

A CRITICO-ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PHILIPPINE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT OF 1998

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Abstract. There are a number of moral and practical issues that need to be clarified in the Animal Welfare Act of 1998 of the Republic of the Philippines. These issues center on the meaning of "animal welfare" in relation to the concept of moral status of the animals. For purposes of effective public policy, such issues have to be explained and elaborated so that relevant discussions and deliberations can be elicited to promote not only the welfare of animals in the Philippines, but also that of the citizens and their environment.

Introduction

This paper analyzes the ethical presuppositions of the Philippine Government's Animal Welfare Act of 1998 (AWA) in terms of how animals under such legislation are purportedly accorded with moral status. For an entity to have moral status means, it has to have moral standing and is therefore worthy of moral consideration. So moral agents ought to "give weight" to the entity's "needs, interests or well being" in their deliberations about and actions towards that entity.¹ Analyzing the moral status of animals under AWA is relevant to the understanding of "animal welfare" and its implications to Filipinos as moral agents.² Moral controversies and ambivalences in AWA, if ever they exist, will also be clarified. I will not claim that a particular philosophical view concerning the moral status of animals is presupposed in AWA. Rather, I will point out the possible moral view or views implicit in AWA as regards the moral status of the animals.

The Ethical Presuppositions and Issues of the Animal Welfare Act of 1998 (AWA)

The main purpose of AWA is "to protect and promote the welfare of all animals in the Philippines by supervising and regulating the establishment and operations of all facilities utilized for breeding, maintaining, keeping, treating or training of all animals either as objects of trade or as household pets."³ From this purpose, it can be gleaned that the law accords moral standing to animals since they must be properly handled and taken care of in terms of their safety, adequate food provision, and

sanitation. But what moral status animals have under such a law remains to be seen, while questions pertaining to their moral status relative to human beings and to other living entities including the environment need to be addressed.

The domesticated animals are not the only ones protected by the law. Those living in the wild are also protected. Section 7 thus provides: "It shall be the duty of every person to protect the natural habitat of the wildlife. The destruction of said habitat shall be considered as a form of cruelty to animals and its preservation is a way of protecting the animals." This provision raises a question whether the natural habitat should be preserved for its own sake or for the sake of the animals dwelling in it. It seems that the natural habitat is worth preserving not because it is morally considerable for its own sake but because it benefits the wild animals. In this scenario, the natural habitat has instrumental value only. But if such is the case, then it might be in conflict with the beliefs of those citizens who argue for the intrinsic worth of the natural habitat or environment whose existence is greater than the organisms living in it. In environmental ethics, this view where the biotic community is greater than the individual living in that community is known as "land-ethical holism." One of the proponents of this view is J. Baird Callicott who claims that "the earth's biotic community per se is the sole locus of intrinsic value, whereas the value of its individual members is merely instrumental and dependent on their contribution to the 'integrity, stability, and beauty' of the larger community."⁴ So this apparent tension between the provision on protecting wild animals (animals ethics) on one hand and the environment (environmental ethics) on the other hand can be better clarified and resolved if the relative moral status of both wild animals and environment is known.

On the same provision above, we can ask if the law gives equal moral status to both domesticated and wild animals. The question is important because if they do not have equal moral status, then what are the criteria for giving higher moral status to one over the other? And granting they have equal moral status, how does one resolve cases when their interests conflict with one another? These issues need to be addressed by those mandated by law to implement AWA and by concerned citizens.

One important notion in animal ethics that needs to be understood is the concept of "mixed communities."⁵ Some people may argue that the domesticated animals have higher moral status compared to wild animals because the former have important roles in "mixed communities" while the latter have not. Domesticated animals like cows and goats, for example,

provide humans with milk, and in return, humans protect these animals by taking care of them, by providing them food and shelter. "The Interspecific principle", Warren writes, "requires us to accept stronger moral obligations to animal members of mixed communities, especially those that have trusting and affectionate relationships with human beings."⁶ So this principle gives more moral importance to domesticated animals, including pets, than to wild animals. But it can be argued also that even if wild animals are not part of "mixed communities," they still have moral worth because they have interests of their own: they have the capacity to flourish and realize their natural purpose. Their capacity to flourish and realize their good are sufficient reasons to respect their lives for their own sake. Furthermore, wild animals just like the domesticated animals, are also sentient. As such, they can also suffer; this entitles them to an equal consideration of interest as with the domesticated animals.

