

Part 1. Green Camouflage

Just as Pope Benedict (hereafter referred to as Benedict) warned that projects of poverty reduction can serve as a pretext for the exploitation of poor populations, so too, Pope Francis stated that programs purporting to save the environment often conceal the agenda of a wealthy elite who use environmental NGOs to limit the sovereignty of democratic nations in the Global South the better to exploit their nation's resources:

A delicate balance has to be maintained when speaking about these places, [the Amazon and Congo basins, and ecosystems of tropical forests] for we cannot overlook the huge global economic interests which, under the guise of protecting them, can undermine the sovereignty of individual nations. In fact, there are "proposals to internationalize the Amazon, which only serve the economic interests of transnational corporations."

Rev. Michael Schooyans, in *The Totalitarian Trend of Liberalism*, hailed by Pope John Paul II as "a pertinent analyses,"¹⁴ traced the growth of a "transnational club of the powerful" who "ensure the connivance of the local bourgeoisie to strengthen the transnational club's control" over the poor and the resources of developing nations by limiting the economic growth, functioning democracy, and sovereignty of developing nations.¹⁵ Some of the actors, whom Schooyans identifies as members of this transnational club of the powerful where there in East Africa when concerns about the environment first began to circulate after World War II as various African nations began to emerge from colonial rule.¹⁶

Stephen J. Macekura in *Limits of Growth: The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century* notes that Julian Huxley, a British biologist, eugenicist and founder of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Russell Train, a U.S. Tax Court judge and founder of the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation (AWLF), and Maurice Strong, a Canadian oil and gas executive and chairman of the UN Rio Earth Summit (1992), all found East

¹⁴ Michel Schooyan, *The Totalitarian Trend of Liberalism*, (St. Louis, MO: Central Bureau, 1997) Letter of Pope John Paul II to the Author, dated December 9, 1991. p. xix.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 94-95, citing Michael Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington and Joji Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy. Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission* (New York: University Press, 1975). Some of the members of the transnational club of the powerful that Schooyans mentions include those active in the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg Circle, the Trilateral Commission and even less transparent groups including continental Freemasonry.

¹⁶ Stephen J. Macekura, *Of Limits and Growth: The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) pp. 1-4, 116-117.

Africa (its flora and fauna, big game hunting, sightseeing and bird watching) enthralling as young men. Each of them individually and often times networking together set out to preserve East Africa and eventually the whole earth from the ecological predations of their local human populations and national governments. Acting on behalf of humanity in order to save exotic landscapes, plants, and animals from destruction, they felt justified to ignore the protests of the national leaders of developing countries.¹⁷

In the postwar years, global events shaped environmental thought in a number of important ways. International conservationists such as Julian Huxley made a significant cognitive leap about how they considered the relationship between themselves, the rest of the world, and political boundaries. NGO members such as Huxley often spoke of ‘the planet’ or ‘the earth’ as an object of governance. Alongside this construction of the earth as a coherent social unit, conservationists implied that wildlife belonged to the whole of humanity, not any one particular nation. Environmentalists interpreted these developments as evidence that nation-states could no longer stand alone – or be trusted – to ensure the protection of the environment. Effective management of the natural world required new ideas, new relationships, new institutions, all of which would help create coherent way of militating against the most fearsome aspect of decolonization and development.¹⁸

The Murchison Waterfalls Ugandan development project epitomizes the clash between environmental globalists and national political leaders. In 1965, Ugandan officials launched a five-year plan to tap the waters of the mighty Nile River to generate a tremendous amount of electricity. However, this plan called for the elimination of the worldclass Murchison Falls. Russell Train wrote to Ugandan President Obote explaining the negative impact this project would have on wildlife and the positive economic benefits of the waterfall in terms of tourist dollars and foreign exchange. The chairman of Uganda’s Electricity Board succinctly expressed the sentiments of Ugandan political leadership to the officious intermeddling of environmental globalists in Ugandan domestic policy: “To hell with animals and to hell with tourists, to hell

¹⁷ See Brian Scarnecchia, book review of Stephen J. Macekura, *Of Limits and Growth: The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), Acton Institute, *Journal of Markets and Morality* 19, fall 2016.

