the meeting which includes reading different authors' interpretations and trying to immerse oneself in their thinking and writing (their debates, themes and discussions). Such preparatory activities will equip an individual to assess their interlocutor's case fairly and responsibly before arriving at their counter-arguments. The point here is to avoid snap judgements based on one book, essay, comment, etc., when it is only one amongst many produced by the target culture.

Agreement or reconciliation and mutual respect should follow automatically if the above steps are firmly observed. Preparation is necessary because newcomers to any discipline – be it philosophy, religion, colonialism, ecology, politics, and the economy – are bound to make unconscious mistakes. Those who are responsible for formulating norms or drawing up ethical guidelines, tend already to have pretty fixed views about the way things should be. A good example of this is the treatment of toxic waste in the US where the predominantly white administrators have seen fit to dump it near predominantly black neighbourhoods. Dave Foreman while contributing to the theme '*Racism and the Future of the Movement*' wrote:

Ecological problems such as pollution incinerators, dangerous landfills, and toxic industrial waste sites are a huge survival issue for the communities of colour throughout this country. Indeed, poor communities, with a high percentage of the people of colour are far more likely to be chosen as the sites of such environmental and public health hazards than the white and more middle-class communities. Environmentalists and civil rights groups can make common cause around such issues and they should.³¹

The common cause of civil rights movements and ecological groups that Foreman points to here is apparent. A much more intractable problem is getting the poor, mainly black communities into productive dialogue with their predominantly white, middle-class administrators, for whom they would never vote and share no obvious mutual interest. It is

³⁰ Mall Adhar Ram, *Polylog*, No. 1, 1998.

³¹ Bookchin Murray and Foreman Dave, *In Defending the Earth*, a Dialogue, p. 90, 1991.

necessary for such circumstances, or similar structural dominance like colonialists, gender, religion, to build bridges amongst communities and even at an individual level and then make the necessary steps for intercultural polylogue can take place. In such historical injustices, building bridges and mutual respect ought to play a vital role. Firstly, this can be achieved on many levels. The level of the individual, the community, the regional, nation or international institution by offering the chance for reconciliation. Secondly, in trying to begin anew with the need to seek out opportunities to learn, listen and be concerned and interested in other people's lives.

Another example in this phase is of the missionaries. With the arrival of the missionaries, the indigenous systems of worship the use of the mother tongue and dancing were disregarded (see the second African Synod, 1995). The church, especially the Catholic system of faith was transmitted using Latin language. This may well still be true in some places, silent, still, steeped in the Latin language, and male dominated. With the election of St. John Paul II, as the head of the Catholic Church, new Advent dawned on the African Catholic church. The Catholic Church adopted a project of enculturation designed to signal its hope for a reconciliation with and mutual respect for the indigenous systems of worship. In this enculturation project, liturgical dancing was allowed, and prayers were held in the vernacular. When the Lord takes his due place in an indigenous culture, he awakens all the energies of the first creation which it articulates, devoting with the power of his redemption.³² Hence, reconciliation and mutual respect motivate the offended and 'offender' to work together in order to develop the atmosphere of the standard activeness instead of passivity.

It would be erroneous to think that each of the three streams of ecophilosophy was apprehensive with different ecological crises. It would also be fallacious to imagine that most philosophers were not engaged with philosophical questions such as ontological, metaphysical and ethics. It would be untruthful to think that ecophilosophers did not promote the spiritual welfare of its followers. A culture that does not promote the equilibrium of the ecosystem is a self-destructive culture. The fact is; we are all sailing in the same boat; both we and the bio-

³² Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa; Special Synod for Africa, Madagascar and the Islands*, in September 1995.

system that we rely on the need to achieve equilibrium to ensure our survival, and the survival of many other non-human species. We need new ideas, individuals and even institutions in which we can team up together to repair the disintegrating environment. Successful action and thought are not built by continuing the approaches that have led to the current situation but by having the courage to chart a new course. Rather than remaining engaged in destructive, combative and alienating processes we need to institute the atmosphere of cooperation in which we can learn and educate one another, i.e. expanding our understanding of the ecological crisis. Sequentially, it is an opportunity to grow together within the frameworks of a revitalized intercultural philosophy and a future-directed ecophilosophy, all from the vantage point of the earth – the single boat whose fate we all share.

The groundwork is organized: we all agree that we are sitting on the same ground, respectively participant has made by opening his or her mind to the possibility of exotic concepts and methodologies. What then are common ground or the features of the three ecological streams? Which of these features will then be possible to engage in polylogue?

- The primary arguments from deep ecology, eco-feminism and social ecology are: we need to address both the struggle for our well-being as human beings and the survival and welfare of the non-human species. This is because we are all facing the same ecological or environmental crisis. The definite reduction in biodiversity and the potential threat to the existence of the human being which all three view agree is responsible (both in the sense of responsible for causing and responsible for clearing up).
- The origins of the ecological problems and their primary environmental concern in each of the three streams are the same. Naess Arne, Plumwood Val and Bookchin Murray adumbrate similar histories of humanities' quest to find the proper place and his role in nature.
- They all agree that there is a fundamental urgency to this problem. The three views agree:

“Our society has got to learn to live in peace with the planet and with the rest of the biosphere. We are in complete agreement on this fundamental point. We all live under the constant threat that the world of life will be irreversibly

undermined by a society gone mad with its need to grow. This is true by replacing the organic by the inorganic, soil by concrete, forest by barren earth and the diversity of life-forms by simplified ecosystems. In short, by turning back the evolutionary clock to an earlier, more inorganic, mineralized world that is incapable of supporting complex life-forms of any kind, including the human species. The entire world of life, including those few but beautiful wild places that remain, must be protected. Indeed, wild areas must be expanded.”³³

These words can create a good atmosphere necessary and also dispel the fears of the participants the unnecessary prejudices that are the cause of disrespect and misunderstanding. The world of ecophilosophy with the help of polylogue could begin from what are the unifying factors than over stressing their dualistic differences.

Everybody is the child of his or her environment and this means that although we are human, we can think and act differently. According to the environmental setup complementarity and indifference is an attempt to outline the significant differences that exist in the ecology that are inherently dualistic in nature. The complementary differences between movements or philosophies should not try to minimize their difference but maximize their uniqueness. Uniqueness could originate from ideological or methodological differences, upbringing and even social or hierarchal priorities which might harbour immediate and imminent crises depending on time and place. Another factor that could also contribute to complementarity in difference in the ways in which ecological crisis is observed and the way in which it is carved up and the resulting pieces are defined. Logically, it leads to identical, similar or overlapping treatment or themes. For example, nature philosophy/environmental ethics, social theory, deep ecology, ecofeminism, social changes and socio-ecology. I have here in mind the complementarity in difference created by environmentalists and ecophilosophers, individuals and institutions, NGO's and Governments.

