

## Respecting Nature: A Study to Environmental Ethics

Kemi Anthony Emina<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria.

E-Mail: [eminakemi@yahoo.com](mailto:eminakemi@yahoo.com)

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**Abstract:** This work reviewed different approaches to environmental ethics. I also show that these approaches to nature can be combined in order to study the value of nature in its three aspects. In this way, these three approaches turn out to be complementary. All these theories primarily agree on the point that nature has value. The value of nature makes it worthy of moral consideration. In this connection, we have especially elaborated on the idea of complementarity by discussing the relationship between environmental ethics and environmental law. In this context, a claim is made since all environmental policies are based on the instrumental value of nature, and most of them are not fully effective in preserving nature. We may thus hold that if the policies are based on deontological values, we can preserve nature in a better way. Hence, "respect" is the concept with which all three theories agree. If the attitude of respect can be cultivated in people, then the result will definitely be positive and constructive in our approach to nature.

**Keywords:** Environmental Ethics, anthropocentrism, non-anthropocentrism, respect for nature.

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### INTRODUCTION

Environmental ethical thinkers agree upon one thing i.e., "nature" has "value" (Anthony & Essien, 2018; Essien et al., 2021). The "value" of nature makes it worthy of moral consideration and the human community has to take necessary steps concerning nature in order to sustain on earth. This is the reason based on which the question regarding the value of nature has been raised. It is raised in terms of an instrumental value concern or intrinsic value concern towards nature (Umotong, 2012; Ignatius, et al., 2022). This ethical perspective involves an enquiry in to the variety of ways in which human beings can value nature. These three theories are historically seen as rival theories.

In our thesis they are viewed as the three aspects of morality and therefore they are considered as complementary approach towards nature. The complementary approach of these theories can be seen while understanding nature. Thus, in the present study these three approaches formed a new approach to ethics which together may be applied to explain multifaceted characteristics of nature and its significance. In turn it shows that human being's have many sided relationship with nature. In order to establish how these three approaches form a complementary approach towards nature we need to discuss first the problems which each of these theories have. The reason is that none of these theories is sufficient in itself to establish a holistic relationship between human being and nature.

### PROBLEM'S WITH TAYLOR'S THEORY OF RESPECT FOR NATURE

According to Sandler (2009), we can see at least three related problems with Taylor's theory of respect for nature. The problem is with his consideration of respect for nature as an ultimate moral attitude:

(a)The first problem is, how is it possible to say that someone has respect for nature in Taylor's sense. According to Taylor, any living thing possesses inherent worth as a member of earth's community of life. To ascribe inherent worth to the living things is to adopt the attitude of respect for nature. This formulation of attitude of respect for nature is based on Kant's theoretical framework of the attitude of respect for persons as persons. According to Kant, to consider persons as having inherent worth means to adopt the attitude of respect for persons as persons (Garcia, 2012; Umotong & Dennis, 2018). When this attitude is adopted as an ultimate moral attitude this involves having the disposition to treat every person having inherent worth or human dignity.

On the basis of Kant's theory Taylor conceived his bio-centric theory in environmental ethics (Fry, 2000). But the problem here is, adopting the attitude of respect for persons in Kantian sense and respect

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\*Corresponding E-mail: [eminakemi@yahoo.com](mailto:eminakemi@yahoo.com)

for all other living beings in Taylor's sense should be defined. The disposition here is just more than a tendency of intension. It is an efficient tendency to treat people as having inherent worth. The question is, how adopting the attitude of respect for persons and other living beings will help us in terms of practical knowledge. The problem is, there are different people from different cultural and social backgrounds. We cannot know each and every person, their culture and society. In view of this how does this attitude bring the capacities and emotional sensibilities that are needed to make a particular choice, namely, between treating one person or living being as having human dignity or inherent worth and others' without these. No one can have all these just by adopting an attitude of respect for individual persons and all other living beings. From the childhood, a person has to be trained through moral training so that these dispositions and capacities are inculcated.

