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Environmental Discourse and Policy Alternative

Teresa Kwiatkowska*

ABSTRACT _____

Environmental ethics is concerned with describing the values carried by the non-human world and prescribing an appropriate ethical response to ensure conservation and restoration of those values. As such, it has to provide information crucial for making environmental decisions. Despite the various and visible accomplishments in regard to biological diversity at the world scale-level, the countries that harbor the greatest diversity have not been able to slow present trends of environmental degradation. An effective environmental policy requires more than shifts of consciousness from a human oriented to a nature- oriented perspective. Likewise, it demands a strategy that goes beyond economic valuation.

Key words: Environmental ethics, public policy, deforestation, financial markets.

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Discurso ambientalista y política alternativa

RESUMEN

La ética ambiental pretende definir valores del mundo vivo no humano e indicar las respuestas morales relevantes para la conservación y restauración de estos valores. Por lo tanto, tiene que aportar la información crucial para la toma de decisiones ambientales. Sin embargo, a pesar de muchos logros en la conservación de la riqueza biológica a nivel mundial, los países que aguardan la mayor diversidad no han sido capaces de frenar su deterioro. Una política ambiental efectiva requiere más que cambios de la conciencia desde una orientación antropocéntrica a una orientada hacia la naturaleza. Igualmente, requiere una estrategia que va más allá de la evaluación económica.

Palabras clave: Ética ambiental, políticas públicas, deforestación, mercados financieros.

Introduction

By the middle of the XXI century world population will most likely increase by some 3.68 billion. Almost all this growth will be in the developing world. Of increasing concern are problems such as overpopulation, mass migration, and environmental degradation, together with patterns of increasing poverty. As resources become limited and the human population continues to grow, there will be increasing pressure on natural areas to be used for extracting timber, harvesting wildlife, and mining minerals.

The praiseworthy solution recommended by United Nations 2005 Millennium Project (Environment and human well-being: a practical strategy) falls into line with the Agenda 21 accorded in Rio in 1992. The proposed practical steps that governments and in-

ternational agencies can undertake to device policies of development and of conservation in which local people can participate leave many questions unanswered. One of the key difficulties is the "forest management for protection and sustainable production" (UN Millennium Project, 2005:30) above all in developing countries that harbor tropical rain forest. The other is mitigation of global climate change by 'stabilizing greenhouse gasses'. The Kyoto Protocol, the most popular agenda for reducing pollution by trading carbon quotas, has been raising doubts about its fair and efficient global application. It seems that modern environmental policy suffers from several significant weaknesses, and is not capable of dealing with the world's most serious environmental problems.

Those who address global environmental problems regularly stress the im-

portance of values in motivating people to assume the responsibility and they call for a new, environmental ethics. People need a new orienting value framework if only to order and interpret the huge quantities of information they are exposed to, as these now mix social and environmental problems. Any resolution of environmental issues will remain firmly moral and political. Such normative environmental policy points toward developing a realistic vision of what an environmentally-just society should look like and on what values and norms it should be based. This paper discusses ethical values that are (or might be) directly or indirectly involved in environmental decision-making, together with the alternative approach to the future of environmental planning.

I. Screening ethics

As the things are, theories are not able to encourage the many to nobility and goodness.

Aristotle

Environmental ethics is concerned with describing the values carried by the non-human world and prescribing an appropriate ethical response to ensure conservation and restoration of those values. It is mostly concerned with the root causes, the variant forms, the threatening manifestations of environmental and social problems. They range from the extinction of species, ecosystems fragmentation and degradation, water and air pollution, and soil erosion to overpopulation, autono-

mous technology, economic inequality and justice.

Although all forms of ethics can raise these issues, one thing is different about environmental ethics; it wants to expand moral consideration to animals, plants, to species, even to ecosystems and the Earth therefore calling for a re-evaluation of human-nature relationship. Like all modern moral thinking, environmental ethics is often analyzed at two levels: normative and theoretical.

The first level includes practical questions about what is the right thing to do in specific concrete circumstances. Here ethics points toward a set of rules to be recommended on empirical grounds, mainly regarding the resulting "good consequences". When applied, environmental ethics extends the arguments about values to environmental policy and regulations. The second level addresses questions about the nature of ethical value and identifies an imperative or moral principle of universal character.

