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Environmentalism Critiqued: Pope Benedict's Use of 'Human Ecology' to Meet the Challenge of Environmentalism as a Collectivist 'Political Religion' for a New World Order

Abstract: The environmental movement has been a blessing and a curse: a blessing in so far as it highlights the need to respect the balance of nature which implies acknowledging nature's normativity; but a curse in that it conceals an agenda to create a collectivist political/civic religion as part of a new world order. Part One, "Green Camouflage," tracks the ways and means an international club of the powerful have used the laudable goals of conserving nature and providing for a "sustainable development" to lever the transfer of national sovereignty away from nation states beginning with those in the Developing World to regional and international venues so that these powerful networks may more easily manage and exploit the Developing World and eventually the whole world. Part Two shows how Pope Benedict XVI has helped to demystify this agenda hidden in a cloak of green by reinvigorating natural law jurisprudence transposing it into a new key as "human ecology" in tune with the new evangelization while at the same time calling those of Catholic inspiration to work together to protect and promote human ecology, correctly understood.

Keyword: New world order, sustainable development, sovereignty, ecology, Pope Benedict XVI

"The Church has a responsibility towards creation, and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water, and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood.

– Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 51 (2009)

Introduction

As an NGO representative of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists to the United Nations I was honored to meet Pope Benedict on December 7, 2007, at the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Rome Forum of NGOs of Catholic Inspiration. He asked those present, over eighty NGO representatives, to advance authentic human rights and integral human development in international and regional human rights venues:

I encourage you, then, to counter relativism creatively by presenting the great truths about man's innate dignity and the rights which are derived from that dignity... What is needed, in fact, is a spirit of solidarity conducive for promoting as a body those ethical principles which, by their very nature and their role as the basis of social life, remain non-negotiable [Benedict XVI 2007: 5-6].

Two years later in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Benedict himself unfurled a creative way to counter relativism to represent the great truths about man's innate dignity in a spirit of solidarity conducive for promoting a body of non-negotiable ethical principles. Developing a term first suggested by Saint John Paul II¹, he wrote that to preserve the environment and "protect mankind from self-destruction" that "there is a need for what might be called a human ecology" because the deterioration of nature is closely connected to the moral health of human society. Moreover, a proper understanding of the ecological system is "based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature" [Benedict XVI 2009b, n. 51]. Nature (including human nature), he said, contains a "grammar" discernable to human reason "which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation" [ibid., n. 48].

The creatureliness of mankind and nature provides a common grammar whereby one can read from the "book of nature" which is "one and indivisible" an ethic concerning not only the environment but also human life, sexuality, marriage, the family, and social relations. Therefore our "duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person" [ibid., n. 51]. Benedict noted the

¹ "Although people are rightly worried – though much less than they should be – about preserving the natural habitats of the various animal species threatened with extinction, because they realize that each of these species makes its particular contribution to the balance of nature in general, too little effort is made to *safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic "human ecology"* (emphasis in the original) [John Paul II 1991a, n. 38].

hypocrisy of uphold one set of duties towards flora and fauna while trampling on those due to the human person [ibid.].

The full development of this all-encompassing ecological ethic earned Pope Benedict the title the “green pope”:

The Church, like the radical ecologists, sees a tie between the environment, the social, the economy, and political, but adds to it the ethical dimension, in which she perceives a key for changing reality. It is not enough just to recognize these ties; it is also necessary to analyze them and justify them. This will be the task of Benedict XVI, who will earn the title of ‘green pope [Bruges 2014, n. xxi].

