

# **All living is Meeting: A Buberian Approach To Environmental Ethics**

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## **Introduction**

When we look around Thailand, we can see how our environment is deteriorating day by day due to human carelessness and his greed for wealth and comforts. As a teacher of ethics, I would like to bring out in this short research paper the ethical values involved in caring for environment. There is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race or regional conflicts or continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of due respect for nature. Humankind's failure to relate to nature, failure to relate to its ecosystem with respect, is clearly reflected in the ongoing environmental crisis, which our newspapers daily speak of. The environmental crisis has been on the increase. When I speak of environmental crisis has been on

the increase. When I speak of environmental problems I refer to those problems that arise from human dealings with the natural world and its ecosystem. Human beings cannot help using and modifying the natural world, since we depend on nature for our food, clothing and shelter, for the water we drink and the air we breathe and so on, The unintended, often careless human actions are now creating problems like global warming, the extinction of multitudes of species of flora and fauna, the pollution of water sources are problems that raise profound issues regarding how we should live our lives and organize our societies, that were never encountered by previous generations (Attifield, 2003, p.1)

As we look into our society's future, we you and I - must avoid living only for today attitude

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by plundering the nature for our own convenience alone without thinking of tomorrow. We cannot risk our health or that of our grandchildren by the destruction of our planet's resources. Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher and theologian, has advanced the philosophy of relationship in his book "I and Thou" (1929). In this paper I like to develop an environmental ethics based on his philosophy of dialogical relationship between man and nature. At present I am teaching ethics and I would like to know more about the ethics of environment, and how should we take care of it. I would like to use Martin Buber's thought of I-Thou relationship in finding a solution to the problem of environment. In my opinion a complete environment ethic can be constructed using the philosophy of Buber.

## Research Question

As mentioned in the introduction to day the destruction of environment is taking place at a faster rate than before, both in Thailand and the world at large. How can we slow down perhaps even prevent the destruction of environment?

## Research Thesis

The practice of the Buberian philosophy I thou dialogical relationship between man and nature will prevent the destruction of the environment.

## Objective

- To Understand the present environmental crisis.

- To describe the Buberian Philosophy of I-Thou Relationship.

- To develop an Environmental Ethic based on Buberian philosophy.

## Limitations

This paper limits itself to Buber's philosophy in relation to environmental ethics.

### Section 1 Environmental Crisis

#### 1.1 The Ecology crisis

Ecology is the scientific theory that speaks of the interrelationship or the interdependence that exist between the different elements in nature. The harmonious interrelationship between the different parts is called the ecosystem. A healthy ecosystem guarantees a healthy environment. Environmental crisis results from the destruction of this interrelationship.

One of the first sins against nature is the indiscriminate application of the advances made in science and technology. Many recent discoveries have brought undeniable benefits to human community. This demonstrates in Buber's words the "nobility of the human vocation to participate responsibly in God's creative action in the world." Unfortunately the application of these discoveries in the fields of industry and agriculture has produced harmful long-term effects. These have led to the painful realization that we cannot interfere with the ecosystem without paying attention to the consequences of such interference particularly to our well-being and that of the future generations. The gradual

depletion of the ozone layer and the related “greenhouse effect” has now reached crisis proportions as a consequence of industrial growth. Massive urban concentrations, vastly increased energy needs, industrial waste, the burning of fossil fuels, unrestricted deforestation, the use of certain types of herbicides, coolants and propellants are known to harm our atmosphere and environment. The resulting meteorological and atmospherically changes range from damage to health to the possible future submersion of low-lying lands under water. While in some cases, the damage has already been done that may well be irreversible while in many other cases it can still be halted. It is necessary, however, that the entire human community of individuals, state and international bodies should take seriously the responsibility to protect the environment. The most profound and serious indication of the moral implication underlying these ecological problems is the lack of respect for life, that is evident in many patterns of environmental pollution. Often, the personal interests take priority over concern for the dignity of workers and economic interests over the good of individuals and even peoples. In some cases, pollution or environmental destruction is the result of an unnatural and reductionistic vision of the universe that at times leads to genuine contempt for man. On another level. Delicate ecological balances are so upset by the uncontrolled destruction of animal and plant life or by reckless exploitation of natural resources. It should be pointed out that all of these, even if carried out in

the name of progress of progress and well-being, is ultimately to mankind’s disadvantage. Finally, we can only look with deep concern at the enormous possibilities of biological research and the possible biological disturbance that could result from indiscriminate genetic manipulation and from the unscrupulous development of new forms of plant and animal life, to say nothing of unacceptable experimentation concerning the origins of human life itself. It is evident to all that handling the delicate the delicate genetic pool and the indifference to fundamental ethical norms in regard or their rejection, would lead mankind to the very threshold of self-destruction

