

Protecting the Spiritual Environment:  
Rhetoric and Chinese Buddhist Environmentalism

by

Seth Clippard

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved April 2012 by the  
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Huaiyu Chen, Chair  
Hava Tirosh-Samuelson  
Stephen Bokenkamp  
Hoyt Tillman  
Ben Minter

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2012

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the way in which leaders of certain Taiwanese Buddhist organizations associated with a strand of Buddhist modernism called "humanistic Buddhism" use discourse and rhetoric to make environmentalism meaningful to their members. It begins with an assessment of the field of religion and ecology, situating it in the context of secular environmental ethics. It identifies rhetoric and discourse as important but under acknowledged elements in literature on environmental ethics, both religious and secular, and relates this lack of attention to rhetoric to the presence of a problematic gap between environmental ethics theory and environmentalist practice. This dissertation develops a methodology of rhetorical analysis that seeks to assess how rhetoric contributes to alleviating this gap in religious environmentalism. In particular, this dissertation analyzes the development of environmentalism as a major element of humanistic Buddhist groups in Taiwan and seeks to show that a rhetorical analysis helps demonstrate how these organizations have sought to make environmentalism a meaningful subject of contemporary Buddhist religiosity. This dissertation will present an extended analysis of the concept of "spiritual environmentalism," a term developed and promoted by the late Ven. Shengyan (1930-2009), founder of the Taiwanese Buddhist organization Dharma Drum Mountain. Furthermore, this dissertation suggests that the rhetorical methodology proposed herein offers offers a direction for scholars to more effectively engage with religion and ecology in ways that address both descriptive/analytic

approaches and constructive engagements with various forms of religious environmentalism.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The term for PhD in Chinese is *boshi* 博士, which means “one broad in learning.” Although most dissertations attempt to demonstrate depth, this dissertation has taken breadth as its goal. Partly, the decision was circumstantial. But mostly it was because this dissertation addresses questions that fall into no one category of academia. Working within the interstices of religion and environment requires frequent boundary-crossing and a rather ad hoc toolbox. The reasons for this I hope to lay out in the work that follows, but I am appreciative of all the mentorship and encouragement I received since embarking on this project. I had to cross several boundaries and produced a document that can claim no disciplinary home. I am aware of the demands that this has made on my committee members, and for their support, I am very grateful.

There are many people that have contributed in many ways to this degree and dissertation project. I would like to thank Profs. Joel Gereboff, James H. Foard, and Juliane Schober for their support and encouragement. Prof. Joel Gereboff deserves special recognition for his departmental leadership and outstanding support for the graduate program and each graduate student in Religious Studies. I would like to thank each member of my committee: Profs. Stephen Bokenkamp, Ben Minteer, Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan, and Hoyt Tillman. Profs. Tillman and Tirosh-Samuelsan have supported me intellectually from the first steps of this project. Prof. Tillman has been an ideal model of collegiality and what kind of community scholars should strive for. Prof. Tirosh-Samuelsan has been influential in teaching me what it means to have goals and how to

achieve them. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to my chair, Prof. Huaiyu Chen. Although immediately having a graduate student to advise may not make for a smooth transition to a new university, his constant support was a great asset to me.

I would like to thank the support provided by Dharma Drum Mountain and the Sheng Yen Educational Foundation for two dissertation research grants. The Sheng Yen Educational Foundation has also offered me opportunities for the publishing and presentation of parts of this project. I appreciate Sheng Yen Educational Foundation and the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* for permission to include previously published material.

I am grateful for the many helpful conversations I had regarding “spiritual environmentalism” with Shi Guoguang and Shi Changshen. I have also benefitted from discussions with Lin Yiren and Lin Chaocheng. Appreciation also goes to my sister, Sara Berglund, for helping with proofreading and applying an outsider’s eye.

Finally I would like to thank the constant support of my wife, Jennifer, who tolerated nearly three years of absence, while I was overseas finishing this degree. Her patience and kind encouragement mixed with some helpful prodding helped keep me focused on the “human realm” (*renjian* 人間). And my two sons, Ashmore and Blake, have been a constant source of stress-reduction. I hope I can someday repay their sacrifices.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM: THE FIELD OF RELIGION AND ECOLOGY.....	10
Sorting the Terms.....	11
Religion.....	14
Nature.....	18
Ecology, Environment, Environmentalism.....	21
A Short History of the Field.....	27
The Non/Anthropocentrism Debate.....	28
Critiques of the Dominant Paradigm.....	34
Environmental Pragmatism.....	36
The Theory/Practice Gap.....	41
Religion, Science, and Nature.....	48
Religion and Ecology.....	61
Anthropological Beginnings.....	62
Worldviews and the Anthropocentrism Debate.....	65
Religious Cosmologies and Narrative.....	68
Religion and Nature.....	73
Religious Environmentalism.....	76
Examples from Judaism and Confucianism.....	80
Confucianism.....	80

CHAPTER	Page
Judaism.....	87
Conclusion .....	97
3 RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTALISM AND RHETORIC.....	99
The Role of Rhetoric in Environmentalism .....	100
Definition and Strategy of Rhetoric .....	105
Audience .....	109
Identification .....	112
Framing.....	110
Environmental Rhetoric.....	117
Applying Audience, Identification, and Framing .....	119
Norton’s <i>Sustainability</i> .....	123
The Philosophy of Arne Naess.....	130
Approaches to Deep Ecology.....	131
Loose Derivation, Deep Questioning.....	133
Ontology.....	135
Self-realization, Identification, Unity-in Diversity .....	136
Naess’s Rhetoric and the Language of Transformation .....	140
Semantics .....	142
Methodological Vagueness .....	143
Dialectic and Rhetoric .....	145
Radical Ecology and Language.....	152
Dialectics in Radical Ecology .....	153

CHAPTER	Page
Social Ecology.....	156
Ecofeminism .....	161
Arne Naess .....	164
Deep Rhetoric .....	167
Religious Environmentalism and Rhetoric .....	168
Audience and Identification .....	172
Examples.....	174
Confucianism.....	174
Judaism.....	178
Conclusion .....	180
4 BUDDHISM AND ECOLOGY .....	183
Survey of the Field.....	183
Environmental Ethics and Buddhist Environmentalism.....	191
Approaches and Major Concepts .....	196
Critiques .....	206
Varieties of Buddhist Environmentalism.....	212
Thailand .....	216
Singapore .....	223
Kong Meng San Poh Kark See.....	227
Bao'en Si.....	230
Jinlong Si.....	234
Conclusion .....	237



CHAPTER	Page
5 CHINESE BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTALISM.....	239
Contexts of Buddhist Environmentalism .....	240
Taiwan and China.....	241
Humanistic Buddhism .....	249
Chinese Buddhist Organizations and Environmentalism.....	261
Zhongtaishan.....	261
Protecting Life: LCA and Zhaohui .....	262
Chinese Buddhist Environmental Discourse .....	266
Chinese Buddhist Understandings of “Environment” .....	268
<i>Jing</i> and <i>Huanjing</i> .....	270
<i>Tu</i> : A Chinese Buddhist Land Ethic.....	279
Ecology and <i>Shengtai</i> .....	286
Conclusion .....	295
6 PURIFICATION OF MIND AND NATURE.....	299
Chan Discourse and Rhetoric .....	300
Dharma Drum Mountain .....	303
Major Campaigns.....	305
Protecting the Natural Environment.....	308
Protecting the Spiritual Environment.....	311
Spiritual Environment as Religious Environmental Rhetoric ...	319
Relation to Other Three Environmentalisms .....	322

CHAPTER	Page
Dialectic .....	324
Audience .....	327
Relation to DDM's Other Campaigns.....	329
Deep ecology and spiritual environmentalism.....	332
Ciji.....	335
<i>Fu</i> .....	337
Recycling and <i>Huanbao</i> .....	338
“Regulating oneself, returning to propriety” .....	344
Audience .....	348
FGS .....	352
Environmentalism in FGS .....	353
Pure land Rhetoric and Enviromentalism .....	356
Monastic Grounds.....	360
Characteristics of Chinese Buddhist Environmentalism .....	363
7 CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	373
REFERENCES .....	380
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH .....	412

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The field of religion and ecology is growing and will likely gain in importance as climate change and other environmental problems receive attention from all sectors of society. As one of the most widespread religions in the world, Buddhism will also receive increased attention for how its tenets and practices can offer guidance and resources for addressing environmental problems. The role of Buddhism in the modern world has already become quite important as scholars continue to explore the intersections between Buddhism and modern sciences and social sciences.<sup>1</sup> The intersection between Buddhism and environmental sciences is no exception. In response to environmental exigencies, scholars have devoted significant efforts towards exploring Buddhist environmental ethics. This project though is necessarily a constructive one, since, as scholars like Lambert Schmidthausen and Ian Harris have shown, Buddhism possesses no intrinsic environmental ethic. However, in order for a practical ethic to be articulated, it is important to clarify and explore with great care and precision the ways in which Buddhists *qua* Buddhists are responding to environmental issues. By so doing we can better understand how and why environmentalism is made meaningful to Buddhists. Scholars engaged in analysis and description will thus have more

---

<sup>1</sup> Particularly popular are investigations into Buddhism and cognitive science. See works such as B. Alan Wallace, ed., *Buddhism and Science: Breaking New Ground* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Mathieu Ricard and Trinh Xuan Thuan, *The Quantum and the Lotus: A Journey to the Frontiers Where Science and Buddhism Meet* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001); and Dalai Lama, *The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006).

well-defined their subject matter by making a community's beliefs and practices more tangible. From this point scholars engaged in the constructive work of developing Buddhist environmental ethics can proceed to articulate an ethics that is both meaningful to Buddhists today and intellectually sound. The contribution I am aiming to make in this dissertation is invite discussion between these two scholarly projects—the analytic and constructive, regardless of whether scholars are engaged in one or both projects. As Bauman, Bohannon, and O'Brien argue, many scholars of religion and ecology are motivated by practical concerns; "This field exists not just to develop theories and ideas, but also to contribute to the activist cause of building a more sustainable world."<sup>2</sup> A scholar's constructivist interest in the field can take the form of outright activism to the desire to make religious environmentalism a discourse that reflects the shared concern of religious communities that has the goal of affecting public policy and human behavior.

With these observations in mind, in this dissertation I seek to do the following: First, I will define the main arguments and approaches towards discussing and analyzing Buddhist environmentalism. From a review of the current literature I will show that the work in Buddhist environmentalism (which I take as encompassing Buddhist eco-philosophy and ethics) follows the routes already laid out by work by Christian theologians and secular environmental philosophers. I will argue that this results in a lack of attention to unique aspects of Buddhist philosophy and the distinctions between different Buddhist cultures. I show that that without attending to the contextual details of a specific instance of

---

<sup>2</sup> Gottlieb, *Greener Faith*, 8.

religious environmentalism, we are unable to elucidate what factors serve to link the environmental interests to religious interests. Towards suggesting a remedy to this deficiency, I propose adopting a rhetorically informed approach to understanding religious environmentalism. Then, I will elucidate how the Buddhist community under analysis utilizes ritual, practice, and discourse to create a meaningful rhetoric of Buddhist environmentalism. I will attempt to show that approaching religious environmentalism according to the following model enables scholars to better understand how religious environmentalisms work; that is to say, by understanding how religious communities come to articulate the religious nature of environmental concern, this project seeks to contribute to both empirical research on religion and ecology and more constructive projects represented by environmental ethics.

In consideration of the fact that Buddhism and ecology emerged out of the larger field of Religion and ecology, chapter two will begin by introducing the dominant approaches to the field of religion and ecology and highlight how the guiding questions of the field and the responses to those questions result in varying understandings of the field, not only by taking a different approach to how the connection between religion and environmentalism is debated but how the way in which religion is understood differs. This chapter will show how issues such as whether environmental ethics should aim for a nonanthropocentric worldview, making nonanthropocentrism a central problematic in religious environmentalism, and the gap between ethical theory and practices that reflect those theoretical foundations has been taken up by scholars of religion. In

addition, this chapter addresses the interface of science, environmentalism, and ethics particularly as scholars discuss the way in which scientific and ethical discourses of nature impinge upon one another. In the following section, the chapter turns to the varieties of approaches to the field of religion and ecology, outlining the focuses on cosmology, community, and non-mainstream religious traditions. Chapter two concludes with a short description of how religion and ecology plays out in the context of two traditions: Confucianism and Judaism.

Chapter three addresses the degree to which religious environmentalism turns on how discourses of nature, environment, and religion develop out of multiple contexts and seeks to demonstrate that the way in which the motivation of a religious environmental ethic is deeply rhetorical. This chapter offers a model of rhetoric rooted in a notion of persuasion, but the way in which the model functions is explained by reference to three concepts: audience, identification, and framing. This model of rhetoric is inspired by Kenneth Burke and his interpreters and articulates the main methodological approach of the dissertation. This chapter applies these notions to environmental philosophies of Bryan Norton and Arne Naess. The work of these two philosophers provides a way to illustrate how environmental rhetoric can move environmentalism beyond the theory/practice gap and incorporate ontological and metaphysical elements of environmentalism that are common to religious environmentalism. This chapter concludes with an inquiry into religious environmental rhetoric and returns to the examples discussed in chapter two, Confucianism and Judaism, to show how rhetorical

analysis rearranges the way in which the environmental concerns of a tradition are established, altering the predominant contours of the field.

Chapters four and five focus specifically on Buddhist environmentalism. Chapter four provides a survey of Buddhism and ecology, highlighting the dominant concepts and approaches to articulating a Buddhist environmental ethic. These approaches follow the dominant paradigm of a concern with worldview, cosmology, and nonanthropocentrism that characterizes most religious environmentalism, and the critiques of these approaches show the practical difficulties that are entailed. In order to further emphasize the importance of attending to contextual factors of specific Buddhist communities, this chapter offers two case studies of Buddhist environmentalism in contemporary Thailand and Singapore.

Chapter five narrows the focus of the dissertation to modern contemporary Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. The first section lays out the differences between Buddhism and environmentalism as they developed in China and Taiwan from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on. The following section first describes the major characteristics of humanistic Buddhism (*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教) and juxtaposes it to engaged Buddhism (both forms of Buddhism being associated with contemporary Buddhist environmentalism) and then presents the environmental beliefs of two organizations that either do not emphasize the practice (Zhongtaishan) or do not incorporate many elements of Buddhist environmental rhetoric into their discourse (Life Conservationist Association). Finally, the chapter offers an analysis of the way in which Taiwanese scholars

have assessed the discourse of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism, identifying the key concepts and terms.

Chapter six focuses on three humanistic Buddhist organizations that not only carry out significant or moderately significant environmental campaigns, but also promote environmentalism as a specifically Buddhist concern through the use of rhetorical appeal— Fagushan 法鼓山 (Dharma Drum Mountain/DDM), Ciji gongde hui 慈濟功德會 (Ciji), and Foguangshan 佛光山 (/Buddha Light Mountain/FGS). Since two in-depth studies of FGS and Ciji have recently been published, I will focus on each organization’s efforts towards advocating environmentalism and what practices each advocate. I will provide a brief overview of DDM’s overall vision known as the five-fold spiritual renaissance campaign, particularly its focus on education and Chan meditation, in addition to its environmentalist mission. This chapter begins with an extensive analysis of the term “spiritual environmentalism” developed by Ven. Shengyan 聖嚴 (1930-2009) of Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM). After earning a doctorate in Japan in Buddhist literature, Shengyan went to the United States to promote Chinese Buddhism and teach Chan meditation. Over a decade after his first trip to the United States, Shengyan coined the term *xinling huanbao* 心靈環保 (‘spiritual environmentalism’ or ‘protecting the spiritual environment’) and made that term the central teaching in his project of Chinese Buddhist renewal. Questions that are addressed in this section include: How does the concept of *xinling huanbao* influence and inform DDM members’ relationships to mainstream environmental practice? How is protection of the natural environment understood to be



spiritual/Buddhist practice? Most of the analysis in this section centers on the term *xinling huanbao*, since this term has been extensively developed as the linchpin of Shengyan's teaching and the mission of DDM. The basics of DDM's environmentalism are contained in the notion of spiritual environmentalism. Moreover, this term has begun to be used, albeit sparingly, by leaders of other Buddhist organizations, suggesting the possibility of spiritual environmentalism becoming the basis of a robust Chinese Buddhist environmentalism.

The next section takes up the environmental rhetoric of Ciji. Ciji was founded in the 1960s by Venerable Zhengyan 證嚴 (b. 1937), the only Taiwanese Buddhist leader discussed in this dissertation to have been born in Taiwan. Major emphasis is placed on the way in which Zhengyan reinterprets notions like recycling and environmentalism, as well as her emphasis on traditional values such as the family generally associated with Confucian culture. The chapter concludes with an examination of the environmental rhetoric of Ven. Xingyun 星雲 (b. 1927), founder of FGS. His environmental rhetoric rests upon his interpretation of the Western Pure land, but is altered somewhat through his application of humanistic Buddhist notions of the Pure land.

The conclusion will address some of the implications this dissertation has for future work in religion and ecology, going so far as to offer rhetorical analysis as a methodological precondition for scholarship on religious environmentalism. This dissertation responds to the perceived failure of environmental ethics to have a significant impact on policy and large scale changes in environmental values

and behavior. Scholars have noted the increase in religious participation in communities throughout the world, referring to the phenomenon as the desecularization thesis (in opposition to the previously offered secularization thesis which held that societies are becoming less religious.)<sup>3</sup> If desecularization is proceeding apace as some scholars suggest, then the influence of religious communities on social movements like environmentalism cannot, nor should not be ignored. But just how a traditionally secular concern is made meaningful in religious terms for specific communities tend to not be found in articulations that are primarily philosophical and metaphysical. The basic position argued for in this dissertation is that scholars of religion and ecology should attend to the rhetoric of environmental concern and not assume that the articulation of environmental concern should proceed directly from a single tradition's doctrinal or theological commitments. By examining the rhetoric of a specific religious community, scholars can begin to tease out the way that the layered identity of religious groups is addressed in discourse. Beginning with rhetoric maintains a productive balance between theory and practice that also offers possibilities for merging the two.

Regarding terminology, for consistency, I have used the Pinyin versions of all Chinese names, even though some figures have established other transliterations. I use the term "Pure land," except in cases where it refers to the

---

<sup>3</sup> See Peter L. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999).

Pure Land school of thought or where a specific Pure land is being referred to  
(e.g., Amitabha's Pure Land).

## Chapter 2

### IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM: THE FIELD OF RELIGION AND ECOLOGY

Scholarly work in the connection between various religious traditions and environmentalism (e.g., Christianity and ecology or Buddhism and ecology) is typically listed as a subfield of a larger discipline commonly referred to as religion and ecology. We might say that these subfields emerged out of the larger field of religion and ecology, but it might be more correct to say that the field itself emerged out of the work being done on each tradition, since articles pertaining to environmental stances in particular religious traditions appeared before any formal recognition of a field known as religion and ecology. In this chapter, for the purposes of offering a coherent analysis of the general themes and issues relating to religion and ecology, I will begin by introducing the dominant approaches to the field. I will situate the field within the context of secular environmental ethics and then highlight the guiding questions of the field. This will involve first looking at implications of and reasons for distinguishing between key concepts like nature, ecology, and environmentalism. Then, I will offer a short history of the field and address two issues that pertain to religion and ecology scholarship: the role of science and the theory/practice gap. Next, I will look specifically at three ways in which the area of study is labeled as a field—religion and ecology, religion and nature, and religious environmentalism. This discussion will attempt to offer some definitional clarity to a field which has flourished in part because of its ambiguity. Finally, I will offer a short reading of

two traditions, Judaism and Confucianism, to illustrate some of the issues discussed in this chapter and provide a basis for comparison with Buddhism in chapter three.

## 2.1 Sorting the terms

The difficulty of describing the field to which the current study belongs is immediately apparent from the lack of agreement on what name it—religion and ecology, religion and the environment, religion and nature? What exactly is being studied and what methods are evoked in the process? Generally speaking, we can say that the object of study includes how religious belief and practice impact ecosystems and the non-human world and the ways in which the non-human world impinge on human religiosity. But this definition adds little clarity. The religious influence on ecosystems, the elements of nature that are represented in religions, and the history of human ill-effects on the natural world due to behaviors resulting from human religiosity: these three call upon anthropological, philosophical, ethical, historical, and theological resources so broad that it would make little sense to place them under one single academic field. Perhaps the various scholars working in the field acknowledge those scholars with whom they are in dialogue, suggesting a sense of unity. The various names given to the field noted above, then may reflect different preferences in terminology and not radically different guiding questionings. But the issue is more than simply a difference in preferences, since the various labels contribute to how scholars address and conceptualize methodological and theoretical bases of critical inquiry.

A recent publication entitled *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology* can be considered the first attempt to offer an overview of the field with attention to the methodologies in use. The editors note that religion and ecology is a “deeply interdisciplinary” and “constantly evolving field of study.”<sup>4</sup> As an emerging field it is probably too early to tell what direction(s) works in the field will take. There is great flexibility in this ambiguity, and such ambiguity is sometimes taken to be the strength of the field.<sup>5</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker describes the situation thus:

In the humanities, important multidisciplinary fields of study are emerging in environmental history, literature, and philosophy. Religion and ecology can be situated as a new field of study in the humanities that is similarly multidisciplinary in outlook and concern. From the perspective of this field, *based within religious studies or theology*, the contributions of religions to environmental studies and policy may be clarified.<sup>6</sup>

According to this account, the field is conceived as multidisciplinary but also seems firmly placed within religious studies. In either case, issues of methodology and theory present their own academic challenges, as they often do for the study of religion in general. As one step toward more clearly delineating the boundaries of the field, Bauman, Bohannon, and O’Brien take care to discuss

---

<sup>4</sup> Whitney A. Bauman, Richard R. Bohannon II, and Kevin J. O’Brien, eds., *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Bron Taylor, “Exploring Religion, Nature, and Culture—Introducing the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*,” *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 1:1 (2007), 5-24.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter their Ecological Phase* (Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company, 2003), 32 (emphasis in original).

ways of defining both religion and ecology. The practice of defining the key terms as a way of animating discussion within an academic field should not be disregarded or taken lightly. J.Z. Smith's comments on the term 'religion' are apt here: Religion "is a second-order, generic concept that plays the same role in establishing a disciplinary horizon that concepts such as 'language' plays in linguistics or 'culture' plays in anthropology. *There can be no disciplined study of religion without such a horizon.*"<sup>7</sup> The field of religion and ecology likewise is in need of a disciplinary horizon if the work in this field is to be *disciplined*. This does not mean its interdisciplinary and constantly evolving nature must be limited, but it is helpful for scholars to work within set boundaries, if only to be constantly transgressing them. In order to practice the critical work of scholarship in the field of religion and ecology, it is more than helpful to have some working definition of these terms and not bury the issue by using 'ecology,' 'environmental,' 'environmentalism,' and 'ecological' all synonymously. To complicate matters, the "first-order" terms—'religion,' 'nature,' 'environment,' and 'ecology'—escape simple definition.<sup>8</sup> By first examining the complexity involved in obtaining working definitions of these first-order terms, we can better

---

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms in Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 281-282.

<sup>8</sup> My use of the qualifier "first-order" to refer to religion here may seem in direct contradiction to J.Z. Smith's identification of 'religion' as a "second-order term." However, Smith was referring to the field of religious studies, in which case religion very well can be considered second-order. When the focus is the field of religion and ecology, religion itself becomes a first-order term.

appreciate the difficulties and problems in establishing the focus of the field of religion and ecology.

### 2.1.1 Religion

‘Religion’ has typically referred to the various ‘world religions’ (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, and Judaism), along with a variety of indigenous traditions. Several scholars working in this field have set out to clarify how they understand ‘religion.’ Bron Taylor offers a helpful discussion of how to situate ‘religion’ in the field, and he is keen to make space for modes of individual or communal experience that are not considered part of any established religious tradition (e.g., paganism, wicca, deep ecology, and surfing.)<sup>9</sup> Taylor opts for a “family-resemblance” approach to religion to avoid suggesting there is an essence to religion which “leaves in play and open to contestation the definition of religion, and even challenges whether choosing a definition is important.”<sup>10</sup> Roger Gottlieb also offers a rather broad definition of religion, appealing to Tillich’s description of religion as ultimate

---

<sup>9</sup> In his introduction to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, he offers an adaptation of David Chidester’s definition of religion, stating religion is “*that dimension of human experience engaged with sacred norms, which are related to transformative forces and powers and which people consider to be dangerous and/or beneficent and/or meaningful in some ultimate way.*” See Bron Taylor, “Introduction,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (New York: Continuum, 2005), x (emphasis in original).

<sup>10</sup> Bron Taylor, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 3.



concern (Gottlieb alters this phrase to read “ultimate significance”).<sup>11</sup> But he also adds a functional definition stating that religions supply humans with norms and rituals which regulate human conduct and communication.

Bauman, Bohannon, and O’Brien discuss the importance of defining religion, noting that “[d]efinitions of religion matter to scholars of religion because they work as filters through which we see things.”<sup>12</sup> This is perhaps true whether scholars are working on religion singularly or on specific traditions, in which case it is important how scholars define that specific tradition or group (e.g., what is ‘Christianity’, ‘Buddhism’, or ‘Indigenous’). However, the importance of defining religion perhaps lies more in its relevance to normative projects that seek to assist in forging partnerships between different religious communities to collectively address environmental issues. Bauman, Bohannon, and O’Brien argue that many scholars of religion and ecology are motivated by practical concerns; “This field exists not just to develop theories and ideas, but also to contribute to the activist cause of building a more sustainable world.”<sup>13</sup> The implication is that scholarly work can create a common vocabulary upon which different religious communities can build coalitions despite having different theologies, practices, and belief commitments.

---

<sup>11</sup> Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Routledge, 2004) 8. See also Roger S. Gottlieb, *A Greener Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), xii.

<sup>12</sup> Bauman, Bohannon, and O’Brien, *Grounding*, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Gottlieb, *Greener Faith*, 8.

For scholars working on a single tradition, the map of religion is perhaps less complicated, but questions still persist regarding how one will delimit that tradition. The questions of what religion is seem to be relevant mainly in the cases where scholars, like Taylor, are trying to create space for people whose environmental commitments resemble religious commitments. Questions such as: Is there a common facet of the tradition that all adherents value, or is each tradition as internally complex as the larger field of religion are relevant and important to the scholar. But scholars should not lose sight of the fact that defining religion can also lead to the reification of religions (or religion) as autonomous agents. The error in this is that it is rather people who are acting, writing, engaging that are the real subjects of the field. As Robert Campany has persuasively argued, speaking in terms which attribute agency to religious traditions elides the fact that it is people who act, people who identify in different ways and to different degrees with the tradition.<sup>14</sup> We should then attribute the interdisciplinarity, change, and constant expansion of the field to the the influx of different perspectives of human actors.

---

<sup>14</sup> Campany's comment comes from his critique of metaphors for religion: "But, if we are to go on speaking of religions, we should at least find new metaphors for doing so. If possible, the new metaphors should avoid picturing religions as really existent things in the world; as organisms; as hard-sided clearly demarcated containers of people and things; and as agents, because picturing them in all these ways falsifies the actual state of things and skews our research questions in unfortunate ways. Religions do not exist, at least not in the same way that people and their textual and visual artifacts and performances do. And when religions are metaphorically imagined as doing things, it becomes harder to see the agents who really and nonmetaphorically do things: people." Robert Ford Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (In the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions* 42:4 (2003), 319.

But if we consider the work of scholars of other fields (anthropology, sociology, etc.), perhaps the definition of religion is not so critical. When the religious community being studied has already been identified, does ‘religion’ as an etic category still matter? In a case where the subject is Appalachian American Pentacostals, does ‘religion’ come pre-packaged? The claim that religion and ecology is simultaneously rooted in religious studies *and* interdisciplinary means that either religious studies is an interdisciplinary field (or as some might say a “transdisciplinary field”—incorporating many fields under one heading) or that religion and ecology extends well beyond the practice of religious studies. This issue would fruitfully be sufficiently addressed on its own terms, but the question need not be resolved for work to be done in the field. Roger Gottlieb seems to have overcome the issue by addressing ‘religious environmentalism’ rather than ‘religion’ which highlights religion as a phenomenon modifying human behavior and not a reified entity. He focuses on the way a religious community practices environmentalism. Comparisons can then be made with environmental work carried out in non-religious communities and non-environmental work carried out in religious communities. Comparisons can then be made to determine how strongly the environmental work done resembles or is understood to be religious practice or ritual, and whether it is inspired by religious values or beliefs. The important point to keep in mind is that uses of the phrase ‘religion and ecology’ often tend to treat religion as an agent, leading to meaningless statements about what religion can do to help the environment or how religions cause environmental degradation.

Defining religion is important to the extent that one's concern is with analyzing a global movement of religious environmentalism. Environmentalism, like religion, can be discussed both generally and with reference to particular instances. The two are not unrelated. But it is not necessary to begin with a definition of religion or even offer one in order to make significant contributions to the study of religion and ecology. And, following Bron Taylor, it is possible that an overemphasis on religion will lead to a myopic view of what religious environmentalism could be. As the Chinese philosopher, Gongsun long 公孫龍 observed, a white horse is not a horse. The former cannot be reduced to a category of the latter. Likewise, religious environmentalism need not be viewed only as a subcategory of either religion or environmentalism.

#### 2.1.2 Nature

Another term whose meaning is difficult to demarcate is 'nature.' Bron Taylor defines nature as "that world which includes – but at the same time is perceived to be largely beyond – our human bodies, and which confronts us daily with its apparent otherness."<sup>15</sup> Gottlieb describes 'nature' as "the earth's system of living beings and the support systems for them."<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the most extensive treatment of the concept nature in its contemporary context is Kate Soper's *What is Nature?* Soper attempts to provide an inclusive analysis of how nature is conceived in environmentalism and argues

---

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, "Introduction," x.

<sup>16</sup> Gottlieb, *Greener Faith*, xiii.

that in all discussions of nature, there is a fundamental sense of separation between humanity and nature that is “axiomatic to Western thought.”<sup>17</sup> But Soper soon complicates this basic assumption by highlighting ways that we use the word ‘nature’: in a cosmological sense, where ‘nature’ refers to everything that is (and so something of which we are a part) and in a human sense (human nature), a use that suggest both a continuity with ‘other natures’ while still claiming a difference (human nature is qualitatively different from non-human nature). She states, “We also use it in reference to that totality of being of which we are a part. We have thought, that is, of humanity as being a component of nature even as we have conceptualized nature as absolute otherness to humanity. ‘Nature’ is in this sense both that which we are not *and* that which we are within.”<sup>18</sup>

To delineate the implications in contemporary terms of this conundrum, Soper identifies two dominant ways the term ‘nature’ has been used in environmental discourse—a “realist,” “nature-endorsing” use of the term exemplified in ecology and the green movement and an opposed “culturalist,” “nature-skeptical” use characteristic of post-modern discourse.<sup>19</sup> The division between these two is not whether there is a human-nature distinction, but in “the

---

<sup>17</sup> Kate Soper, *What is Nature? Culture, Politics, and the non-Human* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 15; 38.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>19</sup> See also James Proctor, “Nature, Concepts of: Environmental and Ecological,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 15, eds. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Amsterdam and New York: Elsevier, 2001), 10398-404.

way it is to be drawn.”<sup>20</sup> That is, the distinction is related to the way each camp deploys ecological discourse, which Soper has divided into three modes: metaphysical, realist, and lay (or surface). The first places humanity within nature as a part of nature, the second “refers to the structures, processes, and causal powers that are constantly operative within the physical world, that provide the objects of study of the natural sciences,” and the third pertains to “the nature of immediate experience and aesthetic appreciation; the nature we have destroyed and polluted and are asked to conserve and preserve.”<sup>21</sup> These three modes of discourse are “interlocking” but each reflects a way in which nature is uniquely conceived, represented, and made the basis for argument in one way or another.

John Hedley Brooke examines how such a problematic term as ‘nature’ has remained so resilient. He shows that part of ‘nature’s’ staying power is built around the various dichotomies nature is a part of (nature/culture, nature/nurture, nature/art, etc.) but that much of the difficulty in speaking about nature is caused by the collapse of these dualities following the advent of modern science (which Brooke traces to Bacon and Newton).<sup>22</sup> Brooke concludes by suggesting that one other reason for the persistence of nature in our contemporary discourses is due to the authority that comes with speaking for nature. Carrying Brooke’s argument one step further, we might say that the ambiguity of what nature is and what

---

<sup>20</sup> Soper, *What*, 41.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 155-56.

<sup>22</sup> John Hedley Brooke, “Should the word *Nature* be Eliminated?” in *Envisioning Nature, Science, and Religion*, ed. James D. Proctor (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2009), 327-28.

nature means is part of its power and appeal. This is to say, because of the wide appeals to ‘nature’ and the wide of appeal of ‘nature,’ the term persists as an anchor of discourse and a flashpoint for debate.

### 2.1.3 Ecology, Environment, Environmentalism

Finally, it is necessary to look at what is meant by ‘environmentalism’ and ‘ecology.’ There are several reasons for raising this question. The most obvious is that most scholars use the label ‘religion and ecology,’ rather than ‘religion and nature,’ ‘religious environmentalism,’ or ‘religion and the environment.’

Secondly, according to Soper’s analysis most scholars addressing the relationship between religion and nature would fall into the realist, nature-endorsing camp she associates with ecology. Third, by identifying a nature-endorsing position with ecology, we can address the question of what exactly scholars are studying when they work in the field of religion and ecology. John Clark makes the distinction between ‘environmentalism’ and ‘ecology’ as follows:

The term environmentalism is sometimes used to refer to a traditional, instrumentalist view that conceives of “nature” as that which *surrounds* human beings, and reduces the natural world to an assemblage of resources that ought to be used wisely for the benefit of humanity. The term “ecology” may accordingly be reserved for a more critical and transformative perspective that reconceptualizes the place of humanity *within* the larger system or whole.<sup>23</sup>

Peter Hay, in his inclusive work *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought*, notes the tradition of distinguishing ecology from environmentalism, whereby the former is associated with revolutionary, deep-structure change and

---

<sup>23</sup> John Clark, “Introduction,” in *Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Michael Zimmerman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 343.

the latter pertains to reformist, managerial changes. But he goes on to argue that he will treat them as synonyms for two reasons: first, people involved in the green movement do not make sharp distinctions between the terms, and second, the movement described as “environmental” or “ecological” lacks definitive boundaries.<sup>24</sup> Soper, too, does not choose to distinguish between ecology/ecological on the one hand, and environmentalism/environmental on the other. However, we might point out that the three meanings of nature that she offers as interlocking map onto the two parts of Clark’s distinction: Clark’s ‘environmentalism’ being related to Soper’s realist and lay uses; Clark’s ‘ecology’ being related to Soper’s metaphysical use. But I believe there is a good deal we can learn about the various green projects by looking at the distinctions and the intellectual context of those distinctions. The focus on rhetoric that I take in this dissertation dictates that even though words may be used interchangeably in ordinary discourse that does not mean there is no interest motivating the use of each term.

According to the website of the Ecological Society of America, “Ecology is the scientific discipline that is concerned with the relationships between organisms and their past, present, and future environments.”<sup>25</sup> Similarly, most reference works define ecology as the science of or scientific study of the relationships between organisms and their environments. Although McIntosh

---

<sup>24</sup> Peter Hay, *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 1-2.

<sup>25</sup> “The Ecological Society of America,” accessed August 31, 2011, <http://www.esa.org/aboutesa/>.



amply demonstrates that the meaning of ecology is fluid and is frequently used in popular senses, he also shows that it is rooted in science and akin to biology, with the popular uses being derived from the scientific meaning of the term which emphasizes the interrelationship of entities.<sup>26</sup> Despite showing that ecology has yet to achieve a singular definition and that many ecologists have likewise been interested in and have contributed to issues pertaining to environmental ethics and policy, his history of the discipline clearly demarcates ecology as a branch of biology focused on the relationships among populations and communities of plant and animal species within an ecosystem. Finally, there is the argument that when anyone is referred to as an ‘ecologist’ it nearly always refers to a person conducting research on some field of biology.<sup>27</sup> The association of ecologist with scientist is rarely challenged. Based on these descriptions we can establish the dominant meaning of ecology as a branch of biological science.<sup>28</sup>

The matter cannot be so easily settled, though, since as is often pointed out, the etymology of the term ‘ecology’ derives from the root *oikos* (household) and -ology (the study of ) or *logos* (the logic of). Based on this etymology,

---

<sup>26</sup> Robert P. McIntosh, *The Background of Ecology: Concept and Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 12-15.

<sup>27</sup> In contrast, a scholar studying cultural ecology is generally considered an anthropologist.

<sup>28</sup> John Kircher makes a similar argument. He traces the development of ecology from its roots in natural history, arguing that the defining characteristic of ecology is its basis in evolutionary biology. See John Kircher, *The Balance of Nature: Ecology’s Enduring Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Another term that appears to serve in place of ecology is environmental science, which suggests a connection between ecology and that which is considered ‘environmental.’

ecology can be defined as “the study of the household” or the “logic of the household.” The comparison with “economy” (*oikos -nomos*, or “the management of the household”) shows that household is used as a metaphor to describe a close association of things and beings functioning in mutual cooperation. Of course, Haeckel intended this implication when he coined the term ecology. But for current purposes it is important to note that this metaphorical tenor of the term ‘ecology’ in scientific discourse can be utilized in a variety of ways and was early on used in discourses other than science and continues to be so used to this day. We cannot, then, simply say that ‘ecology’ is solely a scientific term, but we can acknowledge that the use of ‘ecology’ in scientific discourse is deeply situated and systematized, whereas its non-scientific uses are less systematized and defined.

Environmentalism, unlike ecology, is not similarly situated so deeply in physical scientific research or study.<sup>29</sup> One description of environmentalism reads:

Environmentalism is an intellectual, moral, and political movement that arose in response to global environmental crises. Although it had its precursors in forestry preservation and national parks campaigns of the twentieth century, the contemporary movement is distinguished by a perception that there is a global complex, interrelated web of environmental problems that pose a threat to the health, well-being, and perhaps the very existence of humanity...Environmentalism can be understood as a theoretical position (a view about the nature and causes of the environmental crisis), as a moral position that poses the question of what our relation to nature ought to be, and as a social and political

---

<sup>29</sup> Although one might argue that if we place the beginning of environmentalism at the publication of Carson’s *Silent Spring*, scientific research provided part of the impetus for the movement.

movement aiming to bring about a society capable of living within environmental limits.<sup>30</sup>

The above definition demonstrates that even though environmentalism has its roots in activism and is both a social and political movement, it also encompasses questions of human/nature relationships that could be described as “realist” (theoretical) and “surface” (moral), in Soper’s sense of the terms. And it seems that the theoretical position of environmentalism is one that can be informed by research in ecology (the scientific discipline), without having to relabel itself ‘ecology.’ Perhaps the use of the term ‘ecology’ as opposed to ‘environmentalism’ is a historical matter. Since ‘ecology’ predates ‘environmentalism’ by several decades, it is only natural that this is the term used to reference concern for environmental problems such as pollution. However, it is also possible that the scientific tone of ‘ecology’ offers a sense of objectivity that ‘environmentalism,’ which is generally understood to have become popular during the counter-culture movement of the sixties, does not.

We should also look briefly at the term ‘environment,’ as it is the basis for ‘environmentalism.’ The questions asked about the word ‘nature’ can perhaps likewise be posed about ‘environment.’ James Proctor argues that ‘environment’ has only in the last century and a half been used as a synonym for ‘nature’ and with this new meaning of environment comes “a parsing out of *environment* into natural or cultural surroundings, both of which are significant but dissimilar

---

<sup>30</sup> J. Thompson, “Environmentalism: Philosophical Aspects,” *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 15, eds., Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Amsterdam, New York: Elsevier, 2001), 4679.

enough to warrant distinction.”<sup>31</sup> What Proctor pushes for is a recovery of the meaning of environment that deals with connections:

If there is one thing I want to reclaim about environment, it is the vision of connectedness articulated...Connections matter empirically, morally, and politically. The best of our knowledge of nature, of scientific inquiry, and of religious wisdom is the sense of connectedness they offer. The worst of environment in the contemporary sense is the binary disconnect it presumes by its very utterance.<sup>32</sup>

We see in Thompson’s definition of ‘environmentalism’ that he does not use the term ‘environment’ but only ‘environmental.’ Taking seriously Proctor’s proposal, we can ask whether Thompson’s definition of environmentalism, being rooted in environmental issues, suggests a singular concern with nature or the natural world, or can the environmental concern behind environmentalism be based on a perceived threat to states of connectedness? If the latter, then environmentalism no longer has the exclusive reference of protecting nature, but of acting to protect connectedness in a variety of different milieus—“natural” or “artificial.” The scope of these two different understandings of environmentalism could be quite significant. In the case of religious environmentalism, we need to first look at how each tradition that articulates environmental concern relates the idea of environment to their own practices and belief, if they do so at all.

Thus, although there are ways to distinguish between ‘ecology’ and ‘environmentalism,’ these distinctions are not absolute. It is nevertheless helpful to recognize that ecology tends to be more connected to scientific discourse than

---

<sup>31</sup> James D. Proctor, “Environment after Nature: Time for a New Vision,” in *Envisioning Nature, Science, and Religion*, ed. James D. Proctor (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2009), 296.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

environmentalism, and this tendency can help us become aware of what discourse scholars are employing based on the terms they use.

## 2.2 A Short History of the Field

Based on the preceding section, we can see how a main problem in the nascent field of religion and ecology is hermeneutical. Is the field a branch of environmental ethics or religion? What is the aim of its scholarship? Part of the problem lies in the ambiguity of the secular project of environmental ethics itself. What are the metaethical issues in environmental ethics? What forms of ethical reason best fit it? Is environmental ethics a new form of ethics, as some have suggested? While most scholars are motivated by the desire to effect some tangible change, what kind of change do they envision or believe is necessary?

As a formal academic field, environmental philosophy is the product of a number of developments.<sup>33</sup> It emerged out of the environmentalism that grew with the counter culture movement of the 1960s and 1970s. But it was also part of the growing field of applied ethics that arose during this period and other developments in academic philosophy. Environmental ethics has traditionally been explained by labeling thinkers as holistic or individualistic, anthropocentric or nonanthropocentric. There is no shortage of surveys of the field: Roderick Nash's *The Rights of Nature* and Donald Worster's *Nature's Economy* offer historical overviews, first pitting conservationists such as Gifford Pinchot against

---

<sup>33</sup> For a concise history of environmental ethics, see Ben A. Minteer, *Refounding Environmental Ethics: Pragmatism, Principle, and Practice* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 4-7.

preservationists like John Muir, then turning to the land ethics of Aldo Leopold, and culminating in the rise of the biocentric and holistic philosophies of Baird Callicott and Holmes Rolston, III. Another way to organize the field is along the philosophical lines of utilitarianism, deontological ethics, virtue ethics, and consequentialism. Or they may sort the list of positions according to the primary object of moral concern, (in the case of ethics) yielding the labels (in the case of ethics): animal rights, ecojustice, biocentric ethics, and ecocentric ethics, or (in the case of philosophy): deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism. All these approaches reinforce the notion that what is most at issue is establishing what environmental ethics is and what the most defensible ethical position is. But common to nearly all of them is the issue of the moral standing of nature. This issue has often been addressed according to two types of worldview: anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric.

### 2.2.1 The Non/anthropocentrism Debate

The term ‘nonanthropocentrism’ characterizes a worldview in which humans are not considered to be the center or only subject of moral concern. This is in opposition to *anthropocentric* worldviews that consider humans to be the only morally considerable entities based on either a perceived biological or psychological uniqueness, or based on religious perspectives that understand humans to be at least partially apart from the natural world. As suggested by the typology above, anthropocentrism does not preclude the development of an environmental ethic. However, the most noted advocates of a holistic-nonanthropocentric worldview—J. Baird Callicott and Holmes Rolston, III—have

argued that without the move to a nonanthropocentric worldview human behavior will continue to be substantially self-referential and, thus, humans will be unable or unwilling to make the changes necessary to, as they argue, maintain the stability and integrity of the ecosystem. This last argument is based on the work of Aldo Leopold, who argued in his magnum opus, *A Sand County Almanac*, that “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the ecosystem. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”<sup>34</sup> This debate is crucial to understanding how religion and ecology has developed, since many scholars have sought to uncover or articulate a nonanthropocentric environmental ethic from the philosophical resources of a given religious tradition.

The interest in nonanthropocentrism as an alternative to the dominant anthropocentric worldview is partially based on Lynn White, Jr.’s 1967 article “The Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” which claimed that Christian anthropocentrism led to a disenchantment with nature allowing for humans to see it as merely a resource available for human exploitation. The proposal of a nonanthropocentric worldview seeks to reorient human thinking about the human-nature relationship and incorporate claims by ecologists that humans are part of a larger whole (the ecosystem) that operates on the principles of balance and stability. Since the first formulations of this position in the late 1960s, it has

---

<sup>34</sup> Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), 262. This is not the only way Leopold can be read. For example, Norton views Leopold as an anthropocentrist who advocated an adaptive management approach.

become the dominant paradigm in environmental ethics.<sup>35</sup> In addition to turning focus away from an exclusive concern with human society, nonanthropocentrism has been made the basis of a comprehensive worldview that encourages ecologically-informed behavior and articulates justifications as to why such behavior is also in the best interest of human society. Furthermore, nonanthropocentrism can account for the metaphysical implications of ecology, as Callicott's article by the same name describes.

Both Callicott and Rolston base their nonanthropocentric ethics on the land ethic of Aldo Leopold.<sup>36</sup> Leopold offers the land ethic as the next development in human ethical evolution (a concept that demonstrates the influence of Darwin). Leopold surmises that humans must enter into a new relationship with the land based on the realization brought about by ecological science that humans are a part of a vast network of energy flows, a network that sustains not only the human community, but all communities of species. The upshot (as Leopold says) of this is that the land must become the primary focus of ethical concern, over and above human concerns about land use, whether they be recreational, agricultural, or habitat-related. Callicott and Rolston seek to flesh out the philosophical implications of Leopold's land ethic. They argue that the land ethic is different from traditional ethical thought; it is a new kind of ethic.

---

<sup>35</sup> Ben A. Minteer, "Unity Among Environmentalists? Debating the Values-Policy Link in Environmental Ethics," in *Nature in Common? Environmental Ethics and the Contested Foundations of Environmental Policy*, eds. Ben A. Minteer (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 4.

<sup>36</sup> See in particular Leopold's discussion of conservation and his articulation of the land ethic, Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1949), 247-264.



The difference of the land ethic can be located in its nonanthropocentric focus. Nonetheless, both philosophers rely on aspects of traditional ethical reasoning (Hume's moral sentiment for Callicott, and deontology for Rolston) to make their arguments.

Despite the common basis of Callicott and Rolston's nonanthropocentrism, there are some significant differences. The most obvious difference is on the issue of intrinsic value. Intrinsic value is the idea that a thing has value in and of itself. One of the earliest references to a theory of intrinsic value of nature can be located in the work of Albert Schweitzer and developed by Paul Taylor. Taylor makes the Kantian claim that a thing has intrinsic value if it is an end in itself, and then he argues that all living things are ends in themselves. Taylor's approach, often labeled as biocentrism, attributes value to individual beings. This differs from the land ethic, which Callicott states is "holistic with a vengeance."<sup>37</sup> For Callicott the rights and values of individual entities are necessarily secondary to the value of the land. But Callicott does not prefer the term "intrinsic value;" he opts for "inherent value."<sup>38</sup> The difference is based on the fact that value is a human concept. Things do not have value in and of themselves, but only in reference to human thinking. Callicott's claim derives explicitly from Hume's concept of moral sentiments, by which value and ethical

---

<sup>37</sup> J. Baird Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 84.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-163.

norms are based on emotional responses.<sup>39</sup> Although some might argue that Callicott's axiology is therefore anthropocentric, he counters that it is merely anthropogenic. The ethic that is developed from the moral sentiment is still nonanthropocentric.

Rolston disagrees. He argues that the natural world has intrinsic value. There is value in the objects of the natural world regardless of the human gaze. He develops this argument in his work *Conserving Natural Value*, where he moves through progressive arguments for the value of certain groups of entities culminating in the claim that the world has intrinsic value. The argument is strong, in fact, until this last claim. Rolston reasons, for example, that a bird consumes water, which contributes to its well-being. Since the water itself is valuable to or valued by the bird, the water is valuable. The bird is also an agent of values as it has its own sense of well-being. Therefore, the bird has intrinsic value.<sup>40</sup> This is an axiological condition that exists independently of human presence. Where there is the valuing of something in-itself, there is intrinsic value.

Rolston's approach is pleasing to many people, because he seems to avoid the charge of relativism that can be made of Callicott's position. Callicott's theory of inherent value can be said to be relativistic since it is rooted in the capriciousness of human emotion. Callicott (following Hume) argues that while this may be true in theory, the fact that basic ethics are so widely adhered to

---

<sup>39</sup> See *Ibid.*, 124-127.

<sup>40</sup> Holmes Rolston, III, *Conserving Natural Value* (New York: Columbia, 1994), 195.

confirms that there is an ethical foundation to the human experience. Rolston's position seems to sidestep this charge by claiming a suprahuman foundation for ethics. And, in fact, that is the problem with Rolston's position. It suggests that the human concept of value exists beyond human existence. Value exists regardless of the existence of that from which value is made intelligible. As a secular ethical philosophy, this is simply untenable. Rolston's argument is only possible if one also accepts a theistic perspective, that there is a deity which is the source of value. So we might say that Rolston's nonanthropocentrism is founded on a theocentrism.

Eric Katz has offered a different reading of the anthropocentric/nonanthropocentric debate. Katz argues that nonanthropocentrism does not need to be understood as an absolute ethical claim. Nonanthropocentrism does not need to be philosophically justified on the grounds of its ability to ascribe moral considerability to the natural world; that is, as axiologically true. Rather, nonanthropocentrism is "true" in the sense of its being functional. For example, Katz argues that implementing environmental policies in Third World nations runs into a conflict between protecting biodiversity and the just pursuit of economic development. "When the nonanthropocentric framework is introduced, it creates a more complex situation for the deliberation and resolution...This complication...actually serves to simplify the decision."<sup>41</sup> Katz's argument is also that nonanthropocentrism is more effective at changing and influencing human

---

<sup>41</sup> Eric Katz, *Nature as Subject: Human Obligation and Natural Community* (Lanhan and Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 158.

behavior than anthropocentric ethics are since it moves the focus of concern beyond the individual. Therefore, one should subscribe to a nonanthropocentric worldview as the most useful approach to addressing environmental problems. Katz, moreover, critiques appeals to intrinsic value as upholding an anthropocentric ethic.<sup>42</sup>

Katz's position has merit in its move to reframe the debate in terms more conducive to environmental policy. The protracted debate on intrinsic value between Callicott and Rolston, as well as the debate on nonanthropocentrism among various environmental philosophers has contributed to the sense that there is no way to move forward with a philosophically-informed environmental policy until these debates have been settled. Katz's position offers an argument upon which action can be based on a nonanthropocentric worldview without first having to resolve all the philosophical issues therein. However, Katz's approach still binds environmental policy to nonanthropocentrism, leaving little room for other perspectives.

### 2.2.2 Critiques of the dominant paradigm

Although we can point out how anthropocentrism and the land ethic have been dominant themes in environmental ethics, we are still no closer to taking a stance on what the goal of environmental ethicists is. In order to advance the discussion, Willis Jenkins takes up the questions: What are environmental ethicists trying to achieve? What should an environmental ethic do? He identifies three "practical strategies" in environmental ethics—the strategy of

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 69.

nature's moral standing, the strategy of moral agency, and the strategy of ecological subjectivity.<sup>43</sup> He states,

Organizing the field by its practical strategies differs from the usual taxonomic device of sorting theories according to their place on an anthropocentric /nonanthropocentric continuum. Parsing the field instead by morphologically distinct uses of practical rationality lets those discrete strategies sketch evaluative markers of adequate moral reasoning, and thus a formal shape to environmental ethics.<sup>44</sup>

Jenkins's analysis envisions environmental ethics as "a domain marked out by several distinct strategies, each proposing a kind of practical rationality with its own criterion of adequacy."<sup>45</sup> Characterizing environmental ethical positions as strategies of practical rationality highlights the emphasis Jenkins places on the practicality of environmental ethics (how environmental ethics can move a community to action). In Jenkins's words, "For an environmental ethic to be 'practical,' in other words, its readers must come away with some moral sense to their involvement with the extra-human world."<sup>46</sup> Jenkins's emphasis on the practical nature of environmental ethics is based on 1) his understanding of the field as a form of practical ethics (akin to bioethics and business ethics) and 2) the notion that for environmental issues to be meaningful to individuals in religious terms, these issues must be framed in some way that connects them to religious practice. Thus, he builds upon the work of environmental pragmatists, but argues

---

<sup>43</sup> Willis Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 41-57.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

that their notion of what is “practical” is convoluted and fails to account for different ways environmental issues are framed.<sup>47</sup> Jenkins argues that by focusing on specific environmental problems and defining what is practical as that which is directly relevant to the issue at hand, environmental pragmatists fail to account for other forms of practical rationality by which people come to view environmental issues as meaningful. Before evaluating this charge, let us look more at the environmental pragmatist position.

### 2.2.3 Environmental pragmatism

The environmental pragmatist approach to environmental philosophy is based on the pragmatism of Dewey, James, and Peirce, and further developed by philosophers such as Bryan Norton, Andrew Light, Eric Katz, Anthony Weston, and Ben Minteer. The thrust of environmental pragmatism is to get past the debates regarding the basis of the attribution of moral considerability to the natural world and non-human beings. As Ben Minteer notes, environmental pragmatism offers a “third way” for environmental philosophy, a way beyond the dichotomies of use/conservation and anthropocentrism/ nonanthropocentrism.<sup>48</sup> The key is to address specific problem-areas in a democratic fashion, to address to the needs and concerns of communities involved.

One of the earliest developments of the pragmatist position was made by Bryan Norton in *Toward Unity Among Environmentalists*. Norton first discusses the way in which environmental issues have traditionally been addressed through

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 36-39.

<sup>48</sup> Ben A. Minteer, *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmentalism in America* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009), 2-5.

the thought to be mutually exclusive positions of wise use vs. conservation. This dichotomy is typified in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century figures, Gifford Pinchot and John Muir. Norton argues that the fracturing and subsequent inability of environmentalism to direct environmental policy is the result of an overemphasis on establishing environmental first principles. Norton demonstrates that despite the principles upon which various environmentalists base their actions, the actions themselves (the policies supported) are nearly always the same. Based on this fact, Norton argues for a contextualized approach that seeks to first address environmental policy on the basis of a consideration of the various interests involved. The justification for the interest need not be an issue. Norton's philosophy is derived from Leopold's land ethic, but he reads it differently than Callicot or Rolston. For instance, Norton argues that Leopold's land ethic was anthropocentric. Norton makes an important distinction between "strong anthropocentrism" and "weak anthropocentrism," according to which the latter means that humans have the tendency to prioritize human welfare, but does not exclude consideration of the welfare of the non-human world. Norton argues that Leopold acknowledged several land ethics addressing a variety of interests—recreational, agricultural, ethical, biological, aesthetic, etc. The context of specific environmental issues should determine how these different ethics can be reconciled, not environmental principles.

This approach offers a way to conceive of religious approaches to environmental issues, as well. Since there are a variety of religious beliefs, there will be a variety of positions on the theological or philosophical basis of human-

nature relations. However, if religious leaders focus on the outcome of addressing policy (e.g., reducing carbon emissions), they can represent a vast majority of the human population with a unified consensus. The justifications for why that position is theologically “mandated” or important can be articulated to each community in its own religious language. The basic idea (and the one that I argue for in this dissertation) is that scholars of religion and ecology should attend to the rhetoric of environmental concern and not assume that the articulation of environmental concern should proceed directly from a single tradition’s doctrinal or theological commitments. In terms of environmental ethics, metaphysical arguments tend to miss the point. Andrew Light argues that, as environmental ethics is a field of applied ethics, metaphysical arguments do not translate into public discourse and therefore fail to contribute to improved environmental behavior. Light compares “rationalist motivational internalism” to “methodological environmental pragmatism.” The former assumes that “the truth of a moral requirement guarantees compliance for those who understand it.”<sup>49</sup> The linchpin for “rationalist motivational internalism” in religious environmentalism tends to be metaphysical proofs of the interconnectedness of all beings. Methodological pragmatism, alternatively, would not “re-engage the meta-ethical and metaphysical debates of environmental ethics, but rather to

---

<sup>49</sup> Andrew Light, “Environmental Ethics,” in *A Companion to Applied Ethics*, eds. R.G. Frey and Christopher Heath Wellman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 641. Light’s use of “pragmatism” here does not necessarily rely on the use of pragmatism that characterizes the work of scholars like Norton. Light’s use is rather more akin to Katz’s identification with pragmatism, which is to say, pragmatism as an ends-focused approach.



impress upon environmental philosophers the need to take up the question of what would motivate humans to change their attitudes, behaviors, and policy preferences toward those more supportive of long-term environmental sustainability.”<sup>50</sup>

The larger issue for scholars of religion and ecology relates to the development of methodologies for how to negotiate these two realms of discourse (the interreligious and intrareligious). Previous work on comparative religions does not offer many choices. Environmental pragmatism, however, in attending to context and rhetoric, can provide a sophisticated and relevant model of how this negotiation can be theorized. For environmental pragmatists, the question of whether nature is morally-considerable or whether anthropocentrism contributes to environmental destruction can be resolved in other arenas. And this is where Willis Jenkins’s critique of how environmental pragmatists define what is pragmatic appears to miss the point. He argues that Rolston’s attribution of intrinsic value to the natural world is a form of practical rationality and being practical, he moves the debate back into the theoretical sphere. However, debates over whether Rolston’s position is a form of practical rationality does not play into the specific policy issues that environmental pragmatists want to address. If we distinguish between practical ethics and applied ethics, we can better locate Jenkins’s critique.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 647.

<sup>51</sup> See Avner de-Shalit, *The Environment: Between Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3 n.5. De-Shalit remarks that this is a distinction that *can* be made, that between applied and practical philosophy. He

If we take environmental ethics as a form of practical ethics, then we would do what the pragmatists suggest: take a specific environmental case and discern which philosophical tools contribute to a solution. If we are working from an applied ethics model, then we'd first need to clarify our philosophical position and then attempt to apply it to specific cases. Jenkins's critique of environmental pragmatism is that it elides many ways of framing a problem, and this may be true if the pragmatists are interested in formulating theories to apply to environmental issues. But the pragmatist approach, being civic in nature and taking the democratic process as a given, seeks to involve as many people in the decision-making process as possible so that the outcome, being mutually agreed upon, can be put into practice. That is the basis for what 'practical' means in environmental pragmatism. For Jenkins, if Rolston's intrinsic value theory makes environmental issues meaningful for certain communities and individuals and so motivates them to address such issues, it can be practical. This approach can contribute to solving the problem of the disjuncture between theory and practice by reading theory as a form of practice. But this understanding of practice may not trigger environmental action; it has the potential to be practical but is not practical in itself.

---

labels environmental philosophy a form of applied philosophy, but from Jenkins's survey of the field, it seems correct to say that some philosophers take an applied approach while others a practical approach. Of course, the distinction could lead to the same posturing caused by Naess's coining of the phrase "deep ecology" as opposed to "shallow ecology", but perhaps the differing role of the philosopher in each approach might mitigate this. In applied philosophy, the philosopher appears to hold a position of authority viz. the community, whereas with practical philosophy the philosopher is one participant among many.

The above critique should not detract from what is most important in Jenkins's approach, and that is to demonstrate that concern with practicality is an undercurrent in both secular and religious environmental thought. The inherent practicality of environmental ethics has been asserted by those associated with environmental pragmatism and other environmental philosophers, as well.<sup>52</sup> This means that while there may be lively and crucial debates regarding the normative content of various ethical theories (what environmentalism should do), one driving force of these debates is the question of how to articulate an ethics that will have the strongest impact on environmentalism. Consequently, if we recognize that much of what is offered as environmental ethics is theoretical in nature, then it is useful to inquire into two sets relationships: the first between theory (the content of environmental ethics) and practice (the goal of environmental ethics) and the second between science, as the source of environmental information, and religion, as a source of environmental values. This inquiry will help us 1) identify the weakness between environmental theory and practice and 2) located the layers of environmental discourse that are rhetorically poignant.

### 2.3 The Theory/Practice Gap

Many environmental philosophers representing different strands of environmental philosophy discussed above argue that the goal of environmental ethics and philosophy is to provide a basis for environmentalism/environmental

---

<sup>52</sup> See *Ibid.*, 3; Katz, *Subject*, xv; Kirkman, *Skeptical*, 84; and Light, "Ethics."

practice. Yet why has environmental philosophy seem to have failed to have a significant impact on policy and behavior?<sup>53</sup> Although the theory/practice gap has been addressed by a few scholars, one difficulty that is apparent is in the various ways the terms ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ are defined and employed. For example, Anna Peterson addresses several levels of the connection between theory and practice in religious environmentalism. She critiques the dominant conception of the relationship between theory and practice: “Environmental ethicists need to abandon the idealist assumption of a simple and unidirectional relationship between ideas and practice, in which practice is always derivative or secondary to ideas and believes that if we get the ideas right, then the practices will follow.”<sup>54</sup> She asks why the professed ideas and values of environmental concern are not always reflected in peoples’ actions. The values and ideas people have about the environment approximates what she means by ‘theory;’ theories are organized sets of ideas and values. Moreover, theories are abstract and rarely based on ‘practice,’ which Peterson takes to mean “what people do.” Arguing that ethics based on theories and ideas does not contribute much to changing the world, Peterson advocates a practice-based ethics that emerges out of a change in

---

<sup>53</sup> As Michael Bruner and Max Oelschlaeger note, “in order for discourse to promote social change, it must achieve a hearing before a large audience. By this criterion, environmental ethics has not been effective discourse.” Michael Bruner and Max Oelschlaeger, “Rhetoric, Environmentalism, and Environmental Ethics,” *Environmental Ethics* 16 (1994), 383. See also Minter, *Refounding*, 1-3.

<sup>54</sup> Anna L. Peterson, “Talking the Walk: A Practiced-based Environmental Ethic and the Grounds for Hope,” in *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, eds. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 57.

how we live, a change which reflects, here drawing on David Abram, “true or right relationships with the more-than-human world.”<sup>55</sup> Elsewhere she describes environmental ethics “as a type of lived ethics,” whereby “moral systems” are “applicable to and livable in” concrete situations.<sup>56</sup> Her challenge to make environmental ethics a more active force in environmentalism is laudable, but it seems that the “talk” still precedes the “walk” (to use the colloquialism she titles the paper with.) How can we establish right and true relationships with nature, or establish a practical ethic without first establishing what a true relationship with nature *is*? Peterson does note that the emergence of a practice-based ethics is dialogical, with practice and thought evolving together, but it’s difficult to see how we can practice environmentalism without *ideas* about what that kind of action entails. So the problem is not so much with Peterson’s vision of a practice-based ethics, but with her broad interpretation of “theory” as environmental ideas and values.

Mick Smith takes up the theory/practice question in developing his “ethics of place.” He begins with a critique of “dominant forms of moral theory” (utilitarian, axiological, deontological), arguing that they are all implicated in the rationalization of theory, whereby theory becomes a tool of abstraction that reinforces environmentally destructive modes of living. The relation between

---

<sup>55</sup> Peterson, “Talking,” 55.

<sup>56</sup> Anna Peterson, *Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 4-5. This description echoes more of the applied ethics approach, though, than the practical ethics approach. But Peterson’s suggestion that practice and theory develop together aligns better with the practical approach.

theory and practice which follows from ethics as an abstract tool is “a relation by which theory claims to encapsulate and represent the essential features of moral activities and then reapply them.”<sup>57</sup> Smith objects to ethics so conceived: “The moral considerability of nature need not be a matter of discovering abstract criteria by which one can judge such valuations right or wrong in any absolute sense. Rather, ethical values need to be explained and justified in terms of their context and origins, their production and their reproduction in particular social and environmental circumstances.”<sup>58</sup> Drawing on Bourdieu’s notions of *habitus* and theory as reflexive practice, Smith advocates an ethics of place founded mutually on the cultivation of an ecological *habitus*, “a practical sense of what is significant and fitting and when and where it is so,” and the ability of theory to articulate this ethics, “to frame and construct a ‘moral field’ by re-emphasizing and re-inscribing elements of the prevailing social relations, giving voice to some aspects of the social (and natural) environment while repressing others.”<sup>59</sup>

Smith’s contextualized ethics of place restructures the theory/practice relationship by reinterpreting what theory is and should do in a way that is more useful for scholars and philosophers, those individuals whose work is given to articulating theories. But, like Peterson, Smith’s notion of practice is still based on a preformulated notion of what makes for good environmental practice—a notion that includes experiencing nature and developing right relationships with natural

---

<sup>57</sup> Mick Smith, *An Ethics of Place: Radical Ecology, Postmodernity, and Social Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 219. See also 204.

subjects and excludes following the dictates of technical, industrial society, but goes little further in offering a tangible account of specific environmental practice.

Jenkins emphasis on the practical rationality of environmental strategies implies that there is an intimate connection between theory and practice. He suggests that the theorizing of environmental philosophers can be the basis of practice-in-action. In this way, practice is reinterpreted to mean something like *praxis*, or the link between thought and action. This approach has been explored by Habermas, who addresses the theory/practice dichotomy by positing certain “interests of knowledge” as the linking factor between theory and practice.<sup>60</sup> For Habermas, there are interests which underlie the pursuit of knowledge (empirical, hermeneutical, and emancipatory) and connect the context of knowledge with the possible application of this knowledge. So these interests structure the way in which theories influence norms (here meaning practice). Combining the ‘technical’ and the ‘theoretical’ through the common root *techné*, Habermas argues:

Technical questions are posed with a view to the rationally goal-directed organization of means and the rational selection of instrumental alternatives, once the goals (values and maxims) are given. Practical questions, on the other hand, are posed with a view to the acceptance or rejection of norms, especially norms for action, the claims to validity of which we can support or oppose with reasons. Theories which in their structure can serve the clarification of practical questions are designed to enter into communicative action.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 7-9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

The analysis illustrates the practical character of theory, a method of discerning what we know and how that knowledge can inform action. In effect, ideas have a force (which Peterson mostly discounts) that can help clarify the contours of a given situation through the operationalization of terms and concepts which structure the way a situation can be perceived.

This notion of theory is not too different from how Smith defines theory *vis-à-vis* “moral fields.” But in order to achieve a practice-based ethics, one that arises from attending to the environmental issues as problem-driven situations facing a community, we must not succumb to first privileging certain actions over others (the error Jenkins attributes to environmental pragmatists), which is no different from the application of ideas or theories to situations (the error Smith attributes to current forms of moral reasoning). This latter, the application of theories to moral situations violates the requirements of developing a contextualized ethics since the moral demands of the situation become the object of domination by an external subject, which is to say that the moral contours of a given situation need to be considered in the decision making process.

Furthermore, for a practice-based ethics and a practiced-based use of theory, we need to avoid allowing every idea free reign in the process of moral decision-making. That is to say, although Rolston’s secular intrinsic value theory can be considered a form of practical rationality, it need not play out in situations where individuals motivated by this view are absent. By defining either theory or practice too broadly, we will be unable to discern the boundaries of specific



contexts and situations and thus unable to achieve articulation of what actions fit the ethical and moral exigencies of a specific situation.

Relating theory to practice takes on different contours when we turn more specifically to religious environmentalism. The communities of religious adherents tend to be more defined than the “public” with respect to their views of the world, society, values. At the very least, there is a common vocabulary (or grammar) already in place. The challenge is to know how to draw on that vocabulary to frame the environment as a religious issue. This will not ensure that all religious people will subsequently become environmentalists, but it offers a way of addressing whole communities rather than the individuals that make up the general populace. The theories that are advanced, are, *pace* Peterson, drawn out of the values a religious community holds. The practice aspect of the equation is the carrying out of actions by adherents motivated by the way in which the values (theories) are linked to those practices. The key here is in the way the linkage between theory and practice is articulated. It is possible that these communities will be in touch with other communities leading to the development of networks of environmentalists who are driven by a sense of “mission.” At least this is the hope of advocates of religious environmentalism. Such a resolution of the theory/practice gap does not resolve the problem that Peterson or Smith are engaging, but it does suggest that the problem is in part due to the scale on which they are working.

Two difficulties with basing environmentalism in religion can be immediately detected. One concerns the impact religious environmentalism can

have on environmental policy. There are religious lobby groups that do hold sway in policy-making, but by making environmentalism a religious issue people may feel that it is something that only pertains to their participation in the community. Just as many mainstream religious communities do not engage in political action, they would hold the same position with regard to their religious environmentalism. The other difficulty is perhaps larger in scope: the science-religion connection.

#### 2.4 Religion, Science, and Nature

I will not attempt to recount the science-religion debate here, but will confine myself to looking at how nature alters the landscape of the religion-science interface. With respect to the practical orientation of environmentalism, there is the question of how environmental/ecological science affects policy. Leslie Alm shows how environmental policy and science are poorly linked and so the science often doesn't directly affect the development of policy. He attributes this to several factors, one of which is the complexity of the policy-making process in the United States.<sup>62</sup> However, another challenge to incorporating scientific research into the policy process lies in the way that science is perceived. On the one hand, science is considered indispensable to understanding environmental issues.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, science only offers probabilities based

---

<sup>62</sup> Leslie R. Alm, Ross E. Burkhart, and Marc V Simon, *Turmoil in American Public Policy: Science, Democracy, and the Environment* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 29.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

on collected data, which counters the desire of policymakers to have an irrefutable objective standard of information and simply noting the relative uncertainty of scientific data can allow opponents to various policies to undermine confidence in the supposed objectivity of the scientific evidence.<sup>64</sup> These two aspects of the role of science in policy-making combine to problematize the use of science in environmental policy-making. Scholars have responded by calling on other groups of social actors to influence policy, one of these being religious communities and leaders. If the lines are drawn relating facts to science and values to religion, then any consideration of policy which characterizes it as more in line with questions of value should lead us to assume that religious environmentalism would have a greater impact on policy than environmental science. Conversely, Bryan Norton argues that we cannot and should not separate facts from values, since this does not reflect the way that ordinary individuals speak about their concerns. Facts are motivated by values and values are strengthened by facts. My point here is that the separation might in some cases be effective depending on the issue and the way a given audience has arranged their values to address the issue. It is possible that addressing an issue by relating it more to the values of a religious community can communicate the importance of the issue more effectively.

Leaving policy aside, one way to approach this triangulation of religion, science, and nature is by way of cosmology. For centuries, it has been common to view nature as a source of knowledge revealing universal laws. Proponents of

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 53-59.

natural theology relied on the “Book of Nature” as a source of divine revelation; if humans understood how the world worked, then they would gain insight into the nature of God, the creator of the world.<sup>65</sup> Although beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century natural theology was eclipsed by the rise of the natural sciences and religious questions were mostly relegated to a sphere of metaphysics and ethics, the notion that the natural world operates according to and participates in a moral system discernible by humans has once again become a common theme for some religious thinkers. This reemergence of natural theology (if we may call it that) is primarily due to the adaptation and interpretation of concepts associated with ecology and ecosystems science. Thinkers such as Sallie MacFague, Thomas Berry, and Tu Weiming have all proposed that the natural world (or the universe) possesses a moral sense and structure. They argue that, in light of increased environmental degradation over the last several decades, humans no longer maintain the right relationship with the Earth. They propose that to counteract environmental destruction, humans must recognize our place within the natural world and reclaim a harmonious relationship with the natural world. There are both problems and merits to this approach. The merits from an environmentalist perspective lie in the use of popular environmental concepts of harmony and balance to construct a rhetoric of environmental concern that is appealing to both environmentalists and those who are sympathetic to environmentalism but do not identify with the traditional left-leaning socio-political orientation of many

---

<sup>65</sup> See Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 19-24.

environmental groups. The problems with this approach likewise reside in the way ostensibly scientific ideas are appropriated and employed in different discourses. This appropriation of ecological science by environmental philosophers and eco-theologians has been criticized in two separate but interrelated ways.

