

Chapter-III

Intrinsic Value in Nature: Debates and Dimensions

3.1: Introduction

One of the most common tasks of environmental ethicists has to frame theories according to which nature (or some non-human natural entities) possesses intrinsic value. However, from time to time we have seen efforts to refute this project, the claim being that not only are the particular theories suggested as inconsistent, but the very idea of intrinsic value in nature—at least in some purportedly important sense of “intrinsic value”—is in principle indefensible.

Environmental ethics is one among several new kinds of applied philosophies, which also arose during the seventies. That is, it may be understood to be an application of well-established conventional philosophical categories to emergent practical environmental problems. On the other hand, it may be understood to be an exploration of alternative moral and even metaphysical principles, forced upon philosophy by the magnitude and dimension of these problems. If defined in the former way, then the work of environmental ethics is that of a traditional philosophical task; if defined in the latter way, it is that of a theoretician or philosophical architect. However, in ethics if interpreted as an essentially theoretical, not applied discipline, the most important philosophical task for environmental ethics is the development of anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism that inculcate value theory. Indeed, as the discussion which follows will make clear, without a non-anthropocentric direction the innovatory objectives of theoretical environmental ethics would be betrayed and the whole enterprise would let down in to its everyday routine, applied counterpart.

3.2: Debates on intrinsic value in nature

Western attitude towards nature grew out of a blend of those of the Hebrew people, as represented in the early books of Bible, and the philosophy of ancient Greek, particularly that of Aristotle. The Hebrew and Greek traditions made human beings the centre of the moral universe- indeed not merely the centre, but very often, the entirety of morally significant feature of this world. When Christianity prevailed in the Roman Empire, it also absorbed elements of ancient Greek attitude to the natural world. The Greek influence was entrenched in Christian philosophy by the greatest of the medieval scholastics, Thomas Aquinas, whose life work was the melding of Christian theology with the thought of Aristotle. Aristotle regarded nature as the hierarchies in which less reasoning ability exist for the sake of those with more. To quote Aristotle,

“Plants exist for the sake of animals, and brute beasts for the sake of man- domestic animals for his use and food, wild ones (or at any rate most of them) for food and other accessories of life, such as clothing and various tools.

Since nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, it is undeniably true that she has made all the animals for the sake of man”.⁵⁰

To take on environmental ethics, it may be necessary to perceive environmental issues from different philosophical angles. In doing so it is an obligation for philosophers and ethicists to articulate a passable universal ideal so that environmental problems can be perceived in a proper manner. Moreover, how we see nature and suggest norms by which our interactions with the environment are to be judged are also matters of concerned. Many questions are raised regarding the scope and issues related to environmental ethics. A proper analysis, in fact, shows that traditional western ethics is man centered. Human life is considered superior to any other life form. Accordingly, no intrinsic value is admitted beyond humans. Contemporary environmental ethics, however, begins with ‘moral extentionism.’

⁵⁰Aristotle,(1916), politics, London, p. 16

There are some debates in this regard.

- i) To what extent of the nature/environment, is to be accorded intrinsic value, and consequently, moral worth?
- ii) What is the criterion of according moral value? Some like Peter Singer, favour sentience criterion, while conservationists speak of biospheric egalitarianism. The latter hold that trees and plants have non-felt goals of their own. Even in an eco-system, species are to be accorded moral value.
- iii) Whether to accord equal moral worth to all beings, or accept degrees of value? Some accept degrees; others say this is undue partiality.
- iv) Can we accept killing some wild beasts in order to maintain ecological balance? The welfarists say, 'no'. Conservationists permit keeping in view the integrity of the system. Some thinkers like Warwick Fox, do not find any necessary connection between value ascription and conservation.⁵¹ They think deep self-realisation is needed. Some other thinks that only sentient beings have intrinsic value.
- v) The *fifth* debate is regarding absolute, objective value. Some feel that environmental values are not universal. They support relativist environmentalism.

Let us elaborate these debates thoroughly and comprehensively. The first debate is whether moral worth can be extended to the non-human entities and if it is then what is the criteria of such extension. The argument, in favour of those who support moral extension beyond human, may be put forward in the following way.

1. Moral concern deserves for anyone who has an interest in, or desire for, their own well-being.
2. Humans show a desire for their own well-being, and thus they deserve moral respect. That is, the well-being of other beings ought to be respected and protected, because these other beings have a desire for their own well-being just as we do.

⁵¹Fox, Warwick, (1993), "What Does the Recognition of Intrinsic Value Entail?" *Trumpeter*10, P. 101

3. Yet humans are not the only entities possessing such interests or desires. Other animals also show a desiring interest in their own well-being, and thus they too deserve moral respect just as humans.