### **1.2 Environmental Challenges**

In the twenty-first century, human beings are facing environmental challenges unprecedented in the history of our planet largely through human activity. Life on Earth is faced with the great mass extinctions of different species of flora and fauna since the end of the dinosaur age, 65 million years ago. Some estimates suggest more than 100 species are becoming extinct every day and that this rate could double or triple within the next few decades (Jardins, 2001 p.38). The natural resources that sustain life on this planet, air, water, and soil are being polluted or depleted at alarming rates. Human population growth is increasing exponentially. In 1999, world population reached 6 billion. In fact it was not until 1804 that world population first reached one billion, the most recent one billion increases took just

twelve years. Though the rate of population increase is slowing somewhat, as people are realizing the situation. Still estimates are that it may take 10 years to add another 1 billion people. The prospects for continued degradation and depletion of natural resources multiply with this population growth. Toxic wastes that will plague future generations continue to accumulate worldwide. The worldwide. The worldwide. The world's wilderness areas, its forests, wetlands, mountains, and grasslands are being developed, paved, drained, burned, and overgrazed out of existence. With destruction of the ozone layer the potential threat the "greenhouse effect" will lead to global warming, as a result the very atmosphere and climate of the planet will be changed. Environmental crisis arise from human dealings with the natural world and its systems. Human beings cannot help but use nature like wood for shelter, water to drink and air to breathe and so on. Most often unintentional. Human actions are creating problems like global warming and the extinction of multitudes of species. These problems raise profound issues about how we should live our lives and organize our societies as mentioned earlier. It is clear that the environmental crisis has to be solved. It is estimated that at least fifty that at least fifty thousand species go extinct each year, and three fourths of the world's bird and a quarter of the world's mammalian species face extinction (Flannin, p13). Worse, this rate of extinction could be accelerated by rapid climate change. This climate change is being accelerated by increase of carbon

dioxide levels in the atmosphere, an increase to which humankind has significantly contributed to, especially by the industrial burning of fossil fuels and the rapid destruction of tropical rainforest (Danies, 1998, p.19). The expansion of human settlements and agriculture has led to the massive destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems such as tropical and temperate rainforests, freshwater lakes and streams, coral reefs and coastal mangroves (Flannin, 1997). In the early 1970s, scientists discovered an area in the Gulf of Mexico, offshore from Mississippi delta, was suffering from a condition called "hypoxia". Hypoxia occurs in a body of water when dissolved oxygen levels are too low to sustain marine life. This condition occurs when too many nutrients, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, trigger excessive algae growth resulting in decreased sunlight, loss of aquatic vegetation and ultimately, a significant decrease in dissolved oxygen. Few aquatic species can survive under this condition.

### **1.3 Environment in the Thailand.**

In addition to abruptly halting Thailand's decade long economic boom, the 1977 financial crisis that swept across Asia, focused attention on the negative environmental effects of Thailand's rapid industrialization. While Thailand, as one of the "East Asian tigers," was lauded for its strong economic growth during the expansion years, it also suffered from increased levels of industrial wastewater, dramatic rise in domestic sewage and hazardous waters, and severe degradation of its water and coastal resources. Increased levels of air

and water pollution and the loss of natural habitats - primarily due to deforestation were some of the most visible negative environmental consequences of Thailand's unrestrained growth. As Thailand's economy continues to recover from 1997 financial crisis, more is being focused on the country's environmental problems. The country's return to economic growth has brought with it, renewed threats to Thailand's environment, but there is increased awareness that Thailand's economic development must take into account, the stronger commitment to environmental protection.