AWA further provides that "It shall be unlawful for any person to torture any animal, to neglect to provide adequate care, sustenance or shelter, or maltreat any animal or to subject any dog or horse to dogfights or horsefights, kill or cause or procure to be tortured or deprived of adequate care, sustenance or shelter, or maltreat or use the same in research or experiments not expressly authorized by the Committee on Animal Welfare."⁷ This provision implies that since animals can suffer, then they should not be treated cruelly through torture, food deprivation and inadequate shelter. What is invoked here is the anti-cruelty principle in animal ethics. Because animals can suffer (argument from sentience), Filipinos should not inflict pain, or as much as possible limit the harm done to animals. But intentional and direct cruelty is not only what is prohibited by the law. Even those forms of arguably unintentional cruelty and suffering resulting from intensive animal agriculture for increased productivity; biomedical research to advance knowledge, cure diseases and develop new surgical techniques for use in human and animal health; and testing the toxicity of new chemicals for household products are also forbidden and regulated by the same law. This is shown in Section 6 of the law just cited. This is laudable because the law does not only regulate the present state of affairs regarding the proper treatment of animals. It is also prospective. The provision anticipates the suffering the animals may go through in the future as the Philippines, considering its present economic status, aims to achieve the level of advanced knowledge and facilities in biomedicine and animal science comparable to industrialized countries.

As a general rule, AWA prohibits cruelty to all animals. But why are Filipinos forbidden to be cruel to the animals? Is it because animals, like

humans, can also suffer and experience pain? Or is it because when humans are cruel to animals, they are indirectly damaging their own humanity of which they have the moral duty to respect? These questions can best be answered by looking at them from two perspectives. The first is the utilitarian view of the moral status of animals while the second is the view held by Kant. According to the utilitarian view, animals are sentient beings and as such they can suffer.⁸ If animals can suffer, then they have an interest not to suffer and experience pain. "Any being that has an interest in not suffering deserves to have that interest taken into account. And a non-human who acts to avoid pain can be thought to have just such an interest."⁹ From Kant's view, it appears that humans have only indirect duties to animals. Humans must not be cruel to animals because if they are, then they are damaging that humanity in themselves which they have the moral duty to respect and promote. By being cruel to animals, humans also become "hard in their dealings with men."¹⁰ Kant's view seems to imply that animals have no moral status because they are not persons and moral agents. Tom Regan, however, claims that the basis for ascribing moral standing to an entity should not be that entity's difference/s to other entities. Rather, it should be that entity's similarity/ies with other beings. So, since persons share with animals "the ability to be experiencing subject of a life and to have an individual welfare that matters to them regardless of what others might think," then both persons and animals "deserve moral consideration."¹¹ For Regan, animals as subjects of a life have inherent value of their own. Thus, knowing the reasons why Filipinos should not be cruel to animals help them understand why animals are morally considerable.

Although AWA prohibits cruelty to animals as a general rule, it nevertheless enumerates the kinds of animals that may be killed, employing "at all times" "the most humane procedures," that is, using "the most scientific methods available as may be determined and approved by the committee." Included in the list are "cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, poultry, rabbits, carabaos, horses, deer and crocodiles." The reason why some animals in the list can be killed is not quite obvious. It is understandable why cattle, pigs, goats and poultry can be slaughtered. They are part of everyday Filipino diet. But there is no strong reason to allow for the killing of sheep, rabbits, carabaos, horses and crocodiles. Although some Filipinos eat these animals—for some they are food delicacies—few of these animals are in the country. If the anti-cruelty rule is to be followed, and if animal interests count, then these animals should not be killed, especially if vegetables and other animals as sources of food abound and are readily



available. As Singer says: "If animals count in their own right, our use of animals for food becomes questionable—especially when animal flesh is a luxury rather than a necessity."¹²

The killing of other animals outside of the list above is unlawful except in the following instances:

- (1) When it is done as part of the religious rituals of an established religion or sect or a ritual required by tribal or ethnic custom of indigenous cultural communities; however, leaders shall keep records in cooperation with the Committee on Animal Welfare;
- (2) When the pet animal is afflicted with an incurable communicable disease as determined and certified by a duly licensed veterinarian;
- (3) When the killing is deemed necessary to put an end to the misery suffered by the animal as determined and certified by a duly licensed veterinarian;
- (4) When it is done to prevent an imminent danger to the life or limb of a human being;
- (5) When done for the purpose of animal population control (utilitarian);
- (6) When the animal is killed after it has been used in authorized research or experiments; and
- (7) Any other ground analogous to the foregoing as determined and certified licensed veterinarian.¹³