I am inclined to believe that the future of philosophy and the ecophilosophical crisis lies squarely on the problematic of complementarity in differences, i.e. in the richness of our diversity. Ecological differences should be constructive, and non-combative in style and then the individual becomes more active than passive especially when trying to tackle the

³³ Ibid, p. 29, 1991.

environmental crisis. The differences should not widen and exaggerate but explored and used to provoke new ideas which will then in turn act as a stimulus for yet another new outlook and set of insights, however, this is not necessarily to advocate unity. Bookchin views equally in social ecology:

Sees the balance and integrity of the biosphere as end itself. [...] Natural diversity is to be cultivated not only because the more diversified components that make up the ecosystem, the more stable the ecosystem: diversity is also desirable for its own sake, a value to be cherished as part of a spiritized notion of the living universe.³⁴

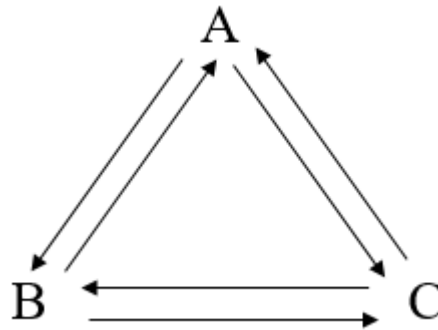
The steps from a favourable atmosphere to an adequate preparation and on further to complimentary difference is a necessary procedure to follow in order to set up an intercultural polylogue. It is possible for the three streams of the ecological movement to work together without diminishing or negating the differences between them. Indeed, since they are advocating a common purpose and vision, it is eminently sensible for them to do so. I have put this shared purpose and vision in the form of a series of questions: Can man learn from nature? Is the nature reasonable enough that a man can learn from it? The answer, after all, the hypotheses and presentations should be yes with more certitude than doubt or scepticism. The aim of this possible intercultural ecophilosophy is, I think, that the differences amid the various views, insights, goals and methodologies should create opportunities to build alliances with different schools of thoughts. Secondly, intercultural philosophy should aim at creating connections between communities, environments, genders, classes, movements, politics and economics.

In doing so, we shall overcome the global challenges facing philosophy, especially the problem raised by Wimmer of an occidental and male dominated philosophy. Justice should be seen to be done with abstract thinking and concrete doing that is unity in diversity needs to be upheld. We can, for this reason, qualify such possible arguments with an intercultural polylogue process which has since it is foundational in human nature an essential argument that man must learn from it for a better wisdom.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 14-15, 1991.

If the nature itself shows the need for diverse species to co-exist within any particular environment, and then, we human's beings should also understand the imperative unity in diversity.³⁵

My summary of the three ecophilosophical streams is represented in the diagram below. People or individual streams are echoed. The ideas, visions and primary goals being shared belong to the unity demonstrated by the arrows while their methodological differences and objectives can be seen at their points of difference – at A. B, and C respectively. The methodological differences could begin with hermeneutics and dialogue until the new intercultural approach, resulted in polylogue.



³⁵ Ibid, p. 5, 1991.

Chapter 6. Interviews

6.1 Why Interviews and their aim

After tracing the historical development of the idea ecology, after attempting to relocate and classify a few among many thinkers especially those who have contributed the stepping stones to the field of ecology, after discussing the three streams of ecology and demonstrating their intercultural potential, in my opinion, it is also worthwhile to venture into another source of ecological knowledge. Orally transmitted source of knowledge. Using this other source, I will attempt to show the types of relationships that are possible in the ecosystem of which we are all members, human beings and non-human beings. I sought to interview people who have contact and have maintained an ecological connection with other non-human members.

The purpose of the interviews is to try and uncover the knowledge in the minds of people whose experience cannot be found in books. It is the type of experience that is traditionally orally transmitted and such sources could help us to restore the lost contacts with other inhabitants of the planet. In my opinion, such knowledge could reveal some 'mystery' that exists in the relationships with the ecosystem. This relationship in the ecosystem ought to be 'mined' in order to achieve a better understanding and appreciation of ourselves and non-human beings, thus improving our ability to coexist better or in eco-equilibrium. Such systems of knowing should be encouraged for the potential enrichment of philosophy, especially Ecophilosophy that seeks knowledge wherever it exists or can be found. This knowledge is a solution of both particular and global problems alike facing ecophilosophy. It will also help to stretch the now narrow understanding of ecology to a better and larger horizon. Such endeavours will eventually bring to light what was previously unknown to Occidental spheres of learning.

I have tried from the beginning of this dissertation to look for particulars to support the proposition that man ought to learn from nature and the evidence was principally from the written texts. I have also interviewed people who had no contact with Western educational influences in the strict sense of the meaning. I was convinced that they have something to share and contribute to the ecology or their contact to their local environment. In trying to overcome the problem Occidental methodology of a male, logical, systematic Socratic dialogue, I have had simple interviews that are informal and general. I introduced the topics or the themes to them. I did not so much determine the course of the questions but remained open for casual conversation especially by following the flow of the ideas. Allowing such format, I hope, I was

encouraging a flexible atmosphere and give the participant the freedom to exchange ideas what he or she knew and even revealed the deeper sense of that knowledge.

There are two types of interview, namely, ordinary or general discussion and secondly, the prepared written questionnaires that are to be filled out. I used the former which is intended to explore the existing traditional unknown knowledge within a given culture or community. The latter restricted the individual's view in the line of the interviewer. I never engaged the second type of interview for a simple reason, most of them never attended the formal education. I interviewed the Kalenjin tribe in Kenya as my example. Ordinary and general conversation is a system that is basically used within this particular community and the end product what would traditionally be orally transmitted was put down in writing.

The chapter as a whole has three ambitions. Firstly, to bring out the individuals' subjective insights and understandings of the theme, ecology and philosophy, secondly to record their understandings of the interrelations and interactions between humans, plants, animal and landscapes for future use, and thirdly to create an active awareness of caring for the whole ecosystem instead of seeing the Human being merely as consumers and utilitarianism. I related the natural proverbs or expressions in the way participants used them without adding any extra or my own personal interpretation. The end product of the whole exercise was the collection of the ecophilosophical materials for future use. (My questions are written in *Italic* and the replies are under diverse names).