One form of the critique states that science is as contingent as any other form of knowledge so that drawing universal implications from scientific concepts overextends the bounds which may legitimately be addressed by science. Stephen Toulmin charts the history of Western cosmological thinking and argues that scientific cosmologies are (among other things) myths that serve to order the world. This role of scientific cosmologies follows on the demise of natural theology, the field of knowledge which had hitherto been the transmitter of cosmological visions. Toulmin questions the wisdom of viewing the sciences as able to deliver pronouncements on the universe as a whole. He points out that science is comprised of multiple disciplines, each having its own context and set of questions, “[e]very scientific discipline is marked by its own specialized modes of abstraction; and the issues to be considered in each discipline are so defined that they can be investigated and discussed independently—in abstraction from—the issues belonging to other disciplines.”<sup>66</sup> The implications of this contextualized understanding of scientific knowledge for views of nature affect a good many theorists of religion and ecology. When science or any one science is

---

<sup>66</sup> Stephen E. Toulmin, *The Return to Cosmology: Postmodern Science and the Theology of Nature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 229.

turned to to explain “the universe” this is qualitatively different than suggesting science can assert a law universally; “the fact that a law is a universal one implies nothing about the universe-as-a-whole.”<sup>67</sup> Scientific discourse operates behind a veil of objectivity in which the observing subject, the spectator, is presumed to be absent. This is part of the strength of science as a form of knowledge. Langdon Gilkey notes that “[s]cience is our most reliable and, on one level, our most fruitful way of knowing”, but that “scientific inquiry represents an abstraction from all that is there, from the richness of the nature that it seeks to know... Therefore, when science speaks of the whole—of what ‘is really there’ or of ‘all that there is’—it is, strictly speaking, no longer science, though a scientist may well be doing the speaking.”<sup>68</sup> This limitation of science—that it is not able to speak of “all that there is” and still be science—implies that scientific cosmologies are either incomplete in scope or must be understood as something other than objective.

Gilkey suggests that we view science as hermeneutical in nature since scientists must interpret scientific data as historical and cultural subjects, thus yielding scientific theories that are equally products of cultures and histories. His interest is to inquire whether a scientific understanding of nature reveals the fullness of nature’s reality (to which he answers it does not), and if not, then is a religious understanding of nature possible in the modern world (to which he

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>68</sup> Langdon Gilkey, *Nature, Reality, and the Sacred: the Nexus of Science and Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 15.

answer it is). In order to “make sense” (in the way that David Abram uses the term to mean “to make real” or “tangible”)<sup>69</sup> of nature, Gilkey argues that we should have a hermeneutic trifecta of science, philosophy, theology since each approach addresses certain questions the other two cannot.<sup>70</sup> Gilkey is not exactly suggesting a Kantian distinction between science and religion, in which each addresses questions that are of no concern to the other.<sup>71</sup> Rather, he is offering an epistemological model of how to approach nature. Of course, this model is only meaningful to a religious individual (and perhaps only to a Jew or Christian), but he demonstrates the implications of the limitations of using science to ask questions about the *meaning* of nature and humanity’s relation to nature.

The other critique is directed at the elaboration of ecological concepts for the purpose of establishing a moral metaphysics (secular or religious). Several scholars have questioned the comparison between ecological science and religious cosmologies or metaphysics of balance and stability which seeks to demonstrate that a religious tradition is inherently or adventitiously ecological.<sup>72</sup> Mark Sagoff observes,

---

<sup>69</sup> See David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (New York: Pantheon, 1995).

<sup>70</sup> Gilkey, *Nexus*, 75-76.

<sup>71</sup> In Ian Barbour’s four approaches to viewing the science/religion relationship, he labels Gilkey as subscribing to the independence view, that religion and science address two independent spheres of inquiry. But in this later work of Gilkey’s he seems to fall into the integration camp. See Barbour, *Science*, 86.

<sup>72</sup> See Lisa Sideris, *Environmental Ethics, Ecology, and Natural Selection* (New York: Columbia, 2003). In David M. Lodge and Christopher Hamlin, *Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World of Flux* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 2006) several essays discuss the ways in

Ecological science has moved away from the foundational beliefs that nature possesses hidden order—that there are ecological “systems” or “communities” the “structure” of which “naturally” or by definition excludes human influence. The environmental movement nevertheless continues to look to science to support its faith that there is a hidden order in nature that human beings disrupt because of our “wrongness”—notably our greed or ignorance or intransigence. Environmentalists invoke science to defend traditional religious views about the relation of humanity to nature at a time when science questions those theoretical assumptions.<sup>73</sup>

Toulmin likens the use of scientific theories or terms to support cosmological assertions to taking a jig-saw puzzle piece out of the puzzle; it becomes meaningless. He continues by offering a constructive approach:

Our cosmological ideas about the universe, and about the place of humanity within that universe, cannot simply ignore [s]cience; instead they must surely be framed in terms that make the best possible sense when viewed in the light of our scientific results, without overextending the scientific concepts in question. We cannot afford to embrace the results of all the specialized scientific disciplines naively and uncritically; but neither can we dismiss them as completely irrelevant, in principle to the whole cosmological project. Rather, we need to look for a middle way: considering with more discrimination just what scientific concepts and hypotheses are directly relevant to cosmological issues, and with what qualifications they can be given wider application.<sup>74</sup>

Toulmin’s suggestion of a middle way seems to be realized in his discussion of the mutual ethical implications of ecological science and ecological philosophy, that both address the question of how humanity is to live upon the earth. But the

---

which Christianity must adapt to the new vision of ecology that is based on instability and flux. There is no assertion that Christianity is inherently nonecological, but what is implied throughout the work is that scholars must find an interpretation of selected Christian scriptures and doctrines that can meaningfully account for how flux in natural systems can be reconciled with Christian belief and practice.

<sup>73</sup> Mark Sagoff, *The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 194-195.

<sup>74</sup> Toulmin, *Return*, 11-12.



position that he argues most cogently posits hardly any legitimacy for the use of scientific concepts outside of their context. Toulmin explains, “[e]xtrapolating the restricted concepts and hypotheses of any science, from the self-limited domain of phenomena proper to the discipline onto a universal or cosmological scale, will therefore be to take an unjustified leap from ‘appearances’ to ‘realities,’ and so involve an illegitimate reference.”<sup>75</sup> To take scientific theories out of the specific disciplinary context and reapply them to another discipline (scientific or not) deprives the term of that which makes it scientific. And if a term’s scientific context is the root of its theoretical and practical authority, when it is merely transferred to another set of questions, it carries no more weight than any other concept used to represent ‘reality.’

Robert Kirkman develops a similar critique of the use of terms and concepts developed within ecological science by environmental philosophers, particularly the strand of environmental philosophy he dubs “speculative environmentalism.”<sup>76</sup> He states that “they [ecological theories] are useful in their contexts, but it is not at all clear that they have relevance in other contexts. Indeed, many of the models used by ecologists cannot be usefully borrowed by other ecologists studying a different level of living interaction, let alone buy

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 11. For his criticism of how “evolution” has been applied by philosophers, see 53-71.

<sup>76</sup> Kirkman defines ‘speculative environmentalism’ as concerned with three claims: “[t]he natural world is fundamentally relational, [h]umans have a moral obligation to respect and preserve the (relational) order of nature,” and “[w]idespread acceptance of the first two claims is the key to solving the environmental crisis.” Kirkman, *Sketptical*, 7.

philosophers seeking to inform an ecological worldview.”<sup>77</sup> The reason for denying the usefulness of cross/interdisciplinary borrowing lies in the history of the concept. As Kirkman explains:

Ecological concepts and theories have been refined and delimited by more than a century of scientific inquiry. While metaphysical organicism is universal in scope, whatever elements of organicism remain in ecology are not only tempered by their mixture with other metaphors but are also limited to a heuristic role in conceptualizing particular terrestrial ecosystems. The power and authority of an ecological theory has been tempered and limited in this way. Once it has been refined to fit a particular context, the organic metaphor cannot be lifted back out again and carried to other domains—or merged with metaphysical organicism—without losing much of its specificity and, as a consequence, all of its authority.<sup>78</sup>

Kirkman’s primary concern is to rethink how environmental philosophers approach their work. Unlike Toulmin, he does not try to find the common ground between ecological science and philosophy. Rather, he attempts to show that because environmental philosophers have tried to articulate an all-encompassing theory of what kind of worldview would solve the environmental crisis, they have tended to adopt scientific concepts to bolster the apparent objectivity of their theory, making it seem as irrefutable as scientific “fact.” The proper role for environmental philosophers is to facilitate public discussions of environmental issues and critically evaluate the arguments put forth for various positions, no matter how much or how little science is involved. Here we must be careful to note whether the use of ecology by advocates of religious environmentalism, for example, is conveying scientific information or if it is using ecology in the

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 76.

metaphorical sense to suggest an intimate connection between entities as a way of promoting a sense of companionship with the nonhuman world that can serve as the basis of a nonanthropocentric environmental ethic, an ecological ethic some would say. The line between these two uses is certainly a fine one, and it may not always be clear just which usage the author is intending. I believe we can safely assume that the more the author refers to stability of an ecosystem, the greater the likelihood that they are pushing a connection between scientific ecology and a more metaphysical ecology. This leads to the second common critique of using scientific ideas to support ethical positions.

Another critique of the application of scientific ecology to environmentalism is the degree to which environmental philosophers are truly integrating the most *current* scientific paradigms. Many environmental ethicists, both religious and secular, work from the assumption promoted by early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century ecologists that nature, in a natural state, is inherently harmonious and stable. From this assumption they argue that if we model human ethical behavior on nature, human societies will naturally achieve harmony among themselves and with the larger natural world. This paradigm has been challenged to the point of being refuted, with works like Daniel Botkin's *Discordant Harmonies* arguing persuasively that while there are varying spheres of regulation within natural systems, there is no static harmony that rules overall: "Wherever we seek to find constancy we discover change."<sup>79</sup> The concern for environmental philosophers

---

<sup>79</sup> Daniel B. Botkin, *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-first Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 62.

advocating the land ethic is how to apply Leopold's claim that "what is right" is based on whether it supports the stability of the ecosystem. If there is no stability, how do we define environmental value? Callicot has responded that we simply emphasize the integrity of the ecosystem, which encompasses both equilibrium and disequilibrium. In terms of religion and ecology, the concern is how to respond to the impact of the new ecology on the belief that the stewardship ethic is focused on maintaining the harmony of the ecosystem. What are the theological implications of the claim that all is in flux?

Lisa Sideris argues that when scholars of religion advocate the compatibility of scientific and religious worldviews by referring to the shared characteristic of harmony and balance evident in both ecology and religion, they are ignoring a host of facts about ecosystems that concern instability, predation, and flux. Sideris argues that Darwinian evolution and its concepts of natural selection have been ignored by many ecotheologians and environmental ethicists in favor of pre-Darwinian views of nature: "ecological theology tends to give priority to the concept of *ecology*—and a particular interpretation of ecology—rather than *evolution*."<sup>80</sup> Ecotheologians like McFague, Reuther, and Moltmann ignore the "ugly" aspects of Darwinian evolution, in favor of the implications that humans are part of the web of life, a web characterized by harmony. This leads these thinkers to advocate imposing harmony on nature, thus "saving" or "redeeming" nature, a move which Sideris argues violates basic ecological principles. The term ecology is used by these theologians and philosophers as a

---

<sup>80</sup> Sideris, *Natural Selection*, 12.

stand-in for notions of harmony, order, community, and stability. But these “ecological paradigms...are not only too vague, but too one-dimensional as well. They continue to capture only one aspect of nature.”<sup>81</sup> Sideris’s argument questions the adequacy of referring to an ecological theology or environmental ethic as scientific if it ignores Darwinian theories; if these philosophies are based on science, they are only partially so.<sup>82</sup>

Nonetheless, the fact that anthropogenic effects on the environment have put an “end to nature” is not refuted by claiming that natural systems at times experience instability, by claiming that there has never been a ‘nature’ that corresponds to human perceptions. Daniel Botkin, in fact, while arguing that there is no stability in nature, still insists that humans understanding this instability is critical to establishing a harmony between humanity and the non-human world.<sup>83</sup> Peter S. White goes even farther and argues that there is balance at the level of the multipatch scale, but this balance is contingent upon regularly occurring disturbances.<sup>84</sup> White’s analysis that humans should understand the balance in change leads to conclusions similar to Botkin’s—humans need to maintain a balance in the degree to which they affect ecosystems, whether or not there is an inherent stability or balance to natural environments. So, there is still

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>83</sup> Botkin, *Discordant*, 188-189.

<sup>84</sup> Peter S. White, “Disturbance, the Flux of Nature, and Environmental Ethics at the Multipatch Scale,” in *Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World of Flux*, eds. David M. Lodge and Christopher Hamlin (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 192-194.

plenty of room for scholars to consider what kind of ethics (secular and religious) would promote behavior that does not threaten or harm those processes that are marked by stability.

I argue that the human/nature relationship that scholars of religion and ecology are addressing is primarily informed by what Rappaport calls a “cognized model” of the environment.<sup>85</sup> This is an understanding of the environmental that is based on not only natural objects (this objective view Rappaport calls the “organizational model”) but on human values and beliefs. So, while Sideris argues that ecotheologians are incorrect in the way they characterize how a Christian sees the *environment*, I would counter that Sideris fails to account for the fact that these thinkers (and others in Judaism, Buddhism, etc.) are first of all concerned with understanding how a *Christian* sees the environment. This is the move that Anna Peterson emphasizes and the one which is of prime importance in any attempt to articulate a religious environmental ethic. Sideris’s own proposal for a Christian ethic of care draws heavily upon Rolston (whose theocentrism is somewhat in line with a cognized model) and ultimately is roughly similar to what Peterson proposes.

Finally, one of the most prominent criticisms of environmental theology and ethics derives from the so-called failure to observe the distinction between “is” and “ought,” also called the naturalistic fallacy—asserting that the “is” of nature provides a legitimate, normative “ought” for human behavior. Sideris, for

---

<sup>85</sup> Roy A. Rappaport, *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1979), 97-99.

her part, clarifies that she does not regard this problematic among the thinkers she critiques but states that they are simply relying on the wrong “is” to derive their “ought.”<sup>86</sup> Other scholars see this is an intractable problem for environmental philosophers. The implications for religion are that scholars no longer have the freedom to invoke natural harmony as the metaphysical correlate of a religious cosmology. This issue is more pressing for the Abrahamic traditions for which the created order is the result of divine action. But it is also important for Chinese worldviews which have been influenced by centuries of correlative thinking and a system of cosmic order based on the heavens (*tian* 天), Dao (*dao* 道), or the supreme ultimate (*taiji* 太極). However, some scholars have argued that Buddhism is well-equipped to respond to this observation of nature-as-flux, since a central tenet of the tradition is that all things are impermanent.<sup>87</sup>

In the next section, I will examine the intersection between the secular approach outlined above and approaches to constructing an environmental ethic within the field of religious studies (hereafter referred to as religion and ecology). I will look at how cosmological and normative religious studies approaches integrate or rely on nonanthropocentrism and why such approaches may reject or downplay its significance.

## 2.5 Religion and Ecology

---

<sup>86</sup> Sideris, *Natural Selection*, 27.

<sup>87</sup> See J. Baird Callicott, “The New New (Buddhist?) Ecology” *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 2:2 (2008), 166-182.

### 2.5.1 Anthropological beginnings

Studying the intersection of religion and the environment need not begin with looking at the field of religion and ecology, because the intersection has already been a subject of inquiry for some anthropologists for decades. In fact, we might even argue that anthropology began as the study of religious views of nature, taking E.B. Tylor's theory of animism as our starting point. But this does not capture the sense of ecology as the study of relationships between objects in an ecosystem. Even with this qualification, it can be argued that the field began with the work of Roy Rappaport and his study of the Tsembaga. Rappaport argues that religious rituals of the Tsembaga are crucial in regulating their resource use.<sup>88</sup> Other anthropologists who took similar approaches include Marvin Harris and Åke Hultkrantz. Leslie Sponsel refers to this branch of anthropology as "ecological anthropology." This work differs from what is associated with the field of religion and ecology primarily in the absence of any normative component to the work. Interestingly, Sponsel argues for greater involvement by anthropologists in activist issues: "a major challenge for anthropologists and other academics is to reach beyond basic research to actually apply knowledge and engage in advocacy to help protect indigenous religious freedom and its sacred places as well as the environmentally friendly nature of the

---

<sup>88</sup> Rappaport, *Meaning*, 27-42.



spiritual, cultural, and historical ecology of the overwhelming majority of such societies.”<sup>89</sup>

The *field* of religion and ecology developed much later than that of environmental philosophy and environmental ethics, although the earliest work in both fields is contemporaneous (e.g., the articles by Lynn White and Christopher Stone). Therefore, scholarship in the field of Religion and Ecology has inherited many of the debates from environmental ethics. This heritage is due in part to the legacy of Lynn White’s seminal article in 1967, which has delimited the ways in which scholars of religion think about the connection between religion and ecology/environment.<sup>90</sup> The first responses to environmental issues with reference to religion came from theologians refuting or agreeing with Lynn White. Afterward, articles appeared pertaining to every religious tradition that wrestled with the question of anthropocentrism as it pertains to the worldview of a given tradition. The dominant trend has been to side with White, as well as prominent environmental philosophers Holmes Rolston, III and J. Baird Callicott, in advocating a turn away from anthropocentric worldviews. But this move in environmental ethics has tended to divorce environmental ethics from environmental policy and resulted in making environmental ethics a discussion that takes place only among environmental philosophers. In religion and ecology, this move has resulted in the attempt to show by hook or crook that the religious

---

<sup>89</sup> Leslie E. Sponsel, “Anthropology as a Source of Nature Religion,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (New York: Continuum, 2005), 98.

<sup>90</sup> Lynn White, Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” *Science* 155:3767 (1967), 1203-7.

tradition one worked on was truly nonanthropocentric. As the conversation developed, religionists (theologians and other scholars of religion) turned to the arguments made by environmental philosophers and ethicists to build their own positions.

Another aspect of much of the early work on religion and ecology highlights ethics as the way in which religions can contribute to environmental thought. The importance of examining the anthropocentric bias of a religious worldview has hardly been ignored, and several attempts are made to advocate a nonanthropocentric approach to religion, with the religious traditions of India and China pointed to as particularly appropriate examples. However, the main positions offered primarily by Christian and Jewish theologians refer to the stewardship ethic or an ethics of care. One obvious aspect of these two ethical responses is that they are decidedly anthropocentric. Since both Christianity and Judaism maintain a special relationship between humanity and God, representative scholars are reluctant to entertain the possibility of a nonanthropocentric religious ethic of the environment. To favor interests of the natural world over human interests, for many, is tantamount to paganism.<sup>91</sup> Even Lynn White, a historian and not a theologian or philosopher, for all his invectives concerning nonanthropocentrism, concludes by endorsing an ethic of care based on the figure of St. Francis of Assisi.

---

<sup>91</sup> See for example Steven S. Schwarzschild, "The Unnatural Jew," in *Judaism and Environmental Studies: A Reader*, ed. Martin Yaffee (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 267-82. Moreover, Schwarzschild is adamant that Judaism has been an urban tradition since the sixteenth century and that environmental concern is irrelevant to the Jewish tradition.

Although there is a tradition of indiscriminate usage of the concept of ecology, and while a satisfactory definition of the term may be difficult to obtain, to use the term as a stand-in for interrelatedness or harmony makes the supposed dialogue of religion and ecology less a conversation of “dual logics” and more a semantic sleight of hand. I will look at three labels below—religion and ecology (emphasizing worldviews and cosmologies), religion and nature, and religious environmentalism—and characterize them based on the ways in which those who use the term to characterize their research approach this intersection between religion and ecology/nature/environmentalism.

#### 2.5.2 Worldviews and the Anthropocentrism Debate

The anthropocentrism debate has understandably given rise to questions of worldview. As humans continue to explore ways to address the environmental crisis—delimited by problems such as depletion of resources, severe pollution of water, air, and soil, the unquantifiable effects of anthropogenic climate change—scholars, scientists, activists, and community leaders are seeking ways to encourage humans to reorient their behavior towards more environmentally beneficial lifestyles. A religious response is becoming more common. Perhaps this helps frame environmentalism as related to one’s “ultimate concern,” or perhaps religion offers a source of community building along the lines of which a larger community can be created out of smaller religious communities, all of which share a common environmental concern. But what are the guiding

questions of this inquiry, and what are the aims of those involved? The central problematic as articulated by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim reads:

In trying to reorient ourselves in relation to the earth, it has become apparent that we have lost our appreciation for the intricate nature of matter and materiality. Our feeling of alienation in the modern period has extended beyond the human community and its patterns of material exchanges to our interaction with nature itself. Especially in technologically sophisticated urban societies, we have become removed from the recognition of our dependence on nature. We no longer know who we are as earthlings; we no longer see the earth as sacred.<sup>92</sup>

Elsewhere Tucker and Grim are more explicit about the contributions religious traditions can make to the enterprise of stemming the currents of environmentally destructive practices that have become so common in the past several decades. However, this passage is instructive because it illustrates what has become the basic focus of the religion and ecology field—humans must reconstruct a relationship with the earth/natural world based on the perception of the earth as sacred. But is this perception acceptable in every tradition? Is it possible for all religions, as Tucker claims, to enter an ecological phase? And if so, what would this entail for any singular religious tradition—any one of which is a complex of extensive historical, philosophical, social, and cultural factors? Tucker, Grim, and Tu Weiming have followed Thomas Berry’s lead in emphasizing that a change in worldview needs to take place. They couple this assertion with the observation that worldviews and cosmologies are intimately related, advancing the notion that the “ecological phase” of religion will arise out

---

<sup>92</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, series forward to *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation between Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), xvi-xvii.

of the recognition that the universe is a matrix of interrelatedness.<sup>93</sup> This recognition will give rise to a change in consciousness regarding the human place in the world. They argue that “[d]ialogue between religion and ecology can...assist in awakening a renewed appreciation for the intricate cosmological web of life in which we dwell.”<sup>94</sup> Such a change in consciousness will be supported by cosmologies which undergird many Asian religious traditions, although these scholars argue that the same resources are present in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, as well.

Some work has been done to downplay the seeming incompatibility of religion with nonanthropocentrism. From a theological approach ecofeminist theologians Sallie McFague and Rosemary Radford Reuther have attempted to account for ecological science by developing theologies that support holistic positions emphasizing the role of human action in maintaining and respecting the stability and harmony of the ecosystem. Although they ultimately advocate a modified stewardship ethic or ethics of care, they push the envelope of what might be considered doctrinally acceptable in the degree to which human interests are delimited by the health of the ecosystem (a concept that has begun to undergo some significant revisions). Needless to say, they draw heavily on Rolston’s work to push their ecotheologies towards a more nonanthropocentric position. Similar work has been done in Jewish theology by Arthur Waskow. Also, both

---

<sup>93</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter their Ecological Phase*. Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company, 2003), 9.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

Jewish and Christian theologians have turned to their mystical traditions as resources for developing a nonanthropocentric theology. Whether employing concepts of nonduality found in Meister Eckhart and Kabbalah will resonate broadly with Christians and Jews remains to be seen.

It is worth mentioning one approach which distinguishes worldviews and religions. Richard Foltz observes that the growing interest in the environment by scholars of religious studies reflects the recognition that questions of values and worldviews are important to environmental discussions. But Foltz states that the label religion and ecology may not, in fact, be the most accurate label for this new academic field, “since ‘ecology’ is term that religious studies scholars use differently than biologists, and ‘religion,’ despite explanations to the contrary, is likely to produce “unnecessary (and, in this case, undesirable) category restrictions in the minds of many people.”<sup>95</sup> Most of the chapters in Foltz’s book follow the same world religions taxonomy, but he includes chapters on Ecofeminism, Deep Ecology, and Third World cultures to show how worldviews can speak in terms approximating religious discourse but outside of the specific discourses of the world religions.

### 2.5.3 Religious Cosmologies and Narrative

Not every stance on religion and ecology takes ethics to be central. There is a current of scholarship that views cosmology as the central issue in articulating

---

<sup>95</sup> Richard Foltz, ed., *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003), xiv.

the connection between religion and the environment. Cheng Chungying offers a definition of environmental ethics that highlights the importance of cosmology:

As the goal of an ethics of the environment is to understand how human beings should relate to the environment *via* a true understanding of the environment, we may see how a metaphysical inquiry into the structure and process of the environment also constitutes a teleological inquiry into the nature of the environment in relation to man.<sup>96</sup>

Cheng's definition implies the normative claim that apprehending humanity's relationship to the environment has some positive transformative effect.

Cosmology, then, for some scholars provides a bridge between the structure of the universe and the human place in that universe. This position is rooted in the work of Thomas Berry and has been developed by scholars of Christianity, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Berry's central point, as he states in his work *The Dream of the Earth*, is that humans need a new narrative.<sup>97</sup> The old Judeo-Christian narrative of human superiority is exclusively anthropocentric and, therefore, no longer viable as a source of human meaning. The narrative that Berry advocates, dubbed the "universe story," is a cosmic narrative based on evolution.<sup>98</sup> This story, Berry contends, will evoke awe and wonder in humans when confronted with the immensity of the world in which humans are but one inhabitant.

---

<sup>96</sup> Chungying Cheng, "On the Environmental Ethics of the Tao and Ch'i," in *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment*, ed. Richard C. Foltz (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003), 209.

<sup>97</sup> Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 42; 123-124.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

Berry is clearly responding here to the criticisms made by White and others regarding the anthropocentric bias of the Christian tradition. Berry suggests that the alternative narrative must be evolutionary in nature and illustrate how humans are one specific development among a vast array of different beings that make up the cosmos. Berry does not see that such a cosmic, evolutionary narrative compromises a belief in the sacrality of life, since Darwinian evolution need not imply the lack of a spiritual essence of existence. As a Catholic priest, Berry's position does not deviate from that endorsed by the Church. But he does seem to venture beyond the prescribed catechetical ground by extending the implication of his new narrative to include a cosmic holism. In this respect, Berry come close to the position of Rolston, and to a lesser degree Callicott.

Mary Evelyn Tucker, a student of Berry's and scholar of Confucianism, has been a main proponent of the cosmological argument. She finds that such an approach is wholly consistent with the way in which Neo-Confucianism, particularly the philosophy of Wang Yangming, describes the relationship between ethics and human spiritual development. Tucker emphasizes that it is imperative for humans to have a transformation of consciousness, through which they come to realize that their individual existence is intimately related to the existence of all other things in a cosmic whole. Following the arguments made by Neo-Confucians, this realization of cosmic oneness will lead humans to inevitably act in accord with nature, nature here being construed in a cosmic sense. The apparent upshot of this cosmological approach is that it does what most secular philosophers are wary of: it derives ethical "ought" from an ontological "is." But



this is not a problem for Tucker, Berry, and others, since the universe has its own laws. When humans act in the interest of the whole, they are doing what is right. Actions issuing from the point of view of cosmic realization are considered to be naturally in accord with the structure of the universe. Since humans are part of nature, their understanding of this oneness means that their actions will uphold the stability and integrity of the [eco]system, to paraphrase Leopold.

Max Oelschlaeger and Anna Peterson have both attempted to chart a course incorporating the secular position, religious ethical position, and religious cosmological position. Oelschlaeger suggests, in *Caring for Creation*, that narrative is the key to formulating a religious articulation of an environmental ethic, “[t]here are no solutions for the systematic causes of ecocrisis, at least in democratic societies, apart from religious narrative.”<sup>99</sup> His approach is reminiscent of Berry’s, but he differs in the way he defines narrative. For Oeschlaeger, narrative is an element of language. The narrative is the source of the ethical imperative and not simply an onto-cosmic description. Moreover, the narrative contextualizes the metaphor he bases his argument on—“caring for creation.” Religious narrative carries a cosmological orientation since narrative is, for Oeschlaeger a part of religious discourse. Arguing that “[r]eligious discourse enables the sacred canopy, the overarching structure that grounds human beingness in a meaningful cosmos,” Oelschlaeger claims that the legitimating

---

<sup>99</sup> Max Oelschlaeger, *Caring For Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 5 (emphasis in original). See also 103.

narrative of creation justifies and catalyzes ethical concern for the environment.<sup>100</sup> In religious discourse, the environment attains cosmological ethical relevance. Oelschlaeger, like Gottlieb, is focused on those who share in the Judeo-Christian creation narrative, although he argues that every individual, religious or not, shares some kind of belief in a creation of some sort. This claim is weak in the context of Oelschlaeger's argument, since he repeatedly refers to the creation story in Genesis as his ideal case. But the argument is strong in the way he links religious narrative, meaning, interest, and action. He notes that humans often justify their ideological positions in the context of narrative; therefore, highlighting a common narrative regarding the natural world, as an object that warrants our caring concern, is the best way to ensure and motivate consensus on environmental issues. Oeschleager is focused on the cognitive effect of cosmological narrative, but the thrust of his argument lies in the rhetorical impact that the narrative can have. The importance of rhetorical discourse to Oeschlaeger's argument is a feature that I will take up in the next chapter.

Anna Peterson follows up on Oelschlaeger's narrative approach and incorporates a variety of views of what being human means, but focuses on revisioning a Christian theological anthropology. She argues that narrative is crucial to theological anthropology, the religious understanding of what it means to be human. Drawing on the same concepts of humans as members of a larger "household" found in secular nonanthropocentric views, Peterson argues that Christianity needs a revised narrative of human situatedness in the world. Such a

---

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 88.

narrative is crucial to revising the Christian theological anthropology and bringing it in accord with a Christian ethics of care. Peterson's narrative is built upon the foundation of a revised theological anthropology. From her analysis of alternative notions of self—drawing on non-Christian traditions, evolution, and theories of relationality, Peterson argues for a “chastened constructionism” that sees the human being as a product of its relations, limited by its corporeality, “in and of the world.”<sup>101</sup> Not only is our understanding of what it means to be human revised, but our understanding of the nature of the world is also altered. The role of narrative is that it can contextualize and make this revised anthropology consonant with a lived ethics; narrative offers a way to make ethics real and meaningful so that humans have guidance for how to live in this new-found universe.

Peterson's position is the most well-articulated and well-reasoned compromise between the inherent anthropocentrism in Christian theology and the nonanthropocentrism of contemporary environmental ethics and ecological thought. The limitations of her approach for a broad construction of religious nonanthropocentrism derive from the fact that her ethics of care is centrally located in Christian theism.

#### 2.5.4 Religion and Nature

Needless to say, the focus on cosmology and worldview is not the sole approach for scholars of religion and ecology. Bron Taylor, author of *Dark*

---

<sup>101</sup> See Peterson, *Being Human*, 185-212.

*Green Religion* and editor of the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, moves away from the “greening of religions” approach to highlight what he terms “dark green religion.” He claims that previous scholarship has tended to marginalize certain people and does not adequately account for the pervasiveness of a new religious worldview independent of the established world religions.<sup>102</sup> The predominant approach that has characterized the field in forums such as the series of “World Religions and Ecology” conferences at Harvard (1996-1998) and the Religion and Ecology Group in the American Academy of Religion, according to Taylor, tends to emphasize mainstream religions and traditions. Taylor points out that because the published volumes that were the product of the conferences, “did not consistently look to the margins, where religious innovation tends to be most intense,” they failed to live up to the goal of “a creative revisioning” set forth in the series forward of each volume. Using a “family resemblances” approach to religion, he seeks to promote a less normative approach to the field than that characteristic of the cosmological/worldviews model. Rather than addressing the recognized world religions, he seeks to establish “dark green religion” as an entity independent from animism and the ‘greening’ of world religions. Therefore, he argues that by only addressing the question of how established world religions can construct and articulate an environmental ethic (the normative approach), we fail to recognize and thus be able to describe the rise of ‘dark green religion’ as a socio-political force in the contemporary world. Taylor’s work broadens the

---

<sup>102</sup> Bron Taylor, “Critical Perspectives on ‘Religions of the World and Ecology’,” *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (New York: Continuum, 2005), 1375.

scope of inquiry and also tempers the tendency to reduce religious environmentalism to a branch of religious environmental ethics. To be clear, Taylor does not reject the contributions made by scholars working on the various ‘world religions.’ But he does argue that this approach fails to account for a vast and growing number of individuals who interact and respond to the natural world in “religious modes” (awe, reverence, etc.) but who do not identify with one of the major world religions or with any religious organization or institution.

Following these critiques, Taylor advocates the use of “religion and nature,” partly because this distinguishes his approach from the mainstream religions approach of religion and ecology and also because of the interpretive possibilities in using ‘nature.’ He examines the history and implications of various labels given to the phenomenon of religious concern for/with nature such as ‘nature religion’ and ‘green religion,’ to which he adds his own term “dark green religion,” which he explains partially through a fourfold taxonomy consisting of “Gaian Spirituality,” “Gaian Naturalism,” “Spiritual Animism,” and “Naturalistic Animism.”<sup>103</sup> These four forms of dark green religion represent different modalities of the human-nature relationship; none of them, however, are founded on the worldviews of mainstream religions. Taylor’s work suggests that one’s worldview is integrally related to one’s beliefs about the value and importance of the natural world and one’s environmentally-related behavior. But by arguing for the rise and importance of dark green religion as a social force, he offers a way to think about religion and nature that is at once practical and

---

<sup>103</sup> Taylor, *Dark*, 5-12 and 14-16.

intellectual. That is to say, there are beliefs, characteristics, and practices of dark green religion that can be identified and analyzed, but he also attempts to show that many environmentalists at all levels of social activism base their activism in a religious view of nature. In this sense the influence of religion on environmentalism takes on a new relevance, although the way we think about religion will need to broaden.

### 2.5.5 Religious Environmentalism

Roger Gottlieb has also offered an alternative path for understanding the field, which he labels “religious environmentalism.” He defines religious environmentalism as “one part of a global movement that seeks to integrate the most creative, humane, and hopeful parts of both secular society and religious tradition.”<sup>104</sup> His argument is clearly normative in nature, as he attempts to show how religion broadly construed, possesses the resources for advancing environmental policy measures through tapping into the democratic process, but, like Taylor, he emphasizes the need to attend to experience and motivation among communities for promoting and incorporating environmental concern into their religious and communal vision. Gottlieb’s work is unique in that it shows that religion can affect the environmental movement without having to affect a change in consciousness first.

Roger Gottlieb’s normative approach is similar to Katz’s work. Gottlieb argues that couching environmental ethics in the discourse of religious concern is the best way to develop an effective environmental ethic. Gottlieb emphasizes

---

<sup>104</sup> Gottlieb, *Greener Faith*, 80.

that the religious aspects of environmentalism offer a way of thinking about “human beings as more than simply their social or physical selves,” which makes humans (or rather human behavior) the focus of religious environmentalism.<sup>105</sup> This focus on human beings suggests an anthropocentric focus to his work, but this anthropocentrism is rather of the sort that Norton calls “weak anthropocentrism” since religious environmentalism is anthropocentric to the degree that religions are anthropocentric. Gottlieb directs his attention away from the concern with philosophical values, per se, and towards the role religion plays in society. He laments what he sees as a turn away from ‘nature’ and ‘creation’ to ‘the environment,’ as this turn signals a loss of the sense of the sacred in nature.<sup>106</sup> He is especially concerned with how religious discourse adds depth and urgency to what are commonly assumed to be social issues. He essentially states that the environment is *de facto* a religious issue, since for religious communities to fulfill their stated commitments to promoting human well-being, they must address the environment. Furthermore, Gottlieb argues that religion has been a valuable part of American democracy since the country’s inception, and so religious perspectives are vital to the process of policy articulation and implementation. The role religion plays in environmentalism in the religious environmentalism approach strikes a middle-ground between the cosmology/worldviews approach and Taylor’s “dark green religion.”

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 31.

His book, *A Greener Faith*, is culturally relevant to mainly North America and mainly addresses a Christian/Jewish American audience. In the chapter “Five Faces of Religious Environmentalism,” Gottlieb’s five representatives are all North American, three Christian, one Jewish, and one Native American (Sioux). But he discusses Buddhist groups in Taiwan and Sri Lanka, an indigenous African religious group in Zimbabwe, and mentions other religion-associated environmental campaigns outside of North America. These descriptions correspond to the institutional focus that is inherent in the cosmology/worldviews approach. Religious institutions have the authority to validate and promote the worldviews that are considered dominant for a particular religious tradition. The religious traditions that Gottlieb references, whether they be Christian, Buddhist, or indigenous, are promoted by religious institutions and have status as “world religions.”

But alternatively, Gottlieb refers to ‘spirituality’ as a mode of religious being that reflects an individual’s own religious sensibilities. Concurring with Taylor, Gottlieb notes that, in many cases, people refer to experiences of reverence, awe, and mystery being based in experiences of nature.<sup>107</sup> This might seem to be crossing into the realm of mysticism, but Gottlieb argues:

It must be stressed that that language of love, awe, and reverence, of nature’s capacity to heal and comfort, are not, as some might suppose, simply the province of poetic and private individuals...Rather, for many in the environmentalist community, these kinds of experiences of nature are

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 151.



essential to *why they became active environmentalists*, and to why they continue the struggle throughout their lives.<sup>108</sup>

Gottlieb's work is a good example of how and why religious ethics should account for environmental concerns without becoming entwined in ontological and metaphysical intricacies and without becoming overburdened by definitions of religion. Like Taylor, he provides ample evidence for the pervasiveness of environmental concern in religious communities and in the individual human concern for nature that goes beyond the organized and often mainstream religious community. One lacunae of the work, though, is in its focus on religious environmentalism in North America. He certainly refers to groups globally, but the way in which he defines religious environmentalism places it in the wider phenomenon of environmentalism, alongside (and sometimes overlapping with) secular environmentalism. But this definition of environmentalism, with its focus on the individual and the kinds of campaigns environmentalists engage in, raises the question of alternative religious environmentalisms, perhaps alternative, localized environmentalisms. This is not intended as a critique but is a natural outcome of a work that seeks to address such broad concepts and phenomena as religion and nature without confining itself to a single tradition.

Nonetheless, I find Gottlieb's approach appealing because it creates space for both mainstream world religions and alternative religiosities or spiritualities to be addressed under one heading: religious environmentalism. The use of the phrase 'religious environmentalism' is also felicitous in that it does not pit religion against environmentalism or nature, but seeks to circumscribe a mode of

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 153-54.

engaging in environmentalism that is informed by religious beliefs and practices, however those may be defined. It is superior to the worldviews approach, since worldviews are not often easily articulated or understood by individuals not only because they consist of sometimes unexamined beliefs and ideas, but also because any one individual may operate according to a *bricolage* of worldviews, not all of which are religious.

## 2.6 Examples from Judaism, and Confucianism

In the following section, I will briefly present how two religious traditions—Judaism, and Confucianism—have been analyzed with reference to the religion and ecology approach. This comparison should reveal that focusing on worldview alone, if one attends to the uniqueness of each tradition does not lead to a unified view of what is to be done; that is to say, there is no common path for the greening of the world's religions. By illustrating the differences between a Jewish ecology and Confucian ecology, I hope to show that for each religious tradition, scholars should attend to the operative concepts and practices. Not every religion contains the same resources nor do those resources interact in the same way. At the risk of misapplying a scientific concept: the chemistry internal to each tradition that might offer a solution to environmental problems must be seen in the conditions relevant to that mixture.

### 2.6.1 Confucianism

Confucianism provides a good example of how scholars use the worldviews/ cosmological approach to articulate the contours of a specific

tradition's environmental ethics. Confucianism presents an interesting case, too, in that the degree to which Confucianism is a religion on par with Western traditions is uncertain, with the question "who is a Confucian" being difficult to answer. On these grounds we might suggest that Confucianism is one part of a larger Chinese worldview. Following this model, there is some work which treats Confucianism alongside Daoism.<sup>109</sup> Finally, one of the major contributors to the cosmological position, Mary Evelyn Tucker, is a Confucian specialist.

In general the major concepts that scholars have offered as the foundations for a Confucian environmental ethic are *qi* 氣 (material force) and *Dao* 道 (way). These concepts entail a nonanthropocentric view of the world or, to use the term advocated by Tu Weiming: 'anthropocosmic.' These approaches affirm the Neo-Confucian vision that Heaven, Earth, and humanity (*tian di ren* 天地人) are ontologically unified by the shared principle and that all things are permeated by *qi*. However, apart from achieving sagehood by virtue of this transformative vision, how this translates into a practicable ethic is unclear. The presumption here is that a cosmological vision of ontological unity provides the basis out of which ethical behavior arises, and that one's actions are the natural result of one's ability to see this unity.

---

<sup>109</sup> See chapter six of Bruce Foltz, *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003), entitled "Chinese Religions." The chapter is comprised of four previously published essays, all but one of which describe Chinese religion as a singular entity. The one essay that distinguishes Daoism and Confucianism, by Mary Evelyn Tucker, still treats them as complementary—Daoism attending to the appreciation of nature and Confucianism addressing human society—both sharing the same cosmology.

In Confucian terms, cosmology connects ‘that which is above form’ (*xing'er shang* 形而上) to ‘that which is below form’ (*xing'er xia* 形而下). The connection between *xing'er shang* and *xing'er xia* suggests that the universe, although diverse, is ontologically whole, an argument usually made with reference to the presence of “principle” (*li* 理) in all things. Whether or not this is true of all Confucian thinkers, the ontological holism of the cosmos based on *li* allows scholars like Tucker and Tu to claim that how we ought to relate to the universe is based on the ontological structure of the universe. That is to say, in Confucian approaches to environmental ethics, the *is/ought* dichotomy, as averred in Western environmental philosophy, is unproblematic. The positions of Tucker and Tu, then, approach the inherent value arguments of Holmes Rolston, III, in the sense that inherent value in nature exists by virtue of the fact that all things are part of an ontological whole. A transformative realization of this wholeness becomes the goal and method of Confucian environmental ethics.

As further illustration of the how goal and cultivation are collapsed into one, Mary Evelyn Tucker identifies two aspects to Neo-Confucian philosophy, a ‘transformative ethics and naturalist cosmology’ as integral to the Neo-Confucian worldview.<sup>110</sup> The naturalist cosmology reaffirms the interconnectedness of all things and the transformative ethics arises out of a recognition of this interconnectedness. Based on this foundation, she claims that self-cultivation is a

---

<sup>110</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Touching the Depths of Things: Cultivating Nature in East Asia," in *Ecology and the Environment: Perspectives from the Humanities*, Donald K. Swearer, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University Press, 2009), 52.

deepening of the “basic sense of connection” between heaven, earth, and humans, a deepening that is compared to “planting and nourishing seeds” and other organic metaphors.<sup>111</sup>

From these descriptions, we can see how Tucker contextualizes the discourse of environmental ethics in the language of Neo-Confucian ethics. Since the images used to describe self-cultivation are naturalistic, the process of self-cultivation increases the sense of interconnection between one’s self and the natural world. It is unclear, though, how ‘seeds of virtue’ are nourished, nor is it shown how self-cultivation leads to the kind of transformation harmonizing self and cosmos.

Responding to debates in contemporary environmental ethics regarding the distinction between anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric ethics, Tu Weiming argues that Confucianism is ‘anthropocosmic.’ This term ‘anthropocosmic’ implies that humans are situated in a triadic relationship with the universe, or Heaven and Earth (*tiandiren* 天地人). Tu also states that “the Confucian way is a way of learning, learning to be human. Learning to be human in the Confucian spirit is to engage oneself in a ceaseless, unending process of creative self-transformation, both as a communal act and as a dialogical response

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 53.

to Heaven.”<sup>112</sup> This statement contains hints of both anthropocosmism and anthropocentrism. In fact, the beginning seems decidedly anthropocentric.

In addition to the characterization of Confucianism as ‘anthropocosmic’, Tu emphasizes the Confucian focus on apprehending the unity of Heaven, Earth, and humans. He refers to ‘forming one body’ with Heaven and Earth as a way to describe the process of moral cultivation: “In the metaphorical sense, then, forming one body with the universe requires continuous effort to grow and refine oneself...Selfish desires are forms of self-centeredness that belittle the authentic human capacity to take part in the transformation process of Heaven and Earth.”<sup>113</sup> Tu’s language in this passage clarifies why Confucianism is not to be construed as anthropocentric. Anthropocentrism prevents humans from achieving unity with Heaven and earth. To verify the anthropocosmic (or nonanthropocentric) position of Neo-Confucianism, both Tu and Tucker, along with several other scholars, turn to Zhang Zai’s “Western Inscription”:

Heaven is my Father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore, that which extends throughout the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions... The great ruler [the emperor] is the eldest son of my parents [Heaven and Earth], and the great ministers are his stewards.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Tu Weiming (Tu Wei-ming), *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 13-14.

<sup>113</sup> Tu Weiming (Tu Wei-ming), "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature," in *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment*. Richard C. Foltz, ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003), 215.

<sup>114</sup> Wm. Theodore De Bary, and Irene Bloom, eds., *Sources of the Chinese Tradition*. 2nd Edition: Vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 683.

Zhang Zai's passage is directed towards human society and the moral activity of the sage. The wording of the first section of the "Western Inscription" is undeniably consonant with an ecologically holistic vision, one that supports Tu and Tucker's anthropocosmic claim. The metaphysical orientation of the text, then, can be said to fit the anthropocosmic mold. Nonetheless, that ecological holism is neither the primary focus nor the concern of the text is clear when one looks at the whole text. The duty that Zhang Zai claims is incumbent upon him is to care for all *humans* regardless of what segment of society they occupy. The ethical thrust of this passage is clearly anthropocentric.

If a unified cosmology in which humans are one part of the whole is the framework of Confucian ecology, the main operative components of this framework which relate Neo-Confucian metaphysics to the world of form are *qi* and *Dao*. In a sophisticated and fascinating discussion of Chinese environmental ethics, Cheng Chungying states, "To understand the *Tao* and to follow the *Tao* is the essence of the ethics of the environment."<sup>115</sup> But in order to follow the *Dao* one must understand *qi*. "It is in understanding [*qi*] that one can see and grasp the subtleties of the environment *vis-à-vis* human beings. It is only on this basis (i.e., understanding the [*Dao*] as [*qi*]) that one is capable of formulating an ethics of the environment..."<sup>116</sup> Tu employs the concept of *qi* to explain that one's connection with the world, the potential of 'forming one body', is no mere metaphysical

---

<sup>115</sup> Cheng, "T'ao and Ch'i," 228.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

claim. The condition of *qi* being the unifying material-force of all beings entails that all beings are connected.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the encouraging vision that Tu and Tucker paint, basing an environmental ethics on Confucian cosmology is a project rife with difficulties. At the top of the list is the observation that despite the deeply engrained Confucian worldview, China's environmental history reveals a tendency towards environmental overuse and devastation. Mark Elvin's magisterial work, *The Retreat of the Elephants*, clearly demonstrates the failure of attending to only ideas. He concludes the work thus:

There seems no case for thinking that, some details apart, the Chinese anthropogenic environment was developed and maintained in the way it was over the long run of more than three millennia because of particular characteristically Chinese beliefs or perceptions. Or, at least, not in comparison with the massive effects of the pursuit of power and profit in the arena provided by the possibilities and limitations of the Chinese natural world, and the technologies that grew from interactions with them.<sup>118</sup>

Elvin seems to be saying that ideas and beliefs are important but do not completely determine how societies act in relation to the environment. A further step must be made in which one practices self-cultivation and strives to realize that vision of unity. The crucial question for Confucian environmental ethics is not that of cosmological vision, but how the process of self-cultivation seeks to transform that vision into practice. With respect to Confucianism, it is impractical to think that masses of people will adopt Confucianism as their spiritual guide and

---

<sup>117</sup> Tu 2003, 213; 215.

<sup>118</sup> Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 417.



embark on the path towards sagehood. Spiritually, Confucianism offers some powerful motifs that can challenge the techno-industrial worldview,<sup>119</sup> but lacks a defined leadership and community of practitioners large enough to carry out extensively visible change.

### 2.6.2 Judaism

In contrast to the dominant trend in the field of environmental ethics, the majority of works seeking to accommodate Judaism and ecology have not disputed the anthropocentric orientation of Judaism as a whole. Rather, they attempt to demonstrate how anthropocentrism is affirmed by the basic theological anthropology of the Torah and rabbinic literature. Although there is a degree of variety to the arguments made in favor of a Jewish environmental ethic, one can easily detect certain dominant themes—1) creation and natural history, 2) commandments, and 3) Torah and the land. A review of these themes below shows that worldview and cosmology, although central to the Jewish view of nature, are tempered by axiological and deontological concerns. Whether these concerns are constitutive of worldview, though, is uncertain.

The Jewish understanding of creation is the clearest example of cosmology being a central concern in Judaism. One of the most basic themes in Jewish environmental scholarship is the rejection of Lynn White's thesis that Genesis 1:28 purports to give humans "dominion" over the earth. White holds

---

<sup>119</sup> See John Berthrong, "Motifs for a New Confucian Ecological Vision," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, ed. Roger Gottlieb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 236-258.

this passage up as the linchpin of Judeo-Christian culpability for the contemporary environmental crisis. The responses to White come from all sides, effectively dismantling White's assertion. One move highlights the complexity of the creation story. While White refers to the "first" creation story, scholars draw attention to the "second" creation story (Genesis 2:15) in which humans are commanded to care for the earth, but are not given complete possession of it nor of any of its inhabitants.<sup>120</sup> Based on this passage, many scholars claim that the force of the command to "have dominion over the earth and subdue it" is mitigated by the command to "till it." Humans are not meant to do what they will with the earth, but are charged with its care. Based on this argument scholars put forth a stewardship ethic as the biblically correct vision of human-earth relations.

Further justification for the stewardship position can be found in the fact that humans are created last in the first creation story. One interpretation of this placement has been that humans therefore represent the pinnacle of creation, thereby making humans superior to the rest of creation. An alternative interpretation, though, recognizes that this ordering places creation temporally prior to humanity. In addition, creation is asserted by God to be good; that is, its goodness is intrinsic (to use the language of environmental ethics) and not based on its instrumental value to humans. This interpretation supplants the "great chain of being" model of human-earth relations with a triadic relationship of God-creation-humanity.

---

<sup>120</sup> Jeremy Benstein, *The Way into Judaism and Ecology* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2006), 36-42.

Another argument made in support of the stewardship ethic is that the second creation story depicts humans as made from the earth as are every other animal. In light of this common ancestry, humans are part of creation; they do not stand outside of creation. Furthermore, God initially gives *adam* the various animals as companions, which suggests that God considers animals worthy of companionship and thus beyond domination or instrumental value. The name *adam* is linked to *adamah* “the land,” a connection which further deepens the relationship between humanity and creation.

Scholars have drawn out the great complexity of the creation and have demonstrated that to lay the blame for environmental destruction on the shoulders of a few select words is sheer nonsense. In fact, Jeremy Cohen, in “*Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master it*”: *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text*, examines the variety of ways in which these lines have been interpreted in Western history, demonstrating that there is nothing inherent in the passage that must necessitate the interpretation White argues for; “Rarely, if ever, did premodern Jews and Christians construe this verse as a license for the selfish exploitation of the environment.”<sup>121</sup> This is not to say that there have not been individuals who have opted for this understanding of rightful maximal domination, but this is not the standard Judaic interpretation.

A topic closely related to the creation-based stewardship ethic is the whirlwind speech in Job. Few articles have dealt with the work as a whole, which

---

<sup>121</sup> Jeremy Cohen, “*Be Fruitful and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*”: *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 5.

can be cast in the light of environmental justice. But many scholars refer to the forceful statement made in the whirlwind speech. Essentially, this passage makes clear that if one takes seriously the creation as the work of God, it is obvious that humans can stake no claim to possessing any part of it. Creation belongs wholly to God. Humans are at best stewards of creation or simple guests. In either case, there is no justification for human domination of nature. To claim otherwise is to succumb to the same hubris that has been the downfall of so many other biblical figures. Aside from putting creation beyond the ken of humanity, the effect of this passage on the reader is one of sheer awe. If one contemplates nature in its complexity, how can one not be humbled in its presence? Moreover, the passage is helpful in obviating the need to argue for creation's intrinsic or instrumental value. For a person who views this text as scripture, this passage does not simply ask the reader to recognize *value* in nature. It is both simpler and more profound, in that it tells the reader to *recognize* nature.

A few scholars have explored textual evidence which suggests that Judaism developed primarily as a land-based tradition. These scholars begin with questions like: what was the environmental context of the early Israelites? How did they relate to the land and their surroundings? How did this relationship affect their beliefs and practices? To what degree did belief and practice likewise mold their environment? Is this natural history of Judaism relevant for Judaism today? The upshot of this line of inquiry is that they read the first texts of the Torah as natural history and not as sources of Jewish cosmology.

Theodore Hiebert offers the most convincing argument in favor of the importance of land in the development of the religion of the Israelites. Hiebert begins by addressing the claim that if history is taken as the biblical center (as it often is), nature is therefore rendered problematic.<sup>122</sup> Hiebert aims to prove that the Yahwist author was writing from a mixed agricultural society supplemented by a seminomadic pastoralism. He argues that the period of desert nomadism did not significantly shape the cultural practices of the Israelites. Hiebert concludes that Israelite religion was one in which the land provided the context out of which meaning was derived, and he suggests that Jews should reaffirm their connection with the land upon which the Jewish experience ultimately rests. However, this connection is based on history and experience and not cosmology.

A second theme is the observance of divine commandments (*mitzvot*). With reference to Judaism and ecology, scholars primarily focus on three commandments: “do not destroy” (*bal tashchit*), non-cruelty to animals (*tza’ar ba’alei chayim*), and *Sabbath*.<sup>123</sup> Scholars draw several implications from the commandment to not destroy, the most common being that humans are to act judiciously and with restraint towards the natural world, particularly in cases in which elements of human civilization (war, commerce, etc.) place the natural

---

<sup>122</sup> Theodore Hiebert, *The Yahwist’s Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>123</sup> See Benstein, *Way*, 93-101; Eilon Schwartz, “*Bal Tashchit*: A Jewish Environmental Precept,” in *Judaism and Environmental Studies: A Reader*, ed. Martin Yaffee (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001); and *Torah of the Earth: Exploring 4,000 Years of Ecology in Jewish Thought*, vol. 1, ed. Arthur Waskow (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2000), 96-102.

world at risk. To be sure, the applications of this commandment are varied and debatable. Issues arise such as how to reconcile conflict between human and nature's interests? Scholars commonly respond, and I think rightly, that a central element of this commandment is that the sphere of moral consideration is significantly wider than humans commonly think. This wider sense of the commandment does not go so far as to endorse an ecocentric ethic or theory of intrinsic value, but the broader implications that might be drawn from this commandment does invite one to consider how the commandment might be employed beyond the context of wartime in which it appears.<sup>124</sup> In other words, many scholars are aware of the moral and philosophical sophistication that observing the commandment not to destroy requires.

The commandment to observe the *Sabbath* is often used to explain how Judaism requires one to be mindful of the effects of overuse of the land.<sup>125</sup> The *Sabbath* requires that humans allow the land to rest. Ehrenfeld and Bentley even argue that the *Sabbath* is the touchstone of Jewish environmentalism:

Without the influence of the Sabbath, stewardship in practice is corruptible and unstable. For Jews, it is the awareness of the Sabbath

---

<sup>124</sup> This wider context of the commandment reminds me of the Norwegian philosopher and founder of deep ecology Arne Naess' concept of deep questioning in that the commandment requires one to examine the norms that follow from certain hypotheses which bear upon one's moral decision making and assess whether those derivative norms are consistent with one's ultimate premise.

<sup>125</sup> As with the commandment to observe non-cruelty to animals, this commandment has contemporary implications. One of those implications addresses agriculture. In his book *Dust Bowl*, Donald Worster describes how over-use of the land was primarily responsible for the Dust Bowl. Nearly all modern industrial agriculture has been equally destructive to the land due to over-use.

during time working days that can bring the realm of time and its accompanying sense of restraint and limit to stewardship. It is the Sabbath that defines the relationship between steward and Ruler. It is the Sabbath, ultimately, that completes and confirms the environmental wisdom of Judaism.<sup>126</sup>

In fact these three commandments, taken together, form a rather coherent Jewish ethics of sustainability. They raise the question of how we are to maintain resources (*bal tashchit* and *Sabbath*) while adopting practices (*tza'ar* and *Sabbath*) that do not diminish the quality of life (*bal tashchit* and *Sabbath*). I see great potential in further developing sustainable Jewish practices that are deeply and broadly rooted in tradition, are philosophically rigorous, and acutely relevant to contemporary debates and issues.<sup>127</sup>

A third theme that frequently occurs in the literature is the relationship between Torah, nature, place. Certain currents can be distinguished within this larger topic, such as issues of Jewish identity and the degree to which that identity is rooted in texts and thus disregards place, the impact of Israel on Jewish notions of place and, by extension, the natural world, and Zionism. There is not space to offer a thorough treatment of all four of these currents, but as a whole they give the impression that the Jewish view of nature is tied into a Jewish worldview. Taking these first two currents together, the dominant response is that a positive relationship with the Earth or nature is deeply rooted in what it means to be Jewish, based on the recognition that the Earth is God's creation. As God's

---

<sup>126</sup> David Ehrenfeld and Philip J. Bentley. "Judaism and the Practice of Stewardship." In *Judaism and Environmental Studies: A Reader*, ed. Martin Yaffee, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 134.

<sup>127</sup> The volume *Ecology and the Jewish Spirit* represents an attempt to further this.

creation, the Earth or nature is a locus for knowledge about God. Many symbols and allegories employ natural imagery. Humans, then, in the process of coming to understand what it means to be created in the image of God, should turn to the natural world as a source of information. That is to say, to be a Jew in the world is tied in with understanding God's being in the world, God's presence in nature. This position is labeled by several scholars as panentheistic, which is acceptable to these thinkers in contrast to the pantheistic view, which limits God to the world. There are clearly theological implications, then, in arguing that Judaism recognizes the world as a source of divine revelation. God is not solely transcendent but also immanent.

Such a view has drawn criticism. The most well-known essay rejecting this idea of divine immanence in nature making a relationship with nature a part of Jewish identity is Steven Schwarzschild's "The Unnatural Jew". Schwarzschild argues that being Jewish is definitively to be opposed to nature. God is absolutely transcendent and not in any way present in nature. The basis of this argument is rooted in Schwarzschild's commitment to a Neo-Kantian understanding of transcendence. Eilon Schwartz describes Schwarzschild's thesis thus:

Judaism is profoundly at odds with the natural world, a world which functions according to certain laws to which history is then subjected. Judaism sees the human being as transcending those laws, with the power to impose a moral order on an otherwise amoral reality. Through human reason, that which makes the human "in the image of God," moral thought



can impose its order on the natural disorder, completing the process of creation.<sup>128</sup>

Therefore, Schwarzschild rejects any position which suggests that Judaism is connected with a pantheistic worldview. Jews are, thus, in no way responsible for bringing their lifestyle in harmony with the natural world. To reinforce this argument, Schwarzschild points to the urbanization of Jewish communities since medieval times. Given this lack of a land, a place, a geographic home, what matters most, in Schwarzschild's opinion is the Torah. The Torah is that singular symbol of Jewish identity. The main relationship a Jew should cultivate, qua Jew, is a relationship with the Torah. The text is everything and the earth (at least with respect to Judaism) counts for nothing.

How have scholars responded to Schwarzschild? One response has been to claim that Jewish history is primarily an agrarian one. Jews only became urbanized when forced by external powers to relocate to the city. There is nothing "inherently" urban about Jews. Another response has been to marshal forth the textual evidence referred to above regarding the positive view of creation found in the creation story and Job. But the most problematic issue Schwarzschild raises, although certainly not the first to do so, is what nature means in the light of the revealed Torah. Does the Torah obviate the need to turn to nature to seek God? Moreover, does the Torah irresolvably problematize theological interest in the natural world? The traditional prooftext that

---

<sup>128</sup> Eilon Schwartz, "Judaism and Nature: Theological and Moral Issues," in *Torah of the Earth: Exploring 4,000 Years of Ecology in Jewish Thought*, vol. 2, ed. Arthur Waskow (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2000), 168.

Schwarzschild cites is the Mishnah *Pirkei Avot* 3:9. Schwarzschild argues that this mishnah clearly establishes the importance of Torah study over contemplation of nature to the point that a moment's distraction from Torah to admire a scene in nature is devastating. Surely, a cursory reading of this mishnah does not contradict this reading. However, as in the case of the *Bereshit* passage 1:28, there is a great deal more complexity perhaps as a result of the apparent clarity of the text.

These debates and issues raise the question of just how to define Jewish worldview. Marc Jacobs, in describing the character of contemporary Jewish environmental activism shows that there is no firm consensus among the various participants.<sup>129</sup> Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan notes that many Jewish environmental activists came to Judaism only after having previously worked with secular environmental organizations.<sup>130</sup> Different traditions within Judaism surely will have different positions on each of these issues and if scholars continue to narrowly focus on worldview and cosmology, they will cut themselves off from a wide variety of materials within each tradition that could potentially shape a tradition's environmentalism.

---

<sup>129</sup> See Mark X. Jacobs, "Jewish Environmentalism: Past Accomplishments and Future Challenges," in *Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word*, ed. Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 463-468.

<sup>130</sup> Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan, "Jewish Environmentalism: Past Accomplishments and Future Challenges," in *Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word*, ed. Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), xxxvii.

## 2.7 Conclusions

So is there any one methodology for the field of religion and ecology? If environmental philosophy (religiously-oriented or not) is to be practical, should there not be an approach that has the ability to address large sectors of a religious tradition? Or is the best approach to hope that each community will change its collective behavior? Certainly, scholars of religion and ecology need to move in the direction of developing critical methods of how to go about doing the work of religion and ecology, in the same way that religionists have gone about developing theoretical models of how to study religion. But we also saw that there is a strong current of practicality and applicability that animates much of the work in the field. The methods that currently dominate are often intellectually and philosophical stimulating, even spiritually intriguing, but the nagging question is what effect does this work have on solving present environmental problems. The ecotheological method (although it has not been described as such) helps us see ways of negotiating religious doctrine and environmental philosophical positions. The cosmological method is fascinating and sometimes inspiring, but it is difficult to see how it can concretely influence policy or behavior (short of a transformation of consciousness).

While these approaches offer helpful resources, several scholars mention the importance of how what people say about the environment is a key factor determining their environmental behavior. The work of McFague, Norton, and Oeschlaeger particularly highlight this aspect of environmentalism. Not only do the hermeneutical problems implicit in the field turn on how terms like ‘nature’,

‘environment’, and ‘ecology’ are defined and used, but the importance of language is central to the hope that religious environmentalism and environmental ethics will make a difference. Oeschlaeger and the environmental pragmatists make it clear that the first order of business is to effect change. This is epitomized in Light’s articulation of “methodological pragmatism” as an alternative to “rationalist motivational internalism.” What scholars say about the environment in ethical discourse, secular or religious, goes beyond just describing doctrines and problems. Language is used to effect change and transformation. But the critiques of Toulmin, Gilkey, Kirkman, and Sideris demonstrate that words cannot be tossed around and reapplied haphazardly.

Building on these approaches and arguments, I will argue that if scholars begin by analyzing how religious communities frame environmental problems, how they articulate the connection between their tradition’s (or other tradition’s) textual and conceptual resources, and how they communicate these connections to their communities, we can have a basis upon which to better compare different religious environmentalisms. That is to say, a rhetorically-based method informed by secular environmental philosophy, particularly that of environmental pragmatism, seems to offer the most efficient and effective approach to this project. It does not require that faith be compromised in order to advocate for specific environmental policies to be implemented. Additionally, it offers a model of how interreligious dialogue might be reconceptualized.

## Chapter 3

### RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTALISM AND RHETORIC

The problems environmental movements (and the environmental movement in general) face are both external (e.g., political and industrial) and internal (e.g., ideological and rhetorical). Yet, one common thread to all these difficulties is discursive—how environmentalism and environmental messages are communicated to concerned and unconcerned audiences. In this chapter I will propose that given this common thread, environmental rhetoric can offer an effective basis from which to develop responses and solutions to environmental problems. I will first demonstrate this common thread with reference to the issues raised in chapter two. Then I will introduce a reasonable and relevant definition of rhetoric which includes the elements of audience, identification, framing and rhetoric's relationship with dialectics. To illustrate how this characterization of rhetoric fits environmentalism I will analyze the work of two environmental philosophers, Bryan Norton and Arne Naess, and see how their philosophical positions reflect a deep concern with not only language but, more specifically, rhetoric. Both Norton and Naess have been greatly influenced by philosophers like Wittgenstein and Carnap, who argued for the importance of addressing language as it is used in everyday communication, rather than an idealized form of language derived from universal rules. This common background has contributed to both Norton and Naess being concerned with making environmentalism accessible to a wide audience. In the case of Naess, I will suggest that this approach provides a necessary corrective to the ways in which he

has generally been interpreted. I will also examine the latent dialects in various positions in one strand of environmental philosophy known as radical ecology. Concluding this chapter I will explore the ways in which environmental rhetoric provides a constructive and novel approach to thinking about religious environmentalism.

### 3.1 The Role of Rhetoric in Environmentalism

Language is not only a central concern for environmentalism and ecology for how environmental messages get conveyed, but the lack of clarity over the most foundational terms of environmental discourse (secular and religious) makes linguistic concerns central to the discussion. These issues are present in the work of a number of scholars covered in chapter two. The different names scholars give to the field religion and ecology demonstrates recognition of the impact linguistic choice can have. One rather early volume entitled *Postmodern Environmental Ethics* situates language at the very center of the project. Max Oelschlaeger explains in the introduction that postmodernism, marking the “linguistic turn,” has exposed the linguistic dependence and contingency of scientific knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Novel and creative approaches to environmental ethics, then, are inconceivable apart from a concern for the impact and importance of the role of language in constructing our scientific, religious, and social epistemologies.

In the previous chapter we saw that the question of language and terminology is not merely a cosmetic concern in environmental philosophy, but

also how the key terms are defined and the terms that are used go a long way to shaping the nature of inquiry. The differences between environmentalism, ecology, and nature and the way religion is defined creates boundaries that, while intellectually and disciplinarily necessary, can limit the ways in which the intersection of religion and environmentalism or ecology or nature is taken up. We saw how Kate Soper explains how the semantic conundrums in environmental discourse effect the way that environmentalism and the environment are understood and addressed. Concepts applied out of the context in which they have gained meaning can lead to false similarities. Max Oeschlaeger's work on creation narratives engages with language, specifically metaphor and narrative, as a source of meaning that can unify various, seemingly disparate communities. Many more scholars voice an interest in language as integral to articulating an environmental or ecological ethics.

Also interested in the power of narrative, Jim Cheney has advocated the bioregional narrative as an approach that cultivates ethically beneficial thinking about humanity's relationship with and existence in nature; "What we want then is language that grows out of experience and articulates it, language intermediate between self and world, their *intersection*, carrying knowledge of both, knowledge charged with valuation and instruction."<sup>131</sup> Bryan Norton, claiming that "we lack a unified, comprehensible vocabulary for discussing environmental problems as problems facing our democratic society" and "a coherent set of terms

---

<sup>131</sup> Jim Cheney, "Postmodern Environmental Ethics: Ethics as Bioregional Narrative," in *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*, ed. Max Oeschlaeger (Albany, SUNY Press, 1995), 37.

for expressing environmental values and for explaining and justifying environmental goals,” offers a revamped theory of sustainability.<sup>132</sup> Approaches employing discourse analysis seek to illuminate the various ways problems are defined and solutions offered, mainly with respect to environmental policy.<sup>133</sup> On a more expansive scale, Thomas Berry argues that what we need is “a new language” that reflects the interdependence of beings, a central concept in ecology, and a language that will cause an *experience* of this interdependence.<sup>134</sup> What Berry means by “a new language” is that our current discourse on the environment is based on difference and hierarchy. Carol P. Christ echoes Berry’s concern and advises, “As we attempt to rename the world, we must be careful

---

<sup>132</sup> Bryan Norton, *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 48.

<sup>133</sup> See John S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Maarten A. Hajer, *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>134</sup> Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (Berkeley: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 42. Frederick Streng has remarked that “*what* one knows is closely related to *how* one knows.” See Frederick J. Streng, “Language and Mystical Awareness,” in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, Steven Katz, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 142. Streng’s comment arises out of his discussion of mystical language. While I am not concerned with mystical language or experience, per se, Streng’s essay is pertinent in that he juxtaposes types of mystical language that have a descriptive function, with those that have a transformative function. The conclusion that Streng draws regarding this type of language, precisely that transformative language ultimately results in an ontological shift of the user of such language is similar to what radical ecologists are suggesting. The main difference is that experience for Streng (whether it is epistemological, ontological, or linguistic) is mystical, while for radical ecology it is ecological. If we know the nature of relationship with the environment experientially, we will know it more intimately. Our understanding deepens and evolves with the increased accuracy of the language we use to speak about the nature of the object of speech.



about the language we choose. Dualistic and hierarchical assumptions have shaped the conclusions of traditional theologies as well as the ways questions are posed.”<sup>135</sup>

Language is a broad topic, even when confined within a specific discourse such as environmentalism. But it is a crucial topic since it impinges on both ontological and epistemological issues. Ontologically speaking, what we say about the environment and human/nature (human/non-human) relations both affects and arises from what we believe nature to be. How we understand the terms “environment(alist)” or “ecology(ist)” impinges on what environmentalism means in word (semantically) and action (rhetorically). But even these ontological concerns are rooted in questions regarding our knowledge about the natural world, how we interpret and communicate our experiences of ‘nature’ and what we believe about the way nature should be. When nature is viewed as “other” it is an object of knowledge. But the way this knowledge is communicated to form communities of concern regarding nature depends on language. Less abstractly, as the success of environmentalism as a social movement depends on forming action-conscious communities of concern, the way in which these communities communicate their values, plans, and agendas internally and to other communities externally depends on the coherence, intelligibility, and persuasiveness of the language they use.

---

<sup>135</sup> Carol P. Christ, *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding meaning in Feminist Spirituality* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1997), 101.

Having established the importance of questions of language to environmentalism, the next question must be how we should approach language in order to contribute to clarifying environmental issues and working towards an ethics of the environment that is practical. As one dominant strand of environmentalism is an activist movement dealing with social engagement and environmental ethics is a form of practical ethics, if we are addressing this strand, we should employ a view of language that is equally action-based.<sup>136</sup> John Dryzek and Maarten Hajer have made significant contributions to our understanding of the linguistics of environmentalism through their use of discourse analysis, showing how language alters and constructs knowledge of environmental problems and possible responses. Hajer even ends with practical recommendations of how ecological modernization should be carried out in the context of social inquiry. Bryan Norton's pragmatist method of adaptive management goes further to use 'sustainability' as the hub around which his method turns, interpreting sustainability as a normative term that acquires meaning only when taken up by a specific community. What these approaches have in common, and the direction in which they point us suggests that, in order to make new connections explicit, we need to reorient ourselves to the link between how we think, how we speak, and how we act. In this chapter, I show how the study of rhetoric can help in clarifying the dynamics of this nexus of

---

<sup>136</sup> However, we should not forget that there are many strands of environmentalism, some are less activist-oriented. In this section, though, I am referring to environmentalism in its activist sense as opposed to the more scientifically-oriented 'ecology.'

speech, thought, and action. When we approach environmental language through the lens of rhetoric, making environmental rhetoric our analytical starting point, we will be better able to bridge the theory/practice gap that currently plagues environmentalism. Before examining religious and non-religious environmental rhetoric, I will first explain how I am using the term and develop a coherent view of rhetoric and the vital importance of analyzing rhetorical issues as first-order issues within religious environmentalism.

### 3.2 Definition and Strategy

Traditional definitions of rhetoric, mostly derived from Aristotle, tend to single out persuasion in oratory as the main concern of rhetorical practice. A more inclusive characterization of classical rhetoric might be stated thus: “the focus on rhetoric typically emphasized the *public, persuasive, and contextual* characteristics of human discourse in situations governed by the problems of *contingency*.”<sup>137</sup> Modern theorists of rhetoric have broadened and reoriented the field to emphasize the complex nature of audience, rhetoric of texts, and the rhetorical dimensions of a whole range of social discourses, notably the media and sciences. However, these new directions in the study and application of rhetoric still reflect to some degree the aspects of classical rhetoric.

