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The Ethics of Embodied Nature Through the Lens of Environmental Sustainability

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The conception of embodiment addresses relationships between knowledge, the mind, and the physical environment. The embodiment is the experience of becoming conscious of what the soma is as a whole. The stance of eco-somatic embodied sustainability places the unfolding of this venture in the perceptual interaction and relation between the human body and nature. The environment at the intersection of human and non-human nature highlights the necessity and importance of acknowledging nature's participation in constructing sustainability knowledge. Postmodern environmental philosophers propose narratives as a central element in producing environmental/ethical knowledge while defining the relationship between place, values, and sustainability. This paper will address a shift from the modern notion of environmental philosophy to postmodern environmental sustainability – the exposition of narratives, ideography, and metaphysical account of place for moving towards contextualising environmental epistemology. Environmental epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics are allied to establishing a dynamic relationship between soma, nature, and culture by developing embodied ecosystem sustainability. We cannot escape nature and its relation to us as we are embedded, situated, and interacting with the environment. However, the notion of an embodiment of nature and humans through contextualising epistemology with relational self, place, and ethics enacted becomes substantiated.

Keywords: Embodied Nature, Environmental Ethics, Eco-somatic, Postmodernism, Sustainability

Introduction

The environmental philosophy often needs help with the core philosophical inquiry while addressing the embodied nature of sustainability. What are the substantive metaphysical, axiological, and epistemological groundings in environmental sustainability, or are the ethical discussions mere speculations? This paper will explore how environmental epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics are so allied that it is unreasonable to disjoint them through the development of embodied ecosystems for a dynamic relationship between soma, nature, and culture. Further, this paper will explore issues, values, and justifications as recent environmental philosophers attempt to contextualise epistemology relative to the physical environment. The concept of embodiment explores the connections among knowledge, the mind, and the physical surroundings that give rise to essential aspects of human existence and sustainability. Our survival and capacity to blossom rely on realising the close-knit relationship of humans with non-human nature through embodied participation in nature. Living as an embodied person the physicality of the planet is not a limitation. Instead, through embodied nature and action, our liberation and realisation of the consequences of this relationship can liberate us from ego dependence. It can transform us into an interdependent, flourishing and sustainable community. This paper will inquire whether there is a need to shift from modern epistemology to postmodernism concerning sustainability.

The ethical inquiries are significant to the epistemological and metaphysical relationship between the human and non-human environment. This paper will present a journey and inquiry with epistemic justifications of humans and ecology as an embodied whole for sustainability existence. The critical inquiry is not undeniable as far as environmental matters are concerned. A study of environmental sustainability shows that it started as an inquiry because human interventions pose a severe threat to nature that has gone too far. There are broader ways through which human culture and non-human nature correlate in establishing belief and worldview, knowledge, norms and institutions, and basic survival and practices. If diverse cultural practices and worldviews are central to biological diversity, the link between human culture and the natural environment is knowledge. The interaction between humans and nature shapes our understanding of values, behaviours, and sustainability. We must find our position, relation, and obligation in nature as our responsibilities to lead an embodied whole in the natural sustainability environment.

1. *De Novo* Epistemological Justification in Nature

The canon of modern philosophy presents a belief system that dwells in fundamental dualism, like reason in contrast to emotions, nature and culture, facts and values, mind and body, etc. The modern period of epistemological inquiry detached itself from the world and treated non-human natural environments as objects of domination and control. The quantitative notion of the environment by modern scientists and industrialisation creates a massive gap between nature and culture. This binary understanding also disconnected humans from sustainable living in nature.

Such duality has resulted in the supremacy of the human mind, where reason is over and above nature, as nature is only a resource for use, and human intellect is free to do anything with the natural environment. Consequently, this prevailing perspective adopts a detached approach, portraying the mind as separate from the body, culture, and surroundings. Human perception of the world is organised in a monologue that centres on human order and purpose [Cheney, 2005, 101–135]. Nelson Goodman contends that the concepts of truth, certainty, and knowledge inherently contain elements of defeat and confusion. Instead of trying to detach these ideas from their historical Western context, Goodman proposes a shift in emphasis: moving from truth to rightness, from certainty to adoption, and from knowledge to an understanding of sustainability [Goodman, 1988, 31–48].