It is normative ethics that takes us into a territory where we are reminded that the strength of an ethical idea lies in its applications, in how it plays out. Environmental ethics reveals various perspectives regarding its theoretical bases and conceptual foundations. In an effort to advance the theory building different principles are used, which is particularly challenging since it expands moral consideration beyond human race. One essential ethical position holds that the basis of our moral obligations to the natural world (plants, animals, ecosystems and sometimes nonliving objects) are found in its significance to the physical,

intellectual and spiritual well-being of humans.

This anthropocentric vision assumes that people, because of their moral interactions or integrity, ought to behave in a certain way toward non-human beings, though their behavior is not strictly owned to the qualities of the natural world. The others more controversial and nature-oriented positions try to explain this moral obligation based on the value natural things possess by themselves. Until now there is no agreement if any living organism or system, besides human beings, can be a bearer of intrinsic value. Although many accept that nature might carry value, independent of human species, they yet assume that only humans are ultimate arbiters of moral worth.

Environmental ethics has been trying to bring these two regions of human concern closer than is customary in traditional moral philosophy. In spite of the various endeavors, it has come up with a rather extensive list of ecological or moral imperatives. This conception has been encouraged by a view of morality analogous to a set of laws in the legal sense, a list of decrees permitting and prohibiting certain actions, with penalties attached.

A person is encouraged to passively absorb the moral prescriptions, and act on them. There is little or no attempt to relate them to the concrete context. However, such a public applied ethics cannot be grounded solely in the rational expertise of critical philosophical analysis. Any worthwhile envi-

ronmental ethics has an obligation to provide information crucial for making ethical decisions that concern not just animals, plants, species, or ecosystems, but also humans in their political and commercial worlds.

2. Private morality and public policy

We begin by explaining the concept of morality. How can we morally condemn certain acts of injury to plants, animals or ecosystems unless we are clear on what constitutes morality? Here we remark that moral rules exceed legal norms. Countless human actions may be rejected or encouraged but they cannot be part of any legal system. A moral rule such as Aldo Leopold's famous pronouncement: "a thing is right when it preserves the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community; it is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Leopold, 1966, 1949:262), is a recommendation to act in a certain way.

This recommendation may be established by experience (science comes in handy) which has been shown to promote personal, social and natural well being better than others. "Well being" can only imply something empirical like self-development, happiness, a more pleasant life, an aesthetically pleasing environment, spiritual enjoyment, a sympathetic connection with other living things, and so on. Morality, as Aristotle indicates, is strictly a personal affair. It is a matter of each person's independent judgments.

We do certain things and take certain actions because we are obliged to our personal values and beliefs. Our decision draws upon the perpetual problem of the meaning of life. If the person is able to put aside any factual consideration to be guided by reasons that concern the way life is lived, then his/her decision will be a moral one. Ludwig Wittgenstein once said: "Only from the consciousness of the uniqueness of my life arise religion, science, and art" (Wittgenstein, 1979: 79e). We can equally apply his thought to morality: The way we act depends on what life we would like to live.

It means that no one can speak or prescribe for others what morally good decision is. And neither does the moral 'I must' have anything to do with concrete facts like deforestation or biodiversity loss. The moral worth of an action does not refer to our wishes, wants, ends or goals. It is not to be assessed through consequences, for they cannot be unconditionally good in themselves. Kantian sense of morality requires that we do the right thing for the right reason, acting in conformity with duty for duty's sake.

Although such an account may be possible in principle, Aristotle once noticed that "if arguments were in themselves enough to make man good, they would (...) have won very great rewards (...); but as things are, (...) they are not able to encourage the many to nobility and goodness" (NE, book X, 9, 1179b,10).

The difficulties grounded in our lives as social beings lurk everywhere. Our values and their origins are embed-

ded in inherited human cultural contexts. Private choices operate within social codes or customs. Given the fact that environmental values are rooted more in ethical discourse than in social or political practice, the protection and conservation of vulnerable biological riches requires a collective form of response that involves regulatory and legislative principles, and political decisions. It is through the government that we have to mediate human-nature relationships. It was again Aristotle who pointed out that it is politics that uses the rest of sciences, and it also legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to restrain from.

By making decisions that directly affect the anonymous public, our acts acquire another character. We cannot disregard this when we make a decision concerning the environment beyond our own back yard; we act as social or political agents, regardless of our deepest ethical or religious intentions. If one designs and decrees a certain natural area as a national park or biosphere reserve, he or she acts as a political agent, not as moral one.