I will emphasize three strategic aspects of rhetoric—audience, identification, and framing—that will help delimit the term and focus our later

---

<sup>137</sup> John Louis Lucaites, et al, eds.. *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999), 2.

analysis of environmental discourse. In addition I will argue that the practice of dialectic when partnered with rhetoric, can effectively establish a demonstrative dimension to environmental discourse and strengthen the appeal to audience and identification of a specific rhetorical strategy.

Just what rhetoric *is* is difficult to say, but Kenneth Burke, the most influential rhetorician of the twentieth century, in defining the human as a “symbol-using animal” and rhetoric as the essentially symbolic function of language, states that rhetoric is “an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.”<sup>138</sup> For Burke, symbols and language are what make humans unique and no human enterprise can be carried out apart from language. Following Burke’s lead, Sonja Foss states that “rhetoric is the human use of symbols to communicate.”<sup>139</sup> “Symbols” in this definition of rhetoric are not necessarily linguistic, but the vast majority of our symbolic communication takes place through language. It is for this reason that Burke refers to rhetoric as symbolic action. Distinguishing action from motion based on the intentional nature of action, Burke argues that rhetoric is the use of language that involves strategy. Another aspect of modern interpretations of rhetoric is that it is concerned not with truth or falsity but with meaning. Burke states that “wherever there is

---

<sup>138</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950), 43.

<sup>139</sup> Sonja K. Foss, et al, eds., *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, Third Edition (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 2002), 1.

persuasion, there is rhetoric and wherever there is meaning, there is persuasion.” Thomas Farrell also notes that “the aim of rhetorical judgment is to particularize meaning by instantiating and refiguring possible categories and criteria through the world of action.”<sup>140</sup>

Since rhetoric has been defined in so many ways, one must be careful to remain consistent. Throughout this paper I will rely on the work of Kenneth Burke. The concept of strategy for Burke is central. Burke claims that “any document...is a strategy for encompassing a situation.”<sup>141</sup> Essentially, it is the strategic nature of language that is what we call rhetoric. Burke posits rhetorical language as a type of action different from poetic language, which is also symbolic action but of a different sort. The difference between these two is that rhetorical action sets out ends to achieve, ends that can be reasonably understood as achievable, while symbolic action, although responding to some situation, does not attempt to realistically affect the situation. Poetic action represents a desire to change the situation but does not direct its efforts at altering it.

Speaking in similar terms, Lloyd Bitzer claims “rhetoric is pragmatic” because it always seeks “to produce action or change in the world.”<sup>142</sup> The

---

<sup>140</sup> Thomas Farrell, “Practicing the Arts of Rhetoric: Tradition and Invention,” in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: a Reader*, John Louis Lucaites, ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999) 87.

<sup>141</sup> Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*. Second edition. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 109.

<sup>142</sup> Lloyd Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968), 3-4. There are some similarities with Austin’s theory of speech acts, particularly the illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects of language. A similar analysis could

concept of the rhetorical situation illumines the connection between a situation and the subsequent discourse. Put another way, there is always a context, not only from which rhetoric arises, but to which it is responding. Discourse is rhetorical in so far as it is a response to a certain situation. Furthermore, rhetorical discourse seeks to participate in the situation and, ultimately, provides a fitting response capable of persuading an audience to accept a specific understanding of reality.<sup>143</sup>

The rhetorical situation has three elements: exigence, audience, and constraints. Exigence refers to some imperfection in a situation, some problem that arises. Of course, not every exigence gives rise to a rhetorical situation; Bitzer clarifies that only if the situation can be modified by discourse is it rhetorical. A natural disaster, for example, cannot be averted by discourse. The last component, restraints, refers to anything that has “the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the situation.”<sup>144</sup> Bitzer devotes little space to the role played by constraints in the rhetorical situation, and it is possible that the category is merely offered to explain why a discourse may fail to affect the desired result.

So, rhetorical action and rhetorical language are distinctive in their attempt to effectively and affectively respond to a specific situation. In line with

---

be done using Austin, although he does not elaborate on the strategic nature of language to the degree that Burke and Bitzer do.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 3-6.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 8.

traditional notions of rhetoric, such an understanding of rhetoric may evoke the sense of rhetoric as persuasion. Neither Burke nor Bitzer deny this connection, although they both qualify it. Burke raises the status of persuasion to art, which, like art, requires the development of certain skills but is also founded in the nature of language itself. Bitzer distinguishes the two by claiming that rhetoric is a discipline with philosophical justification; whereas, persuasion is not. I will discuss rhetoric as persuasion more below in its connection to identification.

### 3.2.1 Audience

Audience is a crucial element for both Bitzer and Burke. In terms of a rhetorical situation, there must be a specific audience to which the rhetor<sup>145</sup> addresses the response, otherwise the discourse is not rhetorical. The rhetor's response is intended to modify a situation by means of discourse, but the change is carried out by those whom the rhetor is capable of affecting; "properly speaking, a rhetorical audience consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change."<sup>146</sup> For Burke, language is always addressed to an audience (Burke states that two aspects of rhetoric are "its use of *identification*" and "its nature as *addressed*"), an aspect which must enter into the consideration of the rhetor if the rhetoric is to succeed.<sup>147</sup> The targeted audience provides the constraints on which images and

---

<sup>145</sup> Rhetor is a term that Bitzer and others use to refer to one who uses rhetoric in contrast to a rhetorician, one who studies rhetoric. Of course, this use is not universal among scholars.

<sup>146</sup> Bitzer, "Situation," 8.

<sup>147</sup> Burke, *Rhetoric*, 45.

*topoi* the rhetor will choose.<sup>148</sup> As Burke explains, “the rhetorician may have to change an audience’s opinion in one respect; but he can succeed only so far as he yields to that audience’s opinions in other respects.”<sup>149</sup> Burke refers to the need to meet an audience’s expectations as form and argues that the form of symbolic action is a key factor in its ability to move an audience.<sup>150</sup> This idea of form is based on how the rhetor manipulates *topoi* by performing “tactical procedures” in which the *topoi*, or audience’s opinion, are presented in a way as to minimize the content or meaning of the *topoi* and draw the audience into a attitude of collaborative expectancy through assent to the form of the delivery. According to this method a rhetor may acquire the audience’s assent to a proposition based on their acceptance of the form, regardless of whether they agree with the proposition.

Stephen D. O’Leary, in his book *Arguing the Apocalypse*, suggests that “viewing rhetoric from a dynamic perspective requires critics to note the subtle differentiations in the temporal constructions that render predictions relevant to a given audience.”<sup>151</sup> His approach to millenarian rhetoric takes the issue of time (as in his reference to “predictions”) as a function of an argument made to

---

<sup>148</sup> *Topoi* refer to those stock images a rhetor uses to persuade an audience. Burke equates these with the opinions or values of an audience.

<sup>149</sup> Burke, *Rhetoric*, 56.

<sup>150</sup> Burke term’s this concept “psychology of form.”

<sup>151</sup> Stephen D. O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: a Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 215.



persuade a “given audience” of a certain interpretation of scripture or view of the world. Seen in this way, time is not an immutable element external to the historical situation. It is a malleable device meant to evoke a desired response from an audience. But O’Leary shows that the way in which millenarian rhetoric is used depends heavily on the character of the audience and the social context impinging upon that audience.

Although not considered a rhetorical theorist, Bruce Lincoln’s discussion of the role myth and narrative, as forms of discourse, play in constructing “new social formations” demonstrates a deep concern for audience. He identifies two techniques that are employed: “ideological persuasion and sentiment evocation.”<sup>152</sup> Lincoln uses the term ‘ideology’ in the more or less conventional sense of an underlying sociopolitical force. Ideological persuasion, then, refers to the ability to achieve a dominant position for a given ideology. The concept of sentiment evocation is more important for Lincoln in the process of social construction.<sup>153</sup> He divides the term into two parts: affinity and estrangement. The point here is that persuasion and evocation both require an audience to take place. Lincoln argues that “we would do better to classify narratives not by their content but by the claims that are made by their narrators and the way in which

---

<sup>152</sup> Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 8-9.

<sup>153</sup> Lincoln states, “Finally, there is the question of whether—and the extent to which—a discourse succeeds in calling forth a following; this ultimately depends on whether a discourse elicits those sentiments out of which new social formations can be constructed.” *Ibid.*, 8.

those claims are received by their audience(s).” He later defines myths as “that small class of stories that possess both credibility and *authority*,” where authority refers to the ability to “mobilize a social grouping” based on the “*paradigmatic truth*” of the myth.<sup>154</sup>

### 3.2.2 Identification

Inextricably related to the importance of audience is the notion of identification. In addition to language as being that which is addressed, Burke asserts the importance of identification (elsewhere termed consubstantiality) between the rhetor and audience. Myth and narrative employ “stylistic identifications” to achieve their ends of constructing social formations, aspects of a text that provide occasions for establishing a connection between concerns the audience has and the concerns the text purports to address.

Burke’s continuity with classical rhetorical is revealed in the way he connects persuasion with identification. He acknowledges that persuasion is the main concern for figures like Aristotle, Cicero, and Augustine and remains a key feature of rhetoric (“Rhetoric is the art of persuasion.”)<sup>155</sup> In fact persuasion and identification (and Burke includes communication), refer to the same function of language. Burke does not replace persuasion with identification; rather he shifts the focus to identification, claiming that “[y]ou persuade a man (*sic.*) only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude,

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 24-25.

<sup>155</sup> Burke, *Rhetoric*, 46.

idea, *identifying* your ways with his.”<sup>156</sup> In connection with persuasion, Burke argues that the goal of rhetoric (or persuasion) is to have an effect upon the audience’s attitude, rather than needing to directly affect action.<sup>157</sup>

Burke readily uses the term ‘persuasion,’ but as we can see with the two aspects of rhetoric he identifies, he is more intent on using the notion of identification to explain the functioning of rhetoric. Burke’s definition of rhetoric as concerned with “inducing cooperation” highlights the link between identification and audience, since there must be an object to which the rhetor’s words are addressed and there must be an action, attitude, or opinion that the rhetor wishes to induce the audience to accept. However, identification can have different purposes. It can be an attempt to have the audience identify with the person of the rhetor. Or the rhetor can attempt to convince the audience to identify with an opinion or action (to make it theirs, so to speak). Or the rhetor can attempt to instill a sense of solidarity among the individual members of the audience (which, in turn, can serve either of the former two purposes). As an extension of the first and third purposes, it is helpful to note that another term Burke uses for identification is ‘consubstantiality’, the idea that the members of the audience (and rhetor) become “one substance.” There are clear parallels with Lincoln’s theory of discursive social formation.

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 55. Quoted in *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, eds. Sonja K. Foss, Karen A. Foss, and Robert Trapp (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2002), 192.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 50. The distinction is made because Burke recognizes that one may be persuaded to an attitude or position or opinion, but not have the means to act. See also 54.

One important caution that Burkes makes regarding identification is that it always implies division. On one end, if division did not already exist, there would be no impetus toward unity. On the other end, if unity is achieved in an audience, or if a rhetor succeeds in unifying an audience by persuading them to identify with a given attitude, opinion, or subject, the rhetor has created a division between the audience and those who hold contrary positions. This raises the question of what Burke refers to as the “agonistic” nature of rhetoric, meaning that it “so often implies the presence of threat or an adversary” and suggests that rhetoric seems never to be universal (in the sense that philosophic or scientific discourses are often thought to be purely rational or objective).

Coming back to the idea of environmental rhetoric, this point is quite important since much of environmental ethical discourse attempts to establish universal principles of ethical concern. While these principles may appeal to many and be logically consistent, in Burkean terms, it is unlikely that they will lead to any change in attitude to inducement to action. Without the necessary corollary of division against which the process of identification stands, such universal philosophical positions will likely to fail to be practically effective. Without identifying an audience, there is no possibility of division between the audience and that which is not the audience, and thus, there is no one to be persuaded.

### 3.2.3 Framing

Framing is a key concept in Burke’s thought. Although he does not use this exact term, his notion of language being bound by terministic screens is

nearly identical to the concept of framing. Burke first argues that the use of terms (or of language in general) necessarily directs the attention: “Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology is must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality.”<sup>158</sup> The terms we choose will affect how we “see” a situation. But Burke continues and asserts that “terministic screens,” as he labels them, imply that what we see is also the result of what terms we have used.

Not only does the nature of our terms affect the nature of our observations, in the sense that the terms direct the *attention* to one field rather than another. Also, *many of the “observations” are but implications of the particular terminology in terms of which the observation are made.* In brief, much that we take as observations about “reality” may be but the spinning out of possibilities implicit in our particular choice of terms.<sup>159</sup>

The choice of words, which audience is addressed, the tone, and the style of discourse all determine whether the rhetor will succeed in inducing cooperation in the audience. But these aspects of communication are also already products of the discourse.

In ways that approximate Burke’s terministic screen, some scholars are beginning to look at framing in environmental communication and the role it plays in affecting an audience’s receptivity and acceptance of environmental

---

<sup>158</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Language, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 45.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 46 (italics in original).

messages.<sup>160</sup> Benford and Snow in dealing with social movements refer to “collective action frames” as an “active, processual phenomenon that implied agency and contention at the level of reality construction.”<sup>161</sup> Robert Entman explains the process of framing by stating, “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”<sup>162</sup> Julia Corbett, analyzing specifically how environmental messages are framed, states that frames are implicit in all environmental messages and contribute to environmental “problem definition.” She further argues that “[f]rames facilitate communication because they carry a great deal of symbolic meaning and help organize and structure our world.”<sup>163</sup> Framing is relevant to rhetoric, furthermore, because it is largely a strategic act aimed at establishing mutual cooperation among members of a specific group.

---

<sup>160</sup> In fact, Burke also uses the term “frame” in his idea of “frames of acceptance.” This idea though does not parallel the contemporary use of the term as much as Burke’s “terministic screens” does, though.

<sup>161</sup> Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), 614.

<sup>162</sup> Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43:4 (1993) 52. Quoted in Julia Corbett, *Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2006), 237.

<sup>163</sup> Corbett, *Communicating*, 308.

### 3.3 Environmental rhetoric

In *Ecospeak*, a rhetorical analysis of the intersection of politics and environmentalism, the authors' state, "As much as the environmental dilemma is a problem of ethics and epistemology, it is also a problem of discourse."<sup>164</sup> Julia Corbett argues:

On the surface, efforts to effect environmental change may seem like battles over physical things like wilderness or air or fish. But in a larger sense, the communicative battle is over the meaning and value attached [to] those physical things, which affects their destiny. In essence, it's a struggle of rhetoric and persuasive argument and the ability to have your values and problem definition prevail and become the accepted cultural viewpoint, the new status quo.<sup>165</sup>

Scholars working on environmental rhetoric address nature and the environment across a broad spectrum of sources including literature, the popular media, and grassroots organizations. Scott Slovic shows how genre distinctions fail to capture the subtle persuasions and differing effects of rhapsody/epistemology and jeremiad/politics among American nature writers/environmentalists.<sup>166</sup> His analysis demonstrates the impact on the audience of choosing embedded rhetorical strategies (combining rhapsody and jeremiad) or discrete rhetorical strategies (separating rhapsody and jeremiad). H. Lewis Ulman

---

<sup>164</sup> M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline S. Palmer, *Ecospeak: Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 6.

<sup>165</sup> Corbett, *Communicating*, 280.

<sup>166</sup> Scott Slovic, "Epistemology and Politics in American Nature Writing: Embedded Rhetoric and Discrete Rhetoric," in *Green Culture Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*, eds. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 82-110.

shows how Aldo Leopold's rhetorical strategy in *A Sand County Almanac* drive the way in which Leopold transforms his persona throughout the book.<sup>167</sup> Ulman argues that the various personae Leopold puts forth aid others in recognizing the systemic value proposed by the land ethic that was the fruit of Leopold's many experiences.

Rhetoric can also contribute to how environmental concern is made meaningful. In the case of environmental ethics, rhetorically sophisticated formulations can provide a strong foundation to build an effective and meaningful environmental ethics, which might prove a fruitful strategy for religious communities as they seek ways to respond to environmental issues. Michael Bruner and Max Oelschlaeger criticize environmental ethics for its failure to identify and engage a larger audience, therefore failing to have any considerable impact on environmentalism, "In so far as environmental philosophy aspires to be *effective discourse*, then it needs to reconsider its pretense of producing knockdown arguments, philosophical foundations, and master narratives, and begin attending to the resources rhetoric offers."<sup>168</sup> They argue that environmentalism has suffered from a lack of "a metaphor or an alternative discourse paradigm that resonates with the lived experiences of non-elite

---

<sup>167</sup> H. Lewis Ulman, "'Thinking Like a Mountain': Persona, Ethos, and Judgment in American Nature Writing," in *Green Culture Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*, eds. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 65.

<sup>168</sup> Michael Bruner and Max Oelschlaeger, "Rhetoric, Environmentalism, and Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 16: 4 (1994), 387.



publics.”<sup>169</sup> Finally, Herndl and Brown argue that since environmental discourse is a “polyphony” of different discourses, rhetorical analysis can help identify the various strands of discourses within environmental discourse and contribute to a more robust understanding of how environmental discourses function and are used in society.<sup>170</sup>

### 3.3.1 Applying audience, identification, and framing

One key in finding a discourse or metaphor that “resonates” with an audience is the achievement of identification between the discourse and the audience.<sup>171</sup> As I have shown with reference to the work of Kenneth Burke, scholars locate the importance of identification as an aspect of rhetoric in the speaker’s ability to achieve consensus and forge a community, often in political contexts. This is no less true for environmental movements. According to Killingsworth and Palmer,

The political effectiveness of environmental rhetoric has thus depended upon a discourse’s ability to create valences, open links that attract individuals among the general public by realistically mirroring the experience of daily life...The working vocabularies of the old movements remain available; new discourses arise to challenge the old; new communities enter the debate as the effects of pollution are more widely experienced.<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 395. See also Norton, *Sustainability*, 50-51.

<sup>170</sup> Carl G. Herndl and Stuart H. Brown, *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 3-19.

<sup>171</sup> Benford and Snow remark that resonance as one factor in successful framing depends on three variables: “frame consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility of the frame articulators or claimsmakers.” See Benford and Snow, “Framing,” 619.

<sup>172</sup> Killingsworth and Palmer, *Ecospeak*, 25.

The success of environmental campaigns thus depends less, or at least no more, on funding and legal battles than whether the targeted audience identifies with the way in which the environmental problems and suggested goals are presented in the discourse.

Some scholars making this argument refer specifically to the question of framing. Robert Weller discusses the slippage between policy measures and successful programs to ameliorate environmental problems, with particular reference to Taiwan and China. He states that “policy failures here come when different cultural frames and modes of discourse fail to mesh.”<sup>173</sup>

We have already seen how Corbett presents the issue: “We see meanings of nature and environment constructed in all messages... Why these frames or labels matter to environmental communication is because, first of all, they appear natural and are therefore taken for granted. And second, they have the ability to powerfully communicate ‘this is the problem, this is who is responsible, and this is the solution.’”<sup>174</sup> But she goes on to argue that the way that environmentalism has been framed by issues like pollution and preservation has limited the effect environmentalism can have.<sup>175</sup> She argues that the power of the environmental frames includes wilderness but leaves out consumerism. Thus the current frames

---

<sup>173</sup> Robert P. Weller, *Discovering Nature: Globalization and the Environmental Culture in China and Taiwan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 157.

<sup>174</sup> Corbett, *Communicating*, 306-307.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 306-308.

that communicate environmental messages that environmental groups draw on, limit and compromise the movement as a whole. Corbett recommends an entirely new vision for environmentalism, “We need a new set of ‘articulators’ to communicate a fresh, broad view of human relationships and actions towards the natural world.”<sup>176</sup>

But from a communication standpoint, successful communication is not just about shifting a frame of reference and “talking” about the natural world in a different way. There is no magic bullet message or strategy that will transform the environmental movement and “save” the natural world. Given the public’s reaction to environmentalists, the hostile political environment, and the becalmed and coopted nature of some movement groups, what’s needed is an entirely new modality for how we think, speak, and act toward the natural world. What’s needed is a new vision.<sup>177</sup>

Her call for a new vision is respectable and may be correct, but issuing such a call is suspect based on what she says about the power of frames themselves. She states that frames are useful when they are stable and that frames provide a common means of understanding for members of a society. If the new vision she advocates is to go beyond frames, then how will that vision be communicated broadly? If it is a new frame, of what use is it until it achieves wide stability? It seems the better route is to take to heart Corbett’s analysis of frames and communication in order to develop a more robust environmental rhetoric based on existing frames. Rhetoric can help the activist (broadly speaking) create that sense of identity and so motivate an audience. But it can also help the scholar to

---

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 306-307.

analyze how the various elements of a given environmental discourse function or fail to achieve consensus among a specific audience.

Max Oelschlaeger sees environmental problems as deeply intertwined with discourse. He seems to answer Corbett's call for a new vision (but in a way that she might find suspect) by reframing the environment in terms of "creation." He argues that a legitimating narrative is needed to establish the importance of the environment in ways other than the market value of resources. He contends that taking the root metaphor of "caring for creation," seeing environment as "creation," can establish a non-consumer value for the environment. Creation as a metaphor for the natural world is powerful and people will accept since it is rooted in the legitimating authority of religious discourse. This basis also makes concern for creation meaningful and carries with it obligations to act.<sup>178</sup> Creation is an element of religious discourse that, Oelschlaeger argues, can unify many different religious communities and create solidarity. Since religious discourse is public discourse, these groups can then collectively support policy changes that oppose environmental degradation.

Oelschlaeger supports his argument very well, but as I pointed out in the last chapter, it is unlikely to have wide appeal beyond North American Judaism and Christianity. For example, there is no strong tradition of creation in the Buddhist or Hindu traditions that carry the same legitimating narrative of creation. I also suspect that the other groups he mentions, pagans and wiccans, will so easily put aside their theological differences. Nonetheless, Oelschlaeger's

---

<sup>178</sup> Oelschlaeger, *Caring*, 120. Sagoff makes a similar argument.

argument that discourse and rhetoric do offer valuable resources for instigating environmental action is cogent. The way in which the specifics of his approach will differ between cultures and religious communities should give us pause as to whether such wide consensus can be achieved.

### 3.3.2 Norton's *Sustainability*

One alternative to Corbett's call for an entirely new vision is Bryan Norton's approach in his work *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management*. Norton states that the problem facing environmentalism today is that communication between the various actors is insufficient. He argues that economists, philosophers, managers, and policy makers, as well as members of the general public have no common vocabulary. His position is built upon a pluralist, pragmatic, multiscalar method of environmental decision making that seeks to establish what is correct by communal consensus arising out of a process of public deliberation. His method of adaptive management can be traced back to a pragmatist theory of language, relying on the philosophies of John Dewy and C.S. Peirce. Norton observes:

The language we speak does not get its meaning by reflecting an inert and passive world "out there," beyond experience, created and ordered by a benevolent, all-powerful being. Instead, language gains meaning from the dynamic relations emerging within a constantly changing and evolving culture composed of purposive individuals in linguistic cohesive communication. Language is thus integral to a complex set of behaviors that have evolved within a community's day-to-day practices. Meaningful speech is reflective of social relationships; social communication includes many exchanges of experience and gradually results in cultural adaptation.<sup>179</sup>

---

<sup>179</sup> Bryan Norton, *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 78.

Beginning from this basis, Norton critiques what he labels the current dominant theories of environmental value that inform environmental policy discourse—economism and intrinsic value theory.<sup>180</sup> Norton identifies these two theories as the only two that profess comprehensiveness and connectedness. The former suggests that a theory encompasses all or most environmental values, and the latter denotes that all environmental values can be reduced to a select few principles. Norton shows how economism (the theory that all environmental values can be reduced to questions of cost and willingness-to-pay calculations) and intrinsic value theory (the theory that all environmental values can be reduced to the question of establishing noninstrumental value of beings) are set in opposition, greatly reducing the complexity of perspectives that could be taken on any number of environmental issues.

Having rejected the monism and reductionism of economism and intrinsic value, Norton proceeds to develop his argument for an empirical pragmatic understanding of environmental value. Following the pragmatist tradition, he allows that instrumental value, intrinsic value, and economic value are all legitimate methods of valuation. But he also argues for communal value as a notion that is commonly precluded in discussions of environmental value, which tend to turn on a contemporary bias for “methodological individualism.”<sup>181</sup>

Having established that whatever forms of value members of a community or

---

<sup>180</sup> See the discussion in *Ibid.*, 154-192.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 239-40. Norton states that the principle of methodological individualism takes the individual as the only object to which goods or benefits can be directed.

discussion bring to the table are legitimate, Norton goes on to explain, with reference to Habermas's communicative ethics and discourse ethics that solutions to environmental problems are worked out in the process of deliberation.<sup>182</sup> There are no uniquely correct answers, though, and the answers that are chosen are subject to continual revision based on experience of putting the decision into practice.

The basic assumption of the method that Norton devises is that there are no *a priori* values or solutions to be discovered. A community or society faced with some sort of environmental problem should seek the participation of all concerned parties and seek to formulate a practical response based on the persuasiveness of the arguments given. This process is two-phased and entails a reflective phase and action phase.<sup>183</sup> In the reflective phase the issues are discussed and debated, but also the various values are weighted, prioritized, and arranged hierarchically according to temporal and spatial scales. The action phase of the process sets forth what criteria will be used to guide the policies and actions the community decides to implement and take. Thus, to facilitate this process, Norton offers "sustainability" as a tool of communication that can bring together (but not necessarily synthesize) the value-oriented, fact-oriented, and pluralistic demands of environmental decision-making.

The rhetorical thrust of his argument for sustainability rests in the idea that the deliberations must proceed in terms understandable to an ordinary language

---

<sup>182</sup> See *Ibid.*, 277-90.

<sup>183</sup> For a discussion of these two phases, see *Ibid.*, 143-45 and 351-54.

speech community—experts and specialists need to communicate their insights accordingly. But this understanding of language goes beyond just having a term to describe an idea or method. According to Norton:

[B]y focusing on everyday communication—language used in everyday situations in which people are trying to act cooperatively—I have emphasized the multiple uses of language. Language is not just used to describe; it is also used to question, to deliberate, to persuade, to express emotions, to enlist allies, and perform commitments. *Sustainability*, as a term for communication in public policy discourse, then, can be judged according to its usefulness in that broader context, as well as for the connections we forge between it and more specialized theoretical and scientific discourses.<sup>184</sup>

Sustainability needs to be defined with flexibility so that it can incorporate scientific and philosophical discourses, as well as express the desires, needs, interests, and values of various communities involved in public policy.

So how does Norton define sustainability? Based on the above clarifications regarding what kind of definition Norton is seeking, he offers a schematic definition (one which “characterizes and relates the key components of a definition while leaving specification of the substance of those components open”), stating that “sustainability is *a relationship between generations such that the earlier generations fulfill their individual wants and needs so as not to destroy, or close off, important and valued options for future generations.*”<sup>185</sup> We can see how his definition sets boundaries for communities to decide what is valuable in the present, but what specifically is valued is left to the generation. His definition also clearly shows concern for future generations, but the connections between

---

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 361 (emphasis in original).

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 363 (emphasis in original).



generations (communal, national, global, etc.) is unspecified. It may seem like he is advocating a strict preservationism by stating that “important and valued options” must not be destroyed, but his pragmatism enables him to claim that although we cannot know for certain what future generations will value, we deliberate to the fullest extent possible, knowing that in doing so we have fulfilled our obligations. In addition, Norton emphasizes that sustainability as a normative term can only be defined more specifically in the context of each individual community (directing our attention to the importance of framing and audience).

Norton’s approach has much in common with Maarten Hajer’s reformulation of ecological modernization. Relying on a Foucauldian notion of discourse,<sup>186</sup> Hajer refers to “story-lines” and “discourse coalitions” to highlight the ways in which discourse works both to support institutional changes advocating environmental policy change and contrarily to reinforce current institutional policies that fail to substantively address environmental problems. In particular he seeks to demonstrate how ecological modernization—a environmental policy making approach that “suggests that environmental problems can be solved in accordance with the workings of the main institutional arrangements of society”—emerged as the dominant position in the nineties.<sup>187</sup> Hajer offers his “argumentative approach” as a way to understand how various

---

<sup>186</sup> Hajer defines discourse “as a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that is produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities.” Hajer, *Politics*, 60.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

policies and policy orientations (such as ecological modernization) emerge as dominant, an approach in which story-lines are central. This approach is quite similar to Norton's. Hajer acknowledges that many competing discourses are at work in environmental politics, representing a plurality of values and positions.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, each participant seeks to have his/her discourse be accepted as the basis of policy formation and so must persuade other parties to offer their support. The role of story-lines is to facilitate the communication of these positions. He states:

Story-lines are narratives on social reality through which elements from many different domains are combined and that provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding... The point of the story-line approach is that by uttering a specific element one effectively reinvokes the story-line as a whole. It thus essentially works as a metaphor... In other words, a story-line provides the narrative that allows the scientist, environmentalist, politician, or whoever, to illustrate where his or her work fits into the jigsaw.<sup>189</sup>

The role that story-lines play is to allow a way for disparate discourses to be organized into a meaningful conversation. Given this explanation of story-lines, we can see that Norton's use and definition of sustainability is just such a story-line. Norton's schematic definition of sustainability and his assertion that it is a normative term ascribe to sustainability the very same functions that Hajer gives to story-lines. But there is a slight difference.

Towards the end of his book, Hajer suggests that ecological modernization should be reinterpreted "reflexively," meaning it should refer to a process of

---

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 62.

public deliberation regarding environmental problems that incorporates both scientific and value discourses.<sup>190</sup> It is difficult to see where Norton's "sustainability" and Hajer's "reflexive ecological modernization" diverge. However, Hajer does not develop the way in which this practice would proceed with nearly the detail that Norton does. In addition, the term "reflexive ecological modernization" does not have the same appeal sustainability does. It is doubtful that the public Hajer wishes to empower by making ecological modernization reflexive would rally around this term. This is to say, it does not possess the same communicative efficiency that sustainability does. Interpreting sustainability as a tool for effective communication has the advantage that the term is already rhetorically rich and there already many popular avenues for articulating Norton's schematic definition of the term.

Norton insists that interpreting sustainability in this way allows each community to present the values held by its constituents and reach a common understanding. The audience for each community is, of course, the collective membership of the community including those who do not participate in the decision-making process. The term 'sustainability,' as Norton defines it, makes the argument that whatever choices are made and whatever practices enacted, there must be concern and commitment to future generations. In this process, it is inevitable that each group or interested party will attempt to make its case in the most persuasive way possible, using metaphors, images, and frames that resonate strongly with the largest number of individuals. One goal of this process is to

---

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 280-283.

provide a strong sense of community, both in the present and in the future. Although Norton emphasizes pluralism, the success of a community to achieve consensus (though not perhaps agreement on all issues) should lead to a clearer perception of the community's identity. The process of deliberation can strengthen identity of the community among its individual members as they become more proactive participants in the decision making process. On this account, one goal of sustainability can be stated in terms of identification, finding ways of framing environmental policy debates in ways that create "unity among environmentalists." Audience, too, is a critical concept for Norton. His appeal is to a large and diverse audience, made up of experts and non-specialists alike, all who share a common interest. He therefore supports the use of ordinary language as one characteristic of the form rhetorical appeal should take. As we can see, Norton's philosophy of sustainability is thoroughly rhetorical.

### 3.4 The Philosophy of Arne Naess

In order to show how rhetoric can help understand the way that environmental messages are presented, even in cases where rhetoric might not be readily apparent, I will now turn to Arne Naess's ecophilosophy and Deep Ecology. I will first provide a short overview of the main components of Deep Ecology, but highlight throughout where Naess's individual philosophy differs.<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>191</sup> Ramachandra Guha also points out the differences between the Deep Ecology of Arne Naess and "its American variant," which places most of its emphasis on wilderness preservation, paying little attention to social inequality. Ramachandra

Although recognizing Arne Naess as the founder of Deep Ecology is commonplace, the notion has only recently been challenged, but this is an important distinction to make in order to more clearly see the rhetorical features of his thought. Then I will present Naess's philosophy through a rhetorical lens to show how what has been understood to be abstract metaphysics is in fact intended to be a strong appeal to deepen one's concern for the welfare of human and non-human beings, an appeal which if successful Naess hopes will lead to the creation of communities working towards social transformation.

#### 3.4.1 Approaches to Deep Ecology

Naess coined the expression 'Deep Ecology' in a short 1973 article, which set 'Deep Ecology' against 'shallow ecology.'<sup>192</sup> In the mid-1980s many philosophers including Bill Devall, George Sessions, and Warwick Fox promoted Deep Ecology as a social movement, based on selected interpretations of some of Naess's ideas. Deep Ecology, like the larger environmental movement, speaks in many voices. In general, scholars distinguish between Deep Ecology as philosophy and Deep Ecology as social movement.<sup>193</sup> Eccy de Jonge classifies

---

Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation—A Third World Critique," *Environmental Ethics* 11 (1989), 72.

<sup>192</sup> Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Long Range Deep Ecology Movement: An Overview," *Inquiry* 16 (1973), 95-100.

<sup>193</sup> Some authors deal with Deep Ecology both as philosophy and social movement; others choose one or the other. For a focus on the philosophy of Deep Ecology, see Warwick Fox, *Towards a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing Foundations for Environmentalism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995); Eric Katz, *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000); Eccy de Jong, *Spinoza and Deep Ecology*:

Deep Ecology in four ways: “(i) as a deep questioning of the relationship between human beings and nature; (ii) as a metaphysics of ethics rather than an environmental ethics; (iii) as a political movement whose premises are both descriptive and normative; and (iv) as an activist approach to dealing with the ongoing destruction of natural entities.”<sup>194</sup> I will focus upon the philosophy of Deep Ecology as defined in (i) and (ii). But there are still distinctions to be made in within this rubric. One distinction is between philosophical content and philosophical method. To the degree that Deep Ecology advocates a process of questioning, it reflects Arne Naess’ style of doing philosophy, one which refers to subject and object and aims at understanding the nature of being of both. Therefore, we might say it is an onto-relational method of inquiry: ontological in that it seeks to uncover the nature of being and beings; relational in the sense that it explores the meaning of entities from the basis of their relationships with other

---

*Challenging Traditional Approaches to Environmentalism* (Hants; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); and Freya Mathews, *The Ecological Self* (Savage, MD: Barnes and Noble Books, 1991). For discussions of Deep Ecology as a social movement, see Bron Taylor, “Deep Ecology and Its Social Philosophy: A Critique,” in *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, eds. Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg (London and Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 269-299; and Val Plumwood, “Deep Ecology, Deep Pockets, and Deep Problems: A Feminist Ecosocialist Analysis,” in *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, eds. Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg (London and Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 59-84.

<sup>194</sup> Ecce De Jong, *Spinoza and Deep Ecology: Challenging Traditional Approaches to Environmentalism* (Hants; Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 2-3. The sometimes violent ways in which the fourth point has manifested has garnered the phrase deep ecology quite a bit of criticism and has led its supporters to work to more carefully define deep ecology along the principles of the previous three modes.

entities. This differs from other styles which examine only the object of inquiry or which are epistemological in nature.

In terms of philosophical content, Deep Ecology is primarily concerned with ontology. “It is a philosophy that focuses on the fundamental ontological interrelatedness and identification of all life forms, natural objects, and ecosystems.”<sup>195</sup> In both these respects, method and content, Deep Ecology has been described as totalizing, meaning it does not address solely social or psychological phenomena; rather, “it is a *cosmology* or a *world view*.”<sup>196</sup> Arne Naess has complicated the matter by coining the term “ecosophy,” which he argues is different from the philosophy of Deep Ecology. An ecosophy is essentially an ecological philosophy that serves as the basis of individual action. According to Naess, it is the specific expression of an individual's deep ecological understanding.<sup>197</sup>

#### 3.4.2 Loose derivation, deep questioning

In addition to the fourfold division of Deep Ecology offered by de Jong, Harold Glasser rightly argues that it is important to distinguish among the “Deep Ecology Approach” (DEA), Arne Naess’s Ecosophy T, and the Deep Ecology

---

<sup>195</sup> Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg, eds., *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), xiv.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> The most well-known ecosophy is Arne Naess' own Ecosophy T, which some people claim is no different from Deep Ecology itself, although Naess has insisted that Ecosophy T is merely his own interpretation of Deep Ecology philosophy.

movement.<sup>198</sup> Glasser uses the phrase “Deep Ecological Approach” to identify Naess’s general style of doing philosophy, which is partly based on “loose derivation” and “deep questioning.” This twofold method moves between norms and hypotheses to link ultimate premises with concrete actions. Ecosophy T is Naess’s particular application of the DEA, beginning with the norm of “Self-realization!”<sup>199</sup> Naess insists that each individual should work to express their own ecosophy as fully as possible. Both the DEA and Ecosophy T should be distinguished from the Deep Ecology movement, which refers to “the loose group of individuals who endorse the deep ecology platform (but may not employ the DEA).”<sup>200</sup> Related to the Deep Ecology movement is the Deep Ecology Platform (DEP) that was devised by Arne Naess and George Sessions in 1984 and attempts to organize the basic beliefs of a variety of supporters of Deep Ecology ideas in an eight-point statement.<sup>201</sup> The DEP is not meant to explain the philosophical

---

<sup>198</sup> Harold Glasser, “Demystifying the Critiques of Deep Ecology,” in *Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Michael Zimmerman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 204. Glasser’s explanation of the DEA can be found on pages 210-214.

<sup>199</sup> Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle*, trans. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 42. For Naess’s explication of Ecosophy T, see 163-210. The use of an exclamation point signifies a norm as opposed to a hypothesis.

<sup>200</sup> Glasser, “Demystifying,” 204.

<sup>201</sup> The platform consists of the following: 1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have intrinsic value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes. 2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves. 3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs. 4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a



principles of Deep Ecology; it is simply a set of guidelines out of which many groups can further elaborate their own programs of action.<sup>202</sup> Having delineated the forms and strands of Deep Ecology, I will now turn to a description of the broad philosophical position of Deep Ecology.

### 3.4.3 Ontology

Deep ecologists<sup>203</sup> see the problem of ecological destruction wholly in terms of ontology or worldview. They claim that an anthropocentric worldview leads humans to see nature as “other” and, therefore, as something which exists solely to be appropriated however humans deem necessary. The development of social institutions which enable the domination of some beings by others is more symptomatic of anthropocentrism than constitutive of the root cause. Arne Naess

---

substantially smaller human population. The flourishing of non-human life *requires* a smaller human population. 5. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening. 6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present. 7. The ideological change will be mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between bigness and greatness. 8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes. See Arne Naess, “The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects,” in *Deep Ecology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambala, 1995), 68. The eight points of the platform have been somewhat revised by Naess over the years, but the basic thrust of each has remained constant.

<sup>202</sup> Arne Naess, “The ‘Eight Points’ Revisited,” in *Deep Ecology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambala, 1995), 220.

<sup>203</sup> Although the terms “Deep Ecologist” and “Social Ecologist” are somewhat clumsy, I will use them throughout the paper because it is structurally parallel to the commonly accepted term “Ecofeminist.” The use of ecologist here, though, is not to be confused with what ecologist means when used on its own, which is akin to a biologist. See above p. 20-21.

uses a hypothetical situation involving a developer and a conservationist who see a forest from two different ways to illustrate the primacy of ontology within ecological philosophy: “*The difference between the antagonists [the developer and conservationist] is one rather of ontology than of ethics.* They may have fundamental ethical prescriptions in common, but apply them differently because they see and experience reality so differently. They both use the single term ‘forest,’ but referring to different entities.”<sup>204</sup> Naess goes on to explain that, on the one hand, the conservationist’s experience of the forest reflects the perception of the forest as a gestalt. The developer, on the other hand, does not experience the forest gestalt, only the presence of many individual trees. For Naess, the failure to experience gestalts strikes at the heart of the ontological problem. To experience gestalts is to understand things in a relational way. To begin thinking in terms of gestalts is the goal Naess sets out for Deep Ecology. Although gestalts and ontology cover what is most essential to the philosophy of Deep Ecology, there are three other concepts that proponents of Deep Ecology endorse: self-realization, non-anthropocentrism, and unity in diversity.

#### 3.4.4 Self-realization, Identification, Unity-in-diversity

Self-realization is the term Naess places in square one of his own ecophilosophy, labeled Ecosophy T; “*self-realization* is an adequate key-term expression one would use to answer the question of the ultimate goal of life.”<sup>205</sup>

---

<sup>204</sup> Naess, *Ecology*, 66 (emphasis in original).

<sup>205</sup> Arne Naess, “Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World,” in *Deep Ecology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambala, 1995), 237.

Naess clarifies that the “self” in “self-realization” is not the same that people associate with the ego. Rather, it is a wider, intercorporeal self, or “Self” (the uppercase “S” suggesting a metaphysically wider, more universal self). Key to Naess’s understanding of self-realization is identification, which is further related to “a situation which elicits intense empathy.”<sup>206</sup> According to Naess, when we identify with other beings, we see their interests as our own. In this process of identification we are “realizing” that our “self” is much larger than that with which we normally identify. What Naess is suggesting is that there is ontological potential beyond what we normally assume. Elsewhere, he refers to the “ecological self,” a self that occupies a fourth stage of development beyond the ego, social self, and metaphysical self.<sup>207</sup> “The ecological self of a person is that with which this person identifies.”<sup>208</sup>

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 227. Naess has also written, “Our Self is that with which we identify.” (Quoted in Fox, *Transpersonal*, 230). From this perspective of the self, whatever we might identify with is what we consider ourselves to be. But that does not mean that the wider our identification, the more we assume to be *ours*. Some critics of this concept of identification or self-realization argue that one appropriates others in this process. See Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London: Routledge, 2000), 201-206. Although Plumwood’s argument has many constructive insights for Deep Ecologists, I believe the process that Naess suggests precludes the hegemonic appropriation Plumwood refers to. An image that Naess would perhaps agree with is that of many people living in a single house, all of whom refer to the house as “mine.” But these multiple claims are mutually accepted, and there is no contestation over whose house it “really” is. In this case, one’s understanding of self is clear, yet negotiable in that it is not in every case restricted to the physical body. Therefore, I argue it is an intercorporeal self.

The aspect of self-realization and identification that fails to receive much acknowledgment is that both refer to processes. David Rothenberg points out that “the word in Norwegian is *Selv-realisering*: Self-realising. It is an active state, not a place one can reach.”<sup>209</sup> The same active meaning holds true for identification (Norwegian, *identifisering*). Thus, even though self-realization is presented as the ultimate goal of life in Naess’s Ecosophy T, it would be better to think of it as a continuous process of the ‘Self’ unfolding before the self.

Both Warwick Fox and Freya Mathews have written at length on these concepts of identification and self-realization, and both have done so with great sophistication. Fox uses the term “transpersonal self” to capture the goal of self-realization: a self that goes beyond its own ego to identity with other selves or egos. However, the interpretations of self-realization given by Fox and Mathews assume a model of development based on a linear progression of ever wider development, but neither seems to explore the implications of the concept in the sense of process. Rather it is presented as a (usually cognitive) state to be achieved. In other words, both reify the concept of self-realization, shifting emphasis away from its dynamic character. In contrast to this reification, Naess has asserted that the concept of self-realization is rather a tool for thinking about the process of expanding one’s sense of self, without seizing upon a final state to be achieved.<sup>210</sup>

---

<sup>209</sup> Naess, *Ecology*, 9.

<sup>210</sup> Arne Naess, *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess*, eds. Alan Drengson and Bill Devall (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2008), 198.

The concept of “unity-in-diversity” is an attempt to account for the complexity and plurality of nature; either of these two concepts, unity or diversity, alone can lead to positions of absolute identity of the self with the natural world or absolute difference. According to Naess, “Here we have a difficult ridge to walk: To the left [unity] we have the ocean of organic and mystic views, to the right [diversity] the abyss of atomic individualism.”<sup>211</sup> The concept of unity reveals the influences of Indian and Chinese articulations of non-duality.<sup>212</sup> The classic case of non-dualism is the Indian school of Advaita Vendanta, which seeks a complete union with the universal godhead, and would have been familiar to Naess based on his readings of Gandhi. But the Advaita conception of unity as non-duality is more extreme than what Naess intends. Instead, Naess seeks to emphasize the interconnectedness of all beings through the concept of being. The idea is closely linked to the process of self-realization. Another way of interpreting the talk of non-dualism is through the concept of relational being. This means that a being's essence is determined ultimately by its relationship with other beings.

Diversity is as important as unity in the phrase “unity in diversity.” It is mentioned in the eight point platform and Naess comments on his difficulty in resolving the “unity in diversity” problematic. Unity, nonanthropocentrism, and self-realization all direct our attention to oneness and holism, but stopping here would effectively negate the value of individual beings, and not just human

---

<sup>211</sup> Naess, *Ecology*, 165.

<sup>212</sup> For the influence of Buddhist (Chinese and Indian) notions of nonduality, see Arne Naess, *Wisdom*, 195-203.

beings. Naess consistently affirms the value and necessity of diversity, and it is on this point that Naess clearly connects Deep Ecology to ethics. Naess argues in the first three parts of the Deep Ecology Platform that richness and diversity contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life and that no being has the right to infringe upon another being's unfolding of its potential, except in the case when vital needs must be met. The problem with this adherence to diversity has been that it is sometimes difficult to see how holism can be squared with diversity. Naess' use of the concept of relationality helps clarify this apparent contradiction. Seeing the relational nature of being not only allows diversity to be maintained as a value, it greatly strengthens the deep ecology position by invoking diversity. The more diverse forms of life that exist, the more beings there are to establish relationships with, and the more depth and breadth one will experience.

#### 3.4.5 Naess's Rhetoric and the Language of Transformation

Language, for Naess, is crucial. His work on semantics should alert us to the fact that what Naess says is not necessarily any more important than how he speaks. Benjamin Howe has recently argued that interpreters of Naess's thought and promoters of Deep Ecology have neglected Naess's philosophical background in empirical semantics and that the Deep Ecology with which Naess should be associated must be seen in light of this background.<sup>213</sup> Through a close reading of Naess's writings on semantics, Howe shows that when we look at how Naess uses

---

<sup>213</sup> Benjamin Howe, "Was Arne Naess Recognized as the Founder of Deep Ecology Prematurely? Semantics and Environmental Philosophy," *Environmental Ethics* 32 (2010).

concepts like meaning, precision, and vagueness, it is quite unlikely that Naess would have supported a static platform to which all supporters of Deep Ecology would consent. Furthermore, despite a widespread acceptance of most of the statements in the platform, it is probably the case that there are multiple interpretations of what each statement means.<sup>214</sup> Naess is not content to offer a systematic analysis of environmental philosophy and hope that people are convinced. He wants to draw others into the conversation. Naess gives the following justification for why he choose the term ‘self-realization,’ one of the most contentious terms in Deep Ecology:

If ‘self-realization’ (or ‘self-fulfillment’) is habitually associated today with lifelong ego-trips, then isn’t it stupid to use this term for self-realization in Gandhi’s widely different sense or (in a less religiously loaded context) as a term for widening and deepening the ‘self’ so that it embraces all life forms? Perhaps it is. *But I think the very popularity of the term makes people feel safe, and they listen for a moment.*<sup>215</sup>

Therefore, his articulation of Deep Ecology philosophy and, in particular Ecosophy T, should be read for its rhetoric as much as for its logic. That is to say, we should ask ourselves why he chooses the terms does and what his reasons are for choosing to articulate his philosophy in the form that he does. For example, when Naess ventures an explanation of the terms ‘ecology,’ ‘ecophilosophy,’ and ‘ecosophy,’ he states: “In this work, these three words will have three very different meanings adapted to our purpose. Others, however, with other purposes,

---

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 372-376.

<sup>215</sup> Naess, *Ecology*, 234-235 (emphasis mine).

may disagree somewhat on these precise meanings.”<sup>216</sup> Although this statement may appear to be simply following scholarly convention (many authors choose to explicitly define their terms), we should still ask: What is *Naess*’s purpose, and how is it served by employing these three terms?

#### 3.4.5.1 Semantics

One indication that Naess is concerned with the rhetorical force of language is his coining of neologisms and construction of terms. Three terms that he claims have, for him, “very different meanings” are ‘ecology,’ ‘ecophilosophy,’ and ‘ecosophy.’ Naess explains that he defines ecology as “the interdisciplinary scientific study of the living conditions of organisms in interaction with each other and with the surroundings,” but just below that definition claims that “the aspect of the science of ecology that is most important is the fact that it is concerned first of all with relationships between entities as an essential component of what these entities are in themselves.”<sup>217</sup> Naess uses ‘ecophilosophy,’ a field of study examining the relations between entities, to emphasize the mutual concerns of ecology and philosophy. But he notes that ecophilosophy is not concerned with “a choice between fundamental value priorities.”<sup>218</sup> In order to address the relationship between philosophical inquiry and pragmatic action, Naess coins the term ‘ecosophy.’ The term ‘ecosophy’ is startling in its simultaneous strangeness and familiarity. It calls to mind ecology

---

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.



and philosophy and invites one to consider how these two modes of inquiry can be combined. It differs from ecophilosophy, though, in that there is not the emphasis on a field of study (as is indicated by philosophy), but rather the ‘-sophy’ part of the term denotes wisdom that is “relevant for action.”<sup>219</sup> Therefore, an ecosophy is “*a philosophical world-view or system inspired by the conditions of life in the ecosphere.*”<sup>220</sup>

What is Naess’s purpose in offering and defining these three terms as he does? Beginning with ecology, Naess establishes that whatever concepts that follow ecology will be ultimately tied to the natural world. They will have ecological impacts. Moving on to ecophilosophy, Naess narrows the field of inquiry to an examination of relations, internal and external. He also casts the discussion in the light of philosophy so as to bring to the fore other philosophical concerns, primarily ontology and epistemology. Finally, with the ecosophical turn, Naess brings the philosophical to bear on the personal. Basically, Naess uses the terms in conjunction to contextualize the discussion in terms of the environment but narrows the focus to the personal. The deeper we go in the analysis (from ecology to ecosophy) the more we see the connections between two “households” (eco-, *oikos*), that of the mind and that of the Earth.

#### 3.4.5.2 Methodological Vagueness

The rhetorical concerns of Naess’s Deep Ecology extend beyond these general semantic concerns. In accounting for the misinterpretations of Deep

---

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 38.

Ecology, Harold Glasser refers to Naess's "methodological vagueness," which he defines as "a sophisticated semantic device for facilitating the acceptance and agreement of statements and notions by emphasizing the positive aspect of ambiguity that is sometimes associated with a high level of generalization."<sup>221</sup> Naess explains the vagueness of the terms in his survey of normative systems saying, "[t]he terms and sentences (including the many one-word sentences) are strikingly vague and ambiguous. They are *purposely* open to a variety of interpretations... There are serious methodological considerations that favor multiple interpretability."<sup>222</sup> According to Naess, "Communication... is not to be seen as a process of two or more individuals making use of a completely 'shared language', but of each carrying out a personal process of interpretation in their own directions of precisations."<sup>223</sup> "Precisations" are increasingly precise formulations of less precise statements, but in being more precise, they admit fewer interpretations. The ambiguity characteristic of less precise statements is more conducive in articulating the ultimate premises of normative systems. In describing his use of normative systems as a way of defining "total views," Naess argues that less precise statements, in their ambiguity, allow for a wider range of possible interpretations and, therefore, more fruitful dialogue and communication.<sup>224</sup> The ultimate goal of communication is to "try to uncover the

---

<sup>221</sup> Glasser, "Demystifying," 209.

<sup>222</sup> Naess, *Wisdom*, 170.

<sup>223</sup> Naess, "Vagueness," 43. See also Naess, *Wisdom*, 170-173.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-43.

roots of valuations and total systems, in both our own and our opponents' premises and conclusions."<sup>225</sup>

The point to be made regarding the methodological vagueness of Naess's approach to normative systems is that it invites conversation. Initially the conversation might be only with one's self. This can be considered in rhetorical terms following Burke's assertion that the self can serve as audience. The vagueness also implies that the process is not a measuring of principles. As Howe points out, even the eight-point platform is not intended to express definite concepts that are integral to a Deep Ecology worldview.<sup>226</sup> Naess advocates a system that encourages people to start from any articulation of their total view and uncover their ultimate premises through a process of questioning, from which point they can formulate more concrete norms. The whole process, as Naess conceives it, is communicative; it does not favor one group over another, nor does it require any prior accepted belief. Thus, Naess's method can involve a potentially unlimited scope of individuals in ecological discussion.

### 3.5 Dialectic and Rhetoric

Raising the issue of dialectics under a discussion of rhetoric may seem at first counterintuitive, if not outright mistaken. However, going back to Aristotle dialectic and rhetoric are two means of argumentation. Before going further I will

---

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 44. The similarities between this and Burke's plan for dramatism are stunning. They both seek to uncover the terministic screens at play in how an individual justifies and situates one's action.

<sup>226</sup> Howe, "Founder," 380-83.

clarify what I mean by dialectics. As Stephen Dunning summarizes: “dialectic refers to some sort of polarity or binary opposition, either a debate between two perspectives or a conflict between two realities.”<sup>227</sup> Burke’s use of dialectics will carry this idea further, but the definition above will keep his developments anchored. Burke appeals to the function of dialectics as a way of dealing with what words mean. Rhetoric, as we have seen, is concerned with strategies for creating communities through symbolic action.<sup>228</sup> As we will see below, dialectic is integral to at least one strand of environmental philosophy—radical ecology. And by reading carefully the way in which dialectic is used by philosophers representative of this strand, we will see that their dialectic is also a strategy of creating a community of concerned environmentalists committed to a change of ecological consciousness.

For Burke, dialectic is a way of establishing “substance,” or that which is. Dialectic is roughly similar to grammar, logic, and philosophy and constitute for Burke one of four aspects of language (with the other three aspects being the

---

<sup>227</sup> Stephen N. Dunning, *Dialectic Readings: Three Types of Interpretation* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1997), 12.

<sup>228</sup> This project is likewise connected to his notion of language as transcendent, a discussion of which will illustrate why Burke’s particular interpretation of rhetoric in general can be robustly used in an environmental context, as opposed to simply applying a concept or term (e.g., Bourdieu’s “practice”, Marx’s “ideology”, or Derrida’s “*difference*”) for hermeneutical clarity. Burke states, “Transcendence...is best got at through dialectic.” Burke, *Symbolic Action*, 188. By “rhetoric, in general,” I mean rhetoric as symbolic action, as opposed to rhetoric as a form of discourse on par with poetics and philosophy. See Barry Brummett for a discussion of how Burke uses these three terms both as constituting a single genus and elsewhere places one term above others. Barry Brummett, “Kenneth Burke’s Symbolic Trinity,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 28:3 (1995), 234-251.

poetical, rhetorical, and ethical).<sup>229</sup> Timothy Crusius, in analyzing the relation between dialectic and rhetoric, defines dialectic as “the study of verbal universes, the disinterested pursuit of a vocabulary’s implications,” and rhetoric means “overcoming estrangement.”<sup>230</sup> Generally, the relation between the two transpires in the goal of effecting a situation (as in Bitzer’s rhetorical situation). Based on Crusius’s reading, both dialectic and rhetoric seek to address differences. Dialectic seeks to uncover and expose differences, latent paradoxes of substance, and rhetoric seeks to overcome differences, to create community. Based on this connection Crusius suggests that dialectic be considered prior to rhetoric, in that without differences, there is no need for rhetoric.<sup>231</sup> As a counter-claim, one might argue that rhetoric puts dialectic to use, that rhetoric as symbolic action, gives dialectic meaning. While this logical privileging of dialectic fits with Burke’s notion of dialectic, we must recognize that the language within which the dialectic process takes place, the terms that are the objects of analysis, for which one seeks to establish what the dialectic substance is, emerge out of a certain reading of the situation. The dialectical analysis works out from and not outside of a terministic screen, so that the relevance of the analysis is already a symbolic act in which acceptance of the terms at hand is part of the process. So dialectic contains rhetorical forces, and to some degree, the rhetorical act, to the degree that

---

<sup>229</sup> The fourfold typology is found in Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 28.

<sup>230</sup> Timothy W. Crusius, “A Case for Kenneth Burke’s Dialectic and Rhetoric,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 19:1 (1986), 24.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

an audience is presented with something new and thus a new perspective, serves the ends of the dialectic. In addition, since one key for “inducing cooperation” is to create mutual identification among members of an audience, illustrating that there is an “other,” one which is “not us,” can highlight the basis upon which the “we” is established. In this respect, dialectic becomes meaningful when actualized in the rhetorical process.

In addition to Burke’s discussions of dialectic and rhetoric on their own terms, this relationship is relevant when using Burke as the basis of an environmental rhetoric, since some notion of ecology is integral to understanding these two dimensions of language. Burke’s connection to ecology has been discussed in reference to how his thought is used in literary eco-criticism<sup>232</sup> but little attention has been given to the role ecology (or the concept of ecology) plays in his more rhetorical thought. Burke referenced ecology as early as his *Attitudes Toward History* (1937), a time when the term was achieving quite widespread currency. Siegel states that “Burke’s use of ecological metaphors to describe social phenomena was a practice becoming increasingly common both within and outside of the ecological community when he began to write *AtH*.”<sup>233</sup> Burke’s use of the term turns on its reference to the interrelationships among organisms of a

---

<sup>232</sup> See Robert Wess, “Ecocriticism and Kenneth Burke: an Introduction,” *KB Journal* 2:2 (2006); Laurence Coupe, “Kenneth Burke: Pioneer of Ecocriticism,” *Journal of American Studies* 35 (2001), 413-31; and Randall Roorda, “KB in Green: Ecology, Critical Theory, and Kenneth Burke,” *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 4:2 (1997), 39-52.

<sup>233</sup> Marika A. Seigel, “‘One little fellow named Ecology’: Ecological Rhetoric in Kenneth Burke’s *Attitudes Toward History*,” *Rhetoric Review* 23:4 (2004), 390.

specific ecosystem. Siegel points out that ecology is similar to Burke's notion of the "comic frame." The comic frame is one which values cooperation and "interrelationships between individual lives," a notion that might seem to fit a broad understanding of ecology where "individual lives" are beings within an ecosystem.<sup>234</sup>

The connection between ecology and dialectic is apparent in some of Burke's other writings. In his discussion of patterns of experience, he states that "universal experiences are implicated in specific modes of experience: *they arise out of a relationship between the organism and its environment.*"<sup>235</sup> As the organism adjusts to the environmental conditions certain universal experiences are selected and others neglected; "[s]uch selections are 'patterns of experience'."<sup>236</sup> And finally, the verbalization of these patterns is what Burke calls a symbol, or "the conversion of an experiential pattern into a formula for affecting an audience."<sup>237</sup> Here we can see the importance of dialectic in generating symbols. Without the interaction between the symbol-using animal and its environment, an interaction that seeks to reconcile the tensions of environment and individual experience, humans would lack the resources to create meaning, that is, in Burke's terms, rhetoric.

---

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 398.

<sup>235</sup> Kenneth Burke, *On Symbols and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 107 (emphasis mine).

<sup>236</sup> Burke, *Symbols*, 108.

<sup>237</sup> Burke, *Symbols*, 113.

There is another connection between ecology and dialectic, though, if we bring in one of Burke's central concepts, his theory of logology. For Burke, logology is literally "words about words."<sup>238</sup> Whereas his method of discerning and uncovering motives for action is labeled 'dramatism,' 'logology' refers to Burke's critical method of understanding how words work in the labyrinth of motives. Ecology, alternatively, refers to that non-symbolic ground which serves as the basis of all language use. The dialectic can be seen in Burke's anthropology, where he defines humans as "symbol-using (logological) animals (ecological)." Ecology in this sense is analogical to the material world. It is the basis of that context or situation in which language use is possible. But it also represents the sense of balance between the symbolic and the non-symbolic or the transcendent and the material that is the dialectical context constraining symbolic action. It is in this sense that ecology is likened to the "comic frame":

[a] comic frame...show[s] us how an act can "dialectically" contain both transcendental and material ingredients, ...both "service" and "spoils"...It also makes us sensitive to the point at which one of the these ingredients becomes hypertrophied...A well balanced ecology requires the symbiosis of the two.<sup>239</sup>

Crusius compares and contrasts ecology with logology, asking "[w]hat does logology, as the study of verbal systems, have to do with ecology, the study of

---

<sup>238</sup> Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 1.

<sup>239</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* (New York: New Republic, 1937), 167, quoted in Timothy W. Crusius, *Kenneth Burke and the Conversation after Philosophy* (Carbondale and Evansville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 222.



natural systems?”<sup>240</sup> On the one hand, there is no ultimate materialism, because logology demonstrates that humans have extricated themselves from a meaningful existence in the natural world. On the other hand, the fact that humans are bodies and that action and symbolic action is predicated on motion (material) necessitates that we cannot claim that we are language all the way down. The two are dialectically related in that ecology (or more properly, ecological balance)<sup>241</sup> provides the context in which the contradictions which logology uncovers can be held in tension.<sup>242</sup> This tension allows the dialectical process to continue, allowing for an ever-fuller self-understanding.

So dialectics, in the way in which Burke relates it to rhetoric, functions on one level to expose the need for rhetoric, providing the materials which rhetoric will then shape. On another level, dialectics provides a way for thinking about and talking about the human-nature relationship. But this way of thinking about and talking about the human-nature relationship is not merely a descriptive act.

---

<sup>240</sup> Crusius, *Conversation*, 223.

<sup>241</sup> One can easily object that Burke’s use of the term ecology to refer balance is not only out-dated, but fails the criteria upon which Toulmin and Kirkman base their critiques. But two responses to this charge are at hand. First, Burke uses the concept in the same metaphorical sense in which it was first coined by Ernst Haeckel. Burke does not use the term with the intent to make claims about the field or study of ecology itself. And given the context of the time in which he first began using the term, his metaphorical use can be at least understood. Secondly, the kind of balance Burke refers to is always set against change and action. Thus, his understanding of ecology seems to be not too far off what is currently thought of as flux.

<sup>242</sup> Crusius also uses the dichotomy of dialectic-dialogue to refer to this feature of Burke’s thought. See Crusius, *Conversation*, 175-97.

Dialectics helps us choose our words and, as Burke argues, these words filter our views in certain ways. So dialectics itself is part of the strategy of persuasion. We will see whether this model is one which finds expression in radical ecology. Next, I will present examples from environmental philosophy to illustrate how at least three forms of environmental philosophy build off the dialectic-rhetoric interface to achieve their philosophical and rhetorical goals.

### 3.5.1 Radical Ecology and Language

Within the broadly construed environmental movement, some theorists give more attention to articulating the core reasons for human-induced ecological destruction. Those theorists who call for sweeping transformation in either human consciousness or society, essentially rejecting “modernity’s instrumental view of nature,” are referred to as radical ecologists, as opposed to those who advocate addressing individual environmental problems, such as water pollution, deforestation, or species extinction.<sup>243</sup> Michael Zimmerman identifies three branches of radical ecology: Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, and Social Ecology.<sup>244</sup> All three share the view that ecological destruction, what some people in the movement refer to as “ecocide,” is the result of a single basic problem. Furthermore, all three highlight the importance of ontology, develop an ethics, and emphasize the relationship between society and nature, but they disagree on

---

<sup>243</sup> Michael Zimmerman, *Contesting Earth’s Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 3.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2. Carolyn Merchant also uses the term radical ecology much in the way Zimmerman does. However, she does not make the strict tripartite distinction between Deep Ecology, Social Ecology, and Ecofeminism. See Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology* (London: Routledge, 1992).

whether ontology or hegemonic social institutions lies at the root of the problem of ecological degradation. In dealing with these problems, language is a central concern. Ecofeminism highlights the language of domination and metaphorical change, and Social Ecology openly employs what they call ‘dialectical naturalism’. For Deep Ecology, the role of language is implied, ‘folded into’ the philosophy of Deep Ecology itself. This is to say that, although language is immensely important in understanding Deep Ecology, nowhere is language addressed on its own terms.<sup>245</sup>

### 3.5.2 Dialectics in Radical Ecology

Viewing rhetoric as a strategic act, which attempts to affect or change the attitudes of others through the skillful use of language<sup>246</sup>, moves beyond the traditional understanding of rhetoric characterized as simple persuasion, usually at the expense of logical argumentation. This revised interpretation of rhetoric does not discard the goal of persuasion, nor does it do away with logic. Logic and rhetoric form a dialectic within which truth and meaning are conjoined.<sup>247</sup>

Dialectics offers one avenue for exploring the connection between ecology and

---

<sup>245</sup> I will be distinguishing Deep Ecology from the philosophy of Arne Naess, later, but for the sake of convenience refer to both here under the term “Deep Ecology.”

<sup>246</sup> “Kenneth Burke,” in *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, third edition, Sonja Foss et al., eds. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 2002), 191. This text provides a useful overview of Burke’s philosophy of rhetoric, since Burke rarely offers a singular definition of rhetoric, despite authoring books entitled *A Rhetoric of Motives* and *The Rhetoric of Religion*.

<sup>247</sup> John O’Banion, *Reorienting Rhetoric: The Dialectic of List and Story* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1992), 15.

language. Thomas W. Simon explores the ways in dialectics has been used in environmental philosophy.<sup>248</sup> He examines the dialectical approaches of Marxist biologists, Murray Bookchin, and Lakota cosmology. He concludes by arguing that ecological dialectics function to remind scholars that multiple perspectives must be used when viewing ecological problems, primarily political, ethical, and spiritual. It is not clear how this position qualifies as a form of dialectics, except in the sense that these viewpoints stand in some degree of contrast. He relies on the Lakota cosmology to suggest a dialectics whereby we can recognize the validity of multiple perspectives and attend to how these perspectives frame problems in the political sphere.<sup>249</sup> Simon provides a helpful overview of some approaches to dialectics in environmental philosophy and science but also waters down the very idea that dialectics have an important role to play in environmentalism. Below I will offer a more robust discussion of not only how dialectics are used to establish the principles of strands of environmental philosophy, but also how dialectics can benefit the development of an effective environmental rhetoric that motivates people to action.

Dunning offers a three-fold typology of dialectics: theoretical, transactional, and transformational. “[T]heoretical interpretation presupposes a dialectic of contradiction and finds truth in clear distinctions... *Transactional* interpretation involves give-and-take, contract, and even covenant. It treats the

---

<sup>248</sup> See Thomas W. Simon, “Varieties of Ecological Dialectics,” *Environmental Ethics* 12 (1990), 211-231.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 231. There are similarities in Simon’s interpretation of dialectics and the way that Gilkey reconciles or connects the discourses of science, philosophy, and theology. See above page 33.

two poles of the relation as two consenting parties to a hermeneutical transaction...*Transformational* interpretation is based upon a dialectic of paradox. It embraces both method and dialogue, both explanation and understanding.”<sup>250</sup> Burke’s use of the term dialectic at various times fits each of these three types. The first type characterizes Burke’s understanding of dialectic as a way of establishing the meanings of words, “the dispositions and transpositions of words.” The second type is related to Burke’s notion of logology as dialectics and the connection between dialectics and ecology.<sup>251</sup> The third evokes Burke’s idea of dialectics as essentially transcendent.

The discussion below attempts to place dialectics alongside rhetorics in the sense that Ecofeminists (Plumwood), Social Ecologists (Bookchin), and Deep Ecologists (Naess) advocate dialectical understanding as a strategy to affect a transformation in consciousness; a move towards ecological thinking. Following the typology offered by Stephen N. Dunning, the dialectical approaches of the Ecofeminist and Social Ecology strains of ecological thought can be characterized as “transactional dialectics.” In contrast to transactional dialectics, Dunning offers “transformational dialectics.” Transformational dialectics are based on paradox, “contradiction is no longer a static opposition; it is a dynamic confrontation leading to a mutual change in both the poles.” Although the

---

<sup>250</sup> Dunning, *Readings*, 8.

<sup>251</sup> This is clarified by Dunning’s further definition of transactional dialectics: “Respect for and openness to the other [pole of the binary opposition] replaces mere opposition. Balance, harmony, and reconciliation subvert the tension of binary oppositions.” *Ibid.*, 6.

contradiction is not resolved, the dialectic reveals “a new reality that embraces both poles in their creative tension.”<sup>252</sup> This dialectic, I argue is precisely that which is employed by Naess, but not the Deep Ecologists.

### 3.5.2.1 Social Ecology

For one form of radical ecology, Social Ecology, dialectics is a central feature. According to John Clark, “Social ecology applies an evolutionary, developmental view of history and a holistic conception of social unity-in-diversity to social and political issues. As a dialectical theory, it does not dissolve the parts into the whole (as various forms of holism are regularly accused by critics of doing). Rather it studies the mutual interaction between parts and wholes, while reducing neither dimension to the other.”<sup>253</sup> The founder of Social Ecology, Murray Bookchin, defines dialectics as “a ‘logic’ of evolution, from abstraction *toward* differentiation,” and advocates what he calls “dialectical naturalism,” in opposition to Hegelian or Marxist dialectics.<sup>254</sup> Janet Biehl describes dialectical naturalism as “both a form of reasoning and an ontological theory of causality.”<sup>255</sup> Bookchin argues that the evolution of lifeforms is participatory and proceeds in the direction of diversity, establishing a unity in

---

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>253</sup> John Clark, “The Matter of Freedom: Ecofeminist Lessons or Social Ecology,” in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. Michael Zimmerman (Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 354.

<sup>254</sup> Murray Bookchin, “Thinking Ecologically: A Dialectical Approach,” *Our Generation* 18:2 (1987), 15.

<sup>255</sup> Janet Biehl, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics* (Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1991), 124.

diversity that is the basis of a stable and healthy ecosystem. But Bookchin would prefer society to ecosystem, since he views the contextual and interrelated characteristic of nature and human society as existing in a continuum, emphasizing that “it is the logic of differentiation that makes it possible to relate the mediations of nature and society into a continuum.”<sup>256</sup> The two are related but distinct and Bookchin distinguishes the non-human world and humanity by labeling them “first nature” and “second nature,” respectively.

Dialectical naturalism is the means by which humans can resolve the “first nature” (the fact that humans are organisms) with “second nature” (the unique consciousness of humans).<sup>257</sup> According to Bookchin, second nature evolved from first nature and is, thus, embedded in first nature. To conceive of second nature as absolutely different is a mistake. However, there is a qualitative difference between first and second natures; second nature (humanity) is endowed with consciousness.<sup>258</sup> Ultimately, Bookchin seeks to place these two natures on an evolutionary continuum, the recognition of which will lead to a third, “ecological” nature. The first and second natures should be in conversation because they share in the fabric of being. The human aspect common to the two natures and the emphasis that these two natures need to be harmonized refutes the

---

<sup>256</sup> Murray Bookchin, *The Modern Crisis* (Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1987), 60.

<sup>257</sup> Murray Bookchin, “What is Social Ecology?” in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. Michael Zimmerman (Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 440-441.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 440-442.

possible characterization of dialectical naturalism as theoretical dialectics; at the very least it is a form of transactional dialectics. As David Abram points out, the only reason humans (Bookchin's second nature) can conceive of the nonhuman world (Bookchin's first nature) as "other" at all is because they are part of that world: "We can perceive things at all only because we ourselves are entirely a part of the sensible world that we perceive! We might as well say that we are organs of this world, flesh of its flesh, and that the world is perceiving itself *through* us."<sup>259</sup> Although, I imagine that Bookchin would object to the "mysticism" inherent in this statement, it reflects Bookchin's own idea that humans are/should be the voice of the natural world. Bookchin argues that the synthesis sought by employing dialectical naturalism will result in the dismantling of social institutions which perpetuate the domination of some groups over others. The dialectical aspect of dialectical naturalism provides a way to break free of the dualistic bind of nature and culture. Thus, if the reification of social institutions leads to hegemonic domination of one group over others, a dialectical approach allows us to deconstruct those establishments and move towards more ecologically appropriate social structures.

