

# STEPS TO A DEEP ECOLOGY

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## Foreword

The most common idea in public opinion about an *ecologist* or *green* movement is a continuous application in order that “natural progress of mankind” is carried out with no pollution and with the smallest changes of environment, usually thought as fine and conservation-worthy.

Which is usually called an ecological working is the “protection of the environment”: small pollution, clean landscape, filters and purifying facilities, preserving nature-islands (the Parks), where we can go and stay to enjoy holidays.

These thoughts are often in people’s mind: their diffusion is surely useful. Nevertheless in following chapters we propose some deeper questions, to underline something seldom present in people’s mind only because ever-breathed ideas seem evident and so are not-conscious: they are the pattern-ideas of our present culture, industrial age of western civilization.

We shall ask some questions:

- Why ecological drama was born in Western culture?
- Why do we think western culture and its myths as “the truth”?
- What is the meaning of growth and welfare?
- Is the idea of “progress” universal or evident?
- What is our species’ position in the Universe?
- Which is other cultures’ thought?

As the breaking of nature balance is due to industrial civilization and its dramatic growth, in order to have some general and standing improvement we need:

- corrode the background ideas of industrial age;
- change its World-View (*weltanschauung*).

## 1. Shallow ecology

*In this chapter we briefly write about ecology in the most usual meaning, accepted by an ever-growing people. So we use the mass-media language, when ecological problem is concerned.*

According to this kind of ecology, where gap between “man” and “environment” is kept, the Earth must be clean and pleasant because it is “the only we have”, or “our home”, a Planet for us. We must “protect and preserve the environment” so that mankind can live better in it: changes must be done “for man’s benefit”.

As an exemple, a swamp is good because it prevents from flood, is teeming for life that can sustain us as food, is beautiful for our amusement, and so on. Forest is good for it gives us oxigen, for we have a lot to learn about it or for our holidays; so

many species can become future domestic vegetables, and so on. The reasons to preserve wide deserts are less obvious. Nevertheless some desert landscapes are accepted to study animals that live in and as a background for our “sport”.

This ecology has no doubt about the central and special position of mankind. Any ecologist movement born by marxist, catholic or protestant concepts is within this type, son of the western ideas. They give tremendous value to “man” and history and have a myth: progress.

There is a very small difference between the two apparent sides of Western cultures, the so-called “believer” and “atheist” thoughts. Both sides think that Universal is a kind of clock, and its single divided parts are substantially machines. One side believes the existence of a Clock-Maker (God of the Old Testament), the other side denies Him, but it is ever a question of something external, that doesn't affect practical behaviour. People of both sides of western culture behave in a very similar way, that is essentially against-Nature. Western thought gives our species, or mankind, a very particular place and looks at it as divided from “the remnant” or “the environment”, that only exists as a background of human works. One side think that is for “God's right”, the other side for “selection right”, but with no behavioural difference. The ideas of French philosopher René Descartes (17<sup>o</sup> century) are these thoughts' background.

Substantially, in this world-view, Nature is preserved as general property and not “nobody goods”. Nevertheless Nature is viewed as “goods”, a “property”, “common estate”, not a living complex with an intrinsic and self-sustaining value.

Near all ecologist movements deriving from Western world-view are on that line: if not, they probably had lesser supporters.

It is like an organism viewed as the “environment” of neural cells or other “central” organ (man). That cell-group has right to change the body for its own profit and growth: the body must live, but for that.

On the whole, in that opinion we can go on in the same way we now operate, with filters and cleaners, preserving some nature-islands here and there in the world.

## **2. Deep ecology**

*In the following chapter we try to escape - if possible – from general pattern-ideas of our culture and use different words from usual ones. We don't undervalue the thin power of word in thought-trasmission.*

*This chapter is an increase of the previous one and not in contrast with it. We only add other ideas, in a different metaphysic background, where ecologist thought has much higher than useful, opportunistic or aesthetic reasons.*

Our species is not in a particular position. All living beings and ecosystems, like all elements in the Universe, have a self-sustaining value. All Nature has an intrinsic and not-divided value, like any component, as existing after a multi-billion year evolution. Mankind is one of these components, a Life-tree branch.

So, instead of “environment” (as Nature were a set for humans), we use words like “Living Beings Complex”; the “environment defenders” become “people that take care of the health or harmony of Life Complex”.

Natural world is not a “common estate” of all mankind but much more: it is billion year older than our species: mankind belongs to Nature and not viceversa.

Instead of ambition, success, self-cofirming (of a group, or a species), we shall think knowledge, mind calmness, as good values: a kind of identification with Universal Mind, a sinthony with cosmic life rythm.

In shallow ecology the Earth must be preserved because it belongs to all present and future generations; according to deep ecology mankind is owner of nothing. We recall Red Cloud’s answer to european invaders that wanted “to buy” the best part of Lakota (Sioux) land: “The land belongs to the Great Spirit. Nobody can buy or sell it”. As you know, white people took it by violence and weapons.