Numerous environmental ethicists endeavour to establish the position of humans in nature and their connection to ecology based on metaphysics as a unified, organic system. Aldo Leopold advocated for organicism, representing a static element within the continuous energy flow in natural systems. The concept of organic wholeness is prevalent and self-evident in the perspectives of deep ecologists such as Arne Naess, Bill Devall, Warwick Fox, and others [Rolston, Light, 2007]. Apart from several arguments for the ecological perception of organicism, J. Baird Callicott argues that ecological science does not condone either holism or mechanism with the development of modern science and evolutionary biology. They argued for the conception of interconnectedness and a system of integral relationships, understanding, and adaptiveness [Callicott, 1986, 301–316]. Sceptics can argue that based on the ecology of organicism only, adequate metaphysics and ethics cannot be constructed by mere speculations. Hence, the sceptical question marks our attention: Is there any independent philosophical basis apart from scientific justification for environmental philosophy? If environmental ethics meets us with moral obligations, responsibilities, and duties in nature, the sceptic turns toward the fact-value dichotomy. According to this dichotomy, drawing *ought* judgment from *is* not appropriate for sustainability, and we will deal with this issue later in this paper.

Epistemology focuses on justifications and structured beliefs based on rigid foundations to justify those beliefs. In modern scientific perspectives, the capacity for human reasoning is seen as a potent cognitive ability that enables subjects to elevate intellectual sovereignty. This ability allows them to engage in critical contemplation and articulate thoughts linguistically, facilitating their pursuit of objective truths in what is presumed to be an emancipatory quest. Any orthodox foundationalism will seek two questions: what are the foundations for epistemic justification? Is it sense data, distinct ideas, or self-evident intuitions? And, what kinds of inferences are logically reliable based on basic foundations? Is it deductive or inductive knowledge? So, the foundationalist seeks to justify how we establish environmental values of sustainability on solid ground with some specific methods and knowledge. Therefore, escaping from orthodox foundationalism is not to increase our knowledge and achieve certainty or show progress and change but to get some other perspective on knowledge and the value of the environment. Nonetheless, engaging in sceptical examination assists us in establishing a solid philosophical foundation for environmental conjectures. Nevertheless, it has the potential to lead us to dismiss environmental philosophy as an impractical pursuit within the realm of sustainable

philosophy or label it as a pseudo-philosophy of sustainability. Robert Kirkman writes, "Environmental philosophers too can entertain false hopes about their status and importance in the world. Intellectual honesty, quoted by the principle of parity, demands that critical philosophical reflection consider the limits of its power" [Kirkman, 2002, 151]. The rational investigation of environmental philosophy becomes justifiable when there is a comprehensive understanding of the environment's metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical aspects as an embodied perspective devoid of mere speculation. Some writers characterise this approach as a postmodern interpretation of environmental philosophy [cf.: Cheney, 1989, 117–134].

One idea in postmodern environmental ethics is that natural environments contribute to knowledge in order to diminish the narrowness of human understanding. A narrow perspective confines the human mind to certain principles, hindering the exploration of alternative avenues for acquiring knowledge. This bounded way of dogmatic epistemology scorns the critical challenges and availability of other sources of knowledge in the environmental philosophy of sustainability. In this context, we can bring Sabina Lovibond's differentiation between 'transcendental parochialism' and 'empirical parochialism.' Lovibond characterises anti-ascetic philosophy as a broad concept aimed at dispelling misconceptions arising from conventional metaphysical frameworks. She recommends an "anti-ascetic philosophy… compelling our recognition of the bodily aspect of knowledge" in which our beliefs and concerns "will necessarily be the beliefs [and concerns] of creatures with a certain physical constitution and a certain ecological location" [Lovibond, 1983, 210].

We can analyse that the body is an essential phenomenon as our beliefs need physicality, place, which leads to sustainability. Embracing this perspective implies consenting to what we term transcendental parochialism. Transcendental parochialism involves rejecting the inclination to break free from the conceptual framework to which we are transcendentally connected, in favor of a more unbiased depiction of the world based on our existence as beings with a specific type of body and environment. As long as other rational individuals or communities can pinpoint new instances of an (empirical) parochial worldview, there will continue to be additional reasons to liberate ourselves from such narrow-minded perspectives [Ibid., 210–217]. Cultural norms shape industrial attitudes toward nature and exclude the non-human environment as a conversational partner for sustainability. In the shaping of these attitudes, they propagated an epistemology of domination. The philosophy of sustainability in the environmental context aims to move beyond narrow perspectives, yet it acknowledges that this effort is rooted in cultural understanding. If we confine our perspective to human communities alone, we remain constrained by parochialism. Therefore, it is essential to broaden our conversational engagement to encompass the natural ecology of our surroundings.

