

Arne Naess Reflection of Eco- Centrism and Deep- Ecology with Utilitarian and Deontological Defence against Anthropocentric Theory

Dr Mayuri Barman

*Assistant Professor (Senior Grade), Department of Philosophy,
Pandu College, Guwahati, Assam, India.
Email: mayuree.bn@gmail.com*

Abstract

Eco centrism and Anthropocentrism are regarded as most important ecological theory. People believing anthropocentrism feels themselves as if they are the most important entities in the universe and animals and plants have less value than human beings. But humans have the responsibility to protect and preserve the environment where they have to stay in harmony with other elements of nature. Thus the new way of ecological thinking that arises in the 20th century is of 'Great Spirit' of inspiration where "interconnection" is seen alive. This 'Relational Model' is very much helpful as it will really affect the anthropocentric attitude of every person. Anthropocentrism is just like a force which is favour for human concern and not for sustainability. Arne Naess, the founding father of environmental philosophy, developed his strong ecological revolution where 'Deep ecology' is a move from anthropocentrism to eco-centrism. Deep ecology arises as a new perception which brings together thinking, feeling, spirituality and action. So, deep ecological thinking and actions together with a better use of our scientific economic and natural resources will add for a better and lasting global world. In our realization of nature "self realization" of every species is needed where the identification of small human self(s) with the wider self(S) will have to realized through diminishing of ego or narrow self(s). If we go through utilitarianism and deontological theories we will find that these theories mainly exploring the roots of anthropocentric which properties to human. Utilitarianism assumes that both pleasure and pain can be effectively measured and compared from human perspective. Deontological theory also says that there is a categorical Imperatives to treat all autonomous agents as an "end and never as a means" which includes only human centric. Thus, for the betterment of society we have to look through the ecological lens which includes class- free society in the entire ecosphere.

Keywords— Eco-centrism, Anthropocentrism, Deep-Ecology, Self-realization, Categorical Imperative, Utilitarianism, Deontological.

I. INTRODUCTION

The current system is integrated with ecological crisis that the task to preserve the environment is a must. This crisis is an outward manifestation of our mind and spirit. A universal holistic approach is needed where we can develop our ecological consciousness and at the same time realize our self internally. There are many ecological theories like eco-centrism and anthropocentrism. People believing

anthropocentrism feels as if they are the important entities in the universe. It is essentially human- centric. Humans have intrinsic value and all other species acquire their values when they are utilized by humans for fulfilling their purpose. But, eco-centrism is nature centric value systems when human species is a mere component of the eco-system. Human have the responsibility to protect and preserve the environment and other elements

where they have to stay in harmony with other elements of nature. But the current world view in today's society is an anthropocentric perspective. This perspective shows that humans need to control and protect the environment to meet their own needs and uses. Thus ecological crisis can be seen when we need a change in our life. Eco-centrism aims to overcoming the ecological crisis by developing a process and showing the meaning of truth in our lives. One of the eco-centric practices is "Deep Ecology". Deep Ecology shows us how we are connected to one's environment and habitats are key factors to the deep ecology perspective. By implementing this practice of the "Deep- Ecology Platform" and exploring our ecological self, we can able to realize our ecological self which Arne Naess calls "Self – Realization".

II. DEEP – ECOLOGY - THE POSITIVE ATTITUDE:

The following lines of Thomas Berry throwing a great ecological message to the people-----
 "Deep ecology pathology has developed in western society and has now spread throughout the planet. A savage plundering the entire earth is taking place through industrial exploitation. Thousands of poisons unknown in former times are saturating the air, the water and the soil. The habitat of a vast number of living species is being irreversibly damaged. In this universal disturbance of the biosphere by human's agents, the human being now finds that the harm done to the natural world is returning to threaten the human species itself."(Berry Thomas, 1995).Regarding these important messages about the problems that affect our Earth have been increasing since 1970's; we need to improve our environmental problems where both negative and positive aspects can be seen. The negative results lead to "fears" and "threats" about the consequences of environmental destruction and short term solutions where we try to apply frequently. The positive results are one of the conclusions drawn from the ecological principle of "interconnection" and "interdependence" among living beings.

Thus, the new way of ecological thinking that arises in the 20th century is of great source of inspiration for all of us where "interconnection and interdependence between everything that is alive."(Garcia Notario, Margarita, 2004). Aldo Leopold claimed about this scientific discovery of the 20th century and regarded this as a relational model. This "Relational Model" will strongly affect the anthropocentric attitude where human beings are regarded as the centre of the universe. Thus, in the field of eco-centrism the relationship between human and the environment is explored from a moral and ethical perspective. Eco-centrism value nature for its own sake. It focuses on intrinsic values. More broadly, it focused on the environment. This relational model is going to change the philosophical world view and the relationship between human beings and the world. It will give strong impact upon anthropocentric tradition where human have the right to dominate the other for his or her own benefit.