The exemptions above require explanation. As to the first exemption, the law respects the religious practices of the cultural minorities that involve animal sacrifices. This is in accordance with the Philippine Constitution's provision on religious freedom. This also agrees with what Warren calls "The Transitivity of Respect Principle" which states that "moral agents should respect one another's attributions of moral status."¹⁴ The principle enjoins Filipinos to respect how the cultural minority Filipinos treat other animals within the context of the religious practice or ethnic custom. Other Filipinos might find their treatment of animals disagreeable, but at least they make an effort to understand why animals are treated differently in that culture. As Warren, borrowing from the idea of Nel Noddings, says: "Respecting other people's ascriptions of moral status is part of respecting persons, part of caring for and about them."¹⁵ Though some people find others' ascriptions of moral status (or the lack thereof) to animals disagreeable, this does not mean that a consensus cannot be reached. "But

respect on each side for sincere beliefs on the other will greatly increase the odds that a consensus will eventually emerge."¹⁶

The second exemption may be found quite objectionable by others. It is because if an animal is suffering from an incurably communicable disease, it does not always mean that death is the solution. One could reason that if the disease is not so debilitating, the animal could still be allowed to live by somehow isolating it from other animals and giving it the proper medical attention and care. There has to be a good reason before this provision of the law is invoked.

The third exemption, quite related to the second, prevents the animal from prolonged agony and suffering caused by an incurable and communicable disease as well as from infecting other animals. Under such conditions, it is morally reasonable to end the misery of the animal and it is in its best interest and other animals' interest that painless death is administered to them in the most humane way possible. This allows animals to die a good and "dignified" death. Warren is of the opinion that euthanasia for animals is not as "usually controversial" as with human cases.¹⁷

The fourth exemption gives priority to the agent's principle wherein the life of a human being as a moral agent is more important than that of an animal threatening the agent's life. Since the animal cannot reciprocate the need of a moral agent for mutual respect, then the agent has the right to defend himself from the aggression of that animal. As Warren says,

...most animals do not have equal moral status on the basis of the Agent's Rights principle. The primary justification for this distinction is that inescapable practical realities make it impossible always to treat non-human animals as moral equals. We cannot always accord animals moral rights that are equal in strength and content to our own, because we cannot hope that they in turn will respect our rights, making possible the peaceful resolution of any conflicts that arise between their needs and important human or ecological needs.¹⁸

The fifth exemption protects other living beings, like humans, other animals and plants from the harm that may befall on them if certain groups of animals grow in number, straying and unwanted. But it is not really very clear what animal population control means. Why do animals have to be killed in order to implement population control? Are they to be euthanized just because they are unattended to and because they pose a danger to public health? Based on the laws of other countries, population control refers to vaccination, rabies quarantine control, sheltering of homeless and

stray animals, animal licensing, spaying or neutering and education programs for a responsible pet owner. Hence, these population control programs practiced by other countries should first be, as much as possible, adopted in the Philippines before resorting to painlessly killing these animals. Otherwise, cruelty is promoted rather than prevented.

The sixth exemption is quite controversial. First it must be clarified what kind of research involving animals is being conducted. It is important because there needs to be a strong moral and scientific justification for using animals in research.¹⁹ The benefits derived from animal experimentation might be gained from other sources or alternatives. Animals may be harmed unnecessarily in the research, which somehow contradicts the anti-cruelty provision of the law. Why do animals have to be killed after being used in the research? Does this imply that the animals have been seriously harmed that to kill them is better than to allow them to experience unbearable suffering? Is this really necessary? Since the implementation of AWA is the responsibility of the Committee on Animal Welfare which is attached to the Department of Agriculture, then deliberations and discussions within the committee should consider moral and factual issues involving animal research. In animal ethics parlance, the three R's must be observed: reduction, refinement, and replacement. Reduction aims at minimizing the use of animals in research if the level and desired information needed can be gained through the use of fewer animals. Refinement means reducing the pain and distress inflicted on the animals as well as improving their welfare when used in research. Replacement refers to the use of other alternatives other than animals (or using non-animals) in research, whenever possible, if doing so results to the same scientific goal.

The last exemption, which allows for the killing of animals analogous to the previous exemptions, according to AWA, depends on the sound discretion of the certified licensed veterinarian. The exemption does not specify further the qualification and role of the veterinarian. This needs clarification and strict regulation because this provision could be invoked and abused to justify the killing of animals.

Although the law grants moral standing to animals and safeguards their welfare, it does not accord moral status to animals equal to that of human beings. This is the reason why it provides exceptions for animal use. The law obviously does not abolish but sets constraints to animal use in order to limit, if not eradicate, unnecessary harm and pain inflicted on the animals. But again, this position can be challenged because some people may argue that the interests of the animals count for themselves regardless whether they benefit humans or not. This is an issue that the Committee on Animal

Welfare should not disregard because it is morally worth considering.