Is Bookchin's dialectical naturalism transformational? It seems defensible to make this characterization. Bookchin's dialectics is not too far removed from Hegel's, in the sense that a synthesis arises out of the dialogue between first and second natures. Of course, Bookchin departs from Hegel in the former's rejecting an absolute spirit or metaphysical reality. But Bookchin's synthesis is not so

---

<sup>259</sup> Abram, *Spell*, 68.



much a new reality as it is the recovery of a primal state of affairs. In reconciling first and second natures, humans achieve balance between the two. Tension is maintained, but no new reality is created. In this way, Bookchin's dialectical naturalism is very close to Burke's dialectic which seeks to improve the condition of human society for all members but maintain ecological balance. Bookchin's dialectic, despite his distaste for mysticism, even refers to the transcendence of first and second natures in a "free nature" and so parallels to some degree Burke's interest in transcendence.<sup>260</sup>

We must, though, also question the way in which Bookchin describes dialectics as developmental. He sets up his dialectical naturalism as an improvement on Hegelian and Marxist dialectics, positing the tension between the first and second natures.<sup>261</sup> However, his emphasis on the evolutionary character of organic and inorganic beings creates a link between humanity and the nonhuman world. This link is crucial to his argument, because it is on this basis that humans must find an ecological way to live. The structures supporting industrial societies ignore the reality of the natural world, which for Bookchin is based on mutuality, harmony, and cooperation. Simon identifies the limits of this

---

<sup>260</sup> Bookchin, "Thinking," 36.

<sup>261</sup> Bookchin faults Marxist materialism for treating the natural world in no more than an instrumental way. This mistake can be corrected by recognizing the universality of the first nature. The error Hegel commits, however, is much more noxious. Hegel's belief that dialectical movement is ever in the direction of "Spirit" leads him, according to Bookchin, into the murky waters of mysticism, where dualism is replaced by monism, into a realm where logic dissolves and humans forgo that which is distinctively human. See Murray Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism* (Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1990), 29-30.

position, noting that while cooperation can be observed in some biotic processes, there is undeniably strife and conflict as well. In addition we should add that Bookchin's understanding of dialectics as both ontological and logical compromises the dialectical character of this philosophy. For example, the idea that second nature opposes first nature allows us to see the logic of the dialectical relationship, but the fact that second nature emerges out of first nature complicates the claim that there is an objective ontological difference between the two. Bookchin, of course, acknowledges that the two are related and explains the dialectical, ontological connection by reference to "eduction," a form of reasoning that "render(s) the latent possibilities of phenomena fully manifest and articulated."<sup>262</sup>

Despite the philosophical shortcomings of Bookchin's dialectical approach, it is important to identify the rhetorical use to which the dialectic is put. Bookchin locates the root of domination of nature and majority segments of human society in a view of nature as conflictual and the use of instrumental reason. This conflict leads humans to seek to obtain their welfare at the expense of the nonhuman world. This view of nature should be corrected to perceive nature as rooted in harmony, differentiation, and mutuality, and if so corrected by the use of dialectical naturalism (organic reasoning), social forms of domination would no longer be tenable. Bookchin seeks to persuade his audience by linking the meaning of "nature" as ecosystems and biotic communities with the meaning of "nature" as an *a priori* essence of entities. The first meaning of nature is

---

<sup>262</sup> Bookchin, "Thinking," 24.

employed when writing about environmental problems; the second when discussing “first nature” and “second nature.” In fact, the idea of “first nature” incorporates both meanings of nature. So the argument that second nature evolves or emerges out of first nature is both logically and ontologically entailed in the way that Bookchin constructs the term, and the acceptance of the logical sequence of his dialectical reasoning favors the acceptance of his ontological causality (as Janet Biehl describes it). We can see how the logic and rhetoric of dialectical naturalism cooperate to establish a sense of intellectual identification with the philosophical premise of social ecology and a sense of ontological identification of the (human) members of his audience with the wider biological community.

### 3.5.2.2 Ecofeminism

Although it would be inaccurate to claim that Ecofeminists in general acknowledge a dialectical component within their discourse, some Ecofeminists do.<sup>263</sup> Karen Warren argues that one area at which the various Ecofeminisms intersect is language.<sup>264</sup> She refers to Wittgenstein’s descriptions of the role language plays in constructing conceptual frameworks. While she does not offer any linguistically-based method for addressing the domination of women and nature perpetuated in a variety of contemporary discourses, one Ecofeminist who does is Val Plumwood. In her book, *Environmental Culture: the Ecological*

---

<sup>263</sup> On the diversity of Ecofeminist thought, see Karen Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28; 60-61.

*Crisis of Reason*, Plumwood offers an extended and sophisticated critique of the host of authoritative dualisms current in modern, Western cultures: culture/nature, reason/nature, human/nature, mind/body.<sup>265</sup> Plumwood argues that these dualisms serve as the foundation for “hegemonic centrism,” structures which then take on a universal status.<sup>266</sup> These centrism, among them anthropocentrism, have lead to the ecological crisis. These centrism are the result of a monological culture of rationalism, a crisis of reason. This crisis is not one that can be solved technologically, though, for it is not a failing of nature. Rather, “[t]he ‘ecological’ crisis is a crisis or failing of reason and culture, a crisis of monological forms of both that are unable to adapt themselves to the earth and to the limit of other kinds of life.”<sup>267</sup>

In response to this predicament, Plumwood argues that we need to develop an “environmental culture”: “In its fullest meaning, developing an environmental culture involves a systematic resolution of the nature/culture and reason/nature dualisms that split mind from body, reason from emotion, across their many domains of cultural influence.”<sup>268</sup> Plumwood believes a “dialogical interspecies ethics” could counter the hegemonic tendencies of rationalist dualism.<sup>269</sup> The reason guiding a dialogical ethics is based not on a subject/object dichotomy,

---

<sup>265</sup> Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*, 3-4.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-101.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 167-195.

which leads to monological hegemony of rationalism, but a subject/subject dichotomy, the nature of which resists hegemonic appropriation. Granted, dialogical and dialectical are not identical terms. However, if we place Plumwood's dialogical ethics in the context of her analysis of the root cause of the "ecological crisis," what we find is that her approach is essentially dialectical in a very Burkean sense. Her dialogical solution seeks to resolve the "dualisms that split mind and body" by redirecting our attention to a dialogical view of human/non-human interaction. This is Burke's comic frame. It is also a response to Plumwood's dialectics of nature/culture, nature/reason, but as a response is dependent on what her dialectical approach uncovers. But the dialectical approach is always implied in dialogical ethics since this form of ethics is always related to what it is not—monological. Moreover, when we recall that Burke used ecology to refer to that material aspect of human life and kept this aspect in tension with the logological aspect of human life, we find much more similarity than we may have expected.

Plumwood describes the dialogical approach in a way which draws quite near to Bookchin's use of the term 'dialectical'. Both approaches recognize a dichotomy in which the terms involved are in tension. For Bookchin, the dichotomy is of first nature and second nature. The dialogical nature of Plumwood's approach sees humans moving between the terms "nature" and "culture," so that the dualism no longer exists as an absolute difference. Rather, nature and culture must be seen as equally legitimate *topoi*, and only a dialectical movement between them can reveal the reality in which they both participate.

Thus, although Plumwood prefers the term “dialogical,” her project is not far off from that of the Social Ecologists, a primary difference being the terms which comprise the dualism. The connection between these two thinkers dialectic and rhetoric can now be clarified. When Bookchin and Plumwood argue for a resolution of their respective dichotomies (first and second natures for Bookchin, nature/reason for Plumwood), they do so with the intention of offering a new way to view human living, a new mode of human consciousness. Both operate within the anthropocentrism/nonanthropocentrism dichotomy, favoring the latter as the proper ecological worldview. In presenting their arguments as philosophy, they are developing what Burke terms a “stylistic identification” for their audience to accept. This identification can be characterized as (properly) rational, egalitarian, and environmentally recuperative.

### 3.5.2.3 Arne Naess

Arne Naess does not explicitly refer to dialectics as an aspect of the Deep Ecology approach. However, a central aspect of Naess’s thought is elucidating a method of discussing environmental and ecological problems in a way that affects and develops the kind of thinking required to solve these problems. This aspect of Naess’s thought is obfuscated by the writings of other Deep Ecologists. This is not to say that they misrepresent or misinterpret Naess’s thought, but that they seem to have overlooked this crucial element. By clarifying the intention behind what is often considered to be vagueness on the part of Naess, we can see that Naess advocates a specific, albeit implicit, method of articulating ecological awareness that is essentially dialectical. When we understand Naess’s ecological

rhetoric, we will find that not only critiques of Deep Ecology as a hegemonic anthropocentrism can be answered, but that there is an underlying unity among the various types of radical ecology that can be used to further the conversation among them. My discussion of Deep Ecology below sees the dialectical form as inherent in the deep questioning approach to thinking ecologically. In other words, Naess advocates dialectical understanding as a strategy to affect a transformation in consciousness, a move towards ecological thinking.

I discussed above the dialectical approaches of Social Ecology and Ecofeminism. In fact, Naess's philosophy is likewise dialectical. The core of Naess's philosophy is based on a dialectics of ontology and ethics. As Naess states, "It is, I think, important in the philosophy of environmentalism to *move from ethics to ontology and back*. Clarification of differences in ontology may contribute to the clarification of different policies and their ethical basis."<sup>270</sup> That Naess is concerned with ontology *and* ethics, not merely with ontology alone, has been ignored by most commentators on Naess's brand of Deep Ecological thought. This movement between ontology and ethics serves as the impetus for Naess's development of a method philosophical inquiry which incorporates alternating processes of questioning and derivation. Furthermore, it justifies the otherwise vague and systematic presentation of Deep Ecology.

The process of "deep questioning" leads one to a further articulation of ultimate premises. The process of "loose derivation" leads one from those premises to a concrete basis for ethical action. But the process is circular so that

---

<sup>270</sup> Naess, *Ecology*, 67.

the concrete particulars are constantly being refined in light of clearer (evolving?) articulations of the ultimate premise. This movement could also be thought of as spiraling outward. A spiral highlights the concept of increasingly wider identification with others. As one develops deeper ecological premises, one sees that one's being need not be limited to the physical body or individual ego. From this more comprehensive ontology will be derived ethical norms that incorporate a greater number of individual beings. Since one's relationship with some beings will not yet be informed by the derived ethical norms, one must come back to the process of deep question and examine whether there is any reason why one should not identify with these beings, and so on.

We can see from this description of Naess's dialectic, the basis of the DEA, that whether we refer to the cognitive/epistemological experience of deep questioning as 'identification' or 'solidarity' (as Plumwood suggests) does not matter a great deal. What is important is that the method addresses ethical relationships in a significant way, without diminishing the value of individual beings. In fact, as Naess has repeatedly claimed, the greater the diversity of individual beings, the greater the degree of self-realization. Furthermore, if the process of self-realization (i.e., the process of deep questioning) can continue, then there is more opportunity to refine one's ethical position. So the process of self-realization does not only lead to a wider scope of ethical concern, it also leads to a more sophisticated and well-developed ethics, perhaps the kind of ethics that radical ecology envisions. But none of this would be possible without the rhetorical elements of Naess's philosophy. Terms such as 'Deep Ecology,' 'self-



realization,' and 'ecosophy' draw one into a sphere of discourse that conjoins philosophy, ethics, and ecology in the context of a dialectic aimed at the transformation of consciousness.

### 3.5.3 Deep Rhetoric

Bookchin, Plumwood, and Naess all place emphasis on ontology in articulating their philosophies. But in attempting to speak meaningfully to an audience, their ontological concerns are imbued with ethical significance. The relationship between ethics and ontology in these instances of radical ecology can be highlighted by showing the dialectics inherent in all three. All three thinkers share the goal of transforming an audience's attitudes (or consciousness) so that the shared ontology between the human and nonhuman spheres leads to a change in behavior: they all aim for a transformative dialectics.

David Tracy argues: "Our knowledge of reality is irrevocably linked to our use of language. Our language is possible because of the differential relations that constitute the words of the particular language. Any claims to full presence, especially claims to full self-presence in conscious thought, are illusions that cannot survive a study of language as a system of differential relations."<sup>271</sup>

Tracy's remarks further highlight the dialectical nature of humanity's ontolinguistic condition and demonstrates why uncovering the dialectics of each of the three thinkers discussed above helps understand the rhetorical nature of their project. Each thinker presents a view of humanity as dependent on the nonhuman

---

<sup>271</sup> David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, and Hope* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 59.

world, which serves to undermine anthropocentric bias. Bookchin's "free nature," Plumwood's "solidarity," and Naess's "wide identification" all offer an ontological alternative, but one that can only be realized through a change in behavior. Dialectical/dialogical approaches to speaking about human being in the world acknowledge the relationship we have with what exists around us. Viewed rhetorically, the dialectics of each thinker opens the door to linking ontology to ethics. But, only Naess offers a way to make the dialectics a tool of achieving transformation, continually exposing the "differential relations" between the "self" and "other" that leads to the incorporation of an ever greater diversity of opinions. And this dialectical process is strengthened and motivated by the other rhetorical elements of his philosophy such as ambiguity, vagueness, and novel terminology.

### 3.6 Religious Environmentalism and Rhetoric

The preceding discussions in this chapter have mainly dealt with environmental rhetoric within secular environmentalism or environmental philosophy. One reason for analyzing the dialectics of radical ecology is because, more than any other type of environmental philosophy, radical ecology addresses worldviews. Because of this concern with worldviews, many religious environmentalists look to radical ecology, in particular Deep Ecology, as a link

between environmental concern and religious belief.<sup>272</sup> Naess contributes to the religiosity of Deep Ecology with references to concepts in Buddhism and Advaita Hinduism. But many scholars and activists recognize that “[b]y probing world views [*sic.*], [D]eep [E]cology inevitably is concerned with religious teachings and spiritual attitudes.”<sup>273</sup> Whether Deep Ecology is a form of religion or religious is a question that scholars can address. Roger Gottlieb states plainly that “Spiritual [D]eep [E]cology is at once the oldest and newest of world religions.”<sup>274</sup> But we should ask: why would a religiously oriented environmental philosophy be appealing or useful to the task of environmental philosophy, generally considered a secular enterprise? As noted in chapter two, theologians responded to the call for more inquiry into the relationship between religion and the environment following Lynn White’s essay implicating the Judeo-Christian worldview in the contemporary environmental crisis. Much of that earlier work focused on theology and religious doctrines, intending to show whether there was an anti-environmental bias (which usually meant anthropocentric, following the terms of the debate White initiated) in religion or religious traditions. Many claimed to show that in each tradition there are rich resources to support an environmental ethics. But if the tests came back negative, if a tradition seemed

---

<sup>272</sup> For a good example of this, see David Landis Barnhill and Roger S. Gottlieb, eds., *Deep Ecology and World Religions: New Essays on Sacred Ground* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

<sup>273</sup> Barnhill, *Deep Ecology*, 5.

<sup>274</sup> Roger S. Gottlieb, “Spiritual Deep Ecology and World Religions: Shared Fate, Shared Task,” in *Deep Ecology and World Religions: New Essays on Sacred Ground*, eds. David Landis Barnhill and Roger S. Gottlieb (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 31.

deeply anthropocentric, what were environmentally-concerned religious leaders to do? Rarely was the suggestion made that religions be dispensed with. So scholars set about to see how religions could be reinterpreted or refocused to encourage environmentally friendly behavior. In addition, following the ethical calls to action by pioneers like Leopold and Carson, discussions of ethics inevitably spilled into questions of religion and religion's role in society.<sup>275</sup> But as Roger Gottlieb notes the involvement of religious organizations in environmentalism is somewhat less inevitable, for despite the importance of religious leaders and communities in social movements like civil rights, there is also a history of religious opposition to progressive social movements.<sup>276</sup> It is this aspect of religious environmentalism—the use of religious discourse to forge communities, motivate activism, and to challenge establishments and institutions—that truly animates the field of religion and ecology.<sup>277</sup> In other words, it is the promise of religious rhetoric that lies at the heart of the field.

The theological and philosophical work done to articulate environmental ethics within (or coming out of) religious traditions needs to be seen as contributing to the larger project of religious environmentalism. One of the most

---

<sup>275</sup> See Roderick Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 88 and 110.

<sup>276</sup> Gottlieb, *Greener Faith*, 59-62. See also Oelschlaeger, *Caring*, 10-14.

<sup>277</sup> This perhaps is where “religion and ecology” and “religion and nature,” as Taylor reads it, diverge, with the former being more normative in its aims and the latter more descriptive. But there is a certain symbiosis at work here, since the descriptive project can provide valuable reflexivity to the normative approach, while the normative approach produces new material for the descriptive project to work with.

important contemporary figures in the field of religion and ecology, Mary Evelyn Tucker, referring to the “ecological phase” of religions, claims: “Indeed, the environmental crisis calls the religions of the world to respond by finding their voice within the larger Earth community. In so doing, the religions are now entering their ecological phase and finding their planetary expression.”<sup>278</sup> She states that religions can help us “revision our role as citizens of the universe” and reorient humans to the Earth.<sup>279</sup> Tucker addresses the fact that religious traditions contain resources that do not have any implicit connection with environmentalism. To reconstruct and reconstitute religions “toward reconceiving mutually enhancing human-Earth relations” requires significant hermeneutical work.<sup>280</sup> But in comments like “religions in their postmodern phase can inspire larger aspirations for our place and purpose in nature than simply economic exploitation,” we see basic rhetorical forces at work.<sup>281</sup> It is not the religions that actively seek to inspire, but humans who see in religious discourse the power to change attitudes and opinions, to inspire, and to persuade larger communities to implement critical changes in behavior.

In this chapter I have attempted to work out how rhetoric can contribute to our understanding of the environmental values we in our communities currently

---

<sup>278</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter their Ecological Phase* (Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company, 2003), 9.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-6.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

hold, but also offer a method of constructing more effective and practical forms of communicating environmental value. This is not simply to find a way to circumvent reasoned deliberation, but to contribute to the problem that scholars like Bryan Norton, Killingsworth and Palmer, and Oelschlaeger confront, who identify the failure of environmentalism with a failure of discourse and communication. Below I will suggest some ways that a rhetorical approach to religious environmentalism can offer religious leaders and communities a means to draw clearer and more meaningful connections between their traditions and the community's environmental concern.

### 3.6.1 Audience and Identification

Rhetoric alerts us to the vital importance of identifying, understanding, and responding to an audience. One way that one succeeds in gaining an audience's assent to a proposition or proposal is by forging identification between one's self and the audience and creating unity within the audience. This means that one must deliver one's proposition in a form that induces assent but also connects to the values and opinions held by the audience. We saw that many environmental philosophers support the use of narrative as a successful form. Narrative, in Bruce Lincoln's terms, needs to evoke emotion and be ideologically persuasive. The problem with the more philosophical or doctrinal analyses in religion and ecology is that the authors have not identified any particular audience, or the audience is merely a limited community of academic specialists. Certainly, there are scholars whose interests are purely academic and are not concerned with the effects on religious environmentalism. But as I have shown,

there is a current of practical engagement that many scholars bring to their work on religious environmentalism. Certainly this is true of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim ecotheologians, but many contributors to Buddhist and Hindu environmentalism are also practitioners.

Ramachandra Guha's critique of radical environmentalism points out that no approach, no matter how successful or popular in one cultural context, is necessarily applicable to another cultural context. When Willis Jenkins maintains that "[f]or an environmental ethic to be 'practical'...its readers must come away with some moral sense to their involvement with extra-human world," he implies that the practicality of environmental ethics depends in part on the degree to which the propositions are meaningful to the audience.<sup>282</sup> Supporting an understanding of truth as arising out of public/communal deliberation, environmental pragmatists create a space for a community to be formed based on the collective will of the members of the audience. The way in which issues are raised and addressed determines the values of the community. The way audience functions here resembles an externalization of Burke's idea of the self as audience, a process by which one comes to identify with a community or society from examining and creating a hierarchy of values.<sup>283</sup>

When we consider the importance of audience in religion and ecology, it becomes clear that limiting it to religious studies or theology is insufficient. The resources and skill of the anthropologist or sociologist are perhaps better suited to

---

<sup>282</sup> Jenkins, *Ecologies*, 41.

<sup>283</sup> For "self as audience" see Foss, *Contemporary*, 193.

identify the dynamics and commitments of a religious community than those of the religious studies scholar or theologian. Rhetorical inquiries that seek to identify what *topoi* the environmentalist (religious or secular) might turn to to make an effective appeal for activism or ethical reflection (regardless of whether such inquiries are academic, activist, or both) thus lead us to reexamine the foundations of the field and where it fits in the larger academy.

### 3.6.2 Examples

In section 2.6 I provided an overview of two religious environmentalisms, Jewish and Confucian. If we just look at the two traditions monolithically and from the perspective of doctrine, they have much in common. Both seem to subscribe to a notion of universal law that is essentially ethical and guides human society. Both advocate humility in light of this law. Both view the natural world as somehow embodying this law. But a rhetorical perspective leads us to see the situation differently. In this section I will offer a revision of these overviews from a rhetorical perspective to illustrate how this method opens new insights valuable to both the scholar and environmentalist.

#### 3.6.2.1 Confucianism

Confucianism, and particularly the Song dynasty development known as Neo-Confucianism, offers a metaphysics and cosmology with resources that seem to support a nonanthropocentric worldview, concern for nonhuman beings, and a strong emphasis on observing ethical norms. For these reasons, scholars like Tu Weiming suggest Confucian humanism can serve as a model for how societies can reorient themselves towards environmentally-positive behavior. Tu, in fact,



argues that Confucianism is more properly termed ‘anthropocosmic’, suggesting the dynamic interrelationship between humans and the rest of the cosmos. Tu’s point is interesting and his use of ‘anthropocosmic’ is appealing, although it does not necessarily make humans equal with other beings. Rather, it suggests that humans hold a special position in the universe, a position that highlights the importance of appropriate human action, but not one that challenges the notion of human superiority.<sup>284</sup> And while it is true that there is a significant use of natural imagery in Neo-Confucian discussions of self-cultivation, reflecting the importance of the natural world in human striving for sagehood, this imagery is mostly just imagery.<sup>285</sup> It does not follow that the use of natural imagery engendered a sense of responsibility for the concrete world of nature. Moreover, the material that Tu and Tucker draw on, while being labeled ‘Confucian’ is almost exclusively taken from the tradition known as Neo-Confucianism. But as Hoyt Tillman has shown through his identification of three “levels of discourse” among Song Confucians, the metaphysical level of discourse (what Tillman labels “speculative philosophy”) was not always the level from which Confucians sought to address problems, and they did not always respond to issues with the

---

<sup>284</sup> This is similar to Bookchin’s idea of ‘second nature’, an idea that ostensibly challenges anthropocentrism, but in actuality creates a heightened sense of responsibility, and therefore importance, for humanity.

<sup>285</sup> See Kim Yung Sik’s comments on the nature imagery in Zhu Xi’s writings. Kim, Yung Sik, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi (1130-1200)* (American Philosophical Society, 2000), 21; 63, 196-197.

level of discourse at which the issue was initially raised.<sup>286</sup> From this observation, we can see that important distinctions need to be made within Neo-Confucian thought, even more so when we speak of Confucianism as a whole.

Approaching Confucian environmental ethics from a rhetorical perspective, alternatively, we would first seek to identify an audience. The promise of Confucian environmentalism begins to falter here. On the one hand, it is not easy to identify a large Confucian community that would have a significant environmental impact. Confucianism is an influential cultural tradition in China, Japan, and Korea, but even in Chinese cultural regions, such as Taiwan, there is little sense that Confucianism is a religious tradition. The lack of audience suggests that the project of Confucian environmental ethics is not likely to have pragmatic effect. This is not to say that values such as filial piety (*xiao shun* 孝順), appropriateness (*li* 禮), and humanity (*ren* 仁) need not be presented as Confucian for them to be accepted. Instead, the challenge is to identify in what manner to communicate these concepts to an audience for which these ideas have resonance. One possible consideration would be to look at the age group of the audience. Using the above concepts may be a fruitful way to engage older Chinese audiences for whom traditional values might resonate more deeply.

What can be said of concepts like *qi* (vital energy, breath) and *Dao* (the way of, sometimes translated as nature)? Confucian philosophers have not been silent on these topics, but, to be sure, they belong to Chinese philosophy and

---

<sup>286</sup> See Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 9-10 and 260.

religion broadly rather than having their provenance in either Daoism or Confucianism. For contemporary scholars who want to access the environmental resources in Chinese religious traditions, these two concepts are central. Tu Weiming and Cheng Chungying both develop theories of Chinese religious environmentalism around these ideas. But what traction do they have with more modern audiences? Does framing environmental issues in terms of *qi* or *Dao* inspire audiences? It would be hard to argue that they do. The terms are common enough in everyday discourse, but not in the highly philosophical sense that Tu and Cheng use them. A rhetorical perspective allows us to better situate the kind of work that Tu and Cheng are carrying out. It is not work that will impact a large audience, but the way in which they organize Chinese religious environmental ethics with notions like *qi* and *Dao* as the basis, helps illuminate other potential *topoi* that might have more practical application. For example, Tu reference to the “fruitful ambiguity” of the meaning of *qi* that “allows philosophers to explore realms of being which are inconceivable to people constricted by a Cartesian dichotomy” mirrors Naess’s intentional ambiguity which promotes discussion and leads possibly to consensus.<sup>287</sup> Cheng suggests that environment should be understood as *Dao*, which is related to “natural spontaneity” (*ziran* 自然). Cheng defines natural spontaneity as “a matter of infinite depth and infinite breadth in an

---

<sup>287</sup> Tu Weiming, “The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature,” in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, eds. J. Baird Callicot and Roger T. Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 69.

onto-cosmological sense.”<sup>288</sup> As a descriptive statement, arguing for this kind of definition of environment would probably not appeal to many listeners. But it fits well into the form of rhapsody/epistemology that Scott Slovic uses to analyze American nature writers. So the move that Cheng makes is not as philosophically important as the sense of awe evoked by representing environment as “infinite depth and infinite breadth.”

There is still more rhetorical work to be done to move an audience to act from this sense of wonder, but the rhetorical value of Cheng’s philosophical analysis seems to me more effective than the philosophical analysis itself, at least in terms of practical environmentalism. Finally, both Tu and Cheng refer to the interaction between *qi* and *Dao*. Cheng notes that they form a dialectic which joins metaphysics to materiality in a way that affirms the value of both. As we have seen already, dialectics is a valuable element of the rhetorical approach and the necessity of formulating an environmental ethic by incorporating both *qi* and *Dao* serves as a fine illustration of this point.

### 3.6.2.2 Judaism

The case with Judaism is quite different from Confucianism. Unlike Confucianism, Judaism has many readily identifiable communities (audiences) defined by ethnic differences, theological differences, and linguistic differences. These communities share a common historical trajectory, but each also has its own history of development.

---

<sup>288</sup> Cheng, “Environmental Ethics,” 226-227.

If we look at the denominations of modern Judaism, such as modern Orthodoxy, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionism, we can identify different ways environmentalism *might* be made meaningful. Orthodox thinkers have identified many laws concerned with the protection of the natural world, which, when combined with the absolute importance of the Torah in Orthodox Judaism, has led Orthodox thinkers from Samson Hirsch on to advocate that protection and avoidance of misuse of natural resources is incumbent on every Jew. Since Conservative Judaism shares with Orthodox Judaism a deep concern for maintaining the law, there are a number of Conservative Jewish thinkers that have likewise been very active in promoting (Jewish) environmental ethics within Jewish communities. Reconstructionism's progressive posture suggests that it would positively respond to and advocate ecologically beneficial attitudes and practices. Given the naturalistic character of the movement's philosophy, however, its responses may not be very different from the secular social responses found in the environmental movement.

The various denominations each have their own particular theological and organizational constraints and nuances which present different possibilities to each community. Despite the denominational character of Judaism in the United States, organizations such as COEJL (Coalition for Environment and Jewish Life) suggest that Jewish leaders and communities seek to address environmental issues from the stance of Judaism, as opposed to denominations. In addition, a review of the literature suggests that the discourse of Judaism and the environment has defined Judaism as a single entity. Recurrent themes stand out from the literature,

such as the commandments, the importance of the Torah, and a sense of stewardship towards creation. But this common strand might be more apparent than real, each author writing from his or her own perspective as if that perspective is the “Jewish” one. In addition, as Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan observes, “the religious sources of Judaism do not inform the identity of most Jews, and secular Jews do not appeal to them in their attempt to address environmental concerns.”<sup>289</sup> However, it is possible that the urgency of the environmental crisis will lead to a renegotiation of older boundaries between the strands of Judaism. Perhaps the leading theologians and rabbis will classify the environment as a pan-Jewish issue, while retaining denominational distinctions on other issues such as marriage, membership, and ritual practice.

### 3.7 Conclusions

In this chapter I have argued that because of the practical nature of environmental ethics and philosophy, these various philosophies are presented with an interest in persuading an audience to accept a certain position. This is no less true of religiously-oriented environmentalisms. In fact, given the highly metaphorical nature of religious discourse, the persuasive strategies and tactics are more effusive than those in secular environmental discourse. Based on this assessment, I argued that a rhetorical analysis can reveal the motives of representatives of various environmentalist positions. I outline the key elements

---

<sup>289</sup> Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan, “Judaism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (New York: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), 935.

of rhetoric as they would apply to the kind of practical philosophy environmental philosophy and ethics tends to be. A robust rhetorical approach will use concepts of identification, audience, and framing to analyze the potential a delivery or proposition has. I also discussed the importance of dialectics to the rhetorical approach. Dialectics highlights the vocabulary of values relevant to each audience that the rhetor can draw on to achieve identification. Dialectics is also a mode of inquiry that promotes effective communication between opposing positions with the aim of resolving conflict and establishing a unity. It is thus a tool available to the scholar studying the discourse of religious environmentalism and the rhetor employing the rhetoric of religious environmentalism.

Rhetorical analysis has much in common with the discourse analysis approaches advocated by Hajer and others. Rhetorical analysis helps scholars address the difficulties and conceptual impasses that environmental philosophies (both secular and religious) have encountered in the history of their development. A rhetorical approach does not nullify other approaches (philosophical, sociological, anthropological, etc.), but Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar notes that rhetorical consciousness arises with a crisis within a discourse.<sup>290</sup> So environmental problems are not solely rhetorical problems, but rhetoric can advance our ability to discuss, think about, and formulate responses to

---

<sup>290</sup> Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "Rhetoric and Its Double: Reflections of the Rhetorical Turn in the Human Sciences," in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*, eds. John Louis Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit, and Sally Caudill (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 210.

environmental problems, especially when the tools and methods of other discourses seem to have stalled.

The rhetorical approach, by emphasizing elements of audience, framing, and identification, also works on another level. This is the practical level by which environmental advocates are encouraged to conceive of their discursive strategies in rhetorical terms. From the comparative examples of Judaism and Confucianism, an analysis of rhetoric reveals that conceptual similarities, once contextualized, might not speak to the same concern. We might consider the Jewish commandment “do not destroy” as akin to the Buddhist teaching of “non-harm” (Skt. *ahiṃsā*) But before we make this connection, we would need to understand how each term is used in the environmental discourse of each tradition. Raising awareness of the importance of rhetoric in effective communication and providing the outline for conceiving of successful screens and appeals, environmental communication can be made more effective and better achieve the goal of motivating audiences to implementing practical measures.



## Chapter 4

### BUDDHISM AND ECOLOGY<sup>291</sup>

In this chapter, I will begin with an overview of the scholarship on Buddhism and ecology, describing what concepts have been at the forefront of the discussion and how these concepts have been developed. Then I will argue for a contextualized approach to analyzing Buddhist environmentalism, one which attends to a community-specific, or country-specific understanding of Buddhism and focuses on the ways that environmentalism has been practiced and articulated as a Buddhist concern in each specific community. This approach requires clarifying how key terms, such as environment and dependent origination (Skt. *pratitya samutpāda*, Ch. *yuanqi* 緣起), are interpreted. It also requires examining the efforts of Buddhists to communicate environmental practices as part of the Buddhist tradition and operationalize the key terms. I will focus specifically on the ways ‘environment’ has been discussed by scholars of Chinese Buddhism and the critiques that these scholars have regarding the current discourse of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. I will conclude by arguing that the label Chinese Buddhist environmentalism better characterizes the current discourse and practices than phrases like Buddhism and ecology or eco-Buddhism.

#### 4.1 Survey of the Field

---

<sup>291</sup> Parts of this chapter have been published in Seth DeVere Clippard, “The Lorax Wears Saffron: Toward an Authentic Buddhist Environmentalism,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 18 (2011), 212-248.

A survey of recent work on Buddhism and ecology reveals that the major trends in scholarship reflect similar trends in secular environmental ethics and work in other religious traditions. Although the literature in the field continues to grow, most scholars deal with Buddhist environmentalism in addition to their primary areas of focus. Generally speaking, the majority of articles address the question of Buddhist environmental ethics, sometimes crossing over into philosophy, as is common in secular environmental ethics. Many articles have appeared in journals such as the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, *Contemporary Buddhism*, and the *Journal of Global Buddhism*. Many seminal articles can be found in the four edited volumes on Buddhism and ecology.<sup>292</sup> There is usually a chapter devoted to environmental questions in anthologies on Buddhist ethics like *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics* and *Destroying Mara Forever*. Peter Harvey's comprehensive treatment of Buddhist ethics, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, likewise contains a chapter on Buddhist environmental attitudes. These collections are valuable for showing that not all work on Buddhist environmentalism is bound to an ethics-based approach. However, the book-length treatments of Buddhist environmentalism all deal with Buddhist environmentalism from the perspective of environmental ethics.

---

<sup>292</sup> Allen Hunt Badiner, ed., *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1990); Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown, eds., *Buddhism and Ecology* (London: Cassells, 1992); Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Williams, eds., *Buddhism and Ecology: The Connection of Dharma and Deeds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, eds., *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism* (Boston: Shambala, 2000).

To date, there are three English language monographs, *Environmental Ethics in Buddhism* by Pragati Sahni, *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics in Buddhism* by Padmasiri deSilva, and *Zen Buddhism and Environmental Ethics* by Simon P. James. Sahni and de Silva address the difficulties of reading environmental concern back into Buddhist concepts that became current well before there was anything such as “the environmental crisis.” Both works attempt to articulate clearly the parameters and practices that constitute Buddhist environmental ethics. On this basis Sahni’s work fares much better, since she focuses on one ethical approach, virtue ethics. Regrettably, Sahni and de Silva’s historical and philosophical analyses are overwhelmingly directed towards how to construct a Buddhist ethic solely based on traditional (Theravāda) and textual material. The problem in this approach is that it provides no clear examples of how Buddhists today are to proceed, short from the pursuit of enlightenment.<sup>293</sup> Sahni concludes that “early Buddhism can be seen to address environmental problems once its philosophy is interpreted in the right spirit.”<sup>294</sup> This sounds reasoned and critical, yet raises the question: How much does early Buddhism and the ethical system surrounding it apply to Buddhists today? What does it mean

---

<sup>293</sup> De Silva compares enlightenment to “ecological awakening” stating that “the one who is enlightened may also be the very paradigm of ecological awakening” and suggests that a deepened sense of connectedness with the natural world is one result of meditative practice. This latter point may be conceded, but the practicality of the enlightenment serving as a prerequisite to ecological awakening is simply too insignificant to be relevant to environmentalism as a whole. See Padmasiri deSilva, *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics in Buddhism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 127.

<sup>294</sup> Pragati Sahni, *Environmental Ethics in Buddhism: A Virtues Approach* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 166.

for the philosophy of early Buddhism to be “interpreted in the right spirit”? The answer inherent in Sahni’s conclusion is that the right spirit is one that articulates a Buddhist environmental ethic that differs only in minor details with the dominant strands of Western environmental ethics. The point to be made here is that the most thorough efforts at seeking an environmental ethic in Buddhist philosophy are always guided by the normative parameters of global environmental ethical discourse(s), and so such efforts have lost sight of the very audience they intend to address.

De Silva’s work is interesting more for what it does not state than for what it does. Throughout his book, De Silva refers to the practical nature of Buddhist ethics, to the attention the Buddha paid to context when delivering a teaching (for example, “[t]he Buddha’s sermons are permeated with an eye for context and practicality.”<sup>295</sup>) And de Silva argues that any environmental ethics should be likewise practical and contextual, at one point claiming ethics should be a “way of life.”<sup>296</sup> But when de Silva proffers evidence of early Buddhist environmental concern he often presents it without any reference to context. The project that de Silva engages in, articulating a Buddhist environmental ethics from a reinterpretation of early sources, does not coincide with the way in which he presents the character of the project, which sees ethics as tied to contexts. He therefore implies that rhetoric should be a valuable aspect of Buddhist environmental discourse (*per* the emphasis on the contextuality of the passages he

---

<sup>295</sup> De Silva, *Environmental Philosophy*, 183; see also 140-41.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 182; see also 18, 26, 27.

cites), but fails to explicitly recognize that a rhetorical analysis of the same passages would yield a more accurate and reasonable understanding of just what in the Buddhist tradition is inherently applicable to a contemporary Buddhist environmental ethics.<sup>297</sup>

Simon James' work seems like it would offer the closest treatment to Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. The work is solely philosophical in its approach and is mostly directed towards an audience unfamiliar with Buddhism. While it provides some philosophical food for thought, it falls into the same category as other works that seek to align the ethics of a given religious tradition with commonly accepted norms of environmental ethics in hope of providing a resource for some sort of global environmental ethic. Like Sahni, James advocates an environmental virtue ethics approach as the most inviting for Buddhism.<sup>298</sup> In a chapter on "Zen ethics" he delineates how Zen can be thought of as a virtue ethics tradition, even to go so far as to imply that Zen *is* virtue ethics.

In spite of the tight arguments James makes, the work suffers consistently from the intractability of James's main subject, Zen. Although taking Zen as his focus, much of what he says of Zen ethics—prizing wisdom (Skt. *prajna*) and compassion (Skt. *karuna*), importance of skillful means, the goal of awakening—

---

<sup>297</sup> In particular, de Silva states, "Ethics which are not related to the practical exigencies of life become mere rhetoric." Ibid., 183.

<sup>298</sup> Simon James, *Zen Buddhism and Environmental Ethics* (Hampshire; Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 33-36. This is not at all surprising since he co-authored a work on Buddhism and virtue ethics that was published shortly after *Zen Buddhism*.

is simply true of most strands of the Mahayāna tradition (Tiantai, Huayan, Pure land, etc.). “Zen,” which James takes as some sort of agent, refers to whatever can be called Zen. His sources are gathered from the Chinese, Japanese and American Buddhist traditions, as well as sources he argues Zen is based on: Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. Although he treats Zen as philosophy he states that “it is in practice that the ‘real’ Zen is found.”<sup>299</sup> Is this to mean that the book, which treats Zen philosophically, is then not really about the ‘real’ Zen? In one way, yes. As he notes, “I have drawn indiscriminately from various Zen traditions as I saw fit in order to make this or that particular point.”<sup>300</sup> In addition, the real Zen as he defines it is about practice, particularly *zazen*, a practice that might make one more receptive to suffering of non-human beings and environmental systems but does not qualify as ethics. But if James’s presumed audience is environmental philosophers (as we should assume when he says that this book is about environmental ethics), then how does his conclusion that he has not attempted to construct a Zen Buddhist environmental ethics, but “an environmental ethics *inspired* by Zen Buddhism,” accomplished by fitting

---

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 129 (emphasis in original). This strategy does not always work well philosophically, either. For example, James argues that selflessness (*anatmān*) does not necessarily entail compassion by reference to instructions to a samurai that emphasizes emptiness on the battlefield. James claims that the samurai is thus deficient in compassion. However, he uses the concept of skillful means to explain how a Zen abbot can be understood to be practicing compassion by striking a deer to prevent it from grazing in a field. But James fails to consider that, in the case of the samurai, focusing on emptiness allows him to fulfill his role as a samurai which could have been to defend others from bandits and the like. The point is that such arbitrary use of textual sources can confuse even the philosophical points one wishes to make.

Buddhist-related notions into the mold of an Aristotilean virtue ethic, speak to Buddhists? The problem here is apparent in many such works. It is intellectually intriguing, but fails to address the tough questions of religious environmental ethics like how can religious leaders drawn on their tradition effectively to motivate members of their community to carry out environmental practices. Had James addressed his book to contemporary Zen Buddhist leaders, he would have gone some way to pushing the field forward.

Finally, some additional noteworthy articles should be mentioned. First, several articles by Ian Harris have served to pose a challenge to the all-too-simple approach of sliding Buddhist terms up against concepts common in environmental ethics. He has argued that the approach taken by many scholars to construct an eco-Buddhist ethic distorts the tradition and misinterprets central tenets. Although possibly troubling to scholars who are trying to forge an ethic of this ilk, his objections are nonetheless thought-provoking and intended to refine the discourse. Harris also provides us with the first typology of Buddhist environmentalism.

Donald Swearer's article, "An Assessment of Buddhist Ecophilosophy" builds upon the typology of eco-Buddhism proffered by Harris.<sup>301</sup> Swearer's typology, building upon Harris's, identifies five different eco-Buddhist positions: eco-apologist, eco-critic, eco-constructivist, eco-ethicist, and eco-contextualist:

---

<sup>301</sup> See Donald K. Swearer, "An Assessment of Buddhist Ecophilosophy," *Harvard Theological Review* 99:2 (2006), 123-137 and Ian Harris, "Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 2 (1995), 173-190.

The first position [eco-apologist] holds that Buddhist environmentalism extends naturally from the Buddhist worldview; the second [eco-critic] that the Buddhist worldview does not harmonize with an environmental ethic. The third position [eco-constructivist] maintains that one can construct a Buddhist environmental ethic, though not coterminous with a Buddhist worldview, from Buddhist texts and doctrinal tenets; the fourth [eco-ethicist], that one should evaluate a viable Buddhist environmental ethic in terms of Buddhist ethics rather than inferred from the Buddhist worldview. The fifth position [eco-contextualist] holds that the most effective Buddhist environmental ethic takes its definition in terms of particular contexts and situations.<sup>302</sup>

The latter three positions are more recent responses to the critiques offered by the “eco-critics.” Swearer’s article (and Harris’s) is important for it provides a clear and accurate picture of the various approaches to eco-Buddhism; most, but not all, of those being ethically-oriented. Moreover, Swearer’s typology introduces a category he terms “eco-contextualists.” This category is valuable in identifying how some Buddhists can express environmental concern without engaging in formal theoretical construction or debates.

For almost two decades, scholars have been examining this intersection of Buddhism and the environment—is it legitimate? How to articulate it? Is it traditionally Buddhist? Is it a new form of Buddhism? The field of Buddhism and ecology has grown gradually since the first anthology of Buddhist environmental writing, *Dharma Gaia*, appeared in 1990. Much of the scholarly work has addressed the ontological strands of Buddhist thought in an attempt to demonstrate that Buddhism is an “environmentally-friendly” tradition. Some of this work has simply focused on descriptions of Buddhist texts as “ecological,” while other approaches have been more sophisticated, taking into consideration

---

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 125.



the cultural contexts of the Buddhism under examination. Not every scholar believes that Buddhism contains a *sui generis* environmental ethic and some have critiqued work on Buddhist environmentalism for twisting the tradition beyond recognition. Since the environmental crisis as it is currently perceived is a contemporary, or at least modern, phenomenon, the resources that scholars draw upon and the very way in which they define the tradition precedes and conditions (if not determines) their environmental reading of the tradition. Pragati Sahni describes the situation very well: “It is believed predominantly that nearly all Buddhist teachings in their application to the environment remain unclear and ambiguous. Thus scholars at both ends of the spectrum have legitimate reason to trust their own interpretation and doubt others.”<sup>303</sup>

#### 4.2 Environmental ethics and Buddhist environmentalism

Lambert Schmithausen has observed that “among Buddhists as well as Buddhologists there seems to be considerable disagreement with regard to whether Buddhism does or does not [favor] an ecological ethics.”<sup>304</sup> Drawing on Swearer’s typology, arguments made by eco-apologists, eco-constructivists, and eco-ethicists relate popular Buddhist concepts to common concepts in environmental ethics. Eco-constructivists differ from eco-apologists primarily on the point that the values, concepts, and practices from Buddhist tradition(s) need to be reinterpreted in light of current environmental situations. Eco-critics argue

---

<sup>303</sup> Sahni, *Virtues*, 2.

<sup>304</sup> Lambert Schmithausen, “The Early Buddhist Tradition and Ecological Ethics,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1997), 4.

that the relationship between these two spheres is either inauthentic or that there are concepts that contradict or supersede the concepts that seem logically consistent with concepts in environmental ethics. Eco-ethicists, further, attempt to discern what kind of environmental ethics Buddhism most closely resembles, in order to clarify what kinds of questions need to be asked. From the literature, the dominant position, reflected in the work of authors like Sahni and others is that Buddhist environmental ethics most resembles virtue ethics.<sup>305</sup>

But perhaps discussions of ethics in terms of type are misguided. Is Buddhist environmentalism a form of virtue ethics? It might have elements that resemble what is known as virtue ethics, as several scholars have pointed out, but it also seems amenable in ways to deontology and utilitarianism. The fact that religious traditions are not coterminous with ethical systems makes it conceptually difficult to claim that a given religious tradition's ethics is of one sort or another. Thus, the debate that Schmithausen refers to of whether Buddhism is an ecological tradition appears to take the wrong question as its focus; as the Buddha might say, the question is poorly put. For environmental ethics, as a form of practical ethics, is intent on seeking reasons advocating a change in behavior or attitude. We need to look for other ways in which to assess

---

<sup>305</sup> Sahni, *Virtue*; David E. Cooper and Simon P. James, *Buddhism, Virtue, and Environment* (Hants: Ashgate, 2005); Alan Sponberg, "Green Buddhism and the Hierarchy of Compassion," in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 370; and James Whitehill, "Buddhist Ethics in Western Context: The 'Virtues' Approach" *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 1 (1994), accessed 01/21/2012, <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/2010/04/05/buddhist-ethics-in-western-context-the-virtues-approach/>.

the ethical dimensions of a tradition's environmental activities. For Buddhist environmentalism we need to begin with the Buddhists who are engaging in environmental practice and examine how they are doing this. It must have some effect on human behavior, individual or communal. Whether Buddhism favors an ecological ethics depends on how Buddhists and scholars of Buddhism interpret elements of the tradition. The evidence put forth for either position may be culled from the vast number of texts in the Buddhist canon, the interpretation of these texts by commentators, extra-canonical material, or the simple desire to present environmental concern as a meaningful aspect of Buddhist life. In this case, the question should be put thus: how do Buddhists go about making environmentalism meaningful in the context of Buddhist thought and practice? How is nature interpreted, understood, articulated, and set in relationship to Buddhists? These are better questions, because they are more closely tied to environmental ethics as a form of practical ethics. By looking at articulations and critiques of Buddhist environmentalism, we can see how nature is viewed, defined, and interpreted in the process of negotiating the intersection of Buddhist ethics, practice, hermeneutics, and doctrine. What for some is a metaphysical issue, is for others a purely ethical one. Just why these differences obtain is a question that would further highlight the various streams of Buddhist environmentalism.

Defining what Buddhist environmental ethics is, what it seeks to accomplish, and who it speaks to seem like related questions, but greater clarity of the issues at stake can be gleaned from engaging one further distinction. As we

saw in chapter one, disagreement over what to label the field of religion and ecology involves more than just individual preference. Various labels highlight different understandings of the goal of the field, meanings of nature, and interpretations of religion's role in society. This is no less true in the Buddhist case. Environmentalism is a contemporary phenomenon. Arguments can be made for the environmentalism of pre-modern and even pre-20<sup>th</sup> century societies, but these characterizations would be only based on analogy. What I have been discussing so far are interpretations of Buddhist tradition(s) and interpretations of environmental concern. It can be said with certainty that Buddhism is not an inherently environmental tradition, no religious tradition is (except for Taylor's dark green religion, or unless we count Deep Ecology as a religious tradition). But many scholars and others argue for the inherent environmental outlook in Buddhism, or as de Silva and Sahni do, argue that Buddhism from its earliest forms or essential concerns is compatible with environmentalism.

This approach, which is predominantly textual in nature I refer to as eco-Buddhism. Eco-Buddhism refers to interpretations of the tradition as an ecological or environmental tradition. It suggests that something in the nature or essence of Buddhism (or some tradition of Buddhism) is at root concerned with the well-being of the natural world. Eco-Buddhism is a view of Buddhism that focuses on Buddhist texts and teachings apart from any concrete Buddhist community, sometimes for the purpose of applying Buddhist concepts to other religious traditions. It is an ontological position.

In contrast to eco-Buddhism, there is Buddhist environmentalism. Following Gottlieb's definition of religious environmentalism, I suggest that Buddhist environmentalism is a form of environmental practice that is carried out in Buddhist communities, by Buddhists acting *as* Buddhists. Buddhism is central and relevant to Buddhist environmentalists, but they will draw on the way in which Buddhism is understood and practiced in its local context, which is to say that the Buddhist environmentalism of an American Theravāda community of central California simply cannot be identical to the Buddhist environmentalism of a Sri Lankan village inspired by the Sarvodaya movement, despite the common tradition of Theravāda Buddhism. Buddhist environmentalism does not require the establishment of first principles or that moral concern for non-human beings be first justified through Buddhist scriptures. Studying Buddhist environmentalism *does* imply that the scholar is best served by not passing normative judgments on what is authentic Buddhist practice and belief and what is not. Following this mode of interpretation, eco-Buddhism itself can be identified as a form of Buddhist environmentalism, provided there is a concrete community that is carrying out environmental practices in response to environmental concern. This distinction offers the advantage of organizing the methodological clutter that has resulted from the hermeneutical admixture of analytical approaches and activist approaches to Buddhism and environmentalism, a situation that is nonetheless the natural outcome of the diversity of interests within the field.

In recognizing the importance of audience we must also acknowledge that Buddhist environmentalism and any corresponding ethics are necessarily contemporary in focus. This is not to say that textual analysis and historical work are not helpful in articulating the contours of Buddhist environmental ethics, but that we must begin with Buddhist environmental practice in the present. Mick Smith offers a thoughtful analysis of the connection of philosophy and context, remarking that “[t]he moral considerability of nature need not be a matter of discovering abstract criteria by which one can judge such valuations right or wrong in any absolute sense. Rather, ethical values need to be explained and justified in terms of their contexts and origins, *their production and reproduction in particular social and environmental circumstances.*”<sup>306</sup> And Ian Harris points out that the cultural diversity of the Buddhist world is simply too great to hope that one ethic or approach will hold true for all Buddhists. However, his suggestion that eco-Buddhism consists of other influences rendering it something other than “authentic Buddhism” seems at least called into question considering the fact that the framing necessary to make environmentalism a meaningful practice for Buddhists will inevitably produce an eco-Buddhism that has adapted to this one demand of the modern world.

#### 4.2.1 Approaches and Major Concepts

---

<sup>306</sup> Smith, *Place*, 52 (emphasis mine).

In an article on tree ordination, I divided current approaches to Buddhist environmentalism into two strategies, textual and practical.<sup>307</sup> The textual strategy is itself discursive, by which I mean that for scholars and advocates of this medium, the first step of Buddhist environmentalism is the articulation of Thai eco-Buddhism, as opposed to a form of Thai Buddhist environmentalism. The textual strategy is the product of scholars and practitioners (both monastic and laity) who are familiar with Western forms of ecological discourse. These scholars, relying on an interpretation of key Buddhist concepts and texts in a way that implies a connection to an environmental discourse, have created a Thai eco-Buddhist discourse that resembles the approach Peterson critiques above. That is, by placing Buddhist terms within the discourse of environmental concern and forging the link in theory between Buddhist thought and environmental theory, it is supposed that Buddhists will take a proactive approach towards addressing environmental issues.<sup>308</sup> Below I will explore some of the terms and concepts that

---

<sup>307</sup> Seth De Vere Clippard, "The Lorax Wears Saffron: Towards a Buddhist Environmentalism," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 18 (2011), 216-17, accessed September 21, 2011, <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/2011/06/06/3120/>

<sup>308</sup> This project of reinterpretation is often associated with engaged Buddhism. Ken Jones argues that this strategy is one way of validating engaged Buddhist theorizing. See Ken Jones, *The New Social Face of Buddhism* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2003), 217-220. He identifies two approaches of this strategy that he refers to as literalism and "socializing textualism." He rejects the first by arguing that this approach, which decontextualizes portions of scriptural texts, "secularizes and reduces both scriptural meaning and engaged spirituality." The second he argues is a legitimate means of validating engaged Buddhism since it attempts to reinterpret teachings and texts with reference to the contemporary social context and taking account of the social context of the text itself. We might argue that these two approaches mirror the eco-apologist and eco-constructivist types, respectively, Swearer describes. The socializing textualist approach is less

make up part of this strategy. Then I will lay out some of the critiques that have addressed this form of eco-Buddhist discourse.

The term *pratitya-samutpāda* is often translated as “dependent origination,” but in the context of eco-Buddhist discourse, we find the term “interdependence” being used as well. The reason for choosing the latter is not hard to discern. Perhaps the most commonly accepted notion of ecology is the study of how entities (individuals, groups, and systems) in the natural world are interrelated. The term “interdependence” (and sometimes “holism”) is often used to reflect this understanding. Since dependent origination does not have the same ecological ring that interdependence does, it is clear that the latter, with its obvious sense that things are related, would be a more effective, meaningful translation with reference to environmentalism. Sulak Sivaraksa uses this term “interdependent,” claiming that the “concept of interdependent co-arising is the crux of Buddhist understanding. Nothing is formed in isolation and, like the jeweled net of Indra, each individual reflects every other infinitely.”<sup>309</sup> The image of the “jeweled net of Indra” is a classic image for dependent origination and has been used to connect to Buddhism with the “web of life” image found in Western ecological discourse.<sup>310</sup> Sivaraksa goes on to argue that anthropocentric language

---

like Swearer's eco-contextualist type, since it is more concerned with characteristics of a social condition and less with actual events in society.

<sup>309</sup> Sulak Sivaraksa, *Conflict, Culture, and Change: Engaged Buddhism in a Globalizing World* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005), 71.

<sup>310</sup> See Paul O. Ingram, “The Jeweled Net of Nature,” in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 71-88.



is a cause for environmental damage, and the concept of dependent origination reorients human understanding towards a more environmentally beneficial worldview, “Environmentalism, as advocated by the government, is a farce and needs to be replaced by a new understanding of the mutually dependent relationship between all forms of nature.”<sup>311</sup> He further offers some instances of a life reflecting this “new understanding.” “Every time a tree is planted, every time a child swims in a river, every time we look upon each other with eyes of compassionate understanding, our commitment to interdependence is restored.”<sup>312</sup>

Chatsumarn Kabilsingh also draws on this sense of interdependence, using it to describe the proper human/non-human relationship. She says, “A man is a part of nature and cannot live as an individual or collectively as a nation, if he violates the laws of nature and shows disregard for it. We must learn to respect nature and see it holistically.”<sup>313</sup> This understanding of the nature of the environmental crisis—that humans act as if they are separate from the world—resonates with much nonanthropocentric environmental ethics in Europe and North America. The typical argument in this vein centers on the assertion that humans fail to see how their actions affect the rest of nature, so that, ultimately, environmental problems are seen as the result of hubris. That is to say, human failure to acknowledge non-human beings as morally considerable allows for the

---

<sup>311</sup> Sivaraksa, *Conflict*, 75.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>313</sup> Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, *Buddhism and Nature Conservation* (Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1998), 12.

pursuit of courses of action harmful to other species and whole ecosystems to be rendered ethically unproblematic for humanity.

Andrew Olendzki has remarked that “[t]here is nothing inherently connected about dependently co-arising phenomena,” suggesting that uses of the doctrine of dependent origination to mean ‘interconnectedness’ are misplaced, and he reflects that the “more interconnected we become, the more bound in the net of conditioned phenomena we may find ourselves. I think the Buddha was pointing a way out of all this, but it is not through getting further connected. It has more to do with getting less connected, less entangled, and less attached.”<sup>314</sup> Olendzki’s observation is accurate, certainly in the Pali context, and it heeds the cautionary principle advocated by Toulmin and Kirkland. However, it does not fully account for how dependent origination is applied in eco-discourse. The goal may certainly be to ultimately become unconditioned, but the uses of dependent origination in the context of eco-Buddhist discourse emphasize how to live in the world while we (individually) are still within the realm of *samsāra* (the cycle of rebirth). It is from this perspective that the eco-Buddhist use of the concept should be understood. However, Olendzki is correct in questioning the joy that some Buddhist thinkers such as Joanna Macy seem to find in this conditioned, “samsaric” world. From a “Theravadin” perspective this joy would certainly not be easily justified, if at all.

*Mettā* or loving-kindness is another concept commonly used as the basis of a Buddhist environmental ethic. According to Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, “The

---

<sup>314</sup> Andrew Olendzki, “Interconnected...Or Not?” *Insight Journal* 24 (2005), 3.  
200

very core of Buddhism evolves around compassion, encouraging a better respect for and tolerance of every human being and living thing sharing the planet.”<sup>315</sup> Although Kabilsingh uses the word compassion here, she frequently switches between “compassion” and “loving-kindness.” I do not think she is intending to distinguish *mettā* from *karuna*, but is referring generally to what is normally understood as *mettā*.

*Mettā* is often connected to the concept of *ahiṃsā*, the doctrine of non-harm. If one is enjoined to not harm other living beings<sup>316</sup>, then developing loving-kindness towards living beings is one way to establish a relationship with them that provides an orientation away from actions that may cause harm. If *ahiṃsā* is the goal, *mettā* is the method. This construction is also central to the precepts and the Eightfold Path. All five of the precepts are directed towards avoiding doing harm to others, whether that harm is verbal, bodily, or psychological. The directives on the Eightfold Path concerning ethics (Skt. *sīla*) are likewise intended to limit the harm one might do. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood provide guidelines for living that are intended to diminish the harm done to other beings in the course of daily life.

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu offers a vision of the human-nature relationship based on his own interpretation and arrangement of Buddhist concepts. He takes

---

<sup>315</sup> Nancy Nash, *Tree of Life: Buddhism and Protection of Nature* (Geneva: Buddhist Perception of Nature, 1987), 8.

<sup>316</sup> It should be noted that the debate regarding whether only living beings are the subject of *ahiṃsa* or if all things be included (rivers, forests, etc.) is far from settled.

*dhamma* (Pali, Skt. *dharma*) to mean “nature,” setting up the condition that destruction of the environment is equivalent to destroying *dhamma*: “By cutting down the forests, we are cutting ourselves off from *Dhamma*.”<sup>317</sup> Buddhādāsa makes clear that *dhamma* refers both to nature in the sense of a natural law, a fundamental truth of the world, and to nature in the sense of the natural world. In the first sense, *dhamma* as the “Law of Nature” is the teaching of dependent origination.<sup>318</sup> In the second sense, *dhamma* is nature as the physical world, of which humans are an inextricable part, and which is expressed by the term *dhammajati*—“that which is born out of the natural order.”<sup>319</sup> This equation of *dhamma* with the natural world perhaps evolved out of his connection to the forest tradition. Regardless the source, we are encouraged to view nature as a source of Buddhist teachings. “Indeed, the lessons nature teaches us lead to a new birth beyond the suffering (*dukkha*) that results from attachment to self.”<sup>320</sup> In response to environmental damage, Buddhādāsa advocates an ethic of care (Pali, *anurakkhā*), but this sense of care is based on non-attachment to self, an empathy with all other things that “necessarily implies the ontological realization of

---

<sup>317</sup> Santikaro Bhikkhu, “Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu: Life and Society through the Natural Eyes of Voidness,” in *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*, eds. Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 160; see also Donald K. Swearer, “The Hermeneutics of Buddhist Ecology in Contemporary Thailand: Buddhādāsa and Dhammapitaka,” in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 25.

<sup>318</sup> Santikaro, “Buddhadāsa,” 161.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>320</sup> Cited in Swearer, “Hermeneutics,” 25.

interdependent co-arising.”<sup>321</sup> It is difficult to isolate a single term as the most basic in Buddhādāsa’s teachings on the connection between Buddhism and the environment. He links dependent origination, suffering, care, *dhamma*, and nature together in an interrelated system that strikes at the heart of the Buddhist project of overcoming suffering with wisdom. Just how this system would be carried out in practice, however, is left somewhat ambiguous.

Phra Payutto has also spoken about the dangers of environmental damage and the need to change our understanding of ourselves and nature in order to be able to act in ways that minimize or arrest this damage. According to Donald Swearer, the difference between Payutto and Buddhādāsa can be described by comparing Buddhādāsa’s “spiritual biocentrism based on an identification of nature and *dhamma*,” with Payutto’s textual strategy in which “teachings are more systematic in nature and more consistently grounded in Pali texts and Theravāda historical traditions.”<sup>322</sup> Swearer goes on to note that Payutto “finds within the Buddhist worldview of mutual cooperation an alternative to Western dualism and materialism, which he holds responsible for many forms of global exploitation.”<sup>323</sup> Payutto investigates the roots of the environmental crisis, finding that aversion (Skt. *doṣa*) and greed (Skt. *lobha*) have led to a global consumerist lifestyle, the consequence of which is pollution, poverty, and other

---

<sup>321</sup> Swearer, “Hermeneutics,” 26-27.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.

social problems.<sup>324</sup> These two qualities are basic to the Buddhist interpretation of *dukkha*. Therefore, the problem of the environment is in essence the Buddhist problem of suffering. Consequently, Payutto offers a solution that is the basic Buddhist response to the problem of suffering—the Eightfold Path.

Payutto states that “environmental problems must be addressed on three levels,” which are “behavior,” “the mind,” and “understanding.”<sup>325</sup> These three levels correspond to the three parts of the eight-fold path—*sīla* (behavior), *samādhi* (the mind), and *prajñā* (wisdom, understanding). From this example we see the degree to which Payutto, although responding to a contemporary social and ethical problem, returns to the very foundation of Buddhism to craft a response.

The textual strategy not only employs specific concepts but looks to certain texts, as well. One popular body of texts for exploring the intersection of Buddhism and ecology is the *jātakas*, the stories of the past lives of the Buddha. There are several ways these have been used in eco-Buddhist discourse: to show that animals are morally considerable, to argue for the inherent ecological concern for the natural world by the Buddha, or to connect human ethics with the lives of animals. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh makes reference to the *jātakas* in several different ways. One way she uses the *jātakas* is as examples of injunctions to act

---

<sup>324</sup> P.A. Payutto, “Buddhist Solutions for the Twenty-first Century,” in *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*, eds. Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft (Boston: Shambala, 2000), 170-171.

<sup>325</sup> P.A. Payutto, *Towards a Sustainable Science* (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1995), 91.

with compassion towards the natural world. The argument is made in one respect on the basis that the *jātaka* tales show that, due to the working of *kamma*, humans are connected to non-human beings. Just as the Buddha in the past was a bird, a tiger, etc., so we, too, have been animals before; thus, harming animals is tantamount to self-harm, as well as harm of those we care for.<sup>326</sup> Another way this point is argued is based on the very presence of animals as characters in the *jātaka* tales. Kabilsingh points out that in many stories, animals are spared from harm because they act in ethically conscious ways or because the story contains a proscriptive stance towards harming animals or other elements of nature. Some of the stories she cites are found in *sūtras* beyond the *jātakas*, too, as in the *Rukkha Sūtra* (*Samyutta Nikaya* 48.67).<sup>327</sup>

As we see from the above, the general thrust of the textual strategy is to reread Buddhist texts in terms of environmental concern to identify which concepts and texts in Buddhism serve the purpose of constructing a discourse of environmental concern. The project attempts to offer a description of Buddhism that allows for a natural linkage with a more normative environmental ethic. The bridging of Buddhist concepts, whether they are ethical or cosmological, with the elements of what tends to be a non-anthropocentric/biocentric/ecocentric environmental ethic is assumed to be all that is needed to induce in Buddhists a change towards ecological consciousness. I will first present the critiques of other

---

<sup>326</sup> Kabilsingh, *Nature Conservation*, 107-108.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

scholars regarding this strategy, then after presenting the practical strategy, I will return to my own critique of the textual strategy.

#### 4.2.2 Critiques

The category of “eco-critics” illustrates that not every scholar is convinced that an environmental ethic can be derived from Buddhist thought, much less that it is in any way *inherently* ecological. Scholars such as Ian Harris, Christopher Ives, and Lambert Schmidhausen are critical of approaches that interpret Buddhism wholesale as unproblematically environmental. Christopher Ives has illustrated how when some thinkers take a rather common environmental concept like identification with nature and explain it in a Buddhist context, or the Buddhist concept of dependent origination, when it is translated as the equivalent of the ecological notion of interdependence, they succumb to certain “rhetorical pitfalls.”<sup>328</sup> For example, Ives states those who advocate using “interdependence” as the translation of *pratītya-samutpāda* tend to erroneously claim that flourishing of beings is dependent on all other things. Likewise, equating the concept of identifying with nature with Buddhist non-duality puts one on the slippery slope of being unable to make ethical distinctions between pristine rivers and rivers of toxic sludge.<sup>329</sup> Ives also points how appeals to compassion do not provide clear

---

<sup>328</sup> Christopher Ives, “In Search of a Green Dharma: Philosophical Issues in Buddhist Environmental Ethics,” in *Destroying Mara Forever: Buddhist Ethics Essays in honor of Damien Keown*, eds. John Powers and Charles S. Prebish (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Press, 2009), 167.

<sup>329</sup> See also Christopher Ives, “Deploying the Dharma: Reflections on the Methodology of Constructive Buddhist Ethics,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 15 (2008), 23-44. In the case of *pratītya-samutpāda*, Ives suggests that the concept is



interpretations of what the appropriate ethical behavior or response to any given situation might be.<sup>330</sup>

Implicit in his critique is the notion that what, as Donald Swearer might say, eco-apologists and eco-constructivists are really trying to do is find a Buddhist environmental rhetoric, a way to speak in Buddhist terms about the environment that is both meaningful and effective. He focuses this critique by asking whether the environmental values that Buddhists claim for Buddhism reflect an honest analysis of the sources or if they are mostly constructed from hand-picked Buddhist sources to fit already identified values. He observes, “One methodological issue worth considering, however, is whether, in their efforts to address specific moral issues, contemporary Buddhist ethicists are formulating genuinely Buddhist ethical stances or are, consciously or otherwise, engaging in acts of eisegesis by looking selectively in Buddhists sources—whether experiences, texts, doctrines, practices, or institutions—to find support for the ethical and political stances that they brought to their practice of Buddhism in the first place.”<sup>331</sup>

Ives’s critique addresses the aspect of the discourse of Buddhist environmental ethics that has made it both widely appealing but also intellectually not unrelated to environmental thought but that the “rhetorical pitfalls” might be avoided by translating the term as “conditional arising.”

---

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 33. He states, “In short, good intentions are admirable, but some other criterion is needed to critique actions and situations, guide actions based on compassion, and conceptualize what Buddhistically optimal situations might look like.”

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 29.

troubling. His solution emerges out of the Buddhist tradition itself. He suggests that Buddhists employ Buddhist soteriology as a device for analyzing and formulating responses to ethical questions regarding a Buddhist environmental ethics. This approach provides for common criteria all based on the notion of *dukkha*, or suffering, for developing an environmental ethic. This methodology of establishing a Buddhist environmental ethic is not susceptible to the charge of being inauthentic and one would be hard-pressed to find a Buddhist community that would deny the question of suffering is central to Buddhist thought and practice. And he avoids the critique he makes of other Buddhist environmental ethics, “insofar as thinkers are pursuing Buddhist ethics, they must clarify the specific Buddhist principles that should be deployed for critical assessment of actuality and for constructive thought about optimal societies.”<sup>332</sup> But we should ask if Ives’s approach is suitable for environmental ethics. If we follow our understanding of environmental ethics as practical, must Buddhist communities be beholden to establishing first principles before engaging in environmentalism, even as Buddhists? It might seem somewhat trite to say, but Buddhists are people, too, and so are individually complex. A Buddhist does not necessarily make all his or her decisions on Buddhist first principles, so much less would we expect a community to do so. Moreover to judge a Buddhist community’s environmental activism as un-Buddhist or inauthentic because it does not adhere exclusively to Buddhist philosophical principles would make the project of Buddhist environmentalism quite unattainable. Least of all for the reasons that it

---

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 31.

might be argued that the Buddhist quality of any such first principle is subject to debate. For example, to what degree was the Buddha's articulation of *dukkha* the product of the philosophical/religious environment of his time? Would socio-cultural influences on the Buddha's articulation of *dukkha* make it less authentically "Buddhist?" I agree with Ives that the Buddhist notion of *dukkha* is central to the tradition *because that is a position commonly agreed upon*, but in examining Buddhist environmental ethics, we should resist the move to establish absolute standards that all ideas must adhere to in order to be considered Buddhist.

Ian Harris has offered a series of critiques of Buddhist environmentalism that question the way terms (Buddhist and non-Buddhist) are interpreted and points out what he sees as the damaging consequences of eco-Buddhist appropriations of the tradition. Harris attributes the concern for the welfare of animals not to Buddhism, but to a larger ethic of civility: "Concern for the animal kingdom is compatible with Buddhism but does not arise naturally from its central insights into the nature of reality."<sup>333</sup> There are other specific examples that Harris offers (the instrumental value that wild areas have, not because of some intrinsic worth, but because they aid the monastic life), but the charge that Harris levels against the eco-Buddhist approach in general is that it does not sit easily with the view of the world that Buddhism adheres to. "Nirvanic dysteleology" and the teaching of impermanence render the world "a domain devoid of

---

<sup>333</sup> Ian Harris, "Ecological Buddhism?" in *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, ed. Richard S. Foltz (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003), 178.

substantiality” and obviate the need to justify concern for the natural world.<sup>334</sup> Moreover, the instances of ecological concern represented by the adherence to *ahiṃsā* that other scholars point to in Buddhist texts and history are interpreted by Harris as the acknowledgement of the Buddha that it would be beneficial to the spread of the *sangha* to encourage actions that demonstrate respect for this kind of civilized behavior. In general, Harris claims that the ways in which Buddhist notions have been enlisted to articulate an eco-Buddhist position in fact rely heavily on global environmental discourses of inherent value and interconnectedness. According to Harris, most articulations of Buddhist environmentalism either appeal to values and concepts that are no different from other more general environmental philosophies, or they so greatly distort the meaning of the Buddhist concepts and text appealed to that they render them inauthentically Buddhist.<sup>335</sup> Harris is, in one respect, correct in questioning the authenticity of Buddhist environmentalism, since claiming Buddhism is inherently environmental is contradicted by concepts central to the tradition and that some concepts looked upon to support Buddhist environmentalism have a pre-Buddhist history. However, Harris’s concern with the authenticity of articulations of environmental Buddhist positions suggests that he is working from an essentialized interpretation of Buddhism. So we may reasonably question

---

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>335</sup> See Ian Harris, "Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 2 (1995); and Ian Harris, "Buddhism and the Discourse of Environmental Concern: Some Methodological Problems Considered," in *Buddhism and Ecology: the Intersection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 376.

how far across the spectrum of contemporary Buddhist communities Harris's critiques can be applied. It is most likely that he is addressing particularly Westernized approaches to eco-Buddhism (regardless of the cultural identity of the representative), and so his critiques should not be taken to cover every instance of Buddhist environmental concern.

There is another point that Harris frequently makes, though, that supports the argument made in this dissertation. Harris states that "supporters of an *authentic* Buddhist environmental ethic have tended toward a positive indifference to the history and complexity of the Buddhist tradition" and that "the generalization of practices from one historical, geographical, or cultural phase of the tradition, in an attempt to justify some monolithic Buddhist position, will be largely illegitimate."<sup>336</sup> Harris's point raises the issue regarding by what criteria is a Buddhist environmental ethic to be considered "Buddhist" and not "a blend of the sort of globalized environmental discourse we might meet with in any part of today's world."<sup>337</sup> Perhaps the problem is inherent in the project of applying religious thought to social issues, for Harris also notes that each of the canonical languages of Buddhism is situated in its own cultural and linguistic context. In this vein, he refers to the difficulty of defining "nature." If we are to understand the Buddhism of a certain cultural or linguistic region views nature, we must attend to how the natural world is understood. Harris notes how nature in early Buddhism is subject the view of impermanence and suffering, but in other

---

<sup>336</sup> Harris, "Discourse," 378; 382.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 387-388.

Buddhist traditions, such as Chinese Huayan, a radical interpenetration of all entities offers other possible interpretations of nature.