1.3.1 Air and marine Pollution

1.3.2 Energy and car Carbon Intensity

## **Section 2 Buberian Philosophy of I -Thou Relationship**

### **2.1 Buber's Life and Works**

Martin Mordoch Buber was born on February 8, 1878 in Vienna Following the breakdown of his parent's marriage; he went to live with his grand parents. At the age 14 he went back to live with his father and his new wife. By this time he was reading Kant and Nietzsche. Thereafter he went to study in Vienna, Leipzig, Berlin and Zurich under great teachers like Simmel and Dilthey. In Vienna he became involved in Zionism and became the editor of *Die Welt*. Around this time he married to Paula Winker. In 1903 Martin Buber joined Hasidic movement and began to engage in the religiousness of Judaism that emphasized that man is made in

the image of God. From 1916 to 1924 he edited *Der Jude*, an influential journal while working. On his path-breaking book "I-Thou" which he published in 1923. His literary works can be placed into three groups; writings on Hasidism, on Biblical studies and finally his philosophical writings. Some of his other important works are; "The Eclipse of God" (1952) considers the relation between religion and philosophy, "Paths of Utopia" (1949) deals with social theories, "Pointing the Way" (1956) considers various philosophical themes and "Knowledge of Man" (1956) gives a more systematic approach to man's knowledge and "Between Man and Man" (1961) a commentary on I and Thou.

### **2.2 I-It and I-Thou: Two levels of relationships**

Buber makes a distinction between types of relationships by noting that humans can treat the "other" not as selves but as mere things. Accordingly we often treat others only as objects -as means to an end. We even consider one's self as an object, an It. If we see the world only through the eyes of "It relationship" then we miss much of that which "is" This relationship Buber calls I-It relationship. In I-It where all things are as just "things." They do not respond to our perception, nor do they change by our perception. We experience beings as objects - as It. Even if we distinguish between the outer and the inner experiences, they do not add anything significant or different to them. Buber claim that even if a distinction between those experiences that are open and those that are secret

does not add anything to their existence. Fundamentally we still experience the other as It. There is no relation between observer and observed - no connection between except that of spatial relationship. The experience is totally in the observer and not in what is observed. It is just a part our awareness of the of the world. But in "I-Thou relationship we reach a new level of awareness where we approach the other as a Thou - as a relational being. The Thou is changed by my awareness of it and it responds to my awareness - thus establishes a relation between I and Thou. Buber notes that we can become aware of the Thou in three ways:

a) the objects in nature where we become aware of them as "Thou" even if they can respond to us or not, depending on their own awareness of our Thou-ness This is the bare minimum awareness of Thou. When we attempt to communicate with them (which we would never do with an object), we never know if they understand us as a Thou.

b) the humans, this is the most common experience of another as "Thou". Though we can experience other persons as objects, we only know them as complete beings when we are aware of them as another "Thou" - a being with whom we can enter into a relationship. When we address the I-Thou relationship with the other, and is fully realized in our conversations.

c) the spiritual beings, where we come close to Mysticism in our relationship. Buber says here the "relation is clouded, yet it discloses itself,

without the use speech, yet begets it." In the end, we cannot speak of the Thou as separate entity and undeniable near to us, nay in us.

Buber's life-long concern was to define human person-hood and person-hood and personal experience. The basic foundation of Buber's philosophy of relationships is the radical distinction between two modes of relationships: "I-It" and "I - Thou" (Buber, 1923) He uses the term I-It to denote impersonal relationships, and I-Thou to denote personal relationships. In primitive human language, according to Buber words are not isolated but combined. There are two kinds of primary words of relationship of the I-Thou and the of I-It. He makes the distinction between the two terms that express man's relationships that make us different from other beings in the world. Thou for Buber in its ultimate meaning addressed to "God" and expresses man's relationship with Him. Thus the primary word Thou does not signify things or person and their relationships but God. These words do not describe something that exists independently by themselves but being spoken, they bring into existence a relationship. Human person just is not He or She. We neither can experience a Thou in him or her. The Thou is nothing by itself yet we can know of Thou in the process of relationship. The phrase Buber frequently used is "all real living is meeting" It can be said that man's existence is relationship, between man and the universe, man and man that find its fullness in the Eternal Thou.