¹⁸ Macekura, *Of Limits of Growth: The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century*, p. 52.

with Murchison Falls!”¹⁹ As one reporter explained, the electrification of this region of Uganda “has become the very symbol of the modernity the nation aspires to...”²⁰

Environmental NGOs prevailed, the Murchison Falls still flows, and the poor in a significant part of Uganda still languish in poverty in comparison with the rest of the country. Fifty years later, another hydroelectric project (the proposed Bujagali dam) in Uganda again pitted global environmentalist against national leaders. Sebastian Mallaby, a reporter for the *Washington Post* visited Uganda to investigate and was left flummoxed. He wondered: “Was the NGO movement acting as a civilized check on industrialization... Or was it retarding the battle against poverty by withholding electricity that would fuel economic growth, ultimately benefiting poor citizens?” In an article he wrote for *Foreign Policy*, he sided with Ugandan government officials trying to empower their poor citizens opposed by The International Rivers Network (IRN), a wealthy environmental NGO based in Berkeley, California:

“Clinics and factories [in Uganda] are being deprived of electricity by Californians,” he asserted. Distant and aloof, the activists cleave to abstract principles designed to ‘save the earth,’ when in reality they denied other governments the right to pursue the projects they wanted or allow local people the right to choose their own paths out of poverty.²¹

Associates of Maurice Strong fired back that Mallaby’s article was “one-sided,” “superficial,” “a blatant polemic,” “a misinformed and illogical screed” and that Mallaby had “grossly over oversimplified the relationship between NGOs, development lenders, and development countries.”²² Macekura concludes that the bitter defensive tone of these responses showed how deeply his investigation had stung the environmental globalist NGO community that had grown in power, accountable to no one, to the extent of directing national and international policy in the name of environmental protection by co-opting politicians and international developmental aid and lending institutions:

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 85.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. p. 304.

²² Ibid. pp. 305-306.

In his Bujagali [dam] example, Mallaby argued that the International Rivers Network purported to represent the interests of the poor and to protect the natural world in Uganda. In practice, though, their resistance to the dam only perpetuated poverty by denying electricity that local people desired. Similarly, he claimed that NGOs had become influential special interest groups that co-opted elected officials for their own benefit. He charged NGOs with using the World Bank's Inspection Panel – the review body... with favoring activists over the bank's staff... All of this occurred, his article implied, without any accountability or questioning of the NGOs' legitimacy to do so in the first place.²³

Environmental globalist NGOs had certainly grown in power. They had helped to curb the power and limit the sovereignty of developing nation-states, a good thing in the mind of a powerful elite: "Writing in 1997, Jessica Mathews, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, identified a 'novel redistribution of power' taking place. 'The steady concentration of power in the hands of states that began in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia is over, at least for a while,' Mathews claimed. Nations were in a process of 'sharing power' with businesses, international organizations, and NGOs."²⁴

How had these globalist environmental NGOs become so powerful, acting with no semblance of coordination but, all the same, achieving a mutually agreeable goal – that of limiting the sovereignty of developing nations and forcing them to share power with multinational business, international organizations, and themselves, i.e., NGOs? One explanation is that all this was brought about by coincidence or mere chance, that is to say, "it just happened." But as Aristotle pointed out, where there is a high degree of order and design, random chance is no explanation.²⁵

²³ Ibid. pp. 305-307

²⁴ Ibid. 312.

²⁵ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: [Aristotle] then seems to contend, as an exhaustive and exclusive disjunction, that things happen either by chance or for the sake of something, only to suggest, finally, that what is 'always or for the most part'—what happens in a patterned and predictable way—is not plausibly thought to be due to chance. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle/#FouCauAccExpAde>, last visited 11/26/2023.

