

**A dissertation submitted to the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy of  
Central European University in part fulfilment of the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Environmental Virtue Ethics in the Mystical Thought of Jalal al-Din Rumi**

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**March, 2019**

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## THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

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Environmental virtue ethics (EVE) is an emerging area of scholarship within environmental ethics. It examines the questions of environmental ethics from the perspective of human character and virtues. Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi is a 13th century Muslim mystic (Sufi) whose works and teachings have gained world-wide popularity in recent decades. Rumi's views have also been the subject of some ecological analysis suggesting their significance for environmental themes. In this context, this research explores the possibility of constructing a notion of EVE from Rumi's mystical thought.

The environmental role model approach has been widely employed by EVE scholars. Some prominent figures such as Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson have been studied as environmentally virtuous personalities. This study proposes Rumi as the first non-Western, Muslim thinker whose teachings and personal example may serve as a philosophical framework and source of inspiration for cultivating environmentally sensitive mindsets, attitudes and patterns of behaviour.

Virtues should be considered holistically since they do not operate in a vacuum. They rather function within a particular philosophical background and in relation to other character traits. As such holistic notions of EVE are generally more sensitive and responsive to broader contexts. Therefore, this research aims to construct Rumi's model of EVE based on a holistic approach which consists of three pillars: cosmological framework (including images of nature), conception of human flourishing and comprehensive account of virtues and vices. Moreover, since Rumi's life and worldview predate the environmental era, understanding the environmental implications of his broader philosophy, as required by the holistic approach, is instrumental to establishing a link between his virtues and environmental themes.

The ecological value of Rumi's views is premised on a *theocentric* vision of reality. It is articulated through certain images of nature such as the conception of nature as the cosmic Self-manifestation of the Divine and the ideas of all-encompassing love and spiritual vitality in nature. Attaining such perception of reality is contingent on a certain state of mind and character which is the goal of the process of inner transformation in Rumi. Therefore, Rumi's virtues and vices are ecologically relevant for both their direct impact on nature and their role in leading self-transformation. Virtues, conceived as drivers of such transformation, may lead their possessor to (a) perceive the deeper non-material dimension of nature, (b) relate to it with a sense of respect, humility and appreciation, and (c) take responsibility for its well-being and preservation.

**Keywords:** environmental ethics, environmental virtues ethics, religion, Islam, Sufism

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# 1. Introduction

This study links two important areas of scholarship – Rumi studies and environmental virtue ethics (EVE). EVE is a relatively new field within environmental ethics. It takes a virtue-based approach to examining the ethical responses to environmental issues. It signifies a shift from the traditional emphasis on values, rights and duties towards the questions of character, human flourishing and virtues. Despite its focus on a different dimension of environmental ethics, EVE aims to complement rather than substitute the field. Its emergence within environmental ethics is attributed to the revival of the virtue ethics tradition within the broader field of moral philosophy.

Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi was a prominent Muslim scholar, poet and Sufi mystic who lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Anatolia. Rumi's works have seen a significant surge in popularity in recent decades. His poetry has been translated into many languages of the world. His ideas of morality and human character have been at the forefront of the popular and scholarly interest in his thought. Moreover, his cosmology and views of nature have been recognized as ecologically significant (see Clarke 2003; Ozdemir 2005). His ideas regarding nature's role in fulfilling the Divine purpose, e.g. as the locus of God's self-manifestation, and reflecting certain spiritual realities, e.g. spiritual vitality of nature and the universal power of love, are emphasized in this regard.

Notwithstanding his emphasis on the character aspects of morality and the relevance of his worldview to ecological themes, Rumi's views have not been studied from the standpoint of EVE. This research represents an attempt to bridge this gap. The value of such study can be explained by a number of reasons. First, EVE as a framework captures an important

dimension of environmental ethics emerging from Rumi's thought. It is of particular interest given that the primary focus of the existing literature has been on Rumi's ideas of nature. In this context, EVE offers a new perspective to the present ecological understanding of Rumi's intellectual legacy. It goes beyond elaborating his views of nature and focuses on more practical aspects of his ethics concerning ecological attitudes and behaviour. As such, the EVE approach deepens and complements the existing scholarship on Rumi.

Second, studying Rumi enriches EVE and broadens its appeal. In general, Western traditions of thought have been influential in EVE while non-Western perspectives have been underrepresented in the field. Therefore, although it is important to study the views of such pioneers as Thoreau, Leopold and Carson as environmental role models, the scope of EVE studies must not be limited to specific philosophies and religions. In this context, studying Rumi as a non-Western environmental role model has a significant value in that it adds to the diversity of views represented in EVE. Such diversity, in turn, enhances the cross-religious and cross-cultural appeal of the discipline.

Third, this research is particularly interesting because in introducing Rumi to EVE it links pre-environmental views to ecological thought. In this sense, it provides some insights into how accounts of EVE can be developed from the systems of thought belonging to a non-ecological age. It must be noted that this study is not the first study of such nature as there are some studies of the Buddhist and Christian traditions from an environmental virtue perspective<sup>1</sup>. However, this study will be the first attempt to connect a pre-environmental

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<sup>1</sup> Some of these studies will be discussed in sub-chapter 2.2.

piece of thought within the Islamic tradition to environmental themes based on a virtue ethics framework.

While there is a significant scholarly and practical value in studying Rumi from an EVE perspective, it is also important to deal with his virtues in a holistic fashion. In general, the need for considering virtues within their wider philosophical contexts has been emphasized in EVE (Wensveen 1999). Since virtues do not operate in isolation, there is a need for a holistic understanding which takes into account virtues' connections to other character traits, notions of human good and background cosmologies. A holistic approach is especially important for this research since Rumi represents a worldview different from most existing accounts of EVE. Consequently, a fuller understanding of his virtues requires the knowledge of his broader philosophy. Moreover, the spiritual dimension of existence and the condition of human being are the fundamental themes of Rumi's worldview. Therefore, an account of his virtues detached from these themes runs the risk of being partial and incomplete. Last but not least, since Rumi is a pre-environmental thinker, establishing his ecological relevance becomes a critical task. In this sense, the ecological significance of his virtues is in great part derived from the broader ecological relevance of his views of nature and human being.

In accordance with the need to analyze Rumi from an EVE perspective and in a holistic fashion, the *aim of this research will be to develop a holistic model of EVE from Rumi's mystical thought*. The holistic model will consist of three key components which include: a) cosmological framework; b) conception of human flourishing; c) account of environmental virtues and vices. The components correspond with the three aspects of the holistic approach mentioned above, i.e. background cosmology, respective idea of human good and

interconnections between character traits. Moreover, the components also determine the three objectives of this research instrumental to achieving its aim:

- 1) To examine Rumi's images of nature from an environmental perspective;
  - a) To offer new images of nature relevant to environmental themes and not previously suggested in the literature;
  - b) To analyse the existing and new images of nature from the vintage point of nature's axiology;
- 2) To develop Rumi's notion of human flourishing and evaluate its ecological significance;
- 3) To develop Rumi's account of environmental virtues and vices;
  - a) To identify Rumi's environmental virtues and vices by analysing their ecological implications for nature and human flourishing;
  - b) To offer a categorization of Rumi's environmental virtues and vices.

Achieving these objectives will produce a holistic model of EVE. By producing such model this study is expected to contribute to the general theory of EVE, Rumi scholarship and the Islam and environment discourse.

## 2. Literature review

This chapter aims to accomplish four primary objectives. Since EVE is a relatively new field of study, the *first* objective of this chapter is to contextualize the field within the broader domain of environmental ethics as well as the religion and environment and, in particular, Islam and environment debate. *Second*, the chapter will aim to review the existing scholarly works on Rumi with a particular focus on his notion of ethics and ecologically significant aspects of his thought. *Third*, since this study is an interdisciplinary effort and is expected to contribute to multiple areas of scholarship, the chapter will aim to identify those areas and specify the study's anticipated contribution. *Fourth*, it will examine the current theory of EVE to identify major trends and strategies in the field that will inform the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this research.

### 2.1. Contextualizing environmental virtue ethics

EVE has emerged in recent decades as a distinct field of study that takes a virtue ethics approach, a once largely defunct but recently revived branch of philosophy, to the questions of environmental ethics, a discipline that began to develop with the emergence of the environmental movement. Therefore, within environmental ethics EVE has its distinct theory and methodology. Early scholars in the field would dedicate much time to explaining EVE by comparing it to other dominant approaches in environmental ethics (see Hill 1983; Frasz 1993). I will use the same strategy and examine dominant themes in environmental ethics to set a background for explaining EVE. I will then examine the place of faith-based perspectives in EVE which is itself an emerging stream of research in the field. Finally, I will explore the current literature on Islam and environment and Rumi's environmental ethics for their significance for EVE.

### 2.1.1. Environmental ethics

Environmental ethics, broadly defined, is a field of philosophy that studies the ethical relationship between human beings and the natural environment (Pojman 2001; D. Keller 2010; Sandler 2013). More specifically, the discipline examines the value and moral standing of the environment (Brennan and Lo 2016) and formulates “a proper ethical response” to preserve and restore this value (Light and Rolston 2003). Environmental ethics grew into a distinct academic field in the 1970s because of rising concerns over the impact of technological progress and industrial development on the state of our natural environment. Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring*, Lynn White's 1967 article *Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* and Paul Ehrlich's 1968 book *The Population Bomb* were among the pioneering works that drew attention to the philosophical and ethical dimensions of growing environmental crisis (Brennan and Lo 2016).

Anthropocentrism was the central theme in most of the early philosophical discussions of ecological problems. The notion played a critical role in the emergence of environmental ethics as a new field of thought (Minteer 2009; Keller 2010; Palmer 2003). Keller's (2010) description of the key assumptions underlying anthropocentrism explains why the concept was so central to the environmental debate. Metaphysically, anthropocentrism holds that there is an ontological divide or dualism, similar to dualisms of culture/nature and mind/body, between human and non-human nature. This dualism has implications for the axiology of both human and nature because anthropocentrism argues that only human beings are intrinsically valuable while nature is only valuable for its use for human beings (instrumentally valuable). Finally, it is by virtue of having an intrinsic value that human beings are worthy of moral consideration. In other words, anthropocentrism holds that only human beings are valuable in themselves and, as such, deserve a moral standing while non-



human beings lacking in intrinsic value are outside the circle of moral consideration. A wide range of environmental theories have been put forward in response to anthropocentrism. To set a background for explaining some of these theories, it would be important to discuss briefly the theory of value (axiology), another key concept in environmental ethics, which is, as partly shown above, closely connected to anthropocentrism.

There are two categories of values in the literature on environmental ethics: instrumental and intrinsic<sup>2</sup>. *Instrumental value* is the value of objects, activities and states of affair as a means or instruments to some other ends while *intrinsic value* is their value as ends in themselves regardless of their role in achieving other ends (O'Neill, Holland, and Light 2008). The two categories are related to other broader concepts in environmental meta-ethics: *subjectivism* and *objectivism*. *Subjectivism* holds that values attached to nature are created by human beings and are dependent on human consciousness for their existence while *objectivism* maintains that nature's value inheres in nature itself and has an objective existence independent of human consciousness<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, subjectivism is considered to be conducive to anthropocentrism while objectivism is conducive to non-anthropocentrism (Keller 2010). In this context, it is held that an anthropocentric value theory views human beings as intrinsically valuable while non-human nature is valuable only instrumentally. A non-anthropocentric value theory ascribes intrinsic value to not only human beings but also to non-human beings (Callicott 1984).

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<sup>2</sup> "Instrumental value" is generally compared with "intrinsic value". Although, it must be noted, there are those, most notably Koorsgaard, who object to such contrast and contend that "extrinsic value" is a proper term to be contrasted to "intrinsic value" while "instrumental value" is to be compared with "final value". "Extrinsic value" refers to something's relational properties as opposed to its intrinsic, non-relational properties as posited by "intrinsic value". See Zimmerman (2015) for further discussion on this subject.

<sup>3</sup> Put differently, the main difference between subjectivist and objectivist notions of value is whether such value is projected on objects by human beings or it is something already in existence which must be recognized by human consciousness (Palmer 2003)

An important area of environmental axiology is the location of intrinsic value. More specifically, if a natural entity is contended to have an intrinsic value then the properties based on which such value is attributed to it must be explained. There have been a wide array of responses to this question. There are two major categories of attributes in this regard: properties of individual organisms, e.g. consciousness, sentience and flourishing, and abstract qualities, e.g. diversity, richness and balance (Palmer 2003). Some of these value attributes will be touched upon when environmental theories are examined below.

Thus, due to the narrow scope of intrinsic value and moral standing maintained by anthropocentrism, environmental ethics as a discipline has attempted to expand the boundaries of moral consideration beyond human beings to encompass non-human natural entities by employing different notions of value (Keller 2010). As a result, two distinct groups of theories have been developed. *One group* argues that there is no need for a new form of environmental ethics and that environmental concerns must be addressed within the existing anthropocentric framework. Instead of re-examining the notions of intrinsic value and moral status of non-human nature, they appeal to human self-interest in arguing for the preservation of the natural environment. Therefore, this group of theories is often called *enlightened* or *prudential* anthropocentrisms (Passmore 1974; Norton 1987; O'Neill 1993). The existence of anthropocentric environmental ethics points to a variety of views on anthropocentrism in environmental literature. Although a good deal of environmental literature refers to the negative conception of anthropocentrism associated with human domination and exploitation of nature, it is important to acknowledge the presence of more positive forms of anthropocentrism considered as a basis for an environmental ethics. The *second group* of theories, unlike enlightened anthropocentrism, are premised on moral extensionism. There are three major theories in this group: animal rights, biocentrism and

ecocentrism (holism). While all of these theories call for some form of moral extension, the scope and content of their extensions vary. Briefly, *animal rights*, also known as animal liberation, argues for the extension of moral standing to non-human animals. There are two prominent proponents of this theory – Singer (1974) and Regan (1983) and each advocates a different version of animal rights. Singer arguing on utilitarian premises holds that animals are sentient beings and, as such, have an interest to avoid pain and increase pleasure. Therefore, it is human duty to consider this interest in the treatment of animals. Regan grounds his theory in the “rights” discourse and argues that all “subjects-of-a-life” which also includes animals possess “inherent value” and this value puts moral limits to human action in relation to animals (Cochrane, n.d.). Unlike animal rights, *biocentrism* holds that all living organisms must be granted moral status because they have a good of their own which they aim to achieve even if they are not conscious of this fact (see Taylor 1986). *Ecocentrism* emphasizes the interdependence of living things and, instead of individual organisms, it ascribes moral standing to holistic entities such ecosystems and species (see Callicott 1998). Another group of theories in environmental ethics which represent a departure from anthropocentrism and ethical extensionism is the “radical ecology” movement which includes such theories as deep ecology (see Naess 1973; Devall and Sessions 1998), social ecology (see Bookchin 1982) and ecofeminism (see Plumwood 1993; Warren 2000). Although the theories within the “radical ecology” movement are diverse, they commonly argue that the extensionist approach is insufficient because it operates within the traditional human-centred framework. Another feature of radical ecologies is that they call for fundamental social and institutional changes and, thus, have a distinctly political element (Cochrane, n.d.).

It is also important to note here that despite its clear goal to challenge the anthropocentrism deeply entrenched in traditional ethical theories, environmental ethics was significantly

influenced by the same theories of ethics, in particular, *consequentialism* and *deontology* (Brennan and Lo 2016). These theories are concerned with the moral quality of acts expressed through the categories of *right* and *wrong*. According to consequentialism, the morality of an act is to be judged by the outcomes it aims to produce. To this end, a certain state of affairs is first determined as intrinsically valuable and the acts that increase this state of affairs are considered to be morally right (Alexander and Moore 2016). In deontological theories of morality, choices are evaluated by their accordance with a moral principle. Thus, an act is considered to be morally right on account of certain characteristics of the act itself, not because of the outcomes it brings about (Alexander and Moore 2016). Among prominent environmental theories, animal welfare, for instance, is a utilitarian (consequentialist) theory while biocentrism and ecocentrism are deontological theories of ethics. The influence of consequentialist and deontological theories can be seen in the types of questions that environmental ethics have been trying to address throughout its relatively short history. Some of these interrelated questions include: *What is and should be the value of nature - instrumental, intrinsic or something else? Do nature and its non-human components have any moral status? What are our moral duties toward nature? How is the morality of our actions toward nature to be determined?* In this context, the development of a virtue-based approach in environmental ethics signified the growing influence of another theory of ethics which was gaining prominence in moral philosophy and which deals with a different set of questions.

### **2.1.2. Virtue Ethics**

Almost concurrently with the evolution of environmental ethics, the second half of the 20th century also witnessed the revival of an ancient branch of moral philosophy known as virtue ethics. Virtue ethics traces its roots to ancient Greek philosophy, more notably to Aristotle. It

has both secular and religious<sup>4</sup> forms and had dominated Western moral thought until the Enlightenment period (Keown 2007). However, beginning with the Enlightenment virtue ethics went through a prolonged decline<sup>5</sup> and it was not until the late 1950s that interest in it re-emerged due in great part to some influential works<sup>6</sup> in the field. Anscombe's (1985) seminal article *Modern Moral Philosophy* expressed a growing concern about the inadequacy of dominant forms of ethics - deontology and consequentialism (utilitarianism) - for moral philosophy and pointed out the virtue ethics tradition as an alternative form of ethics. Unlike deontology and consequentialism, which emphasize the fulfilment of duties and achievement of best consequences as prerequisites for the right action, virtue ethics concerns character and virtues in its deliberations about morality. Rather than asking "What is the right action?", which is the standard question of deontology and consequentialism, virtue ethics asks "How should one live? What kind of person should one be?". While the question about the right action is about responding to specific problems in particular situations, the questions about character are about an entire life (Athanasoulis n.d.).

### **2.1.3. Environmental virtues ethics**

The rise of virtue discourse in environmental ethics can be attributed to the revival of virtue ethics in moral philosophy. As such, a virtue-based approach was a new way of looking at the problems of environmental ethics by asking an entirely different set of questions. Therefore, EVE was considered to be "a new direction" (Frasz 1993) in the field. It embodied a shift from traditional questions of value, moral standing and human duties to non-human beings towards deeper questions of moral character and virtues (vices) in dealing with environmental

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<sup>4</sup> Keown (2007) notes that Thomas Aquinas is credited with the introduction of virtue ethics into the Christian thought

<sup>5</sup> See Cooper and James (2005) for an overview of factors which led to the eclipse of virtue ethics in the Enlightenment period

<sup>6</sup> Most notably, Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy" (1958), Philippa Foot's "Virtues and Vices, and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy" (1978) and MacIntyre's "After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory" (1981).

problems<sup>7</sup>. While the former would operate within predominantly deontological and consequentialist frameworks, the latter would be based in the virtue ethics tradition. In terms of more specific questions, there was a shift from asking standard questions such as “Do animals have rights?”, “Do they have intrinsic value?” or “Why is it wrong to wantonly destroy natural entities?” toward asking questions such as “What sort of person would wantonly destroy nature?” “What sort of personal qualities are needed for the humane treatment of non-human nature?” (Frasz 1993). It is important to note, however, that despite its new focus and approach EVE does not on the whole aim to replace conventional environmental ethics but rather to complement and enrich it since environmental ethics is considered incomplete without a virtue-based approach (Cafaro 2005b).

#### **2.1.4. Emergence of EVE**

One can distinguish two periods in environmental literature regarding the use of virtue-based approaches: (a) a pre-EVE period that is characterized by partial and occasional discussion of virtues and vices; (b) an EVE period that is characterized by the evolution of EVE into a separate field of study with distinct theory and methodology.

