CHAPTER II

MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY FOR NATURE: A SUMMARY

Passmore’s book comprises of three parts. (a) Part One- titled ‘The Traditions’ has two chapters that are historical, titled “Man as a Despot” and “Stewardship and Co-operation with Nature”. It records and analyze past thinking about man’s relationship with the natural world. (b) Part Two examines, serially four central “Ecological Problems” namely- ‘Pollution’, ‘Conservation’, ‘Preservation’ and ‘Multiplication’. (c) Finally, in Part Three, Passmore returns for a ‘Reconsideration’ of the western traditions, and concludes that there is adequate diversity and flexibility within western civilization on which to base a rethinking of our treatment of nature. He does admit that the West needs, to some extent, ‘a new concept of nature’ and ‘a new set of moral principles to act as a guide in its relationship to nature’. He says the west must learn to cultivate an active cherishing of nature.

‘The Traditions’ takes its cue from a question raised by the intellectual historian, Lynn White, Jr.- does the religious and philosophical culture of Western Civilization provide a basis for an ethic

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1 Passmore, 1974, p195
2 Ibid, p186
of environmental protection?3 Passmore defends the western traditions by saying that they are "far richer, more diversified, more flexible than its critics allow."4 He admits that we are destroying our habitation and that a need has arisen to take action if Western civilization is to survive, but the only point of issue, he says, is just how fundamental the changes need to be. He refers to Leopold as suggesting that the west stands in need of a 'new ethic'- an 'ethic of conservation' which deal with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it.5 However a detailed discussion on whether a 'new ethic' is needed or not, and how Passmore reacts to it, will be made in a separate chapter that follows.

Lynn White is shown as saying that our ecological problems derive from 'Christian attitudes towards man's relation to nature which are almost universally held not only by Christians and neo-Christians but also by those who fondly regard themselves as post-Christians'- attitudes which lead us to think of ourselves as 'superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim'.6 White is convinced, first, that 'orthodox Christian arrogance towards Nature' must somehow be dispelled and, secondly, that science and technology are so imbued

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4 Passmore, 1974, p3.
5 Ibid., p4
6 Lynn, white: 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', Science, 155:3767 (March 1967),
with Christian or post-Christian 'arrogance' that 'no solution for our ecological crisis can be expected from them alone'. The point that Passmore wants to arrive at [and he has repeatedly mentioned this] is that the attitude, which has influenced the western mind, is the Graeco-Christianity and not the Judaeo-Christianity (as the critics have supposed).

Passmore says that Genesis has often been blamed as the source and origin of the West's ecological troubles. He observes that the accusation made against the Western attitudes to nature is that it is infected with arrogance. Genesis, Passmore admits, tells man not only what they can do but also what they should do. God creates man and tells him: "To have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26) He also issues a mandate to mankind to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28)

The first creation story tells us that man was given dominion over the animals. The second story says that the animals were created as man's auxiliaries, as 'helpmeet for them', where Adam is represented as giving names to the animals. He then points out that in primitive thought to have possession of a thing's name is to have power over it.\(^7\) Here

\(^7\) Passmore, p8
Passmore tries to show that despite the fact that the Old Testament (O.T.) insists man's dominion over nature, God did not leave the fate of the animals entirely in man's hands. There is evidence that God gave 'every green herb' as food to 'every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air and to everything that creepeth upon the earth.' Even when God flooded the earth, God took pains to ensure the preservation of the beasts as much as men. Proverbs 12:10 teach men to care for their sheep and cattle. The image of the good shepherd whose flocks 'will not want' comes as naturally to the lips of the psalmist as it does to Ezekiel.  