The postmodern perspective introduces a perspective on comprehending metaphysics, epistemology, axiology, and morality. According to C.J. Preston, it is important to note that the postmodern approach does not advocate for a forceful stance on epistemological theories, as the focus on epistemology here is tethered to *Oikos*. Establishing knowledge based on beings, things, events, and phenomena surrounds us entirely, eliminating any void in our minds. Preston contends that

such an orientation significantly aids in transitioning our ethical perspectives away from the mindset of the modern era [Preston, 2005, 1–4]. However, this approach is not a shift from intrinsic to extrinsic values in nature or shifts in normative theories of obligation or duties. Instead, it is for justification of value-talk in nature and human obligation related to nature that is earthbound. The fundamental concept behind an internalist model of cognition is that genuine knowledge is grounded in justification rather than mere belief. This justification is derived from subjective factors or those internal to the individual holding the belief. The notion of internality is not peculiar; instead, it refers to specific aspects to which the subject has epistemic access, such as certainty (Descartes). The externalist theory rejects the idea of internality in cognition, as it views cognitive structures as existing outside or beyond the individual. Postmodern environmental philosophers aim to move away from the dualism of modernist thinking. Consequently, they seek to break free from traditional internalist and externalist cognitive models. Mark Rowlands, in particular, advocates for 'environmentalism' as a departure from the conventional understanding of cognition as either internalist or externalist theories [Rowlands, 2005, 5–27].

The contemporised argument for externalism as environmentalism positions itself against Cartesian internalism. To begin with, externalism does not posit any distinct internal access but rather elucidates the significance of environmental factors or structures that provide environmental information in the process of belief formation and contemplation of these beliefs. Second, shifting from belief to knowledge involves our connection to elements beyond Cartesian 'ghosts in the machine' or our interaction with environmental structures (*Oikos*-factors). Rowlands emphasises that environmental sustainability is a cognitive approach that effectively engages with the world itself, as our gathering of information about and depicting the world is a 'process of the world.' It is not inappropriate to assert that, during the cognitive process, the internal aspects of the subject are, to some extent, intertwined with the environment. The maneuvers of environmental structures, in conjunction with internal structures, play a role in the cognitive process. However, only the pertinent information provided by external structures contributes meaningful value to cognition. The postmodern environmental philosophers also recognised the importance of narratives, ideography, establishing facts and values in place, and the embodied perspective for justifications and knowledge. Therefore, it should be free of the traditional form of explaining knowledge while dealing with environmental philosophy. The narrative, moral imperatives- place-bound ethical instructions with practical implications for material and spiritual realms-have been incorporated into a postmodern environmental paradigm where the local milieu is linked to ethical principles [Cheney, 1989, 130].

1.1. Knowledge, Culture, Nature, and Environmental Sustainability

Jim Cheney pursued a broad inquiry in his essay '*Truth*, *Knowledge, and the Wild World*' by raising an epistemic inquiry about the stand or contribution of the natural environment in producing knowledge. How important is truth to knowledge and epistemology? Cheney recognises the significance of nature in shaping our under-

standing, portraying it as the manifestation of the interaction between the human and the non-human realms [Cheney, 2005, 105]. Therefore, the inquiry indicates the relationship between humans and nature as the question of justification and knowledge, with the question of the natural environment in the genesis of knowledge, becomes substantial for the embodied notion. Further, Cheney elaborates on the nuanced nature of one's responsibilities towards others, emphasising the need to comprehend the intricate threads of connection and intimacy thoroughly. Consequently, determining our moral obligations to the non-human environment hinges primarily on (1) a nuanced grasp of human nature and our capacity to engage with other non-human entities and (2) an awareness of how the intricate networks of relationships constituting the human moral community could extend to encompass the non-human realm. This broadening of the moral community involves delving into the essence of caring, responding to stimuli, and acquiring knowledge within the non-human environment as integral aspects of one's moral community membership [Cheney, 1987, 139–140]. Cheney justified this through the narratives with the testimony to the assertion from the indigenous inhabitants, especially of North America. In the Indian context, we can generalise it with particular reference to Uttarakhand, North-East regions, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and many more.

In this regard, Deborah Slicer raises questions like, "Should environmental philosophers pay attention to narratives because they contain certain truths that are only possible through story and because stories elicit practical wisdom? Should philosophers be writing such narratives?" [Slicer, 2003, 2]. We can extend the question by analysing the possibility of establishing an embodied relationship by narrating stories or what Cheney calls ideography. The coherence of the narrative can be conveyed by situating oneself or humanity within a specific context, the inclination of the self to explore epistemological questions, and the ethical connection to both culture and the natural world. Narrative requires intellect with an emotional grapple. Therefore, the coherence of the narrative involves reassessing an individual's position in an ongoing process of aligning perceived and actual occurrences. This encompasses potential effects on both humans and the environment, juxtaposed with the tangible impact on human well-being and ecological sustainability.