From the questions and discussions above, it is clear that there are important issues that need to be resolved. At the bottom of these issues are the meaning of animal welfare and the kind of moral status animals have. Rawls's notion of 'reflective equilibrium' is an important tool which can be employed in resolving such issues.²⁰ Applying this tool to the above issues means that Filipinos have different and competing moral convictions on the right or just thing to do regarding animal welfare. These convictions could be based on their different moral backgrounds and experiences. In order for those conflicting issues to have some resolution, some coherence must be arrived at by taking those issues into account. AWA will serve as a ground where the different moral convictions of Filipinos on animal welfare will be resolved. This will in turn expand and enrich the legal and moral framework that AWA enforces and stands for. Applying Rawls's reflective equilibrium makes possible the attainment of a consensus necessary for an effective public policy on animal welfare in the Philippines.

The law provides for the establishment of Committee on Animal Welfare (CAW) which is tasked to make rules and regulations for the strict implementation of the provisions of the law on animal welfare. For these rules to be truly morally binding, CAW must create public consultations on the issues concerning how the law is to be understood and applied to problems relating animal welfare. Issues such as these can only be tackled intelligently when CAW touches on the meaning of animal welfare and moral status, though this does not discount the practical side of coming with a consensus when there are conflicting views with regard to the meaning of the two concepts. So for purposes of public policy, "steps should be taken to reduce existing disagreement as far as possible" because it could happen that "if a policy is adopted which many believe to be morally wrong, instability, protest and, in extreme cases civil unrest may ensue."²¹

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis has shown that the notion of "animal welfare" in AWA in relation to the concept of moral status can be interpreted in different ways, depending on one's moral perspective or theory. This is so because AWA does not elaborate further the meaning of animal welfare *vis-à-vis* moral status. This gives rise to certain contending issues pointed out above. This paper has also shown how these issues can be possibly addressed by alluding to some views on the moral status of animals.

AWA as a piece of legislation is supposed to express the values

Filipinos directly or indirectly attribute to animals. It is also supposed to serve as an authoritative guide for Filipinos on how to promote animal welfare. AWA, however, does not only structure discussions from and within a legal framework. It also extends to the moral sphere in the sense that it also “pre-structure moral discussions” on animal welfare in the Philippines.²² Considering the issues pointed out above brings about relevant moral discussions not only within the Committee on Animal Welfare but also among Filipino citizens concerned in promoting and protecting animal welfare.

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Endnotes

¹ Mary Anne Warren, *Moral Status: Obligations to Persons and Other Living Things* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.

² Gruen says "That non-human animals can make moral claims on us" does not in itself indicate how such claims are to be assessed and conflicting claims to be adjudicated. Being morally considerable is like showing up on a moral radar screen—how strong the signal is or where it is located on the screen are separate questions. Of course, how one argues for the moral considerability of non-human animals will inform how we understand the force of an animal's claim." Lori Gruen, "The Moral Status of Animals", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2003 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2003/entries/moral-animal/>; 5.

³ *Animal Welfare Act of 1998*, Sec. 1.

⁴ Andrew Brennan and Yeuk-Sze Lo, "Environmental Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2002 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2002/entries/ethics-environmental/>., 11. See also Warren, *Moral Status*, 126-127.

⁵ See Warren, *Moral Status*, 129-130.

⁶ Warren, *Moral Status*, 235.

⁷ *Animal Welfare Act of 1998*, Sec. 6.

⁸ Peter Singer says: "Animals in pain behave in much the same way as humans do, and their behaviour is sufficient justification for the belief that they feel pain" Peter Singer, "Equality for Animals?" in *Practical Ethics*, 2nd Ed., (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 69.

⁹ Gruen, "The Moral Status of Animals", 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Singer, "Equality for Animals?", 62.

¹³ *Animal Welfare Act of 1998*, Sec. 6.

¹⁴ Warren, *Moral Status*, 170.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁹ An excellent reference for the ethical issues involving animal research would be *The Ethics of Research Involving Animals*. London: Nuffield Council on Bioethics, May 2005.

²⁰ See Norman Daniels, "Reflective Equilibrium", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2003 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2003/entries/reflective-equilibrium/>.

²¹ *The Ethics of Research Involving Animals* (London: Nuffield Council on Bioethics, May 2005), 255-256.