6.2 Interviews

Joseph Chebet Kabon was born in 1954 in Sambalat, Elgeyo Marakwet County. He is married to Jane Tula who is a housewife and she runs a tree nursery where she sells both indigenous and imported seedlings. Kabon worked with the Forestry Department as a forester within his village. He is well well-informed about trees, plants and animals, both indigenous and non-indigenous.

- *Why do you have both Christian and indigenous names? Do you know their meaning?*

Kabon:

We both have Christian names, Joseph and Jane; we were given them at our Baptism. We don't know their meaning but our traditional names, Kabon means a frog while Tula means a crow. The traditional names have extra meaning especially in our traditional celebrations such as in marriage, initiation and for the perpetuation of the clan and in protecting plants, animals and even the birds. The traditional names have other meanings for differentiating people, clans, tribes and they tell you your origin. The traditional names show a unity of families and the deference among men, women and animals; they also can help you trace the source of the clan, people and individuals.

- *Why do you have both Christian and indigenous names? Do you understand their meaning?*

Tula:

I don't know their meanings, of the Christian names. Tula is a kind of bird and Kabon has two meanings, frog and the rain. Physically, when I see a frog I give it my blessing because it is a sign of the family that I am married to. I give food to Tula because it is a symbol of my beginning. I have to love and respect them, the totem because they are both identities of both my families. They are a part of me and part of us. We need the rain, Kabon, for everything needs water. The family of my husband is responsible for this rain, especially in making sure that we have enough water for both indigenous and imported trees.

- *Is there anything we as human beings ought to learn from these traditional names of animals and plants?*

Jane Tula:

On animals; human beings can learn a lot from animals as the source of ‘wisdom’ that can guide them. Animals are crucial for we eat their meat, drink their milk and blood, and we can sell them to get school fees. We also use the animal skin to decorate ourselves during weddings and other celebrations. One can learn the beauty of different animals. We share the same names with animals, such as Soet meaning a Buffalo and Terik, an Elephant

We can learn a lot from nature by using their features to live a better life. These characters are verbalised in our sayings and proverbs. We have proverbs that have their origin in animal colours, characters and even how wild, how much faster, etc. they are. A good example is how to instil and teach a child about the respect that must exist between people in the community, in particular between the young and the old. “*Mageregei chi kimut,*” *you cannot see the whole parts of your head*, this is a reputable way of asking for any assistance from one’s seniors and nobody is having everything.

Another example is a proverb that emphasises the worthiness of being human “*Ibuti tany agobo kelien angwan kotab nee chi nebo kelyen aeng.*” It means: A cow falls although it has four legs so what of a man with two legs.” Since a cow has four feet it is expected to be more stable than a human being who has two legs. People are mandated or ought to be faultless but they can make errors. Being social mean interdependence on others for personal existence. Thus, the people need to coexist and to cooperate with non-humans. We ought to learn from animals but not in the same way a human learns from other people.

- *Ought we to learn from plants, trees or anything in the forest?*

Kabon:

Yes, and no. No, because some plants or trees can be poisonous and can destroy and can kill. Last year (2012) a landslide killed more than 50 people and destroyed lots of properties in our village. Yes. Trees or plants are part of us. Trees or plants grow and they will become old and dry up, even human beings are born, grow up and they will die. Plants and trees bring fresh air, firewood and beauty (pointing to the forest where he was working). We use herbs to cure various diseases. The herbs are from different types of trees and plants. We have this proverb, “*Kitestoi ng’amnot ngulatyo*” *The knowledge we get from sense or observation is not enough.* Our knowledge has wisdom that is supplementary to what we can learn from plants. By

ascending and descending these hills, the landscape has taught us that life is full of ups and downs.

- *Why was or is the cutting of individual trees or plants not allowed?*

Kabon:

It was and is a good custom or tradition to plant trees and not to cut them down before consulting. Consultations were important because of protection and connection between human beings and the spirits which we believe dwelt in trees or individual plants. Some trees or plants are preserved for medicine and family relationship as their totem. In modern times it is known that some trees and plants have deep roots that prevent erosion and protect us and the environment. They prevent landslides by the proper distribution of water and preservation so that sources of streams and rivers do not dry up.

- *Do you know more of the indigenous or the imported trees by name?*

Kabon:

I do know the indigenous trees and plants more than the imported. It is true because most of the trees, plants, etc., have a particular use in the community. The social significances are e.g. sacrifice, Sinendet, Togat and bamboo are used for purifying water, planting it at the source of the river. My parents and those of my age taught me the value of plants or trees and their usage. The imported trees, e.g. the Cyprus is only for timber and not for our traditional houses. Most plants or trees that we knew had names that were interwoven with its value or usage.

- *What are the advantages or disadvantages of a formal education and being a Christian?*

Jane Tula:

Kigilie kot koimen means no limit or end to learning. From my childhood until today I have learned a lot from my parents, grandparents, peers and the environment. After I became a Christian, I learned about the commandments of God and prayers in the church on Sundays. My life has been a life of the continuous process of learning. A healthy mind is a mind that is ready to learn a new experience.

The disadvantages that the Church taught us was to leave some herbs and embrace the mission hospitals' service but they are expensive and sometimes do not heal completely. The name of the indigenous trees and plants were told to me by my parents and other members of society. I do not forget them so quickly since I am now teaching my children and my

grandchildren when they are at home. But the names of indigenous trees were not known to missionaries. Our children are losing a lot of our indigenous knowledge and the future is going to be difficult. The next generations after us, slowly with time will be losing their identity and the value of things and themselves. They will not be in touch with nature and will not know the correct trees that are designated as traditional herbs.

- *Is there a relationship between animals, plants and human beings? Who is greater/superior and why?*

Kabon:

Man is superior to animals and plants because he knows this is a cow, this is a tree or this is a special plant that cures malaria. He can differentiate people from different clans, animals, e.g. the cow and the buffalo are assigned as totems to different clans. But the human beings (*Chi*) need plants and animals for their social life and survival. Man, plants and animals belonged to each other. Man has to keep and preserve nature, i.e., both animal and plants for his existence. (The idea of nature became more descriptive than definitive). The descriptive meaning or the concept used *ole kigiyaita kiy age tugul ne mi ngwony*, is visible in the planet, how everything was formed, and their differences are characteristics of interconnected purposes.