The knowledge is to listen, as nature un-reveals itself and restricts from posing humans' arbitrary will to construct nature. The question could emerge that listening is just a subject's passive activity and does not provide an implication of relation to the humans to non-humans, to know what things and values are. However, it is an active process of cognitive ability as a way of reciprocating to know things and values. Here, we can evoke Holms Rolston's storied residence, an aspect of the thought of environmental ethics and the idiographic dimension of an environmental ethic: "An ethics should be rational, but rationality inhabits a historical system. The place that is to be counted morally has a history; the ethic that befits such a place will take on historical form; the ethics will itself have a history… Under [this] idiographic focus, ethical concern will be directed toward historical particulars, with minimal appeal to types or universals" [Rolston, 1988, 341–342]. We can draw the significance of idiographic focus and historical stories that is prominent to environmental knowledge and an environmental ethic, which could be a central element in producing environmental/ethical knowledge while defining the relation

to place and values. The universal application will also be in question as it proposes relative concerns. Similarly, Cheney draws supports from Vine Deloria Jr., that knowledge is inseparable from human beings, their communities, and their collective experiences. Rather than existing independently, knowledge is derived from individual and communal interactions with the natural world. The significance of people's experiences in observing and interpreting their surroundings cannot be overstated in acquiring knowledge. The goal is not to dismiss prior knowledge or established understanding but to engage with them adaptively. By interpreting the profound richness of stories and human experiences, every aspect of human experience contributes value and imparts guidance in life.

Knowledge as articulating the environment at the intersection of human and non-human nature highlights the necessity and importance of acknowledging nature's participation in constructing knowledge. Gregory Bateson proposes that

> [A]ny on going ensemble of events and objects which has the appropriate energy relations will surely show mental characteristics. It will compare, that is, be responsive to difference… It will process information and inevitably be self-corrective either toward homeostatic optima or toward the maximisation of certain variables… [N]o part of such an internally interactive system can have unilateral control over the remainder or over any other part. The mental characteristics are inherent or immanent in the ensemble as a whole… The network is not bounded by the skin but included all external pathways along which information can travel [Bateson, 1972, 315–319].

Bateson shows that the mind inhered in nature and situated itself with interaction for knowledge in the environment. By means of energy, every unit is interrelated, which produces knowledge. In connection with this, Deloria's principles of the epistemological method are grounded in the central value of 'adaptive fit,' emphasising the importance of finding the right path for human beings, as opposed to embracing values centered on domination and control. This does not imply that the world, seen as living nature, is deified or considered a supernatural entity revealing its own truth. Instead, it underscores a profound and ongoing exchange between the individual and the natural world, representing an integration of nature and humanity. Those who embrace these principles, viewed as epistemological guidelines, become highly attuned to the insights the world provides regarding human adaptive fit within the broader, more-than-human land community.

The natural environment is a valuable phenomenon of biodiversity with various embodied life as a whole for sustainability. We can identify individuals who are effectively positioned to support their cherished principles, while positioning ourselves adequately to recognise diversity. We may possess the cognitive acuity to analyse the state of the world, but its ontological nature will persist, irrespective of the triumphs or shortcomings of epistemology. Philosophers have consistently found themselves confined within an epistemic prison. All knowledge is relative; there is no 'mirror of nature.' Richard Rorty deplores "the impossible attempt to step outside our skin traditions, linguistic and other, within which we do our thinking and self-criticism and compare ourselves with something absolute" [Rorty, 1983, xix]. He suggests that environmental ethicists ought to refrain from the instinct to evade the limitations of time and location in the pursuit of ecological

knowledge. Instead, they should focus on understanding the dynamic nature of the earth, reciprocating with it, and narrating their experiences, thereby gaining a grounded epistemological perspective. Postmodernists present that the capability of narrative for re-evaluation shows the possibility of adaptable knowledge and environmental ethics. However, narratives are comprehensible in retrospect and can present a falsified account of the relationship between humans and non-humans. Moreover, the dependency on producing environmental knowledge for sustainability and values can be somewhat reliable and has limitations. We do not need to go again for a single parochial way, but accepting appropriate ways of looking at environmental philosophy is requisite. Therefore, contextualising epistemology can dwell us into subjective experiences only as we present through narratives and stories and can limit us only to some native span. Narratives and ideography present only a different perspective and do not establish ethical theories, but through experiences embedded in place, we can enhance our embodied relation to nature.

2. The Eco-somatic Approach to Embodiment

We can define embodied persons in environments of nature and culture. Life, a 'skin-in' affair, is equally a 'skin-out' event. Human life is a mind-in and mind-out event. Rolston notes that recent criticisms in epistemology can be broadly categorised into two main components. First, an ideological aspect suggests that our knowledge is shaped by the ideas we generate, and social construction is a product of interactive processes within human communities. Second, a physiological aspect indicates that our knowledge is a somatic construction, shaped interactively by the environments we inhabit. Both concepts and principles have traditionally been part of epistemic analysis. However, the contemporary challenge lies in acknowledging that we cannot entirely detach ourselves from our embeddedness in either culture or nature, contrary to what enlightened individuals may have once believed [Rolston, 2005, 141].