Malcolm David Eckel raises a similar question by asking: “Is there a Buddhist philosophy of nature?”<sup>338</sup> Eckel’s conclusion points to the contemporary exclusivity of Buddhist environmentalism: “If the intention of the question is to identify a simple, unified vision of the sanctity of the natural world, the answer must be no,” though it is not impossible for one to be created by exploring the meaning of self as centered in the natural world, the place of practice.<sup>339</sup> It is not found “ready-made” in the tradition but must be developed consciously. Both Harris and Eckel (indirectly) point to the fact that articulating elements of Buddhist environmentalism requires that we attend to the historical, linguistic, contextual particularities of Buddhist communities. The implication is that any articulation of Buddhist environmentalism must account for the form Buddhism and environmentalism take in a particular audience.

#### 4.3 Varieties of Buddhist environmentalism

In the following chapter I will be looking in detail at Chinese Buddhism and attempting to articulate what might constitute a meaningful appeal to environmental concern from the perspective of Chinese Buddhism. The question

---

<sup>338</sup> Malcolm David Eckel, "Is There a Buddhist Philosophy of Nature?" in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>339</sup> Eckel, “Nature,” 340 and 345-346.

may arise: Why speak only about Chinese Buddhism and not Buddhist environmentalism in general? The latter approach might be better for forging an international consensus regarding how Buddhists can understand various environmental issues. And there is value in appealing to Buddhist groups broadly, as it seems to cast the net wider, creating larger communities, and appealing to the ecumenical nature of much of religious environmentalism. But Trevor Ling contends that “the use of the word ‘Buddhism’ in an unspecified sense has little heuristic value and can be a source of confusion” and argues for a “country-specific” account of Buddhisms.<sup>340</sup> After pointing out the many ways that Buddhisms differ among countries of a single cultural sphere (e.g., Southeast Asia), Ling observes:

It is clear then that it is not enough to say in passing concerning the “Buddhism” of such and such a country in Southeast Asia that it is of the “Theravada” type or “Mahayana”, the Pali type or the Sanskrit. We need to know more than that in order to begin to understand and appreciate what is the position of Buddhism in that country, why “Buddhists” in that country react so differently in matters such as public events, social relationships, natural disasters, political oppression, and so on, from “Buddhists” elsewhere... In other words, we need to be aware that “Buddhism” is an ideological abstraction, since “Buddhists” and their Buddhist traditions are everywhere country-specific, and that Buddhism, in real terms, has from the earliest days been pluralistic.<sup>341</sup>

To examine “Buddhism and ecology” elides the contextual differences that contribute to the discussion—conceptions of nature, individual vs. society,

---

<sup>340</sup> Trevor Ling, ed., *Buddhist Trends in Southeast Asia*. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), 1.

<sup>341</sup> Ling, *Buddhist Trends*, 4-5. I am not following Ling’s proposal to the letter, in that when I say “Chinese Buddhism” I am referring to the Buddhism of China, Taiwan, and Singapore. But my primary analysis is of Buddhism in Taiwan. So perhaps, this project is a test of the limits of cultural forms of Buddhism compared with country-specific Buddhisms.

community problem-solving. To refocus our attention away from constructing a Buddhist ethics and to look at how Buddhist environmental concern has been pursued requires acknowledging the differences with other forms of Buddhism.

In order to bring the audience and the cultural context of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism into view and begin on the right foot, I will offer two points of comparison. The first is how environmentalism is carried out by Buddhists in Thailand. The second is an examination of Chinese Buddhism in Singapore. As I will show in each case, Buddhist environmentalism is best understood in the context of how the forms of environmentalism are meaningful to the cultural context relevant to each case. By cultural context I mean both the form of Buddhism and the larger social context in which Buddhists in those countries are participants. The upshot of this comparison is that it raises the question of whether a global Buddhist ethics is able to make the link between Buddhism and environmental concern meaningful. Even if this is the case, is global Buddhist discourse more than just another context with a specific audience? On the one hand, the decontextualized way in which Buddhist environmentalism is usually discussed elides important cultural and contextual distinctions which makes the efforts of many articles ineffective in articulating the contours of a practical Buddhist environmentalism. On the other hand, many articles that seek to uncover Buddhist resources of environmentalism focus on ancient texts (the creation account in the *Aggañña Sūtra*) or highly metaphysical concepts (“a chiliocosm in a single thought,” Ch. *yinian sanqian* 一念三千) that carry little if any immediacy; since they need to be mediated through so many qualifications, it



becomes difficult to relate to them to concrete situations. I argue that in order to articulate a practical Buddhist environmentalism, we must first identify the community to which the discourse is addressed. Disembodied eco-ethical discourses do not contribute to changes in the behavior of communities or societies. In the case of Buddhism, what is needed is an approach that pays careful attention to the social context of the particular tradition.

For example, Leslie Sponsel's suggestion that Thai temples are good models for sustainability requires a culture in which those temples can be established.<sup>342</sup> The simplicity of Thai forest temples is a stark contrast to the temples one often finds in Taiwan. This is feasible in places like the United States where Buddhism is still being established and there is ample space for a Thai forest temple but is less practicable in Taiwan or Singapore, where land is scarce.

John Daido Looi's Mountains and Rivers Order promotes conservation and respect for natural spaces in a way that is reminiscent of the Sierra Club and reflects views of nature found in Thoreau, Muir, and Whitman. Nature is seen as a source of wisdom and enlightenment experience, so the preservation of natural world/wilderness is necessary for the preservation of individual quality of life. Stephanie Kaza's work on Green Gulch Zen Center and Spirit Rock show that the concerns and understandings of environmentalism are quite particular to each

---

<sup>342</sup> Sponsel, Leslie E. and Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel. "A Theoretical Analysis of the Potential Contribution of the Monastic Community in Promoting a Green Society in Thailand," in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 45-70.

location and demonstrates a connection these projects with Gary Snyder's ideas of bioregionalism and reinhabitation.<sup>343</sup> It is highly unlikely that any of these environmentalisms would resonate with Buddhists in overpopulated Taiwan.

I argue that Buddhist environmentalism is best seen as a response by specific communities to cultural and social exigencies of the community or perceived by the community, however that community might be defined. It seems rarely to be based purely on doctrine. While a philosophical articulation linking Buddhist thought to environmental concern might be meaningful, it does not contribute to our understanding of why the environment is important to the community.

#### 4.3.1 Thailand

Susan Darlington has written extensively on monks she terms "ecology monks," a group that she defines as "those [monks] actively engaged in environmental and conservation activities and who respond to the suffering which environmental degradation causes," and whose "priorities lie in action to preserve vanishing forests, watersheds, and wildlife, and to mitigate the negative consequences of their disappearance on people's lives."<sup>344</sup> Perhaps the earliest Thai environmental activist monk is Ajahn Pongsak Techathamamoo, who in the early 1980s began working with villagers to restore the surrounding forests after

---

<sup>343</sup> Stephanie Kaza, "American Buddhist Response to the Land: Ecological Practice at Two West Coast Retreat Centers," in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 219-248.

<sup>344</sup> Susan M. Darlington, "The Ordination of a Tree: The Buddhist Ecology Movement in Thailand" *Ethnology* 37:1 (1998), 2-3.

decades of clear-cutting.<sup>345</sup> Ajahn Pongsak's efforts were directed at enhancing the living conditions of the villagers by encouraging and helping them to reclaim the forest for the economic stability it offered. However, because he saw the need to change the villager's perception of the forest he contextualized the project in terms of the practice of Buddhist ethics.

Perhaps the most well-known example of Thai Buddhist environmentalism is tree ordination, a practice in which trees are "ordained" and wrapped in a saffron robe to indicate that they have the status of a monk. Tree ordinations are an environmental strategy practice that connects Buddhism, ritual, and environmentalism in Thailand. Nicola Tannenbaum summarizes the phenomenon: "Tree ordinations, environmentalism, and sustainable development are now part of the rhetoric and practice of Thai intelligentsia, development workers, and politicians. In the past, tree ordinations organized by monks were part of a larger protest against modernization, capitalism, and development that were seen as destroying traditional values and ways of life."<sup>346</sup> Darlington identifies the practice of tree ordination as one of the ways in which these ecology monks work with local residents to develop programs of sustainable living that

---

<sup>345</sup> See Kerry Brown, "In the Water there Were Fish and the Fields Were Full of Rice: Reawakening the Lost Harmony of Thailand," in *Buddhism and Ecology*, eds. Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown (London and New York: Cassell, 1992); Donald Swearer, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 126-128.

<sup>346</sup> Nicola Tannenbaum, "'Protest, Tree Ordination, and the Changing Context of Political Ritual,'" *Ethnology* 39:2 (2000), 116-117.

benefit both the environment and the livelihood of the people.<sup>347</sup> The first tree ordination was performed by Phrakhru Manas Natheepitak in 1988 as a response to the droughts brought on by excessive logging that had severely affected the rivers and streams.<sup>348</sup> He saw that the droughts had been brought on by the deforestation caused by excessive logging. In order to bring this connection to the local people's attention, he invented the practice of tree ordination. He explains:

If a tree is wrapped in saffron robes, no one would dare cut it down. So I thought that perhaps the idea could be used to discourage logging, and I began performing ceremonies on trees in the forest near the temple. I called the ritual "ordination" to give it more weight. The term "tree ordination" sounds weird to Thai people since an ordination is a ritual applied only to men. This weirdness has helped spread the news by word of mouth.<sup>349</sup>

Phrakhru Manas addresses several issues of interest to questions of environmental philosophy and ethics. First, he does not refer to dependent origination, *mettā*, *dharma*, or the *jātakas*.<sup>350</sup> It seems that people would not hurt a tree wrapped in

---

<sup>347</sup> Darlington, "Ordination," 1.

<sup>348</sup> See Susan M. Darlington, "The Good Buddha and the Fierce Spirits: Protecting the Northern Thai Forest," *Contemporary Buddhism* 8:2 (2007), 172-175; "Buddhism and Development: The Ecology Monks of Thailand," in *Action Dharma: New Studies in Engaged Buddhism*, ed. Christopher Queen, Charles Prebish, and Damien Keown (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 96-109; and "Rethinking Buddhism and Development: The Emergence of Environmental Monks in Thailand," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 7 (2000).

<sup>349</sup> Cited in Pidop Udomittipong, "Thailand's Ecology Monks," in *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*, eds. Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft (Boston: Shambala, 2000), 193.

<sup>350</sup> Cf. Darlington, "Development," 105, where Darlington discusses the activities of another well-known ecology monk, Phrakhru Pitak Nanthakhun. Although Phrakhru Pitak adopted the strategy of tree ordination from Phrakhru Manas, he has employed it in different contexts. Regarding the monk Phrakhru Pitak Darlington observes that he "emphasizes basic Buddhist principles such as

robes because even if they were not wholly convinced that the ordained tree was on par with a monk; they would not be willing to risk losing merit by harming it in some way. The saffron robes are in themselves something to be respected. Furthermore, Phrakhru Manas clearly says that the term “tree ordination” was chosen intentionally for its “weirdness.” By choosing to mimic the ordination of monks, he goes beyond just wrapping a tree in robes. The tree participates in a ritual in which normally a person undergoes a change in identity. The ordination calls to mind the path of renunciation and the goal of *nirvāṇa* (the cessation of craving). This process marks the tree off from not only other trees, but all non-ordained beings. Herein lies the efficacy of the practice. Anyone could wrap saffron robes around a tree, but only a monk can perform an ordination and in that ordination the monk passes karmic power to the subject being ordained. The members of the Buddhist community are challenged to understand what an ordained tree means and how that affects what all trees now mean.

The ordination is symbolic to the extent that both the monk and the tree are connected through the shared symbol of the robe, although a tree’s status as a monk would not find support in the *Vinaya*. But it is more than than symbolic in the way that ordinations are symbolic. The ordination is symbolic of the community’s environmental concern, and the way in which the human community relates to the forest (represented by the ordained tree) is now changed,

---

dependent origination and an interpretation of the Buddha’s life that highlights a close relationship with the forest. His work is significant less because it incorporates Buddhism with ecological conservation principles than because he works closely with local villagers to identify and develop ways of dealing with the problems that they face.”

a change which would probably not occur were it not for the ordination ritual. This change can be understood by recalling Jenkins's claim that strategies (such as tree ordination) can lead to "new ethical capacities" among religious practitioners. In the case of tree ordination, the local community supportive of the ritual is engaged in a new intersubjective experience between the community and the forest.

The practice of tree ordination rituals has not been without controversy. Although the monks fully recognize that the ordination is only symbolic of environmental concern, because according to the *Vinaya* only human beings can be ordained, criticisms have come from within and without the *sangha* that such ordinations are inauthentically Buddhist.<sup>351</sup> Some monks have countered these criticisms by involving high-ranking members of the *sangha* and government officials in the rituals. Others have justified their practice by highlighting the positive effects it has on the communities in which it is performed. Yet another criticism has been that the rituals have become political statements. In a case Darlington documents from 1991, the ceremony involved the nailing of placards to the trees to be ordained, the last word of which, *chaat*, can be read three different ways, yielding the pronouncement: "To destroy the forest is to destroy life, one's rebirth, or the nation."<sup>352</sup> The political tone in the third reading demonstrates that the practice of tree ordination has extended beyond the local to the national level.

---

<sup>351</sup> Darlington, "Good Buddha," 170 and 178.

<sup>352</sup> Darlington, "Ordination," 10.

Both Darlington and Tannenbaum note how tree ordinations resonate on multiple levels. Initially, the ritual was intended to act as a way of raising awareness of the importance of forests to the local community. A sense of mutual well-being between the forest and the community was promoted, but this identification with the forest's well-being created a sense of division between the community and the national government's development policies.<sup>353</sup> But tree ordinations have now become mainstream and are often ways of strengthening the ties between a local community and Thai national identity, the throne specifically.<sup>354</sup> In 1996 fifty million trees were ordained in honor of King Bhumiphon's 50<sup>th</sup> reign year.<sup>355</sup> This event clearly reveals that the protest element central to previous tree ordinations has been lost in new ritual contexts of nationalism.

Another level that tree ordinations operate on concerns contemporary Buddhist identity and practice. The social activism symbolized in tree ordinations is often partially based in the role of the monk as local leader. Darlington notes how monks refer to the suffering caused by environmental deterioration as a factor in their decision to carry out environmentalist actions. Phrakhru Pitak's reference to "basic Buddhist principles" concerns the effect these concepts have on affecting the villager's relationship with the forest. This use of Buddhist

---

<sup>353</sup> See Darlington, "Good Buddha," 177-178 and Tannenbaum, "Protest," 118-119.

<sup>354</sup> Darlington, "Good Buddha," 181 and Tannenbaum, "Protest," 122.

<sup>355</sup> See Henry D. Delcore, "Symbolic Politics or Generification? The Ambivalent Implications of Tree Ordinations in the Thai Environmental Movement," *Journal of Political Ecology* 11:1 (2004), 1-30.

concepts is not primarily for the sake of articulating a Buddhist environmental ethic, as it is with the textual mode of discourse, because this would not address the immediate situation. As Darlington notes Prakhru Pitak has also incorporated shrines to tree and forest spirits, elements of Thai animism, as a way of making the ritual more relevant and meaningful in a local context.<sup>356</sup>

That tree ordinations employ ritual rhetorically, as discourse-based strategies of community formation based on the process of identification to address a problem, is clear. That they are effective is demonstrated by their appropriation on the national level, even though those appropriations do not necessarily seek to address the same needs as the localized versions. Some of the monks use the rituals to promote Buddhist education among communities, using the rituals as symbolic markers of Buddhist ethical concepts. But the tree ordinations are home-grown responses to local burdens rooted in environmental degradation. They incorporate not only the localized situation of villagers (in both religious and welfare contexts) but the specific monastic–laity relationships of Thai Buddhism. Of course, we can see that the rituals have been nationalized and thus applied to new contexts. There are also tree ordinations that have occurred in Cambodia.<sup>357</sup> Analysis of tree ordinations in Cambodia is a valuable avenue for future research as a test of the degree to which the ritual can be applied to other cultural contexts. However, in Buddhist cultures with greater cultural

---

<sup>356</sup> Darlington, “Good Buddha,” 172-173 and 182.

<sup>357</sup> “Association of Buddhists for the Environment,” accessed January 20, 2012, <http://www.sanghanetwork.org/>.



disparity, it would be difficult to imagine that such rituals would have the same legitimacy and efficacy.

#### 4.3.2 Singapore

Buddhism in Singapore can be dated back to roughly the early- to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Most temples were begun by monks and laymen from Fujian and Guangdong provinces or elsewhere in Southern China. Early Chinese immigrants to Singapore practiced a religious syncretism (which Kuah-Pearce refers to as “Shenism”) of Chinese folk practices, worship of Daoist deities, observing Confucian values, and worship of Guanyin among other Buddhist deities.<sup>358</sup> The temples that were built serves as meeting houses for various communities, often separated by dialects, or clan associations which were more exclusive than the communities based around a common dialect.<sup>359</sup> Despite the extensiveness of Chinese syncretism, or “Shenism,” Buddhist temples were built that did not incorporate Daoist or folk elements. The Shuanglin monastery was the first Buddhist monastery built in Singapore, completed in 1909.<sup>360</sup> The Poh Kark See monastery was completed in 1923 and is now the largest Buddhist temple in Singapore. In addition to temples, the growth of Buddhist associations and visits

---

<sup>358</sup> Y.D. Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore: A Short Narrative History* (Singapore: Skylark Publications, 2005), 31-33; Khun Eng Kuah-Pearce, *Buddhism, the State, and Religious Engineering: Towards a Reformist Buddhism in Singapore* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), 3-4.

<sup>359</sup> Trevor Ling, “Singapore: Buddhist Developments in a Secular State,” in *Buddhist Trends in Southeast Asia*, ed. Trevor Ling (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), 155.

<sup>360</sup> Ong, *Singapore*, 43.

from Chinese monks helped promote the growth of Buddhism in Singapore. Buddhist associations allowed laity to better organize and carry out fundraising and social welfare projects. Ong notes that up through the nineteen sixties, Chinese Buddhism, aside from a few attempts by reformist minded monks to promote dharma teaching, was still mainly ritualistic.<sup>361</sup> But beginning in the seventies and eighties, various Buddhist associations became more active in promoting a reform of Buddhism, moving it beyond just temple worship and chanting. Trevor Ling observes, “One of its [associational Buddhism] chief characteristics is that adherents to this form of Buddhism have a serious interest in what can in general terms be described as a more *philosophical* formulation and presentation of Buddhist ideas and practices.”<sup>362</sup> This trend mostly reflected the interest and concerns of younger Singaporean Buddhists, many of whom had matriculated through university and desired a more sophisticated and modern Buddhism.<sup>363</sup>

Kuah-Pearce discusses Buddhist reform in Singapore as the response to “a new generation of local Chinese whose view of religion differs greatly from the early Chinese migrants” and who seek a more rational and individualized form of Buddhism.<sup>364</sup> She examines how what she labels “Reformist Buddhism” is emerging as a new phenomenon due to the influence of the modernization of

---

<sup>361</sup> Ong, *Singapore*, 98.

<sup>362</sup> Ling, “State,” 163.

<sup>363</sup> See Ong, *Singapore*, 115-117.

<sup>364</sup> Kuah-Pearce, *Engineering*, 6-7. See also Ong, *Singapore*, 190-192.

Singapore society. Exactly what constitutes Reformist Buddhism is not entirely clear, though. Kuah-Pearce distinguishes it from the tradition Shenism well enough, and she provides a few examples of Reformist Buddhist organizations. But with respect to other Buddhist organizations, it seems Reformist Buddhism sits at one end of a spectrum of Buddhist religiosity in Singapore, and it is comparable to other contemporary Buddhist movements such as Humanistic Buddhism, socially-engaged Buddhism, and Buddhist modernism.<sup>365</sup> Part of what constitutes Reformist Buddhism is a greater role for the laity, a de-emphasis on cosmology and myth, and an emphasis on rationality, individual religiosity, education, meditation, and social welfare/activism.

In the Singaporean context, Reformist Buddhism is also marked by collaboration with state policies aimed at maintaining and promoting multi-ethnic harmony. Since in Singapore ethnicity is closely tied to religious identity, the state enacted the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act of 1991.<sup>366</sup> The trend in Reformist Buddhism toward secularization, demythologization, and rationalization as well as the focus on observing ethical norms, minimizes the

---

<sup>365</sup> See descriptions in *ibid.*, 223, 231, and 239. As a way to question the connection between Reformist Buddhism and Humanistic Buddhism, we can ask the following: Branches of the Taiwan Buddhist organizations Ciji and FGS were established in Singapore in 1993 and 1996, respectively. Both quintessentially reflect Humanistic Buddhism but are also clearly within the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. How would Kuah-Pearce categorize these organizations? In profiling Buddhists in Singapore, Kuah-Pearce lists Reformist Buddhists in a separate category from Mahayāna Buddhists and Theravāda Buddhists. For a definition of 'Buddhist modernism', see David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6-7.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

likelihood that Reformist Buddhists will seek to challenge the authority of the state from their position as Buddhists.<sup>367</sup> Moreover, the values that Reformist Buddhists advocate are essentially the same as those promoted by the state in its cultural policies.

As Singapore society has continued to modernize, many Singaporeans have looked to their religious traditions as sources of inspiration and meaning. Leaders of Buddhist temples in Singapore have likewise faced the need to be able to speak meaningfully to the laity. One of the challenges facing Singapore is maintaining a clean and livable environment on a densely populated but small island, while still promoting economic competitiveness. Therefore, it is natural that environmentalists are gaining a stronger presence. The government's Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources in Singapore has carried out environmental initiatives with 2012 and 2030 goal deadlines, which claim to coordinate work with both public and private organizations and agencies. However, Kersty Hobson notes how environmental NGOs in Singapore have yet to occupy a secure position beyond governmental influence to actively voice critiques of anti-environmental or unenvironmental policies or practices, but have begun to construct alternate social spaces from which to communicate within the larger context of Singaporean society.<sup>368</sup>

Buddhist environmentalism is present in different ways in Singapore. This

---

<sup>367</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>368</sup> Kersty Hobson, "Considering 'Green' Practices: NGOs and Singapore's Emergent Environmental-Political Landscape," *Sojourn* 20:2 (2005), 165-166.

section will present three instances of Buddhist environmentalism. Based on this picture, we will see that each instance of Buddhist environmentalism arises from a confluence of specific characteristics, rarely based on or emanating from a doctrinal or philosophical basis. While a philosophical articulation linking Buddhist thought to environmental concern might be meaningful, it is tertiary to the task at hand.

#### 4.3.2.1 Kong Meng San Poh Kark See<sup>369</sup>

Kong Meng San Poh Kark See (KMSPKS) was established in 1921 by Ven. Zhuandao 轉道法師. Zhuandao died in 1943. There was no presiding abbot during the Japanese occupation. The second abbot was Ven. Hong Choon 宏船法師, who took over in 1947. Ven. Hong Choon greatly expanded the temple grounds, revived the adjunct farmland, and, to promote “the Buddha’s teachings on the sacredness of life,” set aside space for devotees to practice the release of animals (*fangsheng* 放生).<sup>370</sup> After Hong Choon died in 1990, there were three other abbots the longest serving from 1995-2004. The current abbot is Ven. Sik Kwang Sheng 釋廣声法師 who was appointed in 2004.

The recycling program was begun formally in 2005 after a trial run in 2004. The name of the program “88 Recycling Kiosk” is a reference to the monastery’s address, 88 Bright Hill Road, which is meant to make the location easy to find for those familiar with the temple. Although the program is officially

---

<sup>369</sup> Information on KMSPKS environmental practices was gathered from visits to the temple in July 2010.

<sup>370</sup> Ong, *Singapore*, 100.

termed a recycling program, recycling is inclusive of the “three Rs”—reduce, reuse, recycle. This follows the classification of the government’s National Environment Agency.

The program is entirely volunteer-run, and there are four categories of volunteers—retail sales volunteers, packing and sorting volunteers, electrical equipment repair volunteers, and administrative/environmental education volunteers. The two main activities of the program are its humanitarian relief work and the jumbo sales. The jumbo sales take place periodically at the temple and they are events open to the public at which the goods that have been donated are sold to the public. The income from the jumbo sales is intended to make the recycling program a self-sustaining program.

88 Recycling is a response to or recognition that Buddhists should be socially responsive, should have a way to contribute to the betterment of society. KMSPKS offers many popular methods of enhancing one’s health and well-being including meditation/yoga classes, counseling seminars, and vegetarian cooking ideas. The recycling program is not just a measure to respond to the environment but is a practical response to the move towards socially engaged Buddhism. What is unique about this form of Buddhist environmentalism is that it combines environmental concern with social welfare. The social welfare component has both domestic and international aspects. Internationally, the recycling program has been inspired by and partially modeled after the recycling program of Ciji in Taiwan (the two organizations have even collaborated on occasion). The recycling program supports KMSPKS’s humanitarian relief efforts, which are

organized and coordinated in response to requests for aid from government bodies overseas. If a request for aid is approved, donated goods are gathered and packaged at the monastery. Then a group of volunteers is established to deliver the goods to the specific community, whether it is a school, orphanage, or small village. Goods generally include food, clothing, and books. Typically, KMSPKS does not engage in disaster relief, which the group Ciji is well-known for. As the program's director, C. Lee, explained, disaster relief requires human and financial resources and coordination that is currently beyond the capabilities of the recycling program. The advantage to the way in which KMSPKS organizes their humanitarian relief, according to Lee, is that communities which might fall outside the purview of other aid organizations are helped and receive immediate material assistance.

Domestically, the program is intended to help individuals engage in interpersonal exchanges against the backdrop of social welfare. These experiences are thought to aid in opening the individual up to a developmental process of increasing awareness of how their sense of value towards material things and other beings can be deepened and how subsequently, they can alter their behavior to better help society. The exchanges that take place at the jumbo sales are intended to raise awareness that the value of material goods is not merely based on the newness of a thing, but that whether a thing is valued is a choice one is free to make. As Lee explained, Singaporeans tend to attribute value to new things. Old and second-hand goods are considered generally to be worthless. But there is a large segment of Singapore's society that is not financially able to

purchase only new items. In other words, the jumbo sales allow for the recovery of both a sense of value and actual monetary value of material goods. The experiences that individuals have while participating in the jumbo sales form part of what Lee calls “walking the green path.” This is a process of increasing awareness of how one’s exists ecologically or environmentally. That is to say, one’s existence is always existence in the context of some environment. A context that is often ignored, and in more urban environments, difficult to perceive is the natural environment. The goal of walking the green path is to reach the “green zone,” a more or less constant mindfulness of the impact one’s actions have in the context of the natural environment. More specifically, this is a way to respond to the ill-effects of rampant consumerism in a country with extremely limited natural resources and physical area. According to Lee, the features of the recycling program are relevant to the Singapore context and not necessarily intended to be directly relevant to a global Buddhist context.

#### 4.3.2.2 Bao’en si

The temple was renovated beginning in 2002, and renovations proceeded in two phases. This obviated the need to find a temporary location for the temple. The renovations were completed in 2007. Bao’en si 報恩寺 can be considered the first technologically “green” temple in the world. The temple’s president, Lee Boon Siong is the grandson of the founder of the temple. His personal history is intimately connected with the temple’s environmental renovations. Lee immigrated to Canada in 1969 in response to the government’s treatment of a number of students and Nanyang University (南洋大學) who opposed the push



towards favoring English language education over Mandarin. Although Mr. Lee was a graduate of National University of Singapore, which uses English as its language of instruction, he felt that the government's accusation that the students at Nanyang were communists was unfounded and unjust. He returned to Singapore in 1995 and took over as president of Bao'en si. However, Mr. Lee was not previously a Buddhist. Having received a Christian education, like his father before him, he considered himself a Christian. But upon taking over responsibility of Bao'en si, he began to study Buddhism, albeit using English and not Chinese. For this reason, Lee states that his intention in remaking Bao'en si into a model of environmental care is not based on a sense of carrying out the Dharma. Rather, he recognized that given Singapore's restrained resources, fragile environmental conditions, and dwindling natural habitats, it is imperative that Singapore begin to implement serious changes. He sees Bao'en si as a model and testing ground for bringing these changes into public view.

What has Bao'en Si done?<sup>371</sup> In addition to making the temple more environmentally-friendly, he wanted to make the temple more accessible for elderly members. Lee, himself over seventy years old, stated that the percentage of Singapore's population that will be restricted to wheelchairs is increasing every year. Moreover, the children of these elderly will be faced with rising costs of living and education costs for their children, and since many couples are

---

<sup>371</sup> Material in this section is based on visits to the temple in July 2010 and personal conversations with Lee Boon Siong. Similar information is also available in Yen Feng, "Buddhist Temple Shines as a Model of Energy Efficiency," *The Straits Times* 9 September, 2009.

supporting both sets of parents (a result of the period of time Singapore implemented a one-child policy), costs of health-care will be an additional financial burden. In the past, children would hire a full-time health-care attendant to look after their elderly parents. However, Lee believes that by creating a wheelchair accessible environment, the temple will be a place that elderly in a motorized wheelchair can move around with ease. Thus, every area of the newly renovated temple is easily accessible by wheelchair.

By far, the most intriguing aspect of the temple is its environmental design, which produces solar, wind, and hydro power, minimizes water waste, and is capable of producing potable water from collected rain run-off. The temple is outfitted with large sets of solar panels. One is on the fourth floor roof and the other sets are placed as eaves around the pagoda, creating a solar pagoda. In each location there are three different types of panel—monocrystallide, polycrystallide, and amorphous crystallide. Each kind of panel was purchased from a different company. The reason for this difference, according to Lee, is to discover which kind of panel is the best for Singapore's environment. Even though the panels have only been online for a couple of years, the numbers show that the amorphous produces the most overall wattage yearly. Thus far the temple is able to produce 75 megawatts per year—more than enough to meet the energy needs of the temple. The excess power is sold back to the city. Another source of power comes from the collected rainwater. The water that is collected from the exposed ground surfaces is collected in one of two reservoirs—one located below the entrance to the temple, the other located beneath the floor on the east-side of the

second floor. The water that is collected on the second floor is used in two ways. First, the water descends down a tube to which faucets are attached. Hoses can be attached to the faucets which are set to open twice a day. These hoses irrigate the ground along the side of the temple to water the native flora. This flora is intentionally designed to provide a rich habitat for the many species of butterfly found in Singapore.

The other way the water is used is to produce electricity. The temple is fitted to accommodate the following process: Every day, the water in the upper reservoir falls 25 meters through pipes that are fitted with micro-hydro generators into the lower reservoir. The electricity produced by this process fuels the pumps that send the water back up to the upper reservoir in an iterated process. The iterations allow for some water to be released to the neighboring ground, enhancing the butterfly habitat. In addition, electricity is used to light the grounds of the temple. However, the use of micro-hydro generators has not begun, since the temple has yet to receive a permit for this use of collected water. In addition, Lee noted that the government has proposed legislation to declare all rainwater government property.

There is another reservoir in the basement at the back of the temple. Lee has devised a plan to collect rainwater from the rooftops in the reservoir in large tanks. The water will then run through a process of purification, including reverse-osmosis. The water will be bottled and sent off for approval to a government and private agency. Like the micro-hydro generators, the Singapore government has not yet approved a permit for this function, so the tanks have not

been installed.

Other features of the temple include solar-powered hot water heaters that supply the temple with water for bathing. This will mainly be used by the resident nuns, which the temple plans to house in the near future. Along the back of the temple are seven solar tubes. These are long tubes which collect sunlight. As the light passes through the tubes it is magnified. These tubes open up in basement areas which do not receive direct sunlight, decreasing the need to use electrical light sources.

#### 4.3.2.3 Jinlong si

Another temple, Jinlong si 金龍寺, deserves mention as a way in which Buddhism and environmental concern come together in a different context. Jinlong si is a traditional Chinese temple in the *sanjiao* 三教 tradition, located towards the east coast of Singapore. The temple boasts a large Bodhi tree. In 2003, the Singapore government announced its intent to acquire the land where the temple was located as part of a project to lengthen an MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) line.<sup>372</sup> The move required the temple to relocate, but the temple management argued that since the root system of a 100-year old Bodhi tree on the temple grounds was so intertwined with the temple, any changes or development would endanger the tree.<sup>373</sup> The temple community moved to have the tree added

---

<sup>372</sup> Karamjit Kaur, Ginnie Teo. "Temple to go to make way for MRT Circle Line", *The Straits Times*, January 21, 2003.

<sup>373</sup> Arti Mulchand, "100-year-old tree may save temple," *The Straits Times*, April 21, 2006, accessed September 21, 2011, <http://www.wildsingapore.com/news/20060304/060421-1.htm>.

to Singapore's Heritage Tree Registry. A website entitled "Save our Roots" was started to raise awareness of the situation, and a petition to prevent the temple's relocation in order to protect the tree was circulated.<sup>374</sup>

The argument made by the temple's supporters was meant to appeal two different but related audiences. First, they argue that the Bodhi tree is a sacred object, so protecting it has positive religious value. This line of argument appeals to Singaporeans not only as Buddhists but as members of a religiously diverse society. Implied in the message is the idea that protecting religious objects, regardless of their religious affiliation is important to Singapore society. Secondly, there is an appeal made primarily to the government, which argues (from precedent) that the tree should be listed on the national historic tree registry, implying that preserving the temple's Bodhi tree could contribute to the cultural richness of the country. Of course, these two appeals would be mutually enforcing for members of Singapore's parliament who were Buddhists. Ultimately, the appeals were unsuccessful and the high court dismissed the temple's case in 2008.<sup>375</sup>

The three cases examined above show that Buddhist environmentalism is present in Singapore Buddhism, and it is present in a rather active way. We make

---

<sup>374</sup> "Save Our Roots," accessed September 21, 2011, <http://sites.google.com/site/saveourroots/home>. The website has not been updated since the government made the final decision to acquire the land, and two blogs mentioned on the site (one in English, one in Chinese) created to provide information about the issue are no longer existent.

<sup>375</sup> Peh Shing Huei, "High Court dismisses bid to save temple site - Jin Long Si has two months to relocate to site offered by Govt; acquired land to be used for homes," *The Straits Times*, February 26, 2008.

no mistake in calling it Buddhist environmentalism, either, since in each case the activities of the three temples are responsive to a community, and it is clear how the audience being addressed gives rise to a dialectical relationship. Jinlong si, Bao'en si, and KMSPKS all engage in some form of environmentalism and employ some strategies that makes environmental actions meaningful in Buddhist terms to their own community. KMSPKS is addressing a community confronting the material and financial modernization of Singapore, which challenges the coherence of the demographically broad community. But modernization has also brought about new needs for community members that relate to meaningful interpersonal relationships and the desire to contribute to social welfare. Bao'en si carried out an environmentally-focused renovation campaign of an older temple with an older community of adherents. The renovations have brought Bao'en si into the public spotlight and rejuvenated the sense of community at the temple, not only by demonstrating that Buddhism can remain important in a modern society by making the temple a center for the community, but by offering a direction for how Singaporean society can address the problems of continuing development. The activities carried out by the members of Jinlong si seem the most obviously rhetorical and perhaps for good reason. Faced with the threat of relocation and the loss of a defining feature of the temple's grounds, the Bodhi tree, the community made appeals to Buddhist history and likewise Singapore's significance as a Buddhist country. Eventually unsuccessful, these efforts demonstrate that the discourse of Buddhist values and identity is no silver bullet when a community's status quo is threatened by government or private projects.

What is important is that these three temples work independently. The elements of their discourse retain no rhetorical similarity and evince no underlying continuity of Singaporean Buddhist environmentalism or even a common ethical approach.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

Buddhist environmentalism is a growing phenomenon that incorporates scriptural hermeneutics, social activism, and multiple discourses (ontological, sociological, political, and ethical, to name a few). There is no one approach to Buddhist environmentalism and no formula for how Buddhists should engage environmental issues. The predominant voice in Buddhist environmentalism is a globalized environmental ethic that seeks to cull environmental concern from Buddhist text in the hope of constructing a singular environmental ethic. I have referred to this approach as eco-Buddhism. In contrast I identified Buddhist environmentalism as an approach to understanding how Buddhists engage in environmentalism based on ways in which environmental concerns are incorporated in a community or tradition's practice and made meaningful without becoming the central focus of its Buddhist identity. This distinction allows us to better see why it is important to attend to local and individual instances of Buddhist environmentalism as a necessary precursor to any project to articulate a theory of Buddhism and the environment. The examples I provided of Thai Buddhist and Singaporean Buddhist environmentalism illustrate that even

geographically proximate Buddhist traditions can diverge significantly based on the cultural factors that shape Buddhism in a region.

In response to these observations of cultural and local particularity, I suggest that scholars begin by looking at how Buddhist environmental rhetoric navigates and negotiates the various influences (cultural, religious, environmental, and political) on the local context. Rarely are Buddhists just *Buddhists*. They are also members of nation-states, communities, families, and other organizations that all form a Buddhist's identity. The grammar of values and cultural perceptions that each Buddhist employs to understand, identify with, or dissociate from environmental issues can be illuminated by examining what claims they are persuaded by, even if it is a case of persuading one's self.

In the last two chapters, I will turn to Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. I will look in detail at the way environment and nature is conceived, the socio-political role of Buddhism and environmentalism, and the importance of rhetoric in Chinese Buddhism. I will examine three organizations and attempt to show how a rhetorical approach to their environmental discourse offers a different way of understanding how environmentalism is meaningfully linked to Buddhism in each case.



## Chapter 5

### CHINESE BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTALISM

In this chapter I will present the discourse of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism as a precursor to the following chapter's rhetorical analysis of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. This is no easy task, since as I will point out, the argument can be made that Taiwanese Buddhist environmentalism is qualitatively different from Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. Moreover, the discourse is a multi-faceted one involving issues of politics, history, religion, and society. In the following section, I will attempt to highlight some of the interstices among these various issues, suggesting some possible divergences between China compared with Taiwan. Next I will present some of the various organizations that have engaged in environmentalism focusing particularly on three—Ciji Gongde hui 慈濟功德會 (Ciji), Foguangshan 佛光山 (FGS), and Fagushan 法鼓山 (Dharma Drum Mountain/DDM). Finally, I will examine the issues that scholars have raised in critically addressing the project of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism.

Before beginning I should note that the use of the phrase “Chinese Buddhist environmentalism” is, in fact, more hypothetical than purely descriptive. Taking into account the suggestion made by Trevor Ling in chapter four regarding the country-specific particularity of Buddhism, perhaps we should look at Chinese Buddhism and Taiwanese Buddhism separately. And there is reason to think this is true, since because of differing socio-political contexts we should expect the Buddhism to be different as well. But I am offering this phrase as a hypothesis.

There is a gap between the environmentalism of Chinese Buddhism in China and the Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan and part of this is due to there being little information on the former and a great deal of development on the part of the latter. We might even ask to what degree the former is following in the footsteps of the latter. In time, as Chinese Buddhist environmentalism in China develops further, it will be necessary to reexamine the degree to which Taiwanese Buddhist environmentalism and Chinese Buddhist environmentalism differ. For the time being, however, I argue that using the phrase “Chinese Buddhist environmentalism” to refer to Buddhist environmentalism in Taiwan and China widens our scope of inquiry and provides a basis for future comparative analyses. Furthermore, we could include Singapore under this designation as a test case regarding the continuity of at least one element (environmentalism) of modern Chinese Buddhism throughout East and Southeast Asia.

### 5.1 Contexts of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism

Julia Corbett identifies four factors linking environmental attitudes and behaviors: attitudinal, personal, contextual, and habits and routines.<sup>376</sup> These four contextual factors describe the role that social, political, and cultural institutions play in influencing environmental behavior. This influence can be on the individual or collective level (e.g., organizations or communities). If we are to address the role that rhetoric plays in constructing identities that link Buddhism with environmental concern and more so with practice (that is, environmentalism),

---

<sup>376</sup> Corbett, *Communicating Nature*, 78-80.

it is important to identify the factors that can both limit and promote not only the identification, but the resultant practice. Therefore, we need to ask in what ways do environmentalism and Buddhism share space in contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese society? Do certain forms of Buddhism tend to dovetail with environmentalism more than others? How do they intersect with each other and with other discourses and practices? What historical factors have influenced the rise of environmentalism and Buddhism in both locations? These questions are tied up with issues of Chinese society and modernity and so it might seem best to approach the issues historically and so begin with China (as do many studies do), but considering Chinese Buddhist environmentalism as a hypothetically singular entity, we should begin with Taiwan, since that is where environmentalism and contemporary Buddhism have developed longer.

#### 5.1.1 Taiwan and China

Environmentalism and Buddhism in the context of Chinese and Taiwanese modernity are heavily influenced by the way these trends developed and were understood in a modern Western context.<sup>377</sup> Robert Weller, Judith Shapiro and others observe that despite the idea that Chinese views of the nature/human

---

<sup>377</sup> For environmentalism, see Weller, *Discovering Nature*, 4-13; Lin Yiren, "The Environmental Practices and Beliefs of Taiwanese Buddhists," (PhD Dissertation, University College of London, 1999), 61; David Williams and Chang'yi Chang, *Taiwan's Environmental Struggle: Toward a Green Silicon Island* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 74; Michael Hsin-Huang Hsiao et al., "Culture and Asian Styles of Environmental Movements," in *Asia's Environmental Movements: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Yok-shiu F. Lee and Alvin F. So (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 213-214. For religion, see Yoshiko Ashiwa, "Positioning Religion in Modernity: State and Buddhism in China," in *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, eds. Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 43-47.

relationship are characterized as harmonious, the dominant view of nature in the twentieth century for both China and Taiwan was the view that nature was a resource to be used and controlled for the development of the nation. They link this view to the adoption of a Western-inspired process of scientific and cultural modernization that peaked once with the May Fourth Movement of 1919. Part of this process was also the modernization of religion, which favored rationalism over superstition and privatized individual belief. Buddhist modernism in China and Taiwan is most readily reflected in the movement known as “humanistic Buddhism” (*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教).<sup>378</sup> But both environmentalism and Buddhism have also developed based on the interactions between the particular political and social contexts in each place. Moreover, there have developed multiple responses to environmentalism and Buddhism in both China and Taiwan depending on whether one looks locally, nationally, or internationally.

Most scholars seem to agree that the lifting of martial law in Taiwan in 1987 initiated a watershed of changes in Taiwanese society, allowing for a proliferation of social activism. The environmental issues that have received the most attention have been nuclear power, pollution, and natural conservation, signaling a continuity with environmental movements in North America and Europe. In addition the earliest critics of the KMT's environmental record were

---

<sup>378</sup> David McMahan defines “Buddhist modernism” as “forms of Buddhism that have emerged out of an engagement with the dominant cultural and intellectual forces of modernity.” McMahan, *Making*, 6. I will discuss humanistic Buddhism in the context of Buddhist modernism more below. On the point of scientific rationalism and Buddhism, see also Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

academics, nearly all of whom were trained in the United States.<sup>379</sup> Lin Yiren notes that critiques by academics and the media of the KMT government's policies towards industrialization and failure to address the ensuing environmentally negative consequences came to be taken up, typically by NGOs, in mass protests, and were often connected to pushes towards more democratic reforms.<sup>380</sup> But there are also elements that make Taiwanese environmentalism particular to the Taiwanese context. First of all, Williams and Chang note the somewhat unique combination of Taiwan being a wealthy nation but with a high population density due to a small landmass and other geographic limitations. Culturally, Weller points out that there is a role religion and culture play in local environmental practices that is uniquely Taiwanese. Religious communities sometimes involve the organizing support of local temples and the intervention of spirit mediums to critique government and private sector development projects.<sup>381</sup> The Confucian notion of filial piety is often invoked as a value that supports conservation and provides a counterpoint to economic value of development projects.<sup>382</sup>

---

<sup>379</sup> Robert Weller and Michael Hsin-Huang Hsiao, "Culture, Gender, and Community in Taiwan's Environmental Movement," in *Environmental Movements in Asia*, eds. Arne Kalland and Gerard Persoon (Surrey: Curzon, 1998), 91. The authors go on to state that the approaches advocated by these advocates were not only the result of a Western discourse of nature, but that these approaches had already been tested in Western societies. See *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>380</sup> Lin, "Environmental Beliefs," 51-82. See also Williams, *Struggle*, 74-75.

<sup>381</sup> Weller and Hsiao, "Gender," 93-96.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-102.

Charles Jones's study of Buddhism in Taiwan shows that, although Buddhism in Taiwan did not suffer the atrocities of Buddhism under Mao, there was nonetheless strong hegemonic control by the KMT government and the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BAROC).<sup>383</sup> Jones notes that in the 1970s but more so after 1987, there developed a period of pluralization of Buddhism, which saw a number of Buddhist organizations develop and aggressively promote positions that were not always in-line with policies and interpretations that the KMT government and BAROC had established.<sup>384</sup> Among these organizations are Ciji, FGS, and DDM, all three of which have contributed to the development of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism as a carrying out of their vision of humanistic Buddhism. Jones argues that, although Buddhism in Taiwan possesses some characteristics that make it unique, it exhibits features that reflect continuity with Buddhist reform in China.<sup>385</sup>

Environmental issues in China have received much attention in the last decade, due to the confluence of multiple factors including: the amount of natural resources China needs to meet the needs of its developing economy and growing middle class, the increase in greenhouse gases by the Chinese industrial and public sector, and the pace at which China is implementing forms of renewable

---

<sup>383</sup> Charles B. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State 1660-1990* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 137-145.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, 178-183.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 219-222.

energy.<sup>386</sup> However, analyses that emphasize the state's hegemonic influence in either promoting or restricting environmentalism have given way to more complex models mapping the interaction of local, regional, national, and international participation in environmentalism.<sup>387</sup> This complexity plays out in environmental terms both advantageously and disadvantageously.<sup>388</sup> On the one hand, Elizabeth Economy notes that despite the rapid increase of environmental laws that are now on the books, the upgrading of the State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) to the Ministry of Environmental Protection, and the increase of lawyers specializing in environmental issues, there is still little enforcement and a lack of clarity about how to apply the laws in local contexts.<sup>389</sup> On the other hand, the Chinese government is following the practice of other governments and allowing NGOs to fill the gap between its environmental goals and the lack of resources to do so.<sup>390</sup> The increase in environmental NGOs in China allows local communities access to the organizational and financial resources to address

---

<sup>386</sup> See Ethan Goffman, "China and the Path to Environmental Sustainability," accessed February 1, 2012. <http://www.csa1.co.uk/discoveryguides/china/review.pdf>

<sup>387</sup> For an efficient summary of these levels of activity, see R. Edward Grumbine, *Where the Dragon Meets the Angry River: Nature and Power in the People's Republic of China* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2010), 144-159.

<sup>388</sup> To encapsulate this dichotomy, authors on the subject are keen to refer to the Chinese saying "There are policies from above, and countermeasures below" (*shang you zhengce, xia you duice* 上有政策下有对策). See Tilt, *Sustainability*, 126.

<sup>389</sup> Elizabeth C. Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010), 91-101.

<sup>390</sup> Economy, *River*, 129-130.

environmental problems. International NGOs also provide domestic environmental NGOs with access to developments in the global environmentalist discourse, which is common throughout the highest levels of government.<sup>391</sup> These NGOs, mainly located in China's poorer and more rural areas, then link local environmental concerns to avenues of recourse with the national government, and provide models for how to pursue such recourse. As Chen explains:

If the domestic discourse is framed by the norms of the international environmental regimes, it should be easier for compliance-promoting civil society actors to strengthen their positions vis-à-vis the state and achieve broad support for policy change. Issue framing by using international standards and foreign experiences also helps NGOs' general efforts to sharpen public awareness of problems and [galvanize] community interest in direct action.<sup>392</sup>

The question remains how the various social actors will negotiate the implementation of global environmental discourse and the localized discourses centered on specific issues. There is a pressing need for China's leaders to maintain a path to environmental reforms that is quick and effective. Many approaches are couched in the global discourse of environmentalism and sustainability, but those discourses have also been developed through democratic processes. New possibilities have opened up to local movements in appealing to the government for assistance and holding them accountable, but activism and protest still must be tempered. Whether a new discourse of Chinese sustainability will develop that is acceptable at many levels remains to be seen.

---

<sup>391</sup> Tilt, *Sustainability*, 137-138; 158. See also Chen Jie, "Transnational Environmental Movements: Impacts on Green Civil Society in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 19:65 (2010), 509; 512.

<sup>392</sup> Chen, "Transnational," 513.



Recognizing that the same multiscalar dynamics that are effective for environmentalism hold for Buddhism, too, has led scholars to reevaluate the relationship of Buddhism and the state. Ashiwa and Wank suggest looking at the institutionalization of religion in contemporary Chinese society as a process of negotiation between religious organizations and the state.<sup>393</sup> They argue that the discourses of modernity (or modernism, following McMahan's distinction) that China adopted and reinterpreted around the turn of the twentieth century have favored an interpretation of religion that sets rationalism over and against superstition, belief over ritual, and the private over the public (conceived of as a secular sphere). The application of this interpretation of religion to Buddhism was not just used by elites and the state, it was also part of an internal Buddhist reform beginning in China, most notably, with the monk Taixu 太虛(1890-1947). But Raoul Birnbaum points out Buddhist reform in modern China was not simply engaged in by advocates of modernism, but there was a "fundamentalist" group of practitioner monks who advocated reform in a return to basic spiritual practices.<sup>394</sup> But these internal reforms, although in part inspired by Western discourses of modernism, also sought to make Buddhism a relevant and important part of Chinese society. To this end, the reforms of Taixu and his legacy lead to

---

<sup>393</sup> Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, eds., *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 8.

<sup>394</sup> Raoul Birnbaum, "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn," in *Religion in China Today: The China Quarterly Special Issues*, ed. Daniel Overmyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 126-127.

the institutionalization of Buddhist welfare and charity work.<sup>395</sup> But such changes bring Buddhists and Buddhism firmly into the public view. One challenge for Buddhist temples and other Buddhist actors, according to David Wank, is the way in which these social actors rationalize their activities in terms amenable to the state discourse of “religion” and how their interpretation of this discourse affects their relationships with the other organizational actors such as the Buddhist Association of China and the Religious Affairs Bureau.<sup>396</sup> As in the case of environmental groups, religious organizations can fill a gap between demands on the state to promote social welfare and the lack of resources to do so. However, in similar fashion, there is a danger in the accumulation of social capital for filling this gap, although the situation, too, varies depending on the sphere (local, national, or international) in which an organization is engaged.<sup>397</sup>

Up to this point I have kept environmentalism and religion separate, but there are contexts in which they already interact; one of these contexts is tourism. As Weller notes, “Secular and sacred tourism in China and Taiwan both draw on a single experience of power.”<sup>398</sup> In China, less so in Taiwan, popular Buddhist sites are often located in mountains, where appreciation of the religious

---

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 138; Donald A. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 155.

<sup>396</sup> David L. Wank, “Institutionalizing Modern ‘Religion’ in China’s Buddhism: Political Phases of a Local Revival,” in *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, eds. Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 145.

<sup>397</sup> Wank, “Institutionalizing,” 144.

<sup>398</sup> Weller, *Discovering*, 89.

environment and natural environment are not readily disassociated. And there is also a religious power, a numinosity that is associated with natural phenomena. Therefore, the goal of conservation of the area bridges religious and environmental interests. But in order to maintain the funds required to support the area, these areas have also been marketed to appeal to consumers. The combination of religion, environment, and consumerism in tourism in China and Taiwan does not follow Western models in which these three are generally separated. The model in China and Taiwan offers possibilities for the increased responsibility religious organizations take towards the environment and supports the reaching out to religious organizations by environmental groups. But it is also possible that the demands of the tourism market for accessible and enjoyable leisure sites could comprise efforts at conservation.

The above discussion has attempted to indicate the contours of environmentalism and Buddhism in China and Taiwan as part of the scene against which the rhetorical dimensions of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism play out. Next I will look specifically at the Buddhist movement that the majority of the organizations advocating Chinese Buddhist environmentalism participate in.

#### 5.1.2 Humanistic Buddhism

As Birnbaum observed, Buddhist reform in twentieth century China can be divided between a “conservative” approach and a “progressive” approach.<sup>399</sup> The former insisted on a return to basic fundamental practices, often located in a limited collection of Buddhist sutras. The latter interpreted Buddhism through the

---

<sup>399</sup> Birnbaum, “Buddhist China,” 127-129.

discourse of modernity, aligning it with attendant discourses of science, technology, rationalism, democracy, and social progress. The most prominent of the progressive reformers was Taixu, who developed his program of reform in response to critiques of Buddhism as irrelevant to modern society and concerned only with funerary rituals.<sup>400</sup> But Buddhist reform was also necessary in the face of threats to Buddhism as a consequence of political reforms in the Republican period aimed at modernizing China as a whole.<sup>401</sup> Taixu's phrase "Buddhism for human life" (*rensheng fojiao* 人生佛教) sought to encapsulate his vision of Buddhism as "a tradition that transforms both the self and the world, that transcends local culture, and that is in harmony with science" and promote Buddhism as a form of moral reasoning that draws on and transcends both scientific knowledge and Buddhist understanding.<sup>402</sup> Furthermore, Taixu reinterpreted the term "bodhisattva" to refer to the kind of person who takes on the challenge of transforming the world according the ideals of compassion and wisdom.<sup>403</sup> This move demonstrates his criticism of devotional Buddhism (focused on devotion to various celestial buddhas and bodhisattvas) as a hindrance to the task of reform, and his desire to make Buddhism more accessible

---

<sup>400</sup> Pittman, *Taixu's Reforms*, 28.

<sup>401</sup> Yoshiko Ashiwa, "Positioning Religion in Modernity: State and Buddhism in China," in *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, eds. Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 48-55.

<sup>402</sup> Pittman, *Taixu's Reforms*, 169 and 177-178.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, 202-204.

to average Buddhists. In addition, these conceptual innovations, Taixu also proposed many changes to the Chinese sangha and Buddhist monastic education.

Taixu's legacy and influence can be seen in China and other countries in East and Southeast Asia, but nowhere is it greater than in Taiwan. The reason for this is simple: when the KMT retreated to Taiwan in 1949, the monk who has developed Taixu's vision more than anyone else, Yinshun 印順 (1906-2006) went, too. Yinshun was not the activist monk that Taixu was, but his contributions to the systematization and further elaboration of Taixu's thought have had an equal and perhaps even greater influence on the development of humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan. Although considered somewhat reclusive, Yinshun is considered a rather controversial figure in Taiwan due to his criticisms of Pure Land Buddhism, particularly in his "New Treatise on the Pure Land" (*jingtu xinlun* 淨土新論).<sup>404</sup>

Several scholars have addressed the question of the significance regarding Taixu's preference for the term *rensheng fojiao* "Buddhism for human life" and Yinshun's preference for *renjian fojiao* "Buddhism for the human realm."<sup>405</sup>

---

<sup>404</sup> Jones, *Buddhism*, 124-13; and Stephania Travagnin, "Master Yinshun and the Pure Land Thought: a Doctrinal Gap between Indian Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.* 57:3 (2004), 281-289.

<sup>405</sup> Marcus Bingenheimer, "Some Remarks on the Usage of Renjian Fojiao and the Contribution of Venerable Yinshun to Chinese Buddhist Modernism," in *Development and Practice of Humanitarian Buddhism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, eds. Mutsu Chu, Jinhua Chen, and Lori Meeks (Hualien: Tzu Chi University Press, 2007), 141-161; Ding Renjie (Ding Jen-chieh) 丁仁傑. "Renjian Buddhism and Its Successors: Toward a Sociological Analysis of Buddhist Awakening in Contemporary Taiwan," in *Development and Practice of Humanitarian Buddhism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, eds. Mutsu Chu, Jinhua Chen, and Lori Meeks (Hualien: Tzu Chi University Press, 2007), 239-2.

Charles Jones states, “In changing *rensheng* (human life) to *renjian* (the human realm), Yinshun expressed the primary difference between his and Taixu’s diagnosis of the source of Buddhism’s degradation. Whereas Taixu thought that Buddhism concentrated too much on spirits and the dead, Yinshun thought the problem had its roots in the history of early Indian Buddhism.”<sup>406</sup> “Buddhism for human life” is intended to emphasize that Buddhism should be concerned more about the condition of humans presently living. “Buddhism for the human realm” is intended to emphasize that Buddhism is primarily concerned with the human realm as the most auspicious of the six realms of existence in Buddhist cosmology. Along these lines, it is clear why Yinshun would have preferred *renjian* nomenclature. Since his reform of Buddhist thought was based on a return to Buddhism’s Indian roots, particularly in the philosophy of the Madhyamaka school, the meaning of *renjian* as the human realm in contrast to other realms, such as the realms of ghosts and gods, would have had traction. Regardless of these semantic differences, Marcus Bingenheimer argues cogently that there is little reason to distinguish between the two terms, especially since Taixu himself used both in his career.<sup>407</sup> Also Stuart Chandler points out that presently, although *renjian fojiao* is preferred by Taiwanese Buddhists, *rensheng fojiao* is more common in China, where Yinshun has had much less influence.<sup>408</sup> In English the

---

<sup>406</sup> Jones, *Buddhism*, 134. See also Pittman, *Taixu’s Reforms*, 270.

<sup>407</sup> Bingenheimer, “Some Remarks,” 145-151.

<sup>408</sup> Stuart Chandler, “Buddhism in China and Taiwan: The Dimensions of Contemporary Chinese Buddhism,” in *Buddhism in the Modern World*

translation one sees most often is “humanistic Buddhism,” which is most likely developed by one of the organizations. Since the groups I will be looking at all prefer the term *renjian fojiao*, this is the usage I will follow along with the commonly accepted English translation of humanistic Buddhism.

Bingenheimer suggests that *renjian fojiao* is generally used as a normative term among contemporary Buddhists in Taiwan and China: “In Chinese Buddhism on Taiwan *renjian fojiao* is often used as a motto to justify the expansion of the group and the branching out of its activities, not merely a statement about Buddhism...It is generally seen as positive and often seems to imply novelty, a progressive force [vis-à-vis] an older ‘traditional’ Buddhism.”<sup>409</sup> He goes on to explain *renjian fojiao* as one expression of Buddhist modernism, following as David McMahan does, the definition of Buddhist modernism proposed by Heinz Bechert, which Bingenheimer argues can be used to describe other movements, such as engaged Buddhism. Bingenheimer’s argument is correct, especially when we consider the popularity of the phrase “humanistic Buddhism” among the contemporary Buddhist groups that claim to follow this form of Buddhism (*renjian fojiao*). Humanistic Buddhism not only reflects the meaning of *renjian* as “human realm,” but it evokes notions of humanism as a modern, progressive philosophy that is focused on the welfare of individuals and supportive of science and democracy. Also, humanistic suggests the related term

---

*Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Stephen C. Berkwitz (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 186.

<sup>409</sup> Bingenheimer, “Some Remarks,” 143.

“humane” which capitalizes on the notion of Buddhist compassion (*cibei* 慈悲), a virtue embodied by Guanyin bodhisattva (*guanyin pusa* 觀音菩薩) who is central to both Ciji and DDM.

However, humanistic Buddhism is not simply indicative of Buddhist modernism in opposition to Buddhist tradition. Scott Pacey notes how the discourse of humanistic Buddhism addresses modernization and globalization and weaves these trends together with an appeal to Buddhist tradition, which presents Buddhism as an alternative to the kind of modernization that is associated with Westernization. Pacey states, “The popularity of *renjian fojiao* therefore arguably derives more from the concept’s successful merging of tradition and modernity than it does from its meaning in a semantic sense.”<sup>410</sup> Chandler observes the way that both modernists and traditionalists refer back to the past to strengthen their position. In the rhetoric of both camps there is an appeal to a revival, relying on a common assumption that the tradition has deteriorated and must be restored.<sup>411</sup> The difference lies in how to carry out the revival or restoration. For traditionalists, the goal is to go back to a point before the tradition was polluted by modern influences. Modernists seek to restore the tradition’s original spirit (effectively predating the traditionalist camp) but incorporate it with the characteristics of the modern social context. Chandler shows how Xingyun

---

<sup>410</sup> Scott Pacey, “A Buddhism for the Human World: Interpretations of *renjian fojiao* in Contemporary Taiwan,” *Asian Studies Review* 29:1 (2005), 457.

<sup>411</sup> Stuart Chandler, *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Perspective on Modernization and Globalization* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 68.



argues that the Buddha was a “modern” during his time and “took advantage of the latest technology.”<sup>412</sup> Likewise Shengyan argues that “spiritual environmentalism” (his particular interpretation of humanistic Buddhism) is nothing other than what the Buddha practiced in India. Moreover, in some respects the tradition that is valued in humanistic Buddhism is not the Buddhist tradition alone, but the Confucian tradition of ethics. Both Xingyun and Zhengyan value Confucian notions of family and filial piety. In fact, Zhengyan has added filial piety (“Be filial to your parents and be moderate in speech and attitude”) as one of five precepts Ciji members observe in addition to the five traditional Buddhist precepts.<sup>413</sup> Richard Madsen and Stuart Chandler also point to the blurring of the secular/sacred and public/private divide instituted by the increased participation of the laity and the social concerns of the monastics in humanistic Buddhist organizations as characteristic of a Confucian worldview.<sup>414</sup>

The appeal to Confucian virtues as a hallmark of the two largest humanistic Buddhist organizations raises an interesting point of comparison between humanistic Buddhism and other forms of Buddhist modernism. How

---

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., 69-71.

<sup>413</sup> See “The Spirit of the Ten Tzu Chi Precepts,” Ciji website, accessed February 9, 2012, [http://tw.tzuchi.org/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=837%3Athe-spirit-of-the-ten-tzu-chi-precepts&catid=116%3Atzu-chi-path&Itemid=324&lang=en](http://tw.tzuchi.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=837%3Athe-spirit-of-the-ten-tzu-chi-precepts&catid=116%3Atzu-chi-path&Itemid=324&lang=en).

<sup>414</sup> Richard Madsen, *Democracy’s Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 25-28 and 46-47; Chandler, *Establishing*, 75-76 and 236-252; and Lai Yonghai, “*Ruxue jiaorong yu rensheng fojiao*,” in *1991nian fojiao yanjiu lunwen ji* (Kaohsiung: Foguang, 1992), 127-129.

does humanistic Buddhism compare with engaged Buddhism? Engaged Buddhism has received increasing attention from scholars, not least because of the broadness of the term. Engaged Buddhism most generally refers to Buddhist social activist movements. Christopher Queen, editor of several volumes on engaged Buddhism, works gradually towards a definition in his various introductions, but never firmly sets one forth. He claims that engaged Buddhism is a form of Buddhism that participates in social welfare and political activism, maintains an ecumenical attitude, and seeks to reformulate Buddhism by a reinterpretation of Buddhist scriptures.<sup>415</sup> Humanistic Buddhism would appear to share these concerns in degrees depending on which organization one looks at. For example, Ciji avoids politics completely, while FGS has even had its own presidential candidate. So we might say that a comparison between engaged Buddhism and humanistic Buddhism would fruitfully highlight the different ways in which Buddhist groups and organizations have attended to the challenges and promises of various discourses of modernity. But there might be cases in which these two fail to capture the engagement of Buddhism with modernity.

Honk-yok Ip in an article entitled “Buddhist Activism and Chinese Modernity” distinguishes Buddhist activism from engaged Buddhism and humanistic Buddhism, arguing that these two latter terms are, among other

---

<sup>415</sup> See Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King, ed., *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1996), 1-44 and Christopher Queen, “Introduction: From Altruism to Action,” in *Action Dharma: New Studies in Engaged Buddhism*, eds. Christopher Queen, Charles Prebish, and Damien Keown, (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 22.

difficulties, vague.<sup>416</sup> He notes that the movements associated with the label engaged Buddhism are always associated with reform, whereas the term ‘Buddhist activism makes space for individuals who have been actively engaged with Buddhism’s interaction with modernity, without necessarily seeking to adapt Buddhism to modernity or reform it. Ip’s choice of the term ‘Buddhist activism’ rather than ‘engaged Buddhism’ or ‘humanistic Buddhism’ is probably less based on semantics than on a reluctance to throw more fuel on the academic fire of engaged Buddhism. But it also reflects a concern that Bingenheimer voices regarding the terms *rensheng fojiao* and *renjian fojiao*, which is that these are emic terms.<sup>417</sup> They are terms that are meaningful to those who identify with humanistic Buddhist organizations (or engaged Buddhist movements). Ip’s preference for a term that is no more well-defined than the two he rejects illustrates the difficulty in establishing any firm definition of these movements, especially given that he stretches “activism” beyond its typical range of meaning rendering it equally vague.

Nonetheless, the comparison between humanistic Buddhism and engaged Buddhism is useful in clarifying the ways in which an analysis of Buddhist environmentalism must take into account the social and cultural contexts of the community one is analyzing. For example, Christopher Queen states that one unifying concern among all engaged Buddhist movements is the overcoming of or liberation from oppression, which is reflected in his description of engaged

---

<sup>416</sup> Hong-yok Ip, ““Buddhist Activism and Chinese Modernity,” *Journal of Global Buddhism* 10 (2009), 146-151.

<sup>417</sup> Bingenheimer, “Some Remarks,” 151.

Buddhism as a way to refer to Buddhist liberation movements.<sup>418</sup> This orientation towards liberation is more focused on social freedom, though liberation can be read as having a transcendent counterpart in the liberation from suffering (i.e., *nīrvāna*). The main focus of humanistic Buddhism, however, is on purity. There is still a mundane, this-worldly emphasis in humanistic Buddhism, exemplified in the goal of “establishing a Pure land on earth” (*jianshe renjian jingtu* 建設人間淨土). The implication of this difference is that the ways in which social issues are framed spiritually will differ and so then will the ways in which adherents or members of these groups (humanistic Buddhist and engaged Buddhist alike) understand the issues in Buddhist terms. In the case of Buddhist environmentalism, engaged Buddhist approaches will tend to emphasize justice issues (as in the case of Buddhism in Thailand), either aimed at ending the oppression of people affected by environmental degradation or the oppression of the natural world itself. In the case of humanistic Buddhism, whose primary metaphor is purity, environmental issues will emphasize the stability and cleanliness of the natural world as an indicator of the degree to which a “Pure land on Earth” is being established. The success of Ciji’s recycling program attests to this difference.

Before moving on, I would like to raise the issue of environmentalism in the light of Yinshun’s justification for preferring *renjian fojiao*. For the most part, environmentalism in contemporary Chinese Buddhism is linked with humanistic Buddhism, even though the two most influential advocates of humanistic

---

<sup>418</sup> Queen, “Introduction,” 10.

Buddhism, Taixu and Yinshun, never mentioned environmentalism. But it goes without saying that nowadays any organization that advocates humanistic Buddhism must express some environmental position, at least in order to claim a public stance on the issue. The three major organizations that advocate humanistic Buddhism—Ciji, FGS, and DDM—all pay attention to environmentalism as a particular area of social and religious concern, but each in its own way. Their different approaches reflect each founder's own interpretation of humanistic Buddhism and the character of the organization as a whole. Stuart Chandler highlights general differences among these three organizations:

The differences in method employed by Vens. Xingyun, Zhengyan, and Shengyan are a matter of emphasis rather than of clear-cut distinctions. Foguangshan, Ciji Gongde Hui, and Fagushan all engage in charitable and educational efforts. . . . The differences in focus nonetheless set the tone for each organization: Ciji Gongde Hui is the Buddhist group famed in Taiwan for its compassionate service, Fagushan is regarded as the foremost place to learn meditation, and Foguangshan is known for its educational endeavors. Having staked their claims in the spiritual marketplace, these organizations staunchly guard their domains. There is little cooperation or even interaction between the three communities. They are rivals more than allies, generally polite rivals, but rivals nonetheless, for they are all vying to attract a limited population: those Buddhists on Taiwan who find the rhetoric of [h]umanistic Buddhism appealing.<sup>419</sup>

And Richard Madsen further locates these organizations in the context of Chinese culture by pointing out the Confucian character of these organizations, particularly emphasizing the Confucian focus on family that is a central metaphor for Ciji and FGS.<sup>420</sup>

---

<sup>419</sup> Chandler, *Establishing*, 77.

<sup>420</sup> Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma*, 89.

When discussing Buddhist social action, the majority of cases pertain to human welfare. Environmental issues are unique in the sense that the emphasis is equally or more greatly placed on nonhuman welfare. Yinshun has stated that the focus of Buddhism should be on the human realm (*renjian*), since this is the realm in which Buddhas achieve enlightenment and is the realm to which most Buddhist teachings are relevant. But taking this strictly, Buddhist environmentalism would be only of peripheral concern, since humans are not the main focus. Among the six realms of existence, animals and plant are separate and lower than humans. Such a view of *renjian fojiao* suggests that technological approaches to environmental problems are perhaps the best if they are the most efficient. But this approach does not necessarily address the root causes of environmental deterioration and might be seen to ignore conservation. However, the environmental practices of humanistic Buddhist groups do not reflect this interpretation of “human realm.” The fact is humanistic Buddhist organizations tend to consider humanistic Buddhism as a form of Buddhism that addresses problems in and of human society. Among these problems are environmental issues, not only because they affect humans but because so many environmental problems are anthropogenic. Thus, it seems reasonable that rather than reading *renjian fojiao* simply as humanistic Buddhism or “Buddhism for the human realm,” it should be elaborated to “Buddhism as a conceptual and practical source of solving social and environmental problems facing the humans and nonhumans in the modern world aimed at the goal of spiritual and social purity, a goal that is realized in correct ethical action based on Buddhist and Confucian ethical

guidelines.” In light of the unwieldiness of this explanation, I will simply use ‘humanistic Buddhism.’

In the following sections, I will introduce the humanistic Buddhist organizations already mentioned and examine the scholarly discourse of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism.

## 5.2 Chinese Buddhist Organizations and environmentalism

It can be said that many temples practice a minimal environmentalism to the degree that the members are encouraged to observe a vegetarian lifestyle. Whether this should qualify as environmentalism is not as important as the fact that some temples hold up the practice as in accordance with environmental principles. For the temples and organizations that make this moderate shift in rhetoric, adding to the justification of vegetarianism its environmental benefit, demonstrates that some Buddhists are keen to adapt to social currents and not simply confine their discourse to traditional *topoi* (compassion in the case of vegetarianism). Below I will look at the environmental approaches of several Chinese Buddhist organizations to construct a fuller picture of the ways in which contemporary Chinese Buddhism is responding to and reframing environmental issues. Since I will be treating the environmentalism of DDM, Ciji, and FGS from a rhetorical perspective in chapter five, I will not discuss them.

### 5.2.1 Zhongtaishan

Zhongtaishan (中台山) is not commonly considered to promote humanistic Buddhism, but as Guo Chengtian notes, “Ven. Weijue’s 惟覺 theology

is much like humanistic Buddhism. Weijue has proposed to transform Buddhism into an academic, educational, scientific, artistic, and humanistic discipline.”<sup>421</sup> However, the founder of the organization, Ven. Weijue, does not acknowledge either Yinshun or Taixu in Zhongtaishan’s lineage. Rather, the lineage is traced through Ven. Xuyun 虛雲, a monk renowned for meditation. Another way in which Zhongtaishan stands apart from the other three major Buddhist organizations is with respect to environmentalism. Weijue has never offered a stance specifically on environmental issues, and in the literature of the organization there is not much in the way of explicit reference to environmentalism. But that is not to say that there is no concern, much less awareness, regarding environmental issues. There is a strong emphasis on vegetarianism throughout the organization, which is linked to environmental concern. And on the grounds of the main temple in Puli, Taiwan there is an organic farm which supplies produce for the monastic meals. Even at a branch temple in Taizhong, *Puming jingshe* 普明精舍, members of the staff pointed out that every effort was made to use locally grown organic produce for meals. They even acquired some of the produce from the main temple’s garden. But there is not an emphasis on environmentalism as a separate practice that is on its own relevant and important to Buddhist practice, as we find in Ciji, FGS, and DDM.

### 5.2.2 Protecting Life: LCA and Zhaohui

---

<sup>421</sup> Guo Chengtian (Cheng-tian Kuo), *Religion and Democracy in Taiwan* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 31.