The first and second assumptions are basic premises of many acceptable ethics, while the third assumption is the important extension in the reasoning of environmentalists and animal rights advocates. If both human and nonhuman beings desire their own well-being and have a sentient capacity for experiencing pain; then both kinds of beings, in similar ways, can be either benefited or harmed. Hence, both kinds of beings qualify for moral concern. To grant moral respect to the one kind, but not the other, is inconsistent. However, this extension limits only to the *sentient beings* whereas environmental ethicists may go beyond the sentient beings. Aldo Leopold makes a significant entry in this regard in 1949 with the celebrated land ethic “A Sand County Almanac.” In that book Leopold advanced the idea of biotic right, the concept that everything on this planet, including soil and water, is ecologically equal to man and shares equally in “the right to continued existence.” In thus rising above utilitarianism, Leopold became the most important source of modern bio-centric or holistic ethics. He holds that there is as yet no ethic dealing with man’s relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it. . . The extension of ethics to this third element in human environment is. . . an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity.⁵²

3.2.1: Homes Rolston’s approach

Homes Rolston, another contender of the first debate, advocates that there is no better evidence of nonhuman values and values than spontaneous wild life, born free and on its own.⁵³ Animals hunt and howl, find shelter, seek out their habitats and mates, care for their young, flee from threats, grow hungry, thirsty, hot, tired, excited and sleepy. They feel pain of getting injured and treat themselves by licking their

⁵²Leopold, A; (1949), *A Sand Country Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 238-9

⁵³Rolston, Holmes;(2006), *Art, Ethics and Environment: A Free Inquiry Into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature*. Newcastle. UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, P 1-11

wounds. Thus we are quite convinced that value is more than anthropocentric. These wild animals defend their own lives because they have a good of their own. There is somebody behind the fur or downs. Our gaze is returned by an animal that itself has a concerned outlook. Here is value right before our eyes, right behind those eyes. Animals are valuable by themselves, able to value things in their own world. They preserve a valued self-identity as they deal with the changing world. There is intrinsic certainty for an animal as it values its own life for what it is in itself. Humans have used animals for as long as anyone can recall, instrumentally. And if we minutely look at the animal's nature, in most of their moral traditions, they have also made place for duties concerning the animals for which they were responsible, domestic animals, or toward the wild animals which they hunted. We modern people are too wise, if we think that ethics is only for people. But extension of moral concern goes beyond as we understand that animal lives command our appropriate respect for the intrinsic value present there. This is, of course, only an ethic for mammals, to some extent for vertebrates too, and this is only a small percentage of living things.

In the same way, as Rolston argues that a plant is not a subject, but neither is it a lifeless object, like a stone. Plants, quite alive, are unified entities of the botanical though not of the zoological kind, that is, they are not unitary organisms highly incorporated with centered neural control, but they are linked organisms, with a meristem that can repeatedly and indefinitely produce new vegetative units, additional stem nodes and leaves when there is available space and resources, as well as new reproductive modules, fruits and seeds. Plants make themselves; they repair injuries; they move water, nutrients, and photosynthate from cell to cell; they store sugars; they make toxins and regulate their levels in defense against grazers; they make nectars and emit pheromones to influence the behavior of pollinating insects and the responses of other plants; they emit allelopathic agents to suppress invaders; they make thorns, trap insects. A plant, like any other organism, sentient or not, is a spontaneous, self-maintaining system, nourishing and reproducing itself, executing its program, making a way through the world. It checks against performance by means of responsive capacities with which to measure success. On the basis of its genetic information, the organism distinguishes between what *is* and what *ought to be*. The

organism is an axiological system, though not a moral system. So the tree grows, reproduces, repairs its wounds, and resists death. Trees have its own defense mechanism for which tree is defended for what it is in itself. Every organism has a *good-of-its-kind*; it defends its own kind as a *good kind*. Thus, the plant, as we were arguing, is involved in conservation biology. This is surely a matter of understanding that the plant is valuable, able to value itself on its own.