Arne Naess, the Norwegian philosopher, is a great environmentalist stated about 'Deep Ecology'. Deep Ecology shows that humanity is not only a part of nature, but intertwined with nature, as idea and fact. The advocates of deep ecology claim that the most important task to understand the world in the right way is not only to solve environmental problems, but a new world view that is a new philosophy of the relationship between nature and humanity. Deep ecology arises from our intuition where everything hangs together. We are nothing without development but our full development depends on each other. Our identification with the outside world is called by Arne Naess 'Deep questioning' which involves the whole person not a part of it as he always believes –"Everything hangs together".(Garcia Notario, Margarita)

Thus the central idea of deep- ecology is that we are part of the earth rather than apart and separate from it. Deep Ecologist emphasize that human beings are only part of ecology on this planet. It believes that only by understanding our unity with nature one can achieve full realization of humanity. "Human nature is such-

-- Arne Naess says—that, with sufficient comprehensive maturity, we cannot help but identify our self with all living beings, beautiful or ugly, big or small, sentient or not.”(Naess Arne,1995). Identification given by Naess involves both intellectual and reason; both need to receive the same importance where balance between them is a must to achieve future goals. So such identification takes place where both reason and emotions are working together. Deep – ecology, therefore, plays a vital role in the society far from anthropocentric ethic to eco- centric view—which rejects human as the centre of the society, shows that all life is equally valuable and has equal right to flourish. Deep- Ecology shows the philosophical study between living beings and nature with its values, ethics and religion of human and non-human. Here, it teaches us that we have to change our perception concerning the environment around us as it is going towards destruction because of our actions. So, deep ecological thinking and actions together with a better use of our scientific, economic and natural resources will add for a better and lasting global world. In our realization of nature as a part of humans will not only begin to care for nature as it is its own but at the same time understand its ultimate goal for all beings which is “self realization”, means full development of all the potentials of an individual. Thus, the fundamental and ethical value is the self realization of every species, where self is understood broadly transcending the discrete boundaries of an individual ‘self’. Naess self realization refers to the whole of nature as it involves the identification of small human self (s), personal ego with the wider whole, the capital (S). The individual self (s) will have to realize the universal self (S) through the diminishing of the ego or the narrow self. Here comes the important maxim “everything is interrelated between human and non-human world constitute Naess’s ultimate norm that is, “Self Realization”. Therefore, self realization is the norm which connects all life form through the ultimate principle--- “Life is fundamentally one”.

III. DEFENSE AGAINST UTILITARIAN AND DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS

If we go through the normative ethical theories, mainly exploring the roots of anthropocentric which are properties to humans. Jeremy Bentham utilitarianism is based on the assumptions that define utilitarianism from a human perspective. It is based on three assumptions---

First, the sentience is what determines which entities are to be considered by this moral framework.

Secondly, utilitarianism demands that this sentience is determined by the entity’s capacity to experience pleasure and pain.

Finally, utilitarianism assumes that both pleasure and pain can be effectively measured and compared. (Four Normative Theories in Environmental Ethics)

If one attempts to broaden the utilitarianism standpoint to include the environmental standpoint to include the environmental side, or if anyone tried to incorporate animals into utilitarianism as to feel something like pleasure and pain, one cannot generalize this animal consideration to non-biotic components regarding environment or even to the whole species. As a result the basic characteristics of utilitarianism is based wholly on an anthropocentric view, which is human centric.

Thus, utilitarian limits to intrinsic value. But holistic environmental ethics argue that we have duties not only to humans but they content that we should preserve wild places, species, biotic communities and also the eco-systems. As Aldo Leopold describes- the greatest good is the ‘land’ not to any particular individual.

Deontological theory says that there is a ‘Categorical Imperative’ to treat all autonomous agents as an “ends and never as a means”. This right excludes animals and only includes human centric. Even Kant’s view is that “animals... are there merely as means to an end. That end is man.”(Kant and Beck, 1980)

IV. DEFENSE AGAINST ANTHROPOCENTRIC APPROACH

An anthropocentric approach is criticized as it values only the human need and desires. According to this view, a natural entity is said to be useful as a resource for human beings and it ends when human duties fulfill with their desires. Here the problem is that fear arises under this theory as the environment is viewed as a resource where humans can be used any way they see fit. So, supporters of anthropocentric theory to environmental value assert that natural entities become valuable when they are used by humans or through human experience. It is for this reason the anthropocentric theory is not favorable by some environmental philosophers.

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, for the betterment of our society we have to look not through anthropological lens, but through the ecological lens. To change our approach of viewing current events, one has to combine the natural value with the human value. Instead of an egocentric world, we can better our lives by choosing a higher moral standard and stewards towards our environment. Let's take out the 'I' from 'ego' and try to enhance ourselves to the world and make it 'eco', which is betterment not only for mankind but for the whole world, for without nature, there will be no mankind.

The Maxim "Live and Let Live" suggest a class-free society in the entire ecosphere, a democracy in which we can speak about justice, not only with regard to human beings, but also for animals, plants and landscape. (Naess 1989: 173)

Thus with the formula 'Live and Let Live' will derive the norm "Self – Realization for every being". The joy and meaning of life can be enhanced towards a new way of seeing the world through self-realization. Traditionally, our self can develop and undergo three stages--- from ego to social self, comprising the ego, and there to metaphysical self, comprising the social self and identify with others where the self is widened and deepened. Thus, self realization is the norm which connects our life through the

ultimate principle—"Life is fundamentally one".

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