Critics base their accusations on the idea that man is an absolute ruler and he take care of it only as long as he profits from it. Passmore claims that although the O.T. does not in any way hold that whatever exists was created for man's sake, one point is absolutely clear that 'nature is not sacred.' Nature in itself is not divine because man rules over it. Unlike Eastern religions, he says, the religion of the Hebrews recognizes a sharp distinction between God and nature. Man's dealings with nature are sharply separated from his dealings with God. It is his relationship with God, which really matters. The Hebrews did not consider nature as having a 'mysterious life' and this certainly left man free to exploit it without any qualms like other societies. They do not equalise nature with God. In fact they attribute and dedicate everything

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8 Passmore, p8
9 Ibid. p9
to God who owns everything. But man has been given the liberty to exploit it as far as there are no restrictions labelled against it. Passmore emphasizes that the Old Testament, does not set up an unbridgeable gap between man and nature. Secondly, it is uncompromisingly theocentric: nature exists not for man’s sake but for the greater glory of God. It is here, Passmore points out, that in “the Christian separation of man from the animals and the Christian view that nature was made for man, lies the seed of an attitude to nature far more properly describable as ‘arrogant’ than the purely O.T. conception of man’s dominion”\textsuperscript{10}

Passmore says that the Christian attitude is distinct from others as it derives its attitudes from a God who is anthropocentric - a man-centred God. He agrees with the critics of Christianity when they say that Christianity has encouraged man to think of himself as nature’s absolute master, for whom everything that exists was designed. He does not agree however when they suppose that this is Hebrew teaching. He rather believes that it originates with the Greeks.\textsuperscript{11}

In the Greek religion as well as the Greek Enlightenment man’s place in nature was a major point of dispute between the Epicureans and Stoics. The Epicureans find it absurd to suppose that God created for

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid. p12
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p13
human use, the world with all its vices and shortcomings. The Stoics, on the other hand, hold the view that all creatures are designed to serve man. Man is the only one who can make advantageous use of nature so they were created for them. The universe, as they saw it, is a vast body, providentially governed to serve the interests of only its rational members—men and gods, and as such free from moral censure.\(^\text{12}\)

"If, then, one can speak of 'Christian arrogance' in supposing that all things are made for men, it must be with the proviso that it is not Hebraic-Christian but Graeco-Christian 'arrogance'.... It is one thing to say, following Genesis, that man has dominion over nature in the sense that he has the right to make use of it: quite another to say, following the Stoics, that nature exists only in order to serve his interests."\(^\text{13}\)

Passmore admits that even the Graeco-Christian doctrine of nature does have practical guidance in two ways—conservative and radical. First, the conservative interpretation is that since God has designed everything for man's use, it is impious for man to change it. Men were free to use nature as they chose—provided they did not worship it as sacred—but otherwise it was best left alone, created as it was in the form most suitable for their needs. As for the radical interpretation, which he

\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., p15
\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., p17
takes it to be the crucial one, it understands that everything on earth is for man's use and this gives him the liberty to modify nature, as he will. Cicero's Balbus is referred to here saying that, "we alone have the power of controlling the most violent of nature's offspring, the sea and the winds, thanks to the service of navigation.... the rivers and lakes are ours...we give fertility to the soil by irrigating it, we confine the rivers and strengthen or divert their courses... by means of our hands we try to create as it were a second nature within the world of nature." Cicero foresaw man as a demi-god, constructing with his hands a new nature. Robert Jungk is also shown as presenting a similar attitude in the modern times that man is trying to take God's place by recreating and creating a 'man-made cosmos according to man-made laws of reason'.

Passmore, however points out that when Cicero talked of man taking control of nature, he (Cicero) did not see it leading to the creation of a science based-technology with its potential benefits as well as its potential dangers. In the 17th century, Passmore adds, Bacon and Descartes could see that this 'second nature' was not going to be all good only and that it had its potential dangers. Bacon started emphasizing that 'knowledge itself is power'. He argued that learning should be referred to use and action, which he said, is true not only in

14 Ibid., p.18
15 Ibid
the case of practical philosophy' as navigation, but also in the case of what Bacon called ‘philosophy of universality’. Man would gain mastery over things only through intellectual knowledge and “overcoming her resistance not by force but by his intimate knowledge of her secrets”. The dominion that was symbolized when God called upon Adam to give names to the animals was in the back of Bacon’s mind when he thought of his projects for the advancement of science as restoring to man his original dominion over the animals.