3.2.2: Edwin P. Pister's approach

Edwin P. Pister, a Fishery Biologist by profession in California, had a tough time to save the extinction of several species of desert fishes living in small islands of water in an ocean of dry land. He and his associates took the case of the Devil's Hole pupfish to save them from extinction. The fishes were threatened by agro business persons pumping groundwater for irrigation. Pister took a long journey to do the best needed including knocking the door of Supreme Court of the United States and ultimately he won the case.⁵⁴ This happened because Pister felt a *moral* accountability to save them from extinction without considering about whether they had instrumental value or not but they had, Pister believed, *intrinsic value*. However, this is totally a "philosophical" concept and he was unable to explain to his colleagues and constituents. As one put it, "When you start talking about morality and ethics, you lose me."⁵⁵ Finally, Pister found a way to put the concept of intrinsic value across clearly. To the question *What good is it?* He replied, *What good are you?* The answer compelled the questioner to test the fact that he or she regards his or her own total value to exceed his or her instrumental value. In general, people hope to be instrumental to their family, friends, and society. Even though we prove to be good for nothing, we believe, nevertheless, that we are still entitled to life, to liberty, to the pursuit of happiness. (If only instrumentally valuable people enjoyed a claim to live, the world might not be afflicted with human overpopulation and overconsumption; certainly we would have no need for expensive hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and

⁵⁴Pister, P. Edwin; (1985). "Desert Pupfishes: Reflections on Reality, Desirability, and Conscience." *Fisheries*, 10/6: p 10-15

⁵⁵ -----; (1987). "A Pilgrim's Progress from Group A to Group B", In *Companion to A Sand County Almanac*, J. Baird Callicott (ed.). Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, p. 228

the like.) The dignity and the respect of human beings direct to the commands of human ethical entitlement. This is ultimately grounded in our claim to possess intrinsic value.

3.2.3: Albert Schweitzer and Paul Taylor's approach

Albert Schweitzer, in advocating moral worth to nature, stated that the every life that wills to live and exist in the midst of life which wills to live. It is like one's drive to live where there is a longing for more life. There is enigmatic exaltation of the will which is called pleasure, and terror in face of annihilation and injury to the will to live which is called pain. In the same way, life obtains in all the will to live around us. There is no concern whether it can express itself to our comprehension or whether it remains unvoiced. Hence for Schweitzer, there is a 'reverence for life' toward all will to live, as towards one's own. Thus, the great concern of the fundamental principle of morality lies herein. Maintaining and cherishing life is considered as good and in contradiction it is evil to destroy and to check life. A man is a moral man only when he obeys the limitation laid on him to help all life which he is able to help, and when he goes out of his way to avoid injuring anything living.⁵⁶ Paul Taylor, an American philosopher defends the same line of thought that Schweitzer advocates. For him every living thing is pursuing its own good in its own unique way. Once we see this, we can see all living things "as we see ourselves" and therefore, "we are ready to place the same value on their existence as we do on our own."⁵⁷ Taylor advocates that intrinsic value can be ascribed to species, to natural system over and above individuals.⁵⁸ Since, he argues, we ascribe intrinsic value to humans, we must ascribe intrinsic value to all other living beings for the sense that there is no rational basis to accept human as superior to other beings. Any individual who exists as a teleological centre of life does possess intrinsic value, and this characteristic is shared by all living beings. Taylor's notion of individual's welfare or good is broader than those of having consciousness or having interest. Any living

⁵⁶Schweitzer, Albert, (1929), *Civilisation and Ethics*; part 2 of the philosophy of civilization, 2nd ed., trans C. T. Campion, London, p. 246-7

⁵⁷Taylor, Paul, (1986), *Respect for Nature*, Princeton, p. 45 and 128.

⁵⁸ Taylor, P, (1981), *The Ethics of Respect of Nature*, *Environmental Ethics*, 3, p. 198

organism aims at realizing, what it considers, to be its own welfare. So any living organism has a definite purpose which it wants to accomplish in its life. This realization of purpose of completeness is relevant to possessing intrinsic value. This shows, at least in this sense, that there is no difference between humans and non-humans so far as intrinsic value is concerned. For them, nature has inherent or intrinsic good and this good is such that it deserves concern and consideration of all moral agents and the realization of good is to be promoted and protected.

3.2.5: Peter Singer's approach

However, Peter Singer has a different tone of voice with regard to the above mentioned arguments specially to Schweitzer and Taylor approaches. For him the defends that have been offered by both Schweitzer and Taylor for their ethical views are that they use language metaphorically and then argue as if what they have said is literally true.⁵⁹ We may often talk about “plants” seeking water or light so that they can survive, and this way of thinking about plants makes it easier to accept talk of their “will to live,” or them “pursuing their own good”. But once we stop to reflect on the fact that plants are not conscious and cannot engage in any intentional behaviour, it is clear that all this language is metaphorical. For example, a river is pursuing its own good and striving to reach the sea. Singer, therefore, suggests that in case of plants, rivers etc., it is possible to give a purely physical explanation of what is happening; and in the absence of consciousness, there is no good reason why we should have greater respect for the physical process that govern the growth and decay of living things than we have for those that govern non-living things. Again if we accept Taylor's thesis that humans and members of other species be treated at par, then herd culling would not be allowed because the same treatment to humans would definitely be regarded as immoral, as it would amount to genocide. Another problem that Taylor may face is the discrimination among species which preservationists usually do. Preservationists treat individuals of an endangered species with special care and withhold the similar kind of treatment to individuals of other species which are not so endangered. Hence individual of one species are being used as means for