Wensveen (1999) states that any piece of “ecologically sensitive philosophy, theology, or ethics” incorporates, to a certain degree, a virtue language. This point seems to hold true considering the fact that early writers and activists who catalysed the environmental movement often employed virtue language in some way. For instance, Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) views arrogance as the cardinal vice responsible for environmental destruction and advocates humility as a proper ecological attitude. Lynn White (1967) distinguishes arrogance and domination of nature embedded in the Judeo-Christian tradition of thought as

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<sup>7</sup> For ideas about why the virtue ethics approach has taken some time to come to prominence in the field of environmental ethics, see Wensveen’s *Dirty Virtues: The Emergence of Ecological Virtue Ethics* (1999)

deep philosophical roots of distorted human-nature relationship and suggests humility of St. Francis of Assisi as an ecologically sensitive virtue. In one of the earliest environmental philosophy books, *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (1974), Passmore identified greed, self-indulgence and short-sightedness as vices which had brought about environmental degradation and offered thoughtful action as a value which can us help avert the ecological crisis. Furthermore, recent studies of the life and works of some figures that are regarded as the predecessors of the environmental movement such as Henry David Thoreau and Aldo Leopold (see Shaw 1997; Cafaro 2005b) point to the presence of a strong environmental virtue element in their writings. Thus, virtue language had been a part of ecological literature even in the pre-EVE period, however its application was rather sporadic and without using a coherent theoretical framework.

The first attempts to apply an explicitly virtue-based approach to environmental problems was made by such scholars as Thomas Hill (1983)<sup>8</sup>, Geoffrey Frasz (1993)<sup>9</sup>, and John O'Neil (1993)<sup>10</sup> which marked the beginning of the EVE period. Hill's pioneering article offers preliminary insights into what an analysis of environmental issues from a virtue perspective may look like. The article consists of three components which seem to be typical of most early literature in EVE. First, it makes a case for a virtue-based approach in environmental ethics and explains the shift that such an approach would require. Second, it proposes a theoretical framework for working with virtues by introducing the concept of "psychological preliminaries". The concept denotes certain character traits which constitute "a natural basis for the development of certain virtues". Third, based on this framework, the article analyses "proper humility" as a cardinal environmental virtue. Frasz's article displays a similar

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Hill, 1983. *Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments*.

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Frasz, 1993. *Environmental Virtue Ethics: A New Direction for Environmental Ethics*.

<sup>10</sup> John O'Neil, 1993. *Ecology, Policy and Politics: Human Well-Being and the Natural World*.

thematic organization. He explains the EVE approach by comparing it to deontological and utilitarian theories of ethics. He then examines some theoretical matters pertaining to this nascent field and proposes a conceptual tool for considering virtues in terms of a mean, deficiency and excess (to be discussed later). Finally, he evaluates Hill's (1983) "proper humility" and offers his own "openness" as an alternative version of humility. Wensveen's (1999) highly influential book on EVE *Dirty Virtues: The Emergence of Ecological Virtue Ethics* describes several features of the EVE discourse, develops a catalogue of environmental virtues and vices and offers a re-interpretation of courage and the traditional Seven Deadly Sins as environmental virtues and vices. These and subsequent literature have contributed to the development of a more elaborate and comprehensive theory of EVE and expanded the case studies of specific environmental virtues and vices.

## **2.2. Religion and environmental virtue ethics**

Religion has been a part of environmental ethics since its very beginning. Lynn White's influential article *Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* (1967) played a critical role in drawing religion to the centre stage of the environmental debate. While environmental ethics aimed to challenge anthropocentrism, White argued that the dominant form of the Judaeo-Christian tradition was, in fact, the source of the anthropocentric worldview and attitudes and, as such, was responsible for the modern ecological crisis. This triggered a vigorous debate and a wide range of responses from within the Christian tradition<sup>11</sup>, "from defensive denial to revisionary agreement" (Jenkins and Chapple 2011). Along with criticizing Christianity for promoting attitudes which brought about environmental degradation, White's article also established the link between religion and environment (Jenkins and Chapple 2011). As a result, writers from almost all major religions articulated their traditions' responses to the

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<sup>11</sup> For a summary of arguments on both sides of the debate see *Christianity as Ecologically Harmful* (Kinsley 1996a) and *Christianity as Ecologically Responsible* (Kinsley 1996b)



ecological crisis. Although virtue language was often employed in many of these writings, specific attempts to explore the link between religion and virtues have been absent from the EVE literature for some time. Wensveen (1999) is, perhaps, the first author to give religion a significant place in her analysis of EVE. She examines Thomas Berry's *The Dream of the Earth* for its ecological virtue component<sup>12</sup>. She also revisits Christianity's Seven Deadly Sins and offers their re-interpretation as ecological vices. Another prominent EVE scholar Sandler (2005) in his introduction to, perhaps, the second most important book<sup>13</sup> in the field of EVE observes that accounts of human excellence do not have to be limited to secular and naturalistic worldviews. He argues that religious traditions can also be a source of human excellence which often transcend the natural and define human excellence in relation to the Divine or cosmic. In the same book, Taliaferro (2005) talks about internal and external contexts which explain the differences between religious and secular accounts of virtues. He offers a general and cursory analysis of environmental virtues that are common to theistic religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam and contrasts them with a non-theistic philosophy of Buddhism.

Although the above-mentioned authors made pioneering attempts to look into the relationship between religion and EVE, they do not conduct a fulsome and detailed study of a religious tradition from an EVE standpoint. However, it seems to be clear that they establish the importance of religion for EVE. Taliaferro (2005), for instance, presents several arguments for the study of religious environmental virtues. Three of these considerations are worth summarizing here. *First*, religious worldviews provide "a comprehensive metaphysical framework" for addressing more specific questions of environmental ethics. *Second*, since

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<sup>12</sup> Wensveen acknowledges that Berry's philosophy although carrying certain features of Christian sensibilities "cannot be described as Christian in any orthodox sense of the word". However, she also recognizes that religion is important for Berry's understanding of "how we can move from an ecological crisis to an ecological society"

<sup>13</sup> *Environmental Virtue Ethics* edited by Ronald Sandler and Philip Cafaro (2005)

religion is an important force for the majority of the world population, religious values should be taken into consideration if we are to engage with the world. *Third*, religiously defined accounts of human flourishing can be an important force in EVE's attempt to challenge narrow economic values. Taliaferro puts it this way:

Finally, religious conceptions of human flourishing are important to consider, as they are, socially and philosophically, an important challenge to consumptive, economically defined values in popular culture, the marketplace and politics. ... historically they have often delimited a sphere that is independent of economic values (e.g., the worth of a religious rite is not measureable solely in economic terms) and one that can serve as a base for critically assessing economic values.

As will be demonstrated in the next section, each of these considerations in some way informs the rationale and framework of this research. However, all of them jointly point to a need for more faith-based perspectives in EVE. This is the area of research to which this study aims to make its unique contribution by exploring Rumi's religious thought from an EVE perspective.

In addition to solidifying the place of religion within the EVE discourse, the existing body of literature also contains some recent case studies of specific religious traditions employing the EVE approach. The following works examine the contribution of Buddhist and Christian traditions to EVE: Cooper and James' (2005) *Buddhism, Virtue and Environment*, Keown's (2007) *Buddhism and Ecology: A Virtue Ethics Approach*, Pragati Sahni's (2008) *Environmental Ethics in Buddhism: A Virtues Approach* and Deane-Drummond's (2004) *The Ethics of Nature*. Some of these studies helped to shape the theory and methodology of this search. They will be revisited in chapter 3 and 4.

### **2.2.1. Islam and environment**

As a major world religion Islam's perspective on environmental ethics has been

underrepresented in the environmental discourse (Kula 2001). Some scholars working in this field argue that, unlike other monotheistic religions, Islam is clear of the burden of “explaining any scriptural imperatives” for the modern ecological crisis (Haq 2003). On the contrary, ecological problems are seen as a product of the Western civilization and the Muslim world is claimed to be co-opted to the Western economic system (Khalid 2002). Although many scholars are critical of environmentally destructive economies and consumption-driven lifestyles in Muslim countries, these are not viewed as products of the Islamic worldview. According to Erdur (1997), the discussion of environmental issues by Muslim scholars often carries an anti-modern and anti-Western tone. Kula (2001) attributes such orientation of Islamic environmental discourse to the influence of the political Islamic ideology that focuses on such issues as the usury-driven financial system and global economic order<sup>14</sup>. While this analysis may hold true for a part of the literature on Islam and environment, there is a significant focus in the literature on the articulation of Islamic theological views and ethical principles which are regarded as the foundation of Islamic environmental ethics.

It seems possible to summarize the themes that have dominated the discussion on Islam and environment under three broader categories: a) theological views of nature; b) conceptions of human being; c) legal principles regarding the use of natural resources and treatment of animals.

#### **a) Theological views of nature**

In terms of terminology, it is important to note the Qur'an does not use the word *nature*. Instead, it contains numerous references to the word *creation* (*khalq*) which includes both

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<sup>14</sup> For the discussion of usury-driven financial system and global economic order see, for instance, Dutton (1998) and Khalid (1998, 2002).

human beings and the rest of creation (Khalid 2002; Ouis 1998). The eco-theological significance of nature in Islam is grounded in the principle of *tawhid* which is the fundamental principle of monotheism in Islam. It is the testimony to the Unity of God, the Creator. It also signifies the unity of all creation both human and non-human which originate from the Divine source (Khalid 2002). Tawhid rejects any form of dualism other than the Creator and the created. It is viewed as the foundation of the holistic view in Islam as it sees the universe as a comprehensive and integrated whole (Ouis 1998; Ozdemir 2003). It must be noted here that the classical Sufism (mystical tradition of Islam) takes a different approach to the principle of unity as it often rejects any sort of dualism between God and creation. This may have varying implications for environmental ethics which will be discussed later on. For now, I will review major environmental concepts and principles which are based on *tawhid* as the foundational doctrine of Islam.

God is the absolute owner of creation. Everything in the universe is created by God and everything belongs to Him. This is a fundamental tenet of Islamic monotheism stated in the following verse of the Qur'an which says "And to Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and earth. All are to Him devoutly obedient." (30:26). This implies that human beings are not the masters of creation because they do not hold the ownership of creation (Naseef 1998). By virtue of being created by God creation is inherently good. Therefore, unlike the Christian doctrine which views the world as unredeemable, creation is not to be held in contempt and disdained (Haq 2003). In fact, there is a profound wisdom in the creation of the world since God reveals Himself through His creation. Therefore, the universe is regarded as the *ayat* (sign) of the Divine and it is noteworthy the same word *ayat* is used in reference to the verses of the Qur'an itself. Moreover, according to the Islamic view, it is God Himself who is considered to be the ultimate environment. Needless to say, the view has not traditionally

understood the concept of environment in its modern meaning and linked it to ecological problems. However, according to Chittick (1986) the Qur'an describes God as *al-Muhit*, a Divine name mentioned in "And ever is Allah, of all things, encompassing" (Qur'an 4:126) which considers God to be the one who surrounds or the "Environer". In this view, being conscious of God is to see God as *muhit* (everywhere), and as a result, to recognize the sacredness of nature (Nasr 1998). According to Ozdemir (2003), such awareness of the Divine presence in one's environment, natural or otherwise, enhances one's moral sense which comes to guide the person's actions.

Creation works according to *fitrah* - a natural or primordial pattern established by God. This pattern represents the totality of laws which govern nature and its processes (Khalid 2002). Due to its compliance with these laws the universe is called *muslim* - someone or something in a state of submission to the Divine will (Ozdemir 2003). There are two features defining the natural pattern of creation which are balance (*mizan*)<sup>15</sup> and measure (*qadr*)<sup>16</sup>. They point to the interconnectedness of creation which must be taken into account in human beings' interactions with the environment (Abdel Haleem 1998) since they are a part of the same natural pattern<sup>17</sup>. For humans acting in accordance with *fitrah* is a matter of choice as they have the ability to interfere with it. Therefore, their goal is to recognize their fragility and the limits to their actions and wilfully submit to the pattern of creation (Khalid 1998). Doing otherwise by disrupting the cosmic order and balance may lead to irreparable self-harm and destruction.

## **b) Human being**

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<sup>15</sup> Qur'an 15:19

<sup>16</sup> Qur'an 65:03

<sup>17</sup> "[Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah." (Qur'an: 30:30).

Concerning the human-nature relationship in Islam, eco-writers (e.g., Dutton 1998; Baker 1998) generally acknowledge the Qur’anic verses which establish the subservience of nature to human. For instance, “Do you not see that Allah has made subject to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth? (31:20)”<sup>18</sup>. However, the notion of nature’s subservience, as suggested by the same writers, must be combined with the sense of responsibility on the part of human beings. Such responsibility is based in the human role as *khalifa* which presents human as God’s vicegerent or steward on earth<sup>19</sup>. As noted above, humans are embedded in nature; they are neither outside nor above it. However, there is also something unique about human beings. Their inner identity has something from the Divine essence because God breathed His spirit into human (Ouis 1998). Therefore, the inner dimension of human is considered to be the sign (*ayat*) of God along with the universe and the verses of the Qur’an. It is this “theomorphic nature” of human beings that makes them the vicegerents or servants of God (Haq 2003). Thus, God appointed human beings as His representatives on earth and assigned them the stewardship of His creation. As creation is a trust (*amana*) to human beings, they have a moral responsibility for keeping it in its primordial or natural state (*fitrah*) (Khalid 2002).

### c) Legal principles

Certain legal principles and institutions have been instrumental to developing the Islamic notion of environmental protection. To put it in context, it is important to distinguish two foundations of Islamic ethics: a) ethical consciousness embedded in *fitrah*<sup>20</sup> – the original state of human soul that is believed to have a moral capacity, unless distorted, to distinguish

<sup>18</sup> See also Qur’an 2:29; 22:65; 55:10

<sup>19</sup> “And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.”” (Qur’an 2:30)

<sup>20</sup> As discussed earlier, *fitrah* is an important concept in Islam’s understanding of creation. It also pertains to the inner aspects of human nature. As such, it seems to be relevant to Islam’s understanding of virtues which will be discussed later on.

between good and bad and b) legal foundation of Islamic ethics (Izzi Dien 1990). In the legal domain, the following principles have been emphasized as the components of the Islamic legal perspective on the environment: doing what is right, forbidding what is wrong and acting with moderation (Khalid 2002; Saniotis 2012), establishing *hima* – conservation zones (Izzi Dien 1990; Ouis 1998; Haq 2003; Saniotis 2012) and *haram* – inviolable zones (Izzi Dien 1990; Ouis 1998; Dutton 1998), *ihya al-mawat* – reclamation of uncultivated land (Dutton 1998; Khalid 2002; Haq 2003), *hisba* – agency comprised of a public inspector who ensures the proper use and protection of public and private resources (Ouis 1998; Khalid 2002) and *waqf* – donating land for public good including conservation purposes<sup>21</sup> (see Ouis 1998; Khalid 2002).

Among the natural resources water has a special significance with important metaphysical and practical dimensions. The word water (*ma'*) is mentioned in the Qur'an numerous times and it is used for the ritual ablution (*wudu*) Muslims perform before their daily prayers. Therefore, Islamic law prohibits the monopolization, pollution and wasting of water resources (Abdel Haleem 1998). Animals are another major component of environmental protection in Islam. By being sentient beings animals are considered to have some legal rights and although the dependence of human life on animal life for its sustenance is recognized, there is a moral and legal obligation to minimize suffering and avoid unnecessary harm to animals (Llewellyn 2003).

In general, Wensveen's (1999) observation that certain virtue language has been integral to environmental ethics literature from its outset (despite the rise of EVE as a field at a later period) appears to be true for the Islamic literature on the environment. There are some

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<sup>21</sup> In a broad sense, *waqf* refers to any form of endowment, e.g. land, money, property and even one's life, made to a religious or charitable cause

references to the matters of virtues and character in the existing literature even though the subject is not addressed in a comprehensive manner. For instance, Khalid (1998) attributes the shortfalls in human treatment of nature to the “atrophy of intelligence”, ingratitude and sense of indifference and advises cultivating love and gratitude as proper attitudes towards creation. Baker (1998) considers the admonition of haughtiness and its manifestation in “boastful displays of wealth” and the advancement of moderation and distributive justice to be the Qur’anic ethical code to guide human actions. Ouis (1998) points out humility, responsibility and openness to self-examination as important attributes which must define the human relationship with nature. She also notes that understanding the negative aspects of human nature would be an important part of addressing the problem pointing to such qualities as arrogance, egoism, injustice, ingratitude and transgression. The implications of these studies for the current research are two-fold. *First of all*, the presence of virtue language points to the broader significance of addressing Islamic environmental ethics from a virtue perspective. *Second*, the discussions of environmental virtues in Islamic literature are rather unsystematic and fragmentary and lack in a clear theoretical framework. This reveals an important gap in the field because despite some partial efforts there is no comprehensive analysis of an Islamic version of EVE. This is where examining Rumi’s thought from an EVE point of view gains in importance. Given his influence in the mystical tradition of Islam (Lewis 2000), a concept of EVE grounded in his thought would provide an important insight into the virtue-based understanding of Islam’s environmental ethics.

### **2.2.2. Sufism, virtues and environment**

It is possible to understand the main themes emerging from the Islamic environmental discourse in light of the major traditions or disciplines of Islam such as Islamic theology (*kalam*), Islamic law (*shari’ah*) and Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf* or *Sufism*). The division of these disciplines is based on a famous *hadith* (Prophetic tradition) that distinguishes three



dimensions of Islam<sup>22</sup>: *iman* (belief), *Islam* (practice) and *ihsan* (doing what is beautiful and excellence)<sup>23</sup>. According to this classification of disciplines, conceptions of God, nature and human being are the matters of belief which are examined by Islamic theology. Legal principles and rulings regarding the practice of Islam are addressed by Islamic law. The last dimension of Islam which concerns the inner aspects of human existence is the focus of Sufism. Predominance of the first two traditions (Islamic theology and Islamic law) in the Islamic eco-literature appears to echo the influence of deontological approaches in the broader field of environment ethics. This leaves Islamic mysticism, the tradition which Rumi belongs to, as a little explored area of Islamic environmental thought. Since EVE is a major pillar of this research, it would be particularly important to examine the relevance of Sufism to virtue ethics, on the one hand, and the environment, on the other hand. This will be the purpose of the following discussion.

As far as ethics is concerned, it seems to be an essential part of Sufism's concern for the inner dimension of human existence. It is based on the idea that the human self has two levels or states. The *lower self* represents carnal desires and negative dispositions present in human being and the *higher self* represents the manifestation of the Divine in human nature. The latter is based on the idea that human being is created in God's image and represents human being's latent capacity to reflect the totality of the Divine attributes. Transforming one's inner being from the state of the lower self to that of the higher self, which is possible by purifying the soul (*tazkiya-i nafs*) from evil qualities and cultivating the opposites of those qualities (the Divine attributes), is regarded as a critical part of the Sufi path (Schimmel 1975). It is also instrumental to the ultimate goal of Sufism which is to attain the mystical union with God.

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<sup>22</sup> The account of the three dimensions of Islam based on the Prophetic tradition and the disciplines emerging from each of these dimensions has often been used by traditional Muslim scholars and more recently by contemporary scholars of Islam (e.g., Sachiko and Chittick 1994) to explain the general view of the religion.

<sup>23</sup> This *hadith* appears in *Sahih Bukhari* no:47

Nasr (2007) notes that this union should not be understood as the union of God and human being per se but rather as the union of the Divine element in human, as opposed to the ego, with its real source, the Creator. To this end, a person should refine his character or “polish the mirror of his inner being”, to use the allegorical language of classical Sufism, so that it can perform its original function which is to reflect the Divine names and attributes. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the notion of *fanā*’ (annihilation) which also refers to the process of self-purification or annihilation of one’s lower qualities is considered to be mainly an ethical concept in Sufism (Schimmel 2017).

Such understanding of human nature in Sufism points to a significant character dimension in its vision of ethics. It also explains the unique insight that Sufism brings into Islam’s broader understanding of morality. In Sufi understanding, moral action does not merely result from knowing the theological doctrines and legal rulings or principles of Islam but primarily from the transformation of the inner life where preoccupation with self is restrained and concern for others becomes dominant (Heck 2006). Put differently, in contrast to Islamic theology’s articulation of moral principles through doctrines and Islamic law’s translation of ethics into legal rulings, Sufism is more concerned with the practice and internalization of ethics into the attributes of human soul or character. This seems to suggest that a virtue-based perspective can be a relevant approach to exploring the Sufi notion of ethics.