Cheboi Chebet Kipchotwa was born in 1942, Kipyatich Kiprop Kistien Teriki, 70 years old and Joel Chebet Kimoi, also born in same year. They are friends who grew up together but hail from different clans and have different totem names. *(I met them after finishing Sunday service sitting under a tree talking. I asked if I could join them. They didn't hesitate to welcome me. I introduced myself and my reasons for wanting to join them. In the process of talking they agreed to share with me what they knew about human beings, plants, etc., their interrelation)*

- *Why do we use names of the time, place, animals or plants?*

Kipchotwa:

Yes. Our names have a different meaning. Chebet (*bet is day time*) is a name for somebody born during the day. While kipyatich (*tich - cows*) is a name given to anyone born before the animal were discharged for grazing in the fields. Kiprop (*ropta- the rain*) is the name given to someone born during the rainy season, and Kipchotwa (*chotwa-frog*) is a name for the clan, the frog clan. Children are given names because they tell us something about that child or point out something more than seeing a person. What for example is his identity? Are we related? Which animals/plants are they close to? A name points to something.

- *Totem names have an extra reason and meaning for why we use them. I will give our model.*

Kipchotwa, a frog is a clan totem which is connected with humility and wisdom, *Teriki* the elephant is associated with strength and surety while *kimoi*, the buffalo, is associated with swiftness and force. These names, especially from animals, indicate the origin of the individual or the clan. Every clan or community has a particular explanation of their origin, where our grandparents and great-grandparents came from. Without knowing our past experiences and histories, it's difficult to know one's identity and not be able to predict the future and build the future for our children and our clans.

Kimoi:

I am Kimoi which is *soet*, buffalo, because we as the clan admire the characteristics and qualities of the buffalo. It is an active, beautiful and handsome animal. For me and my clan, we identified ourselves with this animal so that we can learn from it and have the same qualities. We try to maintain a good relationship with the *soet* by respecting and not killing it. By loving and taking care of them when there is a prolonged drought or feeding with milk the young one in case they find themselves in a needy situation. We are not allowed to hunt or even eat their meat. Likewise, under no circumstances were we allowed to marry outside the *kimoi* clan.

- *What is the relationship between the human being and the non-human? Which of them is greater and why?*

Teriki:

It is common sense that when we trace the genealogical origin of human beings, animals or plants we shall arrive at the question who created man, an animal or plants. Asis (God) is greater than them all for they came from him. For a man to live well and to be happy, he needs animals and plants. But man is greater than animal and plant because he has a choice, to choose which plant is useful as an herb, for particular sacrifice or protection against natural calamities, especially when the lightning strikes. Man has freedom but plants and animals do not have. Man is greater because he can give names to plants, animals or to himself which have meanings attached to them. He can protect himself from the wild animals by building or settling in a safe place. At the same time, nature can react i.e. lightning, wild animal attacking domestic animals, or in the rain whereby we have landslides or floods.

- *Do the human beings wound them when they destroy plants or animal? If yes how and if no why? Is it possible to reconcile with plants or Nature?*

Kipchotwa:

I think yes. Trees, plants and animals have a good relationship with us human beings. To care for animals and plants is to take care of himself. To destroy plants or totem is to wound oneself or one's clan. Human beings should care or protect trees, animals, birds, snakes or any other members of the Earth. To destroy or cut trees without consulting the authority or clan elders was not accepted. Trees and animals when damaged without a good reason or plan, then we have no rain, no shade for us and animals during the dry season. In addition to that, we have no clean water for us and our animals, birds, etc.. And soil erosion occurs. This means when we destroy plants or animals without good reason we are killing ourselves, without knowing we are wounding ourselves. When the environment is wounded or affected, man is more concerned especially when he cuts down a tree that was planted or grew up alone in the forest or in the bush.

Kimoi (reconciling with nature):

We can use special plants called *sinendet* to restore peace and to show respect to plants or animals that we have hurt or wounded and in restoring the relationships. (Sinendet is a milk-processing creeper plant used as a symbol of blessing and restoring peace and for seeking prosperity).

- *Ought man to learn from nature, i.e. plants and animals?*

Kimoi:

We can or we should get wisdom from learning from animals or plants. Some natural and animal proverbs can help a man relate well to himself, to animals and plants. (*Tupcho chi ak kiy age tugu* - we are all related).

Mokiyume soruriet ye moen keetil Do not shelter under the *sosuriet* plant and then cut it down. The proverb warns people against abusing or misusing a person or anything from which they have benefited. (Political proverb)

Wekse urwo bo ket. The shade of a tree changes, i.e. what goes around comes around. Do to others what you expect to be done to you. (Ethics)

Kinaei kot koimen, knowledge is an ongoing process (epistemology)

Kerchotab mat ko mat. If a person commits a crime, he needs to be given a punishment of equal weight in order to teach him a lesson and also to warn those who may be inclined to follow his footsteps. (Justice in the community).

Tinye bich kelat amotinye tugul tugun - we all have teeth but not all of us have property. All of us have needs but not all of us are fortunate enough to have the means for satisfying those needs. An appeal to a wealthy person or nations who are insensitive to the plight of those in need in our society (the need for equal distribution of our human resources amongst all people)

Matikure chi bonin ko mabanin Do not have a prejudice about somebody just from hearsay. Evaluate and observe his behaviour and thinking before making a judgement or arriving at a conclusion. Verify the knowledge or something before judgement (epistemology).

KTN Prime on 28.05.2013 by Journalist, Mercy Kandie.

Mr and Mrs Kosgei are living in Mindiliwo near Iten, the famous town of sportsmen and sportswomen, Elgeyo Marakwet County, in Kenya. The Kosgeis are a young couple in their mid-30s, the husband is a trained primary school teacher. The family obtained a small retail charcoal business, the business of selling coal, for the wife to run while she was home taking care of the children. One day, Mr Kosgei bought the coal in Kerio Valley near Rimoi Game Reserve. Unfortunately, on this particular day, while transporting coal their lorry developed a mechanical problem and they were forced to spend the night in the truck next to the road. The following day it was repaired and they managed to arrive home in the evening. The third day was the day of offloading. (I met the wife, Mrs Kosgei at home with the children during the August holiday and I managed to interview her.)