On the other hand, Elaine Dewar in her well documented exposé, *Cloak of Green*, argues that “it didn’t just happen by chance” that the seemingly independent and random activities of environmental NGOs, government actors, and multinationals converged to bring about fundamental changes in nation-states and the international and regional organizations. Rather, she documents the labyrinth ways these outcomes came to be through the networking of various influential persons. At the center of these networks within networks she identifies one person, the Honorable Maurice Strong,²⁶ a Canadian oil and gas executive and General Secretary of the 1992 United Nations “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro (1992), who mentored Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum,²⁷ and who together with Michel Gorbachev drafted the United Nations’s *Earth Charter*. Steven C. Rockefeller had this to say after Strong died on November 29, 2015, in *Remembering Maurice Strong Tributes and Remembrances*:

One of the most remarkable things about Strong’s extraordinary life is the vast international network of friends and colleagues from the worlds of business, government, and civil society that he built up over the years. Drawing on this network, he was able to attract and assemble an outstanding team of dedicated, talented women and men to advance the Earth Charter project. Among those who joined him as partners were Mikhail Gorbachev and the twenty-three members of the Earth Charter Commission.... It was Strong’s personal leadership coupled with the leadership of Gorbachev and the Commission that provided the undertaking with credibility globally....²⁸

²⁶ Maurice Strong died on November 28, 2015 at 86 years of age and was mourned by the U.N. See <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/world-mourns-one-its-greats-maurice-strong-dies-his-legacy-lives> , last visited 11/26/2023. Also See “The World Mourns One of its Greats,” <https://www.mauricestrong.net/> , last visited 11/26/2023.

²⁷ See World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab, “Maurice Strong: an appreciation,” Nov. 29, 2015: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/maurice-strong-an-appreciation/> , last visited 11/27/2023.

²⁸ Steven C. Rockefeller, “Maurice Strong and the Earth Charter,” *Remembering Maurice Strong Tributes and Remembrances* <file:///C:/Users/bscarnecchia/Downloads/Steven-Rockefeller-Maurice-Strong-and-the-Earth-Charter-3.pdf> , last visited 11/27/2023. This article may be accessed at the Earth Charter website, <https://earthcharter.org/library/maurice-strong-earth-charter/> , last visited 11/27/2023.

Klaus Schwab also mourned the loss of his mentor, Maurice Strong: “He was my mentor since the creation of the Forum; an indispensable advisor; and, for many years, a member of our Foundation Board. Without him, the Forum would not have achieved its present significance.”²⁹

In a private interview, Dewar asked Strong point blank – “are you a One Worlder?” Strong did not hesitate to reply in the affirmative: “I’ve said for years the world needs a world system of governance. Every issue [should be] dealt with at the level [where it can] be dealt with effectively.... Ozone comes from refrigerants. You’ve gotta have a global agreement [to deal with it] but actions [have to be] taken nationally [so nothing happens] Eventually, the U.N. will need direct access as a global level of systems....” Strong compared his efforts to reorganize the world’s nation-states under a central international government to Garibaldi’s Italian unification project that brought together a multitude of major and minor independent states in a united Italy: “Garibaldi was seen as completely unrealistic for saying Italy could be united, but it did happen. It can become tomorrow’s inevitability. I see it as inevitable – it’s unreal right now – but I do see it as a necessity.”³⁰

Dewar began to understand that Strong and those in his network planned to limit the sovereign prerogatives all nation-states and realign them in a new world order:

[Strong] hoped to get national governments to take the first and second and third steps in the diminution of their own powers at Rio. It was like hearing a distant trumpet sound outside the walls, a signal that a great work had begun. The Rio Summit, like the Stockholm Conference [before it], was aimed at reorganizing the world into very much larger administrative units, with real power redistributed from national governments to vast regional organization. The idea of relative sovereignty was going to apply to all nation states, not just environmentally sensitive places like the Amazon.³¹

To be sure, this transnational club of the powerful does not wish to completely eliminate nation states, Dewar said. These multinational interests, such as the Business Council for Sustainable Development and the World Economic Forum, still needed them as “investors in research and development,” as “buyers of

²⁹ Empty Citation

³⁰ Elaine Dewar, *Cloak of Green* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1995), pp. 294-295

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 318.

products,” and as guarantors of “risk dollars,” and “safe streets.”³² But the primary reason to limit national sovereignty and transfer it to regional and global venues is to create an illusion of democracy by the participation of thousands of NGOs (most of whom were controlled by multinational interests, whom Dewar refers to as Private Governmental Organizations (PGOs), in order to conceal the operations of a global Leviathan:

The point of regional and global levels of governance was to uncouple the power of government from the great mass of the governed, and to make certain that places where crucial decisions are made cannot be directly reached by voters but, can be easily reached by important interest. These interests wanted governments to appear to be democratic – for public relations purposes if nothing else – but to be unresponsive to anyone other than multinational interests.