Moreover, according to Nasr (2007), in Sufism virtues are not reduced to emotional attitudes because they have a certain metaphysical dimension and must be understood in accordance with such dimension. For instance, humility is not simply a disposition to humble oneself before God but rather a spiritual virtue cultivated with a broader metaphysical awareness of one’s nothingness before the Absolute being of God. Such conception of virtues in Sufism

appears to be congruent with a recent trend in the EVE theory to address virtues holistically within their broader cosmological background (Wensveen 1999). This trend will be discussed in more detail in sub-chapter 2.3.

The foregoing discussion points to a potential link between Sufism's focus on character and virtue-orientation of EVE. Notwithstanding this connection, however, the very link between Sufism and the environment appears to be more nuanced and complex. Afzaal's (2005) analysis is particularly noteworthy in this regard since he emphasizes two characteristics of Islamic mysticism which may present both a challenge and opportunity, depending on how they are interpreted, for developing a form of "eco-Sufism". The *first* characteristic is Sufism's ascetic orientation (*zuhd*). It was the major force which historically led to the emergence of Sufism as a distinct tradition in Islam. It was a response to rapidly increasing wealth on early Muslim territories and the dominance of legal formalism in Islamic disciplines. Afzaal further explains that the extreme forms of asceticism tend to over-emphasize one's mystical relationship with God to the extent of ignoring the social and ecological realities of life while more moderate forms of asceticism may be ecologically important for their role in countering attachment to material wealth and excessive consumption. The *second* characteristic is related to the prominent and controversial doctrine of the Unity of Existence (*Wahdat al-Wujud*). In essence, the doctrine holds that things other than God have no real existence, i.e. their being cannot be properly attributed to them because they borrow their existence from God<sup>24</sup>. According to Afzaal, the Unity of Being has important implications for the way Sufism views nature. One of the views regards nature as sacred since its existence comes from that of God's and its relative reality serves as a sign of God's Ultimate Reality. Ecologically, this view may provide a foundation for the inherent

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<sup>24</sup> For a detailed exposition of the doctrine see Nasr (2007)

worth of nature. The other view sees the material world as an illusion deserving no real concern on the part of human because it has no existence of its own.

Sufism's complex relationship with ecological themes should be considered when exploring the general relevance of Rumi's ideas to environmental thought. In the next section, I will review the current literature dealing with Rumi's views of morality and the ecological significance of his worldview. The ultimate goal is to demonstrate that the current scholarship on the subject reveals a potential ground for an EVE study in Rumi. However, such review is different from the original analysis, which I am going to present in chapters 5-12, that examines Rumi's thought to develop a model of EVE. This theme has not been explored in the literature before.

### **2.2.3. Rumi, virtues and environment**

#### **a) About Rumi**

Mawlana Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi was born on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1207 in the city of Balkh, present-day Afghanistan. Because of the tumultuous political situation in the region, Rumi's family had to leave Balkh when he was a young boy. After several years of journey visiting different Muslim lands, Rumi's family finally settled in the Anatolian city of Konya, modern Turkey. Rumi is the name by which he is commonly known in the West. The name literally means "the Roman" and was given to Jalal al-Din Muhammad because the Anatolian region was known as Rum at the time, hence Rumi.

Rumi's father Muhammad Baha al-Din Valad was an eminent scholar of his time in the region of Khorasan<sup>25</sup>. Exact reasons that forced Baha al-Din to migrate from Balkh are not known. It is often related to inhospitable relationships and pressure from some religious

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<sup>25</sup> Historical region now comprising a territory in north-eastern Iran, Central Asia and northern Afghanistan.

scholars as well as rulers<sup>26</sup> of the day (Can 2004). Before arriving in Konya, Rumi's family spent seven years in Larende (Karaman, Turkey) where Rumi got married at the age of seventeen but later lost his mother, Mumina Khatun, and shortly after his brother, Ala al-Din Muhammad. Baha al-Din with the rest of his family moved to Konya, which was the capital of the Seljuk Empire at the time, in 1229 on the invitation of Sultan Ala al-Din Kay Qobad. In Konya, he resumed his activity as a preacher until his death in 1231.

When Baha al-Din died, Rumi was perhaps not ready, given his age and yet uncompleted education, to succeed his father and therefore Burhan al-Din Muhaqqiq, Baha al-Din's disciple, came to temporarily assume his role and mentor Rumi (Lewis 2000). Although Rumi's religious training was initiated by his father, it was under Burhan al-Din's mentorship that he travelled to Aleppo and Damascus to study formal religious sciences between 1232 and 1237. After his return from Syria, he deepened his knowledge and practice of the spiritual discipline of Islam with Burhan al-Din. By the end of this period, Rumi found himself at the peak of a remarkable career as a lecturer, jurisprudent and spiritual guide.

Rumi's encounter with Shams al-Din of Tabriz, a wandering dervish (mystic), on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1244 would be a turning point in his life and have a profound transformative impact on him. According to Nicholson (1950), Rumi "found in the stranger that perfect image of the Divine Beloved which he had long been seeking. He took him away to his house, and for a year or two they remained inseparable". However, Rumi's dedication to this eccentric mystic was not favoured by some people including some of his disciples and family members. As a result of this growing pressure, Shams had to leave Konya in March, 1246. Devastated by Shams' departure, Rumi sent his son Sultan Valad to bring him back and Shams returned to

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<sup>26</sup> During the time of Baha al-Din's life the region was ruled by the Khwarezmid dynasty.

the town in April, 1247. However, the hostility toward him persisted and in December, 1247 Shams disappeared again but this time for good. The loss of Shams and ensuing loneliness distressed and tormented Rumi deeply. He frantically searched for him travelling to Damascus several times and when he lost his hope altogether, he started to realize the presence of Shams in his own heart. Sometime after losing Shams, he developed close spiritual friendships with Salah al-Din Zarkub and later on Husam ad-Din Chalabi and regained his inner peace and serenity through these friendships. Rumi died in Konya on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1273.

For many centuries, Rumi has attracted much interest in the Islamic civilization especially in what is now Turkey, Iran, India, Pakistan and parts of Central Asia. Numerous commentaries were written on his works (e.g. Bursalı 1870; Nicholson 1925; Furuzanfar 1968; Zarrin’kub 1985)<sup>27</sup> and his teachings had a wide-spread cultural and spiritual influence throughout this geography (Iqbal 1974). Rumi has been known in the West since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through European travellers and orientalist (Schimmel 1975; Lewis 2000). However, recent years have seen a rapidly growing interest in Rumi’s poetry which appeals to a broad range of readers from ordinary people to academics. An entire body of scholarly literature has been produced looking into various aspects of Rumi’s thought.<sup>28</sup> Rumi was recognized as the best-selling poet in America (Ciabattari 2014; Kafka 2017). His works are widely read internationally since translations of his writings have become available in many languages of

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<sup>27</sup> For a detailed review of Rumi’s commentators from premodern period to the twentieth century see Lewis (2000)

<sup>28</sup> It is important to differentiate between the verse by verse commentaries on Rumi’s works and the efforts to thematically systematize his views. The first attempt at the latter type of Rumi scholarship, according to Lewis (2000), can be attributed to Shebli No’mani who in his *Savaneh-e Mowlana Rum* “made a brief effort to group the contents of the *Masnavi* under various philosophical and religious categories”. A similar effort was made in Nicholson’s *Selected poems from the Divani Shamsi Tabriz* (1898). Some major works in English aiming to present a more systematic examination of Rumi’s thought include Khalifa Abdul Hakim’s *The metaphysics of Rumi: a critical and historical sketch* (1959), Afzal Iqbal’s *The life and work of Jalal-ud-din Rumi* (1983) and Annamarie Schimmel’s *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi* (1993) and *Rumi’s world: the life and work of the great Sufi poet* (2001) as well as William Chittck’s *The Sufi path of love: the spiritual teachings of Rumi* (1983).

the world. In 2007, the United Nations Scientific, Education and Cultural Organization celebrated the 800th anniversary of Rumi's birth and launched a commemorative medal bearing the poet's portrait (UNESCO n.d.). Rumi's broad appeal is commonly attributed to the power of his poetry and universal character of his teachings which transcend the cultural and religious boundaries.

### **b) Rumi and ethics**

Rumi goes to great lengths to explain human nature in his writings and therefore his views of human have been a key part of numerous scholarly works on his thought to date (for instance, Hakim 1959; Iqbal 1983; Chittick 1983; Schimmel 2001; Khosla 1987; Türkmen 1992; Altintas 2010; Can 2004). Naturally, Rumi's descriptions of human nature are by no means purely conceptual and impartial for he approaches the matter from a specifically religious perspective with a clear and forceful moral message. This message is the foundation of his mystical thought and this is why Rumi's works have often been described to be didactic in nature (Schimmel 1993; Ozdemir 2003).

The existing works on Rumi suggest that the questions of character, virtues and vices are central to his understanding of ethics. Being on the whole consistent with the general Sufi understanding, for Rumi "man is animated by two naturally hostile principles – animality and divinity. It is on the basis of this distinction that Rumi builds up his moral system" (Iqbal 1983). The aspect of human beings related to the Divine is associated with the finite presence of God's attributes such as knowledge, wisdom, love and charity in human nature whereas their animal side is associated with negative dispositions such as greed, anger and lust (Adanali 2007; Altintas 2010). Continuous tension between these aspects of human being constitutes the ground of moral struggle in human life. The purpose is to overcome the lower

and realize the higher self by means of moral purification (Hakim 1959) and the success of this process is contingent upon the inner being or character of human being. Referring to this fact, Türkmen (1999) notes that Rumi's goal is to alter human character as he aims to elevate a person from the lowest state to the highest where the person becomes immersed in the attributes of God. This state of character and consciousness is captured by the doctrine of the *Perfect or Universal Human (insan-i kamil)* which has been often employed by some Rumi scholars to describe his view of human being<sup>29</sup>. Altintas (2010) explains the moral implications of the Divine element in human being as follows:

Rumi, evidently abiding by the Gnostic tradition, also alludes to the narration that, "God created Adam in His Own image". The image must obviously be taken in the spiritual sense and not the physical. So, for instance, as God is munificent, we should be generous; as He is a forgiver, so should we be; and so on. Clearly, the examples of our reflecting the manifestations of the Creator can be multiplied... For this reason, Rumi's entire endeavor is to emphatically stress the fact that by virtue of drawing attention to the relationship between God and humankind, humanity's greatest virtue, ethically speaking, will be to attain the model of *Insan-i Kamil*, or Universal Human.

This brief review demonstrates that the qualities of character are important for Rumi as they are the constituents of higher aspect of human nature attaining which is the goal of moral life. Therefore, it seems appropriate to approach his notion of morality from a virtue ethics perspective. Such connection between Rumi's morality and virtue ethics being preliminarily established, it would be important to examine how Rumi's views have been linked to environment themes.

### c) Rumi and environment

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<sup>29</sup> Nasr (1975) notes that the doctrine is often alluded to but never mentioned as such by Rumi himself since he rather uses the terms *macrocosm* and *microcosm* in reference to human being.



A good starting point to explore the ecological relevance of Rumi's thought is to understand how his worldview responds to the two features of Sufism discussed above which Afzaal (2005) describes as ecologically challenging.

The first point of concern is overly ascetic inclinations of some Sufis which can potentially create indifference to social and ecological issues. According to Iqbal (1983), Rumi's position on this matter distinguishes him from conventional Sufis. He remarks that for Rumi God is never idle and always active and this is the example that must be emulated by human beings because it is critical to realizing their potentials. Therefore, constant effort and action are imperatives and ceasing to be active is equal to death for human beings. However, effort and activity are not limited to spiritual goals but include the exterior aspects of life such as fighting against injustice and oppression. This is explained by the view that there is no monkery in Islam, which precludes quietism and isolation. Moreover, Iqbal further notes that Rumi is staunchly critical of the Sufis who promote withdrawal describing them as the "hypocritical impostors".

Although this reading does not necessarily include nature into the scope of human concern in Rumi, it seems to provide a religiously based framework for human engagement with the worldly versus exclusively spiritual matters. This being said, it must be recognized that it is difficult to isolate environmental issues from social concerns because most, if not all, environmental problems have a human dimension. This is evident in how environmentalism has been shifting in recent decades in the direction of "sustainability" balancing environmental concerns with social and economic ones. Put differently, even if one's concerns were limited to social issues only, they would still require some involvement with many environmental problems as part of these concerns. However, is this philosophical

argument the only way Rumi's thought can be related to environmental concerns? A preliminary answer to this question is that Rumi's worldview seems to have ecologically relevant views of nature which may serve as a basis for its environmental significance. I will discuss this in a while. For now, I will examine the second challenge for the environmental interpretation of Sufism related to the doctrine of the Unity of Existence (*Wahdat al-Wujud*).

Sefik Can (2004), prominent Rumi scholar and the late *Shaikh* (spiritual leader) of the *Mawlawi*<sup>30</sup> Sufi order in Turkey, suggests two different but interrelated interpretations of the Unity of Existence. One of these interpretations holds that since only one thing can exist, it is only God who has existence and everything else is non-existence. The other interpretation sees existence consisting of inner and outer dimensions. The inner dimension of existence consists of a unified light or "the spirit of the universe". Therefore, it is maintained that behind the multiplicity of forms in the outer dimension there is an invisible unity, hence the Unity of Existence, in the inner dimension. In relation to these interpretations, two questions need to be answered for the task at hand. First, does the phenomenal world have any existence of its own or is it an illusion? Second, if the world of forms does exist, then what is the purpose of its existence given the ultimate unity behind this world?

The view that things in the universe are non-existent does not mean they are non-existent in absolute terms, after all God brought them into existence, however, their existence is regarded as non-existence in comparison to the Absolute existence of God. As Hakim (1959) notes the relationship between the existence of God and the phenomenal world is explained through the notion of negative reality, reflected in the metaphor of the light and shadow. In this analogy, the existence of the universe is likened to the reality of the shadow, which, in

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<sup>30</sup> *Mawlawi* (in Turkish, *Mevlevi*) is a Sufi order established by the followers of Rumi.

comparison to the reality of light, that is, the existence of God, is defined as a form of being which lacks in Absolute Being. This view makes the universe a combination of existence and non-existence. For instance, the attribute of Beauty, Hakim further explains, has its perfect existence in God, but its manifestation in the world is mixed with its opposite, i.e. the lack of Beauty. Nasr (1975) also notes that the existence of things in the universe is identical with their relation to God. In other words, although they are non-existent without their relation to God, they are existent precisely because of such relation. Thus, it appears that for Rumi the phenomenal world, although having no existence of its own and only a relative existence dependent on the existence of God, is not however an illusion.

So far as the existence of forms is concerned, they are necessary, according to Chittick (1983), for the comprehension of meaning or “formlessness” which is possible by negating forms. Khosla (1987) observes that for Rumi the outward forms of the world are copies of their archetypes in the eternal knowledge of God. While the copies are inferior to their originals, they are the medium through which the originals and their infinite source, even though to a certain degree, can be known. The world in this sense becomes the locus for the limited Self-manifestation of God through His attributes in creation. For instance, God’s Wisdom, Khosla further notes, is reflected in a multitude of ways things exist and function in the finite realm of creation. Therefore, the phenomenal world must not be disdained because doing so would be tantamount to disregarding and disrespecting God. However, the problem arises when the world is overstressed and its dependence on meaning for its existence is not comprehended (Chittick 1983; Lewis 2000).

Apart from its broad significance for the Divine Self-manifestation, Rumi’s perception of the universe contains others themes which may be ecologically relevant. For instance, Can

(2004) underlines Rumi's perception of everything in creation as alive which he describes as the property of possessing some form of soul or spirit. Such vitality includes inanimate objects as well such as mountains, rocks, soil and minerals. Can explains this view to result from the Qur'anic verse which states that "And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting." (17:44) and some Prophetic traditions which portray things as alive and constantly praising God. Schimmel (2001) also seems to point to this aspect of creation when she mentions Rumi's ability to perceive and interpret the "silent language of everything created".

Wines (2000) explains Rumi's widespread appeal by his ability to turn the attention of his readers from the outward form to the inward dimension – the hidden realm of meanings - while acknowledging that a task like this can only be partially accomplished through the medium of human language. She underlines how Rumi uses the facts of nature to awaken one's spiritual faculties and how interacting with other creatures may be a source of joy in Rumi. She further notes:

Many of Rumi's poems convey feelings of great joy in being able to play any sort of role at all in the natural world. And such confident expressions of belonging and pleasure are too rare in the technologically sophisticated, but socially fragmented modern world.

Rumi's views of nature described above may be linked to a key argument put forward by environmental ethics which holds that reducing nature to its material form and losing sight of its non-material dimension underlie much of the environmental degradation today. Moreover, in Rumi's understanding of human existence there seems to be a religious imperative to maintain one's deeply spiritual aspirations along with one's engagement with the world. Adanali (2007) calls such imperative an "existential synthesis" which combines "dimension of depth" and "dimension of width" where the former represents one's journey toward one's

inner self and the latter represents the journey toward the world outside. The outer world in Rumi's case, Adanali notes, encompasses not only fellow human beings but every single being created by God. This aspect of Rumi's views seems to be supported by his personal example. For instance, Can (2004) provides some incidents from Rumi's life documented by his biographers which describe his treatment of animals. For instance, Shaikh Nafis al-Din of Sivas narrates the following story:

One day Rumi asked me to buy some pastries for two dirhams (penny). Those days the price of a plate of pastries was one dirham. I immediately bought the pastries. After taking the pastries from me, Rumi wrapped them in a piece of cloth and started walking. I walked slowly behind him. Finally, he arrived at a ruin. There I saw a dog that recently had given birth. Rumi gave all the pastries to the dog. I was perplexed by the compassion and mercy of this great saint. Rumi told me, "For the last seven days this poor dog has not eaten anything. She could not leave this place because of her puppies."

#### **d) Rumi in eco-literature**

While the literature discussed above point to some potential ecological themes found in Rumi, there have been only a couple of scholarly works so far which deal with Rumi's thought from a specifically environmental perspective.

Clarke's (2003) essay is perhaps the most comprehensive ecological analysis of Rumi's worldview to date. She notes that for Rumi nature, resulting from the Qur'an's "positive, natural realism", has real existence which in a way responds to the question of nature's existence vs. non-existence discussed above. Based on this nature realism, she makes an attempt at "reconstructing Rumi's vision of nature" and four themes stand out in this regard:

- a) holistic rather than partial understanding of nature which includes everything in our surrounding and their interrelations;
- b) "aliveness" of the universe and its components, a view that must be understood literally rather than metaphorically;
- c) positive views of animals such as their possessing spiritual insight and relying on God;
- d) love as the dynamic force which

attracts things to each other and animates the universe. By pointing out these views Clarke argues that, contrary to the modern scientific understanding, nature is not a dead and mechanical entity for Rumi.

Clarke also touches upon Rumi's vision of human being in the broader scheme of creation. She attempts to reconcile what she calls Islamic anthropocentrism, by which she implies the centrality of human salvation in Islam, with Rumi's emphasis on the spiritual significance of nature. For her the ultimate answer lies in Rumi's emanationist doctrine. According to this view, matter possessing soul strives to reach its Divine origin in the spiritual realm. Humans serve a critical link between the material and spiritual dimensions of existence. They act as a gateway for matter's transition into the spiritual world and its consequent salvation from material existence which happens by matter's assimilation into human being.

Overall, Clark's emphasis is on deriving ecologically relevant images of nature from Rumi's thought. Although she examines his conception of human nature to a certain degree, her account is rather cursory and does not engage in a detailed analysis of character dispositions from an EVE point of view. In the closing of her essay, she concludes that we need to relate to nature instinctively rather than through our "false rationality" and develop a spiritual affinity with nature as a possible implication of Rumi's eco-theology. These features seem to come close to what can be regarded as environmental virtue language in Rumi, however, they clearly require a thorough analysis if they are to be properly interpreted as such.

Last but not least, the idea of matter's salvation by being consumed by human and thus transitioned into the spiritual realm may prove problematic for environmental ethics. Understood at its face value, it seems to promote food consumption because as Clarke puts it:

“Everything has Soul; everything is salvable – and, of course, in accord with Islamic norms, everything is consumable”. Perhaps, understanding this idea with Rumi’s view of virtues and vices can be a way to address this potential problem. For instance, Clarke herself very briefly talks about controlling the appetites of the lower self by exercising temperance although she mentions this while arguing for the goodness of human body in Rumi as a response to the anti-materialist tendencies of Sufism.