Like Bacon, Descartes looked forward to new techniques, as successful as the old crafts, but based one science. What Descartes rejected, Passmore says, was the pious thought that everything was made by God for man on the ground that ‘an infinite of things exist, or did exist...which have never been beheld or comprehended by man and which have never been of any use to him’. He commits himself only to the much weaker position that ‘there is nothing created from which we cannot derive some use’.16 Descartes identifies the human mind with consciousness but every other finite existence “is a mere machine, which men, in virtue of that fact, can manipulate without scruples. Animals not only cannot reason but cannot even feel”17- this, Passmore claims, is the charter of the Industrial Revolution.

16 Ibid, p20
17 Ibid., p21
At this point Passmore says that Descartes inherits the Stoic ingredients in Christianity rather than its more distinctive teachings; man is lord of nature in virtue of his rationality, and that rationality has not been irremediably perverted by the Fall. From the beginning there were objectors but their views did not prevail. The Baconian-Cartesian approach to nature dominated the West, at first merely as an aspiration, eventually as an achievement.

G.P. Marsh was the first to describe man’s destructiveness as arising out of his ignorant disregard of the laws of nature. He said that nature in its original state was not adapted to supporting a civilization but man in order to civilize it was forced to transform it without any sense of guilt. Marsh and other ecologists saw that when man attempted to transform nature, they never do what they want to do, because nature is not a soft piece of wax. When man is trying to adjust one thing, many other harmful adjustments are taking place in nature.

Engels also wrote that for every victory man has over nature, it takes its revenge on man. He understands that, in the process man by no means rule over nature like conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature- but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in the midst, and that all our mastery
of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to know and correctly apply its laws.' To Engels, ignorance and greed are characteristic of capitalism for it is not at all concerned about the consequences of its actions. He argues, "that communism alone can save nature, through its destruction both of capitalism and of Christianity- from the greater profits demanded by the former, the 'senseless and unnatural' contrast between man and nature typical of the latter." (P.25)

However, the Soviet Union, has shared the ideology of capitalism as is evident in the attitude of the Soviet historian Pokrovskiy-"It is easy to foresee that in the future, when science and technique have attained to a perfection which we are as yet unable to visualize, nature will become soft wax in his [man's] hands which he will be able to cast into whatever form he chooses."(p.25) In the East, Japan regards nature as sacred and worships it directly. Yet, this has not prevented Japan from developing an industrial civilization. China was technologically inventive, yet the ideal of conforming to nature has been very powerful in Chinese thought affecting even everyday actions. The only startling exception being Hsun Tsu who argues that it is not enough to let nature develop, conforming to it as it does so; it will go astray unless man
corrects it by acting upon it, just as human beings will go astray unless they are educated.

Passmore commends the critics of Western civilization on their historical diagnosis about a strong Western tradition that man is free to deal with nature as he pleases, since it exists only for his sake. He says they are wrong in tracing this back to Genesis because Genesis and the Old Testament generally, tells man that he is, or has the right to be the master of the earth and all it contains. But it also insists that the world was good before man was created, and that it exists to glorify God rather than to serve man. Only with the influence of the Greek, Christian theology was led to think of nature as nothing but a system of resources, man’s relationship with which are in no respect subject to moral censure.

This attitude to nature sometimes gave rise to conservative conclusions: God had made nature for man’s use and it would be presumptuous to improvise on that. But a radical interpretation was that nature was there for man to modify and transform as he pleases. This was an interpretation of Bacon and Descartes, which was absorbed into the ideology of modern western societies, communist as well as capitalist and has been exported to the East. It brought about a metaphysics for which man is the only agent and nature a vast system of machines for man to use and modify as he pleases. Though this by no
means constitutes the entire Western tradition, nor does its rejection entail the rejection of the science with which it has so often been associated, ecologists are rejecting this metaphysics.

In a chapter on Stewardship and Co-operation with Nature\(^{18}\), Passmore presents two traditional views that deny man to be a despot in his relation to nature. The first one sees him as a steward, a farm-manager, actively responsible as God’s deputy for the care of the world. The second one sees man as co-operating with nature in an attempt to perfect it. The first non-despotic tradition— the stewardship tradition— dates back to the post-Platonic philosophers of the Roman Empire. They believed that man is sent to earth by God to administer earthly things to care for them in God’s name. His responsibility is to look after the welfare of what he governs or take care of.