The somatic notion refers to the whole person as physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual, not as traditionally we have the notion of mind-body duality. As we have discussed, many societal systems often encourage a mind-body split and place the intellect above all. The anthropocentric view develops because of placing human intellect at a higher position in the ecological system than everything is and for human purposes. Ecological thinking is about the interdependence between entities and nature, so it displaces human intellect from the centre of nature. The somatic approach claims to fill this binary of mind and body. It indicates that we become aware of and learns to consciously re-pattern habitual ways of moving, activating more of our innate body and mind intelligence. From this, the process of self-inquiring and learning that empowers us toward more sustainable care of self and nature begins. Embodiment is the experience of becoming conscious of what the soma is as a whole, and the stance of eco-somatic embodiment places the unfolding of this venture in the perceptual interaction and relation between the human body and nature. And engaging with an ecosomatic approach to living involves decentring human agency by asking: how do we co-exist with

nature and for the will of the all-natural elements in the ecosystem? As a sensory, responsive, and participatory experience, the improvisational movement enables a shift towards eco-somatic by creating a form of knowledge. In his book *Becoming Animal*, David Abram writes

> We can sense the world around us only because we are entirely a part of this world, because by virtue of our own carnal density and dynamism – we are wholly embedded in the depths of the earthly sensuous. We can feel the tangible textures, sounds, and shapes of the biosphere because we are tangible, resonant, audible shapes in our own right. We are born of these very waters, air, loamy soil, and sunlight. Nourished and sustained by the substance of the breathing earth, we are flesh of its flesh. We are neither pure spirits nor pure minds, but are sensitive and sentient bodies able to be seen, heard, tasted, touched by all the beings around us [Abram, 2010, 63].

Abram urges to plug humans into earthly sensuous back into the soil. His applications of embodiment branch distinctly from traditional and modern approaches to the subject of how we relate to the natural world. Every entity participates actively in everything surrounding it, be it air, soil, water, or other animals.

As embodied beings in the ecology, humans cannot leave our skin to go out, but we can interact across our skin. We are only a part of this world, along with other creatures and entities; we are not over to nature. As Rolston proposes, life is a *skin-in* and *skin-out* affair; the evaluation of life demands us to look outside of our skin, if not infinitely, but up to the global ecology. The culmination of creatures is around us, and we can compare the knowledge of the other side of our skin. Moreover, environmental epistemology and metaphysics are nothing but gaining, interacting, and transferring information in the ecosystem [Rolston, 2005, 137–174]. We cannot escape from nature and its relation with us as we are embedded, situated, and in interaction with the environment. There is no need to detach the natural environment from skin-bounded beings, as we can enact from our natural experience. The environment outside our skin is genuinely responsible for structuring our cognition and producing knowledge interacting with our inside skin. Wisdom involves extending our understanding beyond personal boundaries to recognise that values are expressions of sustainability within the non-human world. As we are embodied entities, the natural world provides the complete model of health and well-being while maintaining internal relations. We can understand and emulate the internal relation through sustained communication with environmental sustainability.

Ecology reveals to us that we are intricately intertwined and actively participating in the vibrant, earthly surroundings, implying our connection and involvement with it. Consequently, ecology significantly transforms our perception of ourselves as individuals and as part of the broader human nature [Callicott, 1986, 301–316]. Paul Shepard has pointed out that the relational concept of self extends to consciousness, organism, mind, and matter. According to Shepard,

> Internal complexity, as the mind of a primate, is an extension of natural complexity, measured by the variety of plants and animals and the variety of nerve cells-organic extensions of each other. The exuberance of kinds [is] the setting in which a good mind could evolve (to deal with a complex world)… The idea of natural

> complexity as a counterpart to human intricacy is essential to an ecology of man [Shepard, 1969, 4].

So, we are the wayward species of unequally intelligent, highly visual, and social primates. He explores how our cognition, character, and cosmology have developed through the relation to the wild world. Humans are embodied with an ecosomatic approach, but there should be a manageable amount of embodiment so that we become able to value others as their whole in them. Every entity is related to the basic structure as an ecological whole while having its body, place, and value. Therefore, we need to maintain embodied personality by appreciating what skin-out ourselves is and others in their bodies. Embodiment realises us who we are in ecology, our ability to sketch relation inference without disturbing the peace of the natural environment.

2.1. Embodied Person, Knowledge and Nature

The modern unrest and worry sold humans into varieties of subjection to the craving of their senses, intellectual, and ignorance of any world. However, they do not care about the external natural symbiosis environment they can feel. Holmes Rolston has alluded to and extended Shepard's notion of the 'relational self' implied by ecology. Meditating by the shores of a Rocky Mountain wilderness lake, Rolston asks:

> Does not my skin resemble this lake surface? Neither lake nor self has an independent being… Inlet waters have crossed this interface and are now embodied within me… The waters of North Inlet are part of my circulatory system, and the more literally we take this truth, the more nearly we understand it. I incarnate the solar energies that flow through this lake. No one is free-living… Bias is intrinsically symbiosis [Rolston, 1975, 122].