Most environmental decisions and initiatives are in large sense "political" since they consist in advice as to what should be done. However, policy though usually based on how people behave, can also be proscriptive and normative. Environmental values (prudence, care, intergenerational justice, compassion, and respect for nature) like all the other values can be thought and learned. Together with the experience and comprehension of the non-human world they might instill a new

moral disposition and change old habits, and thereby traditional features of social ethics and political decision making.

The new quality of culture that reflects and promotes wellbeing of both humans and the natural world we are immersed in can in time, convert the quality of the environment into the political priority. Nonetheless, as Aristotle rightly pointed out "most people obey necessity rather than argument, and punishments rather than the sense of what is noble" (NE, book X, 9, 1180a)

Admittedly, a society has to exert some pressure over its citizens in order to attain environmental goals that are desirable for the social whole. This will involve sacrifice, larger or smaller ones, on the part of the individual. There must be some enforcement on those who do not wish to comply or cooperate in environmental conservation. A society can control and direct its effects on the environment only if it is organized in such a way as to be able to encourage or compel its members to act in environmentally friendly way.

Without question, one of the most disquieting features of the more radical solutions to ecological and social problems is their tendency to become authoritarian in the face of the pre-supposed total ecological destruction. Such concern leads to proposals for "ecological guardians" to advise the sustainable society on the "just" or moral use of natural resources.

We should not fail to remember that there are ways in which the coercive protection of wildlife and ecosystems, ostensibly for public good, and the intangible benefits of conservation

can actually damage the environment and reinforce the political power of the state: "In the developing world, the myths of wilderness and of the destructive nature of swidden agriculture by the 'backward' natives have justified authoritarian conservation policies based on outdated ecological notions of climax vegetation" (Williams, 2003: 500). The danger of the state that thinks to know what is good for us is not alien to our history, and we should be wary of this in environmental affairs. We must guard against telling others what a moral decision ought to be, or what they have to do with their lives.

Furthermore, the idea of somehow dissolving the concept of the individual as an autonomous and separate person within the social fabric, as some of the radical versions of non-anthropocentric ethics claim, has the potential to eliminate democratic procedures. Ecological egalitarianism rejects any hierarchy, and if we wish to follow such theory, socio-political relations should undergo transformation in order to reflect the equal plurality of the 'biotic community'. This could prove an impediment for rational solutions to environmental problems. When applied to society it can lead to a sort of authoritarian social policy that would sacrifice individuals in the search of a general well-being, through the imposition of some lifestyle by political means.

In our quest for a better future, we should be searching for a viable alternative to the present development models, but not for a new utopia. For whilst utopia is only a vision of a world without

suffering, without conflict, without poverty and with justice for all, while it is just an intellectual or philosophical exercise, is inoffensive and painless. When it becomes an instrument to convert our wishful thinking into practice, it sacrifices everything and everybody on its way to reach its goal.

Critics of contemporary policies offer visions of a free and ecological society that can transform our relationship with each other and with the world. There are parallels more recently in the longing for eco-socialism or eco-communism that seemingly connects the good of the humanity with the Earth democracy. (Albritton et al, 2004) Wherever we look for the Earth Democracy that reunites human being -with the environment, and offers the likelihood for dignified life for everyone, it can not be found in projects that unleashed human and environmental horrors before, for they can unleash them again.

3. Making right decisions?

Humans have ethical responsibilities with regard to the biosphere –otherwise known as the environment. Individuals have ethical responsibilities to sustain the life support systems of other individuals and the communities they live in. Communities and countries have ethical responsibilities not to damage the biosphere and thereby reduce the life support systems of other communities and countries.

All decisions about environmental impacts generally fall into the category of decisions made with elements of risk.

The very idea of risk suggests that we should always expect the unexpected in the outcomes of our decisions regarding natural or social world. The solutions depend on science, engineering, logistics, and economic and moral assumptions about what is good and bad for humans or other life forms. In spite of the growing interest of the general public in nature and wildlife, it may be that the arguments of conservationists must be ultimately framed in cost-benefit terms since governments will always determine their policies against the background of money they have to spend, and, sometimes, the priorities accepted by their electorates.

At the same time, slowly but inexorably, a more comprehensive set of deeper obligations is becoming acknowledged within human society that complements and coincides with obligations to non-human members of the 'biotic community'.

Recently, some have suggested that all kinds of non-market benefits (preserving a species, aesthetic appreciation of forests, and scientific values of biodiversity, recreational or spiritual pleasures) be included in cost-benefit analysis. The idea of this more extended kind of analysis in the environmental context is to compare the benefits (immediate and diffuse, monetary and non-monetary) of a decision (such as preserving wilderness, alleviating poverty and equity) to the costs (direct or potential).