Strong used the United Nations to advance his agenda. Dewar explained that it was at the preparation committees to major UN conferences that Strong “fed key notions through his networks and into political fora.” For instance, “if one wanted clean air and a stable climate, environment [NGOs] argued, then one would just have to accept a diminishment of natural sovereignty to get at the causes and cures.”³³

As the idea of the legitimacy of national sovereignty is diminished in the public’s consciousness due to the ineptness and scandal caused by national leaders, it would be replaced by a new notion – “the idea of the inherent sovereignty of *peoples* took its place, packaged and repackaged to suit various locales.”³⁴ For instance, Dewar explained, in the Amazon basin the inherent right of the Kayapo Amazonian indigenous people was recognized as the guardians of their forest, a semi-sovereign state for them to manage inside of Brazil half the size of France.³⁵ However, Dewar discovered that multinationals were now able to circumvent the government of Brazil and make deals directly with the Kayapo tribes to mine gold, harvest timber, and gather nuts and other commodities for cosmetics from their territory.³⁶

³² Ibid. pp. 318-319.

³³ Ibid. p. 330.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 331 (emphases in the text).

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 11, 78.

³⁶ Ibid. pp. 60-78.

In sum, a neo-colonial two-levered diminution of national sovereignty is occurring in the Global South in the name of the environment and sustainable development. First, the authority of developing nations to control their internal affairs is weakened by regional and international pressure to limit their economic development in order to either safeguard their natural amenities, such as waterfalls, or to retard the effects of transnational environmental harm such as climate change, garbage disposal, desertification, and deforestation. Second, developing nations are, also, subject to internal dissection as foreign pressure bears on them to concede sovereign control over vast territories within their borders to indigenous people to act as guardians of their native land and its natural resources. However, this also facilitates the ability of native guardians to trade these resources with multinationals who can acquire them more expeditiously than from the national government.

Finally, in the name of the environment and sustainable development, pressure is brought to bear on developing nations by international organization and agencies, wealthy nations, and multinationals to curtail the growth of their nation's population by implementing a regime of sexual and reproductive rights, i.e., amoral sex education for children, contraception, sterilization, and abortion, and to guarantee their citizens a right to express their sexual orientation and gender identity. By these means, poverty will be reduced, prosperity will come about, and the environment will be blessed by the reduction of the nation's carbon footprint.

However, Schooyans points out, the real motivation of the United States in limiting the growth of populations of developing nations had more to do with its national security (as a declassified document from the United States State Department, *National Security Memorandum 200*, reveals³⁷) than a genuine concern for helping poor nations to develop. As Schooyans explains:

Finally, a secret document, [National Security Memorandum 200] reserved to the White House, dating from 1974, but made public in 1989 considers it indispensable to the security of the U.S. to implement a policy of demographic control in countries of the

³⁷ *National Security Study Memorandum NSSM 200: Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests* (The Kissinger Report) December 10, 1974, declassified/Released on 7/3/89. See Nixon Library, https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/virtuallibrary/documents/nssm/nssm_200.pdf, last visited 11/26/23 and United States Agency for International Development https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pcaab500.pdf, last visited 11/26/2023.

Third-World. The means are: chemical contraception, sterilization, the IUD, abortion, etc. ... It is also subtly brought out that “the United States can help minimize the suspicion of giving in to an imperialist motivation that could be found as the basis of the support it gives to population activities. For that, it is necessary to emphasize that the North American position flows, as it happens, from facts like the right of the individual to determine freely and responsibly the number of children he desires, and the fundamental right of poor nations to social and economic development.”³⁸

Schooyans suggests that United States’ determination to decimate the fertility rate of nations in the developing world as part of its foreign policy may also have caused it to enlist other organizations to do its bidding: “why... would the U.S. not also use other organisms – such as, for example, the World Bank, the PUND [Program for UN Development], the WHO, or even the UN itself – to conduct its policy in the area?”³⁹

In sum, just as a cloak of green has been used to covertly transfer power from nation states in the developing world to regional and international organizations, so too, the banner of freedom and progress has been used to castrate the population growth of the developing world. The real reason why population growth in the developing world is so dangerous to the Global North is that “demographic growth could be the cause of wealth, and that this is the very reason why it is perceived as a menace by those presently wealthy. It is this thesis, the inverse of that spread of the ideological gnosis, that they must carefully conceal and nip in the bud.”⁴⁰

These lies in the service of violence have not gone unnoticed by Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, all of whom have sought to demystify the lies that lead to the ideological colonization of the Developing world.