⁵⁹Singer, P; (1993), *Practical Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, p. 278-9.

the preservation of individuals of another species. Hence, it seems, approaches of Schweitzer and Taylor are more likely anthropocentric than non-anthropocentric.

3.2.6: J. B. Callicott's approach

Drawing the line of Pister, J. B. Callicott called his argument as the “phenomenological proof” for the existence of intrinsic value. He raised a fundamental question i.e. *how do we know that intrinsic value exist* to establish his proof. This question, however, is similar to the question i.e. *how do we know that consciousness exists?*⁶⁰ Both consciousness and intrinsic value are matter of irrefutable introspection. Pister's question “*What good are you?*” draws our attention that one's own intrinsic value is simply unavoidable. More importantly Callicott argues that if we fail to establish intrinsic value in nature then there is no meaning of environmental ethics as because intrinsic value is the most distinct feature of environmental ethics. If nature does not possess intrinsic value, then environmental ethics will remain as an application of human centered ethics. He also holds that moral truth can be acknowledged and this moral truth is instrumental to justify that nature has intrinsic value. Thus Callicott had refuted Bryan Norton's⁶¹ anthropocentric approaches towards nature. In this context, Callicott referred the instances of voluntary freeing the slaves of plantation owners in Southern America during the period of Abraham Lincoln. The concept is that if the slaves are freed then they will get a chance to cherish their life and improve their value system. The same argument can be produced in case of environment. Human beings as we believe have intrinsic value having a life form of their own and we believe that to dominate or to enslave human beings like slaves is wrong. In the same way cannot we begin to believe that other species too are intrinsically valuable? Therefore, as argued, being

⁶⁰Callicott, J. Baird; (1995), *Intrinsic Value in Nature: a Meta-ethical Analysis*, The Electronic Journal of Analytic Philosophy, vol. 3, Spring, Presbyterian College.

⁶¹Norton, Bryan; (1992), *Epistemology and Environmental Value*, *Monist* 75: P. 208-26.

(Notes: Bryan Norton fairly asks why we should want a *distinct*, non-anthropocentric environmental ethic. There is the intellectual charm and challenge of creating something so novel. And that, combined with a passion for championing nature, is reason enough for me, a philosopher, to search for an adequate theory of intrinsic value in nature. But so personal, so self-indulgent a reason is hardly adequate. What can a non-anthropocentric environmental ethic *do* to defend nature against human insults that an anthropocentric ethic cannot?)

intrinsically valuable, destroying or harming other species is wrong. Destruction of nature is a risk of our own injury and for the future generations of human beings in many ways if we do not watchfully preserve other species. This shows that Callicott arrives at an approach that promotes non-anthropocentrism in a different way. For him, both self-love and sympathy are primitive human moral sentiments. Human sentiments are the results of human reactions to the world; they are results of the ways in which humans are affected by the surrounding world.

Callicott also put forward teleological argument for the existence of intrinsic value in nature.⁶²In *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, in fact, a similar kind of argument was found. For Aristotle human happiness is an end in itself. The argument can be produced as that the existence of means leads to the existence of ends which implies that one means may exist for the sake of another. For example, the train of means must, as Aristotle argued, terminate in an end which is not, in turn, a means to something else; an end-in-itself. Otherwise the train of means would be endless and unanchored. And since means are valued instrumentally and ends-in-themselves are valued intrinsically. Moreover, if ends-in-themselves exist then they must if means do. Again, if means exist then intrinsic value exists. However, Callicott's argument seems to be contradictory when he says that the *means* are instrumental to achieve *end-in-itself*. His concept of self-love and sympathy, the primitive human moral sentiments, may be considered a means to achieve the end i.e. pleasure (a view of ethical teleology). This argument somehow invites the doorstep of anthropocentrism as Callicott augments to say that primitive human sentiments are there in humans because experience shows that it gives a better survival chance in the environment.

