

Good essay about humans and the natural environment: the abuse of natural resourc...

[Technology](#), [Future](#)



Most people from the previous years did not have much concern for the environment; hence, they have taken it for granted. Man has and continuously abuse nature for its natural resources. While humanity's number increase, the number of plants and animals decrease – the quality of the air and water has going down at a fast rate, too (Williams). Will the success of man means the downfall of the rest of nature? Such will not be the case. While, for the moment, giant leaps in industrialization resulted from man's abuse of natural resources for the time being, the future will prove destructive to humanity due to the same reason – the abuse of natural resources.

Unfortunately, the effects of the negligence in protecting and conserving our environment are now starting to be felt. Global warming, climate change, extinction of some species, melting of the ice caps, and other things are now happening all over the planet and there are is one to blame but us.

Technology, innovation, invention and industrialization which have the aim of modernization still have their negative side effects especially to the nature. Pollutants and other toxic materials that harm our natural environment are the main consequences of our pursuit of convenience and modern technologies.

Modern technologies can only be produced through the establishment of industries. These industries need energy in order to operate. The primary source of energy is natural fuel oil from fossils. When fuel oil is burned, it emits huge amounts of carbon dioxide, which is proven to be the major cause of global warming. At present, industrialized nations such as China and the United States of America are the two most air-polluting countries in the

world. While their people and government brag of cleanliness on their buildings and infrastructure, the truth remains, that their dirt in the atmosphere pollutes the entire world - giants in military and economic might but dwarfs when it comes to concern to other people and the planet (Action For Our Planet, AFOP). With almost every nation trying to industrialize themselves and become slaves to excessive fuel our nature is being abused. The unquenchable appetite for convenience and technology is taking up too much of the energy sources available. For example, based from the population growth and the fuel oil production, each person should only consume approximately 1.5 gallons of fuel oil per day. The Americans, however, consume 8 gallons per day - on the average - while the Chinese consume half the said amount - 4 gallons/day (Barlette).

Add to such abuse are the disasters resulting from them. A picture of environmental disaster is the British Petroleum oil spill that happened in 2010 near the Delta of Mississippi. Crone and Tolstoy estimated 4.4 million barrels of oil were spilled to the gulf and is considered to be the worst environmental disaster that happened in U. S. history (Rolston III, 3). The spill degraded not only the economy of the Gulf but also affected the marine and wildlife habitats around the Gulf. Endangered species like Kemp's Ridley turtle, the Green Turtle, the Logger-head Turtle, the Hawksbill Turtle and the Leatherback Turtle as well as thousands species of fish, birds, molluscs, crustaceans and other marine mammals were affected by the oil spill (Rolston III, 4).

Holmes Rolston III said that climate change brought about by global warming is another effect of neglecting our environment. The increasing surface

temperature of the Earth in the recent decades is caused by human activities that emit greenhouse gases. National Securities of European countries even claim that the threat of global warming is greater than the threat of global terrorism. They believe that the heat is not only climatological but also economic, political and moral (5-6).

Rolston also said that environmentalists demand environmental justice and President Bill Clinton passed a law for the people of the United States to have a fair treatment and significant involvement of all people to the implementation, development and enforcement of laws, policies and regulations about the protection and preservation of our environment. Success can be achieved if everyone regardless of race, color and origin will enjoy the same level of protection from environmental hazards and equal rights to live in an healthy environment to live, learn, and work (8).

Moore and Nelson stated that Ethics has always been a concern when we talk about preserving our natural resources. Since we are the ones who threaten the environment, we are also the ones who have the moral obligations of making sure that we do not totally deplete our resources that will totally destroy our environment as well as the moral obligations of securing an environment for the future generation use (1). We humans are highly dependent to the environment. We have the moral obligation of protecting it for the survival of humankind. In addition to that, Moore and Nelson also stated their premise that environmental changes will bring severe harm in the near future if we do not act as soon as possible. We can prevent the harms in the future if we will accept the moral obligations to maintain our world rich in life and liveable in the future. Actions must be

made and they should be started now (1).