²² Here I am alluding to Frans W.A. Brom's discussion of the "expressive-communicative" function of legislation. See his article contribution "Expressive-

communicative Function of Legislation: Animal-protection as an interaction between law and public morality," in *Perspectives on Applied Ethics*, Goran Collste, ed. (Linköping, Sweden: Center for Applied Ethics, Linköping University, 2007), 71-88.

PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

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Introduction

We begin by an examination of our environment in terms of its forest, water, air, mineral and wildlife resources. According some Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) officials, there has been a high extraction rate in our forest resource all over the Philippines. From 1970 to 1989, an exploitation of old-growth forest has occurred at a rate of 210,000 hectares annually. At present, growth of new trees only occupies at about 11,000 hec./year. The lessening of our forest resources is due to their further conversion into non-forest uses. In Mindanao, forest destruction is often the result of illegal logging.

As to waters, the National Water and Air pollution Control reported that half of the country's classified rivers fall below normal water quality standards. Coastal waters in urban areas are extremely polluted and deteriorating. Research reveals that the factors causing the water pollution are illegal fishing and dumping practices, bad sewerage, industrial toxics and overpopulation. Coastal areas have deteriorated due to heavy siltation, pollution, over fishing and destructive fishing techniques. Recently, a river in the western portion of Cagayan de Oro City was heavily polluted due to some small-scale miners' working at the upper part of the river stream. The mining activity released significant amount of chemicals in the river causing the death of marine life especially the fishes. Not so far away from the said area are industrial plants near the coastline that emit hazardous fumes which cause the low dissolve of oxygen, high carbon dioxide and low Ph level of water that is killing a lot of water resources. Aside from their industrial plants' discharge and untreated waste water that flow into the sea, their factories constantly emit hazardous fumes that contain large amount of sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide and methane gas to the air. In Cagayan de Oro City, there is a large volume of sewage contamination for surface

and ground water generated by the largest consumers of piped water supply. These waters are either untreated or undertreated.

DENR reports a declining fish yield in most regions of the Philippines due to habitat destruction and declining mangroves. As to coral reefs only 5 % of its population has remained today.

According to the World Bank reports, water pollution in the Philippines is due to fragmented water management, weak law enforcement, and poor planning. (as cited by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, 2006). In an interview with local officials, fisher folks and private individuals, they all figured out that industrialization has plagued the coastal water ecosystem. Under industrialization there were four major reasons pointed out as the cause of destruction of our coastal ecosystem, namely deforestation, soil erosion, overfishing, and coastal poverty shown by decreasing fish catch that affects the income of fishermen. Moreover, in the interview most of the respondents mentioned some reasons why water pollution cannot be stopped. The reasons they pointed out were the following: the uncoordinated, fragmented and conflicting efforts of various agencies.

Furthermore, there is also air pollution problem, which is now being remedied through the Clean Air Act and other bills and laws implemented to combat it. Seventy to eighty per cent of air pollution is caused by vehicle emission, while 20 to 30% is due to such factors as construction work and burning of garbage, overpopulation, and industrial activity in the area. (climatearch.org 2007). Sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and total oxidants prove to be hazardous to health. Some 230 to 390 people in Metro Manila die every year of respiratory illness attributed to air pollution. (World Bank 2001). Among drivers, 32.5 %, air-conditioned bus 16.4 and commuters 13.8 suffer from chronic obstruction pulmonary disease. Bronchitis, an illness experienced by 55 % of the population, is found to be attributed to pollution mostly occurring in urban areas (Department of Health report 2006).

Along with air pollution is also the problem of waste management. During the interview with local officials, and residents, two topmost reasons were pointed out as the cause of waste management problem, namely, urbanization and the rise of consumerism. A study of Badilla, conducted in Cagayan de Oro city, shows the need to segregate waste, compost yard waste and recycle of materials such as paper and plastic cups. (Badilla 2003)

The facts mentioned above show that there has been human arrogance done towards nature and the environment. Together with the whole world,



the Philippines has been facing environmental challenges for many years now. The natural resources that sustain life in our country—air, water and soil are being polluted or depleted at alarming rates. Human population growth is increasing side by side with urbanization and the rise of consumerism. The prospects for continued degradation and depletion of natural resources multiply with these factors. Toxic waste continues to accumulate especially in the urban areas. The problem of pollution, population control, food production, energy production, consumption and preservation of endangered species are problems faced by our country today.

The existential challenge is that man is affected by the continued degradation of our environment, and the quality of his life has become objective, abstract, and devoid of any communal meaning. All these abuses of the environment have created an existential anxiety on the majority and, in its worst case, a loss of being. Yet, man is a seeker of meaning and personal relevance. He wants his life to have sense and to be truly worth living. That is why he cannot just be indifferent to this present problem.