Pope Benedict recognized the link between genuine human development and the environment. But he also recognized and denounced neo-colonialism under the guise of sham development programs. In his *Apostolic Exhortation, Africae Munus* (2011), he called on the Church to speak out against certain entities acting in consort with environmental NGOs that seek to exploit Africa’s natural resources by preventing African nations from ordering their economic and social development according to their traditional family values:

I ask all the members of the Church to work and speak out in favor of an economy that cares for the poor and is resolutely opposed to an unjust order which, under the pretext of reducing poverty, has often helped to aggravate it.... Organized for the creation of wealth in their homelands, and not infrequently with the complicity of those in power in Africa, these groups too often ensure their own prosperity at the expense or the well-being of the local population... [T]he Church must speak out against the unjust order that prevents the people of Africa from consolidating their economies and from developing according to the cultural characteristics [Benedict XVI 2011b].

Pope Benedict also condemned an ideological colonization that makes an idol of nature “absolutizing nature... considering it more important than the human person... such notions eliminate the difference of identity and worth between the human person and other living things... opening the way to a new paganism tinged with neopaganism” [Benedict XVI 2010, n. 13]. This disregard for human dignity, he pointed out, serves to legitimize neo-colonial demographic control

programs (requiring contraception, sterilization, and abortion) that Developed countries promote in Developing countries as a form of “cultural progress” and frequently impose it in return for developmental aid [Benedict XVI 2009b, n. 28].

On the contrary, Pope Benedict insisted that authentic development must be “integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man” [Paul VI 1967, n. 14]. The good of man, the whole man includes both his body and his soul:

The question of development is closely bound up with our understanding of the human soul, insofar as we often reduce the self to the psyche and confuse the soul’s health with emotional well-being.... Development must include not just material growth but also spiritual growth, since the human person is a ‘unity of body and soul, born of God’s creative love and destined for eternal life [Benedict XVI 2009b, n. 76].

However, in international parlance development or more precisely “sustainable development” has no defined meaning but, rather, is used to promote various agendas [Macekura 2015: 312]. For instance, First World environmental NGOs employ the term to justify their intervention in the Developing World to preserve nature by enjoining what they consider unnecessary economic development. On the other hand, political leaders in the Developing World speak of sustainable development to develop the natural resources of their country for rapid economic growth. Finally, an international wealthy elite use the term to limit the sovereignty of nation states to suit their special interests directly and indirectly through State actors and environmental NGOs. For them sustainable development provides green camouflage concealing an agenda to impose a collectivist worldview, a political religion, on a new world order that they intend to manage. Pope Benedict, on the other hand, affirmed the positive possibilities of globalization and the need to manage it, but he also warned that if the principle of subsidiarity, social fraternity, was excluded globalization may become tyrannical in nature:

By considering reciprocity as the heart of what it is to be a human being, subsidiarity is the most effective antidote against any form of all-encompassing welfare state.... Hence the principle of subsidiarity is particularly well-suited to managing globalization and directing it towards authentic human development. In order not to produce a dangerous universal power of a tyrannical nature, *the governance of globalization must be*

marked by subsidiarity, articulated into several layers and involving different levels that can work together. Globalization certainly requires authority, insofar as it poses the problem of a global common good that needs to be pursued. This authority, however, must be organized in a subsidiary and stratified way, if it is not to infringe upon freedom and if it is to yield effective results in practice [Benedict XVI 2005, n. 57].

In a similar vein, Pope Francis declared that economic development must have a “human face” to ensure the development of the whole person and not simply those who benefit financially from an unregulated, so called, free market: “Those charged with promoting economic development have the responsibility of ensuring that it always has a human face. Economic development must have a human face. We say no to an economy without such a face!” [Francis 2015, n. 3]. For this reason, back in 2007 Pope Benedict charged NGOs of Catholic Inspiration to reinvigorated natural law jurisprudence to meet the advance of those who aspire to a global directorate concealed beneath a cloak of green that in fact cancels the human face of economic development.

Part 1. Green Camouflage

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis pointed out that programs purporting to save the environment often conceal the agenda to limit the sovereignty of developing nations so that vast economic interests may more easily exploit the natural resources of economically poor countries:

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’ [ibid., n. 38]².