Maurice Friedman (1987) explains that the Thou of I-Thou is not limited to men, but it includes animals, trees, objects of nature and God. I-It is the primary word of experiencing and using. It takes place within a man and not between him and the world. Hence it is entirely subjective and lacking in mutuality. Whether in knowing, feeling, or acting, it is the typical subject relationship. (The Knowledge of Man, 1965, p12)

In order to understand the personal I-Thou relationship and the difference between I-Thou and I-It relationship further clarification is needed. The I of primary word I-Thou is different I from that of the primary word I-It. The I of the primary word I-It makes its appearance as individuality and becomes conscious of it as subject of experiencing and using. The I of the primary word I-Thou makes its subjectivity without a dependent genitive, meaning it does not possess. Individuality makes its appearance by being differentiated from other individualities. A person makes his appearance by entering into

Relation with other's differentiation is to experience and to use, and the aim of this is "life", that is a dying of the self that lasts the span of a man's life. The aim of relations is relation's own being, that is contact with the Thou, that is of eternal Thou (I and Thou, pp.62-63).

The personal relationship is the relationship between I-Thou, not the I-It relationship. Relation, for Buber, is mutual. My Thou affects it (I and Thou, p.15). The fuller its sharing the more real it becomes (p.63). A person becomes conscious

of himself when he is sharing in being, co-existing. There is no distinction between being and being when I-Thou is realized. Buber explains more about sharing the being. In sharing the person becomes conscious of himself as sharing in being, as co-existing, and thus as being. Individuality becomes conscious of himself as sharing in being, as co-existing, and thus as being such-and-such and nothing else. The person says, "I am" the individual says, "such-and-such". Know thyself means for the person to "know thyself to have being", then individuality means to "know the particular kind of being" that I am. Individuality in differentiating itself from others is rendered remote from true being... individuality neither shares in nor obtains any reality. It differentiates itself from the other, and seeks through experiencing and using to appropriate as much of it as it can (pp.63-64).

Buber maintains further that the Thou meets man through grace. However, it is not found by seeking, but by speaking of the primary word (p.11). As it has been known, speaking of the primary word means speaking of I-Thou. In this moment, man can see relationship between man and man that leads to eternal life, God himself.

Consider a human relationship that has progressed to a deep level of understanding. This relationship will look like each of the persons in it are treating each other as objects, but to the persons in the relationship, they are aware of the other as a Thou—a being apart from the I, yet also a part of the I. It is a pity that quite a few

relationship, are nothing of the sort for each of the person experiences the other as an object, as an It rather than as a Thou. These are the relationships which remain static and which end in disaster. We are unsatisfied with such “relationship” because we feel they are missing something. We are correct they are missing the very thing that defines them as relationships - a Thou. A true relationship with the Thou is a dynamic, growing, creative, changing awareness. It is a relationship built on choice - the Thou can “step up to meet me”, but I must choose to reciprocate - or the relationship fails. If I go out looking for a relationship by looking for an object, then I will never find that which I seek.

### **Section 3. I-Thou Relationship and Ethics of Environment**

#### **3.1 Ethics of Environment**

Environmental ethics is a systematic account of the moral relationship between human beings and their natural environment. Environmental ethics assumes that moral norms govern human behavior toward the natural world. A theory of environmental ethics then must explain what these norms are and to whom or to what the human owe their responsibilities and show that these responsibilities are justified. Different theories of environmental ethics offer differing answers to the above questions. A brief overview of some of these ethical theories will be in place here. Some philosophers argue that our responsibilities to the natural environment are only indirect, namely to preserve its resources,

best understood in terms of the responsibilities towards other humans. Anthropocentric (human centered) ethics holds that only human beings have values. Thus, although we may be said to have responsibilities regarding the natural world, we do not have direct responsibilities to it.

A word of caution is in order at this point. It is fair to say that many philosophers think of ethics as providing the same general type of practical guidance as does science and technology. Many believe that the role of ethics is to provide a general principle or theory that can be applied in specific cases from which we can deduce specific practical conclusions. Thus, for example, an ethical principle might direct us to act so as to maximize the overall happiness. Ethical behavior, therefore, involves determining which of two acts, A or B, will in fact maximize overall happiness. With this done, we can then deduce the ethics is capable of offering the same type of answers, including environmental issues. But the world is not as simple as we would like it to be. In fact Ethical theory refers to any attempt to provide systematic answers to the philosophical questions raised either by way of descriptive and normative approaches. These questions are raised from an individual or societal or public policy point of view Individual moral questions would include: What should I do? What kind of person should I be? What do I value? How should I live? While questions of social philosophy or public policy point of view include: What type of society is the best? What policies should we follow as a group? What social

arrangements and practices will best protect and promote individual well-being? What should be done when individuals disagree questions that affect both individual and social morality. Thus in this broad sense, an ethical theory would include philosophical analysis of moral, political, economic, legal, and social questions?