3.2.7: Arne Naess's approach

Arne Naess took a strong stand questioning the esteemed German philosopher Immanuel Kant's insistence that human beings are never used *merely* as a means to an end. But why should this philosophy apply only to human beings? Are there no

⁶²Callicott, J. Baird; (1995), *Intrinsic Value in Nature: a Meta-ethical Analysis*, *The Electronic Journal of Analytic Philosophy*, vol. 3, Spring, Presbyterian College.

other beings with intrinsic value? What about animals, plants, landscapes, and our very special old planet as a whole?

Arne Naess, a revolutionary environmentalist mentioned that there is existence of greatness in nature other than human. For him, “To meet a big, wild animal in its own territory may be frightening, but it gives us an opportunity to better understand who we are and our limits of control: the existence of greatness other than the human.”⁶³

Furthermore, Naess elaborated, in regard to environmental issues, that the process of so-called *identification* perhaps is more important than any other. We always have a tendency to see ourselves in everything alive. We try to identify ourselves with the death struggle of an insect the way a mature human beings experience spontaneously of their own death. We relate ourselves with sentiments in a way that the other animals and insects struggle for relieve from pain, and death. We react spontaneously to the pain of persons we love and try to identify with the person’s sentiments as if the reflection on pain is a good in itself. However, to philosophize “seeing oneself in others” is a difficult job. A complete report on the death struggle of an insect as some of us experience such an event must include the positive and negative values that are attached to the event as firmly as the duration, the movements, and the colors involved.⁶⁴ So, for him, there is a considerable majority that adheres to the ideas about the rights and value of life forms. And a strong conviction is established that *every life form has its place in nature* that we must respect. Naess, in the first of eight points charter what he coined as “the platform of deep ecology,” or rather, one formulation of such a platform stated that the flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth has inherent value. And from the above he had successfully concluded that the value of nonhuman life forms is independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.

⁶³Naess, A, (2005). The heart of the forest. In A. Drengson & H. Glasser (Eds.), *Selected Works of Arne Naess*, X, Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer, p. 551–553.

⁶⁴Naess, A, (1993), Intrinsic value: Will the defenders of nature please rise. In P. Reed & D. Rothenberg (Eds.), *Wisdom in the Open Air*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 70–82

In oppose to these views propagated by the philosophers as has been discussed so far, there are group of thinkers who have drawn a different line of thoughts in regard to the moral extension to non-human world.

3.2.8: Robert Elliot's approach

Robert Elliot, taking into account of consequentialist and deontologist position, claimed to conceive that if wild nature has intrinsic value, then there is an obligation to preserve it and to restore it. There is a connection between value and obligation. If wild nature has intrinsic value it is because it exemplifies value adding properties. Elliot's favourite candidates are naturalness and aesthetic value. The aesthetic value draws together various other suggested value-adding properties other than naturalness, such as diversity, stability, complexity, beauty, harmony, creativity, organization, intricacy, elegance and richness. Specially such properties might be value-adding in their own right, but additionally they might, in conjunction with other properties, constitute the property of being aesthetically valuable, which is likewise value-adding. In this context Elliot focuses on naturalness and considers some objections to naturalness and considers some objections to the claim that it is value-adding.⁶⁵

3.2.9: Bryan Norton's approach

Another advocate of this debate is Bryan Norton and for him nature functions spontaneously to produce a pool of raw materials and also as a dumping ground for our wastes. Human beings in most way fail to understand that nature deliver sin calculable ecological services. Again we also fail conceive that nature is a source of aesthetic delight and spiritual stimulus. Norton argues, to support nature protection we need to act in accordance with the interests of future generations (as well as of present persons). Because of it the ecological services and psycho-spiritual resources received from nature are taken into account with great enthusiasm. Hence protection of nature is unavoidable even for the respect for human beings (or for human

⁶⁵ Elliot, Robert;(1992), *Intrinsic Value, Environmental Obligation and Naturalness*, The Monist, Vol. 75, No. 2, The Intrinsic Value of Nature, Oxford University Press,p. 138-160

interests). Thus, for Norton, there is no difference between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric environmental ethics in respect to its prescription in personal practices and public policies.⁶⁶

Let us turn to the second debate i.e. whether to accord equal moral worth to all beings, or accept degrees of value? Some accept degrees; others say this is undue partiality. When we say that this human has intrinsic value, and this tree has intrinsic value, and this virtue has intrinsic value, and this owl has intrinsic value, etc., give way to feeling that the claim to accord moral worth to nature consists in two parts (i) plenty of entities have intrinsic value, and (ii) they have the same sort of intrinsic value with equal quantity. The second part is ambiguous because having the same property “*p*” might happen either “*p*” is equally applies to e.g. *x* and *y*, and “*p*” comes to *x* and *y* in degrees. The ambiguity concerns the issue whether intrinsic value is held equally by all intrinsically valuable entities. Some adopted the version of environmental egalitarianism and some other rejected it.