The same idea of “progress” has a meaning only in a particular cultural background that is not of all mankind. The most of human cultures lived within Nature with no mind about “progress” or “history”; the best or the worst are only referred to particular values of any culture: they have no universal meaning. Words like “development” or “economic growth” mean the overwhelming of industrial culture over other cultures and of mankind on the other species.

In deep ecology there is no central or best pattern. Global equilibrium, variety and complexity of living species, ecosystems and cultures are self-sustaining values. Words like “growth” or “decrease” are complements, in dynamic balance, with no good or bad value.

Concepts like “resources” or “wastes” are not necessary, because they admit changes that take something (resources) and cast away something else (wastes), which means a not-cycled way, which damage and change equilibrium condition. The so-called production eventually is a waste production.

The word “civilization” is useless and dangerous, because it has a particular value-list as background. “Civil” means to-day “according to Western values” and nothing more. But we have no real reason to think western culture as “better” than Yanomami, or Eskimo, or Dogon, or many other cultures ever existed on Earth.

In the same way to speak about “useful”, “harmful” or “harmless” species is a nonsense, because anything in Nature is a self-sustaining value and gives value to the Complex in which exists.

Substantially, in deep ecology, the idea of environment is increased to become the perception to be a component of a Psychophysic Unity, that is Nature, the maximum variety, harmony or dynamic balance of species: a sort of self-improving Minded system.

### **3. Some aspects of the ecological crisis.**

*The ecological drama was born in the industrial civilization and broke into the world in the wake of its overwhelming expansion. Industry myth was born in Western*

*culture two or three centuries ago: we shall write about the thought evolution which caused it.*

The practical essential findings to “take off” with technology were well known to Chinese culture many centuries ago. But industrialization process did not begin in China, where it was now imported from Western world.

The background of Chinese thought – based on Tao and Buddhist philosophy – apparently could not push that knowledge to the way followed by Europe. But Europe was not “in advance” on the way of progress. Also Indian culture three thousand years ago was based on more refined concepts than Europe of sixteenth century, but in India there was the precise consciousness of the inopportunity to follow the technological growth way.

The inspiring background of Western, or Jewish-Christian, culture is the Old Testament, where we can look for a reason of our behaviour towards Nature. But following evolution, like the expansion of Descartes philosophy and Newton physics, - just in time preceding the industrial age - caused present ideas and overwhelming against Nature. They are not up-to-date but nineteenth century ideas: one or two centuries are required before new concepts can expand from few people to general thought.

Our culture is marked by an opposition with Nature: life is viewed as a “fight against nature-power”. With different philosophies this sentence means “fight against our own complex”, which causes trouble and disease.

In effect, where “environment” is bad, human crisis is present too, with psychopathy and crimes. That is because difference between “man” and “environment” is only our culture’s illusion.

If malignancy-cells could speak, they probably had an idea of “development” or “growth” of the same kind of our industrial age, that is to uniform all species and all cultures and overwhelm and destroy in uniformity all cells or cell-groups, whose behaviour “must” be permanent growth.

So many people, far from cities, are afraid of something like snakes, or rocks, but are quiet in a quick car. We need not statistics to know that only in Europe sixty thousand people per year find death in road accidents. How many people could enter the Amazonas forest? But crossing New York or San Paolo suburbs clearly appear much more dangerous. Our non-conscious or cultural concepts push us to fear natural more than machine or man-made dangers, also against evidence.

Our civilization is technological, not scientific: the push to work, not to know, is prevailing.

Which can corrode the basis of our culture cannot be studied: it is simply denied or left with no research at all. As an example, no study about possibility of “reincarnation” or “rebirth” or about near-death psychic phenomena is allowed by the official world.

The so-called “movements for life” worry about human life only, but they never mind the health of Living Complex or tortures to many kinds of life. Our culture allows tremendous genetic manipulations on any living species, with strange

creatures as a result. But, at the only far hint to have an hybrid chimpanzee-man (also if not possible), science had a quick reaction. Any bio-manipulation is a nonsense, but the chimp-man, if free in a surviving forest or savannah of our poor planet, could recall us that we are of the same nature of all living beings.

The background of Western culture on this subject is terribly weak.

*Australopithecus* or *Homo erectus* are extinct in recent times on a general life scale, and their extinction is merely an accident. If they were living, our culture could behave in the following ways:

- to hunt them as a sport;
- to put them in zoo cages;
- to keep them as slaves;
- to condemn death people that kill them (are they “people”?).

There is ever a thin fear to find a living *Yeti* on the Himalayas. But if we maintain again and again a gap between “man” and “animal”, we lose the true Life-Soul.

The more we learn about primate behaviour, the smaller the differences between human and non-human primates appear to be.