In his encyclopaedic entry<sup>31</sup>, Ozdemir (2005) concentrates on the metaphysical dimension of nature. He highlights the following views as the pillars of Rumi’s ecological outlook. Since God is the ultimate goal of Rumi’s worldview, the entire existence is *theocentric* (God-centredness). God created the world to be known through the manifestation of His attributes in the world which renders the universe a cosmic book to be read and understood. Therefore, everything in creation is viewed with a sense of purpose, meaning and order. Moreover, everything is alive and there is no matter that does not possess life. Bestowed with life, every single being was created to praise and love the Creator. Love has a special place in Rumi’s mystical cosmology. It is the force that sustains the universe and interconnects everything in existence. Love sharpens a person’s intuition and is superior to intellect. Ozdemir further notes that animals are not Descartes’ *automata* in Rumi and have the ability to feel the power of love.

Ozdemir mentions the central place of morality along with spirituality and rationality in Rumi’s thought. He also stresses the role of human as the vicegerent of God in defining human-nature relationship. However, despite these references to human nature, he mostly focuses on Rumi’s conception of nature. Although he mentions such qualities as love, care,

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<sup>31</sup> Ozdemir’s essay appears as an entry in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*

compassion and wisdom in relation to nature, these concepts need to be further explained as it is not clear how they function as environment virtues in the broader context of Rumi's thought.

While Clarke's and Ozdemir's essays are valuable contributions to explaining Rumi's environmental ethics, they both seem to have taken a primarily deontological approach, a trend that has dominated the broader field of environmental ethics, as they focus on Rumi's positive views of nature to make a case for nature's moral status. This being the case, however, it would be equally important to evaluate Rumi's views of virtues and vices from an environmental perspective to attain a fuller understanding of his significance for environmental thought. It is particularly important considering, as discussed above, the emphasis he places on the matters of character and the presence of a strong virtue language in his works. As mentioned earlier, as a new direction in environmental ethics EVE aims to complete rather than replace existing approaches in the field. For an environmental ethics which focuses exclusively on rights and duties without concern for human character would, according to thinkers in the virtue tradition, be incomplete and unbalanced (Cafaro 2005b). In line with this view, this study being the first attempt to apply an EVE framework to Rumi's thought will complement and build upon the existing literature on the ecological aspects of Rumi's thought.

### ***2.3. Theory of environmental virtue ethics***

Since the emergence of EVE as a distinct branch of environmental ethics, two areas of the theory of EVE seem to have been the focus of much scholarly effort: a) developing strategies for specifying environmental virtues (vices); b) developing a holistic understanding of EVE. This study aims to build a holistic account of EVE from Rumi's thought employing some of



the strategies for identifying environmental virtues. Therefore, in this section I will examine these strategies and the components of the holistic approach to EVE.

### **2.3.1. Strategies for determining environmental virtues**

A key task in EVE is to establish what character traits are constitutive of environmental virtues and vices. Several strategies have been developed to deal with this task, which can be summarized as: (a) environmental role model; (b) extensionist strategy; c) human flourishing. While all of these strategies will be drawn upon in this research, the environmental role model is of particular importance because it will be used as an umbrella strategy and will determine this study's specific contribution to the EVE field, as will be described below.

*Environmental role model* is a common strategy which examines the personal example of some individuals as role models for specifying environmental virtues (Frasz 1993; Hull 2005; Sandler 2005). The approach has been popular among EVE scholars in recent years. A number of case studies have been conducted employing the approach to explore the EVE significance of some prominent thinkers and activists such as Henry David Thoreau (Cafaro 2000, 2005b), Aldo Leopold (Shaw 1997; Cafaro 2005b), Rachel Carson (Cafaro 2005b), Thomas Berry and Murray Bookchin (Wensveen 1999). For instance, Cafaro (2005b) in his analysis of Henry David Thoreau identifies simplicity as a central environmental virtue while Shaw's (1997) examination of Aldo Leopold suggests respect, prudence and practical wisdom, the list not being exhaustive, as primary environmental virtues. The environmental role model strategy relies upon two components – identifying environmental virtues in one's writings and in one's character and actions. Examination of the literature listed above demonstrates that some authors draw upon both components in their studies of environmental role models while other such as Shaw (1997) and Wensveen (1999) focus primarily on the written philosophies of their selected figures. In this research, I will use both Rumi's written

works and accounts of his life as the main sources. However, my main focus will be on Rumi's writings; his biography will be used only in a complementary capacity and only when needed. Since this is a methodological question, it will be discussed in detail in the methodology chapter.

Despite their growing popularity, case studies of environmental role models in EVE have so far been limited to figures from the Western tradition. Expanding these efforts to other traditions would be an important academic task. It is acknowledged that the primary reason for doing EVE is to guide and reform human practice (Hull 2005; Wensveen 1999). Reforming the practice in religiously, culturally and philosophically diverse contexts of modern societies and of global human community, in general, may require examples of environmentally distinguished personalities from diverse faiths and cultures. Such diversity can make EVE more relevant locally and globally and may ultimately facilitate its goal of changing human attitudes towards the natural environment. In this respect, this research will be a unique contribution to the field because Rumi will be the first non-western figure, to my knowledge, who will be studied from an EVE perspective using the environmental role model approach. At the same time, the study will also be an attempt to connect a pre-modern system of thought to a modern problem. There is a challenge and opportunity in such attempt. The challenge relates to the risk of reading Rumi anachronistically. This will be addressed in detail in the chapter on methodology (sub-chapter 4.3.). The opportunity lies in the fact that this and similar studies point to a broader variety of potential resources for EVE which may come from pre-modern and pre-environmental periods. Last but not least, a conception of environmental ethics arising from Rumi's teachings would be relevant to not only Muslim

societies but also to non-Muslim cultures because of his growing influence across cultural and religious boundaries<sup>32</sup>.

***Extensionist strategy*** is the application of some interpersonal virtues (operative in human-to-human relationship) in human-nature context (see Wensveen 1999; Sandler 2005; Hursthouse 2007). There have been some attempts to apply the extensionist approach in order to link some traditional virtues to non-human nature such as humility (Hill 1983), stewardship (Welchman 1999), benevolence including compassion, friendliness, kindness, generosity and jealousy, selfishness, greed and profligacy (Frasz 2005), gluttony, arrogance, greed and apathy (Cafaro 2005a), Seven Deadly Sins (vices) from the Christian tradition (Wensveen 1999), Buddhist virtues of respect for life, contentment, generosity and responsibility (Sahni 2008).

***Human flourishing*** approach holds that a character trait is specified as an environmental virtue in relation to a particular account of human flourishing (Sandler 2005). In this approach, a particular notion of human nature and a derivative idea of human flourishing are determined and the character traits constitutive of human flourishing are regarded as environmental virtues. That is, human being is defined in relation to the characteristic features of his nature as, for instance, biological, social, rational, spiritual or ecological being. This definition determines what it means to flourish as a human being and the character traits enhancing the selected concept of human flourishing are defined as virtues while character traits diminishing human flourishing are considered vices. Using Sandler's example, if human being is defined as a social being, then his flourishing consists of dispositions that are conducive to the well-functioning of a person's social group and help him maintain good

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<sup>32</sup> See section 2.2.3. for Rumi's universal influence

relationships with the members of his group. Likewise, any disposition that disrupts these conditions is regarded as a vice. In addition, as observed above, accounts of human flourishing in EVE do not need to be framed in solely naturalistic or secular terms; they can also be based in religious worldviews (Sandler 2005). In fact, providing religiously defined conception of human flourishing can be an important advantage of EVE because such notions may serve as a counterbalance against narrowly defined economic notions of value (Taliaferro 2005).

### **2.3.2. Holistic approach to EVE**

With the evolution of the EVE theory since Hill's (1983) pioneering work a shift toward a holistic and comprehensive account of environmental virtues has characterized the field. This holistic trend seems to be in three forms: a) connection between virtues and character traits; b) connection between virtues and human flourishing; c) connection between virtues and underlying worldviews. Three components of the holistic model of EVE I am proposing to apply to Rumi's thought are shaped by these three forms of relationship between different elements of EVE.

Instead of developing environmental virtues (vices) in an isolated manner, EVE scholars have increasingly stressed the need to examine virtues in relation to other virtues and traits of character. Wensveen (1999) draws a parallel between the general emphasis on holistic modes of thinking in eco-literature and calls for a comprehensive approach to EVE. She holds that we should rely on what she calls a "network of virtue relations" rather than on individual virtues in order to avoid extremes and achieve balance. Hull (2005) identifies the tendency to limit the scope of human excellence to a green virtue and the resulting failure to adequately address its relation to other virtues (vices) as a shortcoming in the EVE theory. By other virtues Hull implies "other virtuous states of character" which, despite containing no direct

environmental responsiveness, can be a part of an integrated account of environmental virtues and can indirectly serve ecological ends. O'Neill, Holland, and Light (2008) seem to make the same point when they state that virtues do not operate in isolation and they remain excellences of character only "in the company of other virtues". Hill's (1983) strategy of identifying certain character traits as "a natural basis" for the cultivation of environmental virtues seems to be representative of the same trend. He explains that a person wishing to destroy the natural environment would most likely be indifferent to non-sentient nature. This state points to the lack of an important character trait in the person - "appreciation of one's place in the natural world". Overcoming this character deficiency would result in "self-acceptance" - a character trait which is "a natural basis" for developing proper humility, gratitude and appreciation of nature. Frasz's (1993) method of specifying a virtue as a mean as opposed to excess and deficiency, both of which would be vices, is another contribution to a holistic understanding of virtues. He explains his virtue of "environmental openness" (mean) in relation to "environmental closed-mindedness" (deficiency) and "misanthropy" (excess) which he sees as two extremes of "environmental openness".

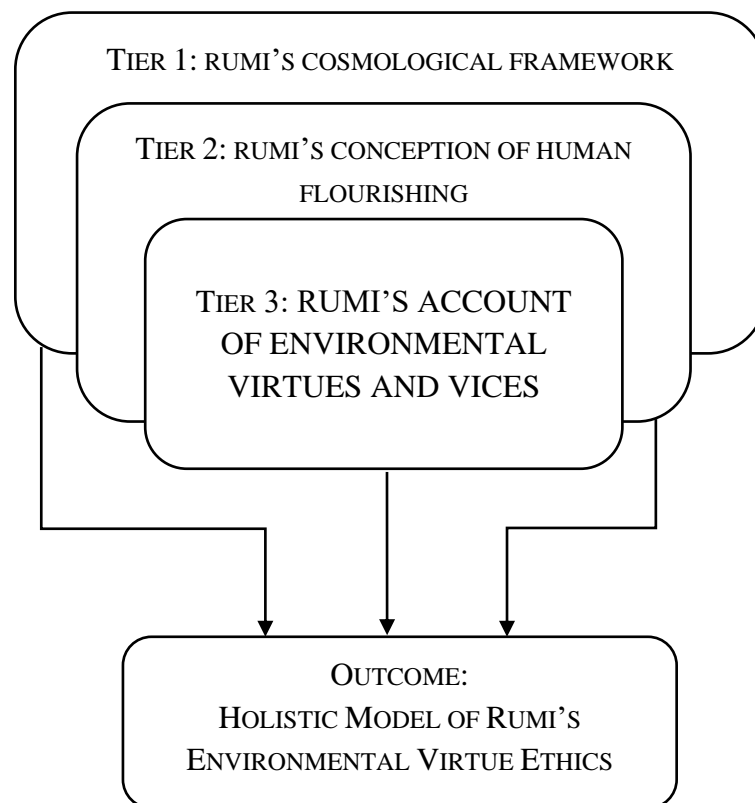
As discussed above, examining virtues and vices within a particular account of human flourishing is one of the common strategies for specifying environmental virtues. Due to its characteristic to link virtues to broader ideas of human good, this strategy is also representative of the shift towards a holistic account of EVE. It is noteworthy that some case studies on environmental role models employed the concept of human flourishing for examining the life and works of ecologically distinguished personalities. This provides a useful model for this research as it employs the notion of human flourishing for developing a version of EVE from Rumi who is proposed as an environmental role model in this study. For example, Cafaro (2005b) in his study of Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold and Rachel

Carson as environmental role models observes that love and interest in nature evident in their personal examples are the virtues which are not only conducive to a positive human-nature relationship, but are also essential to living well and flourishing as a human being. Cafaro's point about the dual end of virtues is an important one because it brings into perspective what Sandler (2006) calls *teleological pluralism* or the pluralistic account of virtues. Whether virtues should be agent-relative (self-regarding) or agent-independent (other-regarding) is a central question in virtue ethics and EVE. For the former virtues are necessary for the advancement of human flourishing, whatever the definition of human flourishing may be, while for the latter virtues should aim to promote the wellbeing of others regardless of their effects on agent's own good. The pluralistic view responds to this dilemma by arguing that these notions of good are not mutually exclusive, that is, virtues can serve both an agent's own good as well as the good of the natural environment (see also Hull 2005).

In the EVE literature there is a growing recognition that a complete understanding of environmental virtues would take into consideration the beliefs and conventions of a worldview in which virtues are situated. Virtues cannot be fully comprehended as "isolated entities" because they acquire their meaning in relation to each other and in relation to aspects of a worldview they represent (Wensveen 1999). Taliaferro (2005) in arguing for religious environmental virtues notes that environmental ethics is often concerned with the discussion of values such as intrinsic, instrumental or holistic values without giving a proper consideration for "a comprehensive metaphysical framework" which for him would provide a support for both environmental ethics and environmental virtue ethics. Thus, understanding the complex interface between virtues and an underlying cosmology may provide us with a fuller picture of environmental virtues.

### 3. Theoretical framework

In developing a version of EVE from Rumi's thought I will draw upon a tripartite theoretical model of EVE. The three tiers of the model draw from the three areas of EVE theory<sup>33</sup> discussed earlier (section 2.3.1.) and represent a broader shift toward a holistic understanding of environmental virtues in the EVE literature. The three tiers are as follows: (a) cosmological framework; (b) concept of human flourishing; (c) account of environmental virtues and vices. The tiers of the model are successive steps each of which deals with a particular component of Rumi's thought in order to develop a comprehensive model of EVE. Therefore, the model will employ theories, strategies and concepts developed in these areas of EVE theory.



**Figure 1:** Holistic Model of EVE

<sup>33</sup> The three areas of EVE theory are (a) connection between virtues and character traits, (b) connection between virtues and human flourishing, and (c) connection between virtues and underlying worldviews.

I propose *four assumptions* which I will examine in building this model of EVE. I will discuss the assumptions in the process of developing my theoretical model below.

***The four assumptions in the EVE model from Rumi's thought include:***

Assumption 1: *Nature has both instrumental and non-instrumental values*

Assumption 2: *Nature's instrumental and non-instrumental values are primarily spiritual values*

Assumption 3: *Experiencing the spiritual value of nature is conducive to human flourishing.*

Assumption 4: *Environmental virtues will aim at a) developing human capacity to perceive nature's spiritual value; b) cultivating respect for nature's value; c) preserving nature as a spiritual value.*

### **3.1. Cosmological framework**

The need for a cosmological context in developing a comprehensive account of environmental virtues has been emphasized in the EVE literature. It is based on the view that a complete understanding of a virtue would describe the virtue's relations to other virtues and place it in the context of its respective worldview. For virtues acquire their substance and meaning in relation to the worldview in which they are situated (Wensveen 1999). This holds true, in particular, for religious contexts because meanings and values in religious worldviews originate in a transcendental or metaphysical source. Therefore, to provide an account of such values we need to explain the "comprehensive metaphysical framework" (Taliaferro 2005) which accommodates it.

Rumi's cosmological framework will consist of three components: (a) main themes of Rumi's worldview; (b) Rumi's images of nature; (c) concept of nature's value. While all of these components in some ways serve as pillars of Rumi's model of EVE, the first component will play a broader role in providing a background for other tiers and components of the



model. As such, it will not be an all-inclusive account of Rumi's worldview. Only relevant themes will be selectively included in this part.

The second tier - outlining Rumi's images of nature - is important for two reasons. First, it will offer preliminary insights<sup>34</sup> into the relevance of his worldview to environmental thought. In the environmental debate, it has been argued that Cartesian dualism and mechanistic conception of nature underlie the anthropocentric worldview which regards nature as a dead matter, lacking moral status and, therefore, of only instrumental value to human being. This explains why developing theories which attribute to nature a non-instrumental value(s) has been so central to the philosophical and religious environmental ethics, although the latter offers a different explanation of the roots of anthropocentrism. Therefore, images of nature are presumed to be an important indicator of the ecological significance of a worldview on the assumption that a non-mechanistic outlook may produce more positive views of nature. Moreover, identifying the ecological character of Rumi's cosmology will have certain implications for the environmental relevance of his virtues. For if Rumi's cosmology is established to be ecologically significant, it will provide a useful framework for examining his virtues from an environmental perspective. This point is particularly important because this research, as mentioned in the previous chapter, attempts to apply modern environmental concepts to a pre-environmental period which raises the question of compatibility<sup>35</sup> and anachronism<sup>36</sup>. Second, Rumi's images of nature will be a ground for deriving his concept of nature's value which is the task of the next component.

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<sup>34</sup> It has been noted that virtue-based approach would complete traditional environmental ethics (Cafaro 2005b). Based on this view, I consider that full ecological significance of a worldview is derived from both images of nature and account of virtues. Therefore, I argue that Rumi's views of nature will provide only "preliminary insights" into the ecological significance of his worldview which will be completed by a notion of EVE derived from this thought.

<sup>35</sup> Sahni's (2008) use of the cosmological approach to nature is noteworthy in this regard. She uses this approach to demonstrate the significance of early Buddhist teachings to environmental ethics.

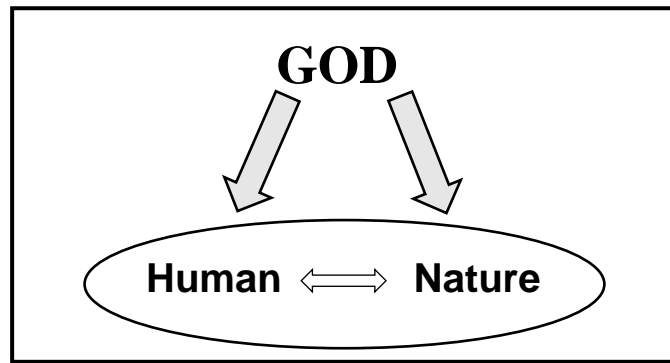
<sup>36</sup> See next sub-chapter 4.3. for further discussion on anachronism.

The examination of the secondary literature on Rumi suggests that his religious cosmology can be defined as *theocentric* (God-centred) (see Ozdemir 2005). This is also supported by the theocentric character of Islamic cosmology (see Saritoprak 2005) which Rumi's cosmology is a part of. It must be acknowledged at this point that at times some of Rumi's statements may sound as supporting anthropocentric supremacy over nature. I will argue later in sub-chapter 6.2. and 8.3. why such statements should not be interpreted as such. Therefore, in the final analysis it seems more appropriate to describe Rumi's worldview as theocentric. As noted in chapter 2, I recognize the fact that there are multiple conceptions of anthropocentrism in the environmental ethics discourse. In this regard, my references to anthropocentrism throughout this research imply the negative or dominance-based conception of the term unless specified otherwise.

In environmental ethics, theocentrism, being a part of religious environmental ethics, is proposed as an alternative worldview to anthropocentrism, which places humans in the centre of existence, and non-anthropocentrism (e.g. biocentrism, ecocentrism), which places nature in the centre of human-nature relationship. In between the two, theocentrism attributes the central place in existence to God.