How did things get this way? How did the environmental crisis come about? The Philippine environmental crisis is also a global environmental crisis and thus this crisis needs some serious analysis. Historically speaking, despite the benefits that agricultural revolution, industrial revolution and modern technology have given to humanity, they nevertheless produce adverse effects on our environment. It has been noticed that technology, for example, can undermine the human spirit, devastate our community and threaten human lives. (Pojman 2000).

This paper shows some concrete facts about environmental issues taken from the Philippine context. But the way these issues are reflected and philosophized is based on the Oriental and Western ways of philosophizing. Specifically, the paper wants to answer the following questions: 1) What major environmental issues does our country face today? 2) What is the role of philosophy in dealing with these issues? 3) What quality of life must we choose relevant to life's preservation? 4) What are the possible approaches and paths to the preservation of our environment and the search of a meaningful quality of life?

This paper is significant for those in the field of Philosophy since it challenges us to critically think and reflect on what we should do, and how we should act, and what to value. Aside from this, the paper is also a challenge to re-establish our connection with all things in the universe and to ask how we can respect and be more responsible to our environment.

Environmental problems pose basic questions on ethics and on Philosophy in general, especially about the common end we should achieve.

This study does not seek to offer practical, technical and feasible solutions to the environmental issues faced by our country today. What this paper offers is only to help assess and determine through rational analysis and reflection the possible visions and philosophies to guide our individual life and moral choices. This paper presents what philosophers of the past say about nature and environment and how do they approach environmental issues? This paper clarifies man's relationship to the environment and his responsibility toward it. Lastly, this paper seeks to address each Filipino on how he can establish a personal conviction and commitment to preserve his environment as guided by his lived philosophies.

What is the role of philosophy in dealing with environmental problems? How do we begin making the right moral judgment? It seems only reasonable that we step back and consider the significance of Philosophy in the decision-making process itself (Des Jardins, 2001). Man is always caught up in a moral dilemma. Environmental issues put us in a moral dilemma. Here lies the importance of Philosophy; it invites man to reflect and deliberate on his options, choices and actions to determine what quality of life to truly preserve his environment.

Some Philosophical Approaches to Environment

Many philosophical theories can help us find ways to analyze and deal with environmental issues. The following are some selected approaches and possible paths to deal with environmental problems. These approaches at the same time can be made as a lived philosophy that can guide man's actions. Let us start with the Oriental thought.

The first is **Buddhism**. In one of the eightfold paths, Buddha mentions that right action consists in showing charity and avoiding actions that tend to extinguish existence. He stresses the idea of moving from self-love to Self-Love (a wider all encompassing kind of love). Moving from self-love to Self-love is like manifesting love externally to all living and non living beings. Through act of charity we begin to respect lands, skies, marine life, the forest etc. The four noble truths of Buddhism state that the source of man's suffering in the world is his selfish desires for material gain. Desires are the cause of evil and misery in life. For Buddha, desire and greed are inseparable. Today, many people desire for more material wealth and other mundane pursuits and in the end cause their own unhappiness. Buddha says this desire must be stopped by practicing the moral path of discipline

of the mind and by seeking good actions and avoiding evil ones. Aside from this man must also follow the path of meditation which makes him attain the spiritual truth.

Buddhism tells us the importance of considering the supremacy of the spiritual, eternal truth for the salvation of our souls rather than material possessions whose consequence does not lead us to true liberation. Buddhism offers a cure for continued environmental destruction by seeking to replace man's exploitative attitude with a life of simplicity and charity. Also, it stresses the idea of going back to the basic practices like the observance of cleanliness in our own person and in the environment. Water must be clean, be it the river, pond, or well, for the protection of life and safety of all people. Rules regarding cleanliness of the surroundings must be prompted by ethical and aesthetic consideration. In addition, Buddhism treats noise pollution as a serious personal and environmental problem. It advocates that we pursue external and internal silence. For silence invigorates those who are pure in heart and raises their efficiency for meditation, and the more efficient they are in meditation, the more they are close to the truth.

Buddhism stresses a gentle and nonviolent attitude to all creatures especially plants and animals. Thus, land and sea life must be preserved. Buddhism states that the physical environment of any given area conditions the growth and development of its biological parts, e.g., flora and fauna. These in turn influence the mind frame of the people interacting with them. Buddhism points out that our frame of thinking determines our moral judgments. Man's moral values can affect how he would treat and deal with his biological and physical environment. For man and nature are connected in a reciprocal causal relationship, with changes in one necessarily bringing about changes in the other. When humanity is demoralized through greed, then exploitation and poverty are the natural outcomes. A large-scale exploitation done to our environment requires a change of heart and a moral conversion. When there is moral conversion humanity will again start to recapture the lost balance and harmony he has with nature.