### **The History of Ethics.**

The formal study of ethics in western philosophy, in a serious and analytical sense began with the early Greeks, and later the Romans. Important Greek ethicists include the sophists and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who developed ethical naturalism. The study of ethics was further developed by Epicurus and the epicurean movement, and by Zeno and the Stoics. Although not developed in a formal and analytical sense, the subject of ethics was of great concern to the Hindu people in ancient India. For the first time in world history, they described the highest ethical standards called "absolute ethics". In Europe the formal study of ethics stagnated until the Middle Ages. It was in the Middle Ages St. Thomas and medieval philosopher began to debate on ethics based on natural law and "divine law". Modern Western ethical philosophy began with the works of great philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, Immanuel Kant and others. The Utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham, William Godwin and John Stuart Mill followed. Arthur Schopenhauer must be mentioned here because of his "Preisschrift uber Grundlageder" concept of morality. He was the first European philosopher to start out from the ethical

achievements of Ancient India. The study of analytic ethics came with G.E. Moore and W.D. Ross, followed by the emotivists like C.L. Stevenson and A.J. Ayer and others. Jean-Paul Sartre developed the existentialist approach. Some modern philosophers who have done serious philosophical writing on ethics include Korsgaard, Charles Hartshorne and to an extent Ayn Rand. Ethical theories are important since some commentators claim that these theories, embedded as they are in common ways of thinking, have been responsible for some of the environmental problems we face today. That is the practice of environmental ethics sometimes challenged the very theories of ethics, the philosophers have been busy defending. Some argue that these theories are part of problem, and that we have been misled by these theories. Thus, an important part of environmental ethics should consist in an examination of philosophical theories about ethics. In this way, environmental ethics not only benefits from traditional ethical theories but also contribute to the development of this branch of philosophy.

### **3.2.1 The Utilitarian Ethics**

The classical statements of this tradition are found in the writings of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century, yet utilitarianism continues to be an influential theory today. Utilitarian reasoning is especially influential in the areas of economics, public policy, and government regulations. This means that utilitarianism has played

a significant role in environmental policy. In general terms, utilitarianism tells us to maximize the overall good or to produce greatest good for the greatest number of people. Thus the utilitarian theory rests on two elements: an account of the good and a rule for judging all acts and decisions in terms of that good and a rule for judging all acts and decisions in terms of that good. The rule tells us to look to the consequences of any particular act and judge the ethical status of that act in terms of those consequences. If the act tends to maximize good consequences, it is an ethically right act and if it does not then the act is ethically wrong.

### 3.2.2. Passmore

Western philosophical and religious traditions encourage viewing human beings as superior to all others in nature and, therefore justify controlling and dominating nature for their own use. While other theories sees man as a part of nature and as such must respect nature. Besides man is a highly evolved being has responsibility to care and protect nature. In a very real sense, the tension between these two developments of mainstream western philosophy creates the biggest challenge to traditional ethical theories. Can the dominant ethical tradition provide the resources to resolve environmental controversies? A good example of this ambiguity appears in one of the first philosophical examination of environmental issues done by John Passmore in his book *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (1974). He writes that the first role of the philosopher is to

dispose of unhelpful, unreasonable, or dangerous alternatives. Then the philosopher places all views that deal with mysticism, the 'nature-as-sacred' v, and animal rights among the 'rubbish' for they deny man any moral relationship with nature. In these theories man's position in nature is to be a "despot" who rules over nature with arrogance and hubris and treats nature as mere wax to be molded in whatever manner he desire. Yet Passmore believes that the western tradition contains some seeds for an ethically appropriate relationship with nature. There we do find different arguments why it is wrong to torture and kill animals for cosmetic research or for reasons of gourmet tastes, We also find many anthropocentric reasons to defend the position that we have ethical duties toward animals, in spite of the fact that people own animals and, thus, have property rights over them. Some do care about animals and thus, would be affected by the mistreatment of them. Further, mistreating animals can make man callous and insensitive to suffering, In the short people do value animals for a variety of reasons. But do humans owe any moral consideration directly to the animals themselves? Do animals have moral standing? Does man has moral connection with environment to receive close philosophical attention? These are questions need to be answered.