Hoffman and Sandelands' (2005) definition is useful in this context:

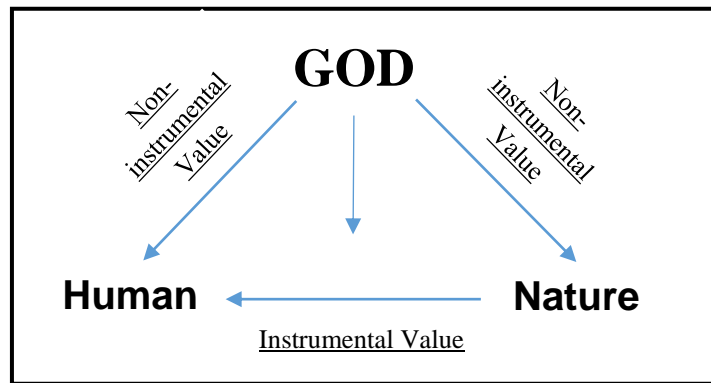
“Unlike the two-term metaphysic of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism that defines only man and nature, the three-term metaphysic of the faith defines man and nature in relation to the God that created them both”



**Figure 2: Theocentrism**

(adopted from Hoffman and Sandelands)

Rumi's theocentric worldview has important implications for the value of nature. In theocentric *axiology* (theory of value), unlike in anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism, it is only God who has intrinsic value independent of an external value-giver and at the same time, unlike in *subjectivism* or *objectivism*, it is God who is the source of all other values in creation. In this scheme, both human and nature derive their values from God. In the case of nature, this value can be of two types – non-instrumental and instrumental (*assumption 1*). In its acceptance of dual value, such axiology is in line with the value *pluralism* thesis advocated in environmental ethics (O'Neill, Holland, and Light 2008). It is important to note that the instrumental value of nature, although intended for human beings, is not anthropocentric in the sense that it is not arbitrarily determined by human beings. Instead, it is God, who grants nature its value and it is God who determines that nature have an instrumental value for human beings. Therefore, this value is human-oriented but yet theocentric which is different from the human-centred value of nature in anthropocentrism.



**Figure 3:** Rumi's Theocentric Axiology

This research suggests both non-instrumental and instrumental values of nature are based on nature's spiritual attributes. Therefore, both of nature's values are spiritual values (*assumption 2*). Non-instrumental spiritual value of nature comes from all the spiritual aspects and qualities of nature which characterize its connection to God. Therefore, such value can be defined as the *non-instrumental divine value of nature*. Some of the spiritual qualities of nature are also directed toward human being which constitutes the instrumental spiritual value of nature. Accordingly, the instrumental dimension of nature's value in Rumi can be defined as *human-oriented divine value of nature* grounded in theocentrism. A wide range of instrumental values of nature in environmental literature include material, aesthetic, recreational, cultural and social values (O'Neill, Holland, and Light 2008). Although the spiritual value of nature also figures in the environmental literature (e.g. Palmer 2003; Sandler 2006), there seems to be no standard definition of this value. This may be related to the fact there is no standard definition of spirituality itself since, according to Zsolnai (2015), it is "a rich, intercultural and multilayered concept".

In general, spirituality is associated with a search for a deeper meaning and purpose of life (Sheldrake 2012). The European Spirituality in Economics and Society Institute suggests a

more ecologically oriented definition of spirituality which defines it as “*people’s multiform search for the deep meaning of life that interconnects them to all living beings and to ‘God’ or Ultimate Reality*” (“European SPES Institute” n.d.). Bouckaert and Zsolnai (2012) mention one more dimension of spirituality by distinguishing three aspects of spiritual search: inner identity, connectedness (with all living beings) and transcendence. So their definition includes *the search for inner identity* in addition to connection with all living beings and God. This research will draw upon a synthesis of the above mentioned definitions and include all three aspects of spirituality suggested by Bouckaert and Zsolnai. Such integrated definition seems to appropriately capture different aspects of Rumi’s thought. In addition, it also allows for multiple forms of spiritual search which may comprise two forms of spiritual quest in Rumi - experiential (perceptual) and intellectual (cognitive). Thus, based on this definition of spirituality, I define Rumi’s notion of the spiritual value of nature as *nature’s capacity to facilitate human beings’ multiform search for a deeper meaning and purpose of life which connects them with a) their inner identity; b) all living beings; and c) God.*

### **3.2. Concept of human flourishing**

Human flourishing is an important strategy for specifying virtues. It is based on the belief that virtues contribute to human flourishing. Therefore, identifying which character traits lead to human flourishing is a central task of virtue ethics. Considering virtues in the context of human flourishing is gaining prominence in EVE as well and represents the holistic trend in the field. The task of establishing Rumi’s notion of human flourishing will consist of three parts: a) outlining Rumi’s idea of human nature; b) identifying Rumi’s notion of human function; c) establishing Rumi’s notion of human flourishing and evaluating its ecological significance.

Human flourishing despite being a relatively new term<sup>37</sup> occupies a central position in virtue ethics. It has been developed in recent decades as an alternative to *eudaimonia* which is one of the three major concepts along with “arête” and “phronesis” in ancient Greek and modern neo-Aristotelian ethics. Eudaimonia has traditionally been translated as “happiness”. This translation has been criticized for the fact that eudaimonia is something subjectively determined (Rasmussen 1999; Hursthouse and Pettigrove 2016). According to this argument, happiness may not always be associated with a virtuous character depending on a person’s understanding of happiness as is the case, for instance, with the hedonist notion of happiness. Therefore, human flourishing has been proposed as a more “technical notion” whose content may vary depending on a particular theory of human nature (Rasmussen 1999). Despite some persisting arguments for the continuing currency of eudaimonia, this study will employ the term human flourishing to avoid possible confusions with happiness because happiness does not capture Rumi’s conception of flourishing.

Human flourishing is derived from a specific theory of human nature and human good and its exact content varies from theory to theory (Rasmussen 1999). Therefore, there are different concepts of human flourishing across philosophies and religious traditions which reflect their author’s or tradition’s understanding of human nature. Current literature on Rumi’s understanding of human being suggests that human nature is a complex entity and often combines opposite qualities. Despite this fact his essential identity, if properly actualized, seems to be spiritual. There seems to be a correlation between human spirituality and the spiritual dimension of nature. Therefore, my *third assumption* holds that both cognitive and perceptual experience of nature’s spiritual value, which is, as suggested above, human-oriented, is conducive to human flourishing.

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<sup>37</sup> Hurka (1999) states that Elizabeth Anscombe’s 1958 article *Modern Moral Philosophy* first introduced the term “flourishing” in contemporary moral philosophy

In developing a concept of human flourishing from Rumi's view of human nature, two theories from virtue ethics will be employed as analytical tools. Function is an old Aristotelian concept which aims to define human flourishing based on a distinctive function or property of human being that sets him apart from other beings. Thus, flourishing would be evaluated on how one as human being performs his or her distinctive function. For Aristotle, for instance, the function of a human being would be reason and, consequently, a flourishing individual would be the one who reasons well (Athanasoulis n.d.). The function argument seems to fit well the religiously teleological character of Rumi's cosmology. For someone or something to have a function implies that the person or thing is designed for a purpose which seems to befit the central tenet of the teleological worldview. In fact, one of the criticisms directed at the argument holds that human beings can be considered to have a function only under certain "religious and metaphysical assumptions" (Korsgaard 2008). The criticism makes the argument even more relevant to Rumi's case since the latter is a religious and metaphysical cosmology.

The second concept that will be used to explain human flourishing in Rumi is premised on the idea that human being should be viewed as a composite being. According to this idea, human beings are not composed of only internal states; they also have relations with other beings in the world. Therefore, a full account of human nature must consider the "internal attributes and his external connections to other persons and things in the world." (Spencer

2007). It would be important to explore this aspect of Rumi for a better understanding of the scope of his idea of human flourishing. It is expected to give some insights into the areas of operation, e.g., social, human-nature, human-God, of his virtues and vices. Drawing upon this theory, an attempt will be made to understand how Rumi's account of human flourishing addresses person's relationships with the Divine and beings other than himself.

### **3.3. Account of environmental virtues**

This sub-chapter will develop a theoretical background for working with Rumi's account of EVE. It will rely on an integrated framework developed for this research which combines the elements of several theoretical approaches in the field. I will also provide a rationale for using such framework and discuss some minor theoretical tools that will be employed in this research.

#### **3.3.1. Integrated framework**

To develop Rumi's account of environmental virtues, I will draw upon an integrated theoretical framework which incorporates various theoretical concepts and tools from the EVE field including Wensveen's (1999) catalogue of ecological virtues and vices, the concepts of good and harm used by Cafaro (2005a), the pluralistic theory of virtues originally proposed by Swanton (2003) and the inclusive account of environmental virtues developed by Sandler (2006). Sandler's account of virtues includes categories of virtues and a typology of virtues which are interrelated. Thus, the integrated framework consists of five components which can be divided into two groups pertaining to: (a) identification of environmental virtues which includes catalogue of environmental virtues, criteria of environmental good and harm and *teleological pluralism*; (b) classification of environmental virtues which includes categories and typology of virtues. I will explain each of these components below.



### **a. Identification of environmental virtues**

Wensveen's catalogue consists of 189 environmental virtues and 174 environmental vices that was compiled from environmental literature, which she views as a testimony to the presence of virtue language in environmental ethics literature from its very beginning. It must be noted that the catalogue does not provide accounts or definitions of the environmental virtues and vices. Therefore, the catalogue will be employed only as a check list for a preliminary identification of character traits in Rumi as potential environmental virtues and vices. However, for a thorough analysis of these character traits from an EVE perspective a more substantive set of criteria will be required which will be an objective of other components of the integrated framework. One of such criteria will rely on the notions of good and harm used for identifying virtues and vices in both virtue ethics and EVE. In virtue ethics, good and harm have conventionally been understood as relating to self and/or others and the latter would generally imply other human beings. In EVE, however, the notion of other-regarding good or harm is extended to non-human individuals as well. For instance, Cafaro (2005a) invokes the concept of harm (environmentally defined) for defining gluttony, arrogance, greed and apathy as environmental vices. In addition, he notes that vices also presuppose a particular notion of good which they undermine and which varies depending on particular conceptions of human flourishing. This being said, however, in this research the scope of ecological good and harm will not be restricted to nature-regarding considerations only. As explained below, both self and other-regarding reasons will be considered in working with environmental virtues and vices.

Traditionally, virtue ethics has focused on human flourishing in its efforts to develop accounts of virtues and vices. Such focus often draws criticism when a virtue ethics approach

is applied in environmental ethics because of a wide-spread concern among many environmental ethicists with virtues ethics' appeal to self-interest and its link to anthropocentrism (Cafaro 2005b). As discussed earlier (section 2.1.2.), in response to this criticism, EVE scholars have suggested *teleological*<sup>38</sup> *pluralism* as a conceptual framework which embraces both agent-relative and agent-independent ends for identifying a character trait as an environmental virtue (Sandler 2006). In this view, dispositions can serve human good, non-human good or a combination of both and qualify as environmental virtues as long as they are justified by certain environmental considerations. In other words, they need not be exclusively concerned with the well-being of non-human nature to be considered environmental virtues.

It is also noteworthy that there is a non-material connection between self-regarding and other-regarding harm. In some cases, harm to nature may result from harm to inner self, that is, a vicious state of character may negatively affect a person's perception of his surrounding, human and non-human. In this case, a vice with seemingly no immediate impact on nature may in fact produce ecologically harmful attitudes. The same connection exists between self-regarding and other-regarding good. In fact, such connection is embedded in the category of virtues called the *virtues of communion with nature* which will be discussed in the next section.

Before moving to the classification of virtues, it would be important to discuss a more general point regarding the identification of environmental virtues. That is, in establishing a link between Rumi's virtues and EVE, I will not exclusively rely on EVE analyses but will draw

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<sup>38</sup> Swanton (2003) distinguishes three types of virtues: anthropocentric, non-anthropocentric and non-teleological. Anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric virtues are described as teleological because they are aimed at attaining some ends external to themselves. Non-teleological virtues are based on their inherent qualities rather than being oriented at any external good or value.

on the broader environmental literature. This is explained by the fact that many works on environmental ethics are relevant and valuable for EVE. For example, as already noted Wensveen's (1999) catalogue of environmental virtues and vices, which is the most extensive catalogue in the field, was derived from the general environmental literature. It is also reflected in the fact that many of the earliest examples of EVE were drawn from the lives and writings of eco-thinkers such as Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson, who did not frame their idea in the EVE language but whose views were still found to be highly relevant to EVE. All of this points to the difficulty of separating EVE from broader environmental ethics as the latter provides an important ground to build further discussions of EVE.

Thus, the fact that a virtue is discussed outside of a specifically EVE context does not rule out its EVE relevance. The bottom line is that the virtue, regardless of its original context, must be shown to have certain implications for the environment. Of course, besides being environmentally significant, the virtue must also meet certain criteria, established by the virtue theory, to be qualified as a virtue. And it is the purpose of this study to evaluate Rumi's virtues for their ecological value as well as their virtue qualifications. Both of these requirements rely, to a certain degree, on external resources, i.e., virtue theory and environmental thought. It is particularly true at this stage of EVE when the field is still trying to develop its own theory and many of the potentially environmental virtues have not been examined in the EVE literature as yet. Therefore, in addition to the EVE literature, I will also draw upon various areas of environmental ethics such as eco-feminist thought, the *biophilia* hypothesis, and environmental aesthetics in attempts to demonstrate the environmental status of Rumi's virtues.

### **b. Classification of environmental virtues**

Within the context of virtue teleology, Sandler (2006) proposes three categories of environmental virtues: (a) environmentally responsive virtues; (b) environmentally justified virtues; (c) environmentally productive virtues. Virtues which in their operation respond at least partially to nature and its constituents are regarded as *environmentally responsive virtues*. Character traits that are accepted as virtues at least partly because of environmental considerations are *environmentally justified virtues*. Such considerations may include natural resources, habitats, positive relationship with nature and so on. Virtues necessary for achieving certain environmental ends are *environmentally productive virtues*. For instance, virtues necessary for the completion of projects aimed at preserving certain environmental goods and values can be environmentally productive virtues. It is important to note that the same virtue can be in more than one of these categories so they are not mutually exclusive. The inclusive account of environmental virtues, according to Sandler (2006), is more suitable for explaining the complex and multifaceted relationship between human beings and the natural environment.

Further, Sandler (2006) introduces a typology of environmental virtues which include *virtues of sustainability*, *virtues of communion with nature*, *virtues of respect for nature*, *virtues of environmental activism* and *virtues of environmental stewardship*. These groups of virtues are determined based on the type of environmental considerations they address. The natural environment provides us with the basic material and non-material goods which are crucial for our survival and well-functioning. Virtues justified based on these concerns for the environment are *virtues of sustainability*. Some environmental goods are necessary for our physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual growth. However, to benefit from such goods we need to develop our ability to enjoy and appreciate those aspects of the environment.

Therefore, virtues constitutive of our capacity to appreciate nonmaterial goods of the environment are *virtues of communion with nature*. The virtues which appropriately recognize and deal with the human-independent value of the environment and its entities are *virtues of respect for nature*. Character traits that are necessary in one's active efforts to protect the environment and its goods and values can be regarded as *virtues of environmental activism*. There are dispositions which are important for individuals "who by position or avocation are specially occupied, responsible, qualified or empowered to maintain environmental goods and values". Such dispositions constitute *virtues of environmental stewardship*. For some examples of specific virtues for each of these groups see Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Sandler's Typology of Environmental Virtues

<b>Environmental Virtues:</b> <sup>39</sup> <b>Environmentally Responsive, Environmentally Justified, Environmentally Productive</b>				
<b>Virtues of Sustainability</b>	<b>Virtues of Communion with Nature</b>	<b>Virtues of Respect for Nature</b>	<b>Virtues of Environmental Activism</b>	<b>Virtues of Environmental Stewardship</b>
temperance	wonder	reverence	diligence	benevolence
frugality	openness	compassion	cooperativeness	loyalty
far-sightedness	appreciation	restitutive justice	commitment	justice
attunement	attentiveness	considerateness	optimism	honesty
humility	love	ecological	creativity	diligence
etc.	etc.	sensitivity	etc.	etc.
		etc.		

<sup>39</sup> Sandler's table of environmental virtues is presented here without adaptation. "etc." at the end of each list of virtues is originally used by Sandler which implies the lists only aim to give examples of virtues for each category and as such are not exhaustive.

The first two groups of virtues are agent-relative as they are both instrumental to human ends. The third group - virtues of respect for nature - is agent-independent because it encompasses different types of responses to non-instrumental aspects of nature regardless of human ends. The last two groups can be either agent-relative or agent-independent or both based on the motivations of the agent. The majority of these virtues are environmentally justified and, to a lesser degree, environmentally responsive and environmentally productive virtues.

### **3.3.2. Rationale for using the integrated framework**

This framework is considered to be suitable for this research for a number of reasons. *First*, pluralistic theory embraces both agent-relative and agent-independent considerations as appropriate ends for environmental virtues. This seems to correspond with the notion of nature's value emerging from Rumi's thought which, as mentioned earlier, considers nature to have both instrumental and non-instrumental values based in the theocentric spirituality. Therefore, it is presumed that Rumi's virtues can contribute to both agent-relative and agent-independent ends and function within such teleological pluralism.

*Second*, identifying virtues as environmentally responsive, environmentally justified and environmentally productive virtues allows us to work with a broader range of character traits and dispositions. This is particularly important for two reasons: a) such strategy takes a more inclusive and comprehensive approach which resonates with the fact that the relationship between character traits and the environment are not always direct and explicit which, as mentioned above, requires a complex and nuanced approach; b) since Rumi's thought represents a pre-environmental period, exploring his views for environmental virtues at times requires a more innovative and creative strategy. Reducing his environmental virtues to

character traits explicitly responsive to natural entities would be to miss more implicit links between his virtues, concept of human flourishing<sup>40</sup> and the environment.

*Third*, Sandler's typology provides some guiding principles for organizing Rumi's environmental virtues. Some of Sandler's categories such as the virtues of communion with nature, respect for nature and environmental stewardship seem to be particularly relevant to certain aspects of Rumi's thought such as his frequent emphasis on the spiritual dimension of nature and human self, his idea of all-inclusive love and the human vicegerency on earth. Thus, there may be some important parallels between Sandler's and Rumi's typology although their constituent virtues and their substance may be different given their philosophical differences.

### 3.3.3. Other theoretical tools

Apart from the integrated theoretical framework outlined above, there will be three other conceptual tools which will be used in working with Rumi's virtues. I will discuss these tools below; however, it must be noted that these tools will be employed selectively where applicable and necessary.

An *extensionist strategy* in EVE aims to apply traditional virtues to the new area of the human-nature relationship by giving them a new interpretation (Hursthouse 2007). In Rumi, some virtues such as love, humility, justice and gratitude do not seem to operate exclusively in interpersonal relations. Therefore, by employing virtue extensionism I will attempt to build a conceptual ground drawing upon Rumi's views to justify the application of traditional virtues in nature-related contexts. The main rationale for employing this strategy is based on

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<sup>40</sup> It is expected that Rumi's concept of human flourishing will play an important role in identifying some of his environmental virtues

the fact that for Rumi human relations with the external world are not limited to the social sphere. In his holistic understanding of existence at least some of his virtues seem to include human-nature interactions. For instance, we have mentioned earlier that Rumi views love as the spiritual force which interconnects all creatures in the universe and therefore, as Ozdemir (2005) notes, human treatment of the natural world should be founded on this principle of universal love.

Frasz (1993) is often credited for introducing to EVE the Aristotelian criteria for *defining a virtue in terms of its mean as opposed to its excess and deficiency*. He explains his virtue of “openness” (mean) in relation to “environmental closed-mindedness” (deficiency) and “misanthropy” (excess) which he sees as two extremes of “environmental openness”. This approach to analysing character traits on a scale of intensity may be an effective way of establishing relationships between virtues, vices and character traits. This strategy seems to be applicable to some of the environmental virtues and vices found in Rumi. For example, the strategy will be applied in examining Rumi’s notions of humility for its EVE relevance. There will be three interrelated notions of arrogance, humility and false humility which, I will argue, are environmentally relevant. They can be placed on a spectrum similar to that of Frasz’s open-mindedness or proper humility. See table 2 below for comparison.