Taylor prescribes to take up or adopt the attitude of respect for nature. But all of us know that this cannot be done overnight through a rational process suddenly. According to Taylor (2008), to adopt the attitude of respect for nature means to acquire a set of dispositions and capacities treat an individual as having human dignity. At this point Taylor has only extended the Kantian approach of categorical imperative towards all living beings. His approach is totally nature oriented. He calls for a change in action, emotion, perception, sensibility and understanding towards nature. It demands for a complete change in character. He demands for a complete change in someone's character to see himself as sharing a common bond with all living things. This is an individual's emotions and perceptions and the whole way of perceiving and responding to the world.

This kind of complete change in one's character will not come overnight by simply reading a philosophical book and deciding to bring a change to adopt the attitude of respect for nature. The above problem can be solved if we construct the attitude of respect for nature as a virtue because virtues can be acquired through moral training that begins in a person's childhood and the training continues through self-improvement. Virtues are not developed in a person overnight, and it cannot be acquired theoretically by attending lectures or reading books. It is a process which starts from one's childhood.

(b)The second problem is with Taylor's concept of inherent worth as he ascribes inherent worth to living things (Callicott, 1995). The concept of inherent worth demands to consider the facts about a living being to see whether a particular course of action benefits it or harm it. According to Taylor to see the inherent worth of a living being is to adopt a character trait i.e., the virtue of respect for nature or as Hursthouse (1991) calls it "being rightly oriented to nature". According to Hursthouse (1991) the above reasons can be used to train children for inculcating a virtuous character trait that is oriented towards nature. When parents see that the child pokes or hits or tears at the living thing then the parent says "don't do that, you will kill it", or "you have to water the plant because it needs water". In this way the child is taught how to look after a plant or an animal. Parents or teachers can explain to the child regarding the teleology of a living being. This moral training helps a child to bring out a particular way of perceiving acting, feeling and thinking about the natural world. Such training helps a child to recognize the inherent or intrinsic worth for living things. This can be called nature-loving rather than respecting nature.

(c)The third problem with Taylor's account is the ascription of inherent worth to individual living things. He limits the inherent worth to living beings only and therefore the attitude of respect for nature can be said as respect for living nature. According to Taylor things have inherent worth only because they are members of the earth's community of life. He identifies the characteristic out look of someone with respect for nature as follows:

One sees one's membership in the Earth's Community of Life as providing a common bond with all the different species of animals and plant that have evolved over the ages. One becomes aware that, like all other living things on our planet, one's very existence depends on the fundamental soundness and integrity of the biological system of nature. When one looks at this domain of life in its totality one sees it to be a complex and unified web of interdependent parts. (Hursthouse, 2007, p. 44).

In the above paragraph Hursthouse (2007) gives emphasis on the word "biological" than the words "system of nature". The other terrestrial entities such as the sun, the moon, the sea, the mineral in the earth, and the ozone layer also have roles to play in maintaining the domain of life in earth and these are the inanimate things. We can see both the animate and the inanimate are unified in a web and they are

interdependent. But the author questions the need of stressing interdependency among animate and inanimate objects because many inanimate things are independent of animate things for their existence. If at all we are making a difference then this distinction between animate and inanimate becomes inappropriate in the context of environmental ethics.

Taylor has made this distinction in order to give a foundational premise to the concept of inherent worth. He says things have inherent worth when they share a common feature i.e., being a member of the earth's community of life. But Hursthouse says if we think of ourselves as rightly oriented towards nature as a character trait arising from our childhood training but not as an attitude founded by an adults rational recognition, then this gives us many particular reasons for doing actions towards nature. The reason is the inculcation of right orientation towards living nature starts from the very beginning of childhood. The childhood moral training helps a child to behave in a certain way in certain contexts and shapes the emotional response of wonder towards nature. Here the distinction between the animate and the inanimate becomes insignificant. The children are trained not only not to harm and kill the living but also not to destroy natural inanimate objects. We should tell them how important they are in so far as the geological workings of our planet are concerned. They should know that each and every cycle in earth is inseparable from the workings of different life forms. Now-a-days we see the concern about the environment and the virtue of being rightly oriented towards nature is more widespread amongst children than adults. The virtue ethics approach will be right if change comes through actions and practical reasoning of people in who have inculcated the relevant virtues. The current task must be to develop the relevant virtues in us and our children.