### 3.2.3 Biocentric Ethics and the Inherent Value of Life

The biocentrism ethical approach sees all living being; simply by virtue of being alive, have

moral standing. They focus their attention on the value of all living things but questions whether the value of life is moral in nature in the sense of full moral standing or a different or perhaps still anthropocentric meaning of value. Biocentrism technicians also face the challenge arising from a more ecological point of view namely the interdependency of the entire nature. It is not very clear whether the species or ecosystems can be incorporated into the biocentric theory since neither is alive in any straightforward sense. According to many environmentalists, such ecological wholes should be the primary focus of environments ethics.

#### **3.2.4 The Land Ethic**

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) is the single most influential figure in the development of an economic environmental ethics. The science of ecology developed during his lifetime, and was the first person to call for a radical rethinking of ethics in light of this new science. The Land Ethics, which he developed, is an ecological understanding of land that rebuts the Lockean view of land as property. He said that we could no longer treat land as a mere object, a dead matter that can be used and shaped in any way that human's desire. Land should be viewed as a living organism that can be healthy or unhealthy, injured or killed. "Land, then, is not merely soil; it is a foundation of energy flowing a circuit of soils, plants, and animals." Leopold writes. Thus, Leopold opens the "Land Ethic" by suggesting the sort of moral extensions presented in ethics and tells

us that land ethics simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively, the land. Although "we have no land ethic yet, we have at least drawn nearer to the point of admitting that the bridges should continue as a matter of biotic right (Botkin, 1940, p.3) Botkin's suggestion seems to be that we should extend moral consideration, what he termed "biotic right" to birds, soils, waters, plants, and animals.

#### **3.3 Relationship between Self and Nature.**

Buber's philosophy dialogue studies the relationship that exist between the self and the other. The other is being not identical with the self. In "Replies to My Crisis", Buber states: "I proceed from a simple real situation: two men are engrossed in a genuine dialogue. I want to appraise the face of this situation. It turns out that customary categories do not suffice for it. I mark first the physical phenomena of speaking and gesturing men, second the "psychic" phenomena of the other as of it, what goes on "in them"? But the meaningful dialogue itself that proceeds between the two men and into which the acoustic and optical events fit, the dialogue that arises out of the souls and is reflected in them, this remains unregistered. What is its nature, what is its place? (Buber 1967, pp706-707)

Buber's philosophy of dialogue between the I-Thou can be viewed as an account of the relationship that is between the self and the other in terms of the I-It and I-Thou relationships. His philosophy of environment views the self as

a hermeneutic agent, for the type of relationship that can hold between the self and the other depends on how the self interprets the other. If the self interprets the other as an It, then the relationship between the self and the other will be an I-It relationship but if the self interprets the other as a Thou, then the relationship between the self and the other will be an I-Thou relationship. In "Distance and Relation" Buber analyzes this hermeneutic act in terms of a "twofold event" consisting of the "primal setting at a distance" and "entering into a relation" (Friedman, 1965, p.60). The "primal setting at a distance" involves the self setting itself apart from the being which is not the self where the self identifies the other as the other. Identifying the other as the other allows the self to enter into a relation with it (p 54). This movement opens the possibility of a relationship with the other either as an I-It or I-Thou. For the I-It and the I-Thou relationships hence come into being when the self interprets the other either as an It or a Thou. The self is in I-It attitude when it interprets the other as an It, the self in the I-Thou attitude when it interprets the other as a Thou. The I-It and the I-Thou hence correspond to the I-It and the I-Thou attitudes of the self. When the self is in the I-It attitudes, it is in the I-It relationship with the other; when the self is in the I-Thou attitude, it is in the I-Thou relationship with the other (Kaufman 1999, p.53). What should be noted here is that whether the self and the other are in the I-It or the I-Thou relationship depends on the self and not the other (Berry, 1985, p.36).