**Table 2:** Notions of humility in Frasz and Rumi

Degree	State	Frasz	Rumi
Deficiency	Vice	Closed-mindedness	Arrogance
Mean	Virtue	Openness/humility proper	Humility



Excess	Vice	Misanthropy	False humility
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Another strategy for establishing connection between environmental virtues and various character traits is Hill's (1983) concept of "psychological preliminaries". The concept holds that certain character traits, though not being virtues themselves, may serve as a "natural basis" for cultivating certain virtues. As noted above, this strategy was employed for examining environmental virtues in Buddhism by Sahni (2008) and Keown (2007). Using this conceptual tool may help understand subtle relationships between virtues and other character traits and produce a more comprehensive accounts of virtues. For instance, in arguing for humility as an environmental virtue in Rumi, I will identify from existing environmental literature three psychological conditions for cultivating humility towards non-human nature such as *awareness of nature*, *overcoming self-centredness* and *self-acceptance*. The presence of these conditions makes Rumi's notion of humility relevant to human-nature relations.

## 4. Methodology

There are three sets of methodological considerations pertaining to this research. The first set concerns Rumi's literary works and their translations. The second set addresses potential issues which may arise in the process of reading and analysing Rumi's works, including such matters as the knowledge of tradition, understanding imagery, holistic and synoptic reading. The methodological framework in this category has been developed drawing upon insights from various areas of Rumi scholarship. The third set concerns the issue of compatibility of EVE theory and Rumi's philosophy with a particular focus on the problem of anachronism. The issue has been addressed by using the strategies developed by similar studies in the field of EVE.

### 4.1. Rumi's literary works and translations

Rumi's literary legacy consists of five works. Two of them are poetry: the *Divan* and the *Mathnawi*. The *Divan* or *Divan-i Kabir* ("The Great Collection") is a collection of couplets and quatrains. The *Mathnawi* or *Mathnawi-i Ma'navi* ("Spiritual Couplets") is a collection of rhyming couplets and consists of six books. Rumi's prose consists of three works. *Fih Ma Fih* ("in it what's in it") is a collection of Rumi's sermons and lectures. *Majalis-i sab'a* ("The Seven Sermons") is a collection of seven sermons and lectures delivered by Rumi on different occasions. *Maktubat* ("The Letters") is a collection of 150 letters sent by Rumi.

Most of Rumi's works were written in Persian, however, for the purpose of this study the Persian texts were not used as primary texts. This decision is explained by the fact that mastering the level of literary Persian required for understanding the Persian editions of the original manuscripts or their editions would be a hugely time-consuming undertaking and would affect the timely completion of the study. This disadvantage was dealt with in several

ways. First of all, Turkish translations of Rumi's works were used as primary texts, which are recognized as largely accurate (see below). So all of Rumi's works, excepting the *Maktubat* which was excluded due to the inaccuracy of translation, were initially read in Turkish. Second, after the initial reading of the Turkish translation selected verses and passages were also read in English. This increased the accuracy of my reading by enabling comparative analysis between the two translations of Rumi's works.

All of Rumi's works are available in Turkish. Abdalbaki Golpinarli, a prominent Turkish expert on Rumi, translated all of the five books of Rumi into modern Turkish. Golpinarli's translation is recognized as highly accurate (Lewis 2000). Both the *Mathnawi* and *Divan* were translated into English by Professor Reynold A. Nicholson. Nicholson's translation of the *Mathnawi* (1925) is based on his own edition of the Persian text and regarded as very close to the original (S. G. Safavi and Weightman 2009). It must be noted, however, that his translation of the *Divan* (1898) is not a full translation; it contains a collection of 50 poems from the *Divan*. Moreover, Nicholson's translation relied on an earlier edition of the *Divan*. Furuzanfar in his critical edition of the book rejects the authenticity of seven (out of fifty) poems which appear in Nicholson's translation (Lewis 2000). Therefore, in this research I used Arthur J. Arberry's translation of the *Divan* which appeared as *Mystical Poems of Rumi* (1968) and *Mystical Poems of Rumi 2* (1991) because Arberry used Furuzanfar's edition of the book and excluded the seven poems deemed to be unauthentic. Moreover, Arberry's translation is more inclusive as it contains four hundred poems from the *Divan* as opposed to Nicholson's fifty.

Rumi's *Fih Ma Fih* was translated by Arberry (1977) as *Discourses of Rumi* and by Wheeler Thackston (1994) as *Signs of the Unseen* both translations, according to Lewis (2000),

“accurately convey the substance and flavour of Rumi’s lectures”. However, Rumi’s two other smaller works the *Majalis-i sab’a* and *Maktubat* have only partly been translated to English. Only one out of seven sermons is available in English translation by Lewis (2000) and a few pages of the *Maktubat* have been translated by Chittick (1983). Since these writings, which constitute a relatively small portion of Rumi’s works, are not fully available in English, we only have their Turkish translations which can be used for this study. However, the Turkish translation of the *Maktubat* had to be excluded from this study altogether. Golpinarli’s translation which is the only available translation of the *Maktubat* in Turkish is based on Feridun Nafiz Uzluk’s edition of the Persian text. According to Lewis (2000), this edition is full of mistakes which renders it virtually useless. Furthermore, I have read the *Majalis-i sab’a* and did not find any views with potential relevance for the subject matter. Thus, although consulted, no references to this last book are included in this research. This leaves us with three major works of Rumi to deal with in the rest of this study. Below I will provide further background information on these works.

#### 4.1.1. The Divan

The *Divan* has been called by different names such as *Divan’i Kabir* (“The Great Collection”), *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi* (“The Collection of Shams-i Tabrizi”) and *Kulliyat-i Shams-i Tabrizi* (“The Complete Shams-i Tabrizi”). Of the translations utilized for this research, Golpinarli’s Turkish translation of the *Divan* (1955) contains 44000 verses and is based on the oldest available manuscript located in the Konya Museum while Arberry’s English translation of four hundred verses of the *Divan* is based on Furuzanfar’s critical edition of the earliest ten manuscripts collated with the Chester Betty manuscript.

As evident from the *Divan*’s different names, Shams-i Tabrizi plays a central place in the creation of the book. In fact, the beginning of its composition is attributed to a period of

Rumi's life that begins with his meeting with Shams. The majority of poems in the *Divan* were written between 1244 and 1260 and in them Rumi appears as someone who survived a "spiritual crisis and a guide to the shores of inner enlightenment, which can be reached only through great suffering and burning away the self" (Lewis 2000). His encounter with Shams and subsequent series of events which include Shams' appearance and disappearance had a clear mark on his poems. The depth of this experience often produced sudden and uncontrollable states of outpouring poetry in Rumi which were recorded and memorized by his disciples (Arberry 1968). Therefore, ecstatic expressions of mystical love primarily for Shams in whom Rumi found a way to the Divine, as well as lamenting the departure of Shams, his spiritual guide and friend, are the major themes of the *Divan*. Unlike other poets, Rumi prefers to use Shams' name instead of his own in his poems which shows his devotion to Shams (Can 2004).

#### **4.1.2. The Mathnawi**

The *Mathnawi* is broadly regarded as the magnum opus of Rumi. In general, *mathnawi* refers to a form of poem consisting of couplets where two lines in a couplet rhyme with each other. Therefore, *aa/bb/cc* is the rhyme scheme that Rumi's *Mathnawi* and other *mathnawis* follow. The adjective *ma'navi* in the *Mathnawi-i Ma'navi* can be translated as "spiritual" from Arabic which explains why the *Mathnawi* is often translated as "Spiritual Couplets" in English. Nicholson's English translation of the *Mathnawi* used in this study consists of 25632 whereas Golpinarli's Turkish translation consists of 25673 couplets. The *Mathnawi* was written at a later stage of Rumi's life after his fifties from 1258 almost until his death in 1273 with some interruption in between (Lewis 2000). As the years of composing the *Mathnawi* mark the period by which Rumi had recovered from the loss of Shams, one can see a more sober style focusing a specific moral message as opposed to the ecstatic expressions of the *Divan*. It is noteworthy that Rumi, like other Sufi poets before him (e.g., Ferdowsi, Nezami,

Sana'i and 'Attar), used *mathnawi* to convey his ethical and mystical message (Lewis 2000). This style is dramatically different from systematic treatises written by theologians, philosophers and some exponents of Sufism such as ibn 'Arabi. *Mathnawi* with its symbolism and metaphorical language is seen by many Sufis as an important method of expression corresponding to the didactic goal of Sufi doctrines which aim to inspire a personal transformation as opposed to being learnt as mere concepts (Chittick 2005). In this respect, it is also important to understand the intended audience of Rumi's *Mathnawi*. Lewis (2009) explains that Sufis traditionally addressed two types of audience at the same time – ordinary people not familiar with mystical doctrines and those already initiated into the spiritual path, and that Rumi aims to explain the roots of spiritual path to everyday folk rather than learned scholars. As such the *Mathnawi* draws upon stories and parables from various source including the Qur'an, hadith, lives of Sufi sages, folk tales and so on. According to Williams (2006), each book of the *Mathnawi* focuses on a specific aspect of gradual transformation on the spiritual path. Thus, thematically the books of the *Mathnawi* can be divided into three groups each covering a major aspect of the path: a) Books 1 and 2: the evils and deception of the carnal self (*nafs*); (b) Book 3 and 4: reason and knowledge exemplified by Moses opposing illusory imagination personified by Pharaoh; (c) Books 5 and 6: true understanding of God by overcoming one's own selfhood. Such thematic division gives some preliminary basis for understanding virtues as part of a process of personal transformation in Rumi. I will further elaborate on this theme when arguing (in chapter 12) for a process-based conception of virtues and vices in Rumi's teachings.

#### 4.1.3. Fihi Ma Fih

The book consists of seventy one discourses including lectures and sermons delivered at different times. They were written down by Rumi's disciples and compiled as a book at a later date. The style of the discourses which exhibit the characteristics of an oral speech

suggests an audience of middle-class people which occasionally includes some statesmen of the time rather than that of learned intellectuals (Lewis 2000). In some cases, Rumi answers the questions of his students or guests. The discussions cover a wide range of subjects including the explanation of Islamic teachings and Sufi concepts, commentaries on the *Mathnawi* and some political events of the day such as the Mongol invasion.

#### 4.1.4. In-text reference codes

Quotes from Rumi's works will be used extensively in later chapters to explain Rumi's views and ideas. Whenever the quotes appear in the text, references will be provided to his relevant works using a set of codes which is a common practice in most Rumi literature. The codes consist of abbreviations for the books' title followed by the poem and verse number in the case of the *Divan*, discourse number in the case of the *Fihi Ma Fih* and the book<sup>41</sup> and verse number in the case of the *Mathnawi* (see table 3 below).

**Table 3:** Examples of book reference codes

Code	Book name	Book, discourse, verse number
D 4: 15	<i>Divan</i>	Poem 4, verse 15
M IV: 1555	<i>Mathnawi</i>	Book 4, verse 1555
FMF 32	<i>Fihi Ma Fih</i>	Discourse 32

<sup>41</sup> As noted earlier, the *Mathnawi* is divided into 6 books.

It must also be noted that there are numerous sections in each book of the *Mathnawi*, which often come in the form of stories, and each section has a separate title. Most of these titles are long some of them even being a paragraph's length. Sometimes it may be difficult to distinguish them from regular verses. Therefore, whenever a section title from the *Mathnawi* is quoted in this study, it is marked in bold.

I must also note that in conducting this research I used primarily Rumi's literary works. However, his biography was also used where relevant to preliminarily establish his relevance for EVE and to support the points and conclusions resulting from his written works. The decision to use Rumi's biographical accounts in such complementary role can be explained by the fact that it is difficult to establish the ultimate historical accuracy of those accounts because they date back to an earlier period of history as compared to the biographies of Leopold and Carson, for instance, whose lives and works are better documented and have recently been studied from an EVE perspective.

#### **4.2. Reading and analysing Rumi**

Rumi's writings contain a broad variety of moral teachings, wisdoms, parables, doctrines and concepts derived from the Qur'an, hadith, mystical literature and folklore tradition. Therefore, proper reading of Rumi's writings requires some understanding of the teachings found in these sources. Chittick (1983), for instance, considers general knowledge of the Islamic tradition (fundamental teachings contained in the Qur'an and hadith) and acquaintance with some doctrines and concepts of Sufism to be instrumental to understanding Rumi's works. Relevant sources on Islam and Sufism as well as secondary literature on Rumi have been consulted in working with Rumi's texts and, where necessary, references to those sources will be provided in the discussion of Rumi's views and ideas on related topics.



In employing Sufi concepts to explain Rumi's teachings, I recognize the fact that, like other traditions of Islam, Sufism is internally diverse and general statements of any nature must be considered with caution. Therefore, whenever an idea is introduced in the text as a Sufi view, it means that there is a general agreement on the view in classical Sufism. On the other hand, if any idea belongs to a specific period or school of Sufism or specifically to Rumi's thought, it will be denoted as such. Classical Sufism generally refers to the period of Sufism which started in the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> centuries with the appearance of some prominent Sufi figures and continued into the period of Sufi orders in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Within this period the classical Sufi sources started to be produced in the 10<sup>th</sup> century due to the need to consolidate Sufis tenets and principles in written form (Nasr 2007). Major authors of this period include al-Sarraj, al-Kalabadhi, al-Makki, Hujviri and others.

#### **4.2.1. Rumi and the Qur'an**

Rumi's works, particularly, the *Mathnawi* have a profound relation to the Quran. Safavi and Weightman (2009) estimated that there are 528 explicit references to the Qur'an and more than 750 hadiths in the *Mathnawi*. According to Soroush (n.d.), the number of the Qur'anic references is even higher; there are more than two thousand instances where the Qur'anic verses are referenced in one form or another in the *Mathnawi*. Such rootedness in the Qur'an led the 15<sup>th</sup> century Sufi poet Abd ar-Rahmān Jami to describe the *Mathnawi* as "the Quran in Pahlawi (Persian)". Although it is important to note here that despite this close link, there is a growing concern among scholars about the fact that the relation of Rumi's poetry to Islamic sources and traditions have been ignored and misrepresented in contemporary English translations of his works (Naghmeh-Abbaspour and Mahadi 2017).

There are some distinct features of Rumi's connection to the Qur'an that must be emphasized. Virani (2002) distinguishes several general reasons for using the Qur'anic verses in classical literary texts such as bringing a distinct linguistic flavor to a given poem, attracting divine blessing, seeking scriptural support and legitimacy for certain views and demonstrating one's command of the scripture. However, he maintains that Rumi's approach to the matter is different in that it engages in an interpretation of the Qur'an to demonstrate the deep roots of fundamental Sufi principles in the scripture. Indeed, Rumi himself alludes to this fact in the preface to the first book of the *Mathnawi* calling it the "expounder" of the Qur'an. Moreover, the titles of some sections in the book attest to its role as a Qur'anic commentary. For instance, a section (2881-2920) in Book 4 is titled as a "Commentary on the Verse, "And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them save with real ground"".

Analyzing such intertextual references in the *Mathnawi*, Naghmeh-Abbaspour and Mahadi (2017) observe that Rumi employed this method to make Islamic teachings and principles more palpable to ordinary people. In this sense, Rumi's poetic style of the Qur'anic interpretation is different from classical *tafsir* (exegesis). It is accessible to audiences not trained in formal religious sciences or initiated into the Sufi path due to its use of tales, stories and rhetorical devices. Moreover, in contrast to the linear and "atomistic" approach of the classical *tafsir*, Rumi's exegesis, more appropriate defined as *ta'wil* ("allegorical or spiritual interpretation"), is intertextual and spiritual and focuses on the Qur'an's fundamental moral message through a didactic style and poetic mode of expression (Virani 2002). Thus, the Qur'an has an exterior meaning which is important; however, its interior meaning, of which there is a multitude of layers, is of ultimate significance. Therefore, Rumi criticizes literal reading of the scripture and urges one to penetrate into its deeper meanings although the latter

requires an open heart and purified self (Lewis 2000). This mode of understanding the Qur'an also is applicable to Rumi's understanding of reality as where the state of heart and one's inner being plays a critical role.

#### 4.2.2. Synoptic reading

Holistic reading has been described as critical to reading and understanding Rumi's writings. While this approach is important for all of Rumi's works, it seems to be particularly relevant to his *Mathnawi* since the work has often been described as lacking order and structure (Safavi and Weightman 2009). Arberry (1977), for instance, describes the *Mathnawi* as "a notoriously difficult work to read and understand; not only, or even so much on account of the intricacy and unfamiliarity of the doctrines therein enunciated, but still more because of the casual looseness, not to say anarchy, of its construction". However, it has recently been recognized by Safavi and Weightman (2009) that the synoptic reading technique, unlike sequential reading, allows the latent order and structure behind the seeming chaos and disorder in the *Mathnawi* to be detected. In sequential reading the meaning and structure of a text unfolds in a linear order as reader proceeds from one part of the text to another. In synoptic reading, by contrast, the structure of the text is recognized by reading an entire text first and then detecting non-linear relationships between the parts of the text. In their synoptic method, Safavi and Weightman also employ parallelism and chiasmus as literary devices to reveal the hidden structure of the text. Thus, Safavi and Weightman's 2009 book which deals with Book One of the *Mathnawi* and their subsequent publications in the *Journal of Transcendent Philosophy* which apply the same method to other volumes of the *Mathnawi* were deployed as a thematic guide to the text. Each Book of the *Mathnawi* has been examined by Safavi and Weightman dividing the book into intermediate levels such as discourses, sections and paragraphs. A detailed analysis and interpretation of each discourse as well as schematic demonstration of non-linear relationships between discourses and

between sections within each discourse have been provided. As such these works are not intended to be substitutes for the original text, but rather methodological tools which will facilitate the reading of otherwise unstructured and chaotic text of the *Mathnawi*.

#### **4.2.3. Symbolism**

Rumi's works, like most mystical writings, are characterized by an extensive use of images and symbols which requires a certain degree of acquaintance with the Sufi allegorical language. Although there seem to be pre-established conventions as to what a given symbol signifies in mystical literature, some images seem to have greater variations of meanings than others. For instance, Schimmel's (1993) thorough analysis of Rumi's imagery is useful in understanding the general character of his symbols. The imagery of the Sun, Water, Gardens, Children, Food, Weaving and Sewing as well as the symbolism inspired by animals are among the central elements of Rumi's allegorical discourse. The image of the Sun which is associated with God and spiritually outstanding personalities such as prophets and saints has a more limited set of meanings than the symbol of water which is used to signify a broad of variety of states, things and phenomena represented by Rumi through diverse forms in which water appears in the physical world (e.g. ocean, sea, river, torrent, rain, ice, tears). According to Keshavarz (1998), an important dimension of Rumi's works is that they are characterised by dynamic symbolism and changing meanings of his images. Therefore, to rely solely on a fixed set of images with pre-defined meanings in reading Rumi would not be sufficient to understand his versatile symbolism. However, Rumi, as Keshavarz further observes, did not entirely disregard the standard imagery of the mystical tradition of his time. He rather

employs it in a creative way. He constructs new symbols, signs and meanings which transgress the boundaries of conventional Sufi imagery. Therefore, reading Rumi's imagery must be context-sensitive as it combines traditional as well as new images which may have different meanings in relation to different elements of a text or poem<sup>42</sup>.

### **4.3. Problem of anachronism**

When attempting to develop a model of EVE from Rumi's philosophy, it is important to address the question of compatibility between the two systems of thought (EVE and Rumi's philosophy). In other words, when applying an environmental theory to a particular philosophy there is a chance we are superimposing a framework which the host philosophy would normally reject (Cooper and James 2005). There are two interrelated aspects of compatibility: content-related and temporal. The content-related compatibility is established by the type of ecologically-relevant content that the host philosophy provides. In other words, it has to be determined if the philosophy offers (a) a developed theory of environmental ethics or (b) various ecologically relevant ideas which have to be located and organized into a coherent whole or (c) only implicit views which can be related to ecological thinking by relying heavily on inference<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> I have discussed Rumi's creative use of images here as a point for consideration in reading his works. When he uses unconventional images, he usually explains or alludes to their implied meanings in the text; he does not leave his readers clueless about those images. In such cases, the meanings must be looked for in the text itself, hence the suggestion for a context-sensitive reading.