Michael Schooyans [1997], in *The Totalitarian Trend of Liberalism*, hailed by Pope John Paul II [1991b, n. xix; John Paul II 1991b] as “a pertinent analyses”, 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

² Quoting: [The Fifth General Conference 2007: n. 86].

poor and the resources of developing nations by limiting the economic growth, functioning democracy, and sovereignty of developing nations [Schooyans 1997: 94-95]³. Some of the actors Schooyans identified as members of this transnational club of the powerful where in East Africa when concerns about the environment first began to circulate after World War II when various African nations began to emerge from colonial rule [Macekura 2015: 1-4; 116-117].

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 the 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 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 their local populations and national governments. Macekura points out that these wealthy international elite appropriate to themselves moral authority to speak on behalf of humanity as they set out to save exotic landscapes, plants, and animals from national leaders who sought to develop their countries' natural resources:

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

³ Citing: [Crozier, Huntington, Watanuki 1975]. Some of the members of the transnational club of the powerful 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.

institutions, all of which would help create coherent way of militating against the most fearsome aspect of decolonization and development [ibid.: 52].

Controversy over the Uganda's Murchison development project epitomized the clash between environmental globalists and Developing World leaders. In 1965 Ugandan officials launched a five-year plan to tap the waters of the Nile River to generate tremendous amounts of electricity. However, this plan called for the elimination of the world-class 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. Uganda's Electricity Board Chairman rebuked the officious intermeddling of environmental globalists in Ugandan domestic policy saying – "To hell with animals and to hell with tourists, to hell with Murchison Falls"! [ibid.: 85]. As one reporter explained, the electrification of this region of Uganda had "become the very symbol of the modernity the nation aspires to..." [ibid.]. In the end, however, the wealthy international elite prevailed, the Murchison Falls still flows, and this part of Uganda still languish in poverty compared to the rest of the country.

Fifty years later, another hydroelectric project (the proposed Bujagali dam) in Uganda again pitted wealthy global environmentalists against Developing World leaders. Sebastian Mallaby, a reporter for the *Washington Post* visited Uganda to investigate and was left flummoxed. He wrote, "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"? [ibid.: 304]. In an article 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" [ibid.].

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" [ibid.: 305-306]. Macekura, however, concludes that the bitter defensive tone of these responses showed how deeply his investigation had stung this elitist environmental NGO community, one that had grown in power and was accountable to no one, directing national and international policy in the name of environmental protection by co-opting politicians and international developmental aid and lending institutions:

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 NGO's with using the World Bank's Inspection Panel – the review body... 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 [ibid.: 305-307].

Environmental globalist NGOs had curbed the power and limited the sovereignty of a developing nation, a good thing in the mind of some. Jessica Mathews, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote that there was a 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," she claimed. "Nations were in a process of 'sharing power' with businesses, international organizations, and NGOs" [ibid.: 312].

How had these globalist environmental NGOs become so powerful, acting with no semblance of coordination but, all the same, achieving mutually agreeable goals? Elaine Dewar [1995: 249-296] in her exposé, *Cloak of Green*, argues that it didn't happen by chance. The seemingly independent and random activities of environmental NGOs, government actors, and multinationals were orchestrated to bring about fundamental changes in nation-states and in international and regional organizations. She traced the labyrinth ways these changes came about through the networking of influential persons in overlapping organizations. At

the center of these networks within networks she identified and interviewed one pivotal person, Maurice Strong, a Canadian oil and gas executive and the General Secretary of the 1992 United Nations “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro (1992)⁴. Maurice Strong helped form the World Economic Forum and together with Mikhail Gorbachev drafted the United Nations’s *Earth Charter*. When Maurice Strong died on November 29, 2015, Steven C. Rockefeller [2018] had this to say:

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...

Klaus Schwab [2015] mourned the loss of Maurice Strong: “He was my mentor since the creation of the [World Economic] 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”.