The 'precautionary principle' constitutes a method for incorporating intergenerational equity concerns into environmental decision-making. It has

to be stated that many policy-related research results in increasingly complex models that generate a never-ending debate about their applicability. I do not refer to famous Schrödinger's phrase that "nature resists imitations through models" (Schrödinger, 1980:323), but to the fact that models entries can hardly be observed or estimated.

The use of statistics is hampered by the lack of specified knowledge about the ways ecosystem works and its spatial and temporal changes. This combined with scarce information about the social factors that contribute to the degradation of ecosystems, make sound decision-making particularly difficult. Quite frequently it is impossible to separate rhetoric from the reality of what is happening to the global biodiversity since amidst the concern over the environment, special interests are being served as they wrestle for power, influence and funds.

Shellenberger, Nordhaus convincingly argue that the first wave of environmentalism was framed around conservation and the second around regulation. "We believe the third wave will be framed around investment". (2004:28). Until now the existing market based approaches have fall short of the expected answers. Market has been unable to put a price on biological resources. The popular cost benefit analysis faces the impossibility of quantification both of benefits and costs (both market and non-market) associated with actions that affect biodiversity.

Nevertheless the concern in environmental ethics to get an account of the value of the non-human world has posi-

tively corrected many purely exploitive relations with the natural world, integrating moral perspective into people's attitudes and environmental decision making. The concept of 'environmental management' has replaced the 'domination' of nature. These are similar terms, but their semantic fields differ. Managers can include communitarian human-nature relationships and participatory democracy in a manner compatible with the rational use of biological diversity. Management emphasizes the mutually supportive processes of human growth and socio-economic emancipation as well as the conservation of a natural environment.

All the same, the great variety of the ethical and political questions remains unanswered: Do we protect the biosphere at all costs? Should we forbid traditional shifting cultivation in the name of environmental protection? Should we encourage some conversion of tropical forest to intensively-managed agro-ecosystems to take the pressure off the remaining native ecosystems? Should the management and conservation of the forests in one country be shaped by international objectives to protect the biosphere, biological diversity and global climate?

4. Beyond the impasse: a new proposal for environmental policy

The contemporary world is manifesting multiplicity of divisions that attempted solutions have been unable to dissolve. The inherited poverty is made more hopeless by the people's need to

squeeze more the natural resources in the place they live in. It is not to say that people are incapable of loving the environment; however, when they weight up the issue of surviving most people consider the utility value of the natural resources they are actually using. A sensitive overall risk-adjusted analysis leads to the conclusion that morality cannot be the only consideration in environmental decisions. People might regret the decision to alter their environment, however, under the circumstances they cannot consider otherwise.

Often, they prefer receiving a given amount of money or economic goods at a specified time with certainty rather than receiving diffuse market and non-market benefits (preserving a species, aesthetic appreciation of forest, scientific values of biodiversity, recreational or spiritual pleasures), sometime in the future and determined by a random variable having the same expected value as the given amount. Probably only in the case of medicine - a cure or remission - is seen as worth the regret of the short-term suffering. As we should not merely encircle wilderness areas, we should not rely on the traditional practices for conservation either.

They are developed under previous environmental and economic circumstances and generally ignore externalities arising from global demand for natural resources (timber, beef etc.) as well as the basic needs from the growing local population.

So, despite various and visible accomplishments many countries, particularly in those tropical regions that harbor the greatest biological diversity, have been unable to slow present trends of environmental degradation. Many unique ecosystems are currently at risk including forests, wetlands, some marine regions, and various dry and arid areas. In Latin America the natural forest cover continues to decrease in all countries. A total of 5.8 million hectares a year was lost during 1990-95, resulting in a 3 per cent total loss for the period (FAO, 1997b).

In May 2005, the government of Brazil released figures showing deforestation in the Amazon rainforest reached 26,129 square kilometers for the year ending August 2004. Deforestation in the Amazon in 2004 was the second worst ever as rain forest was cleared for cattle ranches and soy farms¹. Between 1990 and 2000, Mexico lost an average of 347,600 hectares of forest per year. According to figures from the World Conservation Monitoring Centre Mexico has some 2765 known species of amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles. Of these, 34.0% are endemic, meaning they exist in no other country, and 12.3% are threatened by the habitat conversion. Such levels of potential extinction of species associated to deforestation and the great biological diversity provide evidence to declare Lacandonia (southeast Mexico) tropical hot-spot and priority

¹ <http://www.mongabay.com/brasil.html>

goal in conservation effort. (Mendoza, Dirzo, 1999: 1621-1641).