*Our closest relatives are chimpanzees. There is only one per cent genetic difference. We're more closely related to chimpanzees than any two frogs you see are probably related to each other.* (National Geographic, october 1988)

In other words, Judeo-Christian culture never can conceive Life Ethics but only a morality within mankind.

It is useful to note that ideas born by Genesis were developed in geographic areas where other kinds of apes were missing. The presence of chimp, gorilla or orang-utan gives evidence of the no-gap position of our species related to other ones.

Last exemple:

All Life follows Nature-cycles. On the contrary, our culture follows its own periods, like the week-rythm, proceding from Genesis tale. We operate according to that artificial period and celebrate battles, republics and Saints: it should be much better to follow Moon phases, to be in feast at beginning or end of seasons, to follow Sun, Moon and star cycles. We should be happier. These would be holidays for all mankind, meanwhile the present ones are feasts to divide us: battles have winners and losers. The Sun is at the Equator's Zenith for everybody.

But even in our culture, terribly depending on “history”, there is little sign of Nature: the greatest holiday “must” be on December 25, because in our soul deepness there's a far remember of the feast we had when we realized that night's increase was over and daylight was again improving: three or four days after Winter Solstice we need to be sure of it.

Some American Native cultures so point out the near-monthly rythm:

- the moon when ducks come back (February);
- the moon when grass grows (April);
- the moon when red lilies bloom (June);
- the moon when deers lose their horns (August);

- the moon of coloured trees (October), and so on.

We can recall a Lakota shaman's thought:

*The history of all Life is good to tell; we share life with beasts and winged beings of air and all green beings: they are all sons of the same Mother and Father. Sky is Father and Earth is Mother: all living beings with feet, wings or roots are they sons.*

*Black Elk*

An Amazonas tongue has the same word to mean the greatest level of Mind, or the Great Spirit, and "all" in fluent all-day language.

Again, according to an African tribe culture:

*We believe God is everything: river, grass, tree bark, cloud and mountain.*

#### 4. The myth of origins

*Here we shall speak about "culture" and "world view", **not** about religion: we never express opinion about religion belief.*

A culture behaviour regarding Nature, that is other species, ecosystems and interrelations, is greatly depending on its world-view, or metaphysical believing.

Regarding only the late and widely spread cultures, the worst damage to ecosystems come from patterns deriving from Judeo-Christian and Muslim source, that is from cultures inspired by the Old Testament.

We use the term "Judeo-Christian culture" in the meaning of the tradition evolved in last 15 centuries to origin present Western culture and **not** to indicate a culture inspired by Christ's teaching and thought. We think that Christ's teaching was very far from Old Testament ideas: an actual evidence is that He was damned to death for this. The idea that Christ's teaching has been a "continuity" of the previous tradition of that Middle East land is only a mistake of following centuries.

Christ's thought is very alike some Eastern philosophies: substantial background-ideas like acceptance, not-care about matter world, universal love, uselessness of establishment, extinction of desire, and so on, are common to Christ and Eastern thoughts. His external look too, from tradition, recalls an Indian's look.

So the parity among people (rank abolition and uselessness of hierarchy) are similar to Buddhism. It's also clear that the Old Testament is an ethnical myth, meanwhile Christ's teaching is universal and non-ethnic, like Buddha's.

We can still perceive something about His natural philosophy, as in the statement: *Look at the field lilies: they don't work nor spin. Nevertheless I tell you even King Salomon, in his splendor, could never be dressed like them.* (Matthew, VI 28-29). This is a mere acceptance of Nature and an advice not to change natural world. There is a sharp contrast between the search for self-calmness taught by Christ or Buddha and the Bible-Jewish background on which Western culture is founded.

Another misunderstanding is the gap between "monotheistic" (three of Middle East origin) and "polytheistic" religions. It is hard to find a true "polytheistic" thought, even if we can call "monism" that of non-biblic cultures, whose metaphysics well know the Unity of Universal and the impossibility to break it into pieces. We can

perhaps choice among traditions with the idea of an *external* God who acts on the world (that's a dualistic view) and traditions with the idea of an impersonal God immanent in Nature, or over any difference between immanence and transcendence.

With reference to many gods of the so-called polytheism, they simply are non-conscious or archetypical psychic powers: According to Bateson:

*If you put God as external in front of His creation, and you think you are created like Him, you naturally watch at yourselves as out and against all the things around you. In the moment you think that all mind is yours, all the surrounding world will be apparent to you with no mind and with no right to any ethic consideration. You will think the environment is to be exploited only by yourselves. Your survival unity will be only you and your people and your species in opposition to other social unities, other races, other animals and plants.*

*If this is your opinion about your position towards nature and if you have a strong technical power, you have the same survival chance of a snow-ball in the hell. You will die for the toxics of your own hate or simply for overpopulation and extra-exploiment of resources.*

(translation from the Italian version of the book *Steps to an ecology of mind* by Gregory Bateson)

Genesis' ideas have been in people's mind for two thousand years: so our species is called "master and lord over nature", that would exist only for us!