Some argue that God also meant the same thing when He told the Hebrews to subdue the world. In the same spirit, the environmentalist John Black maintains that Genesis makes this duty clear when God put Adam in the Garden of Eden to manage and protect it. He goes on to say that man, being made in the image of God has the responsibility to take care of nature just as God takes care of man— ‘man is to nature, that is,

\(^{18}\)Ibid. ,p28
as God is to man'.\textsuperscript{19} To this, Passmore points out that Christianity does seem to pass moral judgment on man's relationship to nature. He admits that there is a recurrent New Testament image in which man figures as a steward representing God. However man's stewardship, he continues, relates to the church and not to nature.

Passmore points out that in order to present the idea of stewardship over nature, Black refers us only to an often-quoted passage from the Chief Justice, Sir Matthew Hale, who tells us in his characteristically legal terminology that 'the end of man's creation was that he should be the viceroy of the great God of heaven and earth in this inferior world; his steward.....of the lower world'.\textsuperscript{20} Like a farm manager, man can be called to account if he willfully or carelessly degrade the earth's resources.

The second tradition- Co-operation with nature, the tradition that man's responsibility is to perfect nature by co-operating with it, coalesces with the first one to a certain degree. Taking the etymological meaning 'nature' as 'to be born' or 'to come into being', it is understood as actualizing that which is potent. The task of actualizing the

\textsuperscript{19} ibid. \textsuperscript{p29}  
\textsuperscript{20} ibid. \textsuperscript{p30}
potentialities of nature is taken to be at the disposal of man by way of perfecting it. The perfecting of nature requires skill and, in this sense, mastery; a mastery which perfects, not a mastery which destroys or enslaves. Man's duty in respect to nature, then, is to seek to perfect it by working with its potentialities.

On the contrary, Genesis says that the world was created complete by God and was perfect until Adam sinned. The Early Church Fathers like Augustine also did not suggest that man should carry this task upon his shoulders, neither did he say that God would help him if he did. The idea of a universe-in-the-making which man helps to form, in co-operation with a Spirit intend on civilizing it was reinstated by Fichte and other German metaphysicians. They emphasize the fact that nature has already been greatly modified by man so, co-operation with Spirit means co-operation with a spiritualised nature. Though at first man was forced to dominate, he is now able to deal with nature gently. It no longer resists but welcomes their attention.

Teilhard de Chardin points out two fundamental mistakes of Traditional Christianity- Firstly, it has supposed nature to be static, created once and for all by God at the creation; Secondly, its supposition that in order to save themselves, men must free themselves from, rise above the world. Whereas, in Teilhard's view, nature is equal to self-
creation and man must work with the world to help it 'on its path towards that final consummation for which the whole creation groaneth and travailed until now'. According to Passmore, such metaphysical systems are important because they testify that the Western civilization has an attitude to nature that cannot be reduced either to despotism or to stewardship. Nature, for it, is still in the making.

Talking about how we can judge the perfection of nature, Passmore shows parks and gardens and reservations as representing a liberating as opposed to a tyrannical mastery over nature. The seventeenth and eighteenth century formal gardens show nature as bearing the sign of man perfecting them. The 17th century 'geometrical gardeners' felt that to perfect nature it had to be reshaped first. The 18th century 'pruners' felt that perfecting nature meant removing dead limbs, cutting off branches the tree is not strong enough to hold or which would prevent the free growth of other branches and help the tree to assume its perfect form. The first view encourages man in his relationship with nature is to think of himself as a ruthless despot, imposing order on what could otherwise be a meaningless chaos. Passmore supports the second view, the pruner shows his skill by bringing to light the potentialities of the nature on which he operates.