## **PROBLEMS WITH DEEP ECOLOGY**

Deep ecologists consider that humans are not outside nature. They are the one among all nature's constituents (Heynen, et al., 2006). Therefore, humans cannot be independent persons who ascribe value to nature. It is because the concept of biological egalitarianism demands that human beings must value and respect all living and non-living entities. From this kind of thesis it can be drawn that nature has rights. For example, just like people, rocks, mountains and rivers also have rights for themselves. It is the rocks interest that is protected. It is not the human beings interest in the rock which is protected. Due to such sentiments there was a rush of legal action in USA in 1970s on behalf of threatened species and land-scapes. We will now go into the discussion relating to the various problems that are found in connection with deep ecology.

### **(a) The notion of intrinsic value**

According to O'Neil we must believe that nature has intrinsic value in order to have an environmental ethics (O'Neill, 1992). Intrinsic value means noninstrumental value. Nature is not a means to an end but it is an end in itself. Nature has value in terms of its own properties irrespective of its relationship to other entities. Intrinsic value is an objective value in the sense that value resides in nature independently of subjects. The notion of intrinsic value has been criticized when the deep ecologists say that non-human nature has objective value which is not dependent on human valuation, and then we are making a distinction between humans as a subject and nature as an object. This kind of conception contradicts the deep ecologists own conception of interdependence of human and nature.

In this connection we point out another related objection which says that the notion of intrinsic value by itself cannot be ascribed to nature without any reference to human beings. The reason is that since values are creations of human beings they cannot be thought of apart from human beings. In the earlier paragraph we said that the intrinsic value is the objective value and it can be justified because objective values exist independent of human beings. The objective value exists even if there is not a single human being on the earth. But the very idea of value, worth, and rights are human ideas. These are the human concepts and valuations which are imposed on nature. It is only human beings who value nature. Except human beings the concept of value has no meaning for the rest of nature apart from the very basic survival instincts of other beings.

### **(b) Interests in nature**

Another objection for deep ecology may be raised from the point of view of interests. If nature requires right and protection intrinsically then it must have interests. Because these things can be demanded only when he has interests in himself that is, he thinks about himself. Deep ecology is criticized for assuming that plants and non-living entities have their own interests. The interest which deep ecologists give to nature such as growth, survival, and balance are actually the human interests.

Deep ecology seems to be misanthropic which means hating humanity. It says humans are no better than other living things. Therefore human wellbeing is not a moral priority.

(c) Hierarchy of vital needs

Deep ecologists have to work out a clear hierarchy of vital needs (French, 1995). If there is not a clear hierarchy of vital needs then, what is to be done when there is a conflict between the interests of various entities of the nonhuman natural world and human interests? This often happens in the case of environmental issues. In such situations if we favor human beings then we are abandoning the non-anthropocentric holism. On the other hand if we favor the non-human nature then we take the misanthropic standpoint. Therefore deep ecologists need to make out a clear hierarchy of needs.

(d) Overgeneralization of anthropocentrism

Another critique against deep ecology is, it has over-generalized in its criticism against the human-centeredness and the dominant worldview. But the critics say not all humans or all human-centered ethics are responsible for environmental problems (Salleh, 1984). Thus, deep ecologists failed to acknowledge that many human beings are not the part of dominant perspective. Ramachandra Guha, Indian ecologist, who has raised a similar kind of criticism against deep ecology. He says deep ecology is an American ideology. It is essentially a part of wilderness preservation movement. It is true that deep ecology claims universality. Hence according to Guha if deep ecology is put into practice then it would lead to disastrous consequences. The consequences of the practice would be adverse for the poor and agrarian population in underdeveloped countries. Guha says that if the basis of policies is biocentric equality then the result would be direct transfer of wealth from poor people to rich people, and a majority of poor people would be displaced. Deep ecology is not very helpful for the people of underdeveloped and developing countries.