*Grow and multiply yourselves*: modern push to growth was born by this statement; but in a culture with different philosophical background it appears like a pathological growth in an Organism. So, the western concepts "to be the civilization", to expand "truth" or "welfare" all over the world, were born by the biblical idea of an "elected people", by the tale which gives preference to a particular ethnical group. The big proudness of the West had that origin: the two ways of the West, "believer" or "atheist" are very similar.

The West has been waiting only for a "technical power" to start the breakdown of natural balance.

## **5. Descartes and Newton. Materialism. Growth.**

*The present way of life of Western culture was not born by "practical" resolutions: the spread of a way-of-thought has caused the birth of a way-of-life.*

Last push in Western culture for beginning to destroy Nature came by the spreading of Descartes' ideas (besides Bacon, Locke, and so on) and by Newton's physics.

When the thought of the French philosopher conquered Western minds, on the wake of some good mathematical ideas, the most expansive and destroying cultural pattern ever born on Earth appeared: industrial civilization.

So ecological drama began.

As well-known, in Descartes' mind there is a tremendous gap between "spirit" and "matter": man only has "spirit". All other living beings are matter only: so man could manage them with no ethical problem! And so Newton's physics could set the "matter world" that became a giant machine, lead by precise mechanical laws.

Mechanicism, so born, has been the paradigm of official science just to twentieth century and is the background of present general mind of Western culture and industrial civilization.

Regarding Locke, we report this statement:

*Whoever encloses some land for himself by his work is increasing mankind resources: the goods for sustaining human life produced in an enclosed land surface are over ten times bigger than the ones collected in a natural land. We can say that a fellow who fences a land piece and takes a bigger goods amount from ten acres than from a hundred of natural land, grants a gift to mankind of ninety acres.*

As you read, he has no care about all Life broken down nor about world's beauty. Locke had no perception of global balance and no mind about the interrelation among all living beings.

Unluckily all Western culture has followed his ideas and to-day economic-industrial world think so. According to Rifkin:

*If we read Locke to-day, we have the unpleasant feeling that he would be happy only after viewing all rivers locked by dams, any nature wonder hidden by advertising boards and any mountains powdered to have bitumen.*

(both are translations from the Italian version of the book *Entropy* by Jeremy Rifkin)

These ideas gave birth to the supremacy of economics and economicistic way of life typical of industrial age. At present somebody begins to have doubts, but in practical behaviour those ideas are fully followed. Modern idea of "growth" or "development" comes from that background, with the following results:

- death and extinction of other kinds of living beings. Growth process is a spreading invasion of mankind and its machines against other Life;
- extinction of human cultures. All mankind is compelled to live according to the same life-pattern and to follow a fixed value-list, with an indefinite matter-goods growth at its top;
- end of beauty and world-variety. Natural ecosystems are replaced by a non-harmonic and grey-uniform extent of very few species (mankind, monocultures, breedings), often degraded and deprived of spirit and dignity;
- need of concepts like resources and wastes, that come from non-cycled but open-way operations;
- decrease of physical work, replaced by stress of other type or by a "volunteered" physical work;
  - replacement of living substance by lifeless matter: machines, plants, roads instead of forests, swamps, savannah;
  - increase of human life-expectancy, often not balanced by a correlated birth-decrease, obviously needed for keeping equilibrium.



We can say that soul-equilibrium and world-harmony disappear when economic growth concept is present.

Material growth of something always goes together with degradation of something else in space or time. The statement “balanced growth” is only a term-opposition, or is meaningless, substantially different from “dynamic equilibrium”, in which economic pointers are fluctuating around steady values.

John Stuart Mill gave evidence already in 1858 of the good value of stationary economics, but his words were noticed by few isolated people only, meanwhile the West was self-pushing towards the growth religion.

Regarding the opposition between economics and ecology, we can note that:

- the so-called “economic requests” do not exist, because they are exclusively depending on the value-list of each cultural pattern. Economics is man-made: there is no physical or natural law according which economics must be “growing”;
- “Ecology requests” are basic physical and biological laws far over our species’ transient frenzy.

Economic system must agree with Life Complex for never-ending time if we want to live, also neglecting ethic or aesthetic values.

Some words again about the idea of welfare, that essentially is a mind condition and not a lot of objects. We should have a deep study about the nature of mind rather than the push to never-ending desire caused by industrial pattern.

Regarding the future, the worst hypothesis is to go on with growth: in this case the world would become terribly degraded. Nevertheless the growth process could not go on for ever, because of the impossible conditions for Life.

We must consider also utopias.

We eventually recall the origins of the growth concept and the ecological crisis:

- The Bible idea of a gap between our privileged species and remnant world, viewed as a background for us. With the idea of a “God divided from the world” it was very easy to cut down God (*materialism - marxism*) and replace “God’s right” with “selection right”. So there was no change: the same danger of death is over Amazonas forest and Siberian taiga.