<sup>43</sup> Cooper and James (2005) put these three questions in evaluating the compatibility of Buddhist views with environmental ethics.

The second aspect adds to the complexity of the problem by bringing a temporal dimension into play. It raises the possibility of anachronism or anachronistic interpretation. Oxford Dictionaries defines anachronism as “the action of attributing something to a period to which it does not belong”. Thus, when we look into a philosophical idea or a system of thought which belongs to a certain period in history by employing contemporary theories and concepts we run the risk of anachronistic interpretation. For this research, anachronism would question the suitability of ecologically-oriented reading of Rumi’s thought based on the assumption that in the historical context of Rumi’s life ecological problems either did not exist or were not conceived of in modern terms.

There are several ways I will address this potential issue in this research. Some case studies of particular pre-environmental traditions and philosophies from an EVE perspective provide useful methodological clues. Cooper and James’ (2005), Sahni’s (2008) and Keown’s (2007) studies of Buddhist virtues and Cafaro’s (2005b) study of Thoreau, Carson and Leopold as environmental role models are particularly relevant. First of all, it is important to note that in terms of the three content-related possibilities discussed above, Rumi’s works do not contain a worked-out environmental theory nor do they offer ideas only implicitly connected to environmental thought. They rather provide resources which can be directly related to environmental concepts and principles. However, to more fully understand the ecological significance of his views and, more importantly, to derive a coherent theory of EVE from

those views, one needs to read Rumi's texts holistically and analyse his ideas based on a certain theoretical framework.

Drawing upon some elements of the EVE-related studies mentioned above, I propose three ways of addressing the issues of compatibility and anachronism: cosmological, psychological and precedent-based. The *cosmological approach* is employed by Sahni (2008) in her analysis of virtue approach to environmental ethics in Buddhism. In fact, she is well aware of the problems that may arise when connecting two different worldviews.

However, at the outset, I admit to being aware that in doing the above I run the risk of added confusions which are connected with speculating whether certain attitudes and ideas belonging to a particular time and mood can be integrated suitably or successfully into the ethos and outlook of diametrically opposed traditions. I may be open to the charge of trying to attribute contemporary ideas to the Buddhist way of thinking that do not belong there.

She proposes to use the conception of nature as a methodological tool to address this potential problem. In environmental debate, it has often been argued that at the root of present ecological crisis lies our anthropocentric conception of nature. The assumption is that certain views of nature determine how human beings understand and treat nature and its constituents (for example, see White 1967, Plumwood 2002). Therefore, an important part of the philosophical analysis of the causes and solutions of the ecological crisis has focused on examining the conceptions of nature. This also explains why developing ecologically conducive views of nature has been central to both secular and religious environmental ethics. In many cases, developing environmental ethics means searching for ecologically

relevant ideas and principles in worldviews which are not western and belong to a pre-environmental period. Therefore, focusing on the conception of nature provides us with at least some criteria to assess the ecological significance of different worldviews and allows us to go across temporal and cultural contexts in our search for environmental ethics. This seems to be the fundamental approach that has informed much of the work carried out at the intersection of religion, culture and environment to-date including the works on Rumi and environment discussed above.

The next approach which I call a *psychological approach* draws upon moral psychology. It is used by Keown (2007) for establishing a link between Buddhist teachings and environmental attitudes. I suggest that Keown's approach effectively addresses the compatibility problem and is also applicable to this research. To sum up the argument, first, virtue-based ethics is identified as the most suitable framework for explaining Buddhist moral teachings. Second, it is argued that modern ecological problems have a psychological basis and that Buddhism would most probably consider ecological crisis as a psychological one. Based on these premises, it is held that environmentally destructive attitudes and Buddhist vices such as selfishness, greed, ignorance and apathy share the same psychological roots or what Keown calls "dysfunctional psychological states". Virtue ethics aims to eliminate these dysfunctional states and long term solutions to the environmental problems would depend not so much on more technology and conservation but on cultivating virtuous character traits such as compassion, wisdom and mindfulness. Thus, in the psychological approach there is an appeal



to human psychology in building a direct link between the modern problem and the ancient worldview on the assumption that, unlike contexts and worldviews, human psychology is mostly unchanging. A similar approach seems to have been adopted by Cooper and James (2005) in their book *Buddhism, Virtue and Environment*. They argue that Buddhist virtues of humility, self-mastery and equanimity can militate against consumerism, speciesism and apathy which they describe, respectively, as conative, conceptual and cognitive human tendencies which bear responsibility for ecological crisis. The psychological approach is relevant for this research because, as explained earlier, Rumi's works have a strong moral tone with much focus on virtues, vices and other human tendencies and it is highly likely that for Rumi as well ecological problems would be primarily of psychological (spiritual) and moral nature.

The last approach is what I call *precedent-based approach*. It is based on making an analogy between this research and other similar studies and making a case for the possibility of applying modern concepts to pre-environmental philosophies based on precedent. Cafaro (2005b) studied such figures as Thoreau, Carson and Leopold from an EVE perspective. Although all three are recognized to be environmental role models, there seems to be an important distinction between them from the point of view of anachronism. Rachel Carson (1907-1964), recognized as the founder of modern environmentalism, and Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), the closest predecessor of the environmental movement, are considered to be contemporaries. They lived in a period when the irresponsible exploitation of natural

resources was becoming increasingly evident. As a result, their voices emerged as a reaction to these ecologically destructive practices.

Thoreau (1817-1863), however, who lived almost a century earlier than Leopold and Carson, did not seem to openly respond through either his writings or personal example to environmental problems nor understand them the same way they came to be understood in the environmental age. Instead, he would focus on personal development, cultivation of character and richness of experience as the keystones of his philosophy of life. Moreover, he advocates such virtues as simple life, limited use of material goods, intimate relationship with nature and deep understanding of existence and embodies them in his personal example. Due to these aspects of his philosophy and life, Thoreau is regarded as an environmentally virtuous personality (Cafaro 2005b).

Although Rumi lived five centuries prior to Thoreau, there appear to be important parallels between Rumi and Thoreau: a) they did not live in the environmental age and did not write from an environmental perspective; b) character development and cultivation of virtues are central themes for each of them; c) both have positive views of nature in their philosophies. Although the historical account of Rumi's life may not have been as accurately documented as that of Thoreau's to make decisive conclusions about his interactions with the world of nature, Rumi through his strong didactic message propounds a certain way of being and living in this world which is worth being assessed for its environmental significance.

In general, addressing compatibility and anachronism is a methodological step, however, of the three approaches described above only two - the cosmological and psychological approaches, besides being the arguments for justifying the application of environmental theory to Rumi's thought, also have practical implications for this research. As seen in the previous chapter, the cosmological approach with its focus on the conception of nature is integrated into the theoretical framework that will be used to develop Rumi's model of EVE. Thus, his conception of nature will be examined to establish the ecological relevance of his cosmology. The psychological approach will inform the way I will work with virtues to make connections between different character traits and environmental virtues and vices. This was partly discussed in the previous chapter. The third approach is used here to make a case for this research by way of providing a precedent, that is, Cafaro's (2005b) study of Thoreau's philosophy and life.

## 5. Cosmological framework

This chapter contains the first part – cosmological framework – of the holistic theoretical model of Rumi's EVE outlined in the previous chapter. First, I will provide a brief overview of relevant themes from Rumi's thought which will set the stage for all further discussions of Rumi's views in this research. Second, I will examine different images of nature in Rumi's cosmology and discuss the axiology of nature emerging from these images. The main reason for providing this analysis is to establish the ecological relevance of Rumi's worldview based on his ideas of nature which, in turn, will help us determine the EVE significance of his conceptions of human flourishing and virtue ethics. Many images of nature to be discussed here, such as nature's spiritual vitality and God's self-manifestation through the universe (cosmic book), can be found in the existing ecological works on Rumi (see sub-chapter 2.2.). However, an attempt will be made to provide a more detailed account of those images by including some new elements to existing themes which have not been discussed in the environmental literature. More specifically, God's positive relation toward nature has not been discussed as an ecological theme. This may offer a new perspective into Rumi's ecological conception of nature. In addition, the implications of Rumi's images of nature for the axiology of nature will be examined in this chapter with a specific emphasis on understanding how his theocentric worldview affects this axiology. This will become another original aspect of this analysis.

Rumi's thought consists of his mystic poetry and collections of sermons recorded by his companions. He did not produce a treatise where a systematic exposition of his cosmological views can be found. Some ideas which constitute the elements of his cosmology are scattered throughout his poetry and sermons. While it is possible to get a rough picture of his worldview by putting those ideas together and complementing them with insights from

Sufism, any attempt to provide a fuller account of his cosmology would have to tackle a number of questions that Rumi's commentators have struggled with. For instance, Hakim (1959) and Iqbal (1983) list a number of questions about Rumi's evolutionary outlook. In this respect, offering new interpretations or possible answers to such questions would be beyond the scope of this research since many of these questions would require separate studies in order to be dealt with. The matter is further complicated by the mystical character of Rumi's views which cannot always be explained and reconciled through rational categories of understanding. Rumi himself is aware of some paradoxes in his thought and suggests that one needs a spiritual and experiential as opposed to rational understanding to resolve them. In view of such complexity, the aim of this chapter is rather specific. It is limited to examining certain themes in Rumi's thought which make a background for his EVE instead of addressing broader questions unless they are somehow related to the subject matter.

### ***5.1. Major themes of Rumi's worldview***

In this sub-chapter, I will review some themes which are the pillars of Rumi's broader outlook. The themes include his view of God, the world and evolution. However, this list of themes and discussion under each theme are by no means exhaustive. The choice of themes and the scope of discussions are only intended to provide a general background and serve as a point of reference for further analyses in this research. More specific aspects of these themes will be discussed in relevant sub-chapters later on.

#### **5.1.1. God**

In Islamic epistemology, there are several categories concerning the knowledge of God. More specifically, these concepts aim to explain if and how God can be comprehended by human understanding. In general, God is considered to be comprehensible and incomprehensible at

the same time. To explain this seeming paradox, a distinction is made between God's essence (*dhat*) and God's names (*asma*). The former refers to God's being and the latter to His attributes (*sifat*) (M IV: 219) by which God describes Himself. What is beyond human comprehension about God is His essence. In a Prophetic tradition, Muslims are warned not to think about God's essence<sup>44</sup>. Rumi quotes this tradition in the *Mathnawi*: "Hence Mustafá (Mohammad) enjoined us, saying, "Do not seek to investigate the essence of God" (M IV: 3700). Rumi explains this fact by suggesting that things are known through their opposites, however, as God has no opposites, He cannot be comprehended. (M I: 1131). In *Fihi Ma Fih*, Rumi relates the impossibility of understanding God in His essence to the "extremely subtle" reality of God (FMF 59). Therefore, the only way it is possible to know God is by understanding His attributes.

If he conceives that he is in love with the Essence (of God), conception of the (Divine) names and attributes is not the Essence.

Conception is created; it has been begotten: God is not begotten, He is *lam yúlad*<sup>45</sup>. (M I: 2757-58).

Although it is important to differentiate the essence and attributes from each other so that human mind can somehow understand God, the distinction, as Chittick (1983) notes, is conceptual not ontological since in reality God's essence and attributes are one. Because of this unity of the essence and attributes, the real nature or "quiddity" of God's attributes cannot be known either (M III: 3633-3636). Rumi underlines this fact by saying that if the attributes "shone forth" as they are in their essence, they would destroy the temporal world (M III: 1391). Therefore, the only way to understand God's attributes, which are absolute and infinite, is by understanding their relative and limited reflections in God's actions (*afal*) and the affects (*athar*) of His attributes in the phenomenal world and beings.

<sup>44</sup> See *al-Tabarani al-Mu'jam al-Awsat* hadith no:6319

<sup>45</sup> "He neither begets nor is born" (Qur'an 112:3)

None knows the quiddities of the attributes of (Divine) Perfection except through (their) effects and by means of comparison. (M III: 3636)

It is increased in respect of the effect (which it has produced), but not in respect of its essence: the essence hath (suffers) no increase or diminution.

God was not increased by (His) bringing the world into existence: that which He was not formerly He has not become now;

But the effect (phenomenal being) was increased by (His) bringing created things into existence: there is (a great) difference between these two increases.

The increase of the effect is His manifestation, in order that His attributes and action may be made visible. (M IV: 1665-68)

According to this account, it is through creation (*khalq*) that the attributes of God can be distinguished from the essence and find their outward manifestation in the created realm. Despite the fact that the attributes are one in God's essence, there is difference between different attributes of God such as the Forgiving (*al-Ghaffar*), Provider (*al-Razzaq*), and Hearing (*as-Sami*) as well as the opposite qualities such as the Giver of Life (*al-Muhyi*) and the Giver of Death (*al-Mumit*). It is in creation that different attributes become separate by being manifested in different forms (Chittick 1983).

It is also worth briefly discussing the concepts of *tanzih* and *tashbih* in relation to God's essence and attributes. Murata and Chittick (1994) note that *tanzih* denotes God's distance and wrath while *tashbih* emphasizes God's nearness and mercy. They further explain that according to *tanzih* God cannot be conceived by comparing Him to anything in the created realm because God is pure of shortcomings and imperfections which are characteristic of creatures. According to *tashbih* there must be some degree of similarity between God and creation so that at least some comprehension of God would be possible. The literal meaning of *tanzih* is "to declare something pure and free of something else" whereas *tashbih* means "to declare something similar to something else". This distinction also leads to the differentiation of the Divine names described above into the ones pertaining to God's

difference from creatures, the names of *tanzih* or the names of God's essence, and the ones that stress God's resemblance to creatures, the names of *tashbih*. Since God's essence cannot be comprehended in positive terms, the former category of names describe God in terms of what He is not in relation to creatures. Some of such names include the Holy, Glorified and Independent which denote God's purity of any imperfection and insufficiency found in creatures. The names of *tashbih* in turn are the names of God which are found in creatures as well. For example, the names such as Mercy, Compassion, Knowledge and Love are observed in creation and signify God's closeness and care for creatures (Murata and Chittick 1994).

Generally speaking, Sufis embrace the perspective of both *tanzih* and *tashbih* but with an overwhelming emphasis on the latter. They stress His nearness and the possibility of perceiving Him in this world through the effects of His attributes in creation, although they agree that it is not possible to know Him in His essence. Rumi is against using any of these concepts for God because none of them would be sufficient to express His reality since His presence is everywhere.

Both the muwahhid (who asserts the transcendence of God) and the mushabbih (who asserts His immanence) are bewildered by thee, O thou who, being without image (external appearance), art (appearing) in so many forms. Sometimes He causes the mushabbih (who regards the forms in which God is immanent) to become a muwahhid (who regards God under the aspect of pure transcendence); sometimes (these) forms are waylaying the muwahhid (so that he cannot gain access to God who transcends all forms). (M II: 57-58)<sup>46</sup>

Put differently, these concepts can express only a certain aspect(s) of God's reality and He would still be beyond their grasp. Despite this fact, Rumi is in agreement with Sufis in

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<sup>46</sup> See also M III: 344-46 and FMF 24



stressing the closeness and mercy of God towards creatures<sup>47</sup> and, as Iqbal (1983) notes, he criticizes those who deny the possibility of seeing God in this world likening them to the *Mu'tazilite* philosophers<sup>48</sup>.

### 5.1.2. World

For Rumi, the creation came into existence as a result of the Divine Command “Be”. This idea has its roots in the Qur'an which attributes the act of creation to God's single creative command “Be” (KuN). It appears in several verses of the Qur'an. For instance, “Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.” (Qur'an 2:117) (see also Qur'an 3:47, 3:59, 16:40, 40:68). This creative act does not depend on pre-existing matter and conditions and as such is creation *ex nihilo*.

The (Divine) Command KuN (Be) was a single act, and the (two letters) N and K occurred (only) in speech, while the (inward) meaning was pure (uncompounded) (M I: 3100)

This earth and the (heavenly) spheres were brought into existence by God with deliberation (extending) to six days;  
Otherwise, He was able—“Be, and it is”—to bring forth a hundred earths and heavens (from non-existence) (M III: 3500-3501)

As to the question of why God created the universe, Rumi's answer is consistent with the general view of the matter among many Sufis which is based on an oft-quoted tradition: “I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known, so I created the world”<sup>49</sup>. The tradition

<sup>47</sup> I will examine some of the passages emphasizing God's closeness later in this chapter.

<sup>48</sup> *Mu'tazila* is a rationalist school of Islamic theology

<sup>49</sup> According to Encyclopaedia Iranica this is the most commonly quoted hadith in Sufi writings including 'Abd-Allah Anṣari's *Ṭabaqat al-Ṣūfiya* (pp. 639, 645), 'Ayn-al-Qoṣat Hamadani's *Zobdat al-ḥaqa'eq* (pp. 265-70), Ruzbehān Baqli's *Masrab al-arwah* (p. 6), Najm-al-Din Razi's, *Merṣad al-'ebad* (pp. 49, 122, 124, 401), and 'Ala'-al-Dawla Semnani's *al-'Orwa le-ahl al-ḳalwa wa'l-jalwa* (p. 466). Some scholars such as Ibn Taymiya and Ibn Hajar known to be critical of Sufism rejected the authenticity of this hadith as there is no chain of transmission for it. However, the Encyclopaedia further notes that the content of the hadith does not warrant such rejection. It is clear though that regardless of its authenticity the saying was popular among many Sufis including Rumi.

constitutes the basis of the Sufi theory of creation and views the universe as an instrument of knowing God (Ernst 2011). As noted above, due to His subtle essence God can only be comprehended through His attributes. Originally, His attributes are identical with His essence unless they reveal themselves in God's acts and effects. In other words, unless the attributes become manifest in creation, they remain *hidden* in the Divine essence. This is how the *hidden treasure* becomes manifest and known. Therefore, the word *treasure* figures as the key metaphor for the attributes of God in Rumi.

For God declares, "I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known." This is to say, "I created all the world to manifest My Reality, now through graciousness, now through severity." God is not the kind of king for whom one voice is sufficient. If every atom in the world became God's herald, they would still be unable to properly proclaim His Truth. (FMF 46)

(The creation of) these creatures of the world is for the purpose of manifestation, to the end that the treasure of (Divine) providences may not remain hidden. (M IV: 3028)

Acquire this appetite so you will not only see the appearances of form, but will find the Beloved everywhere. (FMF 15)

Rumi's cosmology consists of two dimensions: phenomenal and spiritual. These dimensions are based on the Qur'anic concepts of creation (*Khalq*) and command (*Amr*) both of which appear in the same verse: "His is the creation and the command" (Qur'an 7:54)<sup>50</sup>. "Creation" is the physical realm and "command" is the world of spirit. Rumi refers to the same Qur'anic verse while talking about these dimensions of existence: "Know, therefore, that to Him belongs the creation and to Him the command; "the creation" is the form and "the command" is the spirit riding upon it." (M VI: 78)

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<sup>50</sup> Full verse: "Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He covers the night with the day, [another night] chasing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds." (Qur'an 7:54)

The phenomenal world of creation is characterized by time, space and plurality (M IV: 3692). It is open to sense-perception. The spiritual dimension is unitary in nature and can only be recognized by spiritual perception. It is noteworthy that the two realms are not separate realities as the reality is one. They are two dimensions of the same reality. However, the material realm cannot have an independent existence.

The deliciousness of milk and honey is the reflexion of the (pure) heart: from that heart the sweetness of every sweet thing is derived.  
Hence the heart is the substance, and the world is the accident: how should the heart's shadow (reflexion) be the object of the heart's desire? (M III: 2265-66)

“Heart” or the spiritual dimension is the “substance” or essence of reality. “The world” or the material dimension derives its meaning and beauty from the spiritual. Therefore, the spiritual is the basis of existence and the material is dependent on it.