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21 Ibid. p34
22 Ibid. p36
Another example that displays the despotic concept of perfection is that of town planning. The town planner often seeks to 'design with nature'. They do not think of man as being a despoiler. Here man seeks not to impose design but to use to the fullest of potentialities. The great virtue of the doctrine that it is man's task to perfect nature by design with it is that it is a half-way house between the despotic view that he should seek, merely, to dominate over it and the primitivist view that he should do nothing to modify nature, since it is perfect as it is. Passmore does recognize the fact that in the hands of some of its exponents, its potentialities may be reduced to the lowest point, that they remain as a raw material ever. At least in principle this view offers an alternative to despotism and primitivism alike.

Passmore started this section with a statement that, the traditions of the West are more complex, more diversified and more flexible. He ends with the note that, important changes in moral outlook have taken place and will continue to do so, 'but the degree to which their reforms have been in the long run successful depends on the degree to which they have been able to appeal to and further develop already existing traditions'.

23 Ibid., p 40.
Part Two of the book deals at length, the four ecological problems. He considers a problem to be ecological if it arises as a consequence of man's dealings with nature. Pollution, depletion of natural resources, the extinction of wilderness, the increase in human numbers; all these are categorized as ecological problems. To him an ecological problem is a type of social problem because we believe that our society would be better off without it. To solve an ecological problem as well as a social problem "is to describe a satisfactory way of reducing the incidence or the severity of the phenomenon stigmatised as a problem."^24

Pollution-Passmore finds this problem the simplest to analyse and most manageable of them all. He defines pollution as the "process of putting matter in the [wrong place] in quantities that are too large."^25 In this connection, wrong place would mean if - (i) it is displeasing to the senses (ii) it is dangerous to human health, and (iii) it destroys wildlife, plants or animals.

The solution to the problem of pollution depends upon solving along with it economic, moral, political and administrative problems. Scientifically speaking much has to be learned about pollution. When a scientist lays down acceptable levels of pollution, he is partly guessing and not really predicting with assurance. They are unable to give a clear and adequate standard of anti-pollution legislation that governments can

^24 ibid., p.44
^25 ibid., p.45
incorporate. Any scientific contribution to the solution will have to aim at understanding how a particular form of pollution arises and what its threats are.

A technological problem refers to the discovery of method of reducing the incidence of pollution. In Passmore’s words, ‘it is very easy to think up technical solutions of ecological problems if we consider them in isolation, and if we define a technical solution, without any reference to costs, as one which describes a way of freeing ourselves from the ecological condition which concerns us. Such a solution is somewhat said to be ‘practical’ but ‘operational’.” He continues saying that “In so far as ecological problems can be solved only with the help of scientific discovery and technological invention, they can be solved only within the Western tradition. That much is obvious.” Technological innovations involve an element of ecological risks. But then abandoning it altogether will bring in economic and social risks. At this point the economist enters; who can use rational Western type methods of cost-benefit analyses. Passmore opines that ecologists and economists should work together as each has methods at his disposal, which the other needs.

The moral problems arising out of pollution is not overwhelming. A polluter who endangers the life and health of his neighbour can be co-

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26 Ibid. P48
27 Ibid
erced by state intervention to prevent them from harming others. There are also considerable political difficulties in effectively legislating against pollution. Looking only at democratic-capitalist countries- it has been so far successful in some instances like- clean-up drives. Those that do come up against these legislations are those large industrial corporations who stand to loose much. Another political obstacle to reform is from established habits and expectations. We have all been accustomed to thinking that air and water exist only to serve us and they are infinite and self-repairable. As such we pollute it. To a certain extent, this problem has been successfully tackled but there is still more that needs to be and can be done.

Conservation- Passmore starts this chapter with a distinction between conservation and preservation. Conservation is defined as saving of natural resources for later consumption while preservation refers to saving from damage and destruction. The conservationist programme, he says, confronts us with a fundamental moral issue; ought we to pay attention to the needs of posterity? To give a positive answer would mean making two assumptions - first, that posterity would suffer unless we do so. Secondly, that if it will suffer, it is our duty so to act as to prevent or lessen its sufferings. With the first assumption that posterity will suffer unless we change our ways, the suggestion that

\[^{28}\text{Ibid. p75}\]
often follows is that posterity can safely be left to look after itself, provided only that science and technology be allowed to flourish. This interpretation of the situation comes from economists and from nuclear physicist who confidently declare that resources will never run out. Passmore quotes the nuclear physicist Alvin Weinberg, who tells us that 'the most essential resources are virtually inexhaustive'. If what these economists and physicists are saying is true, Passmore observes, there is no 'problem of conservation'. That there is a problem of conservation is highly disputed.