- Our species is the only soul-endowed. This idea is strengthened by Descartes’ philosophy, which gives a great gap between spirit and matter: in Descartes thought, man would be spirit and matter, other living beings should be matter only, or machines.

So mankind had right to make any manipulation on nature. Materialism, last son of the West, has brought no change: matter against matter, the strongest winner has all rights.

## **6. West – East – Animism**

*Many ways of thinking, or leading ideas, spread in general thought, are perceived as obvious and “natural” or “proper of human nature”: but they are only the paradigm of Western culture, its prejudices.*

If we hope that deep ecology can enter human mind, we must analyse the ideas derived from the biblical tale of Genesis and now considered “evident” for Western mind: we need upset the behaviour towards Nature and no-care for world beauty.

It is clear that many Western individuals have different world-views, at a conscious level, but the thought-ways and not-conscious attitude may be very different from rational ideas.

We’ll never speak about individual thought.

First, we must realize that the background of our culture is not at all accepted by all mankind. We can have a brief look out of the West, with this statement reported from a hindu-inspiring text:

*Rivers flow to west or to east. They come from Heavenly Ocean, and come back to Ocean, they become the same Ocean itself. Water cannot remember which river it was: in the same way living beings, coming from Being, don’t know their own origin. Any living being they were on Earth – man, tiger, lion, wolf, worm or butterfly – they exist for ever as Tat (°). This thin entity is everywhere in the Universe, it is reality, it is You.” (Chandogya Upanishad, 10<sup>th</sup> khanda)*

(°) Sanskrit word for “that”. It is used for primeval substance, that is everything and appears as psychis, matter, energy.

It is easy to realize the deep difference from Bible’s Genesis.

In these metaphysical ideas the opposition man-nature is missing.

Instead of three different levels as God-man-nature (in materialism the last two remain), we find an everpresent universal God-Nature.

The first precept of Buddhist ethics is very simple: “Not to damage any sensing being”. The term “sensing being” can also mean a species, an ecosystem or similar entity, as mind-endowed.

Only few eastern philosophies advise to become quasi-vegetarians: they generally ask the respect for Life in any component. Instead, ethics of Judeo-Christian or Muslim traditions take care only of values within our species according to Genesis ideas; the remnant is only a background, or “environment”.

Regarding many kinds of animism found everywhere in mankind, it is clear that in those world-views we are not the only beings soul-endowed: a similar “gap” would be almost unthinkable for people that well know orang-utans or gorillas. But it would be unthinkable also for people who know the nature of Life phenomena and biological evolution!

Our babies are spontaneously animist: then culture imprinting sweeps this attitude away.

As an example, we can look at behaviour of some culture-groups regarding hunt:

- In Western and similar cultures the idea of “killing by sport” is actual: the killing is very often viewed as a “merit” by hunter. The fact regards a pushing minority: the only way to limit is by hard prohibitions, just now. In the West world there are many people that spend money to have a killing permission, which is the opposite of traditional “search for food” of other cultures’ hunting.

- In many animist cultures the capture of prey was considered as “a god’s gift” (or a gift of “the species’ genius”): killing was accepted only if followed by a complete utilization of all parts of the gift, for eating or however survival. The hunted animal was often a totem, he had a kind of sacrality. A killing “for amusement” or with “no reason” was an offense to the god; it was viewed as a crime and put the hunter in the waiting for the god’s punishment, that very often was coming towards the unconscious ways and strict mind-body bindings.

Animist cultures did usually not cause a species’ extinction or ecosystem’s destruction: Amerindian natives lived with buffalo and other species for thousands of years in harmonic dynamic balance, that two or three centuries of European “civilization” have swept away.

- Eastern cultures generally regarded other beings in a death-rebirth cycle (*samsara*) or in any case worth of love, in a cosmic balance. Ethics like “Not to damage any sensing being” come from this concept. In Eastern phylosophies other species live our own adventure and have full right to a good and free life. On the contrary, the so-called “movements for life” of our world take care about humans only, and not at all about balance and health of Life Complex.

If we hope in the end of hunting, we need over all a new ethic and cultural background.

With regard to the idea of “progress”, we can note that:

- Western-type cultures call “progress” a never-ending growth of matter goods and decrease of physical work;
- Eastern-type cultures call “progress” an improving of perception and mind-calmness;
- Animist-type cultures need not the idea of “progress”.

## **7 - Some trends of modern thought**

*In this quick survey we begin from Copernicus. When we write about single authors, we don’t refer to their own world-view but often to following extensions, also mixing with other people’s ideas. Thought changes are very often spreading in semi-opposition with conscious mind of some beginners.*

As a hope mark, we note that mechanicistic wiews born by Jewish and Descartes’ phylosophy are firmly criticized by some Western scholars, just in a time when they are spreading all over the world as “modern” on the wake of material power of the West.