Moore and Nelson said that James Gustav Speth was able to show one proof that it is mainly because of our doings that contribute to the destruction of our environment. Human activities and occurrences like deforestations, climatic instability, increasing human population, utilization machines that emit greenhouse gases and economic progress contribute to the depletion of our environment and natural resources (3). His main argument is that the economic progress of a country or a particular place greatly affects the environment. Speth also illustrated various charts showing how human activities related to economic growth are accelerating and not being held at fair levels the emission of toxic wastes and pollutants to the environment through the years. The economies of the world will most likely to double in size in just two decades and there is also the possibility that our environment will be enormously deteriorated when that time comes. We do not want that to happen because it will be us who will suffer the consequences so we must do actions now to prevent the deterioration of our environment (6).

Moore and Nelson also cited Daniel Quinn as the one who related the increasing biomass of humankind to the extinction of other species. All living things are composed of biomass. What is alarming is the increase of human biomass because the human species are slowly taking the biomass of other species around us. Quinn said that we acquire the biomass of the surrounding species through the cutting or burning down forests and later on converting them to crop or pastureland. The previous biomass of thousands of species like bugs, birds, and other wildlife that lived in that particular forest are now destroyed and would be impossible to be recovered again. We

then diminish other thousands of these species if we clear adjacent forests everyday which also make these species become inevitably extinct (11). The growing population of human can also be accounted for the destruction of our wildlife. We deplete our natural resources in order to feed our species' ever-growing population. This shows Thomas Malthus' theory of human exceptionalism where our population will continue to grow as long as resources are still available. This will result to the depletion of every last area of wilderness that will make other species be pushed to extinction (12).

Moore and Nelson also said that Dalai Lama and Sidney Piburn believe that the misdirected human behaviour is one of the causes of some global crises like war, poverty, pollution and suffering. Dalai Lama and Piburn believe that we can use our genuine sense of universal responsibility with wisdom and compassion so that the results of our actions will not harm but will be beneficial not just to ourselves but also to other people and other organisms as well. This attitude can be extended in protecting our planet. Applying the values of having a good heart will be essential in developing the aspect of human nature which can also be applied in doing actions for the preservation of our natural resources (17-18).

Barack Obama as quoted by Moore and Nelson said that timid politics will not help in solving the problems of global warming that we are facing today. He was alarmed because the intensity of the storms, the number of forest fires and the duration of drought have been breaking records now. Obama also argued that if we will continue to idle, by the year 2050 drought and famine will affect 250 million just in the states of America which might increase the chances of riots, wars and strife in the country. Ice caps will also melt at a

faster rate and coastal cities and towns will soon be swallowed by the sea. No one wants a future like that. That is why Barack Obama is calling the attention of all people to start acting now in saving our planet. Our planet needs our cooperation in helping it preserve its natural resources (32). Stuart Chapin III as quoted by Moore and Nelson also stated that our planet have been giving signs that it needs help but unfortunately, most of us do not listen to our planet's wailings. Scientists and ecologists have seen many changes in the ecosystems around the planet over the past two decades. Although change is not something that is new to us, what is alarming is that these changes in our ecosystems are happening in relatively faster rates. These changes are so fast that we are experiencing phenomenon that should be experienced several hundred years from now. Human actions are the main contributors of these changes. Simple occurrences like storms during summer and unusual delayed of the winter season are some of the signs that the planet is trying to say to us that if we continue not to notice them then we will be in peril (75-76). Chapin III also said that we should first understand this rapidly changing planet of ours in order to make the best ways in preserving our planet for the future generation (78). Moral concerns should be only given to the future of human species in saving our environment. We should also extend our moral concerns to other forms of life as well. Moore and Nelson believe that we should take the responsibility of protecting the future of our planet for the sake of all life forms in Earth. All life in our planet gives balance to our nature and ecosystem and by taking away one life form might destroy the said balance. In a macro view, all species are all equally worthy of living. Humans should

be aware of that thought and since the humans are more capable in taking actions, humans are the ones who should take charge in the responsibility to our nature. Conserving our environment would also mean conserving the biodiversity in our planet (98-99).