Passmore argues that we cannot be certain that posterity will need what we save- or on the other side that it will not need what we should not think of saving. There is always a risk too that our well-intentioned sacrifices will have the long-term effect on making the situation of posterity worse than it would otherwise be. That is the case for simply ignoring posterity.

On the other side, where we 'take thought for the morrow', our ability to love prepares to make sacrifices for the future. Sometimes while we try to protect what we love we often make the wrong decisions and destroy it. Over-protection can be as damaging as neglect. He says if the more pessimistic scientists are right, we now stand in a special relationship to the future. Passmore points out the fact that conservation
is not an isolated issue. By ‘doing what is just in the present’\textsuperscript{29}, we may be doing what is best for posterity to a degree somewhat greater than is ordinarily allowed. If we were to concentrate on improving public facilities as distinct from private wealth, on diminishing noise and air pollution by substantially reducing automobile traffic, we might find that we have in the process decreased the level of industrial activity to a relatively harmless point. In general, people do not seem to find their present mode of life particularly enjoyable; we certainly need to experiment with alternatives, which are at the same time less polluting and less wasteful or resources. The recycling of resources both benefits us, as helping to solve the problem of wastes, and would, we hope, also benefit posterity. If we find ourselves in uncertainties, he says, we should concentrate our efforts on these double-benefit forms of action.

Preservation- It has been defined as an attempt to maintain in their present condition areas of the earth’s surface which has not yet been explored and exploited by man and also protecting from extinction species of living beings which man has not yet destroyed. Preservation as an ecological problem considers questions like, ‘should there be any agreement that it is wrong to destroy wilderness or undomesticated species?’ We can think of wilderness and species as having either a purely instrumental or an intrinsic value. They are valuable not only as

\textsuperscript{29}ibid., p.99
economic resources but as providing opportunities for the pursuit of science, for recreation and retreat, as sources of moral renewal and aesthetic delight. But here, there can be clashes of interests, which then sharply raise the question of 'rights'. Closely associated to this is the debate whether rights are applicable to what is non-human. He has shown a preservationist appeal that often been successful. This not only draws attention to the unintended consequences of destruction but also tries to find, for example 'New means of mining, new means of restoring land, new methods of coping with those predators which are particularly damaging to human interests.'^30 A wider change in attitudes can also help by giving less emphasis on consumer goods, a greater appreciation of the value of contemplation, or quiet enjoyment, at simply looking at the world around us as itself an object of absorbing interest, not as an instrument or resources.

Multiplication- The rate at which the human population is increasing is likened to the reproduction of cancer cells by many ecologists like P.R. Ehrlich and others who say that 'people are pollution'.^31 Passmore defends that as much as the population increase may seem offensive to the senses and a threat to health, biases such as the ones stated above are too vicious a judgment. As an ecological problem it is discussed as to how we can determine whether our

^30 ibid., p.126
^31 ibid., p. 127
population growth is too rapid and what moral objections there are to the attempts made to control it. The precise importance of population growth as a source of ecological destructiveness is highly debatable. Although a decline in the rate of population growth would not necessarily reduce the extent of pollution, the rate of depletion of natural resources, the rate at which species and wilderness are disappearing, it may be the most effective and feasible of methods available to us. There are of course forces, which tell against reduction of population growth like - ignorance, prudishness, religious ideology, social habits, female servitude and moral objections. He also discusses the moral objections to the methods of population control like infanticide, abortion, contraception, sterilization, periodic abstinence and legislative enactments. According to him the limits we ought to attempt, as a generation is not with numbers posterity as such but with their sensibility, their civilization and their happiness. For him to surrender our freedom, to abandon all respects for persons in the name of control over pollution growth is to make sacrifices, which our proper concern for posterity cannot justify.