I shall now examine how the relationship between self and nature can be developed from Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue. This is important since Buber's philosophy of dialogue needs to account for the relationship between self and nature, if it is to be a foundation for an environmental ethics. I earlier defend nature as consisting of both living and nonliving natural entities. In his understanding of the spheres of relation, Buber states that in the "spheres of beings", the self is in relation with Nature - nature (non humans) humans, and spiritual beings (Buber, 1929 pp. 56-57). Buber's account of thresholds of mutuality provides a more elaborate classification of the types of beings the self can be in relation with. The realm of plants and nonliving natural entities, which Buber describes as "the huge sphere that reaches from the stones to the stars" (Buber 1929. P. 173) is classified as the pre-threshold of mutuality, since entities in this realm cannot respond to the self. Animals are classified as the threshold of mutuality since they have the ability to respond to the self's presence. (p.172.). Buber does not classify animals as being beyond the threshold of mutuality as they lack only the capacity for language necessary for them to respond to human self's address to them as Thou by dressing the human self as Thou. Of the spheres of Nature, Buber states that here the relation vibrates in the dark and remains much below language sphere. The creatures stir across from us, but they are unable to come to us, and the Thou we say to them stick to the threshold of

language. (pp. 56-56)

Though animals are below the “threshold of language”, yet they can provide “an often astonishing active response” to the self and “can both turn toward another being and contemplate objects”. But they “are not twofold” like man- the two-fondness of the basic words I-Thou and I-It is alien to them” (pp.56-57) hence the ability of animals respond to the self’s address as Thou and their inability to correspondingly to address the self as Thou is the reason why Buber classifies animals as beings on the threshold of mutuality and not above it. Therefore the sphere of Nature, consisting of nonliving natural entities, plants, and animals, extends from the pre-threshold to the threshold of mutuality. The spheres of humans and spiritual beings or aesthetic forms are classified as the over-threshold of mutuality. (pp.172-173). I shall not be touching on this point in this short paper. The self can also relate to Nature in the I-It attitude. As shown when the self relates to Nature in the I-Thou attitude, the self recognizes that natural entities possess possibilities of their own beyond those which man can impose on it by the self. In contrast, when the self relates to nature in the I-It attitude it fails to Recognize that natural entities do possess their own possibilities beyond those that are imposed by the self, and recognizes only those possibilities that are imposed by the self.

### **3.4 The I-It Relation and Environmen-tal Ethics**

Martin Buber argues that the industrial revolution has contributed a dual crisis among the humans. First, the expansion of bourgeois society, a result of which individuals has no close relationships with one another. The new human communities do not have the sense of “being at home in world” which the traditional small communities in which individuals had with one another. New communitiessuch as clubs and trade unions could not bring about the relationship that the traditional small communities provided. Individuals hence suffer alienation in the modern industrial world ( pp.157-158). Besides the rise of new machine technology due to the industrial revolution has led to what Buber describes as the modern crisis of “man’s lagging behind his work“. In the past, humankind was fully in control of its artifacts and technologies. The era ushered in by the industrial revolution saw a situation in which. Man is no longer able to master the world that he himself brought about. It is becoming stronger than he is, it is winning free of him. It confronts him in almost elemental independence, and he no longer knows the word which would subdue and render harmless the golem he has created man faced the terrible fact that he was the father of demons whose master he could not become (p.158).

In fact the humankind’s modern artifacts and technologies are described in diabolical terms, as seen in his use of metaphors like the golem

and the demon. The metaphor of the golem is especially apt name for technology created by human hands.

### **3.5 The I-Thou relation and Environmental Ethics**

Buber's principle insight is that the human individual is a "relational being" and his life is fully realized only when the self establishes itself in genuine relationship with the other. Hence Buber describes the I-Thou relationship as "the cradle of actual life" (p.60). The self that has only I-It relationships with others is "not human". (p.85) AS argued, when the self-moves in the I-Thou relationship with Nature, the self is transformed. Its I-It attitude has been replaced by the I-Thou attitude, but more importantly this self is transformation is a transformation of the status of the self as a relational being. When the self is in the I-It relationship with Nature, the self is only in relation to itself, and hence its potential as a relational being is less realized than it would it would have been, had it been in the I-Thou relationship with Nature. If it can show that the self has reason to engage in the I-Thou relationship with Nature, where the self-treats Nature with respect, then Buber's philosophy of relationship would have met the criterion for being a foundation for environmental ethics namely the philosophy of dialogue form as the foundation for environmental ethics.