In a private interview Dewar [1995: 294-295] 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 untied, but it did happen. It can

⁴ Maurice Strong, 86 years old, died on November 28, 2015, was mourned by the U.N. See: [UNEP 2015; Mauricestrong.net].

become tomorrow's inevitability. I see it as inevitable – it's unreal right now – but I do see it as a necessity”.

Dewar began to understand that Strong and his associates planned to limit the sovereign prerogatives of 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 [United Nations] 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 [ibid.: 318].

Dewar explains that this transnational club of the powerful often working in league through the Business Council for Sustainable Development and the World Economic Forum have no intention of eliminating nation states entirely because they are still needed as “investors in research and development,” as “buyers of products,” and as guarantors of “risk dollars,” and “safe streets” [ibid.].

The global empire being built through the transfer of national sovereignty to regional and global venues is mystified, i.e., given the appearance of a democratic transition of power through the participation of hundreds of NGOs in international and regional organizations. However, Dewar points out that many of the most influential NGO are supported financially by multinational interests or First World governments, whom Dewar referred to as private government organizations (PGOs) [ibid.: 81]. In reality the operations of these regional and international organizations counterfeit the democratic process:

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 decision are made cannot be directly reached by voters but, can be easily reached by important interests. 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 [ibid.: 318-319].

Strong used the United Nations to advance his agenda especially through the preparation committees to major UN conferences whereby he “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” [ibid.: 330].

Dewar also warned that as the value of national sovereignty became tarnished in the public mind due to the ineptness and scandal caused by national leaders, Strong’s associates would insinuate “the idea of the inherent sovereignty of *peoples*” to take its place, “packaged and repackaged to suit various locales” [ibid.: 331]. For instance, in the Amazon basin more and more the Kayapo Amazonian indigenous people came to be recognized as the noble guardians of a vast portion of the rain forest, a semi-sovereign state inside of Brazil half the size of France [ibid.: 11; 78]. This transfer of control allows multinational entities to circumvent the government of Brazil and make lucrative trade deals directly with the Kayapo to mine gold, harvest timber, and gather nuts and other commodities for cosmetics in their semi-independent territory [ibid.: 60-78].

In sum, a neo-colonial two-levered diminution of national sovereignty is occurring in the Global South. First, the authority of developing nations to control their internal affairs is weakened by foreign NGOs that stymie the economic growth of developing nations supposedly to protect the environment. Second, developing nations are subject to internal dissection and forced to concede control over vast territories within their borders to indigenous people who are depicted as better able to protect the environment than their own inept, corrupt, and scandalous political leaders. However, in reality this diminution and transfer of national sovereignty facilitates the ability of multinationals to exploit the natural resources of the Developing World more expeditiously.

Finally, the economic constraints imposed on the Developing World are compounded by its demographic castration. In the name of the environment and sustainable development, Schooyans warns, international pressure is brought to bear on developing nations to curtail the growth of their populations by implementing a regime of sexual and reproductive rights, i.e., contraception, sterilization, and abortion, and an ideological colonization promoting deviant sexuality all of which recondition and paralyze the victims:

Today one can see a leaning towards a new kind of totalitarianism... The wealthy countries of the world are searching for freedom of total action... Their first target is the less privileged populations of the world. With this purpose, they don't hesitate to use international organizations, both public and private.... The principal characteristic of totalitarianism is that it attacks man in all his dimensions: physical, psychological, and spiritual. Totalitarianism inhibits, paralyzes, and anesthetizes man's capacity to make personal judgment and free decisions" [Schooyans 1994].

Schooyans points to a secret, now declassified document by the United States National Security Council, *National Security Memorandum 200*⁵, as evidence that the anti-natal policies targeting the populations of the Developing World serve a hidden agenda to advance the hegemony of the United States and other wealthy nations.

Finally, a secret document, 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 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 [Schooyans 1991b: 57-58]⁶.