But we need some centuries for deep and widely spread changes of background phylosophy, after the first change-hints. Nevertheless we have now only one or two decades to prevent demographic and economical-industrial growth from pushing the world to a disaster due to breaking of any life balance.

Methaphysics of an age comes from physics of the previous age: we must approach the “turning point”.

With Copernicus, the centre of Universe is changed from the Earth to the Sun: that is the first step to question about man-nature relation, the first displacement from the central position, even if not all people perceived the importance of that, after few centuries. Nevertheless at Copernicus time no doubt was about the soul exclusiveness of our species.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, biological evolution, completely expressed by Charles Darwin, clearly corroded the idea that mankind is “special” or “born by special creation”, something “out of Nature”. Nevertheless, when Darwin’s thought appeared, a good chance for a deep cultural change was lost: instead of the evidence that our species is Nature, evolution was put in the mechanistic view with evidence for the struggle for life and survival of the fittest, and any kind of arbitrary extension.

Evolution could replace the previous background: but that is not yet become. Instead, some shallow aspects of Darwin’s theory were used to increase the mechanistic world-view.

According to Bateson:

*We are now beginning to find some epistemologic errors of Western culture. According to the general thought prevailing in England in the mid-eighteenth century, Darwin’s evolution theory was based on natural selection where survival unity was family, species, or subspecies, or something like. But we now know that is not the survival unity of real biologic world: true survival unity is the complex “organism with his environment” (not exactly limited). We are only now learning that any living being that wastes his environment, kills himself.*

(translation from the Italian version of the book “*Steps to an Ecology of Mind*”)

If we choose the wrong unit, we oppose man and nature.

If we recall the above-mentioned ethical precept (“Do not damage any sensing being”) it is now clear we can mean a “sensing being” is such a mind unit, or “psychic unit”, not limited to the narrow idea of present West.

Therefore, according to Bateson too, even an ecosystem, a species, a group of interrelated living beings have (or are) mind.

As compared with Eastern ideas, a mind unit is a subject of *karma* (Sanskrit word for “action” or “action consequence”, a kind of natural force or “destiny” due to previous actions and never coming from external): we are not speaking about a physical individual. A Living being Complex is a *mind* subject.

So, the advice “Do not damage any sensing being” is intended as an ecological precept instead of an advice to eat vegetables only; also vegetables and plant-animal complexes are intended as “sensing”, with different consciousness degree.

*Psychoanalysis.* After Copernicus and Darwin, mankind is not yet out of Nature, nor at the centre of Universe. After Freud, man cannot just rule himself. But psychoanalysis’ beginner only referred to each autonomous individual.

Only after the changes carried out by Carl Gustav Jung we can have the idea of a collective unconscious also in Western culture: there is some inner connection among individuals. The more in the deep, the more psychis is expanded and archetypal, including larger animal communities, all Life.

Jung, even if using conceptual categories of the West, had a deep knowledge of Eastern philosophies. He begins to speak about synchronous not-casual phenomena and on other than “rational and conscious” sphere. The idea of an autonomous “self” acting on “the external world” is increasingly collapsing. Whatever we do, we changes ourselves too.

Now we spend some words about physics. The maximum of mechanicism, coming from Newton’s ideas that Universe is a giant Clock and all its parts can be divided in ever smaller pieces, is reached at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, when science’s idea was to be almost reaching “the truth”.

Living beings were considered extremely complicated “machines”.

The 92 atoms were kind of minuscule balls, and all physical “realities” was made by them and by “fields”. Space and time were absolute realities: all processes were carried out within them. Spirit phenomena were in separate field at all or viewed as “imaginary” and denied.

People’s thought is up to date on this position.

With special relativity (1905) mechanistic or classic physics begin shaking. Space and time lose their absolute characteristics, matter and energy are the same. In 1916, general relativity states that gravitation is “geometry of spacetime”.

But another even deeper revolution has its roots in the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, that is quantistic physics, clearly appeared in 1927, when Werner Heisenberg claims his *uncertainty principle*. The so-called “Copenhagen school”, led by Niels Bohr, denies any idea of an “objective reality” and any chance to divide - not even ideally - phenomena and observation. In other words, we can’t separate spirit and matter. Without “a mind”, we can’t speak about anything, perhaps only as a ghost chance-wave.

If we can extend this statement, psychis must be universal: otherwise which system can be viewed as “observer”?

We can note that the same results on a physical-mathematical level were viewed in different ways on a philosophical level:

- Einstein, with his Jewish cultural background, could never put away the “external objective reality” and did never agree with quantistic physics; even if declared to like “Spinoza’s God”, he never left his “Western” position about physical world;
- Schroedinger, with his deep knowledge of Veda-Hindu philosophy, never accepted *a real world* not-intellegible by human mind, considered as a reflex, an *hologram* of Universal Mind;
- Bohr, who also knew Tao philosophy, fully accepted what descended by Heisenberg-Schroedinger physical-mathematical findings, cast away “the objective reality” and explained many opposite evidence (like wave-particle) as complementary aspects of the same thing.