Buddhism believes that if immorality rules society, man and nature deteriorate; if morality is prioritized, the quality of human life and nature improves. Thus, moral virtues such as generosity and compassion produced purity of the heart and induced us to good actions. In Buddhism, there is a close connection between human morality and events and conditions in the environment. Buddhism teaches that the mind is the director of all things. Mind is great. Therefore, it must be controlled and disciplined. Impure minds lead to greed, selfishness, suffering and delusion. While a pure mind

gives birth to wisdom, moderation and happiness. Pollution in the environment has its source from the pollution within man. Thus, if man wants to achieve a clean environment, then he has to adopt a lifestyle that is grounded from a moral and spiritual dimension. (Takakusu 1947.)

Buddhism adds that we must be careful not to destroy ourselves, and we ought not to destroy those natural beings that share the world with us. (Humphrey 1990)

What is to be achieved is a better attitude towards the world. Schumacher in his book *Small is Beautiful* says that when we ask what we can actually do, we can work to put our inner world in order. Thus, to change the world, we need inner conversion. It is good to have a system of conservation that is not solely based on economic self interest but in the conversion of the self. Nature and humanity stands with the type of moral force at work. Man and nature are interdependent (Schumacher 1989).

The second approach is **Taoism**, a Chinese philosophy that advocates the attitude of nonaction, which means to control and discipline our personal desires to make us cultivate peace and harmony within ourselves to a the world at large. Tao is the subtle way. It advocates going with the flow of nature and not to use force which is often the source of destruction. To go against nature is the source of misery and disharmony. Taoism also advocates living a life of simplicity and nonattachment. When applied to the environmental conservation, Taoism advocates lessening our desires for material things. We can utilize things in the environment for our own sustenance but we should avoid greed, selfishness and attachment to material things. For the key to harmony, peace and happiness is simplicity and contentment.

Taoism respects that things in the world have their own time. This flow of nature's time must not be disrupted or misery occurs. When man starts to exploit things at their unripened time then disorder and destruction occurs. Applying it to environmental issues of irresponsibly cutting trees which take years before they can be replaced, the result would be the loss of our precious resources which naturally leads to all forms of disaster. Man must develop a deep awareness and understanding of his involvement in the greater scheme of nature. One possible solution is the Taoist principle of non-action and non interference. We let Mother Nature be. Do not exert effort, do not disrupt the environment. For once we dominate nature for our own purposes, then we have destroyed nature and have created and artificial reality. However, when we let things be, everything is in its proper order and harmony exists in the world. (Lao Tzu 1948).



Furthermore, Taoist philosophy sees the world as intricately interconnected processes and continuously changing, and yet balance is achieved. Taoism sees the world in perpetual change but each change marks its return. Thus, it means that all actions are connected with all other things, and all actions return to affect man in the same way ecology teaches man. If man destroys his environment, what he does will return to him. The world is moving in cyclic motion. There will be consequences of man's actions. We are accountable of our actions. Thus, as thought in Chinese Philosophy essential to man's action is to live in harmony and balance. Man should not dominate the world he lives in. Instead of trying to, he must learn to live harmoniously with unchanging law of nature. (Fung Yulan, 1952).

Furthermore, Taoism advocates the principle of *wu-wei*- doing by not doing. The Tao means the way. It sees reality as a process and everything within it is a subprocess. Everything has its own way of being. With that Tao everything has its own *te*. The *te* is the force of the Tao. It is said that things go well when we follow Tao. This means that a being's self identity is an aspect of its own particular life process, its own particular way of being alive. Thus, a being best thrive in existence if it follows its own identity. This philosophy of *wu-wei* then, applies to our own life and to all other non- human beings in the world. We do well when by leading a life that best fits us. Taoism advocates that we ought to think of the world in terms of dynamic and highly connected living processes that are to be valued in their own right and for what they are in their essences. In coming to terms well with ourselves and with the world, we ought to morally move in accordance with the flow of life, rather than try to move against nature and our surrounding environment by irresponsibly destroying it. This means that man must not go away from the natural rhythms and harmonies of the world and must strive to maintain the whole stability of life's processes. Rather, man must act in accordance with the nature of things. This means that we need to find a continuing balance and order with our environment. An action that follows the flow of nature causes no disruption. For example, cutting young trees that is only replaceable every 25 years is like disrupting its natural growth and rhythm. Exploiting the environment is like destroying its natural growth and regular flow. Preserving it is like allowing nature to flourish and to grow in its own time. "Tao never does; yet through inaction that everything is fulfilled. Chinese philosophy builds on the philosophy of order, harmony and integration. This is a model on humans ought to relate to the natural world (Tao Te Ching 1991).