- *What happened on this third day?*

Mrs Kosgei:

We offloaded the coal and a young monkey was discovered between the sacks of coal. In the beginning, we were afraid of the young monkey but my husband approached it and got hold of it without lots of resistance from the animal. We took it inside the house and gave it milk from the cows and to our surprise it took it without hesitation. After two or more hours we gave porridge at ten o'clock when we were also eating. We took lunch together and it became used to all the types of food we were eating and it knew precisely which plate and cup that I gave it, like my children. We gave it its sitting position in the dining area and when watching television. My husband reported the incident to the Wildlife (Rimoi) Game Reserve authorities who gave us permission to keep the wild animal.

- *What name did you give and why? How were the communications?*

Mrs Kosgei:

I gave it the nickname Damaris Jepkogei. I had a friend whose name was Damaris and I had wished to name one of my children with the same designation. Instead of us calling Damaris *it* we changed the proposition to be *her* as in our culture. In our culture a newly born baby is referred to as *it*. After gender identification, the pronoun changes from *it* to him or she and we started talking a simple language that we use at home with our children: greetings, hand shaking..., thank you, sit down, come, go, etc.. After supper, we could watch television together but surprisingly, with animal documentaries and other touristic advertisements, she would become very nervous and would leave her sitting place and hide behind the table. Within a period of one week she became friendly to animals especially the sheep and cows. Every morning it would pick ticks from all other animals. She started first playing with our children and then the children of our neighbours without many problems.

When she makes a mistake, I could tell her “Don’t do that” and she was very obedient like my children. Like my kids, she was respectful when we had visitors and she could take her sitting place. Sometimes I could cane her like my kids when they repeated the same mistake that I had told them not to make. *Kergei lagoi ak kayak. Children are like animals for they are limited in understanding and judgments till they are grown up.* She was taken back to Kerio Valley Rimoi Game Reserve according to the laws of the wild animals in our country.

- *What was her reaction to leaving your home and in the new home? Have you actually visited her?*

Mrs Kosgei:

Jepkogei developed a different attitude of fearing the Game Warden who used to visit her twice a week. When she was taken away to the Game Reserve everybody became sad. We were accustomed to each other, especially my children. Every time my kids came back from school they tell me: Mum, we are missing her. The youngest would ask me if she will come back to us. I have visited her once but I don’t know if I will visit there again. She is very lonely and not happy and when she saw me she was very delighted. They told me she rarely interacts with other animals. I have tried to keep in touch with wildlife wardens in order find out how she is doing.

- *What are your family's totems (your parent's and your husband's)?*

Mrs Kosgei:

I and my family are Christians and we no longer believe in totems.

- *What have you as a Christian and as a family learnt through this unique experience with Damaris?*

Mrs Kosgei:

Jepkosgei lived with us very well. She was sleeping in a particular place made for her. But when she was left alone in the compound she would stay on the roof the house or in the trees until we came back home. At home we ate, watched television together and she could play in the compound with the children. It reminds me of two proverbs that I know. *mautie tarit konyi* that means: *Animals and people will never forget home, nests or the cowshed, etc..* And *mautie moset katwalet* means *A monkey will never forgets its habits*. In addition, in eating and staying together, my family and Damaris reminded me of the Creation story. Each one of us, animals or human beings, are very different but when loved, we can coexist like Damaris, my animals and my family, husband, children and neighbours.

I and my children have developed an interest in conserving animals by respecting and loving them. We are all interrelated. We miss Damaris. We wish to maintain our relationship. (Her voice changed.)

Chapter 7. **General conclusions**

Each branch of philosophical discourse is the child of its time. It is bound to be unwavering in large part by the epistemological, metaphysical and ethical assumptions shared unthinkingly by the whole culture as well as being influenced by the particular challenges and agonies of its time. Indeed, philosophy emerges as a way of conceptualizing what makes each epoch distinct from the previous one. There is no doubt that Western positivistic, instrumental, scientist thinking underpinned with utilitarian Judeo-Christian theology (continued as Nietzsche pointed out, in enlightenment thinking) have contributed to, if not caused our agonies. The challenge of modern philosophy faces is to overcome these in ways that will lead to a wiser approach to ecology. The new canon of ecophilosophy is attempting this by formulating new foundations of thought, new visions of the future, new conceptions of civilization that embrace and unite all members of the cosmos.

The questions I raised at the beginning of the dissertation have now been answered, thus giving us a clearer understanding of what ecophilosophy is. In the first chapter I introduced and discussed some of the authors from throughout history who were apprehensive about the relationship between nature and the human. I carefully chose authors from different periods who made an early contribution to our ecological understanding particularly those who demonstrated the interconnectedness of nature and humans, between first nature and second nature. The concepts were not strenuously manufactured at the university as they often are today by professional analytic philosophers but they were rooted in praxis developed by men and women who had direct contact with the subject they theorized.

These thinkers and many others covered in the dissertation were not engaged with abstruse conceptual gameplay but with concepts oriented towards life. Oruka's attitude was, philosophy not directed towards the solution of real-world problems was not worthy of the name. In the first chapter I explored the work of thinkers who showed that not only was it necessary to place equal value (in analogous sense of the word) on the human and nature but it was also essential to follow up this abstract idea of interconnectedness with a positive practical action.

I have discussed some of the constraints of traditional philosophy (especially the ethics and concepts) and the crises that beset it. These limitations were emphasised by Oruka and each of the other writers representing the three streams of ecophilosophy. We have now entered yet another period of confusion and turmoil and current challenges point out the limitations of the analytic and the empirical comprehension of man and the world. These constraints stem from

Western philosophy and Judeo-Christian religion and these difficulties and obstacles need to be overcome. Whenever society with its civilization, science or technology changes, philosophy must re-examine its position too. This dissertation urges the development of a new conceptual apparatus and philosophical framework in which the multiple fundamental social, ecological, epistemological and ontological problems can be reflected. Philosophy from the very beginning was a great subject but it has only become significant by responding to the historical challenges that faced humanity. It will only retain its greatness in the present by responding adequately to the current local and global situation.