Natural resources and services of the ecosystems are usually what we get as gifts from our planet Earth. These gifts are even given to us for free. Things like the sun, rain, fresh air, water, rich soil for farming and growing fruits and vegetables are just few of the commodities that we can get from our environment. Many living organisms are highly dependent on these gifts but sadly, what we do in return is that we exhaust all of these resources and leaving nature nothing. We usually take these gifts for granted and usually forget to be grateful to the Mother Nature. Being grateful is being able to reciprocate the gifts that the nature is giving us for free. Moore and Nelson said that protecting our environment is a good way of giving back to our planet (132).

Moore and Nelson observed that there is a large percentage of people who are not alarmed by environmental crises like global warming and ecological collapse. We should not let time teach them the threats of these crises and we should educate them as early as now. People who understand the threats and emergencies should be consistent with their convictions in saving our planet. Resolving the crisis in our environment through various steps must be made now. Since the humans gave the biggest contribution in destroying our environment, we should also be the ones to give the biggest contributions in making it go back to its original state as much as possible (469).

We can consider different environmental and ethical approaches that can be used or be applied to solve different environmental issues that were raised previously. Gudorf and Huchingson view John Passmore as one of the first environmental philosophers who held onto anthropocentric philosophy and then became environmentally concerned. He was able to appreciate how important it is to have a clean, healthy, and beautiful environment for the well-being of all humankind. Passmore argued that we have the responsibility to the other people who can be endangered because of the damages that we do to the environment. Anthropocentrism does not give values directly to the environment but gives values to the humans who value the benefits that we can get from the environment (8).

Another moral approach that we can use is the Biocentrism, or the life-centred ethics. Gudorf and Huchingson referred Biocentrism as giving respect to the other individual creatures in our planet. This type of outlook promotes equality among all creatures therefore not considering the humankind as superior species from other species. Biocentrism does not really give value to rivers nor the entire ecosystem but we can extend it in environmental protection since it is concerned about a sustainable environment liveable to all forms of life (12). Ecocentrism and Biocentrism have overlapping definitions yet can be both applied in solving environmental crisis. Gudorf and Huchingson referred to Econcentrism as a moral approach about valuing the interdependence and interconnection of organisms which make the entire ecosystem as the center of attention. Preserving the interdependence of organisms entails preserving the environment on which they live in (13).

Gudorf and Huchingson also explained that the environmental crisis happening to us now is because of the societal patterns and institutions. Social ecologists say that these points were not considered by biocentrists and deep ecologists because they see cause of the problem on a large and broader view. Instead, the root of the problems of environmental destruction can be found in ourselves and how we view ourselves as superior organisms who oppress those who we view as inferior to us (17).

Ecofeminism is also another helpful approach in solving our environmental problems. Gudorf and Huchingson said that the patriarchal views to women can be considered similar to the attitude toward nature since nature is usually addressed as feminine or even maternal as we usually call it as Mother Nature. Nature then becomes an object of male-centered control (18). Discriminations and oppressions should be abolished so that we can live in harmony with women and with our nature.

The idea of ecojustice can also be done in order to conserve our natural resources. Gudorf and Huchingson said that this concept will bring equal attributions of environmental benefits and burdens to all places. This concept is somewhat ideal and maybe difficult to achieve since it needs to redress previous environmental injustice. But if we succeed, we can have a just and peaceful community with an environment which is healthy, diverse and sustainable (19).

There are still numbers of environmental ethics that are applicable to resolving environmental issues our country is facing today: pragmatic approach to the environment that is made from moral pluralism to be consistent in making moral decisions, and the ethics of religion. If we will be

successful in pulling out all our options, we can have a sustainable future ahead of us as well as a healthy environment to live in.

Countless accounts prove that our environment is very important, because it is where we get the supplies for most of our primary necessities that are vital for our survival and evolution as a species (eco. issues. com). Our environment is not only beneficial to us humans but to other organisms as well. It is therefore necessary that the present and future generation take responsibility in preserving and protecting the environment in order to have a sustainable future which will benefit not just the people today but also the future generations of living things as well. It is not yet too late to take actions. The steps that we will be taking in order to have a sustainable environment might be difficult but will be achievable through the help of one another.

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