Part 2. The Church’s Duty – Demystify the Lies that lead to Ideological Colonization.

Pope John Paul II recognized and denounced “a conspiracy against life,” a veritable “war of the powerful against the weak” directed against individual persons but also against nations as a

³⁸ Schooyans, *The Totalitarian Trend of Liberalism*, citing *National Security Memorandum, NSSM 200*, pp. 57-58.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.58.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.179.

whole: "This conspiracy involves not only individuals in their personal, family or group relationships, but goes far beyond, to the point of damaging and distorting, at the international level, relations between peoples and States."⁴¹ This war, he said, presents "a truly alarming spectacle," presenting "scientifically and systematically programmed threats"⁴² involving even international organizations that promote their misanthropic agenda as a victory for freedom:

[W]e are in fact faced by an objective "conspiracy against life", involving even international Institutions, engaged in encouraging and carrying out actual campaigns to make contraception, sterilization and abortion widely available. Nor can it be denied that the mass media are often implicated in this conspiracy, by lending credit to that culture which presents recourse to contraception, sterilization, abortion and even euthanasia as a mark of progress and a victory of freedom, while depicting as enemies of freedom and progress those positions which are unreservedly pro-life.⁴³

John Paul II recognized that at the heart of the disrespect for nature and for human life, there lies a blindness, an amnesia of God, and this leads to a blindness, an amnesia of the dignity and worth of the human person. Once God is forgotten, the difference between human beings and other creatures is lost. This blindness in turn distorts one's approach to nature. Either one errs through presumption and uses human freedom with no respect for the laws which flourish nature, or through despair and fear of ever using human freedom wisely, insists that nature much be left untouched: "Thus it is clear that the loss of contact with God's wise design is the deepest root of modern man's confusion, both when this loss leads to a freedom without rules and when it leaves man in "fear" of his freedom."⁴⁴

Benedict agreed that to avoid these two ecological missteps, according too little or too much respect for the environment, we must regain a clear vision of "the intrinsic balance of creation." Simply put, we need to see nature as something more than the "result of mere chance," and so, it is *not* at our disposal as "a heap of scattered refuse." On the other hand, we must see it as

⁴¹ Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), #12.

⁴² *Ibid.* #17.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* #22.

something less than a neo-pagan source of salvation “more important than the human person.” In either case, Benedict warns, “our sense of responsibility wanes.” If this balanced “vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it.”⁴⁵

Both extremes miss the mark because they fail to appreciate the metaphysics of rationality that pervade all reality. Benedict reminds us that God Himself, the “three divine Person are pure relationality”⁴⁶ and “the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations” and consequently “It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God.”⁴⁷

Moreover, what is mathematics but the study of relationalities. Benedict’s reflection on Galileo’s thought in this regard is insightful: “Galileo said God wrote the book of nature in the form of the language of mathematics.”⁴⁸ Benedict says it is amazing that there is a correspondence between an invention of the human mind, mathematics, and the structure of the universe that allows us to use it. Therefore, he says, “the intellectual structure of the human subject and the objective structure of reality coincide: the subjective reason and the objective reason of nature is identical” and “we see, that, in the end, it is ‘one’ reason that links them both. Our reason could not discover this other reason were there not an identical antecedent reason for both.”⁴⁹

The correspondence of the subjective reason (mathematics) with an objective reason found in nature and an antecedent Creative reason that caused this correspondence also has repercussions on law and human rights. The Austrian legal philosopher, Hans Kelsen, said that legal norms can only come from the will. However, nature has no will, so, it contains no norms unless a will had put them there. This would require a Creator God whose will had put norms into nature. However, Kelsen said that “[a]ny attempt to discuss the truth of this belief is utterly

⁴⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, #48.

⁴⁶ Ibid. #54.