The crisis in philosophy urgently requires a re-examination of certain epistemological and ethical concepts. In each, exclusive rather than inclusive thought processes have tended to dominate thus, leading to a more anthropocentric view of the cosmos. By opting for more inclusive modes of ethics and knowledge, a more conscientious attitude towards nature can be developed. In all spheres of knowledge we need to be conscious of the limits of naturally occurring resources and advocate strict measures that will make them last longer. Ecophilosophy, a new canon, has to instil a sense of reverence for nature and the realization that we human beings are extensions and members of nature. Nature is an extension of us (these two ideas are visible in the three streams and treatments of other cultures from Oruka). The human intrinsic value is of course a contested point whether the non-human does have any intrinsic value, (I didn't argue here) needs to be extended to cover all of nature. Thus, it is the ethical directive espoused by Oruka, Leopold, Plumwood and many others.

Over a period of time, philosophy faces new challenges and therefore requires new methodologies. Various efforts have been instigated in the current situation to extend its purview to include the whole world and not just the human world. Besides logic and reason, – the favoured mode of Western philosophy – hermeneutics, dialogue/dialectic have traditionally borne little fruit. The polylogical method promises a way of recuperating these lost forms and achieving an intercultural ecophilosophy that is comprehensive and global in reach. In incorporating other cultures, ideas, streams, sages and a re-examined Western philosophy, ecophilosophy becomes a texture of theories and praxis suitable for the whole human race. In the process all ideas are seen to have a potential value and so ideas are not prejudged and all members of society (women, men and children alike) have a role to play on the planet. i.e. making it a better place to inhabit.

Leopold, Oruka and Plumwood have all argued that religion needs to adapt its doctrines in order to make it inclusive rather than exclusive. Religion advocates a particular revealed

spirituality in which an element of mysteriousness is unavoidable. Can we learn from nature to acquire an individual spirituality? Most authors presented in the first four chapters – Naess, in particular – had extreme interactions with nature. They experienced nature as a world full of mysteries. The world is full of wonder: awe, order, beauty, fulfilment, interjustice, love, respect, reverence, compassionate membership, etc. I think that this is the sort of spiritual feeling that human beings need in order to acquire a better equilibrium with Earth. Through such concepts/feelings we as people, especially through traditional cultures, can transcend the physical and obtain the sort of the spiritual sense that answers man's quest for meaning. With this spiritual view ecophilosophy would address itself to the ultimate extensions of the phenomenon of man, leading to a new ethics to replace that of the dead spiritualities of the West which dualized spirit and substance.

Different branches of Ecophilosophy advocate either the anthropocentric care of a man or – especially in the opinion of Oruka and Naess – an Earth-centrism that is more inclusive in outlook. There are essential differences in the aims and views of each. The former treats man as superior due to his uniqueness and the latter considers all life forms (or all beings – variously defined) as of equal importance. Each perspective sees either society or nature as the only source of stability for the short and long terms of the ecological crisis. A set of guiding rules, both local and global, needs to be created and recognized. These rules or laws should help man live at the minimum. People throughout the whole world have enough to eat and the security that originates from the Earth, as a parent and from the individual who is endowed with a moral duty, to be his brother's keeper. In due process, we discourage and minimize poverty, government aid and the pure capitalistic view etc., we help to preserve natural resources and treat each other as human beings, not objects or instruments. The trading of blames between the first and third worlds on ecological and economic crises will be reduced by the fact that each human being, as a moral agent, should shoulder the responsibility of transforming the sour relationship between people and nature.

When one reads between the lines in the interviews I carried out there is a distinction between information, knowledge and wisdom. What those interviewed had learnt from school or in Church tended to be disengaged from real life and its values. The type of knowledge which one gains from school or Church is mere information because the knowledge that comes from parents and friends of nature can be more practical. This second type can be labelled natural wisdom. The value or meaning of knowledge is only visible when it can be transformed from theoretical into a practical form. Some of my interviewees have managed to integrate

knowledge successfully with wisdom turning them into sages irrespective of their gender or age. Knowledge intertwined with value or meaning can be of service to the human being, especially in forming epistemological, ethical and ecological perspectives. In the process, an individual will use his acquired knowledge and value system as complete classes and hence learn to see nature, culture and other human beings differently. When knowledge about nature can be integrated with its value, each retaining its identity without being fully assimilated to the other, then we shall make better progress in solving the ecological crisis. I would like to conclude by stressing the importance and the necessity of indigenous wisdom and knowledge with the words of Oruka:

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) permeate all that we do and think and believe. Some indigenous knowledge is, in fact, equivalent to what Western scientists know and define as fact, some of it a belief similar to what philosophers and theologians define. And a lot of it is like a belief. And a lot of it is folk wisdom, or, as my grandmother would have called it, common sense. Indigenous knowledge is a broad topic which cuts across many discipline and professions. [...] The concern with indigenous knowledge is however not a matter that has been created by the recent or current environmental protectionists. It has been the subject of investigation for many years since the advent of European anthropologists. [...] However, what is significant to note from these anthropologist's studies is that IKS of the native was not treated by the West as respectable forms of knowledge but merely as respectable forms or satisfying the Western racial whims and curiosity about the lower cultures.³⁶

³⁶ Oruka, *Practical philosophy*, p. 269, 1997.

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Chapter 9. **Abstract Ecophilosophy according to Henry O. Oruka**

Oruka was born in 1944 in Nyalgunga village near Lake Victoria and died in 1995. He was a renowned philosopher of the 20th Century, renowned for his speculative philosophy especially African philosophical debates. He, like other open-minded scholars, knew that philosophy or wisdom do not exist only in a few continents or in the heads of individuals but subsists where humans are. In the view of Oruka understanding African philosophical debates falls into various phases. Phase one is categorized by prejudice, mostly from colonialism, missionaries, anthropologists and racists. Phase two is myths and ethnophilosophy. Phase three is the six trends which he clearly expounded. In this third phase Oruka introduced the ‘sage philosophy’ which has become the modern Socratic philosophical approach.

Unknown to most scholars was Oruka’s practical philosophy. In this practical philosophy Oruka attempted to implement various themes and theories that aimed at reducing human problems and suffering. Most of these ideas and principles needed urgent attention because of their local and global interconnectedness. The topics and issues, he wrote, were the truth, ideologies, problems of philosophy and culture, ethics, poverty, local and global justice, aid, retribution and ecophilosophy. The ecophilosophy was directly connected with cultural erosion, poverty, disease and other environmental catastrophes. The environmental concern was demonstrated by *Darwin’s Nightmare*, a documentary film by an Austrian, Hubert Sauper, which was based in Mwanza, near Lake Victoria, Tanzania.