The need for conservation of the forests has been placed high on the political agenda in many countries. Another positive development is the use of incentives for promoting the establishment of forest plantations. Recent policy reforms in Guatemala, Paraguay and Uruguay are expected to stimulate the reforestation of thousands of hectares. So far, despite all these efforts, the region's forest resources are still under extreme and competing pressures. On the one hand, large population groups are heavily dependent on forests for food, especially in tropical South America and there has been heavy encroachment of forests by the rural poor in their search for land for agricultural use. On the other hand, strong external and internal pressures are being put on countries with extensive tropical forests to try to conserve and protect these unique ecosystems.

Biodiversity loss, and consequently the need for its conservation involve diverse environmental, social and economic issues that bring in different kind of values. The professionals in charge of conservation proposals have a tendency to speak in general moral terms about the need to protect forest, and prevent diversity deterioration. It is often transformed into the single concept of nature free of human presence. This perception however, as are all the "views from nowhere," using Nagel's phrase, is frequently at odds with local realities.

Recently, it has been recognized that without a systematic program of re-

source management, which addresses the economic needs of the local people, any demarcation will be of little long-term value. Past experience proves that the conventional model of preservation (isolated reserves) has provided relatively limited protection to native inhabitants and to the tropical forest environment in which they reside. It was unrealistic to expect that major wild land conservation programs could be undertaken without an appraisal of the likely benefits to people who live in poverty alongside protected areas. No strategy, however excellent its basis in scientific research, can succeed unless it takes account of the external forces exerted by nearby peoples, who, having no other choice, will degrade or destroy reserves no matter how cleverly they are managed internally.

There is no doubt that the complex interactions of biology, economics, social and technological factors have to be approached and solved in an ethical way. Global MEAs and non-binding instruments have increased awareness of environmental issues and contributed to an environmental conscience which would have been unimaginable a quarter of a century ago.

However, effective environmental policy requires more than shifts of consciousness from the human-oriented into the nature-oriented. The development of a functional ethic depends on regional economics, local policy structure, exterior demands, all of which are embedded in social and cultural settings. Public environmental agencies, with their limited and unfocused mandate, have had little impact on industrial

and other productive activities. The conservation course of action often hangs in the thin air imposed by the environmental law as a rule of conduct. However, rules and regulations are hard to enforce because many institutions cannot monitor compliance and systematic enforcement can have negative economic effects. Moreover, programs that are devised to fight poverty are usually unrelated to environmental policies.

Until now, various recommendations to bring together ecologically sound ways of living with the call for renew growth to alleviate poverty in the developing world scarcely brought the required results. The conjecture that once the site was designated as a 'natural' reserve, its biodiversity was preserved proved short-sighted. The shelter of its legal status did not resolve the problems of land tenures and speculation, or stopped the harmful agricultural activities. Furthermore, none of the proposals including the Kyoto Protocol with its Clean Development Mechanism and permits to pollute is aimed at stopping deforestation. Instead, researchers and politicians are skeptical that a global scheme of emissions trading will reduce emissions rather than simply shifting pollution around. (Hopkin, 2004: 268-270).

Environmentalists thought that a strong case can be made for conservation based on the local, regional and global values of forests to be incorporated into decisions on "sustainable" management of this important resource. The idea was to help forest dwellers and rural settlers profit from

the wilderness without destroying it. In Costa Rica, a series of forestry laws has established the principle that people involved in reforestation or forest conservation should be rewarded for the environmental and social services provided by forests. However, it did not stop the destruction; selective timber harvesting proved costly and inefficient.

Ecologically friendly activities such as collecting wild fruits, rubber, nuts (non-timber products), including pharmaceutically active substances are either money-losing propositions or push some plant species to the brink of extinction. Many of well meant "sustainable" programs lost touch with the development necessities of the communities. They focused exclusively on the alternative activities like industrial reforestation or intensive, multi-crop land use that may appeal to the healthy self-interest of the local people by providing trees and harvests of value to them.