⁴⁷ Ibid. #53

⁴⁸ Pope Benedict, From Meeting with the Youth of Rome and the Lazio Region in Preparation for the Twenty-first World Youth Day, April, 6, 2006.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

futile.”⁵⁰ This caused Benedict to ask – “Is it really pointless to wonder whether the objective reason that manifests itself in nature does not presuppose a creative reason, a *Creator Spiritus*,” given the fact that the whole culture of human rights that we have inherited from the past arose from the “conviction that there is a Creator God” and “the awareness of people’s responsibility for their actions.”⁵¹

Benedict’s outline for a “new trajectory of thinking” that “requires a deeper critical evaluation of the category of relation”⁵² provides the key to decipher the intrinsic balance of creation and opens a path for law and policy between the excesses of too little or too great a regard for the natural environment. This new trajectory also helps to clear the air and dispel the mystification concealing the agenda of the transnational club of the powerful who use the environment as collectivist political religion for a new world order.

Michael Bauer’s in *Natural Law and the Natural Environment: Pope Benedict XVI’s Vision Beyond Utilitarianism and Deontology* explains that Benedict’s environmental hermeneutic, if you will, rests on the convertibility of being and goodness, the convertibility of being and order, and the uniquely intellectual nature of the human being. It is man’s ability to mentally abstract and instantiate cognitively the goodness and order of any aspect of the natural world that orders all creation to Him.⁵³

Benedict’s natural law understanding of being posits, in line with the Augustinian-Thomistic view, that every instance of being is also an instance of goodness. Evil is the absence of a requisite goodness, a privation of being. This line of thought is compatible with deontological thinkers who insist that the “intrinsic worth” of all being grounds our human obligation to care for the natural environment regardless of its utility for human beings. However, Bauer points

⁵⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, “Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Bundestag,” Apostolic Journey to Germany, 22-25 September 2011.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, #53

⁵³ Michael Bauer, “Natural Law and the Natural Environment: Pope Benedict XVI’s Vision Beyond Utilitarianism and Deontology,” Chapter 3 in Tobias Winwright & James Schaefer (eds.), *Environmental Justice and Climate Change: Assessing Pope Benedict XVI’s Ecological Vision for the Catholic Church in the United States*, (Lanham, MD, 20706, USA: pp. 43-57 (2013) <https://philpapers.org/archive/BAUNLA-2.pdf>, last visited 11/27/2023.

out, the deontological notion of intrinsic worth fails to justify how some things with intrinsic worth may still be used to flourish genuine human ends.

Bauer then explains that every instance of an intelligent order is an instance of being. intelligent order being what prescribes a being distinguishing it from all other beings. As Bauer explains, “[t]he crucial point here is that it is only through some kind of order (or form) that any natural kind and thus any natural thing can exist in the first place; and correspondingly, it is only through some kind of order (or form) that any natural goodness can exist. If all order (or form) were taken away, then all being and thus all goodness would also disappear.”⁵⁴

Finally, for Benedict the human person is more than a combination of genetic information and interactions with the environment (understood strictly in terms of material and efficient causality).⁵⁵ Given the unique innate rational nature of man and the ability of the human mind to abstract the intelligible form or “inscape” of other created things and know them cognitively, the human person thus unites created things relationally. This cognitive union of created realities images God who draws all creation back together in union with Himself, not to annihilate their being in a collective oneness but, rather, in intimate relational communion. “It is for this reason,” Bauer says, “that the human being, while part of a larger created order [of nature], is also a being towards which other created beings might be ordered; and so, the human being may make use of other created beings [all of nature] for the sake of satisfying legitimate human ends.”

Benedict explains that it is because of man’s ability to image God and instantiate the goodness and order of created being cognitively within himself that his duty to nature rests on his duty to himself. Why? “Because the human creature – unlike the lower creatures – is able to reflect the natural world’s unity and goodness in a uniquely excellent way [and so] we can say [with Pope Benedict] that ‘our duties toward the environment flow from our duties towards the person.’”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid. citing Pope Benedict XVI “Address to the Members of the Pontifical Academy for Life on the Occasion of the Fifteenth General Assembly,” February 21., 2009.

⁵⁶ Ibid. citing Pope Benedict XVI, “Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, “January 1, 2010, #12.