When the self relates to Nature in the I-Thou mode, the self-interprets Nature as having possibilities of its own beyond those imposed

by the self. Self therefore cannot treat Nature solely as a means but having possibilities of its own. Hence when the self relates to Nature in the I-Thou mode, the self recognizes Nature as an end-in-itself. I have show earlier that Buber's philosophy of relationship does explain how of the environmental crisis. Now, besides the criteria for it to be a foundation for environmental ethics.

The Buberian approach emphasizes that humankind should engage in the I-Thou relationship of respect with nature and in the process the self of the Buberian approach is ennobled. This approach argues that we should protect and assist Nature because of its intrinsic value. Even if the self of the Buberian approach does not know whether Nature has possibilities or not, it would still continue to treat nature as end in itself due to its intrinsic value. In the Buberian approach. The self relates to Nature in the I-Thou mode regardless of whether the natural entity being related is an individual [like a tree] or a collective (like an ecosystem). The Buberian self-addresses nature as the Thou because of its intrinsic value.

The Buberian approach to environmental ethics closely linked with anthropology. The anthropological approach consists of environmental ethical philosophies. Such as deep ecology that are primarily concerned with what is being human or what being human ought to be. The Buberian approach belongs to this approach. As it argues that the human being is a relational being, and that the self should relate to Nature with respect that

will enhance the realization of the human potential. Philosophies within the anthropological approach argue that humankind will fall into a relationship of respect with Nature if self perceives Nature to possess possibilities of its owns, The Buberian approach fulfills this task by means of the I-Thou Relationship. The self's being in the I-Thou relationship with Nature will bring it into a relationship of respect of Nature. Buberian approach can also be linked with the Self-realization approach, which is the dominant version of deep ecology. However, the Buberian approach has a significant advantage over the Self-realization approach since the Buberian approach does not involve in the Problematic concept of self-transformation. It is easier for them to achieve the Buberian self-transformation as this simply involves the self's switching from its I-It attitude to the I-Thou attitude

#### Conclusion Findings and Conclusion

Buber's life concern is based on inter-human and inters nature relationship. The relationship can be categorized as follows: It consists of relationship between man and world, the relationship between man and man and the relationship between man and God. According to Martin Buber, there are two modes of relationships that of It and that of Thou. The word of It is the world of things, whereas the second is the world of relationships. To understand their relationship is to meet each other, because "all real living is meeting". The I-Thou relationship must be always understood in terms of the concrete

situation of life-reality.

However, man can treat others as things as the world of It. It is in confirming existence of the other's being. Man affirms his own being. In meeting the other, the relationship comes in being. If man meets the other, in this relationship he experiences the relationship between him and God. Thus in relationship man will realize the existence of others as well as his own existence. As human beings, we cannot separate ourselves from the others. Relationship is to respect the intrinsic value of any reality and enter into relationship with it. Which this paper is all about.

In our days human rights and values are very much emphasized. If the message of Martin Buber is to be realized, then the writer considers that man will not harm not harm another man, rather man will simultaneously respects each other. We cannot attain peace through Weapons but through dialogue with your partner, which begins in respecting him as yourself. This will provide sustainable peace.

A philosophy, which can serve as a foundation for environmental ethics is the philosophy dialogue of Martin Buber His Philosophy is based on the richness of the self that respects the various possibilities exist in nature even though he does not fully understand these possibilities in its completeness. This enables man to enter into a relationship with nature through the dialogue of I-Thou. This in turn brings out his very nature as a relational being and hence fulfills his nature as a human being. In an environmental ethics

based on relationship between man and nature beings with deep with deep respect for one another where the self address nature as a Thou. For all real living is meeting the other with respect. This excludes the self from treating Nature as a standing reserve or a mere means or as an It.

Since Buber's philosophy can explain how the environmental crisis arose, and can also explain how humankind can be in a relationship of respect with Nature, the Buberian approach to environmental ethics is a meaningful approach that will preserve ecosystem. All real living is meeting.

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