## **PROBLEMS WITH LAND ETHICS**

(a) The problem of naturalistic fallacy

In ethics the central challenge is to ground ethical values in natural facts. It is a claim that there is a logical gap exists between statements of fact and judgments of value, i.e., “is” and “ought”. It is called the naturalistic fallacy (Brinkmann, 2009). The critics of the land ethics say that, in Leopold’s famous dictum- *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* is exactly an example of naturalistic fallacy.

We can see in Leopold’s theory that, he presents nature as an organic model. The organic model presents the whole ecosystem as distinct wholes and they maintain a stable equilibrium in nature. Leopold’s description is a natural scientific description and development of an organic whole. With the integrity and stability of that organic whole we can say what is good and bad, right and wrong, healthy and unhealthy for the particular elements of that system. According to Leopold’s theory predators are also good for the ecosystems and they ought to be protected because they have a role in maintaining stable populations within the ecosystem. Leopold’s attempt to adopt the organic model may be said to be type of teleological reasoning of Aristotle. This can be seen as a way of bridging the gap between the “is” and “ought” problem. But the difficulty is, why should we value the overall integrity or stability of the system itself?

The answer may be all particular ecosystems have a role to play in maintaining the overall stability and integrity of larger organic whole. For this reason human beings ought to preserve the integrity and stability of an ecosystem because in doing so we are helping in maintaining the good of larger whole and ultimately the earth is an organic whole. But again the question comes back i.e., why should we value the integrity and stability of earth as a greater whole, because the instrumental and individualistic reasons are not included in the land ethics.

There is another point in land ethics where the leap between the ecological fact and ethical value remains open. Land ethics says an ecosystem like an individual organism goes through many developmental stages. The normal developmental progress would provide a basis for evaluation of the health and well-being of that system. This evaluation is correct if we assume the validity of the organic modes. But in fact most ecologists’ do not accept this, because this is a weak point. Land ethics also talks about the community model. In the community model all individuals are related to each other functionally such as, a food chain. All members of a food chain are related to each other functionally. We can evaluate the roles of individual organisms and species in a food chain but there is no reason to assume a function for the food chain itself without any human concern. There is not enough reason why

the food chain itself should be valued in itself. Hence why is the preservation of the integrity and stability of a food chain or energy circuit good or right?

Hence all the above criticism are derived from Leopold's normative conclusion, *a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and a beauty of the biotic community*, is derived from the facts of ecology in some or other way (Westra, 2001). From Leopold's land ethics we can assume that a factual and meaningful basis exists for attributing integrity, stability and beauty to the ecosystem. But still the connection between ecological facts and value conclusion is open for questions.

(b) Criticism of the holistic ethics in land ethics

The most important criticism of land ethics is towards its holistic ethics. In the holistic ethics it gives priority to the good of the whole and therefore it undermines the good of the individual. For example, the good of the individual human being is sacrificed for the good of the greater community i.e., called nature. It seems Leopold allows hunting of individual animals in order to preserve the integrity and stability of the greater whole i.e., nature. In the same way he seems to allow hunting of humans if needed. He allows this on the ground that if doing so would preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of a particular community. It is because, Leopold describes human beings as only members of the nature. Many critics consider it as, "environmental fascism" because it subverts respect for individuals. The individual prospect is sacrificed for good of the greater biotic community (Eba, 2020). Therefore, to place the right notion of the individual is difficult.

Another criticism against land ethics is we cannot justify treating the good of the biotic community as the only or necessary source of right and wrong. Such positions are extreme positions where human beings are treated as biological entities only. Humans are much more than just a biological entity.

Another challenge to Leopold's holistic ethics regarding his meaningful account of ecological wholes is not defensible. We have seen that Leopold adopts an organic model of ecosystems. He says land itself can be seen as a living organism. In land ethics we are able to make a connection between the facts of ecology and the values such as integrity and stability, health, and wellbeing only when we treat ecosystems as organic wholes. But this kind of holism is refuted by many ecologists as we saw in the previous discussions. Ecologists have refuted the organic model, because ecosystems can be seen as organisms only in a metaphysical way and it does not happen actually. Ecosystems are not viewed as organisms literally. Individuals within an ecosystem can exist outside the ecosystem. The individual members are not like the organs of a body which cannot exist outside the body. Ecosystems do not have the "unity and definiteness" like a real organism. On the other hand the constituent parts of ecosystems are capable of moving into other ecosystems. The constituent members in an ecosystem are quite independent. Therefore, the members of ecosystems are different from the organs of a body.