This new trajectory of thinking sees man's role in creation imaging God, imitating the Creator by cognitively drawing together created beings into relationship with other beings. Sin, on the contrary for Benedict, is a "rejection of relationality."⁵⁷ Therefore, when human beings treat the environment as a pile of refuse with no innate value or conversely when they treat themselves believing that they are a mere epiphonema of nature, they reject the hierarchy of relationality found in the created order:

Human duties to the environment "flow from" human duties to other human persons, not because created beings in the environment have value only in their usefulness to humans, but rather because created being[s] in the environment can become truly themselves (can become truly perfected in their own being) "only by way of relationship."⁵⁸

It should be noted that the metaphysical convertibility of being to goodness attributable has an epistemological corollary in environmental epistemology that can be described as the move from "is" to "good." In his article "The Move from *Is* to *Good*," John Nolt explains that from the attributes of a species (*is*), one may discern the goods that flourish a species (*good*), and from those goods that flourish a species one may conclude a moral duty (*duty*) to promote the goods of a species:

More generally, the class of such arguments can be characterized by the following schema:

All *F* has good (or value) *G* (*is to good*),
We ought to *V* whatever has *G* (*good to ought*),
We ought to *V* whatever has *F* (*is to ought*).⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid. citing "Sin and Salvation" in *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI: His Central Writings and Speeches*, edited by John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne, p.265.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ John Nolt, "The Move from *Is* to *Good* in Environmental Ethics" (2009). Faculty Publications and Other works – Philosophy. [Http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_philpubs/1](http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_philpubs/1), 135-154, 136.

Thus, environmental ethics provides a “solution to Hume’s *is-ought* problem,” which is better understood as an *is* to *good* skepticism.⁶⁰ Hume’s epistemological problem looms large for Benedict as an impediment in natural law theory.

Benedict in his address to the Bundestag explained that the rejection of nature as normative in favor of a so-called scientific functional understanding of nature is due to an opaque theory of knowledge that no longer sees nature as normative due to the supposed impossibility of drawing an “ought” from an “is,” which creates an epistemological cataract:

The idea of natural law is today viewed as a specifically Catholic doctrine, not worth bringing into the discussion in a non-Catholic environment.... Fundamentally it is because the idea that an unbridgeable gulf exists between ‘is’ and ‘ought.’ An ‘ought’ can never follow from an ‘is’, because the two are situated on completely different planes. The reason for this is that in the meantime, the positivist understanding of nature has come to be almost universally accepted.... A positivist conception of nature as purely functional, as the natural sciences consider it to be, is incapable of producing any bridge to ethics and law, but once again yields only functional answers.⁶¹

Mary Tylor protests that the “ruthless division of fact from value” has developed into an ideology that “does not merely deny that it can answer ultimate questions of value and meaning but says that the questions themselves are either meaningless or unanswerable.”⁶²

The repercussions of an instrumental logic that disregards nature’s telos, Benedict warned, has resulted in the instrumentalization of human beings and a political instrumentalization of human society for special interests, not the common good: “It is not surprising that the same lack of reverence which blinds the instrumental logic of modernity to teleology in this ‘scientific’

⁶⁰ John Nolt, “The Move from *Good* to *Ought* in Environmental Ethics,” *Environmental Ethics* 28 (2006): 355-374, 358, 360.

⁶¹ Pope Benedict XVI, “Address to the Bundestag,” September 22, 2011. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110922_reichstag-berlin.html Last visited 6/29/2023.

⁶² Mary Taylor, “A Deeper Ecology: A Catholic Vision of the Person in Nature,” *Communio* 38 (Winter 2011) p. 592 https://economy.secondspring.co.uk/uploads/articles_24_660109623.pdf, accessed 7/7/23.

approach to nature, also blinds the instrumental logic employed by political liberalism to a teleology in the human person and society.⁶³

Benedict's natural law jurisprudence provides a new trajectory focused on the category of *relationality* that meets the Humean epistemological challenge that seemed to debunk natural law theory's foundational principle – *that Nature is Normative*. In this way, Benedict opens wide the windows on the hermeneutical bunker imposed by positivist closed system thinking which admits that only material and efficient causes (functionality) have legitimacy:

In its self-proclaimed exclusivity, the positivist reason which recognizes nothing beyond mere functionality resembles a concrete bunker with no windows, in which we ourselves provide lighting and atmospheric conditions, being no longer willing to obtain either from God's wide world. And yet we cannot hide from ourselves the fact that even in this artificial world we are still covertly drawing upon God's raw materials, which we refashion into our own products. The windows must be flung open again, we must see the wide world, the sky, and the earth once more and learn to make proper use of all this.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Benedict's relational natural law demystifies the irreverent instrumental logic of modernity employed by political liberalism so that the teleology of nature and the human person can once again be clearly seen and defended. One sign of hope that Benedict recognized in this regard was the grassroot ecological movement which, he said, "while it has not exactly flung open the windows, nevertheless was and continues to be a cry for fresh air which must not be ignored or pushed aside, just because too much of it is seen to be irrational."⁶⁵ He goes on to say that young people recognize that there is something wrong with the way we treat nature, shaping or misshaping it at will. They intuit that "the earth has a dignity of its own and that we must follow its directives."⁶⁶ Benedict then drives home the relational teleological imperative of nature's

⁶³ Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to the Bundestag."

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

directives. He insists that there is “also an ecology of man. Man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will.”⁶⁷

While the reestablishment of natural law jurisprudence aligned with an environmental ethic may not immediately address the agenda of the transnational club of the powerful, it opens a door for a more vigorous exchange of ideas. Environmental activists insist that nature and the species of nature have laws of flourishing that impose duties on human society and that courts must promote these goods and enjoin human activity that contravenes them. This, I suggest, marks a juridical path natural law lawyers should pursue. The environmentalist critique – that all things in nature have a nature and natural laws of flourishing – deconstructs the post-Modern existential belief that, as it concerns the human person, existence precedes nature so that the human person is free to create his or her nature and moral norms. Benedict argues – not so!

Man is not merely self-creating freedom. Man does not create himself. He is intellect and will, but he is also nature, and his will is rightly ordered if he respects his nature, listens to it, and accepts himself for who he is, as one who did not create himself. In this way and in no other, is true human freedom fulfilled.⁶⁸

The gates impeding the integral development of the whole person and all persons imposed on developing nations by the transnational club of the powerful can and will be thrown open by the Gospel of Christ. Let us not forget that along with providing an intellectual solution to the anthropological and epistemological dilemmas that stop sort a vigorous reply to post-Modernity, Benedict also promoted an organizational strategy. In 2007, he called to Rome NGOs of Catholic Inspiration and asked us to “to counter relativism creatively by presenting the great truths about man’s innate dignity and the rights which are derived from that dignity....”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Pope John Paul II made similar arguments in *Veritatis Splendor* #40-41 proposing a “participated theonomy” as the only way the human person can act freely.

⁶⁹ See footnote 1.

I would like to conclude with an outline of principles for an integral relational natural law from which further conclusions and practical determinations⁷⁰ of natural law may be articulated to provide “systems of governance for the whole range of the global commons,” as Pope Francis asked in *Laudato Si'*,⁷¹ to wit:

Principles for an Integral Natural Law

Nature is normative because one can reason from the facts of nature to the goodness of nature’s designs to a duty to flourish the goodness of nature’s designs.

Faith and reason confirm that human nature, a unity of an immaterial soul created directly by God with his image impressed upon it united to a material body, is normative.

Because the basic inclinations of plants and animals are fundamentally dissimilar from those of human beings, there is no basis for recognizing the dignity and worth of plants and animals as equal to that of human beings.

Given the one-way similarity between animals and human beings, in so far as animals are like human beings, but human beings are not like animals, it is just to say – human beings deserve no less legal consideration than nature, flora, and fauna, but much greater legal consideration.

Given that human beings deserve no less legal consideration than nature, flora, and fauna, therefore the Precautionary Principle and the Natural Use Principle of environmental ethics apply in the promotion and defense of human flourishing and Rights of Nature’s recognition of the legal personality of nature unable to

⁷⁰ See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 95, A. 2. Also see Adrina Vermeule, *Common Good Constitutionalism*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2022) pp. 9-11 for guidance as to how the principles and determinations of the natural law may apply in the promotion and defense of the classical legal tradition.

⁷¹ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, (2015) #174.

speaking for itself extends to vulnerable human beings unable to speak for themselves.