The third approach is the formation of individual **virtues**. Plato and Aristotle both emphasized the importance of developing a reflective habit of the mind in which virtues are developed (Stumpf 2003). One of these useful virtues is prudence, the habit of the mind to foresee and take responsibility for the possible consequences of one's actions not only to be able to foresee the consequences of one's action but also to see the far-reaching consequences of one's actions. We need to weigh carefully our choices and decisions for our environment. This requires prudence, which is only developed through the habit of correct thinking. To stop the continued destruction of our environment, the ethical imperative should therefore be, first, prudence. We should judge every scrap of biodiversity as priceless while we learn to use it and come to reflect what it means to humanity. The stewardship of environment is a domain on the near side of metaphysics where all reflective persons can surely find a common ground.

Morality is the command of conscience seasoned by a rational examination of the results of our actions. The fundamental command is one that serves both present and future generations (Botzler 1998). It is important for man to develop a futuristic value, a value that looks at the far-reaching consequences of one's choices and actions. ((Des Jardins 2001).

Furthermore, Aristotle's philosophy is useful in reminding humans about a life of moderation. Humans must avoid excessive and defective actions. An exploitative attitude towards the environment is an example of excessive action and a sign of the mind not developed by proper virtues. On the other hand, a defective attitude shows that humans neglect their responsibility towards their environment. Action must be done in the light of the mean. (Nicomachean Ethics 2000).

The fourth approach is based on following the **categorical imperative**, an unconditional duty to treat humanity and all other things as ends in themselves. Kant's philosophy reminds us that we should not treat people as merely means to an end. It is a categorical imperative to "treat humanity whether in your own person or that of any other, not merely a means but always at the same time an end" (Kant 2000).

Today, we have ignored this moral imperative. Many businessmen convert agricultural land to industrial sites not minding a lot of people who are adversely affected by their actions. Many industrial plants emit pollution jeopardizing the health of many people. These are clear examples of treating people as mere means to an end. This moral imperative to respect the dignity of the person must be reconstituted in ourselves. The basis of this is that Kant sees man as involved in the community of persons whose dignity is based on our being the only self-legislating beings that have moral sense.



(Kant 2000). Thus, we must have a self-imposed obligation to grow, improve, strive, serve and do our best for the good of humanity. This philosophy of Kant is also in consonance with the Confucian idea of righteousness and unconditional moral duty. For Confucius, we must act for righteousness sake because we have understood the principle behind of righteousness. A good act is done for righteousness' sake and with no expectations for a reward or fear of punishment (The Analects, 1957).

The fifth approach is based on **teleological ethics** or natural law. Aquinas says that all beings are ordained to their proper ends. Although they lack intelligence, non-human beings are designed and are directed by a Higher Being for some definite purposes. Plants, animals, lands exist with a purpose. Such purposes help human beings fulfill their ends. On the other hand, rational creatures like human beings are directed towards higher ends. One of the basic inclinations of man is that of self-preservation. Land, water, plants and animals exist with a purpose that is to help man achieve his ends. Thus, if man's rational nature tells him that self-preservation is one of his inclinations then his reason must determine the right thing to do to fulfill and enhance this inclination. Making rational and rightful actions to preserve himself and other things will make him live a life of happiness and fulfillment. This is the natural law on the preservation of species. On the other hand, man knows' that when he goes against the natural inclination for life's preservation, he would then live a life of misery. Calamities, famine, hunger would be experienced by all people in the world. Thus, following the natural law makes man happy. Violating it makes his life miserable. (Pegis 1965).

The sixth approach is based on **aesthetic experience**. This has got to do the appreciation and reverence that man feels toward nature. To develop love and appreciation of his environment is to deepen man's understanding of nature and his connection with it. First, man must revisit nature. For Emerson, our appreciation and preservation of the environment is at the same time remembering the preciousness of Mother Nature. From the Latin word '*natura or natus*' comes from the verb 'to grow' and to be born. Nature, then, is whatever has been generated and what has come to be. (Pojman 2000). It generates in the environment and expresses itself in various forms such as wildlife, plants and animals. Emerson in "Circles" writes,

There is no end in nature, but every ending is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens. This fact, as far as it