But they missed the real connection between the complex community problems, external market pressures and biodiversity loss. As Pompa and Kaus rightly observed: "All the terracing, green mulching, selective harvesting, field rotation, crop diversity, and reforestation in the world cannot help if the external consumption of natural resources continues to outpace local sustainable practices and to offer economic incentives that out-compete long term conservation benefits" (Pompa, Kaus, 1999: 5982-5986).

The overwhelming majority of proposals to conciliate economic progress and quality of life with the necessi-

ties of biological conservation have financial incentives attached to them. Until now disbursement of the funds public or private has often been insufficient or sporadic, and frequently derailed. On the one hand, the governmental subsidies (local and national) frequently have been bringing more harm than benefit. On the other, the international fund-lending institutions tend to promote unrestrained development threatening directly biological, ecological and cultural diversity.

The aid has also been used by power groups without changing local ideas and uses of the environment. Many conservation proposals have only succeeded in enormous squander of money. Shellenberger and Nordhaus wrote: "Over the last 15 years environmental foundations and organizations have invested hundreds of millions of dollar into combating global warming. We have strikingly little to show for it" (Shellenberger, Nordhaus, 2004: 6). The subsidizing agencies never visualized the complex interactions between protection of biodiversity, requirements of development and the community life. Nor have they analyzed the direct connections between the local activities and the possible reduction of deforestation or other environmental pressures. As James et al. pointed out "governments could safeguard the world's biodiversity with a small fraction of the money they spend on environmental harmful subsidies" (James et al, 1999:323-324).

Moreover, there has been a broad critique of the methods of measuring economic value of biodiversity, as well

as on the valuation techniques applied in cost – benefit analysis, questioning the viability of capturing all relevant values in terms of money. Economics is helpful in designing institutions and processes through which people can settle environmental disputes. However, economic analysis fails completely when it attempts to attach value to environmental goods (Sagoff, 2004).

All agree with Aldo Leopold that "system of conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided", yet the question of financial incentives that can alleviate the poverty, and indicate the alternative to the environmentally damaging practices has to be addressed promptly. According to some views expressed at the European Conference on the Biodiversity (2004) one of the main reasons of continuing biodiversity loss has been a market failure to play a fundamental role in halting deforestation and overall environmental degradation. Benefits associated with conserving biodiversity are mainly of use for the society as a whole and most of the time not covered by the market.

Many ecosystem functions and services defy monetarization as their contribution to our well-being present and future is unknown or difficult to assess. Most of the non material life support functions represent "collective goods". Intrinsic values by definition have no price, and many other values as for instance, unpredictable preferences of future generation escape monetary evaluation. "Freely functioning markets are based on narrow self-interest. The upstream polluter has no incentive to

account for the cost he imposes on a downstream user of the river. The non-consideration of such “externalities”- the third party costs- may lead to decisions that are ‘wise’ for the individual now, but ‘unwise’ for the society as a whole (and that may also be harmful to the individual). This is a market failure” (Joosten, Clark, 2002: 138).

Concluding remarks

Shellenberger and Nordhaus recently wrote (2004:3): “The new, post-environmental politics must focus more on unleashing human possibility than constraining human activity” (2004:3). Conceivably, the monetary valuation can play a supportive role in environmental policy in spite of many objections, but its multiple practical and normative problems have to be considered when using such a method. However, the comprehensive approach to conservation of the entire biological diversity requires a strategy that goes beyond economic valuation. Philip E. Graves wrote: “To the extent that we value public goods, we also realize that getting extra income to buy them will accomplish nothing. There is no market to which we can buy, say, reduced CO₂ level or endangered species preservation” (Graves, 2001). It was A. Fitzsimmons who, in his controversial book

“Defending Illusions”, points out to the possibility of creating markets on environmental topics. He assumes that the Wetland Protection Certificates could be bought and sold, and that market may be established by the US Congress (Fitzsimmons, 1999).

T. S. Eliot once said that humankind cannot stand too much reality. Undoubtedly, the new proposals to create markets out of environmental predicaments are deemed to be controversial. They suggest that to combat deforestation, loss of biodiversity, climate change and other pressing environmental issues, those who make decisions have to address the material and nonmaterial aspirations people have for their future (Szatzschnieder et al, 2004).

It might be the first step in the long way of efficient management practices that can provide environmental and biological protection for the future generations, without compromising the needs of the present one. It contains the premises that may encourage many to “nobility and goodness” since it simultaneously benefits local communities and the wildlife. Quoting Aristotle again “we can do noble acts without ruling earth and sea; for even with moderate advantages one can live virtuously” (NE, book X, 8, 1179,5).

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