Aldo Leopold, Homes Rolston III, Arne Neass favour equal moral worth to all beings, whereas Moorean group is talking about degree of values. Again, Charles Cockell and some other debated that environmental policy has a size bias. Small organisms, such as microorganisms, command less attention from environmentalists than larger organisms, such as birds and large mammals, hence they bear less “degree” of intrinsic value. The campaigns for the protection of endangered creatures almost always focus on those that are large and impressive. The list of species whose decline or abuse has caught the attention of environmentalists includes: Rhinos, elephants, tigers, whales, seals, lions, turtles, polar bears, many types of birds, domesticated animals, animals used for vivisection, and so on. Evident within the history of environmental ethics and environmental policy is the consistent importance of the size of organisms. Environmentalists do not often concern themselves with the decline of small rodents, insects, or crustaceans.⁶⁷ There are some notable exceptions.

⁶⁶Norton, Bryan; (1991), *Toward Unity Among Environmentalists*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁷Cockell, Charles S; (2008), *Environmental Ethics and Size; Ethics and the Environment*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring), Indiana University Press, p. 23-39

The protection of the monarch butterfly has been an on-going concern for the North American Butterfly Association, and it is an example of a small creature that has attracted the attention of environmentalists and policy makers. In the United States, each state has a symbolic state insect, illustrating that some small organisms have value (although it is not clear what sort of ‘value’ mascots and state insects have to the valuer. Is this a reflection of an instrumental value - some type of competitiveness by each state to have a distinctive insect - or an expression of a belief in the intrinsic value of insects?).

To move on to the third debate related to both welfarism as well as conservationism a massive contradiction between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism is vividly acknowledged. Asking question like, “can we accept killing some wild beasts in order to maintain ecological balance?” has occupied a significant place in environmental ethics. Legally animals have no rights. Property rights are still the premier means of addressing the environment. But man centered approach towards environment is an illegitimate way of giving preference to human interest only. Specisism is discrimination on the basis of species only, without sufficient moral reason. Non-anthropocentrism helps to get rid of traditional attitude towards animals. The fact that it fails to mitigate the dichotomy between biotic and abiotic is mere abstraction and it leads to eco-centrism. Some sort of Anthropocentrism is unavoidable; a ‘perspectival’ anthropocentrism is objectionable. The main *objectionable* concern of Anthropocentrism is the human interest at the expense of non-human animals and non-inclusion of *intrinsic value* to non-human world. That only the human has reason, capacity of communication is factually incorrect. In this context a lot of examples like monkey and Rhinoceros can be provided. Even some non-anthropocentric approaches cannot go deep to the issues of endangered species and the ecosystem. Moral standing of the whole nature, including abiotic part is to be acknowledged. But at this juncture, we are in a pendulum of “The life boat ethics”, where ethics is on one side and development is on the other side. The reason why this dichotomy continues is as because the welfarists say, ‘no’ to any

damage to the non-human world and the conservationists permit keeping in view the integrity of the system.

3.3: Criterion for acknowledging Intrinsic Value in Nature

Now the question “what are the criteria of acknowledging intrinsic value in nature?” needs to be answered in the light to grasp the very idea of intrinsic value in nature. The criterion will perhaps serve the required demand for the debate related to the value ascription and subjective objective dichotomy, which fall under the debate of (iv) and (v).

Before proceeding to examine the epistemological status of attributions of independent value to natural objects, it is necessary to distinguish two importantly different theories regarding that value. Some advocates of independent value in nature believe that nature is valuable in the strong, “intrinsic” sense that natural objects have value entirely independent of human consciousness. According to this theory, the value in nature existed prior to human consciousness and it will continue to exist even after human consciousness disappears. Other theorists adopt a less heroic version of the hypothesis, accepting that valuing is a conscious activity and that value, therefore, will be only “inherent” in nature. According to the inherentists, nature has value that is independent of the values and goals of human valuers -it is not merely instrumental to human ends-but this value is attributed by conscious valuers, either human or otherwise.

Hence the intrinsic value question reflects a long-standing conflict between rival epistemologies, with realists and relativists squaring off in a new arena. For their part, neo-pragmatists adopt an anti-foundationalist stance: the moral and ontological status of nonhuman nature need not be settled - indeed cannot be settled - before engaging in collective action on behalf of the environment. Radical pluralism at the level of conceptual frameworks need not preclude a workable accord on policy. On this view, solutions to environmental problems what Norton called contextual

sensitivity which is different from metaphysical certainty.⁶⁸ In this context Norton assumed two concerns:

- i) The Epistemic Question: Can environmentalists claim that their goals and the value claims that support them are epistemically justifiable, that they are more than merely subjective preferences?
- ii) The Locational Question: Can environmentalists' values be located "out there" in the world itself, independent of human consciousness?