In physics too, some beginners of new ideas try to maintain an anthropocentric view, confirming the trend to put new ideas in a previous pattern, at least for some decades.

We often are told quantistic physics is against common sense, but the so-called common sense is merely based on our culture's prejudices.

According to two well-known scientists:

*Many physics scholars to-day agree on the idea that the knowledge stream is pushing towards a non-mechanical reality: Universe is much more alike a great Thought than a giant machine.* (Arthur Stanley Eddington – James Jeans)

*I am not sure that the "self" we think as a person is a reality and not illusion. According to a well-spread idea in Eastern phylosophy (Upanishad) we are not real individuals, but a kind of reflex of the same Entity.* (Erwin Schroedinger)

Regarding biology:

In the Sixties Jacques Monod so summarized his own thought:

*The old alliance is over. Man eventually knows he is alone in a giant frozen Universe, from where he came by chance. His duty or his destiny are written nowhere.* (L'hasard et la necessité)

This is the top of a metaphysical anguish, only decreased by a kind of a knowledge ethics. Everything is a nonsense.

For this type of materialism, life is only a fall into a non-fit Universe, only a clinging to a sand-particle called Earth, just till death, a brief performance on a very small theatre and a very short time, realizing that everything we do or think will perish for ever, leaving Universe as we never existed. History can't be a continuity, because when the Sun become a red-giant star, the Earth will disappear and there will be no record about all that happened on it.

But François Jacob, Monod's fellow, wrote about "the life's logic".

Any living being has a logic, shows a kind of immanence.

At Bruxelles school, Ilya Prigogine and his fellows, studying the "dissipative structures", or far from equilibrium, as living systems are, view a trend to structure and self-organization. There is an interior push, a kind of "hope" to build up structure

Regarding anthropology, we are hardly trying to leave 19<sup>th</sup> century idea of the "civil" European people that study "wild people" and help "primitives". Claude Levy-Strauss often censured the cultural arrogance of the West. But in Griaule's and Servier's thought the parity among human cultural patterns is even more evident.

According to Servier:

*No expert of ethics has never spoken about guilt of the West in the creation of artificial needs, that we conceal under the term "civilization" or "life standard", the only aim of which is to give work to our factories.* (L'homme et l'Invisible).

There are no "primitives", but only different life patterns: "wild people" are only in Western mind. They are not spending time only to search food and love; they are looking for an universal perception, that is a unity with all Life and Nature. European thought of last centuries, born by Greek, Roman and Jewish ideas, is only an exemple of Western arrogance, following its terrible material power, reached together with a lack of cosmic perception that causes nevrosis and affliction.

The reason of our problems is our separation from Nature, we belong to.

We have not touched the vast parapsychology field, or non-divided psychis-matter phenomena, that official cartesian science must deny or neglect, for not touching its own background.

If a phenomenon can give doubts to the present pattern, it is denied and ignored, which is the typical psychis behaviour before not-wanted news. As an exemple, if we see that emotion affects a plant growth, we forget it, or believe that an “external” power is acting on the plant. But we are indeed approaching the “wild” thought, whose symbols are probably a kind of independent science.

In last development of physics there are many doubts about the so-called “local realistic theories”. We are not sure at all about:

- the existence of an objective reality, or physical world;
- the possibility of inference and extrapolations (ripetibility);
- the no-possibility of instantaneous effects at any distance, or the need of a speed lower than light's.

Any action, or change, or phenomenon has immediate effects on all Universe. We can't isolate or separate anything. After end of “local realistic theories”, we could explore and study many fields like astrology or parapsychology (precognition, clearvoyance, etc.), with a kind of nearing to magic thought.

## **8 - Holistic world-view.**

*When speaking about ecology and protection of Nature, to care of world-views looks as an abstract, or less practical, subject, if compared with advice about waste recycling or forest preservation: the only reason is that the world-view problem has a long-term effect. Therefore there are often some aspects deeply affecting behaviour and attitude, more than any advice of practical ecology.*

We now resume some present knowledge not suitable to Judeo-Christian and cartesian background:

- The Earth, the Sun, nothing else are in any kind of “centre”: stars are equivalent grains in the Infinity; there is no centre at all.
- Mankind is an animal species appeared on this planet three million years ago, Life has been on Earth for three or four billion years, Universe has a 15-20 billion years age, or is eternally pulsing. The so-called “king of create” has arrived late, while his so-called kingdom was not waiting for him. We must be proud indeed if we think “to improve” what has been self-improving for four billion years. Mankind also *is* Nature. Life phenomena are the same in any species.
- Western culture has two-three thousand years age, industrial civilization two hundred years: they are concerned by meaningless time. The idea of “progress” is very young: we can live very well without it. The gap between history and pre-history is only a mind pattern of our culture, to feed its world-view. There is no reason at all to believe a culture is better or worse than another one.