In Lin Yiren's study of Buddhist environmentalism in Taiwan, he discusses three organizations: Ciji, DDM, and the Life Conservationist Association (*Guanhuai shengming xiehui* 關懷生命協會, LCA). The LCA is not a Buddhist organization in the way that Ciji and DDM are, but it was begun by the nun, Ven. Zhaohui 釋昭慧 (b. 1957), in 1993 following a successful campaign to pass legislation making a form of fishing, known as "baitless fishing" (*cuoyu* 挫魚) illegal.<sup>422</sup> Zhaohui served as the head of the LCA until 1999. LCA's mission is based around the objective of "protecting life" (*husheng* 護生), although the organization's literature does not mention Buddhism as a basis of the LCA. The activities of the LCA focus on campaigns to care for stray dogs and protect other animals and ecosystems, education, and political lobbying. This last activity sets the LCA off from the other organizations we listed above. The LCA frequent involves NGOs and governmental organizations in its campaigns and does not shy away from protest.

Despite the lack of Buddhist discourse in LCA's communication, it has a strong connection to humanistic Buddhism. For example, LCA is connected to the Hongshi Buddhist College (*fojiao hongshi xueyuan* 佛教弘誓學院), begun in 1989 by Zhaohui. Zhaohui claims Yinshun as her mentor and identifies closely with humanistic Buddhism.<sup>423</sup> The mission of LCA based on *husheng* is part of

---

<sup>422</sup> "Life Conservationist Association," accessed February 12, 2012.

<http://www.lca.org.tw/about/about-LCA>

<sup>423</sup> In the description of the LCA on the website of Hongshi Buddhist College, it states that the LCA reflects the idea that the bodhisattva ideal is meant to be put into practice in this world, following Yinshun's vision of a Pure land on earth.

Zhaohui's articulation and description of Buddhist ethics. She argues that the basis of Buddhist ethics is dependent origination, which refers to the idea that all phenomena come into existence based on various causes and conditions. We saw in the previous chapter how this doctrine has been appealed to to link Buddhism with Western notions of interconnectedness. Zhaohui tends not to use the doctrine in this way, though. She argues that given the fact that all things exist based on the same ontological process, there is an inherent equality to all beings (*zhongsheng pingdeng xing* 眾生平等性).<sup>424</sup> And she adds that *husheng* is the necessary unfolding of dependent origination, since in the concept of *husheng* is realized the values of mutuality and equality among all beings.<sup>425</sup> The means by which this realization is attained is based in the "method of self-understanding" (*zitong zhi fa* 自通之法), which she defines as the law of the mind's functioning according to conditioned arising.<sup>426</sup> Therefore, for Zhaohui Buddhist ethics and particularly the practice of *husheng* is a method of self-cultivation following the traditional Buddhist goal of the realization of "non-self." She finds affinity with Deep Ecology and draws many parallels between its focus on a transformation of consciousness and Buddhist self-cultivation.<sup>427</sup> But she argues that Deep Ecology

---

"Hongshi Buddhist College," accessed February 15, 2012, <http://www.hongshi.org.tw/intro.aspx>.

<sup>424</sup> Zhaohui, *Fojiao lunli xue* (Taipei: Fajie, 2000), 35-38.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-82.

<sup>426</sup> Zhaohui, *Fojiao houshe lunli xue* (Taipei: Fajie, 2008), 117.

<sup>427</sup> Zhaohui, *Lunli xue*, 229-233.

can be enhanced by the way in which Buddhist ethics, based on dependent origination, offers a way to negotiate the “is/ought” dichotomy.<sup>428</sup>

Zhaohui’s is a highly respected scholar, holding several academic appointments, recently serving as the chair of the Taiwan Association of Religious Studies, and publishing two volumes on Buddhist ethics and metaethics. But she is perhaps better known for her social activism. In addition to environmental issues, she has aggressively promoted gender equality. Her brand of humanistic Buddhism challenges the notion that humanistic Buddhism is inherently nonconfrontational. Her efforts are often considered grassroots, drawing comparisons with the monk Ven. Zhuandao 釋傳道 (b.1941). The environmental advocacy of both Zhaohui and Zhuandao criticizes the push towards development and economic growth when such forces lead to adverse environmental results. Were it not for Zhaohui’s clear promotion of humanistic Buddhism, her social activism would invite consideration of the difference between humanistic Buddhism and a Taiwanese case of engaged Buddhism. Her advocacy of “protecting life” instead of “purity” also signals an interesting distinction between her brand of humanistic Buddhism and that of other leaders. But what these differences seem to point to is the openness of how humanistic Buddhism is interpreted and the way that interpretation is dependent on an organization’s leader’s own history and the way they use the concept of *renjian fojiao* to anchor a discourse and set of practices that make Buddhism meaningful

---

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., 236.

for a contemporary audience. Moreover, she is sometimes critical of the approaches by Shengyan and Zhengyan as too disengaged with the political establishment in Taiwan.<sup>429</sup> Despite the highly philosophical nature of her environmental philosophy, she is the most politically engaged monastic in Taiwan.

### 5.3 Chinese Buddhist environmental discourse

Following the beginning of the environmental campaigns by DDM, Ciji, FGS, and LCA, Buddhist studies scholars in Taiwan joined the discussion and began offering critiques and interpretations of these campaigns. Part of this is due to the public nature of these campaigns, following the lifting of martial law in 1987. But the scholarly response can also be situated in the tradition of Taiwanese scholars taking activist positions on environmentalism. In the following section, I will highlight three terms in the scholarly discourse of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism: environment (*jing* 境), land (*tu* 土), and ecology (*shengtai* 生態). By analyzing the operationalization of these terms in Chinese Buddhist environmental ethics, I hope to illustrate that the essential project of environmental ethics in the Chinese Buddhist context cannot converge with what is commonly considered to be the mainstream position supporting environmental ethics, a nonanthropocentric worldview that seeks to establish the intrinsic value of nature, unless Chinese Buddhist environmental discourse actively adopts the terms and concepts of Western environmentalism. While there is nothing inherently objectionable in Buddhist organizations adopting this

---

<sup>429</sup> See her critique of “spiritual environmentalism” in *ibid.*, 231.

position, it echoes concerns raised over a decade ago by Ian Harris that ‘eco-Buddhism’ is not Buddhist as such, but more a globalized environmental discourse. Or, using the dichotomy I offered in chapter four between eco-Buddhism and Buddhist environmentalism, for Chinese Buddhist organizations to adopt the mainstream approach to environmental ethics would be to align themselves with a decontextualized eco-Buddhism. In the course of analyzing these three terms, this section will also examine the idea that Chinese Buddhist environmentalism, having roots in humanistic Buddhism, is related to a discourse of purity, with particular focus on Pure land (or at least *renjian jingtu* 人間淨土 “Pure land in the human realm”) discourse, and critique the notion that a Chinese Buddhist environmental position can be established on the basis of the ecological notion of interrelatedness. This latter is generally unconditionally accepted by most contributors to the discussion. The comparison between the Buddhist emphasis on interconnectedness and the idea of interconnectedness in ecology (*shengtai* 生態), a comparison which demonstrates an over-reliance on Western environmental discourse (particularly favoring the term ‘ecology’) and also tends toward a positive appraisal of Deep Ecology, suffers from two flaws: 1) the fact that the natural world is also the object of analysis and categorization, so interconnectedness is not primary, and 2) that interconnectedness in Buddhism participates in an epistemological/soteriological discourse, not an ontological one (as is the case in ecology). The elements of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism that adhere best to Buddhism are the multivalent notion of environment (*huanjing* 環境) and purity (*jing* 淨). Finally, the lack of the use of the term *ziran* 自然

suggests that Chinese Buddhist environmentalism is not very compatible with Western discourses arguing for intrinsic value of nature, but that shouldn't necessarily prevent Buddhists from advocating an intrinsic value position, just that doing so would tend towards a hybrid Chinese Buddhist-Western environmental discourse.

### 5.3.1 Chinese Buddhist Understandings of “Environment”

Robert Weller discusses the various terms that can be translated into English as “nature,” including *da ziran* 大自然 (nature), *tian* 天 (heaven/nature), *tianran* 天然 (natural), *huanjing* 環境 (environment), and *shanshui* 山水 (landscape),<sup>430</sup> but then takes up another way of seeing the problem of ‘what “nature” means in Chinese culture’ by looking at ways of conceptualizing relations to the environment.<sup>431</sup> Mark Elvin has noted that “[t]here was no one view of nature that can be called *the* ‘Chinese’ view. There was not even a spectrum. Rather a kaleidoscope of fragments most of which reflected something of most of the other fragments.”<sup>432</sup> What this observation suggests is that Chinese conceptual resources can support just about any view of nature available: there is no singular Chinese view of the environment. The question for environmentalism, then, is what resources support environmental goals, which leads to the question, what environmental goals are most important? If the preservation of ecosystems is

---

<sup>430</sup> Regarding landscape painting, Weller notes, “Unlike a western tradition that tried to capture a pure nature apart from human beings, people form an inevitable part of the Chinese landscape.” Weller, *Discovering*, 22.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>432</sup> Elvin, *Retreat*, 413.

primary, then the view to be supported is going to need to emphasize the holism of the natural world. If species preservation is the goal, emphasizing biodiversity or biocentric egalitarianism, then one should find resources that highlight the value of plants and animals. But this approach still begins with the categories of environmentalism as they exist in Western environmental discourse. Such an approach will fail to recognize any unique characteristic of Chinese discourses of nature. Thinking about the problem of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism using Western categories can help us refine our inquiry, but we cannot simply seek one to one correspondences (a point we have already seen made by Toulmin and Kirkman). Additionally, how are we to navigate the possible incompatibilities of ‘Chinese’ views compared with ‘Buddhist’ views? Or should we take ‘Chinese Buddhism’ as a singular entity? As we are talking about people’s beliefs and understandings of nature, it is not as simply as establishing what is ‘Chinese’ and what is ‘Buddhist’ and finding the common denominator. Different people (Chinese Buddhists) will view nature and environmental issues differently depending on how these identity markers influence their values. As evidence of this fact, several scholars have pointed out that despite religious worldviews that seem to take a positive view of nature (Daoist and Neo-Confucian, mainly), these have hardly ever resulted in positive behavior.<sup>433</sup> So we should be wary of suggestions that deal only in ideas and leave out actual human communities.

---

<sup>433</sup> One of the earliest papers to point this out is Yi-fu Tuan, “Discrepancies between Environmental Attitude and Behavior: Examples from Europe and China,” *Canadian Geographer* 12:3 (1968), 176-191.

### 5.3.2 *Jing* 境 and *Huanjing* 環境

The first term we identify is *jing*. *Jing* itself means “border” or “boundary,” but it is more commonly used in the compound *huanjing*, which means “surrounding area” or “environment.” Like the English “environment” it has a similar generality which does not specify the character of the space or area under concern. *Huanjing* is the term usually used to mean natural environment, sometimes further defined as *ziran huanjing*, “natural environment”. But the term for environmentalism—*huanjingbaohu* 環境保護 or *huanbao* (literally “protecting the environment”)—results in the tendency to construe *huanjing* simply as natural environment. However, as Bryan Tilt mentions from his research into environmental consciousness in southern China, it is sometimes necessary to clarify what kind of environment one is referring to, as the term *huanjing* can be modified by social, personal, political, spiritual or any other such qualifier.<sup>434</sup> Another example of the broad application of *huanjing* has been popularized by Shengyan in his coining of the terms *xinling huanbao* 心靈環保 (spiritual environmentalism or protecting the spiritual environment) and *sizhong huanbao* 四種環保 (fourfold environmentalism). Of the four kinds of environment to be protected, only one refers to the natural environment of ecosystems and ecological

---

<sup>434</sup> Bryan Tilt, *The Struggle for Sustainability in Rural China: Environmental Values and Civil Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 107. Tilt explains that he has difficulty in conducting interviews with Chinese villagers about “the environment.” Later it was pointed out to him that he needed to use the phrase “ecological environment” (*shengtai huanjing* 生態環境) to qualify the “environment” he was referring to.



science, the other three being spiritual, social, and living.<sup>435</sup>

However, in literature on Chinese Buddhist environmentalism, *jing* is often used to mean “external environment” as the counterpart to the “internal environment” of *xin* 心 or mind. In this construction, the terms are portrayed as both contrastive and complementary. Several scholars debate the mind/environment problematic in *xinling huanbao*. The issue was first raised by Yang Huinan 楊惠南. He critiques the environmentalist projects initiated by Shengyan and Zhengyan, arguing that they emphasize mind to the detriment of environment and so constitute an easy path, a romantic approach to Buddhist environmentalism.<sup>436</sup> Although not mentioned by Yang, Xingyun also refers to the mind/environment connection in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* as exemplifying the Buddhist position on this issue: “In addition to protecting the physical environment, we have to take good care of our internal spiritual environment. The *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* says, ‘If one wants to be in a pure land, one should purify the mind. When the mind is pure, the land is pure.’ What this means is that the environment we live in is a reflection of our state of mind. To be successful in the movement to improve the environment, we must not neglect our inner spirit.”<sup>437</sup>

---

<sup>435</sup> I will elaborate on the fourfold fold environmentalism in the next chapter.

<sup>436</sup> Yang Huinan, “*Dangdai Taiwan fojiao huanbao linian de sixiang—yi ‘yuyue renjian jingtu’ he ‘xinling huanbao’ weili*,” in 1995 nian foxue yanjiu lunwenji (Taipei: Foguangshan wenjiao jijinhui, 1996a), 2; “*Cong ‘jingjietuo’ dao ‘xinjietuo’: jianli xinjing pingdeng de fojiao shengtaixue*,” in *Fojiao yu shehui guanhuai xueshu yantaohui wenji: shengming, shengtai, huanjing guanhuai*, ed. Shi Zhuandao (Tainan: Zhonghuafojiao baike wenxian jijinhui, 1996b), 195.

Yang focuses primarily on the passage from the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*—“When the mind is pure/purified, the Buddha lands will be pure/purified” (*sui qi xin jing, ze fotu jing* 隨其心淨則佛土淨)—cited by Shengyan (and quoted by Xingyun, above) to create a dichotomy between mind and environment, but he also refers to statements by Zhengyan claiming that it is more important to dispose of mental garbage (*xinzhong de lese* 心中的垃圾) than external garbage (*waimian de lese* 外面的垃圾).<sup>438</sup> He argues that prioritizing mind, which is inner, deprioritizes the outer, which in the case of environmentalism is the environment, or *jing*.<sup>439</sup> Yang believes Buddhist environmental responses, exemplified by Zhengyan and Shengyan, do not address environmental issues directly enough, because they rely too much on the inner or mind aspect and not enough on the external or environmental aspect of the problem. He critiques them for seeing the natural world as a “surface reality” and not as a central concern.<sup>440</sup> Yang’s distinction is picked-up by other scholars, notably Lin Chaocheng, and the problem of “*zhong ‘xin’ qing ‘jing’* 重‘心’輕‘境’ (emphasizing ‘mind’ and so eclipsing

---

<sup>437</sup> Ven. Xingyun, *Protecting Our Environment: Buddhism in Every Step*, vol. 21 (Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha’s Light Publishing, 2007), 17.

<sup>438</sup> Yang, “*Dangdai*,” 6-12.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20.

<sup>440</sup> See his analysis of Shengyan’s *zhibiao/zhiben* 治標/治本 (addressing the symptom/addressing the root cause) distinction in *ibid.*, 11.

‘environment’))” becomes a central problem in Chinese Buddhist environmentalism.<sup>441</sup>

The contrast between mind and external environment as two separate areas of environmental focus is addressed by Shi Zhuandao 釋傳道, who critiques the idea of a “mind-only Pure land” (*weixin jingtu* 唯心淨土). Zhuandao claims that “protecting life” (*husheng*) encompasses the basic Buddhist teaching.<sup>442</sup> Caring for, protecting, or honoring sentient beings implies extending the same consideration to those beings’ environments. Purified environments have a significant impact on the bodhisattva’s practice of purifying self and others. He sees the environment as the basis for practice and therefore advocates the expression “environment can transform the mind; the mind follows the transformation of the environment.”<sup>443</sup> On this basis he rejects the relevance or

---

<sup>441</sup> See Lin Chaocheng 林朝成, “*Xin jing ze guotu jing: guanyu fojiao shengtaiguan de sikao yu tiaozhan*,” in *Fojiao yu shehui guanhuai xueshu yantaohui wenji: shengming, shengtai, huanjing guanhuai*, ed. Shi Zhuandao (Tainan: Zhonghuafojiao baike wenxian jijinhui, 1996a), 179-192; “*Shentai gongdao yu zongjiao shijian: yi fojiao senlin baoyu sixiang wei hexin de tantao*,” in *1996 nian foxue yanjiu lunwenji: dangdai zongjiao lilun de xingsi* (Taipei: Foguangshan wenjiao jijinhui, 1996b), 73-98. See also Lu Yang 陸揚, “*Dasheng foli, huanjing baohu yu shehui gaizao guanlian xing zhi zai sikao*,” *Dangdai* 107 (1995), 130-141; Lai Xianzong 賴賢宗, “*Tiantai foxue yu shengtai zhexue*,” in *Fojiao wenhua yu dangdai shijie* (Taipei: Wenlu, 2005), 231-270.

<sup>442</sup> Shi Zhuandao, “*Pusa shehui guanhuai de er darenwu: zhuangyan guotu, chengshou zhongsheng*,” in *Fojiao yu shehui guanhuai xueshu yantaohui wenji: shengming, shengtai, huanjing guanhuai*, ed. Shi Zhuandao (Tainan: Zhonghuafojiao baike wenxian jijinhui, 1996), 11-12. It is not clear if Zhuandao intends this to mean the basic Buddhist teaching on the environment or for Buddhism as a whole.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

importance of the concept of a “mind-only Pure land,” preferring a “Pure land in the human realm” (*renjian jingtu*) and argues that the meaning of *renjian jingtu* “points to when beings purify and honor the space around them, their lives achieve dignity and purification.”<sup>444</sup> Whether the natural world is the prime representative of his understanding of *jing* is not clear, although most of his discussion refers to pollution of the natural world.

But these two foci of concern need not be set in opposition, and there are three interrelated ways (hermeneutical, doctrinal, and phenomenological) in which mind and environment are explained as mutually implicative. First, Yang Huinan, in fact, advocates a Buddhist environmentalism centered on “the mutual emphasis on mind and environment” (*xinjing bingjian* 心境並建). Returning to the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, he argues that the passage “When the mind is pure, the Buddha lands will be pure” is to be read as a “biconditional sentence (*shuang tiaojian ju* 雙條件句),” which is to say that neither mind nor external environment can be purified in exclusion to the other.<sup>445</sup> Yang uses the example of direct karmic retribution (*zhengbao* 正報) and circumstantial karmic retribution (*yibao* 依報) as mutually dependent to explain how mind and environment cannot be separated, as one needs the other to arise or be purified.<sup>446</sup> Lin restates the

---

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Yang, “*Dangdai*,” 21.

<sup>446</sup> He is not the only person to use this strategy to resolve mind and environment dichotomy; see also Shengyan’s four-fold environmentalism. This use of the two

argument by stating that Buddha lands are the cause (*yin* 因) of purified minds, as much as they are the result (*guo* 果) of minds being purified.<sup>447</sup>

Lai Xianzong expands on Yang's notion of *xinjing bingjian*. He focuses on Tiantai philosophy and reviews the critiques of Yang and Lin particularly. He argues that the split between mind and environment is not pertinent to Tiantai thought as expounded by its most influential thinker, Zhiyi 智顓 (538-597), and he elaborates on numerous aspects of Tiantai thought that he believes illustrate that Tiantai is not subject to this dichotomy and is therefore a natural conveyor of Deep Ecology thought. Lai discusses the mind-environment dichotomy from the perspective of Tiantai metaphysics. He argues that Shenyan's *xinling huanbao* does not ignore environment, but is an example of "true mind-only (*zhenchang weixin* 真常唯心)."<sup>448</sup> This position is different from the position that Yang attributed to *xinling huanbao*, which Lai labels "consciousness-only, absent of external objects" (*weishi wujing* 唯識無境), in that it encompasses all Buddhist "realms (*jie* 界)" of mind, environment, and the *dharmadhatu* (*fajie* 法界). Therefore, the Tiantai approach allows for the mutual establishment of a mind-oriented and environment-oriented ethic (*xinjing bingjian* 心境並建).

Furthermore, Lai examines Zhiyi's position on *jing* and concludes that,

---

kinds of karma is perhaps based on Yinshun's mutual emphasis of the two forms of karma in his work *The Pure Land and Chan* (*Jingtu yu Chan* 淨土與禪).

<sup>447</sup> Lin, "Xin jing," 183. See also Yang, "Cong," 198.

<sup>448</sup> Lai, "Tiantai," 248.

although to some degree he places greater emphasis on mind, he also advocates a harmonizing and assimilation of mind and environment. Lai states that Zhiyi had two interpretations of *jing*: the external environment (*waizai huanjing* 外在環境) and boundary (*jingjie* 境界).<sup>449</sup> The former is relevant to conditioned arising (*yuanqi* 緣起), in which case Lai claims environment (*huanjing* 環境) is more important than mind. Lai argues the latter meaning illustrates the unity of humans and nature (*ziran* 自然), but it not clear how Lai makes this connection. Finally, Lai argues that Zhiyi's view of *jing* can be illustrated by looking at Zhiyi's threefold division of worlds (*sanzhong shijian* 三種世間): "root world (*genben shijian* 根本世間)," "world of meaning (*yi shijian* 義世間)," and "world of affairs (*shi shijian* 事世間)."<sup>450</sup> I will return to this division below, but with respect to *jing* Lai's point is that for Zhiyi there is a continuity of all boundaries, thus demonstrating continuity between mind and environment, internal and external. However, it should be noted that the subject of Zhiyi's concern is not *jing* as such, but rather "body (*shen* 身)," so we should be cautious whether Zhiyi's use of *shen* can be equated with *jing* in the way Lai suggests.

The second way in which mind and environment are construed as complementary is through the doctrine of two kinds of karma mentioned above—

---

<sup>449</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., 249-250.

direct and circumstantial.<sup>451</sup> Shengyan gives two interpretations of natural environment (related to his fourth kind of environmentalism, “protecting the natural environment” *ziran huanbao* 自然環保). On the one hand the environment is the natural environment of Western environmentalism. On the other hand, the environment is the environment of practice, and it encompasses the two types of karmic retribution Yang mentions: “A person’s body and mind are direct karmic retribution and the environment she lives in is circumstantial retribution. Direct and circumstantial retribution form one’s place of practice. Every person uses her direct retribution to practice within her circumstantial retribution. Thus one must care for the environment just as one would for her own body.”<sup>452</sup> We can better see how mind and environment imply each other by looking at Zhuandao’s suggestion that “protection of life” is the essence of Buddhist environmentalism.

If *husheng* is of primary importance in Buddhist practice, in terms of refraining from causing harm, it must relate to one’s direct retribution (*zhengbao* 正報), one’s own intention and actions. The protection of the environments in which sentient beings exist would also be a factor relevant to direct retribution. But the underlying justification for observing this teaching as primary would be understood in terms of one’s own salvation, that is, the overcoming of ignorance,

---

<sup>451</sup> Although Yang uses this same distinction, Shengyan’s use is not apparently based on his interpretation of any particular text, but is rather based in the corpus of Buddhist. For this reason, I label Yang’s explanation “hermeneutical” and Shengyan’s “doctrinal.”

<sup>452</sup> “Dharma Drum Mountain,” accessed April 15, 2010.  
<http://www.dharmadrum.org/fivefold/fivefold.aspx>.

or in other words, the purification of the mind. In this way, we can read the passage of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* to mean that one must first focus on purifying mind, only then can one turn one's attention to purifying the world. This is different from the interpretation that the world is purified when the mind is purified and avoids the biconditional reading argued for by Yang.

Zhuandao, Lin, and Yang all advocate a balance of mind and environment. Yang further argues that the connection between ecology and Buddhist thought lies in Madhyamaka thought and particularly dependent origination (*yuanqi* 緣起), but he claims that Shengyan and Zhengyan base their ideas on Yogacāra.<sup>453</sup> The content of his criticism here is that the Yogacāra tradition takes the mind as the source of phenomenal manifestation, subordinates the external world to the mind, and thus obviates any need to engage in environmental activism. Moreover, Yang expands his analysis of the Yogacāra mind/environment schemata and concludes that if one only advocates mental purification, then there is no possibility for liberation, since the mind will only be subject to the polluting fumigation (*xunxi* 薰習) of the external world.<sup>454</sup> So the mind and environment must be concomitantly purified for liberation to be possible. However, in a slightly later article, Yang claims that Madhyamaka and Yogacāra both offer interpretations of mind and environment that equate the two domains.<sup>455</sup> This reading suggests that from either a Madhyamaka or Yogacāra perspective, mind and environment are

---

<sup>453</sup> Yang, “*Dangdai*,” 26.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>455</sup> Yang, “*Cong*,” 201.



part of the same ontological whole. In fact, Yogacāra offers a more constructive model for environmental engagement with the distinction between the world of sentient beings and receptacle world. Distinguishing the two can allow us to map the mind/environment distinction onto the two worlds, respectively.

Of course all this might amount to very little if we follow the interpretation of Yogacāra (actually all of Buddhism) set forth by Dan Lusthaus. Lusthaus has argued that Buddhist soteriology is focused on the question of epistemology and not ontology. He says:

Their denial of externality does not entail the reification of that denial into an ontological position, it is rather an existential disruptive force. Yogacara attempted to do something which has not yet been successfully accomplished in Western thought, which is *epistemo-ethics*, i.e., a liberational ethics fully derived from a coherent epistemology grounded in radical experience. They displace ontology and thus ground ethics in something other than metaphysics—in fact, they ground it in the very necessity of bracketing metaphysics.<sup>456</sup>

If the same can be said of the Madhyamaka position, then the question of which philosophical school is more suited for explaining the basis of concern for the environment depends less on how environment is conceived ontologically, and more on how environment is understood (epistemologically) to participate meaningfully in one's liberation.

### 5.3.3 *Tu* 土: The land ethic in environmental thought

---

<sup>456</sup> Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogacara Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 36. See also Erik J. Hammerstrom, "The Expression 'The Myriad Dharmas are Only Consciousness' in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Buddhism," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 23 (2010), 76-77.

Land or *tu* 土 might be considered an overlooked term when used by itself. In general, when coupled with *fotu* 佛土 or *foguotu* 佛國土, it is used as the translation for Buddha lands (Skt. *buddhaksetra*).<sup>457</sup> There are also Pure lands *jingtū* 淨土, among which there are numerous Pure lands for specific buddhas. The problem that arises is how to or whether it is even necessary to distinguish between these different “lands” when discussing Buddhist environmentalism. The reason it might be unnecessary is because the idea of land is not intended in a literal sense, but as a metaphor. Of course, it is not a given that land would be an operational term in Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. As Lin Chaocheng argues in his essay “A Buddhist Land Ethic,” land in terms of soil or ground is not something that is held in high regard in the Buddhist traditions.<sup>458</sup> His essay is in itself interesting, as it is addressing the philosophy of one of the most influential American environmentalists, Aldo Leopold, and attempts to translate his “land ethic” into Buddhist terms. The attempt to articulate a Buddhist land ethic safeguards against relying on anthropocentric discourse (though the degree to which Leopold’s writings are nonanthropocentric is debatable), while drawing on an increasingly popular environmental discourse to raise the visibility of Buddhist environmental thought.

His link between Buddhism and a land ethic lies in the idea of the Pure land. He traces Pure land thought through its Indian roots and numerous texts,

---

<sup>457</sup> *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, “foguotu” (article by Charles Muller).

<sup>458</sup> Lin Chaocheng, *Fojiaotu xiang tudi lunli: renjian jingtū de xingsi* (A Buddhist Ethic View for the Land: A Reflection of the Concept “Pure Land in the Human Realm”), *Chengda zongjiao yu wenhua xuebao* 5 (2005), 78.

noting that Pure land images are not related to environmentalist images of a healthy eco-system. Instead, he employs a sacred/profane dichotomy to describe the nature of Pure land-based environmental discourse and argues that pure lands are not “natural” (*ziran huanjing* 自然環境). But this lack of connection to environmentalism does not make Pure lands irrelevant. Lin states that according to the logic of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, “Adorned and pure Buddha lands are not without any purpose, rather they establish a field of practice upon the empty plots occupied by sentient beings.”<sup>459</sup>

Lin further discusses Shengyan’s concept of “spiritual environmentalism” and Shengyan’s *renjian jingtu* thought and argues that Shengyan is not much concerned with actual environmentalism, but, as his focus on purification might suggest, the religious goals of the practice. He concludes by discussing the purification of *guotu* 國土 and mind based again on the passage from the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*.<sup>460</sup> But his discussion of a Buddhist land ethic interpretation of “purification of the country” (*guotu jing*) returns to passages from Carson and Nash, which belies the dependence of the Buddhist land ethic discussion on

---

<sup>459</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>460</sup> *Guotu* can mean either Buddha lands or a country. It is unclear which meaning Lin has in mind. The reading of “country” would be more radical it seems, since he would seem to be reading the passage in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* as corresponding to Leopold’s meaning of “land.” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, “*guotu*” (article by Charles Muller).

Western discourse and claims that “a sustainable society is the basic requirement for purifying the land.”<sup>461</sup>

At this point we must stop and ask whether we still in the realm of Buddhist Pure land thought or has *qingjing guotu* now taken on a totally secular meaning in the same way Yang’s use of *jing* does. In Lin’s defense, he clearly admits that creating a real Buddhist environmentalism will require looking outside the tradition, which is the very reason he gives for turning to the land ethic idea. The project of creating a Buddhist land ethic is a step in the process of developing a position of mutually promoting mind and environmental protection, though ultimately, he is still seeking to articulate a Buddhist Deep Ecology.<sup>462</sup>

In the article “From Liberation of the Environment to Liberation of the Mind,” in which Yang examines the passage from the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* often cited by Shengyan (“When the mind is pure all the Buddha-lands will be pure”), the difficulty of establishing a clear term for environment in Chinese Buddhist discourse is made clear by the multiple terms used in the text. He begins with the passage from the first chapter of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* entitled “Buddha lands (*foguo* 佛國).” In a previous article he states that the passage relating the mind’s purification to the purification of the Buddha lands is a biconditional sentence, so that the purification of mind and environment are mutually inclusive stipulations. He justifies the same reading here by interpreting the passage regarding the

---

<sup>461</sup> Lin, “*Fojiaotu*,” 87.

<sup>462</sup> See *Ibid.*, 86 and 90.

seventeen practices of a Bodhisattva, beginning with *zhixin* 直心 (“a mind characterized by straight forwardness (or sincerity)”) and moving to *xinjing* 心淨 (“a pure/purified mind”), to show that the mind is the ultimate goal of purification.<sup>463</sup> But within that passage lies the intermediary link of *fotujing* 佛土淨 (“purified Buddha lands”), which suggests to Yang that *before* the mind is purified, Buddha lands must be purified. This reading rests on an understandable, but perhaps incomplete reading of the passage as a causal sequence rather than as a description of the centrality of mind in Pure land thought. The Buddha is asked “how one can purify the Buddha lands,” (*yuanwen de foguotu qingjing, weiyuan shizun shuo zhu pusa jingtu zhi xing* 願聞得佛國土清淨，唯願世尊說諸菩薩淨土之行), and proceeds to list seventeen actions or practices with the syntax “P *shi pusa jing tu* 是菩薩淨土,” which seems to mean something like “P is the Pure land of the bodhisattva.” This is how Yang appears to interpret it. Following the initial presentation of these seventeen, the Buddha lists them in a condensed sequence, culminating with the passage: “Therefore Jewelled Accumulation, if the bodhisattva wishes to acquire a [P]ure land, he must purify his mind. *When the mind is purified, the Buddha land will be pure.*”<sup>464</sup> The question that is relevant to the discussion here is: what is meant by *jing tu* 淨土? It seems as if Pure land is synonymous with Buddha land, and so *jing tu* is something to be acquired (*de jing*

---

<sup>463</sup> *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, “zhixin” and “xinjing” (article by Charles Muller).

<sup>464</sup> Translated in Burton Watson, trans. *The Vimalakirti Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 29 (emphasis mine).

*tu* 得淨土), as Watson translates it. But going back to the original question, “how does one purify a Buddha land,” it seems better to take *jing* 淨 in its verbal form— “to purify.”<sup>465</sup> Both Watson and Yang elide the differences between *jing* in its verbal mode and its nominative mode. *Jing* as an adjective can mean “pure, purified, free from defilement,” as a noun “purification,” as a verb “to purify, to make (something) pure, to become pure.”<sup>466</sup> In each of these uses the defilements can be external or internal and mind-related, e.g., purified of desire or ignorance. If this is the case, then we read the passage “*P shi pusa jing tu*” as “(doing) P this bodhisattva purifies the land.” Recalling that “land” is the translation for the Sanskrit *kṣetra*, land in this sense is not physical environment but a field of merit from which the bodhisattva acts. Yinshun has noted that Pure lands are only created when bodhisattva’s have led sentient beings to enlightenment. The Pure land is a reward or beneficial consequence of a bodhisattva having achieved his vow.<sup>467</sup> So we can read the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* as clarifying the method for how a bodhisattva achieves this goal and not as pertaining to which comes first, mental purification or environmental purification. It has already been noted that the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* contains a vision of the Pure land quite different from other texts, and this reading would maintain that uniqueness in that it insists on a non-“environmental” interpretation of Buddha land, where .

---

<sup>465</sup> There is a similar issue in the Daoist text commonly referred to as the ‘Daoist’ Heart Sutra.

<sup>466</sup> *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, “jing” (article by Charles Muller).

<sup>467</sup> Travagnin, “Master Yinshun,” 295.

The case is the same regarding *yanjing fotu* 嚴淨佛土; it is not clear whether this phrase should be “adorned, pure Buddha land” or “adorning and purifying the Buddha lands.” Yinshun suggests that the term *zhuangyan* 莊嚴 refers to a practice (“adorning”) rather than a state (“adorned”).<sup>468</sup> Yinshun further analyzes these various meanings of the term *jing*.<sup>469</sup> Therefore, with respect to the idea of environment, both in its secular environmentalist mode and its Chinese Buddhist mode, the issue becomes less straightforward. The implications of these differences in interpretation for environmentalism is that with respect to the idea that the dominant voices emphasize mind to the exclusion of environment, the most appropriate approach is not to turn one’s environment into a Pure land but, rather, that the work of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism should start with the purification of the mind. This is to say, the purification advocated in Pure land discourse in the context of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism refers to a process of mental cultivation that seeks to develop a worldview that leads to environmentally-positive behavior. Perhaps this process, and not metaphysical holism, the unified vision of internal and external, is the defining feature of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism.

Finally, with respect to the question of Pure land discourse, the notions of *renjian jingtu* and purity raise further questions with respect to environmentalism. None of the authors surveyed here, lay or monastic, object to the notion that Buddhists today should strive to build a Pure land on earth. A major feature, if

---

<sup>468</sup> Jones, *Buddhism*, 129.

<sup>469</sup> Travagnin, “Master Yinshun,” 291.

not the primary one, of *renjian jingtu* is the concern with purity. Charles Jones has described the situation among modern Taiwanese Buddhists thus:

Building the ‘Pure Land in the Human Realm,’ then, becomes a process not so much of creating a geographical zone in which Buddhist morality and practice prevails as Taixu defined it but of creating a ‘purity’ defined according to the secular agenda created by the individual’s main concern: purified of pollution and waste for the environmental activist, purified of patriarchy for the feminist, purified of political oppression for the dissident, and so on.<sup>470</sup>

But just what does that mean in environmental terms? We have seen above that the idea of a Pure land serving as the model for environmental conservation or preservation still leaves the question of wilderness unresolved (and to some degree threatened). But one aim for advocating a Pure land in the human realm is to replace or challenge the notion of a Pure land as a scripturally defined utopia. In addition, we might say that a Pure land for the human realm would be different from a mind-only Pure land, even though the latter is related to the idea that one’s mental purity is a factor conditioning the arising of a Pure land.

#### 5.3.4 Ecology/*Shengtai* 生態

The metaphysical approach to Buddhist environmentalism seeks to address the question of how nature is described and understood, as it is important in establishing the intrinsic value of nature. It is a problematic issue, since scholars have difficulty enough establishing the moral standing plants and animals, much less the ontological and ethical status of nature. This question is

---

<sup>470</sup> Charles B. Jones, “Transitions in the Practice and Defense of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism,” in *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition*, eds. Steven Heine and Charles S. Prebish (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 135.



important, though, for several reasons. As environmental ethics is generally considered to be a global discourse, it seems there should be some terminological continuity between the various religious discourses on environmental ethics.<sup>471</sup> Yet one must wonder whether what is considered a global discourse is not better described as a globalized Western discourse. Kate Soper's analysis supports this reading, when she argues that in all discussions of nature, there is a fundamental sense of separation between humanity and nature that is "axiomatic to Western thought."<sup>472</sup> But then she also refers to a discourse of "cosmological nature" in which "humanity is neither opposed to it [nature] nor viewed as separable from it."<sup>473</sup> In the Chinese Buddhist context, the tendency is more towards a cosmological discourse of nature because of the inherent holism that characterizes Chinese Buddhism, resulting in the fact that nature as "other" is difficult to establish. This emphasis on interconnectedness (exemplified by the image of Indra's net), although based on the notion of dependent origination, distinguishes Chinese Buddhism from other Buddhisms. Cook, referring to the Huayan 華嚴 worldview as a "cosmic ecology," emphasizes the notions of "mutual identity"

---

<sup>471</sup> The Earth Charter is a good example of the global character of environmental discourse. Steven C. Rockefeller, "Buddhism, Global Ethics, and the Earth Charter," in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) attempts to show how Buddhist discourse can contribute to the Earth Charter, specifically by offering concepts that have universal appeal. Whether this means the Earth Charter is inclined to a Buddhist point of view, or that Buddhism has a decidedly universal appeal is not entirely clear.

<sup>472</sup> Soper, *Nature*, 15 and 38.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

and “mutual intercausality.”<sup>474</sup> Cook mentions that identity and interdependence are merely the static and dynamic modes of the same idea.<sup>475</sup> Based on these notions of identity, interdependence, and intercausality, Cook repeatedly emphasizes the harmonious universal vision of Huayan. In short there are no truly separate entities, as every thing is in itself is the whole. Cook is just one of many scholars to make this argument.<sup>476</sup>

Among Chinese scholars is Feng Huxiang, whose work on comparative environmental philosophy between China and the West treats Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist thought in turn. His main focus is to show how these traditions align with the concepts prevalent in contemporary environmental philosophy, which he takes to be characterized by ecologism or Deep Ecology. His section on Buddhism first lays out the philosophical positions of several Chinese Buddhist schools but chooses to focus on Huayan thought as it represents for him the

---

<sup>474</sup> Francis H. Cook, “The Jeweled Net of Indra” in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*, eds., J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames (Albany: SUNY, 1989), 214.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-226.

<sup>476</sup> See Joanna Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self: Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1991). For examples of other scholars working with the same concepts but with reference to Japanese sources, see Paul O. Ingram, “Jeweled Net,” 75-85; Graham Parkes, “Voices of Mountains, Trees, and Rivers: Dogen, Kukai, and a Deeper Ecology,” in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 113-118; Steve Odin, “The Japanese Concept of Nature in Relation to the Environmental Ethics and Conservation Aesthetics of Aldo Leopold,” in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 97-98.

pinnacle of Chinese Buddhist thought.<sup>477</sup> Feng looks at the Huayan view of nature (*ziran* 自然), individual beings (*wanwu* 萬物), and the attitude towards sentient beings (*zhongsheng de taidu* 眾生的態度). The first section asserts the usual claim that the Huayan view of the universe establishes how all things are imbued with “life” and suggests a position similar to biocentric egalitarianism. While this addresses the problem of a value-neutral scientific materialist view of the natural world by carving out a place for the question of value, it raises other issues of how to adjudicate conflicts between the interests of various value-possessing entities. He argues for a value-laden life science, but he does move towards arguing for an interpretation of the one true *dharmadhatu* world as a metaphor for how to approach environmental problems, and this encourages a comprehensive view from all angles.<sup>478</sup> He concludes this section by saying that the most important point the *Huayan jing* teaches us is that we have to open our spirits and develop our minds so that we can see the world as a living world of value. Have we come full circle to *xinling huanbao*?

Lai Xianzong’s contribution to the metaphysical basis of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism rests on his appropriation of Tiantai philosophy, but he avoids simply citing the notion of dependent origination. Lai argues for a Tiantai-based Chinese Buddhist environmentalism from a predominantly metaphysical viewpoint, but also emphasizes the practical focus of Tiantai. As mentioned

---

<sup>477</sup> Feng Huxiang (Fung Hu-hsiang) 馮滬祥. *Huanjing lunli xue—zhongxi huanbao zhexue bijiao yanjiu* (Taipei: Student Book Company, 1991), 313-408.

<sup>478</sup> Feng Huxiang, *Huanjing*, 357.

above, Lai argues that the individual (*shen* 身) is intimately tied to the external world to show that Tiantai emphasizes the mutuality of mind and environment. He then argues that the practical aspects of Zhiyi's *zhiguan* 止觀 (a tradition of meditation) thought demonstrates that Buddhist cultivation attends equally to the world and the mind. He finally attempts to show that Tiantai supports a view compatible with Deep Ecology in the explanation of how all aspects of reality are mutually dependent (*yicun xing* 依存性). He appeals to various concepts such as *shijie huru* 十界互入 (“the mutual entry of the ten realms”), *baijie qianru* 百界千如 (“hundred worlds and thousand thusnesses”), and *shirushi* 十如是 (“the ten thusnesses”). However, at the end of Lai's discussion, one cannot help but wonder if this is any different from Cook's or Feng's attempts to relate Buddhism to ecology, which takes ecology as the umbrella concept and endeavors to articulate a Buddhist ecology. The meaning of “Buddhist ecology,” though, tends to mean something like conveying a sense of the ontological interconnectedness of beings with Buddhist terminology.<sup>479</sup> But does the soteriological aim of Zhiyi's metaphysics problematize the parallel with Western scientific ecological discourse? I will return to this question below.

In addition to these solidly metaphysical articulations of Buddhist ecology, there is one last approach to consider regarding the theme of Buddhist and ecological interconnectedness. Shi Zhuandao states that “the most important tool

---

<sup>479</sup> See also Shi Hengqing 釋恒清. “*Caomu youxing yu shenceng shengtaixue* (The sentience of plants and Deep Ecology),” in *Fojiao yu shehui guanhuai xueshu yantaohui wenji: shengming, shengtai, huanjing guanhuai*, ed. Shi Zhuandao (Tainan: Zhonghuafojiao baiken wenxian jijinhui, 1996), 33.

for realizing Pure land in the human realm is [the doctrine of] ‘dependent origination.’” Zhaohui takes dependent origination as the basis of Buddhist ethics, but her use of the concept finds its ethical expression in the idea of *husheng*, and she does not seem to follow other scholars in emphasizing the metaphysical interconnectedness that the doctrine implies (although she does not totally disregard it, either).

Although it may seem uncontroversial that interconnectedness is *the* link between Buddhism and ecology, the relationship is, in fact, quite problematic. Scholars have already expressed reservations regarding the ethical and philosophical problems that pertain to ethical decision-making when one advocates an extreme form of interconnectedness as the basis of a Buddhist environmental ethic. The question this section seeks to address is whether scientific ecology is relevant for Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. Although ecology is a metaphor itself, even when modified by “scientific,” is it necessary or even feasible to use “ecology” to define the character of a Chinese Buddhist environmental ethic?

Scientific ecology makes claims about the relationship of aspects of the natural world, typically for the purpose of description; it is purely ontological. Buddhist interconnectedness pertains to epistemological/ soteriological issues: what kind of knowledge is liberating? What sorts of views must one cultivate in order to live an unconditioned life? Interconnectedness is certainly a way to describe the kind of vision liberation requires, and in this respect it is a view of “the way things are.” But the reality that Buddhist thought ascribes to

interconnectedness is described in numerous ways. What does interconnectedness mean in terms of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism? That the human and natural worlds are not distinct, but hang together in a web of interrelatedness is one answer. However, it seems difficult to argue that this is how most Buddhists experience the world. How then is the environment experienced? What does it require to realize the doctrine of interconnectedness? Experience of environment as interrelated might be the ontological reality, but it is not how the world is experienced generally. The emphasis on this ontological interrelatedness is perhaps the result of imposing an objective view of the world on the canvas of practice. From a rhetorical viewpoint, how we understand our experience of nature is more relevant to environmentalism than establishing the ontological character of an entity (although this is not to suggest that the two are unrelated). Thus, Chinese Buddhist articulations of a Buddhist environmental philosophy, should be structured upon soteriological and epistemological bases, and not ontological or metaphysical ones. Recalling Andrew Light's useful distinction between "rationalist motivational internalism" and "methodological environmental pragmatism," Chinese Buddhist environmentalism will be more effective if it follows the former model. The ways in which complex and highly intellectual Buddhist ontology and metaphysics have been employed to articulate the environmental basis of Chinese Buddhism will simply not resonate with a large audience. Light's distinction challenges the efforts of those who believe that if Buddhism's holism can be amply demonstrated, and Buddhists "see" that all beings are one, then Buddhists would cease to act in ways that harm other beings

(sentient or not) because to do so would cause harm to oneself and refraining from self-harm is a universally accepted axiom.

One thing to note about the discussions of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism is that rarely do the contemporary scholars use the term *daziran* 大自然 (nature). The exception is Feng, but his work comes earlier than any others and so it is conceivable that the problems with the term had not been considered. But of more consequence is that nearly all of these scholars prefer *shengtai* 生態 (ecology) when they are speaking generally. *Huanjing* is less directly implicated in environmentalism due to the possibility of a variety of *huanjing*. The implications of preference for *shengtai* are not only that the term invokes Western notions of the environment, but that there is a connection with ecological *science*. Thus, the prominence of the term *shengtai* orients discussions of Buddhist environmentalism around a scientific term. Such a choice reflects the concern of modern Buddhists with aligning Buddhist cosmology with natural science.<sup>480</sup>

Because of the emphasis on ecology, or perhaps influencing it, there is among almost all Buddhist thinkers writing about Chinese Buddhist environmentalism an affinity with a Deep Ecology model—the ideal ecological stance is nearly everywhere affirmed to be in line with Deep Ecology (*shengceng shengtai xue* 深層生態學). What is immediately interesting is that, although Deep Ecology is often promoted as reflecting a philosophy based on the interrelated

---

<sup>480</sup> This tendency for scientific comparison is similar to the discussions surrounding Buddhist meditation. See Lopez, *Perplexed*, 207-210.

functioning of the elements of an ecosystem, it is also conspicuous in its condemnation of Western scientific dualisms, which are said to lead to instrumental views of nature that lie at the heart of environmentally destructive industrialization. As with the link between Buddhist and scientific notions of interconnectedness, the link between Buddhism and Deep Ecology is often considered rather unproblematic, especially given the fact that Arne Naess wrote two articles making explicit reference to the influence of Buddhism on Deep Ecology. But not only is the actual Buddhist content of Deep Ecology suspect (Gandhi was perhaps a greater influence), the notion of interconnectedness is not where Naess draws the connection.

Moreover, the direct connection between Buddhist and ecological notions of interconnectedness is immaterial because ecology is based on empiricism and Chinese Buddhist environmentalism is normative. Suggesting that Buddhist ideas of interconnectedness coincide with concepts in ecology does not mean that these Buddhist ideas justify environmentalist engagement on the part of Buddhists. Comparisons between Buddhist metaphysics and ecology center on the relationship of the individual to the world/universe, but can this comparison be the basis for why an individual as a Buddhist would engage in environmental activism? Discussions of interconnectedness are meant to show that humans are not other from the world—to combat anthropocentrism. Perhaps because of the dominance of anthropocentrism in Western environmental philosophy, this concern has been central in debates on Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. It implies that if the individual sees him or herself as part of the universe, in



ontological unity with the world, then he or she will be inclined to act on its behalf (whatever that means), but this explanation turns into a form of enlightened self-interest and would thus seem to contradict the development of an understanding of no-self that an increasingly enlightened and compassionate being would be assumed to possess. So the discussion of metaphysics should be better understood as a form of strategic speech which augments or inspires one to achieve this realization of emptiness which allows one to experience interconnectedness.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

This chapter argues that Chinese Buddhist environmentalism is a category in need of clarification. Despite the formal and historical similarities between Buddhism in China and Taiwan, political differences affecting religion and environmentalism demonstrate the value, if not necessity, of using the phrase Chinese Buddhist environmentalism contingently. If sufficient similarities exist between Chinese and Taiwanese Buddhist approaches to environmentalism can be illustrated, and we can speak meaningfully about a phenomenon called Chinese Buddhist environmentalism, then scholars can begin to explore broader categories of Buddhist environmentalism (Southeast Asian, Euro-American, etc.)

Another distinction that I explore is between humanistic Buddhism and engaged Buddhism. This distinction does not provide much analytical guidance for distinguishing between the environmental activities of Taiwanese Buddhists and other Buddhists. But the discursive difference, namely the emphasis on

oppression in engaged Buddhism and purity in humanistic Buddhism, encourages us to look more closely at the rhetoric of various Buddhist environmentalisms as a way to better understand how Buddhists link theory and practice and avoid the oversimplifications of eco-Buddhist discourse.

I also analyzed the way in which Buddhist studies scholars (mainly Taiwanese) have examined the discourse of Buddhist environmentalism, considering both scholarly critiques of how contemporary Buddhist leaders have articulated environmental concern and how the scholars themselves have attempted to articulate a Buddhist environmental ethics. This Chinese Buddhist environmental discourse accentuates four concepts: environment (*huanjing* 環境), land (*tu* 土), purity (*jing* 淨), and ecology (*shengtai* 生態). Environment is a very ambiguous term; like the word in English it has a wide range of semantic applications. Only when coupled with “ecology” or “natural” does it clearly equate with natural environment. Buddhist construals of environment add to the ambiguity of the term, since these often carry highly metaphysical or cosmological undertones that might not be made explicit. Land is equally ambiguous, although for humanistic Buddhist discourse the notion of Pure land (or a Pure land on earth) usually contextualizes references to land. Nonetheless, there is no agreement on exactly what a Pure land on earth entails. Purity is a term that seems quite particular to Chinese Buddhist environmental discourse, as opposed to global eco-Buddhist discourse, mainly because it is the operational term for humanistic Buddhism which accounts for the majority of Chinese Buddhist environmental movements. The fact this is the case proves that an eco-

Buddhist approach to Chinese Buddhist environmentalism would likely fail to create meaningful connections since it does not operationalize purity like humanistic Buddhism does. Alternatively, purity would be a persuasive concept in eco-Buddhist discourse, since it is not a term that is used in secular environmental ethics, from which eco-Buddhism largely derives.

Having made this point, it is interesting that ecology is given such precedence. As mentioned previously, this can be accounted for by noting the scientific air that ecology imparts. The scholars who work on Chinese Buddhist environmentalism are very familiar with authors like Commoner, Leopold, Naess, Nash, and others. As Lin Yiren points out in discussing the development of environmentalism in Taiwan, these Taiwanese scholars have incorporated the Western discourse of environmentalism, which values ecology as a philosophical and scientific concept. Also, scholars like Yang, who advocate a radical change in consciousness, or Lai Xianzong, who emphasize the radical interrelatedness of Tiantai Buddhism, find in Deep Ecology a well-established Western environmental discourse that Buddhism can be partnered with. This preference for ecology and more particularly Deep Ecology serves as a reminder that intellectual environmental discourse is unlikely to be unaffected by dominant Western concepts. And while fantastic and thought-provoking work has been done to draw connections between Buddhist and Western concepts, such work does not fully capture the practical nature of environmentalism. The intellectual depth required to make these philosophical connections clear results in a persistence of the theory/practice gap that renders much environmental

philosophizing unenvironmentalist. Thus we can argue that the environmental aspects or potentials of a tradition do not lie primarily in its philosophies, but in the communities of people who identify with the tradition.<sup>481</sup> Turning to the next chapter, we will look at three Buddhist communities who all consider environmentalism to be of importance to Buddhism. We will look at the ways in which this meaning is constructed and argued for.

---

<sup>481</sup> Gottlieb, *Greener Faith*, 55.

## Chapter 6

### PURIFICATION OF MIND AND NATURE<sup>482</sup>

This chapter will examine in detail the environmental rhetoric of three Taiwanese Buddhist organizations: DDM, Ciji, and FGS. All three promote a form of Buddhist modernism known as humanistic Buddhism. Each organization also presents its interpretation of Buddhism as the unique vision of the organization's founder. In addition, Shengyan and Xingyun are dual lineage holders for the Caodong 曹洞 and Linji 臨濟 lineages of Chan Buddhism. The Chan tradition, which at least ostensibly is the primary tradition of Buddhism in China and Taiwan today, is crucially important for these two leaders and their organization's identity and practice.<sup>483</sup> Chan is a highly rhetorical tradition, in the sense that its teachings and discourse rely on a view of language that emphasizes change and transformation. Therefore, in this chapter I will begin by looking at the rhetorical tradition of Chan Buddhism. This initial review attempts to show that rhetoric is a strong part of the Chan tradition. Undoubtedly, other traditions such as Pure Land, Tiantai, and Zhengyan (or esoteric Buddhism) are present in and contribute to the tapestry of the modern Chinese Buddhist world, though it can be argued that Chan Buddhism is the core of contemporary Chinese Buddhism. Then, I will look at each organization to highlight and examine the

---

<sup>482</sup> Parts of this chapter have been published in Seth DeVere Clippard, "Purifying Words: The Rhetorical Aspects of Spiritual Environmentalism," in *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, vol. 2 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2011), 75-111.

<sup>483</sup> Since the Ming dynasty, it became common to refer to any Buddhist temple as a *chan si* 禪寺 or Chan temple.

ways in which environmentalism is made meaningful and the ways in which the organization's environmental rhetoric seeks identification with its audience.

### 6.1 Chan discourse and rhetoric

There is an undeniably strong rhetorical character to Chan discourse. This can be illustrated in two ways. Chan discourse is performative. Instead of describing what the individual, nature, reality is (or *is like*), Chan rhetoric seeks to engage participants in a manifestation of reality, using the practitioner's own mind as its stage. According to Bernard Faure, "Chan discourse is not simply reflecting realities or expressing truths; it is actively producing them, 'impressing' them on an audience."<sup>484</sup>

Chan discourse is also perlocutionary. The "goal" of Chan discourse lies in what it does to its participants. In other words, Chan discourse is not concerned as much with doctrine as it is with insight.<sup>485</sup> It is the transformation of

---

<sup>484</sup> Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 149.

<sup>485</sup> A good example of this is the controversy surrounding Dahui 大慧 and Hongzhi 宏智. Morten Schlütter concludes that the attacks on the Caodong tradition made by Dahui were not directed at the practice of meditation or at the doctrinal position of either Hongzhi nor the Caodong tradition, but rather at the way in which Caodong teachers during the Song emphasized silent illumination (*mozhao* 默照). Dahui criticized this approach for its failure to bring about realization. See Morten Schlütter, 'Before the Empty Eon' versus 'A Dog Has No Buddha-Nature': Kung-an Use in the Ts'ao-tung Tradition and Ta-hui's Kung-an Introspection Ch'an," in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 171-79. As a reaction to this, perhaps while he was in Fujian, Schlütter suggests, Dahui conceives of the *kanhua* 看話 style of *gongan* 公案 use as a more expedient means to realization. Robert Buswell suggests that the *kanhua* style of Zen associated with Dahui was the culmination of a long development of how

our ontological perspective from being to becoming, where there is neither one point of being, nor two, but rather a continuous flow of becoming in which the participant and the participation are mutually dependent.<sup>486</sup> The dependence of the participant on language and the dependence of language on the participant is realized. For there to be any actualization of truth, there must be an audience upon which the actualization is “impressed.” Likewise for the audience to experience the actualization or production of truth, there must be something to represent that truth. In Chan discourse the truth claimed by Chan is given not only form, but also function. Chan truth without the perlocutionary aspect of Chan discourse lacks the transformative quality imparted by this aspect.

In his work, *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism*, Dale S. Wright divides Chan rhetoric into four styles—“the rhetoric of strangeness,” “the rhetoric of direct pointing,” “the rhetoric of silence,” and “the rhetoric of disruption.”<sup>487</sup>

---

language is used within the Zen tradition. Although Buswell attributes more influence to the development of the tradition, his use of the term “short-cut approach” for *kanhua* is indicative of the fact that this method was believed to be more effective means of attaining realization. See Buswell, “The ‘Short-cut Approach’ of *K’an-hua* Meditation: The Evolution of a Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch’an Buddhism,” in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 321-77.

<sup>486</sup> See Michael Mohr, “Emerging from Nonduality: Kōan Practice in the Rinzai Tradition since Hakuin,” in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, 262-66 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Mohr points out that the concept of *kōjō* (Ch. *xiang-shang* 向上) “going beyond” prevents one from just stopping at a the point of realization. In this concept lies a sense that there is no “goal” of practice. Once accomplishments are recognized, one must “go beyond” them and not rest, satisfied with whatever one has attained.

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-103.

He explains that each form is an “instrument of awakening.” The rhetoric of strangeness is intended to shake the hearer out of conventional modes of thinking. Direct pointing refers to gestures made by Chan adepts that circumvent linguistic discourse, “leaving the recipient dumbfounded and out of place.”<sup>488</sup> Silence is exactly what it means. The rhetorical strategy of silence shows up frequently in Mahayana literature, the most familiar examples being Vimalakīrti, Bodhidharma, and the exchange between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa. However, encounters of silence are usually accompanied by a gloss that clarifies whether it is “enlightened silence” or just bewilderment.<sup>489</sup> Finally, the rhetoric of disruption serves to disorient the hearer. Like the rhetoric of strangeness, disruption knocks one out of the sphere of conventional language in order to bring into focus one’s previous self-understanding. All four rhetorical styles aim to set the hearer against the hearer’s own identity, separating the hearer from the ground that had previously seemed so solid. In so doing, the hearer must confront a radically new situation, not in thought or reflection, but in immediate experience. All of the preconceptions and manners of thought are simultaneously brought to the fore and rejected.

But the development of Chan discourse is not simply about enlightenment. As scholars like John McRae and Morton Schlütter have shown, representatives of the Chan tradition have recognized the need to gain support from the throne

---

<sup>488</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., 95. Wright adds, “Silence is clearly meaningful, but only when it stands in the midst of other forms of Zen rhetoric.”



and literati. Schlütter shows that during the Northern Song dynasty, in response to a surge of interest in Buddhist practice by laity, Chan masters made calculated appeals to the elite and literati: “the more literati could be persuaded that a particular tradition of Chan held a special claim to authority and orthodoxy, the better the lineages of that tradition would fare.”<sup>490</sup> The methods advocated by various lineages and teachers were coupled with the image of the teacher as an authoritatively enlightened master. These rhetorical concerns regarding appealing to an audience are active today, too. From the lifting of martial law in 1987 in Taiwan to the increase of a wealthier middle-class in both Taiwan and China, Buddhist organizations have both a greater opportunity to obtain support from a wider segment of society and more competition for that support.

In the following analysis of the environmental rhetoric of Shengyan, Zhengyan, and Xingyun, there are gongan like aspects to their discourse, particularly those of strangeness and disruption, but these figures do not use traditional gongans in the way that I have outlined above.

## 6.2 Dharma Drum Mountain

Of the three organizations under examination, DDM has offered the most systematic incorporation of environmentalism into its mission. Shengyan founded

---

<sup>490</sup> Morten Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 181. See also John McRae, *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

DDM after having been abbot at Nongchan si 農禪寺 for several years. Since 1989, the mission of DDM has been “to uplift the character of humanity and build a Pure land on earth” (*tisheng renjian pinzhi, jianshe renjian jingtu* 提升人的品質, 建設人間淨土). The way in which this mission is to be realized is through the practice of *xinling huanbao* 心靈環保 (‘spiritual environmentalism’ or ‘protecting the spiritual environment’). Shengyan began to think about “spiritual environmentalism” in response to problems he had heard about some environmental organizations achieving their goals. Spiritual environmentalism is also a stage in the development of Shengyan’s thought, following the ways in which he worked out the implications of humanistic Buddhism for Pure land and Chan thought and practice. Shengyan coined the phrase “spiritual environmentalism” and has made that the basic concept upon which his renewal of Chinese Buddhism rests. The importance of the term *huanbao* signals that environmentalism is a central aspect of DDM’s mission. However, the focus on humanity in the mission seems rather anthropocentric. Also recognizing that DDM is a Chan Buddhist organization, Shengyan’s understanding of the Chan tradition reveals an anthropocentric focus. Regarding Chan, Shengyan states, “The core teachings of Chan Buddhism are centered on human capacities and are characteristically down-to-earth,” and that “it centers on the human capacity to genuinely attain freedom for oneself and benefit society as a whole.”<sup>491</sup> The anthropocentrism here, though, is what Norton calls “weak anthropocentrism” and

---

<sup>491</sup> Shengyan, *The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism: Inheriting the Past and Inspiring the Future* (Taipei: Sheng Yen Education Foundation, 2010), 73-74.

this can be said of humanistic Buddhism in general. From the idea of spiritual environmentalism, a number of campaigns have blossomed, but all can be traced back to spiritual environmentalism. In this section, I will situate spiritual environmentalism in the context of the doctrinal and rhetorical system Shengyan has developed. Then I will look at the rhetorical characteristics and effect of spiritual environmentalism.

### 6.2.1 Major campaigns

There are three campaigns that intersect with spiritual environmentalism in some way: Fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign, three types of education, and fourfold environmentalism. In 1999 Shengyan developed what he labeled the “fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign” (*xinwusi yundong* 心五四運動) as an expression of the tradition of humanistic Buddhism he worked to promote. This campaign was a re-envisioning of Buddhism to address the conditions and meet the needs of contemporary society:

The Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign transforms the abstruse and difficult terminology and doctrines of Buddhism into a set of ideas and methods that the average person can understand, accept and use in their daily lives. It is the fruit of many years of effort at Dharma Drum. Although the terms it uses are new, its essential spirit and substance remains the Dharma.<sup>492</sup>

The five elements of this campaign are each subsets of four “methods” or guidelines for daily life. These are: the “four fields for cultivating peace” (*sian* 四安), “four guidelines for dealing with desires” (*siyao* 四要), “four steps for handling a problem” (*sita* 四它), “four practices for helping oneself and others”

---

<sup>492</sup> “Dharma Drum Mountain,” accessed March 10, 2010, <http://www.dharmadrum.org/fivefold/fivefold.aspx>.

(*sigan* 四感), and “four ways to cultivating blessings” (*sifu* 四福). According to Shengyan, these five sets of guidelines comprise a comprehensive “proposition for living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>493</sup> Bhikshuni Guo Jing traces the five sets of four to the text *Erru sixing lun* 二入四行論 by Bodhidharma.<sup>494</sup> She argues that the four practices espoused by Bodhidharma (“acceptance of retribution of enmity,” “acceptance of circumstances,” “absence of craving,” and “accordance with the Dharma”)<sup>495</sup> are all based on “pacifying the mind” (*anxin* 安心), and Shengyan takes this goal of pacifying the mind as the basis of his set of “four fields for cultivating peace,” the first of which is pacifying the mind. Guo Jing then maps the four practices onto the remaining four sets of five in the *xinwusi*: “acceptance of retribution correlates with the “four steps for handling a problem”; “acceptance of circumstances” with “four practices for helping oneself and others”; “absence of craving” with “four guidelines for dealing with desires”; and “accordance with the Dharma” with “four ways to cultivate blessings.” The value of Guo Jing’s analysis is that, if correct, it demonstrates what Shengyan has said about the value of Chan to contemporary societies. He believes that one of the strengths of Chan is its adaptability to a wide variety of circumstances and contexts. Shengyan

---

<sup>493</sup> See *Ibid.*, accessed December 25, 2010, <http://www.ddm.org.tw/ddm/intro/index.aspx?cateid=725&contentid=3649&page=0> and <http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about.aspx?sn=112>.

<sup>494</sup> Bhikshuni Guo-Jing, “A Study of Master Sheng Yen’s Thoughts about Pure Land: Belief centered on Pure Land on Earth” in *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, vol. 1 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2010), 97-100. This text is section three of the *Shaoshi liumen lun* 少室六門論, a collection of works attributed to Bodhidharma. T48, 369c20-379a28.

<sup>495</sup> *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, “erru sixing lun” (article by Michael Radich).

argues that one aspect of the fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign is its “watered-down religious character,” reflecting an interpretation of Buddhist teachings in context.<sup>496</sup> He claims that the teachings he offers can be applied in any religious context. Whether these teachings would still be recognized as Buddhist by Buddhists, or whether their identity as Buddhist teachings would make them acceptable to adherents of other traditions is a valid question.

In addition to this campaign DDM promotes what Shengyan calls the three types of education (*sanda jiaoyu* 三大教育): education-based, culture-based, and care-based. The fourfold environmentalism falls under this third rubric.

The fourfold environmentalism takes the term “environmentalism” and applies it to four separate “environments”—spiritual, social, living, and natural.<sup>497</sup>

The organization describes the four in the following way:

The ‘spirit’ spoken of in the protection of the spiritual environment [*xinling huanbao* 心靈環保] refers to the mind, which is the essence of the Buddhadharmā. As for the protection of the social environment [*liyi huanbao* 禮儀環保], Buddhism places great emphasis on etiquette, including following the vinaya, maintaining deportment, and keeping precepts. It can even be said that observing rules and etiquette is the basic foundation of Buddhism. Protecting the living environment [*shenghuo huanbao* 生活環保] is part of making Buddhism relevant to daily life. Turning to protection of the natural environment [*ziran huanbao* 自然環保], we find that, according to Buddhism, a person’s body and mind are direct karmic retribution and the environment she lives in is circumstantial retribution. Direct and circumstantial retribution form one’s place of practice. Every person uses her direct retribution to practice within her circumstantial retribution. Thus one must care for the environment just as

---

<sup>496</sup> Shengyan, *Xin wusi yundong* (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2010), 14-16.

<sup>497</sup> In using the terms ‘social environment,’ ‘living environment,’ and ‘natural environment,’ I am following the translations used by DDM in their English language literature.

one would for her own body. Thus the fundamental essence of each of the four kinds of environmentalism is Buddhism.<sup>498</sup>

Before moving on with an examination of what spiritual environmental means, I will first discuss what Shengyan's idea of protecting the natural environment to see in what ways it coincides with secular environmentalism and how where it diverges.

### 6.2.2 Protecting the natural environment

The natural environment is the focus of what is normally referred to as 'environmentalism.' Counter intuitively, the description here of "protecting the natural environment" diverges from common concerns of wildlife conservation, recycling, or pollution-reducing policy initiatives, all of which would fall under the common rubric of environmentalism. So if this is *not* typical Euro-American contemporary environmentalism, what kind of environmentalism is it? As we can see from this short explanation, the concept of environmentalism is based on an understanding of environment broader than the natural environment. *Huanbao* 環保 is the reduced version of the term *huanjing baohu* 環境保護 which describes the protection (*baohu*) of an environment (*huanjing*). However, the term *huanjing* for environment can have multiple referents, just as the English term 'environment' can. Sheng Yen evokes this concept of environment-as-context in order to show that human life is multivalent and dynamic. According to Shengyan, both one's body and one's surroundings are the result of karmic

---

<sup>498</sup> "Dharma Drum Mountain," accessed April 15, 2010, <http://www.dharmadrum.org/fivefold/fivefold.aspx>.

retribution. Based on one's past actions, one exists with this body and all its conditions. When Shengyan states that one's environment is the circumstantial retribution, the place of practice, we can surmise that there is a tension between the body and its environment which provides the ground for practice. Attempting to relate this interpretation to the concept of protecting the natural environment, I suggest what is implied here is that we should maintain a stable environment in which this creative tension can allow for spiritual maturation or the working out of karmic obstruction. However, when we turn to other descriptions of "protecting the natural environment" 自然環保, we find a much more mainstream reading of environmentalism.

Shengyan frequently speaks about maintaining a healthy ecosystem, practicing traditional Buddhist burials for their low environmental impact, significantly reducing the use of incense and paper money, etc.<sup>499</sup> There is, however, a common thread in both descriptions of *ziran huanbao*. This is the claim that people should "realize that they are a part of the natural world (體認人是自然的一部分)," and so "one must care for the environment just as one would for her own body." It is worth noting that the reference to recognizing one's identity (to a certain extent) with the natural world and the admonition to care for the world as one would one's own body is a concept that is not uncommon in

---

<sup>499</sup> See Shengyan, *Sizhong huanbao* (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2009), 43-50; Shengyan, et al., *Buyiyangde huanbao shijian* (Taipei: Fagu wenhua 2007), 62-143; and Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi Xinling huanbao* (Taipei: Fagu wenhua 2004), 30-32 and 60-64.

Western environmental discourse, particularly among the proponents of deep ecology.

One final point regarding Shengyan's understanding of Buddhist environmentalism is that, in terms of protecting the environment, it is not something that can be confined to contemporary times. He states, "Since its earliest times, Buddhism has worked on protecting the environment. From the time of Sakyamuni Buddha, [Buddhism] has paid careful attention to the orderliness, cleanliness, and sanitariness of the living environment (*shenghuo huanjing* 生活環境). Within the Buddhist monastic code and scriptures, we can see the maintenance of cleanliness, order, and sanitation, simplicity and protection of the natural environment, even that plants need protection..."<sup>500</sup> Elsewhere Shengyan argues:

Buddhism is a religion that places great emphasis on environmental protection. Sakyamuni Buddha was born at Lumbini Garden. He engaged in spiritual practice in the forest, attained Buddhahood under a tree, and first began preaching at Deer Park. The major monasteries where he taught his disciples were all gardens or woods, such as Jeta Grove, Bamboo Grove, Amravana Garden, and he passed into parinirvana between two Sal trees near Kusinagara. He exhorted his monastic disciples, when spending the night under a tree, to regard that place as his home and take loving care of it.<sup>501</sup>

Whether or not scholars would find this interpretation convincing (a review of the literature on Buddhism and ecology would likely show opinion to be evenly split), the thrust of Shengyan's observation is surely that environmentalism has a long

---

<sup>500</sup> Shengyan, *Xinling*, 47.

<sup>501</sup> Sheng Yen, "Environmental Protection," *Chan Magazine* 20:4 (2000).



history within Buddhism, as long as any other aspect of the tradition. But there is an important rhetorical aspect to this claim that I will return to below.

### 6.2.3 Protecting the spiritual environment

The Chinese term ‘*xinling huanbao*’ is a multivalent term that Shengyan discusses in a variety of contexts. It is translated as both “spiritual environmentalism” and “protecting the spiritual environment.”<sup>502</sup> The latter term better approximates the way the other three ‘environmentalisms’ are translated, whereby the first phrase *xinling* modifies the type of ‘environment’ (*huanjing*) and this kind of environment is ‘protected’ (*baohu*). The translation “spiritual environmentalism” maps onto the syntax of *xinling huanbao* better, whereby spiritual equates with *xinling* and environmentalism equates with *huanbao*. But both translations are used and generally considered to be equivalent. I will use “spiritual environmentalism” for consistency, but I think that there are rhetorical differences between the two which I will discuss later. To return to the larger question: what *is* spiritual environmentalism?

According to Shengyan, he created the term in 1991 as a way to encourage people to focus on creating happy, healthy, and peaceful minds, which would result in the renewal of society. He says, “When the human mind is purified, only then can society be purified.”<sup>503</sup> Because of this interpretation of *xinling huanbao* and purifying the mind, Shengyan argues that, though the term is new, the concept

---

<sup>502</sup> There is on-going debate among lay and monastic community leaders for DDM in Taiwan and the United States regarding the best English translation for *xinling huanbao*. Bhikshuni Guoguang Shi, e-mail to the author, March 16, 2012.