My dissertation, *Ecophilosophy*, stems from Oruka’s questions and his attempt to strike a balance between the local contributions and the global understanding of it. The central issues that form the foundation of the dissertation are why nature was never given the necessary attention in the field of study from the beginning of civilization. Do we know of some scholars who have written about ecology? Why did it take so long for the Western philosophy and Judeo-Christians to adopt the environment as part of their studies? Ought we as humans, need to learn from non-humans or nature? The environmental or ecological studies have not been given due and necessary attention in the history of human civilization, thus it implies no systematic canon and rule locally and globally for the understanding and perseverance of ecology. Some scholars have offered various and unconnected systems and concepts of ecology. I have tried to trace these intellectuals, their themes and ideas and have some observations to make; in doing so, both the conventional and dialectical understanding of mankind and nature are exposed. Oruka, among other authors, singled out Western philosophy and the Judea-Christian systems of

thought which never encouraged the study and preservation of nature by man. The traditional ethics, rationalism, Platonic dualistic and religious approaches to human beings and nature relations became the source of Oruka's arguments. The traditional values, with their characteristics of individualism, anthropocentrism, utilitarianism, rationalism and dualism, advocated what was only good for humans and not for the whole cosmos. In my view this ought to be changed and be enlarged to accommodate non-humans.

From 1970s onwards, some scholars have attempted to outline the failure of the Western and Judeo-Christian systems as not furthering or fostering a better relationship between nature and human beings. Such short-sightedness, according to Oruka and other scholars, had permeated into the sphere of the Greek philosophy of the Judeo-Christian religion. These views are called streams. The three streams, I think, could be of assistance in correcting the misconception in the interrelationship between humans and non-humans. These interrelationships, among others are outlined by the deep and shallow ecologist, Naess, being the founder, ecofeminism, the primary author is Plumwood, and Socio-ecology founded by Bookchin. Naess is of the view that ecological understanding begins from intuition and continues until maturity in reason. Plumwood criticized Western and Judeo-Christian dualistic and ethical concepts; she opted for concepts that are gender, nature, etc., friendly. Bookchin identified the source of the ecological crisis as human social domination which extends to other members of the cosmos. He opted for a dialectic philosophy as a way of changing the social structure especially in eliminating domination on racism, gender and nature.

Each author had a different view of philosophy and ecology which demonstrated an aim to solve the same problem (the ecological crisis), the failure of human beings to accept rationally the interdependent and interconnectedness of all members of the planet. I have in this dissertation concurred with these three streams on their understanding of the ecological crisis, by enlarging old traditional ethics and revaluing the Western concepts. Their diversity of views called for unity in solutions from various cultures, individuals and movements.

This unity in diversity view is the intercultural philosophy that is the concept of Wimmer. This intercultural philosophy should open our minds to see the different authors and other cultural ideas usefulness and possibilities in handling the ecological concerns and conflicts.

Oruka advocated the intercultural view of the ecological crisis. Logically, it is simply possible when we correct the past errors, employ the right concepts which suit the dictates of our time and be wise enough to apply all the necessary knowledge within our reach. In his opinion, each culture exists in a relationship that is locally different and yet globally the same

for both human beings and Nature. It was an indication that there is an urgent need in every culture and each person to co-relate with nature and humanity. Oruka demonstrated this in his concept of parental earth ethics. We ought to learn from individual views, different streams, cultures, religions and non-humans. This sequence of learning ought to be guided by reason to decrease rationalism, anthropocentrism, individualism, domination, prejudice, racism, gender, etc.. Reason has been abstruse, as a tool insensitive to nature, women, children, politics, economics and religion. The ecological crisis could therefore be solved by enlarging our boundaries in philosophy (concepts) and ethics to include non-humans as themes for discussion or learning. To overcome these obstacles to extending the ethical and philosophical thinking, an intercultural ecophilosophical process is necessary. In this process, a polylogue method could be engaged, thus looking for a harmonious equilibrium between humans and nature thus creating an ecological society.

Oruka's philosophical interviews should aid philosophy in acquiring more knowledge and concepts that are suitable for philosophical discussion. In this process of conventions the 'unknown knowledge' that was not written, is now made known and written down. The writing is indispensable, especially for the ecophilosophy that, from the beginning of civilization until today little attention has been accorded and little has been accomplished.

Zusammenfassung

Henry Odera Oruka wurde 1944 in Nyalunga, einem Dorf nahe dem Viktoriasee, geboren und starb im Jahr 1995. Er war ein renommierter Philosoph des 20. Jahrhunderts. Er wurde wegen seiner spekulativen Philosophie, vor allem in afrikanischen philosophischen Debatten bekannt. Er, so wie andere aufgeschlossene Philosophen, wusste, dass Philosophie und Weisheit nicht nur in wenigen Kontinenten oder in den Köpfen einzelner Personen bestehen, sondern, dass sie existieren wo menschliche Rassen zu finden sind. Nach Ansicht von Oruka fällt das Verständnis afrikanischer philosophischer Debatten in unterschiedliche Phasen: „Phase eins“ ist von Vorurteilen gekennzeichnet, die meist kolonialistischer, missionarischer, anthropologischer und rassistischer Natur waren. „Phase zwei“ sind Mythen und Ethnophilosophie. „Phase drei“ sind die sechs Strömungen, die er klar dargelegt hat. In dieser Phase stellt Oruka die Weisheitsphilosophie vor, die zum modernen sokratischen, philosophischen Satz wurde.

Unbekannt für die meisten Gelehrten ist Orukas praktische Philosophie. In dieser praktischen Philosophie versucht er zu verschiedenen Themen und Theorien - um die menschlichen Probleme und Leiden hervorzuheben - Stellung zu nehmen. Die meisten dieser Themen und Theorien verlangen wegen der lokalen und globalen Vernetzung dringende Aufmerksamkeit. Einige der Themen und Fragestellungen, die behandelt werden, sind folgende: Wahrheit, Ideologien, Probleme der Philosophie und Kultur, Ethik, Armut, lokale und globale Gerechtigkeit, Aids, Vergeltung und Umwelt. Alle zusammen nannte er Öko-Philosophie. Diese ist direkt mit der kulturellen Zerstörung, Armut, Krankheit und anderen Umweltkatastrophen verbunden. Dies wird durch „Darwins Alptraum“, einem Dokumentarfilm, der in der Nähe von Mwanza Tansania nahe dem Viktoriasee gedreht wurde, nahe dem Geburtsort von Oruka, demonstriert.