Just as a cloak of green is being used to covertly transfer power from nation states in the Developing World to regional and international organizations, so too, an elite in the Developed World seek to manage the total fertility of the Developing World by subordinating human society to the overarching norm of sustainability, i.e., the human population they deem the earth can sustain. In this way the United

⁵ See: [Nixon Library, https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/virtuallibrary/documents/nssm/nssm_200.pdf (26.11.2023); United States Agency for International Development, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pcaab500.pdf, (26.11.2023)].

⁶ Citing: *National Security Memorandum, NSSM 200*.

Nations' *Earth Charter*, drafted by Mikhail Gorbachev and Maurice Strong, exchanges an outworn Nineteenth Century political religion, a Communist "red" collectivism and a command economy, for a new Twentieth and Twenty-First Century holistic political religion, an environmental "green" collectivism and an ecological command economy:

[The] charter... consecrates the preeminence of the surrounding world in relation to the beings that arise from it by way of evolution and are subordinated to it. The English word *sustainable* [in this context] ... means that the ultimate criterion by which any political, economic, social, etc. program is decided is presented as the determined, necessary constraints imposed by the Earth on everything found in it [Schooyans 2001: 33].

The vulnerability of nature and the anthropological error of seeing human beings as completely imminent, merely a part of nature, lays the foundation for a political/civic religion and to protect future generations drastic measures need to be taken: "To recover this 'ethic of the future,' ecologists, strongly impregnated with New Age ideas, will exalt the cult of Gaia. They will conclude that the rights of Mother Earth are more important than the rights of these ephemeral beings called man" [ibid.: 20].

Part 2. Demystify the Lies

Pope John Paul II [1995, n. 12] recognized and denounced what he referred to as "a conspiracy against life" a veritable "war of the powerful against the weak" directed against individual persons but also against nations as a 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". This war, he said, presents "a truly alarming spectacle" presenting "scientifically and systematically programmed threats" [ibid., n. 17] against human life as a victory for progress and 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 [ibid.].

John Paul II recognized that at the heart of the disrespect 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, he said, in turn distorts one's approach to nature, either one errs through presumption and uses human freedom with no respect for the laws that flourish nature or, conversely through despair of ever using human freedom wisely one 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" [ibid., n. 12].

Benedict, too, insists we must regain a clear vision of creation. 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 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" [Benedict XVI 2005, n. 48].

Both extremes miss the mark because they fail to appreciate the metaphysics of rationality that pervades all reality. Benedict reminds us, that God himself, the "three divine Persons are pure relationality" [ibid., n. 54] and "the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations" and, so, "it is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God" [ibid., n. 53].

Relationality pervades the order of creation. Mathematics is, after all, the study of relations. Benedict's reflection on Galileo considers the implications of this correspondence between a creation of the human mind and the structure of the universe: "Galileo said God wrote the book of nature in the form of the language of mathematics" [Benedict XVI 2006]. This correspondence between an invention of the human mind, mathematics, and the structure of the universe points to the one reason that links them:

[T]he 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 [ibid.].

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. But nature has no will, so, it contains no norms unless a will had put them there. But 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 futile" [Benedict XVI 2011a]. Benedict, however, rejects Kelsen's thesis and asks "[i]s 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" [ibid.].

Benedict's [2009, n. 53] outline for a "new trajectory of thinking" that "requires a deeper critical evaluation of the category of relation" provides the key to decipher the intrinsic balance of creation and opens a path for law between the excesses of too little or too great a regard for the natural environment. This new trajectory also helps to dispel the mystification concealing the agenda of the transnational club of the powerful, a global Leviathan, that use the environment as collectivist political religion wherein man is but part of a greater whole that gives reality and meaning to the part and so he is not the subject of inalienable rights [Schooyans 2001: 21].

Michael Bauer [2013: 43-57] in *Natural Law and the Natural Environment: Pope Benedict XVI's Vision Beyond Utilitarianism and Deontology* explains that Benedict's environmental hermeneutic rest 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 man.

Baur explains that Benedict's natural law understanding of being posits 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, he points 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.