<sup>503</sup> Shengyan, *Huanbao*, 24-25.

is not. In fact, the above quotation is nearly identical to the passage from the “Buddha lands” chapter of the *Vimalakīrti sūtra*, “If the mind is pure, then the Buddha lands are pure” (*suiqixinjing, zefotujing* 隨其心淨, 則佛土淨).<sup>504</sup> In Shengyan’s interpretation of the concept, since the cultivation of the mind has been central to Buddhist practice since the Buddha’s time, then, in the sense that this cultivation is what the term *xinling huanbao* refers to, *xinling huanbao* has been an element of Buddhism since the tradition’s inception. *Xinling huanbao* is simply the practice of Buddhist meditation and ethics, the Eightfold Path. Also central to his explication of *xinling huanbao* are the ever-important Mahāyāna concepts of compassion (*cibei* 慈悲) and wisdom (*zhihui* 智慧).

Throughout the literature discussing *xinling huanbao*, Shengyan makes clear that we can think of the concept in terms of altruism, acting in the interest or for the benefit of others, including the needs of non-human others. In a presentation to a Western audience in 2000, Shengyan describes ‘spiritual environmentalism’ thus: “Instead of considering everything from the standpoint of one person, one race, one time-period, and one place, we should consider it from the standpoint that all humankind of all time and space should be protected in their existence, possess the right to live, and feel the dignity of life.”<sup>505</sup> In

---

<sup>504</sup> Shengyan quotes this passage frequently. Two citations can be found in Shengyan, *Xinling*, 57 and Shengyan, *Xiuxin zai hongchen: weimojing liu jiang* (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 1997), 132. The original passage can be found in Kumarajiva’s translation of the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* T. 475 538c05 ([www.cbeta.org](http://www.cbeta.org)).

<sup>505</sup> Shengyan, “Environmental Protection.” Suffice it to say that the active promotion of the concept and practice of spiritual environmentalism cannot but attract questions regarding DDM’s environmental program. One question that

elaborating on what altruism means in a Buddhist context, Shengyan turns to compassion and wisdom. To act selflessly is compassionate. To handle affairs in the proper manner requires wisdom. There is an intimate relationship between *xinling huanbao* and traditional Buddhist concepts. But the degree to which Shengyan emphasizes traditional concepts is in part based on the audience he is addressing. Nonetheless, the uniqueness of the term, as we will see below, lies not in what it means but in the rhetorical force it carries.

Another way to understand what *xinling huanbao* means is to look at the two different bifurcations Sheng Yen has applied to the term. The first is between a Buddhist interpretation and a contemporary, non-Buddhist interpretation. This distinction is described in the following passage:

Environmental protection must be combined with our respective religious beliefs and philosophical thinking into an earnest mission, so that environmentalism will not become mere slogans. So, strictly speaking, the purification of humankind's mind and heart is more important than the purification of the environment. If our mind is free from evil intentions and is not polluted by the surroundings, our living environment will also not be spoilt and polluted by us. However, for ordinary people, it is advisable to set out by cultivating the habit of protecting the material environment, and go deeper step by step until at last they can cultivate environmentalism on the spiritual level.<sup>506</sup>

With reference to the Buddhist meaning of the term he states that it refers to

“cultivating the body, cultivating the mind, or cultivating one’s actions (*xiushen*,

---

deserves attention is whether Shengyan’s experience in New York in the eighties had a determining influence on Shengyan’s decision to promote spiritual environmentalism as a central teaching of DDM. While this is a logical assumption, there is no indication in any of his accounts that he was significantly drawn to environmentalism while in the United States. By all accounts, Shengyan’s main focus was the propagation of Chan Buddhist meditation.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

*xiuxin huo xiuxing* 修身, 修心或修行).”<sup>507</sup> This process of cultivation is based on the practice of meditation (*chanxiu* 禪修), a practice which closely follows his teachings on moving away from ignorance towards a realization of no-self or awakening.<sup>508</sup> So, the term is meant in one respect to refer to a Buddhist (more specifically, a Mahāyāna Buddhist) worldview.

However, Sheng Yen also explains the term in a way that it can be made meaningful to non-Buddhists. In this vein he offers the following: “*Xinling huanbao* is psychological cleanliness and health (*weisheng yu jiankang* 衛生與健康).”<sup>509</sup> Sheng Yen links this level of *xinling huanbao* to the fourfold environmentalism and the “fivefold spiritual renaissance” (*xinwusi yundong* 心五四運動), emphasizing the benefits to be gained from protecting the various environments of human life, as Sheng Yen lays them out.<sup>510</sup> The term *xinwusi yundong* clearly evokes the May Fourth Movement, a point I address below in section 6.2.5.

The way Shengyan uses “environmentalism” reflects a broad construal of environment. The environment that accompanies *xinling huanbao* in some cases refers to the mind’s environment, whether the mind is pure or impure, or the degree to which the mind is possessed of selfishness and ‘unskillful’ (Skt.

---

<sup>507</sup> Shengyan, *Buyiyangde*, 12.

<sup>508</sup> Shengyan, *Huanbao*, 28-29.

<sup>509</sup> Shengyan, *Buyiyangde*, 12.

<sup>510</sup> Shengyan, *Huanbao*, 29-30.

*akauśalya*; Ch. *feiqiao* 非巧) states. In other cases the term refers to the connection between the mind and society or one's external environment. Thus, Sheng Yen proffers another bifurcation of interpretations of *xinling huanbao*, one which establishes the mind-oriented and the socially-oriented aspects of the term. The first of these is based on the basic Mahāyāna concept that mind is the source of all conditions. He uses passages from a number of sutras—the *Huayan jing* 華嚴經, *Lengqie jing* 楞伽經, the *Jinggang jing* 金剛經, and *Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經—to illustrate his point that the work of “environmental protection” begins with the mind.<sup>511</sup> That is to say, spiritual environmentalism is the basis of the fourfold environmentalism. Perhaps the central text supporting the Buddhist nature of *xinling huanbao* is the *Vimalakīrti sūtra*'s “Buddha Lands” chapter. In fact, Sheng Yen devotes an entire essay to spiritual environmentalism and the *Vimalakīrti sūtra*. The focus of the essay is to demonstrate that Buddhist practice is based on understanding the nature of the mind. If the mind is the progenitor of the external environment, it makes sense that approaching the cultivation of the mind gets at the root of environmental problems. According to Sheng Yen, “Therefore, even if we want to discuss protection of the living or natural environments, we must still begin with the mind.”<sup>512</sup>

In chapter five, I introduced a critique of Shengyan's distinction between mind (*neixin* 內心) and environment (*waijing* 外境). Shengyan claims that his

---

<sup>511</sup> The first two texts are quoted in Shengyan, *Xinling*, 57-58 and the latter two in Shengyan, *Huanbao*, 22-23. See also Bhikshuni Guo Jing, “Study,” 74-75.

<sup>512</sup> Shengyan, *Buyiyangde*, 13.

teaching is essentially Chinese Chan and the mind is the basis of Chan teaching. Chan is the practice of cultivation of the mind to achieve “realization of no-mind (*wuxin* 無心), the mind free of self-attachment.”<sup>513</sup> Towards systematizing the practice of cultivating the mind, Shengyan refers to four types of mind: scattered mind, concentrated mind, unified mind, and no-mind.<sup>514</sup> The mind that Shengyan is referring to and the mind that Chan takes as the focus of cultivation is what Yang referred to as *neixin*. We also see the centrality of mind in *xinling huanbao* and the *xin wusi yundong*. But with respect to the concept of *xinling huanbao*, the distinction between mind and environment is a false one. *Xinling* is not the same as mind in the sense of *neixin*. It is not an issue of inner versus outer. *Xinling* describes the kind of environment to be protected, the relevant form of *huanbao*. In the term itself, inner and outer are already resolved (*xin* in *xinling* and *jing* in *huanbao*). Moreover, the mind is the seat of cultivation in Buddhism, so altruism or activism would have to be related to the mind in order to have a religious connotation. Thus, the critique that Shengyan emphasizes cultivation of the mind is correct, but not to the extent that the external environment is ignored. It was noted above that Sheng Yen claims it is appropriate for some people to begin by carrying out environmental practices before turning to the cultivation of the mind. Mental cultivation in Shengyan’s interpretation of Chan practice is the

---

<sup>513</sup> Shengyan, *Lineage*, 71.

<sup>514</sup> Shengyan, *Hoofprint of the Ox: Principles of the Chan Buddhist Path as Taught by a Modern Chinese Master* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 131. See also “Sheng Yen Educational Foundation,” accessed March 1, 2012, [http://www.shengyen.org/e\\_content/content/about/about\\_04\\_01.aspx](http://www.shengyen.org/e_content/content/about/about_04_01.aspx).

means by which concern for the external world is carried out. It is similar to the protest tactics of many environmental groups, intended to raise awareness and coordinate further action.

The term *xinling* is a composite of two terms meaning mind and spirit. Thus, spiritual environmentalism is, in a way, an incomplete translation of *xinling huanbao*, since the Buddhist context of the term refers to protecting the environment of the mind *and* the spirit. But what Shengyan means by spiritual *is* the mind; he wants to emphasize that the mind is the source of Buddhist spirituality. But the flexibility of the term, that it can refer to Buddhist spirituality of the mind or spirituality in general, suggests that it can be deployed with reference to the mind as the source of being, as the psychological constitution of the person, and as the mind itself. In this respect, ‘spiritual environmentalism’ can serve as a common point of reference in discussions of religion and the environment.

The second aspect of this delineation of *xinling* and *huanbao*, the mind’s relationship to the external environment, builds off the first. Since the mind is the basis of the purity of Buddha lands (*fotu* 佛土), one should be aware that through the practice of purifying the mind is one is also benefiting society. Shengyan makes the claim that pollution of the environment is due to pollution of the mind, “‘Spiritual environmentalism’ expresses the fact that because our minds are polluted the natural environment will be polluted. If our minds were not subject

to pollution, the environment would, likewise, not be polluted.”<sup>515</sup> So the purification of the environments (living, social, and natural) begins with the purification of the mind. To clarify, Sheng Yen’s concept of purity is generally the overcoming of vexations, the absence of the three poisons: avarice, aversion, and ignorance (but primarily avarice), and the realization of no-self (*wuwo* 無我).<sup>516</sup> Thus, we should read the claim that the pollution of the environment arises from the pollution of the mind to be a way of attributing the causes of human behavior that lead to material pollution (an overdevelopment of pollution-creating industries, overproduction of waste products, and an overproduction of greenhouse gases) to mental defilements like desire and ignorance. The practice of *xinling huanbao* is the process of moving from self-interest to acting in the interest of others.<sup>517</sup>

Another example of the link between the individual and the society can be found in the influence that one person can have on others. Shengyan notes that if one person can overcome one’s selfish orientation and purify one’s mind, then that can cause a ripple effect throughout society.<sup>518</sup> Here we can see an aspect of religious environmentalism that is rare in environmental activism. In religious environmentalism more emphasis is placed on the individual’s ability to overcome a selfish worldview, rather than engaging in social change through

---

<sup>515</sup> Shengyan, *Xinling*, 48.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-58.

<sup>517</sup> Shengyan, *Huanbao*, 29-30.

<sup>518</sup> Shengyan, *Xinling*, 57.



collective campaigns. Spiritual environmentalism on its own terms follows the individualist approach typical of most religious environmentalism, but in the context of the other three environmentalisms, particularly “protection of the social environment” (*liyi huanbao*), the cultivation that is central to spiritual environmentalism will inevitably find expression in social engagement. Practicing spiritual environmentalism is intended to aid one in realizing the importance of participating in environmental action campaigns.

Thus, we can see that spiritual environmentalism, on the level of the individual, is an ethical teaching and religious program based on Chan Buddhist ontology, an ontology in which the quality of an individual is determined by the degree of purity of their mind—a term that is used in Chan Buddhism to refer to one’s basic essence. This approach is a break from the majority of environmental ethics discourses which, if excluding religion, base their arguments on deontological or utilitarian moral reasoning, and if including religion, typically base their argument on the human-nature-God relationship. Certainly, Shengyan’s ideas are religious, in that they are Buddhist, but what connection might they have to the field of ecology? Is there a corollary in environmental ethics for Shengyan’s system that might help us see how he makes the ontological and ethical connection? To answer these questions, we will need to understand how the term *xinling huanbao* functions as a rhetorical device to entice others to reorient themselves as Buddhists vis-à-vis environmentalism and how it provides a ground for discussing the relationship between religion and the environment.

#### 6.2.4 Spiritual Environmentalism as Religious Environmental Rhetoric

I should begin by stating that although ‘spiritual environmentalism’ and the fourfold environmentalism carry great rhetorical significance, they are by no means solely rhetorical. In fact, Shengyan points out that these ideas are not meant to be used as slogans or catchphrases. But the practical and philosophical effects of these terms are bound up with their rhetorical aspects. I would be hesitant to claim that Shengyan’s promotion of the concept of ‘spiritual environmentalism’ is purely based on its rhetorical force. But when we ask what Shengyan’s intention is in coining a phrase such as ‘spiritual environmentalism,’ certainly one reason must be to change people’s behavior. This should not come as any surprise, since most Buddhist leaders would admonish their adherents to act in a kinder, more compassionate, and socially responsible fashion. But what catches our attention is this very term ‘spiritual environmentalism’. As we saw above, spiritual environmentalism can be understood with reference to the notions of compassion (*cibei* 慈悲) and wisdom (*zhihui* 智慧), but then why does Shengyan *not* rely on traditional terminology, terminology considered quite common in contemporary Chinese Buddhism? He does not employ these concepts precisely for the reason that the situation he is addressing is not a “traditional” situation.

Environmental concern has only very recently been viewed as a religious issue. It is still far from being part of mainstream belief and practice. Thus, in order to address this new situation, Shengyan brings forth a new term. As Shengyan clarifies, “‘*xinling huanbao*’—this is a new term that we will have to

help people understand.”<sup>519</sup> Since people are not accustomed to thinking about environmental and religious practice as of the same kind, a creative use of language can help entice critical thought about their interrelatedness. Certainly ‘spiritual environmentalism’ is a new term, but then we are confronted with the difficulty of resolving this point with Shengyan’s assertion quoted above that environmentalism in Buddhism can be traced back to the Buddha himself.<sup>520</sup> On the one hand, environmentalism is a contemporary response to a contemporary problem, and on the other hand, it is part of Buddhism from the earliest days. While in terms of defining what environmentalism is this contradiction may be problematic (is Shengyan serving as Buddhist innovator or traditionalist?), if we consider the context of the two statements, a different view emerges. To be sure, the term is certainly new. Shengyan’s recognition of this affirms his intention to relate Buddhism to environmentalism, or in other words, to couch environmentalism in terms meaningful to Buddhists. But the claim that environmentalism is as old as the Buddha is meant to encourage those Buddhists

---

<sup>519</sup> Shengyan, *Xinling*, 48.

<sup>520</sup> Here it is helpful to recall Lincoln’s notions of “ideological persuasion” and “sentiment evocation.” Lincoln’s method of analysis allows us to set aside questions of the relative authenticity of Shengyan’s teaching, a question that has been addressed by many several works on Buddhism and ecology. Such concerns of establishing what is ‘authentically’ Buddhist fall prey to the essentialist fallacy and fail to account for how the tradition is experienced and articulated by those who currently claim to be Buddhists. By applying Lincoln’s categories, we will more directly address the function of Shengyan’s discourse without becoming sidetracked by issues (however philosophically intriguing) that are not germane to this project.

who are contemplating what spiritual environmentalism is to think further about what the term *environmentalism* really means.

By extending the idea of environmentalism beyond its contemporary context, Shengyan can better “spiritualize” environmentalism. It is not only concern for pollution and deforestation, but addresses the religious implications of nature’s role in confronting and overcoming suffering. This way of understanding the term ‘spiritual environmentalism,’ as a basic Buddhist practice, is intended to raise one’s awareness of the soteriological importance of one’s interaction with the natural world.

#### 6.2.4.1 Relation to the Other Three Environmentalisms

To be sure, there is a similar rhetorical thrust to the other three types of environmentalism. They challenge the hearer to question just what it is we are talking about. We can take the case of “protection of the social environment” (*liyi huanbao*) as an example. *Liyi* is a compound of “*li*” meaning “etiquette” (as in *limao* 禮貌 “polite”) and “*yi*” meaning “ritual” or “rite” (as in *yishi* 儀式 “ceremony”).<sup>521</sup> As is implied in the dual meaning of *liyi* as etiquette and ritual, this type of environmentalism addresses two spheres: the individual and the social. Shengyan mentions that this form of environmentalism concerns the observance of rule and etiquette. It is concerned with the relations between individuals and one’s own behavior towards others, which depends upon one’s maintaining a

---

<sup>521</sup> In fact, *li* can be rendered as ceremony or etiquette, so that that the meaning of the binome and each character is roughly synonymous, at least to a modern audience.

respectful attitude in speech, action, and mind.<sup>522</sup> The social aspect of *liyi huanbao* refers to DDM's reformulation of social rituals, namely weddings, funerals, and "releasing life" rituals. Lin Yiren refers to *liyi huanbao* as "ritual [*huanbao*]."<sup>523</sup> Lin observes that the reform of the ceremonial practice of these ritual events "addressed issues of over-consumption and non-environmentally-friendly Buddhist rituals and were justified in the name of [*huanbao*]."<sup>524</sup> *Liyi huanbao* might sound parochial to a contemporary audience, and Shengyan's use of the phrase is meant to evoke that reaction. But the reforming of traditional Buddhist ceremonies as part of *liyi huanbao* also exhibits a modern character in line with a humanistic Buddhist vision, especially when the justification of making the rituals more environmentally-friendly is provided. It creates a dialectic between tradition and modernity, whereby the former is advocated as a means of realizing the latter, and the value of the latter is strengthened by building on the former.

The protection of the living environment (*shenghuo huanbao*) operates with a similar logic. The essential thrust of *shenghuo* ("daily life") is to advocate a simplification of one's lifestyle. In environmental terms, Shengyan asks people to reduce the "waste and pollution" in their daily lives that accumulates from not only work and family responsibilities, but from leading a consumer lifestyle. The appeal to one's desires through advertising, for example, is a source of suffering.

---

<sup>522</sup> Shengyan, *Sizhong huanbao* (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2009), 38-39.

<sup>523</sup> Lin, "Environmental Beliefs," 218-220.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

Connected with this environmentalism, Shengyan advocates “cherishing blessings [or fortune]” (*xifu* 惜福), a term that is central to Ciji’s environmental rhetoric.<sup>525</sup>

The meaning of *xifu* for Shengyan lies in being content with what one already has.

The fact that all four are types or loci of environmentalism can lead one to explore the connection among them. This ontological query on the mind is intended to lead to a consideration of ethics, norms of action. As one contemplates the meaning of spiritual environmentalism, one is encouraged to participate in recycling campaigns, social volunteerism, and consider other lifestyle changes that one thinks consistent with the carrying out the “fourfold environmentalism.” I would contend that the success of this program is in large part dependent on the success of its rhetorical aspects. Were one not to perceive a connection between Buddhist practice and environmental concern, I believe it would be difficult to make the case that one approach the latter with the seriousness that one attends to the former. The rhetoric of spiritual environmentalism challenges the Buddhist to explore that connection.

#### 6.2.4.2 Dialectic

Another way we can fruitfully explore the relationship between the two components of the term *xinling huanbao* is by looking at them as a dialectical pair. We saw in chapter three that dialectic is an integral part of environmental rhetorics and this will allow us to unlock additional dimensions of the term. We will begin by asking: What kind of environmentalism entails spirituality? What approach to spirituality would entail an environmentalist position? How can

---

<sup>525</sup> Shengyan, *Sizhong*, 33.

attention to language and rhetoric strengthen this connection? Answers to these questions will lead one to consider what particular norms/actions encompass. In context of Shengyan's thought, the question can be clarified further.

We saw above that the term *xinling* pertains to the mind; however, the mind in Buddhism is not just our psyche, but also the basis for one's consciousness. So the term *xinling* suggests that the issue not only concerns nature, but in fact begins with our self. When we move from *xinling* to *huanbao*, another question arises. As mentioned earlier, *huanbao* can be translated as the protection of an environment. What exactly is meant by the protection of the mind's environment? For Shengyan the quality of the mind is its environment, therefore we should take care of the mind's quality, just as we would take care of the natural environment. We do not readily see the pollution of the mind, but if we draw an analogy with pollution of the natural environment, we can have some understanding of what it means to pollute the mind. Likewise, we know that by not polluting the natural environment, we contribute to a cleaner and more livable environment. This is beneficial to not only ourselves but to future generations as well. So the common understanding of *huanbao*, initially enigmatic in its place in the term 'spiritual environmentalism,' becomes again quite commonplace. In order to contribute to a positive living environment for ourselves and future generations, we should not pollute the mind (which in the Buddhist sense would be with aversion, greed, ignorance, and selfishness).

Further analysis of the metaphor of the mind's environment is revealing with reference to environmental policy. Environmentalist positions advocating

preservation, biocentric, or ecocentric positions would agree that a natural environment should be allowed to maintain its original state. In the case of ‘spiritual environmentalism,’ what does this mean? Should the mind be allowed to maintain its original state? If we look at what Chinese Buddhist traditions say, the original mind is the Buddha mind. It is the mind of enlightenment. Just as a mirror’s original function is to reflect clearly, the mind, when free of pollution, sees the world clearly. Shengyan takes two positions to the original nature of the mind. He says, “The original quality of the mind is unpolluted, but being subject to environmental influences and desire for material things, it becomes polluted.”<sup>526</sup> However, he also states, “Buddhism understands the human mind to be originally polluted because when we are born, vexations are carried over. We planted karmic seeds in our past lives, which are carried over into this life, which become mental vexations taking, in the mind, the form of joy, anger, sadness, happiness, greed, hatred, delusion, arrogance, jealousy, and so on.”<sup>527</sup> Are these two conflicting interpretations? It is possible, but it is also likely that Shengyan is speaking from two perspectives—essence and function (*ti yong* 體用). The essence of mind, beyond the context of an individual’s experience is one of purity, while the mind functioning as an individual’s experience of the world should be understood in the context of one’s past lives. This latter context entails the karma of past lives and thus leads to the assessment that any individual’s mind from birth has been influenced by external conditions (i.e., polluted). To answer the

---

<sup>526</sup> Shengyan, *Xinling*, 58.

<sup>527</sup> Shengyan, *Buyiyangde*, 18.



question posed above (Should a mind be allowed to attain its original state?), we might conclude that Shengyan advocates obtaining a mind free from karmic obstructions (the originally pure mind), while acknowledging that environmental influences are an unavoidable condition of living.

#### 6.2.4.3 Audience

How does this term operate as a way of communicating with the members of the Dharma Drum organization? As scholars have noted, the main focus of DDM is on Chan practice, which reinforces the focus on the individual, as it is the individual who is responsible for his/her practice. Spiritual environmentalism zeros in on the individual and the process of purifying one's mind. But as spiritual environmentalism is only one part of the fourfold environmentalism Sheng Yen developed, the individual cannot avoid his/her social presence. So the altruistic interpretation of spiritual environmentalism demonstrates that it is a practice or concept which aims to improve the individual's ability to respond to spheres of society, family, and the natural world. Julia Corbett claims that "participatory problem solving and the joining of altruism and self-interest holds great promise in making behavior changes more sustainable and satisfying."<sup>528</sup>

From the foregoing descriptions, we can see that spiritual environmentalism engages in the discourse of bettering or purifying the self. The link between environmental concern and Buddhist practice or observance is meaningful in the sense that environmentalist practices help one deepen one's understanding of the self and in so doing enable one to work on moving beyond

---

<sup>528</sup> Corbett, *Communicating*, 83.

the self, although by so doing one is acting in one's own best self-interest.

Moreover, engaging in environmental practice is linked with altruism. Thus, by combining altruism with the purification of the self, spiritual environmentalism seems to offer a successful formula for the development of environmentally-positive behaviors.

The upshot of this discussion is that Shengyan's use of the term 'spiritual environmentalism' is intriguing, inviting, and perplexing. These characteristics of the term derive from his rhetorical use of the term. He offers the term as a response to changing social contexts, and he attempts to merge religious thought and environmental thought. Spiritual environmentalism is one attempt to articulate this confluence. But as rhetoric it is intended to provoke a response, to decenter the individual's conception of what spirituality or religion is, and what one assumes the sphere of environmentalism is. That spiritual environmentalism is the basis for the other three is certainly in part due to its focus on the mind and the role the mind plays in Shengyan's teaching of Chan. But there is another aspect of spiritual environmentalism that sets it off from the other three. All four terms are comprised of a term (spiritual, living, social, natural) that modifies environmentalism, but, in fact, as we see with the way these terms are translated on page 305 above, each term is better understood as the protection of a kind of environment.

As Bryan Tilt argued, the term ‘*huanjing*’ by itself is nebulous; the type of environment must be further delimited.<sup>529</sup> So although *huanbao* is generally understood to equate with the Western use of the term ‘environmentalism,’ specifically it is still easily rendered as the protection of *an* environment, which environment requires further clarification. So each type of environmentalism should be understood to mean the protection of a kind of environment, a sphere defined by qualitatively identifiable entities, concerns, or relationships. In this sense, the protection of the social environment (*liyi huanbao*) means protecting, attending to, and caring for the rules of social interaction, with an emphasis on Buddhist moral injunctions. What makes spiritual environmentalism semantically unique, and another reason for its central importance within the fourfold environmentalism, is that we can conceive of it not only as the protection of the mind’s environment, but as a way to approach Buddhist practice itself. It a form of environmentalism with clear soteriological implications. By practicing spiritual environmentalism, one is better able to protect the other three environments.

#### 6.2.5 Relation to DDM’s Other Campaigns

There is an additional way in which Shengyan seeks to identify with an audience of Buddhists and that is in his use of a fourfold and fivefold taxonomy. The fourfold environmentalism (along with the fourfold divisions of the fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign) can call to mind any group of four in the Buddhist tradition. Of course the most well-known set of four is arguably the four noble

---

<sup>529</sup> Tilt, *Struggle*, 107.

truths (*sidi* 四諦). There is more than a surface connection between these two sets of four, since, if we consider environment to be any context in which we are located, then the four noble truths characterize the quality of any environment we might be part of. No matter where we are, there is *dukkha* and the possibility of extinguishing that *dukkha*. The fivefold taxonomy relates to the five precepts that form the basic ethical orientation of a Buddhist to the world. As this directly impinges on how we live, then the fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign as a “proposition for living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” would be a new formulation for what is essential for living today.<sup>530</sup>

To give further support to a rhetorical reading of the spiritual environmentalism, we can look at the concept that the fourfold environmentalism falls under—the fivefold spiritual renaissance. While the English translation may not be particularly eye-catching, the Chinese term ‘*xinwusi yundong*’ 心五四運動 speaks volumes. The term immediately calls to mind the May Fourth Movement of 1919 (*wusi yundong*), a watershed event in Chinese intellectual history. The May Fourth Movement serves as an emblem for Chinese modernity, the beginning of a new phase in Chinese cultural and political history. In the sense that the May Fourth Movement was one that engaged and accepted modernity, it would seem a fitting term to adopt for Shengyan’s re-envisioning of Chinese Buddhism’s role in contemporary society. Moreover, the association between Buddhist concepts of enlightenment and the term *qimeng* 啟蒙 suggests a further

---

<sup>530</sup> “Dharma Drum Mountain,” accessed December 6, 2010, <http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about.aspx?sn=112>.

connection.<sup>531</sup> Shengyan, in fact, refers to his renaissance campaign as a “spiritual enlightenment” (*jingshen qimeng* 精神啟蒙).<sup>532</sup> To the contrary, one may think that the anti-traditionalism, which was a hallmark of the May Fourth Movement, would hamper Shengyan’s efforts to argue for environmentalism as a historical aspect of Buddhism (even though this anti-traditionalism was directed at Confucianism). Of course, it is difficult to know how Shengyan perceived the historical event of the May Fourth Movement. As Vera Schwarcz shows, the reference has been reworked, rebranded, and reinterpreted through the last century so that it possible Shengyan was employing it purely to get the audience’s attention. However, Shengyan does not refer to his movement or campaign as a new (*xin* 新) May Fourth, but as a May Fourth of the mind (*xin* 心). His reinvention of the term not only gives it a Buddhist twist and aligns it with spiritual environmentalism, but he also manages to deflect attention from the social upheaval of the original May Fourth Movement. While the terminology of the fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign has not received the attention spiritual environmentalism has, it is an important discursive innovation in strengthening the rhetorical force of Shengyan’s particular discourse of humanistic Buddhism.

---

<sup>531</sup> On this point, see Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 36. It might be interesting to question whether this understanding of enlightenment as rising from a dream could be related to Buddhist notions of enlightenment that suggest “waking up” would have had any influence on Sheng Yen’s use of the term ‘*wusi yundong*’.

<sup>532</sup> Sheng Yen, *Xin wusi*, 14-15.

Buddhist scholars and leaders have made many efforts at articulating Buddhist environmental ethics and how Buddhism can or should contribute to environmentalism. Scholars struggle in their attempts to make environmentalism intelligible and meaningful within the Buddhist context largely because the environmental discourse and Buddhist philosophical/ethical discourse rarely have direct correlates. Without attending to the rhetorical issues in addition to the philosophical ones, the full implications of the disparity between Buddhist ontology and metaphysics, on the one hand, and Buddhist ethics, on the other, are obscured, opening their work to the sort of critiques made by Ian Harris and Christopher Ives.<sup>533</sup> By elucidating the rhetorical aspect of spiritual environmentalism, we find the articulation of a Buddhist environmentalism that addresses both ontology and ethics in an effective manner. To better understand how this is the case, let us look briefly at a secular environmental philosopher's attempt to do just the same.

#### 6.2.6 Deep Ecology and Spiritual Environmentalism

One way of fitting Shengyan's spiritual environmentalism into the field of environmental philosophy and ethics is by comparison with the philosophy of Arne Naess. The connection between Shengyan's 'spiritual environmentalism' and Naess's philosophy helps highlight how rhetoric can function as an aspect of

---

<sup>533</sup> Ives, "In Search," 170-171. Interestingly, in the article which immediately follows Ives's in the same volume, Sallie B. King states, "The nature of the universe itself, then, is the ultimate imperative behind engaged Buddhist ethics." Sallie B. King "Elements of Engaged Buddhist Ethical Theory," in *Destroying Mara Forever: Buddhist Ethics Essays in Honor of Damien Keown*, eds. John Powers and Charles S. Prebish (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Press, 2009), 189.

understanding. If the understanding we are seeking to cultivate is environmental or ecological in nature, then it behooves us to consider ecological rhetoric or the rhetoric of environmental concern. We can explore ideas for the contribution they might make towards aiding the articulation of an environmental philosophy. This is the eco-constructivist position. The difference between the two approaches, though, attests to the need to make each articulation relevant to its linguistic, religious, and cultural context. This is somewhat similar to what Donald Swearer terms the “eco-contextualist” position of eco-Buddhism.<sup>534</sup>

As we saw in the case of Naess’s philosophy, ecology can address issues of ethics and ontology within a single discourse and this discourse can employ rhetorical elements strategically to lead one to an epistemological realization of the nature of this onto-ethical position. Such a realization can be deeply transformative. Within both Naess’s philosophy and the Buddhist context, that kind of transformation leads to a fuller, more beneficial life. Shengyan’s *xinling huanbao* helps one navigate the divide between Mahāyāna Buddhist ontology and ethics, for example. The claim that all things possess Buddha Nature complicates ethical decision making. How do we justify placing greater moral considerability on one entity over another without violating the fact that both are, in essence, ontologically indistinguishable, not only from each other, but from us, the decision maker, as well? Other philosophers have opted for criteria of sentience or consciousness, but these would both be inconsequential in the context of recognizing Buddha Nature. The same conundrum obtains if we replace Buddha

---

<sup>534</sup> See Swearer, “Assessment,” 123-137.

Nature with emptiness. It is basically a problem of recognizing how different levels of discourse are deployed. The rhetorical aspects of *xinling huanbao* lead one to examine the divisions of self and other, mind and the external environment. Achieving clarity on the semantic scope of *xinling huanbao* allows us to be clearer about how the other environmental spheres interact. The fourfold environmentalism offers a way to move, as Naess suggests we should, “from ethics to ontology and back.”

We can address the environmental crisis by attending to our actions as they impact the external environment, which includes both the natural world and society, but Shengyan argues that one can also address environmental issues to the degree that one’s actions are based on the quality of one’s mind (regardless of whether one is a Buddhist). The former derives insight from more traditional ethical discussions; the latter is deepened by ontological and metaphysical arguments. These spheres are linked but remain separate. Thus it is important to recognize the environmental context we are working from. Although this stretches a bit what I think Swearer intended, this separate but interrelated nature of the fourfold environmentalism is “eco-contextualist.”

My point is to demonstrate that the rhetorical basis of spiritual environmentalism allows us to see how Shengyan brings together theory and practice, ontology and ethics.<sup>535</sup> The use of language to affect change is not new,

---

<sup>535</sup> Jimmy Yu has pointed out how Sheng Yen’s thought, having been influenced by that of Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭, has sought to forge a connection between theory and practice. See Jimmy Yu, “Venerable Sheng Yen’s Scholarship on Late Ming



but it has been an underemphasized aspect of environmental philosophy. As Jenkins notes, “By treating environmental strategies as adaptive discursive practices rather than deployments of a comparative code or expressions of nature-related spirituality, they can help stimulate an initiative’s strategic rationale toward further ethical production and revision.”<sup>536</sup>

### 6.3 Ciji

Ciji is the largest Chinese Buddhist organization in Taiwan. It is officially registered as a charity organization in Taiwan and other countries, and this moniker is certainly accurate. But it more than that; Ciji is a transnational secular organization with a sophisticated bureaucracy. There are four main missions Ciji promotes: charity, medical, educational, and cultural, each with its own supporting institutions run almost entirely by laity. But it is also a Buddhist organization in which all authority and decision making power rests with the founder and head of Ciji, Ven. Zhengyan 證嚴 (b. 1937).<sup>537</sup> Julia Huang outlines the complex development of Ciji from a grassroots to a transnational NGO, a transformation that has both expanded Ciji’s image but simultaneously reified the

---

Buddhism,” in *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, vol. 1 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2010), 423.

<sup>536</sup> Jenkins, *Ecologies*, 304.

<sup>537</sup> Julia C. Huang, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Ciji Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 49-61. Huang charts two versions of the structure of Ciji’s bureaucracy and notes that the difference lies in one being ideal (see *ibid.*, 54-55) and the other actual (see *ibid.*, 59).

Taiwanese and Chinese identity of its membership.<sup>538</sup> Ciji's success has been achieved through maintenance of a social image of moral certainty and the ability to efficiently address specific welfare needs in numerous locales. But, as Julia Huang points out, the organization's success on these fronts is likewise rooted in the charismatic leadership of Zhengyan which anchors the "shapeless bureaucracy" of the organization and supports the commitment and collective identity of its members. Huang notes:

Tzu Chi has succeeded in perpetuating its emotional form of commitment, though not without tension, by expanding the compassionate-sorrow emotion of charisma to a general emotion toward the experience of suffering built into its humanitarian practice, and by paralleling its original charismatic ecstasy of crying to the collective effervescence of sign language song. Such transformation not only perpetuates commitment in its emotional form but also rekindles the interplay between emotional experience and subsequent meaningful symbolization.<sup>539</sup>

Huang's analysis emphasizes the role that identity construction plays in Ciji, not only the identity of the members but of the organization as a whole. The ritual acts of crying and sign language song serve as means of persuasion in the sense that they create emotional and bodily forms of identification that creates community from among the audience. This strong communal identification facilitates the carrying out of welfare projects which not only resolidifies Ciji's public image, but provides a concrete experience which can be contextualized in line with Ciji's ideals of compassion and working towards a Pure land on Earth. This is the basis of the environmental work Ciji does, too.

---

<sup>538</sup> See *ibid.*, 210-211 and 245-246.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

When one mentions Buddhist environmentalism in Taiwan, most Taiwanese immediately think of Ciji. This is not without reason. Ciji's recycling program is a trademark practice for Ciji members. Ciji's recycling program began around 1990, following a speech Zhengyan gave in Taichung. As the audience was clapping, Zhengyan reportedly said, "If you take your two applauding hands and pick up garbage, sweep the thoroughfares, and practice recycling, this would help this piece of land become a Pure land; turn the garbage into gold and that gold into love."<sup>540</sup> Given this linkage, Zhengyan's advocacy of environmentalism is focused almost completely on recycling, but it is carried out on a scale that flows into many other areas.

### 6.3.1 *Fu*

Lin Yiren identifies three environmental practices of Ciji: recycling, cleaning public places, and planting trees. From an examination of Ciji literature and fieldwork, he argues that these activities all turn on what he identifies as Ciji's main environmental belief, the image of "cherishing *fu*" (*xifu* 惜福).<sup>541</sup> *Fu*, meaning fortune or wealth, is widely valued in Chinese culture and is interpreted in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Lin rightly observes that by emphasizing "cherishing *fu*" as the basis of environmental practice, Zhengyan draws on both its meaning as a material value and Buddhist value. In Buddhist

---

<sup>540</sup> "*Ciji huanbao jianjie* 慈濟環保簡介 (A simple explanation of Ciji environmentalism)," *Ciji jijinhui*, July 29, 2009.

<sup>541</sup> Lin, "Environmental Beliefs," 176.

terms, *fu* means the merit one gains from performing good deeds.<sup>542</sup> However in juxtaposing these two interpretations of *fu*, it is clear which one is of greater value. The accumulation of merit through good deeds will aid one in the next life and can benefit one's living relatives. In addition to "cherishing *fu*," Zhengyan speaks about "making *fu*" (*zaofu* 造福). Like cherishing *fu*, the expression "making *fu*" blurs the lines between material wealth and karmic merit.

### 6.3.2 Recycling and *Huanbao*

While *fu* is an unarguably central concept, as Lin explains, the notions of *huanbao* 環保 and recycling (*huishou* 回收) themselves are equally central to Zhengyan's environmental rhetoric. Ciji's recycling campaign represents its first efforts at environmentalism. In 2009, Ciji reported collecting 125, 561, 560 kgs of recyclable materials.<sup>543</sup> The largest portion of this is paper. Zhengyan was influenced by a follower to support recycling, and the campaign can be said to have officially begun in 1990 following a speech in Taizhong. In response to the audience's applause, Zhengyan suggested that everyone take their two clapping hands and use them to collect garbage. Since then Ciji has established recycling stations throughout Taiwan and 16 other countries. The income from recycling is quite substantial and funds many of Ciji's other projects, such as disaster relief and medical care.

---

<sup>542</sup> See *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, "fu" (article by Charles Muller). There is a strong connection between *fu* and the term *gongde* 功德, which is part of Ciji's full title, *Ciji gongde hui*.

<sup>543</sup> Zhengyan, *Qingjing zai yuantou* (Taipei: Tianxia Yuanjian faxing, 2010), 277.

Zhengyan has expanded the meaning of recycling, taking it well beyond the material sense of the term. Her reframing of recycling is linked to her interpretation of *fu*. In the famous admonition in Taizhong in 1990, where she asked everyone to use their clapping hands to collect garbage and recycle, she states that “trash can be turned into gold and the gold transformed into merit.” She links the practice of recycling to the notion of rebirth (*lunhui* 輪迴), cherishing life (*zhenxi wuming* 珍惜物命), and maintaining a sanitary, pure environment. Zhengyan explains that after an object has been used or broken, it is typically discarded. But this practice leads to the accumulation of garbage. Following the garbage wars that Weller documents, where trash piled up around Taipei, this image likely resonates with Taiwanese. In order to prevent this from happening, we must practice recycling. In addition, the practice of recycling can give new life to discarded material. If we do not recycle, Zhengyan says, we waste precious resources. She uses the four seasons to symbolize for stages of existence: birth, life, decrepitude, and death (*cheng* 成, *zhu* 住, *huai* 壞, *kong* 空). Recycling captures objects at the stage of decrepitude and returns them to the stage of birth.<sup>544</sup> By recycling we demonstrate our compassion towards resources (*zhenxi ziyuan* 珍惜資源), and contribute to the renewal of life: “Things all have a life. The longer you can use something, the more of its life you can extend. When something has reached the end of its life, it returns to the source. *Huanbao*

---

<sup>544</sup> Ibid., 32-34.

recycles discarded things, remakes them, turns them into something new, and this gives the thing a new life.”<sup>545</sup>

This notion of giving something a new life is the basis of a new slogan Zhengyan has created: “Purity is found in the beginning” (*qingjing zai yuantou* 清淨在源頭). The phrase is less straight forward than “recycling” and so conveys a sense of vagueness. In places she interprets this expression to mean that recycling begins not with collecting garbage and getting it to a recycling center, but in practicing recycling correctly to begin with.<sup>546</sup> But she also uses the expression *wugui yuantou* 物歸原頭 (“things return to their beginning) in conjunction with the idea that environmentalism begins with the purification of the mind. In the Ciji literature we find statements such as, “regardless whether it is the human body, or the great earth and its myriad beings, who are afflicted with illness, for it to recover its health and the four elements to be in harmony, it is necessary to begin from the mind.”<sup>547</sup> Recycling is a purification ritual that gives the individual a context for the practice that purification of the mind entails. Thus, in the same way that recycling reduces garbage and pollution by returning things to their source of production, individuals must return the mind to its source of compassion and get rid of mental garbage and pollution. Here we can see how

---

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>547</sup> Quoted in Zhiru Ng, “Purifying the Mind, Sanctifying the Earth: Visualizing Environmental Protection in Humanistic Buddhist Taiwan,” Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, 2006, accessed October 27, 2009, <http://www.hds.harvard.edu/cswr/resources/print/dongguk/ng.pdf>.

not only recycling has been sacralized, but the concept of garbage and pollution have been reinterpreted to complete the dialectic. She further expands on this imagery by referring to recycling centers as places of spiritual practice or “meditation halls” (*daochang* 道場), “Recycling centers are not only for recycling materials or protecting the earth, they are also spiritual centers for practice. Everyone’s mind is calmed and thoughts are right. Doing this work makes it so.”<sup>548</sup>

In addition to recycling, Zhengyan, like Shengyan, has expanded the meaning of *huanbao* from a Western secular sense of environmentalism, to a spiritual sphere. She offers seven transformations of *huanbao* that she encourages Ciji members to undertake: making it relevant to youth, making it applicable to daily life, increasing knowledge about environmentalism, practicing it within the family, viewing it spiritually, making it more refined, and recognizing the health benefits.<sup>549</sup> Some of these seven transformations pertain to a reinterpretation of traditional environmentalism, some of them seek to expand the number of people practicing environmentalism, and some seek to make it a more popular notion. There is an obvious lacuna when compared with secular environmentalism, though, and that is that there is no mention at all of protests or political involvement. I have noted that Zhengyan dissents from any idea that Buddhists

---

<sup>548</sup> Zhengyan, *Qingjing*, 189.

<sup>549</sup> “Tzu Chi,” accessed February 21, 2012, [http://www.tzuchi.org.tw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=355%3A2009-01-09-07-40-47&catid=56%3Aenvironmental-protection-about&Itemid=310&lang=zh](http://www.tzuchi.org.tw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=355%3A2009-01-09-07-40-47&catid=56%3Aenvironmental-protection-about&Itemid=310&lang=zh).

should be involved in politics, but this incongruity with secular environmentalism demonstrates that there is clearly more than one *huanbao* that is operative in Taiwan. The degree to which Ciji promotes its nonconfrontational vision of *huanbao* reflects a challenge to how not only environmentalism is to be represented in Taiwanese society but also to the process of social change itself.

Furthermore, there are a few cases in which meaning is not only created through reinterpretation of ideas, but also through a unique juxtapositioning of the traditional and the contemporary. One example is Ciji's theatrical performance of the "Water Repentance," an adaptation of the text entitled "Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance" (*cibei sanmei shuichan* 慈悲三昧水懺). This is similar to a more widely practiced rite known as the "Liberation of water and land ritual" (*shuilu chanhui* 水陸法會).<sup>550</sup> Both are Chinese Buddhist rituals that aim at the creation of merit for all beings (*zhongsheng* 眾生), all beings that live in water or upon land, what can be referred to as a "universal salvation rite" (*pudu* 普渡). Daniel Stevenson remarks that the *shuilu* ritual has been, since the Song dynasty, one of the most elaborate rituals in Chinese Buddhism, requiring an enormous amount of paraphanelia and human participation.<sup>551</sup> This ritual is performed elaborately and with significant publicity by many Buddhist

---

<sup>550</sup> "Tzu Chi," accessed February 20, 2012, [http://tw.tzuchi.org/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=866&Itemid=328&lang=en](http://tw.tzuchi.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=866&Itemid=328&lang=en).

<sup>551</sup> Daniel B. Stevenson, "Text, Image, and Transformation of the *Shuilu fahui*, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land," in *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 30-31.



organizations. In light of this characterization, one might wonder why organizations devoted to environmentalism and simplicity would consent to holding the rite with equal embellishment.

The text the ritual is based on discussed various mental and karmic obstructions. The karmic obstructions play out through the various realms of existence, relying heavily on Buddhist cosmology. But the Ciji performance reenacts these in contemporary scenes, accentuating the humanistic Buddhist practice of demythologizing Buddhist cosmology. The concerns are all about the human realm. With this as a basis, the Ciji adaptation depicts two scenes: the first showing natural disasters and the second a scene that is specifically about the consequences of anthropogenic climate change. These two scenes link the consequences of desire and “unwholesome” actions (*e ye* 惡業) to current environmental degradation. The theatrical effect of the performance augments the ways in which Zhengyan challenges her followers to reconceive of recycling and environmentalism as spiritual practices. Desire not only gives rise to individual suffering, but this suffering is already manifest in the negative environmental consequences we see around us. The point being made in the performance is that the mind is the source of affliction and so we must purify the mind, in this case through the practice of repentance and vow. Although such reinterpretation might seem discontinuous with the traditional rite, if we rely on the similarity with the *shuilu* rite, we can argue that it is carrying on the history of such a rite. Stevenson notes how the ritual manuals for *shuilu* rites were as centered on their performance as on their textuality. Moreover, the use of specific ritual manuals

were normative documents used as guides “to *correct* practice.”<sup>552</sup> If Stevenson’s point can be extrapolated to the “Water repentance,” then we can interpret Ciji’s adaptation as another in the tradition of interpretations whereby the Buddhist authority uses the rite to educate its audience on what proper Buddhist belief and practice constitute. In the case of the rite at hand, this involves environmental karmic concern no less than cosmological karmic concern.

### 6.3.3 “Regulating oneself, returning to propriety”

In 2007, Zhengyan promoted a campaign titled *keji fuli* 克己復禮 (Regulating oneself, returning to propriety).<sup>553</sup> The phrase comes directly from Confucius in the *Lunyu* 論語. *Keji* means to control or regulate one’s self, especially with regards to one’s desires. In the Confucian context, *fuli* means to renew the practice of rituals. Zhengyan reinterprets *fuli* as a renewal of civility that is connected with a sense of respect (*zunzhong* 尊重) and benefiting others (*lita* 利他). This latter idea is common in Buddhist discourse as part of the phrase *zili lita* (自利利他), which refers to two goals of Buddhist practice: seeking own’s own benefit (enlightenment) and seeking the benefit (enlightenment) of others. It is connected to both Pure land thought and the figure of the bodhisattva.

The term *keji* can likewise be read with reference to Buddhism, in the sense that controlling one’s desires is a way to reduce desire and therefore cut-off

---

<sup>552</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>553</sup> “Tzu Chi,” accessed February 21, 2012, <http://www2.tzuchi.org.tw/case/2007virtue/01.htm>.

the cause of suffering (*dukkha*). The interpretation of *keji* that Zhengyan advances ties in with her calls for individuals to lead a simpler and more frugal lifestyle. Controlling one's desires is a form of mental cultivation that can purify the mind. *Keji* corresponds with Zhengyan's emphasis of the fact that the kind of social reform that is esteemed in humanistic Buddhism must begin in the mind. That the mind is the seat of change can be supported with Confucian texts, as well. The Confucian text known as the *Daxue* 大學 ("Great Learning") offers a vision of setting the world in moral and political order by beginning with the individual's mind, though Zhengyan does not mention this text. Perhaps this is because the sequence of cultivation laid out in the *Daxue* does not make cultivation of the mind (*xin* 心) its basis. The *Daxue* takes the cultivation back to the "investigation of affairs" (*gewu* 格物). Nonetheless, there is recognition of a correlative cosmology that is common to both Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism. Zhiru Ng refers to this correlative cosmology as central to the way in which Zhengyan relates mental cultivation to social activism and how Ciji simultaneously represents its local and global identity.<sup>554</sup> Regarding the scope and meaning of *keji* in contemporary society, Zhengyan states:

Other than regulating excessive pleasure and consumer desires, we must also control our emotions and our bad habits. Everyone has the same originally pure nature as the Buddha; it is just that it has been polluted by the external environment. If we can always wash away every impurity and change our [bad] habits, the bright luminosity of the mind will emerge. When the mind is bright the world will be bright.<sup>555</sup>

---

<sup>554</sup> Ng, "Purifying," 19-21.

<sup>555</sup> "Tzu Chi," accessed February 25, 2012, <http://www2.tzuchi.org.tw/case/2007virtue-earth/html/01/index.htm>.

This passage demonstrates that the practice of *keji* pertains not only to the mind, but to our actions as well. It could be argued that the emphasis of mental cultivation is more deeply rooted in Buddhism, while the stress on proper conduct and (environmentally) appropriate behavior is more Confucian. But this distinction need not be pressed too far.

The latter half of the passage, though, is additionally interesting for its similarity to a famous passage in the *Platform sūtra*, but not the passage that is often held up as the Buddhist ideal. In the narrative of the text, we find the well-known “wall verse” episode. Two verses are offered as expressions of the enlightened mind. The second is recognized as more enlightened than the first and its author, Huineng 慧能, is recognized as the Sixth Patriarch of Chan. The first, however, reads:

The body is a bodhi tree.  
The mind is like a bright mirror’s stand.  
At all times we must strive to polish it  
and not let dust collect.<sup>556</sup>

In the Chan tradition, this verse is criticized as reflecting a one-sided focus on cultivation without recognizing the truth of sudden enlightenment.<sup>557</sup> The connection between Zhengyan’s statement and the *Platform sūtra* lies not only in the textual similarity, but in the larger context of the allusion. First, there is the

---

<sup>556</sup> Translated in McRae, *Seeing*, 61.

<sup>557</sup> John McRae has offered a convincing analysis of both the historical and doctrinal context of this episode. See *ibid.*, 60-69 and John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Chan Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

surface implication that the practice of meditation, consisting of a constant vigilance against mental pollution, is like environmentalism, consisting in part of a constant vigilance against material pollution. However, there is a dissonance between the two with regard to identification. The traditional passage alluded to by Zhengyan's remarks was uttered by Shenxiu 神修. But Shenxiu was not recognized as the inheritor of the patriarch; Huineng was. Moreover, it is Huineng that became the ideal type for promoting a simple, down-to-earth Chan practice, supporting the notion that enlightenment can be found in carrying out everyday affairs. This is plainly more akin to Zhengyan's vision of humanistic Buddhism, which hardly makes any mention of formal seated meditation practice. If looked at from this angle we find that although Zhengyan's discourse does not frequently make direct references to Buddhist scriptures and other texts, there is still a consciousness of positioning Zhengyan in the tradition of Buddhist masters.

Zhengyan's interpretation of *li* follows more of a Neo-Confucian reading than what seems intended in the *Lunyu*. In the *Lunyu*, *li* seems to mean the rites regulating behavior found in the "Book of Rites" (*Liji* 禮記). But Zhengyan interprets *li* as synonymous with *li* 理, or the principle governing the universal order. This reading, of course, supports Zhengyan's vision of creating a harmonious and well-ordered society, and it is close to the context in which Confucius' statement is made in the *Lunyu*, in which he uses *keji fuli* to define *ren* 仁, or "humaneness." So it could be said that Zhengyan's campaign is to reestablish *ren* as the basis of Ciji environmentalism and perhaps even Taiwanese

society. It is remarkable that Zhengyan uses the expression *keji fuli* as the basis of her campaign given the depth of meaning that the expression contains. But perhaps this is the very reason she chose it. If this is the case, then we see Zhengyan's vision of humanistic Buddhism is decidedly more focused on the kind of society she envisions and less on the degree to which that vision is exclusively Buddhist.

#### 6.3.4 Audience

There are at least three ways in which Zhengyan seeks to connect environmentalism with her audience: one is through emphasis on family, a second is through the person of Zhengyan herself, and a third is through public praise of the Ciji environmental volunteers.

Although Zhengyan is a Buddhist nun and the organization identifies with the Buddhist tradition, there is not a great deal of emphasis on doctrinal study, and Ciji offers a simple message where complex doctrine is largely absent.<sup>558</sup> Only a handful of the millions of members are monastic. In this respect, we can understand the importance of Madsen's remark that "[t]he 'family' ... is a central metaphor in Zhengyan's rhetoric."<sup>559</sup> The family metaphor is more appropriate with laity than with monastics, since in Chinese laity are those who are "with the family" (*zaijia* 在家) and monastics are those who have "left the family" (*chujia* 出家). Moreover, emphasizing family is a powerful way to construct community out of the members of the organization. What I mean is that the notion of

---

<sup>558</sup> Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma*, 32.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 25.

“family” evokes sentiments of familiarity and familiarity, which can mediate the growth of an already large organization. The rhetoric of family has an organizing force.

Family as a virtue or source of virtue is a basic idea within Chinese and Confucian culture. To this extent, Madsen argues that “[Ciji]’s social vision is largely based on classical neo-Confucian themes,” and family and filial piety are the basis of all other virtues.<sup>560</sup> “[Ciji]’s mission makes no sense outside of the humanistic Buddhist vision and the Confucian ethic propagated by [Zhengyan].”<sup>561</sup> In this respect, Zhengyan’s *keji fuli* campaign does not seem such an anomaly. I have already shown how the practice of *keji* centers on the individual, from the cultivation of mental purity to outward behavior. The emphasis on civility in carrying out *fuli* can be viewed from different scales, the most intimate and immediate being the family. Therefore, family is position in an intermediate role between the individual and society.

Another way that the environmental message of Ciji is conveyed to its audience is through the construction of Zhengyan’s identity. This relies on the process by which the audience identifies a rhetor with a set of values they hold collectively. Elise DeVido argues, “Part of comprehending the charisma of Zhengyan emanates from her multifaceted self: at once a woman with a personal background similar to that of many Taiwanese, and at once a woman of unique

---

<sup>560</sup> Ibid., 18, 28, and 23.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid., 39.

and seemingly supernatural will and talents.”<sup>562</sup> It is widely remarked how Zhengyan speaks in Taiwanese more than in Mandarin.<sup>563</sup> This reinforces her identity as fully Taiwanese, in contrast to Shengyan, Xingyun, and Weijue, who were all born in China and immigrated to Taiwan in 1949. DeVido states that “Ciji reflects Zhengyan who reflects Taiwan and its people, at once weak and strong, marginalized yet obliged to adapt to the challenges of globalization.”<sup>564</sup>

A second aspect of Zhengyan’s identity lies in the identification of her with Guanyin Bodhisattva.<sup>565</sup> This image is projected through various pictorial representations of her looking down upon the earth. There is a strong likeness between Zhengyan in these depictions and the representation that Zhiru Ng analyzes of the Buddha that has been made central in Ciji publications.<sup>566</sup> The level of respect accorded to Zhengyan is reflected in the way she is most commonly addressed by her followers: *shangren* 上人 (“supreme person”). It is clear that Zhengyan is considered to be beyond a spiritual level that any ordinary member might attain.

Another identity that accompanies Zhengyan is that of a renewer of Chinese cultural values. The importance and esteem for *li* 禮 as a source of social

---

<sup>562</sup> Elise Anne DeVido, *Taiwan’s Buddhist Nuns* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 45.

<sup>563</sup> Huang, *Compassion*, 32.

<sup>564</sup> DeVido, *Nuns*, 46.

<sup>565</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>566</sup> See Ng, “Purifying,” 21.



reform conveys the idea that, despite the modernist organization and methods practiced by Ciji, tradition is something that must be valued and not discarded. However, Zhengyan's interpretation of *li* is not dependent of the performance of rituals but on the civility of human relationships. Nonetheless, the importance of *li* in Zhengyan's discourse increases her sphere of persuasiveness from an audience of Taiwanese to an audience of all who identify with Chinese culture.

Along with this separation of Zhengyan from the status of ordinary humans, there is a countermove that makes her a model for behavior. Ng observes:

Besides garbage collection and recycling activities, Ciji followers are expected to foster environmental consciousness in their daily attitudes and lifestyles. Ciji literature frequent invokes as their inspiration for environmental practice an anecdote in Zhengyan's daily lifestyle: whenever their teacher Zhengyan washes her hands, she always has a basin under the running tap in order to be able to reuse the water later for watering plants. Emulating the lifestyle of their beloved teacher, Ciji followers use specially designed special portable sets of tableware for meals, from folding plastic chopsticks to plastic containers, as part of their drive against the rampant use of paper plates and bamboo chopsticks, etc.<sup>567</sup>

Ng's comment does not suggest that Ciji members try to be like Zhengyan, but that one should attempt to follow Zhengyan's lead in how to be environmentally conscious. This aspiration to model Zhengyan does not run counter to viewing her as *shangren*. Rather, it reinforces the notion that such simple actions are not irrelevant, but teachings to be followed.

One final way in which Zhengyan and Ciji environmental rhetoric appeal to their audience is through stories about *huanbao* volunteers. This is a way of

---

<sup>567</sup> Ng, "Purifying," 8-9.

connecting with the audience of volunteers and potential members and strengthening the volunteer community. Ng notes that Zhengyan often refers to *huanbao* volunteers as *huanbao pusa* 環保菩薩 (“*huanbao* bodhisattvas”). The reference to laity as bodhisattvas is not uncommon in humanistic Buddhist organizations, but the specific reference to these volunteers further qualifies their activity as essentially spiritual. This nomenclature of *huanbao* bodhisattvas goes along with the renaming of recycling centers as *daochang*.

In the Ciji literature there are numerous stories about individual volunteers and either their unique contribution to the environmental mission or the hardships they overcame through their work as a volunteer. These stories further raise the visibility of the *huanbao* volunteers and impart a sense of virtue to what might otherwise be considered an unattractive and unappealing activity.

#### 6.4 FGS

Foguangshan (FGS/佛光山/Buddha’s Light Mountain) is one of the largest and most widespread Buddhist organizations in the world. The headquarters for the organization are located in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, was established in 1967. The organization’s founder, Master Xingyun 星雲, was born near Shanghai in 1926 and studied for a short period of time under Master Yinshun. Xingyun came to Taiwan in 1949. He is a prominent proponent of humanistic Buddhism, proffering his own interpretation labeled “Foguang” Buddhism. The ethical basis of FGS, like Ciji, is rooted in humanistic Buddhism

and Confucian principles. “The political vision of Buddha’s Light Mountain does not come in the form of a comprehensive political philosophy. It takes the shape of specific moral counsels aimed at giving to a broad, diverse public Buddhist and Confucian answers to practical moral questions.”<sup>568</sup> Madsen characterizes the religious-ethical consciousness Foguangshan promotes as “light” but “thick.” He explains what he means in terms that resonate with Naess’s notion of deep questioning:

Because of its “lightness”—the vagueness of its strictures and their lack of ability to constrain any given individual’s behavior at any given time—it is difficult to measure the influence that Buddha’s Light Mountain’s humanistic Buddhist teachings may have on public opinion. But because of its “thickness”—its capacity to enfold a great many people and to mold their thinking over a long period of time—we may assume that the influence of Buddha’s Light Mountain is significant.<sup>569</sup>

#### 6.4.1 Environmentalism in FGS

In 1992 at the General Assembly for the BLIA (Buddha’s Light International Association, the lay branch of FGS), there was a session on “environmental and spiritual” protection, followed by a campaign in Kaohsiung.<sup>570</sup> It is likely that the environmental problems engendered by Kaohsiung’s industrial economy, in addition to the efforts already underway by DDM and Ciji, served as impetus for Xingyun’s 星雲 incorporation of

---

<sup>568</sup> Madsen, *Democracy’s Dharma*, 77.

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>570</sup> Xingyun, “Protecting the Environment” *Buddhism in Every Step*, v.21 (Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha’s Light Publishing, 2000), 8-9.

environmentalism into FGS's list of issues. We can also see that this campaign followed five years after the lifting of martial law in 1987.

Foguangshan's position on environmentalism is summarized in a short pamphlet titled "Protecting Our Environment." Xingyun first cites sutras to show that Buddhism maintains a concern for the natural world from the time of the Buddha. Xingyun refers to the notion of dependent origination to help explain how human actions are intimately connected to the environment. He then points out how Foguangshan embraces environmental concerns and the relevance positive environmental behavior has for Buddhists today. Much like Shengyan and Zhengyan, Xingyun works from the dialect of inner and outer, "cultivating inner peace and preserving outer ecological balance."<sup>571</sup> Although these seem like two separate milieus of environmental protection, Xingyun weaves them together. Engaging in preservation of ecological balance by protecting life and conserving resources, one purifies one's own karma leading to a better spiritual condition.<sup>572</sup> By attending to our spiritual condition or caring for the mind's environment, we can learn how to care for the external environment. In fact, Xingyun concludes in a familiar vein, stating that purification of the environment begins with purification of the mind, "In order to purify the soils and rivers of our outer environment, we must work to purify our inner spiritual environment."<sup>573</sup>

---

<sup>571</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid., 19. To some degree Xingyun's explication of Buddhist environmentalism relies on correlative cosmology, revealing the influence of Confucian thought on his own interpretations.

He has gone so far as to state that “spiritual environmentalism” is the basis of protecting the natural environment,

Just as we get sick physically, the earth is sick too. When people are sick, they need to be treated and saved. When the earth is sick, it also needs everyone to care for it and save it. To save the earth, we must begin with environmental preservation. On the other hand, the protection of nature depends on humanity to self-awaken, which also starts with preservation of the spiritual environment...To ensure that environmental and spiritual preservation are well practiced is regarded as the most urgent task for humanity right now, if we do not wish to end up as refugees of climate and environment change.<sup>574</sup>

It is interesting that Xingyun has even begun using the phrase “spiritual environmentalism,” and what he means by it is similar to Shengyan, to the degree that the mind and its purity is the key factor to be addressed in spiritual environmentalism. However, when Xingyun discusses how to promote environmental behavior, his response resonates with a mission closer to the core of Foguangshan—education:

To actualize environmental preservation, each person must first know the concept of environmental preservation. The instillation of environmental preservation should start with education. Adults need to set an example for children. For instance, parents need to teach their children to respect life, and cherish and care for all things. Teachers needs to teach their students to respect elders, treat others with manners, and so on. Especially in the elevation of the notion of morality and the maintenance of the public environment, we need to start with reinforcing awareness through education.<sup>575</sup>

---

<sup>574</sup> Xingyun, “*Huanbao yu xinbao*,” *Pumen* 60 (2011), 352. Translated in “Buddha’s Light International Association,” accessed November 23, 2011, <http://www.blia.org/english/about/words/keynote/kn2010.htm>.

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*, 355-56. Translated in “Buddha’s Light International Association,” accessed November 23, 2011, <http://www.blia.org/english/about/words/keynote/kn2010.htm>.

There seems to be a split then between environmental and spiritual preservation. On the one hand, purifying the mind allows one to reduce desire, which is conducive to an environmentally “light” lifestyle. On the other hand, if environmental preservation itself begins with education, then the need for spiritual environmentalism is not crucial to environmental practice. This is not meant as a critique of Xingyun’s proposal. In fact, it might be advantageous to offer individuals two approaches, one oriented toward spiritual practice and the other toward social engagement. There are two appeals here in Xingyun’s notion of environmental and spiritual protection. One is to environmentalism in the mainstream, secular sense with the focus on education. The other is to the environmental benefits that are corollary to spiritual practice.

#### 6.4.2 Pure land rhetoric and environmentalism

Despite the apparent dichotomy of environmentalist approaches here, Xingyun highlights a specific image—Amitabha’s Pure land—that might serve to reconcile this dichotomy for Foguang Buddhists. For Xingyun, the environment is the natural world and the ideal to which this world should be molded is the Pure land of Amitabha. He states:

From the sutras, we learn that Amitabha’s Western Pure Land is a land of great beauty. We can learn a lot about environmental protection from Amitabha Buddha. In the Western Pure Land, the ground is covered with gold, and pagodas rise high into the sky. The land is pure and the atmosphere is serene. There is no pollution of any kind; toxins, violence, and nuclear threats are absent. The Western Pure Land is a place that many of us aspire to enter.

We can create a [P]ure land right here on Earth. Most of the progress we have made in environmental protection is focused externally, but the important work actually lies within one’s heart and spirit. Only

when we have a healthy spiritual environment within can we be effective in protecting the physical environment.<sup>576</sup>

And:

When we Buddhists think of a pure, clean environment, we naturally think of Amitabha's Western Pure Land. On his path as a bodhisattva, Amitabha made forty-eight great vows. Through the strength of these vows, he manifested the Western Pure Land, a land of unparalleled beauty. The ground is covered with gold, pagodas are built with seven kinds of gems, and all facilities are in excellent condition. In the Western Pure Land there is only public good, no public harm. There is only beauty, no toxin, noise or pollution. The weather is cool and pleasant, and the water has eight wonderful qualities: clear, cool, sweet, soft, soothing, peaceful, cleansing, and nourishing. Everyone in the Western Pure Land is kind, physically and mentally healthy, long-lived and free of the three poisons. None of them would ever consider chopping down trees, and the landscape reflects such thoughtfulness. This is why we say Amitabha Buddha is our good teacher on how to maintain a sound mind and a healthy environment.<sup>577</sup>

Xingyun's description of this connection, which is similar to some of the ways Zhengyan has used Pure land discourse to advocate environmental practice, makes a direct appeal to what is arguably the most powerful Buddhist concept among contemporary lay Buddhists. Chandler notes that the Western Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha, among others is an image that Xingyun relies on in conveying his understanding of Buddhist practice.<sup>578</sup> But we must wonder whether Lin's claim that Pure lands are not natural in the environmentalist sense of the term makes this a problematic connection. In each case in which authors speak about creating a Pure land as an act of environmental concern or activism, what is the "nature," so to speak, of the Pure land they are imagining? How does

---

<sup>576</sup> Xingyun, "Protecting," 3.

<sup>577</sup> Xingyun, "Protecting," 9-10.

<sup>578</sup> Chandler, *Establishing*, 46-47.

the Pure land of Buddhist scriptures relate to a contemporary understanding of a pure natural environment? In the case of Xingyun, how can his vision of a Pure land based on traditional scriptural depictions be squared with preserving ecosystems that are not “cool, sweet, soft, soothing,” etc.? And if *guotu* is not meant to refer to the natural environment, then what relevance does this have for Buddhist environmentalism?<sup>579</sup> These questions suggest that there is not as concerted an effort to promote environmentalism through rhetorical appeal as in DDM and Ciji.

However, as Chandler points out, Xingyun’s commitment to a humanistic Buddhist vision also is a factor in how he situates Pure land rhetoric. According to Chandler, Xingyun emphasizes the importance of one’s quality of mental cultivation as crucial in “whether a person finds himself or herself in a [P]ure land...”<sup>580</sup> Viewed in this way, Xingyun agrees with Shengyan that one must purify the mind as a necessary component of achieving a pure external environment. For, as Xingyun elsewhere notes, “Today there are many Buddhists who wish to be reborn in the Sukhavati Pure Land, but I think that this is not as good as putting one’s energies to changing today’s world into a Buddhist [P]ure

---

<sup>579</sup> Lin discusses the ecological meanings of *guotu jing* 國土淨 and *xinjing* 心淨. For the former he states there are two aspects: the material world and the relational world. These two relate to ecology such that the first has to do with caring for ecosystems and the second to establishing a sustainable society. Lin goes on to suggest that we should see the ecosphere, not as a lifeless machine, but as a “home,” pointing out the use of metaphor.

<sup>580</sup> Chandler, *Establishing*, 47.



land.”<sup>581</sup> While this may seem to contradict the very concrete references to scriptural Pure lands Xingyun references in his comments on environmentalism, the unenvironmentalist character of the former comments can be viewed rhetorically, as a way perhaps to create a sense of the work that needs to be done to achieve an ideal of a clean environment. There, thus, is a dialectic between ideal and reality that highlights the difference between our world and a Pure land, and an attempt to persuade Buddhists to not identify with a degraded environment in order to inspire action.

The lack of a systematic discourse on environmentalism does not mean that FGS does not promote environmentalism, but that it does not appear to use rhetoric as strongly as DDM or Ciji. As mentioned in chapter five, FGS has been active in environmental campaigns in Kaohsiung, one of the most polluted cities in Taiwan. Recently, Xingyun has combined the Buddha’s birthday and ritual bathing with Mother’s day and Earth Day.<sup>582</sup> From the coverage of the events in 2010 and 2011, there is more emphasis placed on the ceremony of bathing the Buddha and paying respects to one’s mother. But the combination of these three links the notions of purification (bathing the Buddha) with mother images which invoke the image of “Mother Earth.” The implication is that the purification of the earth is both a Buddhist and filial concern. In addition, the topics of the FGS/BLIA international members conference for 2010 and 1998 were on

---

<sup>581</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>582</sup> “Foguangshan,” accessed February 28, 2012, [http://www.fgs.org.tw/news/news\\_content.aspx?news\\_no=20110430000017](http://www.fgs.org.tw/news/news_content.aspx?news_no=20110430000017).

environmental protection and spiritual protection (*huanbao yu xinbao* 環保與心保) and on nature and life (*ziran yu shengming* 自然與生命), respectively.<sup>583</sup>

Nonetheless, environmental concerns do not appear to be as important as FGS's educational and cultural campaigns. Admittedly, an organization like FGS, DDM, or Ciji cannot address all issues equally. Their resources are ultimately limited. Being located in southern Taiwan means the audience that FGS is immediately in contact with will differ from the audiences in northern Taiwan. FGS has made efforts to present environmentalism as a Buddhist and spiritual concern. But the dialectical structures of its rhetoric simply repeat the inner/outer dichotomy of mind and environment. There are no novel reinterpretations of basic concepts. The appeal to Pure land imagery seems to be the heart of FGS's environmental rhetoric, but from the passages cited above, these do little in the way of resolving a practice/theory dichotomy. FGS's environmentalism seems to be carried out with and relies on the notion that environmental problems are sources of suffering in the human realm and in order to realize a Pure land on earth, they must be ameliorated and addressed.

## 6.5 Monastic Grounds

Before concluding this chapter, there is one aspect of each of these organization's rhetoric that is neither textual or oral but physical—temple building. Each of the three organizations discussed here have all constructed

---

<sup>583</sup> "Foguangshan," accessed February 28, 2012.  
<http://www.fgs.org.tw/events/web/index.html>.

monastic complexes that are large in scope and scale. They are all located in quite rural settings where the tranquility sometimes associated with a Buddhist monastery is somewhat achievable. All three are modern constructions with modern conveniences. DDM and FGS are also equipped to hold conferences and welcome moderate to large groups of visitors. How are these places examples of rhetoric, though?

In one respect, each of the three monasteries serves as the headquarters of the organization. Whenever there is a major event, it is almost always held or associated with the monastery.<sup>584</sup> But more than this, they are pilgrimage sites, places where members and non-members alike congregate. They are places where community occurs. Regarding Ciji's complex, "The Still Thoughts Abode" (*jingsi tang* 靜思堂), Julia Huang notes how it is considered "home" by and for Ciji followers and visits to the Abode serve to renew one's identity as a 'Ciji person' (*Ciji ren* 慈濟人).<sup>585</sup> None of these are monasteries that one would just happen upon. It requires a conscious effort to go there. But they are considered places worth visiting. Each monastery has made the appeal to both members and non-members that, in the case of members, this is where the heart of the organization is, and in the case of non-members, the environment offers benefits,

---

<sup>584</sup> Ciji is somewhat different than DDM and FGS, though, in that it is smaller in scale and serves as the residence for only Zhengyan, Ciji nuns, and a handful of lay personnel.

<sup>585</sup> Huang, *Compassion*, 94-95.

spiritual or otherwise. Either way, there is the expectation that one will identify with the location.