Meine Dissertation über Öko-Philosophie stammt von Orukas Fragen und seinem Versuch, ein Gleichgewicht zwischen dem lokalen Beitrag und globalem Verständnis des Themas herzustellen. Die Hauptfrage, erstens, welche die Basis der Arbeit ist lautet: Warum wurde der Natur nie die notwendige Aufmerksamkeit im Bereich der Studie aus dem Beginn der Zivilisation gegeben? Haben wir oder kennen wir einige Gelehrte, die über Ökologie geschrieben haben? Warum hat es für die westliche und Jüdische- christliche Philosophie so lange gedauert, Ökologie als Teil ihrer Studien anzunehmen? Und zweitens: Sollten wir als Menschen von der Natur lernen?

Den Umwelt- oder ökologischen Studien wurde nicht die notwendige Aufmerksamkeit in der Geschichte der menschlichen Zivilisation gegeben. Dies könnte bedeuten, dass keine systematischen Studien und Regeln lokal und global für das Verständnis und das Beibehalten der Ökologie bestehen. Einige Wissenschaftler haben verschiedene und unverbundene Systeme und Konzepte in Ökologie angeboten.

Ich habe versucht, diese Gelehrten, ihre Themen und Ideen zu finden. Dabei ist sowohl im konventionellen als auch im dialektischen Verständnis und zur selben Zeit ein dialektisches Verständnis von Mensch und Natur gegeben. Oruka griff westliche Philosophie und Jüdisch-christliche Denksysteme auf, die nie die Haltung zur Erhaltung der Natur durch den Menschen gefördert haben. Die traditionelle Ethik, Rationalismus und der platonisch dualistische Einfluss auf die Menschheit und Beziehungen zur Natur wurden die Quelle von Orukas Argumenten. Die traditionelle Ethik, Rationalismus und Dualismus vertreten, was nur gut für den Menschen war und nicht für den ganzen Kosmos. Aus meiner Sicht sollte sich dies ändern und erweitert, um eine größere Sichtweite über den außermenschlichen Aspekt zu erhalten.

Von 1970 an haben einige Wissenschaftler versucht, das Scheitern der westlichen und der jüdisch-christlichen Systeme als nicht förderlich für eine bessere Beziehung zwischen Natur und Mensch zu skizzieren. Solche kurze Sichtweise ist - Oruka und anderen Gelehrten zufolge - in die Sphäre der griechischen Philosophie eingedrungen und auf die jüdische-christliche Religion übergegangen. Andere Wissenschaftler werden als Ströme bezeichnet. Diese folgenden drei Strömungen dachte ich, könnten bei der Korrektur der Unterlassungen helfen: Arne Naess, der den Begriff „Deep Ecology“ (Tiefenökologie) prägte, als Hauptautorin Val Plumwood, Ökofeminismus-Expertin und Murray Bookchin - Mitbegründer des „Institute for Social Ecology.“ Naess ist der Ansicht, dass das ökologische Verständnis beim Intuitiven beginnt und bis zur Reife dauert. Val Plumwood kritisiert westlichen und jüdisch-christlichen Dualismus und ethische Konzepte und entschied sich für Konzepte, die freundlich gegenüber Gleichberechtigung und Natur sind. Bookchin identifizierte die Quelle der ökologischen Krise als menschliche Sozial-Herrschaft, die sich auf andere Mitglieder des Kosmos erstreckt. Er entschied sich für dialektische Philosophie als Methode zur Änderung von sozialer Struktur vor allem um Vorherrschaft, Rassismus und Ausgrenzung zu eliminieren. Jeder Autor mit einem anderen Blick auf Philosophie und Ökologie vertritt das gleiche Problem (ökologische Krise); das Versagen des Menschen, demütig die Abhängigkeit voneinander und die Vernetzung von Mensch und Natur zu akzeptieren. Ich habe in dieser Arbeit auch mit diesen drei Quellen (deep ecology, Ecofeminism, and socio-ecology) übereingestimmt- über ihr Verständnis der ökologischen Krise, durch Erweiterung alter traditioneller Ethiken. Ich

denke, diese könnte eine Hilfe bei der Korrektur der Missverständnisse in der Wechselbeziehung zwischen dem Menschlichen und Nicht menschlichen sein. Ihre unterschiedlichen Aussichten riefen nach Einigkeit in Lösungen von verschiedenen Kulturen, Menschen und Begegnungen. Diese interkulturelle Philosophie sollte unseren Geist öffnen, um verschiedene Autoren und andere kulturelle Ideen zu sehen, die nützlich im Umgang mit den ökologischen Belangen und Konflikten sind.

Oruka befürwortete den interkulturellen Blick auf die ökologische Krise. Seiner Meinung nach steht jede Kultur in Beziehung zur Natur, die lokal unterschiedlich ist aber global gleichermaßen für beide - Mensch und Natur von Bedeutung ist. Dies ist meiner Meinung nach ein Indiz, dass es in jeder Kultur und in jeder Person eine dringende Notwendigkeit zur Zusammenarbeit zwischen Natur und Menschheit gibt. Dies wird in seinem Konzept der elterlichen Ethik gesehen. Wir sollten von der Ordnung der Natur lernen, unter Verwendung von Gründen des rationalistischen Verständnisses den Anthropozentrismus, Individualismus, und die Dominanz etc., schrittweise zu reduzieren, was nach den genannten Autoren als ein Instrument der Insensibilität gegenüber Natur, Frauen, Kinder, Politik, Wirtschaft und Religion verwendet wurde. Um diese Hindernisse zur Erweiterung des ethischen und philosophischen Denkens zu überwinden, wird ein interkultureller ökophilosophischer Prozess benötigt. In diesem Verfahren wird ein Polylog-Verfahren aktiviert, um somit nach einem harmonischen Gleichgewicht zwischen Mensch und Natur zu suchen.

Oruka' weisheits-philosophisches Interviews sollten der Philosophie helfen, mehr Wissen und Konzepte zu erhalten, die für die Philosophie geeignet sind, vor allem im Bereich der Öko-Philosophie, der vom Beginn der Zivilisation bis heute, nur wenig Aufmerksamkeit zuteilwurde und bei der wenig erreicht wurde.

Author`s brief Biography

Personal details

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1991-1997:	Theological studies (at St. Thomas Major Seminary. Awarded Diploma in Theology from the Seminary and Bachelor degree in Theology from the Urbaniana University in Rome).
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