Part III of the book, 'The Traditions Reconsidered' has a chapter 'Removing the Rubbish' where Passmore sets in confrontation Western traditions and ecological problems. He has sought, like John Locke, 'to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing ground a little and
removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge— and, by way of knowledge, to effective action. The rubbish that he considers as lying in the way to knowledge are:

i. Mysticism- He refutes the view that mysticism can save us where technology cannot. He criticises Frazer Darling who suggests that the West can solve its ecological problems only by adopting the 'philosophy of wholeness', or 'the truth of Zoroastrianism'. Passmore believes that the West already has what Zoroaster has to offer. This attitude, he says, is typical of the Western mystical tradition. This tradition holds that man is ideally an aristocrat who is also a servant— whether of God, of the people or of the planet— authoritarianism.

ii. Nature as sacred- Western science, he suggests is the greatest of man's achievements. It converts mysteries into problems which can then be solved. Therefore treating nature as sacred would be to forgo on the whole tradition of Western science. Nature as sacred says that we cannot control or understand it but in submission we must worship it. This is not enough to save the biosphere. Even those who have regarded nature as sacred destroy their habitation. Man treats for Eg.- a stream as god and does not touch it in order to preserve it. In Japan, they worship nature but the ecological destruction is more apparent here. By treating nature as sacred, we go against the tradition of preservation because then

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32 Ibid., 173
we develop the attitude that nature can take care of itself. Passmore has constantly argued for the recognition of 'man's utter dependence on nature' and on the other hand, 'nature's vulnerability to human depredations'. He emphasizes on the fragility of the balance—neither man nor nature is sacred or quasi-divine.

iii. Ignorance—this is one of the most potent obstacles to our solving our ecological problems, an ignorance only science can dispel. As much as the West still needs to cling on to its tradition of critical investigation, there also needs to be a minor revolution within science. Scientists need to pay more respect to work outside laboratories—field naturalists. To say that science has need of new directions, however, is one thing, to say that the west ought to abandon its hard-won tradition of critical investigation is quite another; that tradition it needs more than ever before.34

Passmore says that the view that man is the master of the world should be abandoned. Man's dominion licenses man to sustain himself by making use of what they find around them. Man can live at all only as a predator but should in no sense attempt to master them. Regarding the lordship over nature, Passmore rejects the view that nature is wax in man's hands. Nature is not all under our mastery. Science converted into

33 ibid., p176
34 ibid., p177
technology enables man to control nature, but there is still much man cannot do.

Man can transform the world into a civilized state. That is their major responsibility to their fellow men. Civilization is man’s attempts to understand and subdue nature. As such science, philosophy, technology, architectures and countryside- are all of them founded upon his attempt to understand and subdue nature. Even if the west now wants to turn back and treat nature as sacred- it is not possible, because only by transforming nature can it continue to survive. The ‘duty’ to subdue arises not out of arrogance, but it is only they who can create.

Nature exists only to serve man, as Descartes subscribes, whatever exists is of some use to us. This way man does not cast anything aside as useless rubbish and discourage the destruction of it all. The West’s history is one that has seen it rise to great heights, though often with a tragic twist. Take for instance the history of Florence from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. ‘Everything was there, genius in arts, cruelty and violence of the lowest, least forgivable, kind’. Other cultures have also appreciated the west’s achievements.

What in general Passmore has emphasised is that if the world’s ecological problems are to be solved at all, it can only be through the old fashioned procedure of thoughtful action. How and what

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we think, however, is determined not only by our brain structure but by the nature of the possibilities our societies leave open to us, the forms of thinking its traditions permit and encourage. For him, although the modern west may leave more options open than most other societies, its central stoic-Christian traditions are not favourable in the solution of its ecological problems. It is one thing to suggest that western societies must learn to be more prudent in their attitude to technical innovations, less wasteful of natural resources, more conscious of their dependence on the biosphere. It is quite another thing to suggest that they can solve their ecological problems only if they abandon the analytical, critical approach which has been their peculiar glory and go in search of a new ethics, a new metaphysics, a new religion.