So, considering the words of Rolston, without the opportunity to exist beyond the multitude of competing voices, one can surrender the capacity to reflect in relation to wilderness values.

Generally, most information we gain is within the scope of our native lifespan. While this may seem uncontroversial, it raises questions about the implications. Knowledge is influenced by factors such as our location, physical form, dimensions, and earthly environment. This situation constricts, it may be claimed, what can come through. Mark Johnson suggested: "Our consciousness and rationality are tied to our bodily orientations and interactions in and with our environment. Our embodiment is essential to who we are, to what meaning is, and to our ability to draw rational inferences and to be creative." He urges us to 'put the body back into the mind,' that is, epistemologically, to become aware of how the body is there, willy-nilly [Johnson, 1987, xxxvi–xxxviii]. Further, he claims:

> "Reason, even in its most abstract form, makes use of, rather than transcends, our animal nature" [Lakoff, Johnson, 1999, 4]. We are trying to locate the soma in nature by consciously being aware and interacting with ecology. In the interaction model, the body serves a role beyond simply being a biological support system

> for the mind. Our ability to engage in interaction is intrinsically linked to our embodiment, and the specific conditions of our embodiment significantly impact the nature of these interactions. The available sensory stimuli, influenced by our embodiment, play a crucial role in determining the meaning of these stimuli. Additionally, the learned movements and postures ingrained through cultural influences, as well as encoded aspects such as gender, ethnicity, and class, shape the process of learning and contribute to our perception of the world [Hayles, 1995, 56].

Epistemologically, 'Greening' our belief, environmentally grounding it, will require knowing and appropriately respecting these vital life processes of which we are a part, but which also are *in place* and *take place* apart from us [Rolston, 2005, 137–138].

2.2. The Epistemic Support for Subjects Placed within Objects

The embodied persons are involved in gathering evidence, the quality and the implications of which we must judge. If we live, we must live *somewhere*, as we must live *somehow*. The justification for this belief is rooted not only in the interconnectedness of ideas, words, and concepts but also in the interaction between these and the external world. It involves a dynamic interplay, encompassing feedback and feedforward processes, connecting ideas to the world and words to the world, as well as concepts to perceptions and the objects and processes existing beyond. Evaluating coherence, connectivity, correlation, coordination, and correspondence is essential. While the quest for ultimate foundations or universal truths persists, discoveries have been made in this world, even if they are not immediately self-evident.

However, Hilary Putnam claims, "There is a real world but we can only describe it in terms of our own conceptual schemes" [Putnam, 1978, 32]. Every act of knowing gets 'conceptually contaminated,' and this is so drastic that objects do not exist independently of conceptual schemes. Humans cannot cut up the world any way they please; they have "to carve nature at the joints" (Plato, Phaedrus, 265e). Conceptually, contamination occurs in the realm of epistemology, where the construction of our understanding of the world is intertwined with ontology, the order of knowing with the order of being [Nath, 2019]. An unavoidable standpoint is that numerous objects and events have an existence that predates and continues beyond our own. While there may be moments of philosophical skepticism, individuals across cultures universally live without doubting the existence of an external world. The ongoing inquiry is as follows: Humans are aware of subjects situated amid dynamic objects but what justifies our convictions? The critique is not about certain beliefs being based on others or the fact that some beliefs are more established than others. While it's acknowledged that such variations exist, the concern is that within our sequences of beliefs, the process of inference relies on other inferences, as 'web of belief' but we never 'hit bottom' [Quine, Ullian, 1978, 6–50]. Therefore, instead of building with a perfect logical structure, as if that were ever possible. Remember, each step is getting more refined to even more specific

environments with things like individuation prediction and plurality, and so, all sentences and beliefs that compose our whole web of knowledge, including our belief about the advanced theory.

The early Ludwig Wittgenstein took a correspondence view, "The picture can represent every reality whose form it has" [Wittgenstein, 1961, Remark: 2.171]. Later, Wittgenstein proposes, "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" [Wittgenstein, 1958, Section: 43]. The main feature of language is that we humans are always trying to do something with it, so coping comes first, and copying the wrong way to think of it. Our cognition is always *knowing how* and not *knowing that*. The notion that we can assess our descriptions based on an external reality is misleading, as there is no external realm beyond language that we can reference independently. We constantly exist within the confines of our language, like 'skin in,' navigating our experiences, or intricately connected like threads in a web. The challenge arises in how we can relate to and interact with others when our perception is limited to what is within our immediate understanding, preventing us from acknowledging the diverse modes of existence and significance that others may embody. However, it is essential to recognise that the biotic community should persist within our sphere of significance. While our senses capture perceptions and our minds formulate concepts, our spatial context remains. However, it undergoes expansion, relocation, and the construction of comprehensive perspectives encompassing our experience. George Lakoff writes: "thought is embodied, that is, the structures used to put together our conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience and make sense in terms of it; moreover, the core of our conceptual systems is directly grounded in perception, body movement, and experience of a physical and social character" [Lakoff, 1987, xiv]. We are never acquainted with a mind that is detached and lacks a specific location.