From the above two issues it can be understood that defenders of independent value in nature are incorporated by a commitment to a particular conception of objectivity. According to this conception: For any characteristic, can be objectively attributed to an object *x*, only if subject *S* "finds," or "locates," in *x*; both and must, that is, exist independently of human consciousness. Because they share this basic criteriological assumption, the positions of Callicott and Rolston fall in direct opposition to each other: Rolston believes, and Callicott denies, that it is possible to achieve "objectivity" for environmental values, according to this locational criterion. Callicott, for example, states the issue as follows: "the very sense of the hypothesis that inherent or intrinsic value exists in nature seems to be that value inheres in natural objects as an intrinsic characteristic, that is, as part of the constitution of things. To assert that something is inherently or intrinsically valuable seems, indeed, to entail that its value is objective." Callicott, however, believes that there are "insurmountable logical impediments to axiological objectivism."⁶⁹ Rolston, on the other hand, begins his essay, "Are Values in Nature Subjective or Objective?" with a quotation from William James with which Callicott would agree. It concludes: "Whatever of value, interest, or meaning our respective worlds may appear imbued with are thus pure gifts of the spectator's mind."⁷⁰ Rolston further states, "Nature, indeed, is infinitely beautiful, and she seems to wear her beauty as she wears colour

⁶⁸Nunez, Theodore W; (1999), Rolston, Lonergan, and the Intrinsic Value of Nature, *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Spring), Blackwell Publishing Ltd, p. 105-128

⁶⁹Callicott, J. B. (1989), *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), p. 159.

⁷⁰Rolston, Holmes III, (1986), *Philosophy Gone Wild*, Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, p. 91.

or sound. Why then should her beauty belong to us rather than to her?"⁷¹ He goes on to note that science itself seems hard put to maintain "objectivity."

Ernest Partridge, an eminent British philosopher advocates, and so, perhaps the best approach to a justification of the intrinsic worth of wilderness may be through an account of the experience of wilderness. It should be an account detached, as much as possible, from second-hand reports of the experience, and based, as much as possible, upon the recollection of feelings evoked directly by that experience. To do this, one will call upon the nearest and most vivid source at his disposal: one's own experience. One needs to attempt, at the outset at least, to relate this experience with the least possible amount of preconception or post-analysis. Thus Partridge's approach is *phenomenological*. Following this exercise, phenomenological "brackets" has to be removed and attempt to be made to account for and qualify this experience. This is, of course, as Partridge said a thought- experiment that one might wish to try himself.⁷²

Let us turn to the second debate i.e. Whether to accord equal moral worth to all beings, or accept degrees of value? Some accept degrees; others say this is undue partiality.

Aldo Leopold, Homes Rolston III, Arne Neass are in favour of equal moral worth to all beings, whereas Moorean group is talking about degree of values. Again some other talks that decision on environmental issues are adhered according to the sizes of species belonging to nature. In the other way one can talk about the degrees of intrinsic value. According to Moore, to say that a kind of value is "intrinsic" means merely that the question whether a thing possesses it, and in what degree it possesses it depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question.⁷³ But we can talk more or less amount of intrinsic value only when we talk of more or less amount of intrinsic properties possessed by an object. Intrinsic property changes only when the constitution of the object changes. Also we cannot compare the intrinsic value of an object with intrinsic value of another object in the sense that we cannot claim that

⁷¹Ibid, p. 91.

⁷² Partridge, Ernest; (1970), *Meditations on Wilderness, The Wilderness Experience as Intrinsically Valuable* unpublished and unsubmitted in 1970.

⁷³Moore, G. E; (1922)*The Conception of Intrinsic Value; Philosophical Studies*, (Rutledge and Kegan Paul, London) , P 260- 266

intrinsic value of a particular object is higher or lower than that of another. Intrinsic properties are incommensurable.⁷⁴ So comparing the intrinsic value of an object with that of another object is possible only against the background of a theory which contains all the possible intrinsic properties of all the objects. And perhaps, this seems to be hardly possible to accomplish.