## **PROBLEMS WITH UTILITARIAN APPROACH**

There are a number of challenges raised against utilitarian approach towards nature. Utilitarianism involves a process of measurement and comparison. The phrases such as "maximize the overall good" and "the greater good for the greatest number" necessarily express a process of measurement and comparison (Conway & Gawronski, 2013). These phrases require measuring, comparing, and quantifying. The problem arises when we attempt to quantify the one which is qualitatively primary. Utilitarians have taken the concept of "good" which has only intrinsic value. But intrinsic value is not a thing which can be easily counted and measured. These considerations give rise to many problems.

(a) The first problem is the measurement problem. It is regarding quantifying the concepts, such as pleasure, happiness and desires. The question arises can we consider that all pleasures and desires are same in quality? Are they equal? If the answer is no then how can we measure them, and through what scale? Utilitarians say that these problems can be solved by preference utilitarianism. It is because preferences are rank-ordered than desires. But in the case of desires this does not help in making a comparison among two people's conflicting desires.

(b) The second problem of measuring is that it is difficult to quantify the concept of good. Utilitarians substitute the concept good by the one that can be quantified. For example, good health. Suppose we want to maximize good health as a social goal. In order to achieve this goal how can we measure and compare the consequences of various pollution control measures on health? In practice we use some quantifiable considerations such as life expectancy, injury rate, infant mortality etc. for health. Critics say that although it is true that it may give us some idea about health but they do not give us the whole number. So critics say that in the case of environmental regulation the above problem occurs. It

happens when environmental regulation is analyzed by costbenefit analysis which we measure by various economic factors associated with health. Then we decide by comparing the cost of health and the costs of closing down the sources of pollution.

(c) Another measurement problem arises when we consider the scope and range of a person. It means the scope of the people to be considered and the range of what counts as a person. Critics say that if we go by the theory of utilitarianism then it should only be concerned with all the pleasure or happiness which is produced by any particular act. But in practice it is impossible, because we can never come to know all the consequences of any act. The theory of utilitarianism is restricted to the immediate people. The effects of an act on the future generations is ignored. In the case of environmental problems the impact of an action is related to all people who are in remote and in future. The problem is how can we predict the consequences of our actions? Environmental issues are problematic because the consequences of interfering with the environment may take a long term and it is very difficult to predict because of scientific uncertainties.

(d) Another problem with utilitarianism is, it treats individuals as units of pleasure. It does not consider them as valuable in themselves. It does not recognize any absolute rules such as right to life. It allows a situation where killing someone might produce the greatest happiness. For example, kill a person so that the bodily organs could be used to keep alive twenty individuals who would have died otherwise.

Critics also say that the nature of utilitarian judgments is provisional. It is because according to utilitarianism any particular act is never right or wrong in itself (Gustafson, 2013). Therefore the ethical status of any action is always dependent on its consequences. The rightness and wrongness of an action is always dependent upon the context. Therefore it is always dependent on the factors that are outside an individual's control. Therefore it missed a very important ethical concern where we act upon a principle regardless of the consequences. Critics say this theory is incomplete.

## **COMPLEMENTARY APPROACH**

In all discussions of environmental issues and public policy making the approach to ethics is the traditional human focused. In such cases the nature is regarded as only having instrumental value. The elements of nature provide resources for their basic necessities and luxurious needs. But the problem arises when people exploit these resources rather than using it. In the previous five chapters we have been discussing the relationship between man and nature and the value of nature from three different ethical approaches. But there are many problems with each of these approaches. None of this theory is free of problems. We need a complementary approach to look at nature for a better relationship between human beings and nature. At the same time this approach will also help us to protect nature in a better way. Now we see how it is possible.