We consistently exist within a certain context, implying that a portion of our knowledge is inherently contextual. Our cognitive structures empower us to expand our perspectives, uncovering additional aspects of the compositions found in nature. Yet, the mind is more intricately intertwined with the body than we acknowledge. In this context, there are no observers who are detached or indifferent; rather, our capacity for action is heightened with existential obligations. It is not merely about uncovering the dynamics of order and disorder in biotic communities, but also about recognising the disorder we contribute to and contemplating the optimal balance of order and disorder essential for the overall well-being of ecosystem integrity. This leads us into the domain of ethics.

3. The Enacted Ethical Values in Nature for Sustainability

In broad outline, Cheney presents the link between epistemology and axiology through narrative, and Rolston carries that with some metaphysical leaning to establish the embodied nature in place. As per the above discussion, something inside the skin is our ability to cognise, and something outside of the skin is the environment. They correlate and produce knowledge. If they do not correlate, there will be no cognition, and there will be no perception, and as such, there will be no knowledge.

However, we get the knowledge and perception of nature as skin out, and one's situation in the environment produces knowledge. We tried to conceive the knowledge with the shift of parochial understanding of modern philosophies to the postmodern embodied view of nature.

The dichotomy of fact/value presented by modernism as drawing *ought* judgment from is not appropriate. The basic distinction proposed that facts are objectively out there and have epistemic verifications, cognitive and rational, whereas values are empirically unverifiable, unjustifiable, relative, emotional, and a rational. However, this dichotomy has no significance in environmental philosophy. Putnam's exposure to this presents that

> The right approach to our ethical problem is neither to give up the very possibility of intelligent discussion nor to seek a metaphysical foundation outside it… all problematic situations, but to investigate and discuss and try things out cooperatively, democratically, and above all fallibilistically. The terrible thing about the fact/value dichotomy is that denying that there is such a thing as a responsible and rational ethical discussion blocks the path of inquiry from the very start [Putnam, 2002, 7–50].

Values and facts are both thoroughly interdependent. However, the wrong-headedness of some form of absolute dualism would entail that analysing dualism is sometimes wrong. To understand the things in their place, we need to differentiate, but it does not mean they are extremes to each other. Therefore, we can move from facts to values, from values, in fact, to ethics enacted.

Humans are familiar with care, concern, responsiveness, and obligations and find themselves placed cognitively, critically, and ethically. The exploration of knowledge is an ethical urge to understand the significance of eco-communal living. A comprehensive perspective on current events possesses a guiding, compelling truthfulness and requires validation beyond human applications. There is always a contrasting view while justifying the values in the form of subjective and objective values. Rolston defended that we can place the objective value out there in terms of locational value. Locational values can be located out there in nature independent from human consciousness. Rolston argued that

> From a short-range, subjective perspective, we can say that the value of nature lies in its generation and support of human life and is therefore only instrumental. But from a longer-range, objective perspective, systemic nature is valuable intrinsically as a projective system, with humans only one sort of its projects, though perhaps the highest. The system is of value for its capacity to throw forward (project) all the storied natural history. On that scale, humans come late, and it seems shortsighted and arrogant for such latecomers to say that the system is only of instrumental value or who 'project' intrinsic value back to nature. Both of these are inappropriate responses [Rolston, 1988, 198].

Rolston intends to provide a solution to epistemic problems of values but restricts to possible solutions of the locational objective warrant for environmental values. Responsible behaviour seeks an appropriate embodied relationship to the environment, which locates value to skin-out apart from human consciousness. However, Callicott supported subjective values but accepted some of Rolston's views in a sense as he says that while

> the central theoretical problem for environmental ethics [is] the construction of a coherent and persuasive theory of intrinsic or inherent value in nature, in the strict, objective sense of the terms must by definition be abandoned if one assumes a… subjectivist. Nevertheless, in a sense, consistently with this axiology, persons and other natural beings may be valued for themselves as well as for the utility they afford those who value them [Callicott, 1989, 160–161].

Callicott accepts the problem of objectivity in natural values as representational formulation and chooses to argue the subjective side of values. Nature has value when humans take it into their experience, i.e., they enact value.

As per the above discussion, we can generalise that some postmodern environmental philosophers try to contextualise values with cultural and indigenous valuation frameworks and derive that objective values depend on or come from subjective participation. Rolston would say that it is disconcerting. It seems reasonable to expect that individuals with embodied human perspectives would readily recognise that non-human beings also possess their own values. The notion of intrinsic values within ourselves allows us to identify values beyond our own boundaries and within the boundaries of other beings. Initially experienced within our own kind and communities, the concept of value can metaphorically extend to encompass others and their respective groups, reaching from psychological entities to somatic beings within their species lines and broader ecosystemic communities [Rolston, 2005, 167].