For Benedict, Bauer explains, 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) [ibid.].⁷ Given the unique innate rational nature of man and the ability of the human mind to abstract the intelligible form or "inscape"⁸ 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.

Benedict [2010, n. 12] 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 that 'our duties toward the environment flow from our duties towards the person'".

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" [ibid.].⁹ Therefore, when we treat the environment as a pile of refuse with no innate

⁷ Citing: [Benedict XVI 2009a].

⁸ The term "inscape" coined by Gerard Manley Hopkins expresses the God given designs of all natural things as Glenn Everett points out in "Hopkins on 'Inscape' and 'Instress'", The Victorian Web: "The concept of inscape shares much with Wordsworth's "spots of time," Emerson's "moments," and Joyce's "epiphanies"... But Hopkins' inscape is also fundamentally religious: a glimpse of the inscape of a thing shows us why God created it" [victorianweb.org].

⁹ Citing: [Thorton, Varenne 2008: 265].

value or conversely when we treat ourselves as mere epiphonema, we reject the relational hierarchy of the created order:

Human duties to the environment “flow from” human duties to other human persons, not because created being 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” [ibid.].

It should be noted that the metaphysical convertibility of being to goodness has a corollary in environmental epistemology that moves from “is” to “good.” John Nolt [2010: 135-154] 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*).

Thus, environmental ethics provides a solution to Hume’s *is-ought* problem [ibid.: 355-374]. Hume’s epistemological problem looms large for Benedict [2011a] as an impediment in natural law theory.

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.

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

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 that admits 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 [ibid.].

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 is 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” [ibid.]. 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” [ibid.]. Benedict then drives home the relational teleological imperative of nature’s directives. He insists that there is “also an ecology of man. Man, too, has a nature that the must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will” [ibid.].

While the establishment of natural law jurisprudence aligned with an environmental ethic may not immediately address the hidden agenda of the club of the powerful, i.e., the transfer of national sovereignty to regional and international venues in the service of a new world order, it does provide a common grammar to dispel their lies, mystification, and ideological colonization. For on the one hand their *Earth Charter* mystification posits that human beings are totally imminent and merely part of the larger whole of nature. On the other hand, their post-Modern mystification posits that human beings are totally transcendent, that our existence precedes our nature, and that each person must create their own nature by the values they choose. Both lies propose a relativistic logic that deny, paralyze, or subvert human freedom.

Benedict's theory of relationality strikes a balance: we are that part of nature that transcendence nature but instantiates the goodness of nature cognitively and orders it to God thereby providing nature a mode of transcendence. Environmental activists are right to insist that lawmakers respect in principle that "nature is normative" and that its laws of flourishing be acknowledged and protected in law and policy¹⁰. Pope Benedict suggests, this also marks a path natural law lawyers should follow by extending that principle – that the basic inclinations that flourish human nature are also normative for a truly human society (ST II-II, Q 94, A 2). Thus, human ecology, properly understood, deconstructs both the *Earth Charter* narrative that man is merely a part of nature as well as the post-Modern narrative that existence and human freedom precede human nature, basic duties, and moral norms. Benedict reminds us that we are special creatures, uniquely made in God's image, but not our own creators:

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 [ibid.]¹¹.

¹⁰ See *Harmony with Nature, Rights of Nature, Law & Policy*, a publication of the United Nations that lists twenty-three countries that have embraced the notion of nature as a rights bearer in one fashion or another [Harmony with Nature UN].

¹¹ Pope John Paul II made similar arguments in *Veritatis Splendor* [1993, n. 40-41] proposing a "participated theonomy" as the only way the human person can act freely and be authentically human.

The gates impeding the integral development of the whole person and all persons imposed by a transnational club of the powerful that mystifies its agenda in a cloak of green will be thrown open by the new evangelization. Human ecology, properly understood, answer Benedict's call that we "counter relativism creatively by presenting the great truths about man's innate dignity and the rights which are derived from that dignity".

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