First of all we know that all the three approaches to study the man-nature relationship and value of nature are the ethical theories. At least at this level they are similar. But they are different at the level of studying the relationship between man and nature and at the same time it involves an enquiry into the variety of ways in which human beings can value nature. The three principle approaches to environmental ethics namely the anthropocentric, non-anthropocentric and virtue ethics may be regarded as representing the three aspects of morality which justifies the value of nature (Bassey, 2020). The anthropocentric approach is human centric and it evaluates the value of nature on the basis of consequences of our actions (Akpan & Leonard, 2018). The non-anthropocentric approach gives emphasis on the concept of "duty of human beings" towards nature and the intrinsic value of nature. The virtue ethics studies the value of nature and man-nature relationship on the basis of the virtuous dispositions of human character. Though their approach is different but they are common on one aspect, i.e., they ascribe value to nature either instrumentally or intrinsically (Bassey & Eyo, 2020).

At this point we would try to see that all the three approaches are not totally contrary to each other. These are rather complementary to each other. The three approaches are the most morally defensible versions of valuing nature but at the same time they lead to the same practical requirement i.e., how to valuing nature so that a better relationship between man and nature can be established.

Discussions in the field of environmental ethics are regarding the human and environment interactions and relationships. A complete theory of environmental ethics requires both an ethics of action and an ethics of character. An ethics of action provides guidance regarding what human beings ought to do and ought not to do to the environment. So the ethics of action are the deontological and

consequentialist approaches towards nature and that has been discussed in our third and fourth chapters. In the fifth chapter an ethics of character is discussed. The virtue ethics perspective provides guidance on what attitudes and dispositions we ought to and ought not to have regarding the environment.

These three approaches construct a complementary approach to wards nature. For a complete environmental ethics we not only need an ethics of actions, i.e., deontological, and utilitarian approach but also we need an ethic of character i.e., the virtue ethics which answers the question how should one live? The deontological and utilitarian approach talks about the right actions such as a set of rules, or a general principle or a decision making procedure but this alone is not sufficient. A complete answer consists of not only what we ought to do but also what kind of person we ought to be. The complementary nature of these three approaches can be seen from the point of human character. Virtue ethics as we have said is solely concerned with human character and human character is revealed through individual's actions which constitutes the subject matter of deontological and utilitarian approach. The concept of human action or practice becomes the focal point on which this three divergent trends of ethics co-inside. We will elaborate this further by saying. An individual's action towards environment is determined by his dispositions towards nature. Environmental virtues are not only instrumentally valuable but at the same time they are also valuable in themselves. Environmental virtues are instrumentally valuable because these are the dispositions to identify and perform actions and they are also intrinsically valuable because these are the virtues which are life enhancing.

There are many debates between the first two contrary approaches towards nature, i.e., the deontological and utilitarian approaches. But there are certain common set of principles which both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches propose while dealing with nature. It is because they do lead to one practical requirement i.e., environmental justice. With the help of three principles we will see how both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches lead to the same environmental requirement. These three principles are:

- (a) The principle of human defence.
- (b) The principle of human preservation.
- (c) The principle of disproportionality.

We will now briefly explain these principles.

- (a) The principle of human defence

Actions that defend oneself and other human beings against harmful aggression are permissible even when they necessitate killing or harming animals or plants. The principle of human defence allows human being to defend themselves from other human beings and harmful human aggression. Similarly in the case of non-human aggression human beings are also allowed to kill a lion in the case of life threatening situation. This kind of aggression is allowed for human beings. In this case human beings are being preferred than any other non-human beings.

- (b) The principle of human preservation

Actions that are necessary for meeting the basic needs of human beings are permissible even when in order to protect them we need to go against the interest or welfare of animals and plants. This principle says that if the basic needs of human beings are not satisfied then it would lead to many deficiencies of a standard human life. In order to survive, human beings need a principle of preservation that permits indulging in aggression against the basic needs of non-human living beings. From the point of view of human survival it is thus absolutely necessary to meet the basic human needs. Hence from the point of view of survival human beings cannot afford to protect the interests of non-human species entirely. The reason is that such an action will make human beings extinct from the earth. The very fact of human existence largely depends on our use of nature and that is why in order to protect our basic needs we cannot completely safeguard the interests of non-human species. Thus for the preservation of human species we need to give preference for our own species even if we adopt a non-anthropocentric perspective.