However, recognising intrinsic value that is not human-derived requires individuals to engage in what is beyond their capabilities; it necessitates transcending their own perspectives, languages, and thoughts to appreciate nature independently of human perceptions and preferences. Nevertheless, the quest for a non-anthropocentric intrinsic value appears akin to a Kantian exploration of tangible entities in the noumenal realm. While these values may be articulated in human language, they are not inherently anthropocentric. Intrinsic values attributed to animals or plants exists external to human bodies, although they are not disembodied; instead, they reside within the physical structures of those animals or plants. Our evaluation of these values is limited to comparisons with our somatic interests. The shapes of these phenomenal values reflect our constituting framework. Bernard Williams insists: "A concern for the non-human natural environment is indeed a proper part of human life, but we can acquire it, cultivate it, and teach it only in terms of our understanding of ourselves" [William, 1985, 118]. Here Rolston's response can be yes and no both. The concern must be ours, and our relation to ecology will affect our self-understanding, especially with pets, domestic animals, and plants. The embodied approach to look at the values transcends the boundary of fact/value and subjective/objective, instead it shows a path towards enacted values.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on the shift and changes in the justification of environmental sustainability with a postmodern approach. The problem of nature and culture or disembodied nature distinct from humans as 'the other' has been at the centre of environmental ethics. However, the notion of an embodiment of nature and humans

through contextualising epistemology with relational self, place, and ethics en-acted becomes substantiated. We started our inquiry to move absolute foundationalism to the postmodern perspective of environmentalism, with narratives and stories with some limitations. Further, postmodernism presents the embodied conception of nature, the human relationship with place, and the eco-somatic approach. Establishing the correlation of humans and nature with epistemic support and balancing the activity in nature raises the question of value in nature.

Environmental ethics starts with the question of what we should do regarding ecological catastrophe. This concern sets us in ethics if and only if we interact with nature. So, the question emerges about defining the relationship between humans and nature or the non-human environment. In this case, moral and ethical relationships can take command because they urge what kind of being we should be or ought to be in non-human relationships. The complex relationship makes a moral community with the non-human environment. The distinctive mark of human consciousness and the material of human reason are the systems of concepts embodied by human languages. Hence, human consciousness with abstract rationality is an extension of the environment. The intrinsic value of oneself is taken as a pre-given value in nature [Prajapati, Nath, 2014]. The relational view of the self as a bodily organism and a conscious, thinking thing transforms human egoism into environmentalism. This idea borrowed from Kenneth Goodpaster's felicitous phrase, egoism is regarded as axiologically privileged [Goodpaster, 1979]. After maintaining the relationship with nature as the natural environment is not an absolute other entity, the question remains: How do we know that values are out there? The Environmental inquiry emerges because of human actions that degrade and deplete the ecology, which demands moral and ethical justifications regarding environmental ethics. The cultural variations and contextual relativity do not give us total exposure to resolve the value crises by monist understanding of any value theory, whether a placed location value or subjective attributed narrative value. Indeed, in practical situations, the monist way of applied value resolution does not find its place. We need to analyse more appropriate solutions to properly understand the knowledge of values. The tactics we discussed as the enacted value make two essentially different claims- the subjectivity of the person's accounts is as important to discuss as the objectivity of the value.

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Этика воплощенной природы через призму экологической устойчивости

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Концепция воплощения включает отношения между знанием, разумом и физическим окружением. Воплощение – это опыт осознания того, чем является сома в целом. Концепция экосоматической воплощенной устойчивости предполагает перцептивное взаимодействие и отношения между человеческим телом и природой. Окружающая среда на пересечении человеческой и нечеловеческой природы подчеркивает необходимость и важность признания участия природы в конструировании знаний об устойчивости. Постмодернистские философы-экологи предлагают нарративы в качестве центрального элемента в производстве экологических/этических знаний, определяя при этом

взаимосвязь между местом, ценностями и устойчивостью. В данной статье рассматривается переход от современного понятия экологической философии к постмодернистской экологической устойчивости – раскрытие нарративов, идеографии и объяснение метафизического аспекта для контекстуализации экологической эпистемологии. Экологическая эпистемология, метафизика и этика в их соединенности обеспечивают установление динамических отношений между сомой, природой и культурой путем развития воплощенной экосистемной устойчивости. Мы не можем обойти природу и ее отношение к нам, поскольку мы встроены в нее, находимся в окружающей среде и взаимодействуем с ней. Поэтому понятие воплощения природы и человека через контекстуализацию эпистемологии с использованием взаимосвязанных самости, места и этики становится обоснованным.

Ключевые слова: воплощенная природа, экологическая этика, экосоматический, постмодернизм, устойчивость