Environmental policy is also size bias. Small organisms, such as microorganisms, command less attention from environmentalists than larger organisms, such as birds and large mammals. Campaigns for the protection of endangered creatures almost always focus on those that are large and impressive. The list of species whose decline or abuse has caught the attention of environmentalists includes: elephants, tigers, whales, seals, lions, turtles, polar bears, many types of birds, domesticated animals, animals used for vivisection, and so on. Evident within the history of environmental ethics and environmental policy is the consistent importance of the size of organisms. Environmentalists do not often concern themselves with the decline of small rodents, insects, or crustaceans.⁷⁵ There are some notable exceptions. The protection of the monarch butterfly has been an ongoing concern for the North American Butterfly Association, and it is an example of a small creature that has attracted the attention of environmentalists and policy makers. In the United States, each state has a symbolic state insect, illustrating that some small organisms have value (although it is not clear what sort of 'value' mascots and state insects have to the valuer. Is this a reflection of an instrumental value - some type of competitiveness by each state to have a distinctive insect - or an expression of a belief in the intrinsic value of insects?).

⁷⁴Chakraborty, N. N; (2004), In Defense of Intrinsic Value in Nature, New Age Publishers, Kolkata, p. 41-42

⁷⁵Cockell, Charles S; (2008), Environmental Ethics and Size; Ethics and the Environment, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring), Indiana University Press, p. 23-39

3.4: Dimensions of the Debates

In the long run, the set of ethical virtues praised and the set of ethical prohibitions adopted by the ethic of specific societies will always reflect the conditions under which they must live and work in order to survive. The anthropocentric subjective argument already put forwarded may raise the environmental ethical issues within the framework of man's interest in nature. The varieties of anthropocentric arguments against the pollution, the use of gases harmful to ozone layer, the burning of fossil fuels, the destruction of forests, could be couched in terms of the harm of human health. The rise in sea level will wipe out the entire island nations such as the Maldives which is only a meter above the sea level. So it is obvious that there is value in preserving our environment even within a "human-centered moral framework". This is, hence, a kind of dimension that can be considered as "human-centered moral framework".

If examined thoroughly the debates related to intrinsic value in nature also leads us to think about the wilderness of nature that provides opportunities for recreation. It is assumed that future generation will also value wilderness for the same reasons as we value it today. Hence from ethical point of view economic growth is not more important than preservation of forests, etc. Wilderness is the source of greatest feelings of aesthetic appreciation, rising to an almost spirituality. It will do more to develop character than watching television for an equivalent time. It is for that reason that environmentalists are right to speak of a 'world heritage'. It is something that we have inherited from our ancestors, and that we must preserve for our descendants, if they are to have it at all. The appreciation of wilderness has never been higher than it is today. Wilderness is valued as something of immense beauty and is a reservoir of scientific knowledge still to be gained. We need to be understood that the virgin nature is the product of all the millions of years that have passed since the beginning of our planets. We may gain short term benefits, a luxury life style in a high rise sophisticated apartment by destroying our environment. But such boost may be futile in a fraction of second by a single jerk of earthquake. The recent such occurrences of earthquakes laughed at the human boost. This anthropocentric

approach, even though faced severe criticism from philosophers of other community, cannot be denied its significance even though within human centered framework. However, there are much more important issues which to be discussed considering its objective epistemic aspect.

We have already seen that it is arbitrary to hold that only human beings are intrinsically valuable. If we find value in human conscious experiences, we cannot deny that there is value at least some experiences of non-human beings. Although some debates about significant environmental issues can be conducted by appealing only to long term interests of our own species, in any serious exploration of environmental values a central issue will be the question of intrinsic value. If we go beyond the interest of human beings to the interest of all non-human will perhaps give us the answer to the question at issue. But there is fundamental moral disagreement; a disagreement about the kind of beings ought to be considered in our moral deliberation. However, to extend an ethic in a plausible way beyond sentient beings is a difficult task, because it might be thought that if we limit ourselves to living things, the answer is not difficult to find. But the attempts and approaches to ascribe intrinsic value in nature has opened up some new dimensions in the domain of environmental ethics. To talk about non-anthropocentrism leads us to the question of subjective/objective dichotomy, the question about mind independent existence of intrinsic value. And hence any theory that ascribes intrinsic value to nature makes two claims- 1) Nature is valuable because of what it is, not because of its relation with us. 2) The value in nature is objective in the sense that it is not a matter of individual taste or personal preference. The question is also incorporated about the satisfaction of certain requirements that constitute a consistent common moral norm. To say that if a thing/ state of affairs possess intrinsic value, then things/ state of affairs being similar to it in relevant aspects should be regarded as possessing intrinsic value. For example, since humans have intrinsic value and animals are regarded as similar to humans hence animals should possess intrinsic value or vice-versa.