- (c) The principle of disproportionality

The third principle says that though we need to use nature for to satisfy our basic needs, this tendency can-not be extended beyond our basic necessities. That means we cannot go against the welfare of nature in order to get luxuries of life. A distinction should be thus maintained between the basic needs and luxuries needs with respect to ma-nature relationship. According to our argument the former is permissible where as the latter is not. The same ethical precept is found with respect to our dealing with

other human beings. Actions that violate against the fulfilment of basic needs of other people in order to fulfill the luxury of our own are never been permissible.

In the context of our enquiry in the environmental ethics the need to accept the above principle is absolutely ethically necessary, because the violation of this principle will destroy the very harmony between man and nature which forms the basic thrust of environmental ethics. Considering this we hold that the members of other species are equal to us. We thus rule out the non-equal relationship between human and non-human species. From the consideration of equality it follows that we cannot be aggressive in our approach towards the animals and plants in order to satisfy our non-basic or luxurious needs (Bassey & Eyo, 2020). For to maintain the species equality, the basic needs of the non-human species must be protected against the aggressive action of human beings performed for the requirement of luxurious needs.

The above three principles show that both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric perspectives have some practical aims. We will now elaborate how these needs do arise and how ultimately thus form a mannature continuum. In case of both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches we need a principle of human defence which allows us to defend ourselves from harmful aggression. This principle we need no matter we consider human beings as superior to other non-human species or equal to them. We need to defend ourselves at any cost from the dangers coming from other species.

Secondly we need a principle of human preservation in both the perspectives. This principle permits the actions which are necessary to meet our basic needs of the entire human species. It does not matter even if we need to aggress against the basic needs of animals and plants. The third principle of disproportionality is a restriction on the human use of animals and plants for the sake of meeting luxuries. In the case of non-anthropocentric approach non-human beings are considered as having equal status with human beings. But at the same time the principle of disproportionality puts restriction on the unnecessary use of other species. But in the case of anthropocentric approach, can we still have grounds to protect the basic needs of non-human species against the human aggressive actions to fulfill the luxurious needs of human beings? The answer is no we cannot. The principle of disproportionality is helpful in both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric perspectives. Even if human beings assume superiority he can not by any means be permitted to exploit the basic needs of non-human species for the sake of his luxurious wants. Because, to consider the claim that human beings are superior to the members of other species means, in a competition, a person called A, comes first and other persons such as B, C and D came second, third and fourth respectively.

From this case we can draw the following conclusion with respect to human beings relationship with non-human beings. The person A in the competition may be regarded as human being with having intrinsic values where as in comparison B,C and D may be regarded as belonging to non-human species who has intrinsic value but not having the same intrinsic value as human beings have. However to say this does not mean to deny nonhuman species having any intrinsic values. Hence it implies that the members of other species are as valuable as humans are. In this respect it may be further noted that the worth of non-human species in some respect can excel the qualities of human beings. We particularly mention here the sight of an eagle and the photosynthetic power of plants. These powers or aptitudes point out how animals and plants can be claimed to have superiority over humans in certain matters. Due to this reason we thus put forwards the suggestion that the human superiority instead of ignoring should recognize some of the excellences that no-human species possess.



## CONCLUSION

At another point we can see that the three approaches are not totally different from each other. The deontological perspective and the virtue ethics perspective are well connected. As we have seen while discussing virtue ethics, the virtues like respect can be very well extended to nature. In this way virtue becomes an important component in the case of environmental ethics. Taylor for example, has taken “respect” as the ultimate moral attitude towards nature. He has also given importance to cultivate certain virtues in human beings in order to have the attitude of respect for nature. Leopold also can be seen as the environmental virtue ethicists. In his theory of land ethics he talks about the aesthetic and intellectual extension towards nature. Leopold talks about three virtues, such as integrity, stability and beauty. All environmental theories pertaining to virtue ethics are nonanthropocentric in nature and all non-anthropocentric theories are based on the environmental virtues. Hence all the three approaches are taken together forms a complementary approach that gives us the reason of why and how we should value nature.

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