- Mind operation and behaviour are very alike in all animal species of our order (*Primates*) or our class (*Mammals*). They mostly are non-conscious phenomena.
- Quantistic physics has shown that it's impossible to speak about matter or energy phenomena with no care to "observation", which means that energy-matter is meaningless without mind: it is non-reality, is a kind of chance-wave.

Newton mechanistic physics has only a practical aim, but no mark is in our schools about this deep change of thought.

A very old idea is reborn by this background: animism. Mind must be everywhere in the Universal, if we must avoid an "observer" that causes the so-called reality. No gap between spirit and matter. So we recall the Great Spirit, and the spirit of a tree, ground, river or buffalo.

Also science-freedom from metaphysics is over. Official science must support intellectual stress to remain within cartesian paradigm and is compelled to neglect phenomena for not touching its own background. It must ignore or deny all non-repeated phenomena. It is very hard to agree with the "need" to describe modern knowledge within cartesian paradigm. Nevertheless to-day so many people are self-describing as "cartesian" or "rational" hoping to be up to date, not knowing they are sustaining ideas of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Those ideas are well accepted by people only because all we have ever been breathing after birth is obvious, or not-apparent.

But the priority of "rational" over "emotion" or "intuition" is only a prejudice of present Western culture.

Now we can try some more thoughts:

A reductionist-type approach study the elementary reasons of any phenomenon, dividing it in ever simplest parts. An holistic-type approach studies global properties of a system, never divided in many components.

The first one has been followed during last centuries and has brought the present world-view and way-of-life of Western culture, or of people that adopted western values. The holistic approach is hard for people born in the first background: it's just now beginning to appear, in individual form.

The step to have a new mind-habit is very hard for everyone, who can try to guess as he likes what a general holistic approach can mean.

As an exercise, we can try to imagine a world where:

- opposites are complementary aspects of the same thing;
- death is merely life's other side; Nature is both as the same phenomenon;
- there is no fight, no competition, no winning or losing, no challenge, no need of hierarchy-list;
- we have nothing to manipulate, nor to conquest;
- the ideas of reason and fault, right and wrong merely are dangerous mind-patterns, that increase violence and blow out any smile;
- no gap between spirit and matter, mankind and nature, God and world. Mind is universal, ever-spreading, not-divided. Mankind is nothing central, nor particular.



With the end of an “objective reality”, the ideas of truth and certainty are useless: the concept of truth becomes very similar to Nature’s.

This is not a static view, a view where the lack of the idea of “progress” or “growth” causes a never-changing way of life, or an “ever-waiting” behaviour. We can compare it to a river: it seems not changing, but it’s often quickly streaming. The same water is never flowing in a stream, is ever-flowing. Stones are in the river bed: they are never broken, but left where they are. Water flows around them towards the plain and the sea.

So we don’t mean “make nothing”, we mean: to act following the natural flow of things, following Nature.

Moreover we see in our world too many words like fight, battle, supremacy, competition, match, success, defeat and so on: if you read a newspaper, you see that so many events are viewed according to this pattern.

We can try to look at the cooperative and universalizing side instead of the competitive aspect so increased up-to-date by Western culture; in other words, we can try to improve the “female” side of the world. Women are so many in “green” movements not by chance.

And let us lose animal “strong” symbols like eagle, lion, tiger: rodents are a lot in the world, not the poor eagles in extinction for foolish human growth. It is now time to escape, in a psychological sense too. We have no need of fights, but we need to understand, accept and smile. “Fight for peace” is a strange statement, for peace is a non-fight condition: it’s an attitude. Let us hope it becomes universal.

The spreading of new ideas, in smiling opposition to current prejudices, is very useful. To contribute to universalize the “never-fight” idea is a good work.

The world is not a conquest-land, but is the Whole in which we are as a component. If we have the fixed idea of *growth*, we can improve our perceptive qualities to reach a better synthyony with Cosmic Life cycle. We have many things to do: we can look at blossoms and trees, at the Moon and stars, we can watch the bird flight and feel our synthyony with them, to take part in the Universal symbyosis.

We’ll really enjoy life if we lose the idea of “success” and taste the pleasure of non-competition.

In these ideas, where mind and matter are an indivisible aspect of Nature, we are so far from “bulk matter” moved by “external”, from a world made for mankind and handled for our purposes. To-day situation, caused by spreading of a particular way-of-thinking in a human culture (the West) shows that disasters caused to Global Balance by our species are terribly heavier than other species’: we probably are beyond the point of no-return. Even if Nature finds a new balance - over very long time -, a very poor complex, in life and psychis, will be the result.

We can be happy if we are not “special beings” or “in central place”, but a branch in the Life-tree, as nature ourselves.

Instead of a God-Person apart from the world and judging human acts, we find a God-Nature immanent in everything (in ourselves too); Divinity watches Herself also through a marmot’s or an ant’s eyes, or by means of the fascinating and mysterious sensitivity of a tree.