According to Lin Yiren, “In the popular trend of temple building, a conventional unearthly and socially-disengaged ‘pureland’ is transformed into a ‘here and now’ and socially-engaged Buddhist organization with a substantial material basis.”<sup>586</sup> In the case of environmental rhetoric, the message begins with the beauty of the monastic environment. The rural setting and size of each monastery results in a certain serenity that Taiwanese, who are generally from large cities, appreciate. Moreover, each place makes an effort to observe environmental practices. There are often no disposable tableware, lights are used only when needed, most buildings are well-ventilated and do not require air conditioning, and efforts are made to maintain flora. This is especially true in the case of DDM. Part of this reason is because DDM is the newest of the three complexes, and so was able to take advantage of new environmental technologies. But another part is due to Shengyan’s strong commitment to environmentalism.

The building of the new DDM monastery (officially called the Dharma Drum World Center for Buddhist Education) broke ground on a mountain slope in Jinshan, north of Taipei. Building such a large complex might raise questions over the impact on the flora and fauna, and such questions are legitimate. However, attempting to uphold DDM’s commitment to environmentalism, the development process (still on-going) has been well-documented. Great effort has been made to preserve as much of the local habitat as possible and the architecture

---

<sup>586</sup> Lin, “Environmental Beliefs,” 307.

was designed so as to have minimal contrast with the mountain aesthetic. Two well-fed streams were maintained that contain local fish species. In addition, there is a hiking trail with dense coverage that offers an even heightened sense of seclusion. These elements combine to make DDM a place that offers visitors a chance to engage both their religious and naturalist inclinations. This combination serves as a source of persuasion that Buddhism and environmental concern are connected by demonstrating the identification of the two in the very experience of the monastery. An alternative viewpoint might question whether such construction is even necessary for a Buddhist monastery, which encourages simplicity, and highlighting the amount spent to create such a place, label it extravagant and opulent. Depending on one's reaction to places like DDM and FGS, we can determine the degree to which the rhetoric of place was successful.

## 6.6 Characteristics of Chinese Buddhist Environmentalism

In this chapter my goal was to highlight the deep rhetorical currents that move the rhetoric of DDM and Ciji and account for the shallower currents in FGS. At the outset it is important to note that there is a rhetorical tradition in Chinese culture that each of the organizations we will look at are embedded in and perhaps draw upon. Xing Lu's studies of ancient Chinese rhetoric and the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution build on the fact that "sinologists have noted the striking similarity between Maoism and Confucianism in that both emphasize the role of ideology, conformity, and the moral integrity of the individual," a similarity that

finds expression in the rhetoric of Maoism and Confucianism.<sup>587</sup> In addition, both traditions of rhetoric appeal to the cultivation of the individual as a part of one's responsibility to contribute to the public good. Maoism's inheritance of Confucian ideals and rhetoric helps us situate the rhetoric of humanistic Buddhism in the context of Chinese rhetoric.

There is indeed an emphasis in humanistic Buddhism on the individual's cultivation of his or her mind as the basis upon which social improvement can move forward. But one significant difference between the Maoist rhetoric and that of humanistic Buddhism is the consequences of the use of language, often in the form of slogans. Lu notes with reference to the Cultural Revolution that "the heavy-handed and pervasive use of political slogans in both public and private settings has contributed significantly to a general thoughtlessness still evident in today's China."<sup>588</sup> The environmental rhetoric of humanistic Buddhist groups, and DDM in particular, is quite the opposite. From the discussion on Naess's philosophy, we saw how some environmental rhetoric with a dialectic aspect promotes creative thinking on philosophical and normative issues. The environmental rhetoric of humanistic Buddhism incorporates the same elements of discursive thought intended to move the audience (either individual or collective) to a deeper understanding of the way environmentalism and Buddhist practice are intertwined. This kind of rhetorical practice contains the possibility

---

<sup>587</sup> Xing Lu, *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture, and Communication* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 47.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

of challenges to authority, but it seems that so far such challenges have not greatly upset the direction of these organizations.

In a previous essay, I referred to spiritual environmentalism as “purifying words.”<sup>589</sup> There is the suggestion that this teaching is intended to encourage the practitioner to work towards purifying her mind. But we can also understand this to mean that the in focus on the words used and not *solely* relying on ideas and concepts, environmental rhetoric “purifies” or clarifies religious environmental discourse of the oftentimes obstructive dichotomy of theory and practice, ontology and ethics. I hope to have shown that spiritual environmentalism is more than an attempt to offer a clever term for making Buddhism seem current and relevant in today’s society by hitching Buddhism to the coattails of environmentalism’s current popularity (at least in the media, if not always in practice).

The terms “spiritual environmentalism,” “fourfold environmentalism,” and “fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign” draw on traditional Chinese Buddhist notions of the mind, with its epistemological and ontological centrality, in order to address the role that Chinese Buddhism can play in contemporary society. They give the tradition an emotive and cognitive appeal by juxtaposing the more recent terms ‘environmentalism’ or ‘protection of the environment’ (*huanbao*). In the case of Shengyan’s spiritual environmentalism, the audience that is primarily addressed includes members of Dharma Drum Mountain, but also culturally Chinese Buddhists who follow some form of humanistic Buddhism. The new

---

<sup>589</sup> See Clippard, “Purifying Words.”

term “spiritual environmentalism” brings together two rarely correlated values, religion and protecting the natural world, in order to explore the connections between the two. The relationship offers a ground for creatively reimagining both how one can think about and carry out religious practice, as well as how one can conceive of altruism and engage in environmental protection. The way in which spiritual environmentalism reinterprets environmentalism allows for the further introduction of types of environmentalism. Also, we have seen that Shengyan and Zhengyan attempted to create interpretations of spiritual environmentalism that would be meaningful to non-Buddhists, which provide opportunities for possible interreligious dialogue around the theme of religious environmentalism. These are at least the possibilities set-forth by these articulations of Buddhist environmentalism. What has the impact of this new discourse been, how effective spiritual environmentalism will continue to be, and whether the fourfold environmentalism or the fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign possesses the rhetorical characteristics to make a broader non-Buddhist appeal successful are questions worthy of future research.

In the section on Ciji, I identified several expressions that are used to promote environmentalism. I tried to show that there is no single central concept that compares to Shengyan’s spiritual environmentalism (a term that Zhengyan, too, uses) and neither is there the systematization of concepts that Shengyan offers with his fivefold spiritual renaissance campaign. But it can certainly be argued that environmentalism is the dominant metaphor in Ciji, as it incorporates Buddhist and Confucian ethical and cosmological concepts, a vision of social



reform, and a unique interpretation of Buddhist practice. These elements allow Ciji's environmental rhetoric to construct and define audiences through identification among members, identification with the person of Zhengyan, and the framing of *huanbao*, recycling, and *fu* offers avenues of identification for non-Ciji and overseas audiences. Zhengyan's rhetoric of *fu*, recycling, and *huanbao* simultaneously engages traditional Buddhist and Chinese ethics, contemporary scientific discourse, and a modern social welfare movement. These terms offer paths by which Ciji members and others can identify with Ciji's environmental activities regardless of their degree of religious commitment or sense of religious identity.

FGS and Xingyun have expressed concern for environmental issues and taken concrete measures to address these problems, not on the scale of DDM or Ciji, nor with the degree of systemization, but they have demonstrated their concern in action. In addition, we can identify the presence of environmental rhetoric in Xingyun's publications. Central to that rhetoric is the notion of the pureland. The notion of a pureland is important to all humanistic Buddhist organizations, since they espouse the goal of establishing a Pure land on earth. But making this claim is insufficient as we have seen, since traditional Pure land images, such as those associated with the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha, are idealized and unnatural places. They cannot be easily reconciled with environmental conservation of ecosystems.

What all three of these organizations have in common is a concern to convey the importance of environmentalism as a value relevant to the

contemporary Buddhist. Moreover, they do so in terms intended to be meaningful to the followers of each organization. In the case of DDM, the key concept is spiritual environmentalism and this is deeply connected with environmentalist practices in the conventional sense. The same is true for Ciji, where Zhengyan advocates recycling and cherishing natural resources for both the material and spiritual benefit these practices offer. In Ciji and FGS, where there is a strong emphasis on traditional Chinese and Confucian values, environmentalism is linked to filial piety and social responsibility, either through an emphasis on the welfare of future generations or on environmental activities offering a way for a family to accrue collective merit and strengthen its bond.

An additional element of the process of identification is the authority of each of these three Buddhist leaders. Buddhism and democracy in Taiwan has been a topic of several studies recently. The general conclusion is that most authority remains with the spiritual heads of the organizations, despite increased lay involvement.<sup>590</sup> As Lin Yiren observes:

The role of [m]asters in formulating [*huanbao*] discourse and convincing offers of its correctness is an important one. Masters in all three organizations [in Lin's study these three are: Shengyan, Zhengyan, and Zhaohui] play a 'gatekeeping' role both in terms of providing authoritative interpretations of Buddhist doctrines, and positioning their institutions in society. Moreover, their charismatic personality plays an important role in encouraging their followers to practice [*huanbao*]. This 'gatekeeping' role is also a crucial one for it effectively transforms the scientifically-dominated [*huanbao*] discourse of a secular environmental

---

<sup>590</sup> All three studies were done before Shengyan passed away in 2009. From the digital and print media issued by DDM, he still seems to be the spiritual head of the organization. It would be interesting to see a follow-up study of how DDM has adjusted to the absence and how FGS and Ciji, particular, will cope with this change.

movement to a spiritually based discourse that meets a religious purpose—the construction of a distinctive collective identity.<sup>591</sup>

Zhengyan is a good example of the role these leaders play. The importance of Taiwanese, culturally Chinese, and Buddhist audiences is reflected in the way in which Zhengyan's persona is constructed to arouse the expectations of the audience. Burke refers to this aspect of rhetoric as "psychology of form," whereby rhetorical form creates community by arousing desires and that are then fulfilled by the rhetoric. When viewed as a bodhisattva or *shangren*, the audience expects Zhengyan to be the embodiment of compassion and wisdom. This expectation is then fulfilled by spiritualizing activities that are typically considered mundane. Recycling is a perfect example. Recycling entails sifting through trash and collecting recyclable materials. But when advocated by Zhengyan, who points out that recycling uncovers the value of discarded materials, one can recognize it as the work of a bodhisattva whose vow is to transform impurity to purity. That a bodhisattva figure like Zhengyan recognizes the spiritual value of recycling confirms the essential spirituality of the practice.

Lin's point also illustrates the multivalent process of identification that rhetoric plays. And as Burke has shown, there are processes of both identification and division at play. On one level, the rhetoric of an organization seeks to offer a discourse that is recognizable and appealing to an audience: in terms of values, images, and form. This process of identity formation gathers an audience into a community. On another level, the discourse also will set this community off from

---

<sup>591</sup> Lin, "Environmental Beliefs," 284.

others. For the very same reasons the audience identifies with the discourse, it will likely see these characteristics as different in degree or quality to that of other organizations. In the case of religious rhetoric of DDM, Ciji, and DDM, there is a third level of identification, by which the expectations that the spiritual head is believed to be special in some sense are reinforced by the accompanying discourses (such as biographical narrative) and set off from the rest of the community. This division between leader and community contributes to the authority of the leader's rhetoric.

Finally, we must note the dialectic that accompanies and animates each organization's environmental rhetoric. For both Ciji and DDM, environmentalism is sacralized or spiritualized. Environmentalism began in Taiwan as a secular movement, first associated with Western-trained academics and then becoming a popular means by which to critique the authoritarian government and push for democratic reforms. Following Lin Yiren, I noted that after the lifting of martial law in 1987, environmentalism became more formalized but Taiwanese was going through such dramatic change, social stability was a need that many religious leaders tried to address. Many Taiwanese found the discourse of humanistic Buddhism appealing and religious organizations were freer to offer ways for Taiwanese to contribute to social reform. These changes have been part of the humanistic Buddhist project of reforming Buddhism to make it more acceptable to lay devotees. Stuart Chandler notes that this project has resulted in "the secularization of Buddhist practice. In other words, the divisions between the supramundane and the mundane and

between monastic life and lay life are blurred.”<sup>592</sup> There is no better example of this than spiritual environmentalism.<sup>593</sup> Environmentalism is concerned with the natural world and very mundane social issues. It is perhaps one of the most “earthly” of all social movements. But DDM and Ciji, particularly, have taken environmentalism and argued that environmentalism is nothing less than pure Buddhist practice, the cultivation of compassion and wisdom, the accumulation of merit, the bodhisattva’s process of building a Pure land. For DDM, environmentalism as normally understood is a process of working through karma and purifying the mind. With Ciji there is a clear move to reinterpret recycling as a form of religious practice. And for FGS Amitabha’s Western Pure Land is the ultimate goal for environmentalism.

These reinterpretations of environmentalism are thoroughly (but not solely) rhetorical. They turn on a dialectic of sacred and secular. The way in which *huanbao* is used by these organizations challenges their audiences to step back and question what the goal of Buddhist practice is and what environmentalism “truly” means. On page 110, I noted how, for Burke, dialectic is a way of establishing or addressing difference, while rhetoric is a way of overcoming differences and forging unities. The dialectic of sacred and secular that animates spiritual environmentalism begins from the assumption that these two—spirituality or religion and environmentalism—are different. The

---

<sup>592</sup> Chandler, *Establishing*, 75.

<sup>593</sup> Here I use the term to refer to the environmentalism of all three organizations. This use is justified due to the fact that Shengyan, Zhengyan, and Xingyun all use the term.

environmental rhetoric of DDM, Ciji, and FGS moves on to redefine both these concepts and show that they are, in fact one and the same.

Despite the many commonalities among the environmental rhetoric of these three organizations, there is not necessarily one interpretation of what Buddhist environmentalism means. As Lin Yiren astutely observes, “the emergence of different versions of Taiwanese Buddhist Huan-Baos [environmental discourses and practices] is actually a process of contestation, negotiation, and sharing among different individuals and organizations that is dynamic and generated through particular personal experiences and social practices.”<sup>594</sup> DDM’s “spiritual environmentalism” is deeply connected to the practice of Chan meditation, a distinguishing feature of Shengyan’s teaching. The practice of mental cultivation in Ciji seems to occur mainly in the carrying out of recycling and is enhanced by Zhengyan’s reinterpretation of recycling centers as places of practice. The emphasis on FGS seems to be mostly on education, but the mixture of Pure land rhetoric suggests that environmental protection is not so much a process of cultivation as it is a goal to be achieved. The same can be said of DDM and Ciji, as well, but in the case of these two the teleological focus is balanced by the process of spiritual or psychological transformation.

---

<sup>594</sup> Lin, “Environmental Beliefs,” 295.

## Chapter 7

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this dissertation I have sought to reorient how scholars approach religious environmentalism. I have tried to demonstrate that articulations of the environmental concern within a religious tradition will be difficult to make resonate with the members of that religious community, if those articulations are couched only in metaphysical and philosophical language. In failing to convey effectively how or why environmental concerns are meaningful to one's religious practice and identity, a textually-based strategy of articulating a religious tradition's environmental ethics falls short of bridging the theory/practice gap within environmentalism.

I have sought to redress this gap by offering a method of rhetorical analysis that focuses on identification, framing, and dialectic. Identifying these aspects of a religious tradition's environmental discourse can illustrate how a religious tradition can make environmentalism meaningful to its members and appeal to a larger segment of society. I argued in chapter four and five for the importance of focusing on actual the environmental rhetoric of contemporary religious organizations by demonstrating that various communities within a given religious tradition are implicated in various social, historical, political, and linguistic contexts. These differing contexts make each community unique. Simply advocating decontextualized religious doctrines, regardless of how they have been reinterpreted, and expecting they will be meaningful to members of that tradition ignores the fact that an individual, while she may be, say, Buddhist,

is also Taiwanese, middle-aged, single, and a university graduate. Her background and values that derive from her other identities contribute to determining what her environmental values are.

Although scholars are right to recognize the potential effectiveness of religion in moving communities towards more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, it is necessary to understand religious environmentalism as a social and spiritual phenomenon. Therefore, we must begin with religious environmentalism where it already exists. However, recognizing the differences that exist not only among different religious traditions, but among communities within a religious tradition, scholars need a method by which larger trends can be identified and then applied to broader contexts. Rhetorical analysis is able to accomplish both these tasks of analysis and identification. It is a practical method of inquiry. Based on the research and analysis carried out in this dissertation I would like to offer three final observations: 1) implications for religious environmentalism, 2) the theory/practice gap, and 3) the scholar's role.

This study seeks to illustrate that scholarship on religious environmentalism (or religion and ecology) must begin from a clear acknowledgment of the cultural context of the community of Buddhists one is studying. This includes understanding the various ways environmental problems are perceived and discussed by members of the community. It is important to recognize that environmental issues might not always be meaningful in terms of the Buddhist worldview, but that does not imply that Buddhists do not find these issues important. For example, Bron Taylor's critique that the current world



religion's paradigm governing work in religion and ecology marginalizes non-mainstream groups or fails to account for alternative religiosities can be read in another light. Many contemporary temples, monasteries, and Buddhist organizations emphasize filial piety as integral to Buddhist ethics. As we saw in the context of Taiwanese Buddhism, Confucian notions of filial piety are absolutely central to Ciji and FGS and Shengyan's "six ethics of the mind" (*xin liu lunli* 新六倫理) seek to encompass the traditional five Confucian virtues. However, this virtue is rarely, if ever, mentioned in non-Chinese Buddhist literature on environmentalism. This suggests that simply aligning Chinese Buddhism with Buddhism and treating it separately from Confucianism will result in an analysis that does not accurately grasp the scope and character of values promoted in Chinese Buddhist environmentalism. This lacunae is uncovered precisely as a result of first approaching the rhetoric of the phenomenon and does not arise when Chinese Buddhist environmentalism is examined philosophically. This dissertation proposes and outlines the elements of a new hermeneutical approach that uses rhetorical analysis to articulate the nature of environmental problems, whether those problems are rendered meaningful in a religious context.

A second outcome of this dissertation is that it offers an effective way to reduce, if not eliminate, the theory/practice gap that current approaches to religious environmentalism has inherited from its reliance on the dominant paradigm in environmental ethics. Chapter two showed that environmental pragmatism offers a methodological stance that directly addresses the practical nature of environmentalism while still maintaining the relevance of philosophical

and ethical discussion. Chapter three highlighted the connection between environmental pragmatism and strands of radical ecology based on a recognition of the role that rhetoric plays in making environmental discourse broadly appealing.

This same emphasis on practicality lies at the heart of the turn to religion as a source of environmental amelioration. When addressing environmental issues, many scholars seek to explore the potential of religious traditions in articulating a worldview or part of a worldview that might create a foundation for social change on a larger scale. Even the work of scholars who appear to be simply exploring the environmental interpretations of a tradition's doctrine or practices often include statements that express the hope that such scholarship can contribute to changing the way humans understand the human/nature relationship. And we can see that such incorporation of religion into environmentalism can be successful to varying degrees. The case of Thai Buddhist tree ordinations and the recycling program at Ciji are popular movements and receive worldwide recognition. Roger Gottlieb, Willis Jenkins, and others note similar successes in other traditions.

Combining the theoretical approach advocated by many environmental pragmatists with a focus on rhetoric as a force for change provides a methodology that allows for the mutual development of, on the one hand, the philosophical foundations of specific religious environmentalisms and, on the other, the discursive elements that forge communities out of audiences which are crucial to carrying out substantive change.

These two outcomes of the rhetorical method proposed and developed in this dissertation can also be fit into the theory/practice mold. The first observation is theoretical in nature. It offers what is lacking in the field of religion and ecology, a firm ground from which to begin research into religious environmentalism. This does not mean that rhetorical methodology should displace other approaches and become the only approach. Rather, it suggests that doctrinal and philosophical and ethical approaches all benefit from a foundation of rhetorical analysis which clears the scholar's vision of how the approach taken by a specific religious community will be shaped by the context of tradition, society, and values. The elements of audience, framing, and identification provide specific ways to breakdown the often complex articulations of a community's environmental concern, not only in verbal discourse, but in ritual and communal practices as well. Introducing the dialectical aspect of rhetorical analysis significantly aids in discerning how values are distinguished and defined through the interaction of the religious leadership and lay community.

Rhetorical analysis, though, also reveals that rhetoric is already in play within many forms of religious environmentalism. The examples of Taiwanese Buddhist environmentalism explored here all show that rhetoric is effectively combined with doctrine and the specific religious identity of each organization in the development and promotion of environmentalism as a humanistic Buddhist concern. What Lin Yiren refers to as the negotiation and contested nature of Buddhist environmental discourse is part of a dialectical relationship between the leadership of the Buddhist organizations and their audiences. We can see the

results of how this relationship forms the rhetoric of the each group. DDM's focus on Chan meditation is appealing to its members, in fact, this is one reason people choose to become members. The same can be said for Ciji and its focus on social welfare programs and lack of focus on meditation. So the environmental rhetoric of each organization must align itself with the characteristics of the organization that are already sources of identification. But how the membership responds to the environmental campaigns and the ways in which the organization's seek to make the environment meaningful will determine what adjustments need to be made. Is the message effective? What are the trends in participation? Addressing these elements of the dialectic between lay followers and religious authority would further deepen the analysis of this dissertation and are areas for future research.

Recognizing and taking seriously the rhetorical aspects of religious environmentalism provides a common methodological ground for both scholars doing critical work and others who desire to make constructive suggestions to specific communities on how they might address environmental issues. Since it has been noted that many if not most scholars working in environmental ethics or religion and ecology share some interest in advancing programs of sustainability within communities, this common ground provides a basis for dialogue among all the parties working in the field, regardless of one's goals. Moreover, viewing rhetorical analysis as a method of clarifying terms and identifying strategies would only strengthen the relevance of the theological and philosophical work that constitutes the bulk of scholarship in religion and ecology. I noted the plethora of

Buddhist concepts to which scholars have appealed in attempts to articulate a Buddhist environmental ethics. But mostly these attempts fall on deaf ears since they fail to first identify which community this ethics should or could be operationalized. I have tried to illustrate that in the case of Taiwanese Buddhists, a meaningful environmental ethics will build on notions of purity, the establishment of a Pure land on earth, Confucian notions of filial piety, and the rectitude of one's mind and/or spirit. Other emphasises and how these concepts are related will also depend on the specific community. But none of these concepts could be easily deduced from the articulations heretofore offered by scholars. By building religious environmentalism on a rhetorical foundation, scholars and practitioners are better equipped to create the kinds of community required to effectively address the continuing threat posed by environmental damage.

## REFERENCES

### *Primary Sources*

“Ciji huanbao jinjie 慈濟環保簡介” (A simple explanation of Ciji environmentalism). *Ciji jijinhui* July 29, 2009.  
[http://www.tzuchi.org.tw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=353&Itemid=292&lang=zh](http://www.tzuchi.org.tw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=353&Itemid=292&lang=zh) (accessed 11/18/2011)

Hu, Muin. *Sharing Dharma Drum Mountain: A White Paper on Happiness*. Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corp., 2005.

Shengyan (Sheng Yen) 聖嚴. *The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism: Inheriting the Past and Inspiring the Future*. Taipei: Sheng Yen Education Foundation, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Environmental Protection.” *Chan Magazine* 20:4 (2000), 31-33.  
Accessed April 15, 2010.  
<http://chan1.org/ddp/chanmag/fal2000.html#environment>.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Establishing Global Ethics*. Spiritual Growth Series. Ven. Chang Ji and Kristina Mayo, eds. Elmhurst, NY: Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Footprints in the Snow: The Autobiography of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*. New York: Double Day, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Hoofprint of the Ox: Principles of the Chan Buddhist Path as Taught by a Modern Chinese Master*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Jingtu zai renjian 淨土在人間 (The Pure land is in the human realm)*. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Shattering the Great Doubt: The Chan Practice of Huatou*. Boston: Shambala Publications, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Shengyan fashi Xinling huanbao 聖嚴法師心靈環保 (Spiritual Environmentalism)*. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Sizhong huanbao 四種環保 (Fourfold Environmentalism)*. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Xinling huanbao 心靈環保 (Spiritual Environmentalism)*. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Xin wusi yundong* 心五四運動 (Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign). Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Xiuxin zai hongchen: weimojing liu jiang* 修行在紅塵: 維摩經六講 (Practicing in the human realm: Six lectures on the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*). Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_, et al. *Buyiyangde huanbao shijian* (Different Voices on the Practice of Environmental Protection). Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2007.

Xingyun (Hsing Yun) 星雲. “*Huanbao yu xinbao* 環保與心保 (Environmental and Spiritual Preservation).” *Pumen xuebao* 60 (November) 2011, 341-61. English version available as *Keynote speech given at the 2010 BLIA General Conference, Fo Guang Shan, Taiwan, October 2-7, 2010*. <http://www.blia.org/english/about/words/keynote/kn2010.htm>

\_\_\_\_\_. *Protecting Our Environment: Buddhism in Every Step*, vol. 21. Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha’s Light Publishing, 2007.

Yinshun 印順. “*Jingtu xin lun* 淨土新論 (A new treatise on Pure land).” in *Jingtu yu Chan* 淨土與禪, *Miaoyunji* v. 4. 1-75. 1981.

Zhaohui (Chao Hwei) 釋昭慧. *Fojiao houshe lunlixue* 佛教後設倫理學 (Buddhist Metaethics). Taipei: Fajie, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Fojiao lunlixue* 佛教倫理學 (Buddhist Ethics). Taipei: Fajie, 2001.

Zhengyan (Cheng Yen) 證嚴. *Qingjing zai yuantou* 清淨在源頭 (Purity at the source). Taipei: Jingsi renwen, 2010.

### *Secondary Sources*

Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

Abuyuan, Althea Tumacder. “Faith-based Organizations, International Organizations, and Environmental Management.” PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2006.

Alm, Leslie R., Ross E. Burkhardt, and Marc V Simon. *Turmoil in American Public Policy: Science, Democracy, and the Environment*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010.

Ashiwa, Yoshiko. "Positioning Religion in Modernity: State and Buddhism in China." In *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*. Edited by Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, 43-73. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Ashiwa, Yoshiko and David L. Wank, eds. *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Badiner, Allen Hunt, ed. *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1990.

Barbour, Ian G. *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.

Barnhill, David Landis, and Roger S. Gottlieb, eds. *Deep Ecology and World Religions: New Essays on Sacred Ground*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001.

Batchelor, Martine and Kerry Brown, eds. *Buddhism and Ecology*. London: Cassells, 1992.

Bauman, Whitney A., Richard R. Bohannon II, and Kevin J. O'Brien, eds. *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Benavides, Gustavo. "Ecology and Religion." *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Edited by Bron Taylor, 548-53. New York: Continuum, 2005.

Benford, Robert D. and David A. Snow. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), 611-39.

Benstein, Jeremy. *The Way into Judaism and Ecology*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2006.

Berger, Peter L., ed. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999.

Bernstein, Ellen. *Ecology and the Jewish Spirit: Where Nature and the Sacred Meet*. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.

Berry, Thomas. *The Dream of the Earth*. Berkeley: Sierra Club Books, 1988.



\_\_\_\_\_. *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Berthrong, John. "Motifs for a New Confucian Ecological Vision." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*. Edited by Roger Gottlieb, 236-258. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Bhikshuni Guo-Jing. "A Study of Master Sheng Yen's Thoughts about Pure Land: Belief centered on Pure Land on Earth." In *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, vol. 1 (*Shengyan yanjiu di er ji* 聖嚴研究第一輯), 69-108. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2010.

Biehl, Janet. *Finding our Way: Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics*. Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1991.

Bingenheimer, Marcus. "Some Remarks on the Usage of Renjian Fojiang and the Contribution of Venerable Yinshun to Chinese Buddhist Modernism." In *Development and Practice of Humanitarian Buddhism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Edited by Mutsu Chu, Jinhua Chen, and Lori Meeks, 141-161. Hualien: Tzu Chi University Press, 2007.

Birnbaum, Raoul. "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn." In *Religion in China Today: The China Quarterly Special Issues*. Edited by Daniel Overmyer, 122-144. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Bookchin, Murray. *The Modern Crisis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1987.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism*. Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Thinking Ecologically: A Dialectical Approach." *Our Generation* 18:2 (1987), 3-40.

\_\_\_\_\_. "What is Social Ecology?" In *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Edited by Michael Zimmerman, 436-454. Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001.

Booth, Wayne C. "Kenneth Burke's Religious Rhetoric: 'God-terms' and the Ontological Proof." In *Rhetorical Invention and Religious Inquiry: New Perspectives*. Edited by Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted, 25-46. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Botkin, Daniel B. *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Brock, Bernard L. "Epistemology and Ontology in Kenneth Burke's Dramatism." *Communication Quarterly* 33:2 (1985), 94-104.

Brooke, John Hedley. "Should the word *Nature* be Eliminated?" In *Envisioning Nature, Science, and Religion*. Edited by James D. Proctor, 312-336. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2009.

Brown, Kerry. "In the Water there Were Fish and the Fields Were Full of Rice: Reawakening the Lost Harmony of Thailand." In *Buddhism and Ecology*. Edited by Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown, 87-99. London and New York: Cassell, 1992.

Brummet, Barry. "Kenneth Burke's Symbolic Trinity." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 28:3 (1995), 234-251.

Bruner, Michael and Max Oelschlaeger. "Rhetoric, Environmentalism, and Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Ethics* 16: 4 (1994), 337-357.

Burke, Kenneth. "Dramatism and Logology." *Communication Quarterly* 33:2 (1985), 89-93.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays in Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969 [1961].

\_\_\_\_\_. *On Symbols and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Buswell, Jr., Robert E. "The 'Short-cut Approach' of *K'an-hua* Meditation: The Evolution of a Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism." In *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*. Edited by Peter N. Gregory, 321-77. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987.

Cabézon, José Ignazio. "Buddhist Studies as a Discipline and the Role of Theory." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 18:2 (1995), 231-268.

Callicott, J. Baird. *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The New New (Buddhist?) Ecology." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 2:2 (2008), 166-182.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Roger T. Ames, eds. *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. Albany: SUNY, 1989.

Campany, Robert Ford. "On the Very Idea of Religions (In the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)." *History of Religions* 42:4 (2003), 287-319.

Chandler, Stuart. "Buddhism in China and Taiwan: The Dimensions of Contemporary Chinese Buddhism." In *Buddhism in the Modern World Comparative Perspectives*. Edited by Stephen C. Berkwitz, 169-194. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Perspective on Modernization and Globalization*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.

Chang, Changfu. "The Problem of the Public: John Dewey's Theory of Communication and Its Influence on Modern Chinese Communication." In *Chinese Communication Studies: Contrasts and Comparisons*. Edited by Xing Lu, Wenshan Jia, and D. Ray Heisey, 47-64. Westport, CT: Albex Publishing, 2002.

Chen Huaiyu. "A Buddhist Classification of Animals and Plants in Early Tang Times." *Journal of Asian History* 43:1 (2009), 31-51.

Cheney, Jim. "Postmodern Environmental Ethics: Ethics as Bioregional Narrative." In *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*. Edited by Max Oelschlaeger, 23-42. Albany: SUNY Press, 1995.

Chen Jie. "Transnational Environmental Movement: Impacts on the Green Civil Society in China." *Journal of Contemporary China* 19:65 (2010), 503-523.

Cheng, Chung-ying. "On the Environmental Ethics of the Tao and Ch'i." In *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment*. Edited by Richard C. Foltz, 224-236. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.

Chesebro, James W. "The Symbolic Construction of Social Realities: A Case Study in the Rhetorical Criticism of Paradox." *Communication Quarterly* 32:2 (1984), 164-171.

Chou, Jou-Han. "Tong wang renjian jingtu de yaoshi 通往人間淨土的鑰匙:淺談聖嚴法師的菩薩戒 (A key leading to the pure land: discussion of the Bodhisattva vows in Master Sheng Yen's system)." In *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, vol. 2 聖嚴研究第二輯, 113-154. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2011.

Clark, John. "How wide is Deep Ecology?" In *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. Edited by Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg, 3-16. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Matter of Freedom: Ecofeminist Lessons or Social Ecology." In *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Edited by Michael Zimmerman, 455-470. Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001.

Clippard, Seth DeVere. "The Lorax Wears Saffron: Toward a Buddhist Environmentalism." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 18 (2011), 212-248.  
<http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/files/2011/06/Clippard1.pdf>

\_\_\_\_\_. "Purifying Words: The Rhetorical Aspects of Spiritual Environmentalism." In *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, vol. 2 (*Shengyan yanjiu di er ji 聖嚴研究第二輯*). 75-111. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2011.

Cohen, Jeremy. "*Be Fruitful and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*": *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Cook, Francis H. *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jeweled Net of Indra*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Jeweled Net of Indra." In *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*. Edited by J. Baird Callicot and Roger T. Ames, 213-29. Albany: SUNY, 1989.

Cooper, David E. and Simon P. James. *Buddhism, Virtue, and Environment*. Hants: Ashgate, 2005.

Corbett, Julia B. *Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2006.

Coupe, Laurence. "Kenneth Burke: Pioneer of Ecocriticism." *Journal of American Studies* 35 (2001), 413-31.

Crusius, Timothy W. "A Case for Kenneth Burke's Dialectic and Rhetoric." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 19:1 (1986), 23-37.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Kenneth Burke and the Conversation after Philosophy*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999.

Curtain, Deane. "A State of Mind Like Water: Ecosophy T and the Buddhist Traditions." In *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. Edited by Eric Katz, 253-268. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

Dake, Mitsuya. "Pure Land Buddhism and Its Prescriptive on the Environment." In *How Much is Enough? Buddhism, Consumerism, and the Human Environment*. Edited by Richard K. Payne, 63-81. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010.

Darlington, Susan M. "Buddhism and Development: The Ecology Monks of Thailand." In *Action Dharma: New Studies in Engaged Buddhism*. Edited by Christopher Queen, Charles Prebish, and Damien Keown. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Good Buddha and the Fierce Spirits: Protecting the Northern Thai Forest." *Contemporary Buddhism* 8:2 (2007), 169-185.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Ordination of a Tree: The Buddhist Ecology Movement in Thailand." *Ethnology* 37:1 (1998), 1-15.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Rethinking Buddhism and Development: The Emergence of Environmental Monks in Thailand." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 7 (2000).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Ritual and Risk: Environmental Buddhism in Practice." Paper to be presented at the conference "Buddhism and Ecology," Harvard Divinity School, December 10, 2005. Accessed 01/23/2012.  
<http://www.hds.harvard.edu/cswr/resources/print/dongguk/darlington.pdf>

De Bary, Wm. Theodore, and Irene Bloom, eds. *Sources of the Chinese Tradition*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: vol. 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

De Jong, Eccy. *Spinoza and Deep Ecology: Challenging Traditional Approaches to Environmentalism*. Hants and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004.

Delcore, Henry D. "Symbolic Politics or Generification? The Ambivalent Implications of Tree Ordinations in the Thai Environmental Movement." *Journal of Political Ecology* 11:1 (2004), 1-30.

De Shalit, Avner. *The Environment: Between Theory and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

De Silva, Lily. "Early Buddhist Attitudes towards Nature." In *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*. Edited by Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, 91-103. Boston: Shambala, 2000.

De Silva, Padmasiri. *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics in Buddhism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Ding Renjie (Ting Jen-chieh) 丁仁傑. "Renjian Buddhism and Its Successors: Toward a Sociological Analysis of Buddhist Awakening in Contemporary Taiwan." In *Development and Practice of Humanitarian Buddhism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Edited by Mutsu Chu, Jinhua Chen, and Lori Meeks, 229-267. Hualien: Tzu Chi University Press, 2007.

DiZerega, Gus. "Empathy, Society, Nature, and the Relational Self: Deep Ecology and Liberal Modernity." In *The Ecological Community: Environmental Challenges for Philosophy, Politics, and Morality*. Edited by Roger S. Gottlieb, 56-81. New York; London: Routledge, 1997.

Dryzek, John S. "Green Reason: Communicative Ethics for the Biosphere." In *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*. Edited by Max Oelschlaeger, 101-118. Albany: SUNY Press, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Dunning, Stephen N. *Dialectical Readings: Three Types of Interpretation*. University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1997.

Eckel, Malcom David. "Is There a Buddhist Philosophy of Nature?" In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 327-349. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Eckersley, Robyn. "Divining Evolution: The Ecological Ethics of Murray Bookchin." *Environmental Ethics* 11 (1989), 99-116.

Economy, Elizabeth. *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*. 2004.

Elvin, Mark. *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Ehrenfeld, David and Philip J. Bentley. "Judaism and the Practice of Stewardship." In *Judaism and Environmental Studies: A Reader*. Edited by Martin Yaffee, 125-135. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001. 125-135.

Evanoff, Richard J. "Communicative Ethics and Moral Considerability." *Environmental Ethics* 29:3 (Fall) 2007: 247-266.

Faure, Bernard. *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Feng Huxiang (Fung Hu-hsiang) 馮滬祥. *Huanjing lunli xue—zhongxi huanbao zhexue bijiao yanjiu* 環境倫理學—中西環保哲學比較研究 (Environmental

- Ethics: A comparative study between Chinese and Western environmental philosophy). Taipei: Student Book Company, 1991.
- Foltz, Richard S., ed. *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.
- Fox, Alan. "Process Ecology and the 'Ideal' Dao." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32:1 (2005), 47-57.
- Fox, Warwick. *Towards a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism*. London: Shambala, 1990.
- Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar. "Rhetoric and Its Double: Reflections of the Rhetorical Turn in the Human Sciences." In *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*. Edited by John Louis Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit, and Sally Caudill, 194-212. New York: Guilford Press, 1999.
- Gare, Arran. "The Postmodernism of Deep Ecology, the Deep Ecology of Postmodernism, and Grand Narratives." In *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. Edited by Eric Katz, 195-214. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.
- Gilkey, Langdon. *Nature, Reality, and the Sacred: the Nexus of Science and Religion*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Glasser, Harold. "Demystifying the Critiques of Deep Ecology." in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Edited by Michael Zimmerman, 212-226. Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.
- Goffman, Ethan. "China and the Path to Environmental Sustainability." Accessed 2/1/2012. <http://www.csa1.co.uk/discoveryguides/china/review.pdf>
- Gombrich, Richard and Gananath Obeyesekere. *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Gottlieb, Roger S. *A Greener Faith*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Grim, John and Mary Evelyn Tucker. "Intellectual and Organizational Foundations of Religion and Ecology." In *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*. Edited by Whitney A. Bauman, Richard R. Bohannon II, and Kevin J. O'Brien, 81-95. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011. 81-95.

Gross, Rita M. "Toward a Buddhist Environmental Ethic." In *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*. Edited by Richard S. Foltz, 163-171. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.

Grumbine, R. Edward. *Where the Dragon Meets the Angry River: Nature and Power in the People's Republic of China*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2010.

Guha, Ramachandra. "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique." *Environmental Ethics* 11 (1989), 71-83.

Guo Jingru 郭靜如. "Fojiao yu huanbao: Taiwan fagushan de huanbao linian yu shijian (Buddhism and 'Huanbao': Environmental Belief and Practice of Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan)." M.A. thesis, Fu Jen University, 2009.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Theory and Practice*. Translated by John Viertel. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

Hajer, Maarten A. *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Hallisey, Charles. "Ethical Particularism in Theravāda Buddhism." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3 (1996), 32-43.

Hallisey, Charles and Anne Hansen. "Narratives, Sub-ethics, and the Moral Life: Some Evidence from Theravāda Buddhism." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24:2 (1996), 305-327.

Hammerstrom, Erik J. "Buddhists Discuss Science in Modern China (1895-1947)." PhD diss., Indiana University, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Expression 'The Myriad Dharmas are Only Consciousness' in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Buddhism." *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 23 (2010), 71-92.

Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Harris, Ian. "Buddhism and the Discourse of Environmental Concern: Some Methodological Problems Considered." In *Buddhism and Ecology: the Intersection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 377-402. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Buddhist Environmental Ethics and Detraditionalization: The Case of EcoBuddhism." *Religion* 25 (1995), 199-211.



- \_\_\_\_\_. "Causation and Telos: The Problems of Buddhist Environmental Ethics." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 1 (1994), 45-56.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ecological Buddhism?" In *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*. Edited by Richard S. Foltz, 171-181. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 2 (1995), 173-190.
- Harris, Paul G. "Environmentalism in a Globalizing World: The Case of China." In *Environmental Values in a Globalizing World: Nature Justice and Governance*. Edited by Jouni Paavola and Ian Lowe, 123-139. London; New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Hay, Peter. *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Heine, Steven and Charles S. Prebish, eds. *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Heine, Steven, and Dale S. Wright, eds. *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Henning, Daniel. *Buddhism and Deep Ecology*. Bloomington, IN: 1<sup>st</sup> Books Library, 2002.
- Herndl, Carl G. and Stuart H. Brown, eds. *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.
- Hershock, Peter D. *Buddhism in the Public Sphere: Reorienting Global Interdependence*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Hiebert, Theodore. *The Yahwist's Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Hobson, Kersty. "Considering 'Green' Practices: NGOs and Singapore's Emergent Environmental-Political Landscape." *Sojourn* 20:2 (2005), 155-176.
- Hoffman, Frank J. "Unskillful Karma: Environmental Pollution as Ignorance in Action." *International Journal for the Study of Humanistic Buddhism* 1 (2011), 1-15.

Hori, G. Victor Sōgen. "Kōan and *Kenshō* in the Rinzai Zen Curriculum." In *Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*. Edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, 280-315. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Hourdequin, Marion and David B. Wong. "A Relational Approach to Environmental Ethics." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32:1 (2005), 19-33.

Howe, Benjamin. "Was Arne Naess Recognized as the Founder of Deep Ecology Prematurely? Semantics and Environmental Philosophy." *Environmental Ethics* 32:4 (2010), 369-83.

Hsiao, Michael Hsin-Huang. "Environmental Movements in Taiwan." In *Asia's Environmental Movements: Comparative Perspectives*. Edited by Yok-shiu F. Lee and Alvin F. So, 31-54. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999.

Hsiao, Michael Hsin-Huang, On-Kwok Lai, Hwa-Jen Liu, Francisco A. Magno, Laura Edles, and Alvin Y. So. "Culture and Asian Styles of Environmental Movements." In *Asia's Environmental Movements: Comparative Perspectives*. Edited by Yok-shiu F. Lee and Alvin F. So, 210-229. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999.

Inada, Kenneth A. "The Cosmological Basis of Chinese Ethical Discourse." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32:1 (2005), 35-46.

Ingram, Paul O. "The Jeweled Net of Nature." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams. 71-88. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Ip, Hung-yok. "Buddhist Activism and Chinese Modernity." *Journal of Global Buddhism* 10 (2009), 145-192.

Ives, Christopher. "Deploying the Dharma: Reflections on the Methodology of Constructive Buddhist Ethics." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 15 (2008), 23-44.

\_\_\_\_\_. "In Search of a Green Dharma: Philosophical Issues in Buddhist Environmental Ethics." In *Destroying Mara Forever: Buddhist Ethics Essays in Honor of Damien Keown*. Edited by John Powers and Charles S. Prebish, 165-186. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Press, 2009.

Jacobs, Mark X. "Jewish Environmentalism: Past Accomplishments and Future Challenges." In *Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word*. Edited by Tirosh-Samuels, Hava, 449-480. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

- James, Simon P. *Zen Buddhism and Environmental Ethics*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004.
- Jamieson, Dale, ed. *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.
- Jenkins, Willis. "After Lynn White: Religious Ethics and Environmental Problems." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 37:2 (2009), 283-309.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Jiang Canteng 江燦騰. "Huangjing baohu zhi fanxing zhuan yi 環境保護之「範型轉移 (The Paradigm Shift in Environmental Protection). In *Taiwan dangdai fojiao 台灣當代佛教 (Contemporary Taiwanese Buddhism)*, 168-175. Taipei: Nantian shuju chuban, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Taiwan fojiao shi 台灣佛教史 (A History of Taiwanese Buddhism)*. Taipei: Wunan, 2009.
- Johnston, Lucas. "The 'Nature' of Buddhism: A Survey of Relevant Literature and Themes." *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* 10:1 (2006), 69-99.
- Jones, Charles B. *Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660-1990*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Transitions in the Practice and Defense of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism." In *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition*. Edited by Steven Heine and Charles S. Prebish, 125-141. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Jones, Ken. *The New Social Face of Buddhism: A Call to Action*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2003.
- Kabilsingh, Chatsumarn. *Buddhism and Nature Conservation*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Buddhist Monks and Forest Conservation." In *Radical Conservatism: Buddhism in the Contemporary World. Essays in Honor of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's 84<sup>th</sup> Birthday*. Edited by Sulak Sivaraksa, 301-310. Bangkok: Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Early Buddhist Views on Nature." In *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*. Edited by Roger S. Gottlieb, 130-133. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Kalland, Arne. "The Religious Environmentalist Paradigm." In *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Edited by Bron Taylor, 1367-70. New York: Continuum, 2005.

Katz, Eric. *Nature as Subject: Human Obligation and Natural Community*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg, eds. *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. London and Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Andrew Light, eds. *Environmental Pragmatism*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Kaza, Stephanie. "To Save All Beings: Buddhist Environmental Activism." In *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*. Edited by Roger S. Gottlieb, 330-350. New York: Routledge, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Kenneth Kraft, eds. *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*. Boston: Shambala, 2000.

Kearns, Laurel and Catherine Keller, eds. *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

Keown, Damien. *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*. New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2000.

Killingsworth, M. Jimmie and Jacqueline S. Palmer. *Ecospeak: Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Millennial Ecology: The Apocalyptic Narrative from *Silent Spring* to *Global Warming*." In *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary Society*. Edited by Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, 21-45. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Kim, Yung Sik. *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi (1130-1200)*. American Philosophical Society, 2000.

King, Sallie B. "Elements of Engaged Buddhist Ethical Theory." In *Destroying Mara Forever: Buddhist Ethics Essays in Honor of Damien Keown*. Edited by John Powers and Charles S. Prebish, 187-203. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Press, 2009.

- Kircher, John. *The Balance of Nature: Ecology's Enduring Myth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Kirkman, Robert. *Skeptical Environmentalism: The Limits of Philosophy and Science*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- Kraft, Kenneth. "Nuclear Ecology and Engaged Buddhism." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 269-290. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Kuah-Pearce, Khun Eng. *Buddhism, the State, and Religious Engineering: Towards a Reformist Buddhism in Singapore*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2009.
- Lai Xianzong 賴賢宗. "Tiantai foxue yu shengtai zhexue" 天台佛學與生態哲學 (Tiantai Buddhism and Ecophilosophy). In *Fojiao wenhua yu dangdai shijie* 佛教文化與當代世界. 231-270. Taipei: Wenlu, 2005.
- Lai Yonghai 賴永海. "Ruxue jiaorong yu rensheng fojiao" 儒學交融與人生佛教 (The Blending of Confucian studies and Buddhism for Human Life). In *1991nian fojiao yanjiu lunwen ji* (Collection of Buddhist Studies essays from 1991), 108-129. Kaohsiung: Foguang, 1992.
- Laliberté, André. *Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan, 1983-2003: Safeguard the Faith, Build a Pure land, Help the Poor*. New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.
- Lancaster, Lewis. "Buddhism and Ecology: Collective Cultural Perceptions." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 3-18. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966.
- Light, Andrew. "Environmental Ethics." In *A Companion to Applied Ethics*. Edited by R.G. Frey and Christopher Heath Wellman, 633-649. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Lin Chaocheng 林朝成. *Fojiaotu xiang tudi lunli: 「renjian jingtu de xingsi* 佛教徒向土地倫理: 「人間淨土」的省思 (A Buddhist Ethic View for the Land: A Reflection of the Concept "Pure Land in the Human Realm"). *Chengda zongjiao yu wenhua xuebao* 成大宗教與文化學報 5 (2005), 59-90.

\_\_\_\_\_. “*Shentai gongdao yu zongjiao shijian: yi fojiao senlin baoyu sixiang wei hexin de tantao*” 生態公道與宗教實踐: 以佛教森林保育思想為核心的探討 (Ecojustice and religious practice: Focusing on Buddhist thought regarding forest conservation). In *1996 nian foxue yanjiu lunwenji: dangdai zongjiao lilun de xingsi* 1996 年佛學研究論文集: 當代宗教理論的省思 (A Collection of Research papers on Buddhist Studies from 1996: Reflections on contemporary religious theory), 73-98. Taipei: Foguangshan wenjiao jijinhui, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. “*Taiwan renjian fojiao huanjing lunshu de minxiang yu xingsi*” 台灣人間佛教環境論述的面向與省思 (Aspects of and reflections on Taiwanese Humanistic Buddhist environmental discourse). *Dangdai* 173:55 (2002), 52-61.

\_\_\_\_\_. “*Xin jing ze guotu jing: guanyu fojiao shengtaiguan de sikao yu tiaozhan*” 「心淨則國土淨關於佛教生態觀的思考與挑戰 (“When the mind is pure, all lands are pure”: Concerning the thought and challenges of Buddhist ecological views), in *Fojiao yu shehui guanhuai xueshu yantaohui wenji: shengming, shengtai, huanjing guanhuai* 佛教與社會關懷學術研討會文集. Shi Zhuandao, ed. 179-192. Tainan: Zhonghuafojiao baike wenxian jijinhui, 1996.

Lin Qixian (Lin Chi-Hsien) 林其賢. “*Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang lichang de jueze* 聖嚴法師人間淨土思想立場的抉擇 (Discerning a choice for humanity from Master Sheng Yen’s teachings on humanistic Buddhism).” In *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, Volume two 聖嚴研究第二輯. Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2011, 155-200.

Lin Yiren (Lin Yih-Ren) 林益仁. “The Environmental Practices and Beliefs of Taiwanese Buddhists.” PhD diss., University College of London, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. “*Huanjing shijian de ‘quanqiu’ yu ‘zaidi’ bianzheng: yi fagushan de ‘huanbao’ lunshu wei li*” 環境實踐的‘全球’‘在地’辯證: 以法鼓山的‘環保’為例 (The dialectical relationship between ‘global’ and ‘local’ environmental practices: A case study of Dharma Drum Mountain’s ‘huan-bao’ discourse). *Taiwan shehui yanjiu likan* 55 (2004), 1-47.

Ling, Trevor. “Singapore: Buddhist Developments in a Secular State.” In *Buddhist Trends in Southeast Asia*. Edited by Trevor Ling. 155-183. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993.

Lodge, David M. and Christopher Hamlin, eds. *Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World of Flux*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

Loori, John Daido. *Teachings of the Earth: Zen and the Environment*. Boston: Shambala, 2007.

Lopez, Donald S., Jr. *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Lovell, Jeremy. "Language of Religious Fervor Inflames Climate Change Debate." *New York Times*, March 19, 2010. Accessed 30 July 2010.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2010/03/19/19climatewire-language-of-religious-fervor-inflames-climat-42978.html>

Lu, Xing. *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture, and Communication*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Rhetoric in Ancient China, Fifth to Third Century B.C.E: A Comparison with Classical Greek Rhetoric*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998.

Lu Yang 陸揚. "Dasheng foli, huanjing baohu yu shehui gaizao guanlian xing zhi zai sikao 大乘佛理, 環境保護與社會改造關聯性之再思考 (Reconsidering the link among Mahâyâna principles, environmental protection, and social reform)." *Dangdai* 107 (1995), 130-141.

Lusthaus, Dan. *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogacara Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

Macy, Joanna. *World as Lover, World as Self: Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1991.

Madsen, Richard. *Democracy's Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007.

Marietta, Jr., Don E. "The Interrelationship of Ecological Science and Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Ethics* 1 (1979), 195-207.

Mathews, Freya. "Deep Ecology." In *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*. Edited by Dale Jamieson. 218-232. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Ecological Self*. London: Routledge, 1991.

McIntosh, Robert P. *The Background of Ecology: Concept and Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

McMahan, David. *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

McRae, John R. *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Chan Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Merchant, Carolyn. "The Death of Nature." In *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Edited by Michael Zimmerman, 273-286. Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Routledge, 1992.

Mills, Sara. *Discourse: The New Critical Idiom*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Minteer, Ben A. *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Pragmatism, Piety, and Environmental Ethics." *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 12 (2008), 179-196.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Refounding Environmental Ethics: Pragmatism, Principle, and Practice*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Unity Among Environmentalists? Debating the Values-Policy Link in Environmental Ethics." In *Nature in Common? Environmental Ethics and the Contested Foundations of Environmental Policy*. Edited by Ben A. Minteer, 3-17. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Nature in Common? Environmental Ethics and the Contested Foundations of Environmental Policy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009.

Mohr, Michael. "Emerging from Nonduality: Kōan Practice in the Rinzai Tradition since Hakuin." In *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*. Edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, 262-66. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Muller, A. Charles, ed. *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*. <<http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb>>. Edition of 2011/5/1.

Naess, Arne. *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle*. Translated by David Rothenberg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.



\_\_\_\_\_. *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess*. Alan Drengson and Bill Devall, eds. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Ingemund Gullvåg. "Vagueness and Ambiguity." *The Trumpeter* Volume 22:1 (2006), 56-73.

Naquin, Susan and Chün-fang Yü, eds. *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992.

Nash, Nancy. *Tree of Life: Buddhism and Protection of Nature*. Geneva: Buddhist Perception of Nature, 1987.

Nash, Roderick Frazier. *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

Ng, William Yau-Nang. "Yin Shun's Interpretations of the Pure Land." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 34:1 (2007), 25-47.

Ng, Zhiru. "Purifying the Mind, Sanctifying the Earth: Visualizing Environmental Protection in Humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan." Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, 2006. Accessed October 27, 2009. <http://www.hds.harvard.edu/cswr/resources/print/dongguk/ng.pdf>.

Norton, Bryan G. *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Toward Unity Among Environmentalists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Odin, Steve. "The Japanese Concept of Nature in Relation to the Environmental Ethics and Conservation Aesthetics of Aldo Leopold." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 89-109. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Oelschlaeger, Max. *Caring For Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

O'Leary, Stephen D. *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Olendzki, Andrew. "Interconnected...Or Not?" *Insight Journal* 24 (2005), 3.

- O'Neill, John. *Ecology, Policy and Politics: Human Well-being and the Natural World*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Ong, Y.D. *Buddhism in Singapore: A Short Narrative History*. Singapore: Skylark Publications, 2005.
- Overmyer, Daniel. *Folk Buddhist Religion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Pacey, Scott. "A Buddhism for the Human World: Interpretations of *renjian fojiao* in Contemporary Taiwan." *Asian Studies Review* 29:1 (2005), 455-461.
- Parkes, Graham. "Voices of Mountains, Trees, and Rivers: Dogen, Kukai, and a Deeper Ecology." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 111-128. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Pas, Julian. "Stability and Change in Taiwan's Religious Culture." In *Religion in Modern Taiwan: Tradition and Innovation in a Changing Society*. Edited by Philip Clart and Charles B. Jones, 36-47. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003.
- Passmore, John. "Ecological Problems and Persuasion." In *Equality and Freedom: International and Comparative Jurisprudence*, volume 2. Edited by Gray Dorsey, 431-42. New York: Oceana, 1977.
- Payne, Richard K., ed. *How Much is Enough? Buddhism, Consumerism, and the Human Environment*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010.
- Payutto, P.A. "Buddhist Solutions for the Twenty-first Century." In *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*, edited by Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, 170-178. Boston: Shambala, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Towards a Sustainable Science*. Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1995.
- Peterson, Anna L. *Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Talking the Walk: A Practiced-based Environmental Ethic and the Grounds for Hope." In *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*. Edited by Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller, 45-62. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

- Pittman, Don A. *Towards a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.
- Plumwood, Val. "Deep Ecology, Deep Pockets, and Deep Problems: A Feminist Ecosocialist Analysis." In *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. Edited by Eric Katz, 59-84. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Proctor, James D. "Nature, Concepts of: Environmental and Ecological," *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, volume 15. Edited by Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes, 10398-404. Amsterdam, New York: Elsevier, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Brendon M. H. Larson. "Ecology, Complexity, and Metaphor." *BioScience* 55:12 (2005), 1065-1068.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Envisioning Nature, Science, and Religion*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2009.
- Rappaport, Roy A. *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1979.
- Rockefeller, Steven C. "Buddhism, Global Ethics, and the Earth Charter." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 313-324. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Rolston, Holmes, III. *Conserving Natural Value*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Roorda, Randall. "KB in Green: Ecology, Critical Theory, and Kenneth Burke." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 4:2 (1997), 39-52.
- Sagoff, Mark. *Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Sahni, Pragati. *Environmental Ethics in Buddhism: a Virtues Approach*. London; New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Salleh, Ariel. "Class, Race, and Gender Discourse in the Ecofeminism/Deep Ecology Debate." In *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*. Edited by Max Oelschlaeger, 79-100. Albany: SUNY Press, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. "In Defense of Deep Ecology: An Ecofeminist Response to a Liberal Critique." In *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. Edited by Eric Katz, 107-124. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

Santikaro Bhikkhu. "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Life and Society through the Natural Eyes of Voidness." In *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*, edited by Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King, 147-193. Albany: SUNY Press, 1996.

Schak, David. "Socially-engaged Buddhism in Taiwan and Its Contribution to Civil Society." In *Development and Practice of Humanitarian Buddhism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Edited by Mutsu Chu, Jinhua Chen, and Lori Meeks, 197-226. Hualien: Tzu Chi University Press, 2007.

Schlütter, Morton. "'Before the Empty Eon' versus 'A Dog Has No Buddha-Nature': Kung-an Use in the Ts'ao-tung Tradition and Ta-hui's Kung-an Introspection Ch'an." In *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*. Edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, 168-199. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009.

Schmithausen, Lambert. "The Early Buddhist Tradition and Ecological Ethics." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1997): 1-74.

Schwarcz, Vera. *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Schwartz, Eilon. "Judaism and Nature: Theological and Moral Issues." In *Torah of the Earth: Exploring 4,000 Years of Ecology in Jewish Thought*, vol. 2 "Zionism and Eco-Judaism." Edited by Arthur Waskow, 159-173. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2000.

Schwartz, Eilon. "Bal Tashchit: A Jewish Environmental Precept." In *Judaism and Environmental Studies: A Reader*. Edited by Martin Yaffee, 230-249. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001.

Schwarzschild, Steven S. "The Unnatural Jew." In *Judaism and Environmental Studies: A Reader*. Edited by Martin Yaffee, 267-282. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001.

Seigel, Marika A. "'One little fellow named Ecology': Ecological Rhetoric in Kenneth Burke's Attitudes toward History." *Rhetoric Review* 23 (2004), 388-403.

Sessions, George, ed. *Deep Ecology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Boston: Shambala, 1995.

Shapiro, Judith. *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Sharf, Robert H. "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience." *Numen* 42:3 (1995), 228-283.

Shi Hengqing 釋恒清. "Caomu youxing yu shenceng shengtaixue (The sentience of plants and Deep Ecology)." In *Fojiao yu shehui guanhuai xueshu yantaohui wenji* 《shengming, shengtai, huanjing guanhuai》佛教與社會關懷學術研討會文集 (Papers from the conference on Buddhism and social concern). Edited by Shi Zhuandao, 15-42. Tainan: Zhonghuafojiao baike wenxian jijinhui, 1996.

Shi Jianyang 釋堅仰. "Cong yinian sanqian quanshi tiantai de huanbao guan 從一念三千詮釋天台的環保觀 (An interpretation of the Tiantai view of environmentalism on the basis of yinian sanqian)." *Yuanguang Institute of Buddhist Studies* (2004), 1-25. Accessed June 1, 2011. <http://www.fuyan.org.tw/93v15.htm>

Shi Zhuandao 釋傳道. "Pusa shehui guanhuai de er darenwu: zhuangyan guotu, chengshou zhongsheng" 菩薩社會關懷的二十大任務: 莊嚴國土、成熟眾生 (Two major responsibilities of a Bodhisattva's social concern: respecting the land, maturing beings), in *Fojiao yu shehui guanhuai xueshu yantaohui wenji: shengming, shengtai, huanjing guanhuai* (Papers from the conference on Buddhism and social concern). Edited by Shi Zhuandao, 3-13. Tainan: Zhonghuafojiao baike wenxian jijinhui, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Zhongshi huanbao shi jianli renjianfojiao de genben" 重視環保是建立人間佛教的根本 (Emphasizing environmentalism as the basis for humanistic Buddhism). *Pumen* 131. Kaohsiung: Foguangshan, 1990.

Shi Zhuanfa 釋傳法. "Taiwan fojiao shehui yundong zhong de huanbao yu dongbao wenti" 台灣佛教社會運動中的環保與動保問題 (The environmental and animal rights problems for Taiwanese Buddhist social movements). In *Renjian fojiao yu dangdai duihua di san ju yinshun daoshi sixiang zhi lilun yu shijian xueshu yanjiuhui*. Taipei: National Taiwan University Center for Buddhist Studies, 2003. <http://enlight.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-NX012/nx102551.htm>

Shiva, Vandana. "The Impoverishment of the Environment: Women and Children Last." In *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Edited by Michael Zimmerman, 287-304. Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001.

- Sideris, Lisa. *Environmental Ethics, Ecology, and Natural Selection*. New York: Columbia, 2003.
- Silk, Jonathan A. "What, if anything, is Mahayana Buddhism? Problems of Definition and Classifications." *Numen* 49:4 (2002), 355-405.
- Simon, Thomas W. "Varieties of Ecological Dialectics." *Environmental Ethics* 12 (1990), 211-231.
- Sivaraksa, Sulak. *Conflict, Culture, and Change: Engaged Buddhism in a Globalizing World*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005.
- Slovic, Scott. "Epistemology and Politics in American Nature Writing: Embedded Rhetoric and Discrete Rhetoric." In *Green Culture Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*. Edited by Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, 82-110. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. "Religion, Religions, Religious." In *Critical Terms in Religious Studies*. Edited by Mark C. Taylor, 262-284. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Smith, Mick. *An Ethics of Place: Radical Ecology, Postmodernity, and Social Theory*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.
- Snyder, Samuel. "Chinese Traditions and Ecology: A Survey Article." *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* 10:1 (2006), 100-134.
- Soper, Kate. *What is Nature? Culture, Politics, and the non-Human*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1996.
- Sponberg, Alan. "Green Buddhism and the Hierarchy of Compassion." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 351-376. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Sponsel, Leslie E. "Anthropology as a Source of Nature Religion." In *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bron Taylor, ed. 96-98. New York: Continuum, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ecological Anthropology." In *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bron Taylor, ed. 544-548. New York: Continuum, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. and Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel. "A Theoretical Analysis of the Potential Contribution of the Monastic Community in Promoting a Green Society in Thailand." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*.

Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 45-70. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Stalley, Phillip and Dongning Yang. "An Emerging Environmental Movement in China?" *The China Quarterly* 186 (2006), 333-56.

Stanley, John, David K. Loy, and Gyurme Dorje, eds. *A Buddhist Response to the Climate Emergency*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009.

Stark, Jerry A. "Postmodern Environmentalism: A Critique of Deep Ecology." In *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*. Edited by Bron Taylor, 259-81. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Streng, Frederick J. "Language and Mystical Awareness." In *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*. Edited by Steven Katz, 141-169. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Stevenson, Daniel B. "Text, Image, and Transformation of the *Shuilu fahui*, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land." In *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*. Edited by Marsha Weidner, 30-70. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Swearer, Donald K. "An Assessment of Buddhist Ecophilosophy." *Harvard Theological Review* 99:2 (2006), 123-137.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Hermeneutics of Buddhist Ecology in Contemporary Thailand: Buddhadāsa and Dhammapitaka." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, 21-44. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Principles and Poetry, Places and Stories: The Resources of Buddhist Ecology." *Daedalus* 130:4 (2001), 225-241.

Tannenbaum, Nicola. "Protest, Tree Ordination, and the Changing Context of Political Ritual." *Ethnology* 39:2 (2000), 109-127.

Taylor, Bron. "Critical Perspectives on 'Religions of the World and Ecology'." In *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bron Taylor, ed. 1375-76. New York: Continuum, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Critical Perspectives on 'Religions of the World and Ecology'." In *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bron Taylor, ed. 1375-76. New York: Continuum, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Exploring Religion, Nature, and Culture—Introducing the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 1:1 (2007), 5-24.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Introduction," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bron Taylor, ed. vii-xxi. New York: Continuum, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Religious Studies and Environmental Concern." In *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bron Taylor, ed. 1373-79. New York: Continuum, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. 2 vols. London; New York: Continuum, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Michael Zimmerman, "Deep Ecology." In *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bron Taylor, ed. London; New York: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005.

Tegbaru, Amare. "Local Environmentalism in Northeast Thailand." In *Environmental Movements in Asia*. Edited by Arne Kalland and Gerard Persoon. 151-178. Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998.

Thompson, J. "Environmentalism: Philosophical Aspects." *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 15. Edited by Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes. Amsterdam, New York: Elsevier, 2001.

Tillman, Hoyt Cleveland. *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992.

Tilt, Bryan. *The Struggle for Sustainability in Rural China: Environmental Values and Civil Society*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Timmerman, Peter. "Western Buddhism and the Global Crisis." In *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*. Edited by Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft. 357-368. Boston: Shambala, 2000.

Tirosh-Samuels, Hava. "Judaism." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bron Taylor, ed. 925-937. New York: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Nature in the Sources of Judaism." *Daedalus* 130:4 (2001), 99-124.



\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Tiyavanich, Kamala. *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth Century Thailand*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

Toulmin, Stephen E. *The Return to Cosmology: Postmodern Science and the Theology of Nature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Tracy, David. *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, and Hope*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987.

Travagnin, Stefania. "Master Yinshun and the Pure Land Thought: a Doctrinal Gap between Indian Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.* 57:3 (2004), 271-328.

Tu Weiming (Tu Wei-ming). "Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality." In *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, eds.. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature." In *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. Edited by J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames. 67-78. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. Tuan, Yi-Fu. "Discrepancies between Environmental Attitude and Behavior: Examples from Europe and China." *Canadian Geographer* 12:3 (1968), 176-191.

Tucker, Mary Evelyn. "Overview of World Religions and Ecology." Forum on Religion and Ecology (website). <http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/> (accessed 1/1/2012).

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Philosophy of Ch'i as an Ecological Cosmology." In *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, eds. 187-207. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Touching the Depths of Things: Cultivating Nature in East Asia." In *Ecology and the Environment: Perspectives from the Humanities*. Donald K.

Swearer, ed. 49-64. Cambridge, MA: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University Press, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter their Ecological Phase*. Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Duncan Williams, eds. *Buddhism and Ecology: The Connection of Dharma and Deeds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_ and John Berthrong, eds. *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation between Heaven, Earth, and Humans*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_ and John Grim. Series forward to *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation between Heaven, Earth, and Humans*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, xv-xxxii. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Udomittipong, Pidop. "Thailand's Ecology Monks." In *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*. Edited by Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, 191-197. Boston: Shambala, 2000.

Ulman H., Lewis. "'Thinking Like a Mountain': Persona, Ethos, and Judgment in American Nature Writing." In *Green Culture Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*. Edited by Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, 46-81. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Van Buren, John. "Critical Environmental Hermeneutics." *Environmental Ethics* 17:3 (1995), 259-275.

Wank, David L. "Institutionalizing Modern 'Religion' in China's Buddhism: Political Phases of a Local Revival." In *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*. Edited by Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, 126-150. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Warren, Karen. *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

Waskow, Arthur, ed. *Torah of the Earth: Exploring 4,000 Years of Ecology in Jewish Thought*. 2 vols. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2000.

Watson, Burton, trans. *The Vimalakirti Sutra*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Welch, Holmes. *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism: 1900-1950*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Weller, Robert P. *Discovering Nature: Globalization and the Environmental Culture in China and Taiwan*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao. "Culture, Gender, and Community in Taiwan's Environmental Movement." In *Environmental Movements in Asia*. Edited By Arne Kalland and Gerard Persoon, 83-109. Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998.

Wensveen, Louke van. *Dirty Virtues: The Emergence of Ecological Virtue Ethics*. New York: Humanity Books, 2000.

Wess, Robert. "Ecocriticism and Kenneth Burke: an Introduction." *KB Journal* 2:2 (2006). Accessed October 11, 2011. <http://www.kbjournal.org/wess2>.

White Jr., Lynn. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155:3767 (1967), 1203-7.

White, Peter S. "Disturbance, the Flux of Nature, and Environmental Ethics at the Multipatch Scale." In *Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World of Flux*. Edited by David M. Lodge and Christopher Hamlin, 176-198. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

Whitehill, James. "Buddhist Ethics in Western Context: The 'Virtues' Approach." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 1 (1994). Accessed 01/21/2012. <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/2010/04/05/buddhist-ethics-in-western-context-the-virtues-approach/>.

Williams, David and Chang'yi Chang. *Taiwan's Environmental Struggle: Toward a Green Silicon Island*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Williams, Jack F. "Environmentalism in Taiwan." In *Taiwan: Beyond the Economic Miracle*. Edited by Denis Fred Simon and Michael Y. M. Kau, 187-210. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1992.

Wright, Dale S. *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Wu Yansheng 吳言生. "Fojiao lilun sixiang yu hejie shehui de goujian" 佛教理論思想與和解社會的构建 (Buddhist Ecological Ethics and Harmonious Society). *Juequn* 38:2 (2008), 20-25.

Xue Yu. "Humanity and Nature—Buddhist Reply for Contemporary Environmental Crisis." *International Journal for the Study of Humanistic Buddhism* 1 (2011), 17-54.

Yaffee, Martin, ed. *Judaism and Environmental Studies: A Reader*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001.

Yang Huinan 楊惠南. “*Dangdai Taiwan fojiao huanbao linian de sixiang—yi ‘yuyue renjian jingtu’ he ‘xinling huanbao’ weili*” 當代台灣佛教環保理念的思想—以「預約人間淨土和「心靈環保為例 (Contemporary Taiwanese Buddhist environmental thought: Using “A reservation for the pureland” and “spiritual environmentalism” as examples). In 1995 *nian foxue yanjiu lunwenji*, 1-44. Taipei: Foguangshan wenjiao jijinhui, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. “*Cong ‘jingjietuo’ dao ‘xinjietuo’: jianli xinjing pingdeng de fojiao shengtaixue*” 從「竟解脫到「心解脫」建立心竟平等的佛教生態學 (From ‘place nirvana’ to ‘mind nirvana’: establishing a balance between mind and place for Buddhist ecology). In *Fojiao yu shehui guanhuai xueshu yantaohui wenji: shengming, shengtai, huanjing guanhuai*. Edited by Shi Zhuandao, 193-206. Tainan: Zhonghuafojiao baiken wenxian jijinhui, 1996.

Yu, Jimmy. “Venerable Sheng Yen’s Scholarship on Late Ming Buddhism.” In *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, Volume one 聖嚴研究第一輯. 415-26. Taipei: Faguwenhua, 2010.

Zappen, James P. “Kenneth Burke on Dialectical-Rhetorical Transcendence.” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 42:3 (2009), 279-301.

Zhang Lei and Lijin Zhong. “Integrating and Prioritizing Environmental Risks in China’s Risk Management Discourse.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 19:63 (2010), 119-136.

Zimmerman, Michael. *Contesting Earth’s Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994.

Zimmerman, Michael, ed. *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology* (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2001.

#### Websites

Association of Buddhists for the Environment <http://www.sanghanetwork.org/>

Buddha’s Light International Association <http://www.blia.org>

Dharma Drum Mountain <http://www.ddm.org.tw> and <http://www.dharmadrum.org>

Ecological Buddhism: A Buddhist Response to Global Warming  
<http://www.ecobuddhism.org/>

Foguangshan <http://www.fgs.org.tw>

Forum on Religion and Ecology <http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/>

Foundation for Deep Ecology <http://www.deepecology.org/index.htm>

Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery <http://www.kmspks.com/>

Life Conservationist Association <http://www.lca.org.tw>

Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (Singapore)  
<http://app.mewr.gov.sg/web/Common/homepage.aspx>

Mountains and Rivers Order of Zen Buddhism <http://www.mro.org/mro.html>

Poh Ern Shih Monastery <http://pohernshih.info/>

Master Sheng Yen <http://www.shengyen.org>

Tzu Chi Compassion Relief Society <http://www.tzuchi.org.tw>

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Seth Clippard received his BA from Davidson College and MA from the Divinity School, University of Chicago. He has taught courses in Buddhism and Religion and Nature at Arizona State University and has been a lecturer at Toko University, Chiayi, Taiwan. His articles have been published in the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* and *Studies of Master Sheng Yen*, and he has presented at conferences in both the United States and abroad.