### **5.1.3. Evolution**

A unique aspect of Rumi’s thought among Sufis is what is often described as his evolutionary worldview. It has often been regarded as an anticipation of the modern theories of evolution (Hakim 1959). However, even cursory reading shows that Rumi’s view of evolution shaped by his mystical thought is fundamentally different from its modern counterpart. First of all, since the world consists of the spiritual and material dimensions and the spiritual is the basis of existence, Rumi’s evolution is not primarily naturalistic. Although it manifests itself in the realm of nature, its roots are located in the spiritual realm. The material evolution starts with matter in the mineral (inorganic) form. From there it finds its way into the world of plants from which it moves into the world of animals and finally merges into human being. It is an upward movement of matter into higher forms of life in the food chain.

Every matter has its spirit or as Hakim (1959) puts it “dimly conscious soul”. Spirit accompanies matter throughout its stages of evolution into higher forms. In Rumi’s world, spirit has precedence over body because matter depends on spirit for its existence and not vice versa. Therefore, spirit operates as the active element or the moving force behind evolution. However, the evolution of matter ends in human body from where it decomposes and starts its cycle over again in the mineral form<sup>51</sup> while spirit not only drives matter until its highpoint in human body but continues its journey from human to angels and hundreds of other spiritual states until reaching God. While matter’s circulation is bound by the cycle of nature, spirit’s progression goes through different spiritual realms. If we keep in mind that the origin of spirit itself is God, from where it descends into the form of matter, we realize that spirit too completes its cycle of coming from God and going back to God.

O my noble (friends), slaughter this cow (the fleshly soul), if ye desire to raise to life the spirits (possessed) of insight.  
 I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to the animal.  
 I died from animality and became Adam (man): why, then, should I fear? When have I become less by dying?  
 At the next remove I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels;  
 And I must escape even from (the state of) the angel: everything is perishing except His Face.  
 Once more I shall be sacrificed and die to the angel: I shall become that which enters not into the imagination.  
 Then I shall become non-existence: non-existence saith to me, (in tones loud) as an organ, Verily, unto Him shall we return. (M III: 3900-3906)

In this scheme of evolutionary cycles, a question arises as to what is the exact force that drives the evolution. It was noted that spirit powers the upward movement of natural elements. That being so, what is the force which activates spirit? For Rumi this force is undoubtedly love. I will engage in a detailed discussion of love, the cornerstone of Rumi’s

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<sup>51</sup> It is quite interesting that for Rumi natural elements, much like spirits, are attracted to their origins. The title of a section in the *Mathnawi* (M III: 4421-4434) which explains this is as follows:

**How each element attracts its congener that has been imprisoned in the human constitution by the non-homogeneous (elements)**

See also M III: 22-26

philosophy, in the next sub-chapter and in sub-chapter 10.1. For now, suffice it to say that it is the cosmic flow of love that powers the cosmic cycle of spirit. This being said, however, Rumi is aware that in the visible domain it is struggle rather than love which describes the processes in the universe. This struggle is manifest between all elements from atoms to higher forms of being and life. Even within human being there is a war between spirit and body. However, this clash of opposites pertains to the corporeal realm or the world of multiplicity whereas the spiritual realm is characterized by peace, unity and harmony (M VI: 36-60). Thus, although the outward dimension of the universe appears to be full with conflict and struggle, the underlying reality is dominated by love. This becomes particularly clear when Rumi explains that it is because of love that natural elements are ready and willing to be consumed by higher elements in nature (M V: 3853-55). They are driven by the desire “to live a higher and fuller life” (Hakim 1959). As explained in the quote below, this urge, “craving and desire for home” continues to drive spirit until it reaches its Divine origin, “the Living One” or “the Infinite Soul”, and ceases to have a separated existence from God. Thus, it is the initial descent from its Divine origin and ensuing pain of separation from God and the desire to return to Him which continuously urges spirit to attain higher forms of life and layers of reality.

**How likewise the soul is drawn to the world of spirits, and how it craves and desires its home, and becomes severed from the bodily parts which are a fetter on the leg of the spiritual falcon.**  
 It (the soul) says, “O my base earthly parts, my exile is more bitter (than yours): I am celestial.”  
 The desire of the body for green herbs and running water is because its origin is from those;  
 The desire of the soul is for Life and for the Living One, because its origin is the Infinite Soul.  
 (M III: 4435-4437)

The human plays a unique role in the evolution. He is the critical link between the material and spiritual realms. He is the last stage before spirit escapes from captivity in the material

realm. It is interesting that for Rumi human being's evolution starts from the moment matter begins its ascent from the inorganic state. This is explained in the verses quoted below.

First he came into the clime (world) of inorganic things, and from the state of inorganic things he passed into the vegetable state.  
(Many) years he lived in the vegetable state and did not remember the inorganic state because of the opposition (between them);  
And when he passed from the vegetable into the animal state, the vegetable state was not remembered by him at all,  
Save only for the inclination which he has towards that (state), especially in the season of spring and sweet herbs  
Like the inclination of babes towards their mothers: it (the babe) does not know the secret of its desire for being suckled; (M IV: 3637-3641)

Thus, with each advent to a new stage humans forget their previous state. For example, rising to the animal life they have no memory of their lives as plants. The only thing that stays with them in their new state is the attraction or "inclination" to the previous one. With each new stage in evolution they become more complete. In addition, reason also evolves throughout these stages until it develops into full rationality in the human state (M IV: 3646-3649). As a result of being the link between the two worlds, human beings consist of a multitude of levels and stages within themselves. One can say that there is a micro-evolution inside human being which is a part of the macroevolution in the outer world.

The aim of this brief account was to explain of human being's place in the background of Rumi's evolutionary cosmology. As such, this account is certainly incomplete and can only serve as a short entry into Rumi's broader conception of human being which will be examined in detail in chapter 6. In the next sub-chapter, I will discuss the second component of Rumi's cosmological framework, i.e. his images of nature.

## 5.2. Images of nature

The purpose of this sub-chapter is to establish the ecological significance of Rumi's worldview. To this end, I will first discuss different ideas pertaining to nature and God-nature relationship in Rumi's views. These ideas can be organized under four themes: cosmic book, vitality of nature, cosmic love and God's relation to creation. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the first three of these themes can be found in the literature on Rumi's environmental ethics. The last theme is a unique view not suggested in the literature. The initial discussion of these themes in their respective sections below will be predominantly descriptive. I will conduct the analysis of their ecological implications in sub-chapter 5.3. I will examine the axiology of nature which emerges from these themes in Rumi's theocentric context.

### 5.2.1. Cosmic Book

In Islamic theology, the creation of nature is not purposeless. In the Qur'an, God says: "And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play." (44:38). In the verses of the *Mathnawi* quoted below, Rumi interprets a similar verse of the Qur'an and emphasizes this purpose behind creation. What is particularly important is that this purpose is based on the meaning of creation rather than on its visible form. The outer form or the physical being is created for the sake of the "essential meaning" behind the form. This establishes the precedence of the meaning over the form<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> See also the following passage from *Fih Ma Fih* "Yet, day and night you have been occupied with nurturing the physical form that does not know right from wrong. Why have you devoted all your energies to looking after the physical, entirely neglecting that subtle essence? The physical exists through that essence, but that essence in no way depends on the physical" (FMF 2).

**Commentary on the Verse, "And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them save with real ground"<sup>53</sup>: (i.e.) "I did not create them for the sake of just this which ye see; nay, but for the sake of the essential meaning and everlasting providence which ye see not."**

Does any painter paint a beautiful picture for the sake of the picture itself, without hope of conferring benefit?

Nay, (he paints it) for the sake of guests and young people who by diverting themselves (with it) may be relieved from cares.

From his picture (arises) the joy of children and the remembering of departed friend's by their friends.  
(M IV: 2881-2883)

Another critical aspect of Rumi's understanding of this Qur'anic verse is that the purpose of creation is not left to human to determine; it is unambiguously defined by God. We have already examined Rumi's view regarding the purpose of God's creation of the world which is based on the famous Prophetic tradition. God created the universe to manifest the *hidden treasure*, the metaphor for God's attributes, in the created realm. There is another famous metaphor for the Divine attributes in the Universe which Rumi mentions in *Fihi Ma Fihi* (Discourse 5). He emphasizes God's omnipresence in the universe by alluding to a well-known verse of the Qur'an: "And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing." (2:115). According to Sufis, the notion of the Face of God in the verse implies seeing God's signs in the surrounding world.

Thus, the purpose for the creation of the world is spiritual which is to reflect the Divine signs in the universe. At the same time, this also points to a link between the purpose of creation and the notion of *tashbih* explained above. Accordingly, the idea of God's nearness and the possibility of observing Him in this world is fundamental to Rumi's account of creation. The names of God through which God can be known are believed to be infinite many being hidden from human kind. According to a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad there are ninety

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<sup>53</sup> Only this quoted part is a verse of the Qur'an; the following quoted sentence seems to be Rumi's interpretation of the verse.



nine names of Allah<sup>54</sup>. As mentioned, Rumi makes a reference to many of these names such as Wisdom, Power, Beauty, Love and Mercy in the context of creation. For instance, “Know, O son, that everything in the universe is a jug which is (filled) to the brim with wisdom and beauty.” (M I: 2860)

In this context, it is particularly noteworthy that the Qur’an describes natural events such as the movements of the sun, moon, stars, earth, sky, sea and rain as the signs (*ayat*) of God (e.g., Qur’an 16:10-17, 10:5). These phenomena make up the order and balance in creation and, as described in the verses of the *Mathnawi*, point to the profound meanings beyond the visible dimension of the universe. At the same time, the Qur’an refers to its own verses as *ayat* – the sign. There is an important correlation between the Qur’an and the Universe since both represent the signs of God and are, therefore, called as the Divine book – the “book of revelation” and the “book of creation” (Setia 2007). Therefore, the universe is often called the Cosmic Qur’an or the Cosmic Book. The notion that nature with its perfect order and proportion is a sign of God has been suggested as a key principle in Islam’s environmental ethics (Khalid 2002).

Although Rumi’s ultimate emphasis is on the meaning over the form, the form or matter does not lose its significance. The phenomenal world is necessary for the meaning to reveal itself.

Form too possesses great importance. No, much more than importance—it is of true substance. Just as the body will fail if it lacks a heart, so too it fails without a skin. If you plant a seed with no husk, it cannot grow, but if you bury it in the earth with its shell, then it germinates and becomes a great tree. So, form is a great and necessary principle, and without it our task fails and our purpose is not attained. Yes, this principle is reality in the eyes of those who know reality and have become reality! (FMF 5)

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<sup>54</sup> “Narrated Abu Huraira: “Allah's Apostle said, “Allah has ninety-nine names, i.e. one-hundred minus one, and whoever knows them will go to Paradise.”” (Sahih Bukhari no: 894)

Despite the fact that the material domain is the lowest level of reality, without this level the subtle meanings of the Divine attributes cannot be manifest and, consequently, comprehended by human being. The Sufi concept of “veil” may help us better understand this complex relationship between form and meaning. According to the concept, creation is a veil between human being and God and it serves a good purpose because human would not have the ability to endure God’s beauty if it were revealed directly without a veil (FMF 9). So people must see the Divine through the veil of creation which implies natural phenomena and cause-effect relationships in the universe. However, there is also a danger in the existence of the veil because “the people of this world see secondary causes and think they are the origin of everything. ... Secondary causes are only a veil to occupy the common people” (FMF 15). For human being, understanding the Divine signs in the universe comes through effort. Therefore, Rumi says that “day and night people are forever revealing God, but while some understand this, others are unaware” (FMF 46). According to Rahman (1980), one of the potential problems which arises from the regularity of the processes in the universe is that people tend to attribute this regularity to self-sufficient natural causes and not to the reality which is behind nature. Therefore, he further explains, instead of viewing the universe as the miracle of God expressed in the ordered universe, they rather consider “interruption and suppression” of natural processes as a miracle. The analysis above demonstrates that the vision of God’s attributes in the universe is not a given state for human since certain contemplative effort and spiritual insight are necessary because natural causes can both reveal and completely conceal God depending on the perspective one takes in observing the universe.

### **5.2.2. Vitality of nature**

Vitality is an important element of Rumi’s conception of nature. Everything in nature regardless of its outward appearance possesses life. There are recurring references to this fact

throughout Rumi's works. There are two aspects of this vitality. First, vitality is not about the biological properties of life but rather about the spiritual qualities and functions of natural entities. Second, vitality is real, not symbolic, and applies to not only living organisms but also to seemingly inanimate beings such as stone and soil. Third, natural entities possess awareness and have the ability to communicate.

In Rumi, vitality is a spiritual rather than biological phenomenon. We can recall that the creative evolution outlined above is driven by the movement of the spirit towards its Divine origin. This points to some sort of spiritual consciousness in the matter which Hakim (1959) describes as "dimly conscious monads". There are also other characteristics of vitality attributed to nature. For instance, inanimate objects' glorification of God is explained as an important spiritual function of creatures: "The glorification of God by inanimate beings will become evident to thee" (M III: 1022). Rumi mentions such praise of God by creatures in numerous places (e.g., M III: 1495, FMF 60, FMF 11, FMF 21, M VI: 3449, M II: 2566). The verse of the Qur'an which describes the act of glorification puts it this way: "The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving." (17:44). This description is often regarded as a Qur'anic premise for Islam's environmental ethics. In her analysis of the concept, Ouis (1998) explains that prayer has a central place in Muslim religious consciousness and since nature is in a constant state of praise and prayer, for human beings joining nature in prayer is entering into a state of unity and brotherhood with nature. She quotes the following tradition as a textual support for brotherhood between creatures: "I bear witness that all creatures are brothers"<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> "O Allah, our Lord and the Lord of all things! I am a witness that the servants are all brothers" (Sunan Abu Daud no: 1508)

Some depictions of nature in Rumi suggest that nature's vitality is not a mere symbolism. As a Sufi poet, Rumi is known for his extensive use of imagery and symbolism (Schimmel 1993; Keshavarz 1998). However, his accounts of vitality characterizing nature are an exception. He explicitly states that these accounts are real and rebukes those who fail to recognize their reality. Moreover, for Rumi vitality is not only a matter of theoretical knowledge or belief which comes from religious stories; from the forcefulness of his language he seems to have an experiential understanding of the vitality in nature. For instance, the *Mathnawi* contains a clear indication of how Rumi takes vitality quite literally. He explicitly rejects any interpretative explanation of the idea that inanimate beings glorify God.

The glorification of God by inanimate beings will become evident to thee; the doubts suggested by (false) interpretations will not carry thee away (from the truth).  
 Since thy soul hath not the lamps (the lights necessary) for seeing, thou hast made interpretations,  
 Saying, "How should visible glorification (of God) be the meaning intended? The claim to see (that glorification) is an erroneous fancy. (M III: 1021-1023)

He argues that interpretation is just a pretext for someone who is incapable of perceiving the glorification and, therefore, such person would deny the literal understanding of the verse. However, Rumi is also aware that the experience of vitality in nature is not open to everyone. He suggests that if one goes from the physical into the spiritual realm of existence, the glorification becomes comprehensible. For instance, he points out the difference in how the vulgar and the Prophet perceive the world. For the vulgar it is dead and inert, but for the Prophet, who has an enlightened heart and mind, the world glorifies God and is filled with love and bounty. The way the vulgar person sees the world is a veil which makes him blind to the real nature or face of the world. See, for instance:

Just as, to the Prophet, this world is plunged in glorification of God, while to us it is heedless (insensible).

To his eye, this world is filled with love and bounty; to the eyes of others it is dead and inert.  
 To his eye, vale and hill are moving swiftly: he hears subtle discourse from clod and brick.  
 To the vulgar, all this (world) is a bound and dead (thing): I have not seen a veil (of blindness) more wonderful than this. (M IV: 3532-3535)

Another dimension of vitality is that natural entities are described to possess awareness and understanding. This applies to both animate and, more importantly, inanimate entities. As such, they are described to possess self-awareness as well as the awareness of God, human beings and other entities in nature. For instance, essential natural elements such as the earth, water, air and fire are said to be aware (acquaint) with God although this awareness is not always comprehended by “us” - human beings<sup>56</sup>. Similarly, natural entities such as the moon, sea, earth, wind and stone are described to perform certain functions. Some of these functions include non-physical activities such as understanding, seeing the signs and wishing peace, which point to a certain degree of awareness as opposed to the unconscious performance of their physical functions. The natural entities themselves are said to underline their non-physical qualities and the fact that they cannot be experienced by every human being.

The mountains too make a song like that of David, and the substance of iron is (as) wax in the hand.  
 The wind becomes a bearer for Solomon, the sea becomes capable of understanding words in regard to Moses.  
 The moon becomes able to see the sign in obedience to Ahmad (Mohammed), the fire becomes wild-roses for Abraham.  
 The earth swallows Qárún (Korah) like a snake; the Moaning Pillar comes into (the way of) righteousness.  
 The stone salaams to Ahmad (Mohammed); the mountain sends a message to Yahyá (John the Baptist). (They all say), “We have hearing and sight and are happy, (although) with you, the uninitiated, we are mute.” (M III: 1014-1019)

Moreover, the following episode from Rumi’s biography suggests that animals, dogs, in this case, have a capacity to understand the human spiritual insight.

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<sup>56</sup> “Earth and water and air and sparking fire are unacquainted with us, but acquainted with God.” (M II: 2370)

It is also transmitted that one day Mowlana<sup>57</sup> - *God sanctify us with his lofty secret* – stood in a marketplace. He was uttering higher meanings and secrets, and the people of the city had formed into a crowd. Mowalana turned his blessed face from the people toward a wall and he uttered divine insight until night came on and it was time for the evening prayer. Once it was night, all the dogs of the bazaar formed a circle around him. His fixed his blessed gaze firmly upon them and went on uttering higher meanings. The dogs moved their heads and tails, and gently went bow-wow. Mowlana said: ‘*I swear by God, the High, the Powerful, the Irresistible, apart from him there is no one powerful and irresistible in existence, these dogs understand my divine insight. After this don’t call them “dog” because they are relatives of the Dog of the Seven Sleepers*<sup>58</sup> (*ashab al-kahf*).’ (Aflākī 2002).

The spiritual vitality of natural entities includes their ability to communicate which consists of their ability to respond and articulate themselves. Again, this aspect is particularly interesting because it applies among others to inanimate objects. We have already seen some indications of this ability in the verses quoted above, i.e. when the moon, earth, wind and stone assert their ability to hear, see and rejoice. However, more detailed examples of this are found in Rumi’s narrations of the stories of the Prophets in which human beings and natural entities are described to enter into a communion. For instance, the following passages from the *Mathnawi* recounts Solomon’s communication with plants to inquire about their medical benefits.

Every morning, when Solomon came and made supplication in the Farther Mosque.  
He saw that a new plant had grown there; then he would say, “Tell thy name and use.  
What medicine art thou? What art thou? What is thy name? To whom art thou hurtful and for whom is thy usefulness?”  
Then every plant would tell its effect and name, saying “I am life to that one, and death to this one.  
I am poison to this one, and sugar to that one: this is my name (inscribed) on the Tablet by (the pen of) the Divine decree.” (M IV: 1288-1292)

Thus, we can observe in these verses that in Rumi’s worldview plants have the capacity to not only comprehend human speech but also to respond to it. Their responses also suggest that they possess a degree of self-awareness expressed in their knowledge of their own healing properties.

<sup>57</sup> Honorific title of Rumi meaning “our master”.

<sup>58</sup> The reference here is to a group of devout youth, a.k.a., the “Sleepers of Ephesus” in Christian tradition, and their dog who were persecuted by a tyrannical ruler for their faith and hid in a cave where God made them sleep for 300 years. See Chapter 18 of the Qur’an titled *Al-Kahf* (“The Cave”) for more on this story.

### 5.2.3. Cosmic Love

In this section, I will outline the cosmological aspect of love in order to derive Rumi's image of nature based on love. I will discuss other aspects of love as a human disposition and a potential environmental virtue in sub-chapter 10.1.

Love is the central theme of Rumi's mystical thought. Metaphysically, love is the foundation of existence whose effects are also partially observable in the phenomenal realm. However, the reality of love is much deeper than its worldly manifestations. Love is a fundamental attribute of God (M VI: 971). Based on the tradition quoted above "I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known, so I created the world" (FMF 17 & 46), Sufis consider love to be the *raison d'être* for the creation of the world. The desire to be known which stems from God's eternal love is thought to have led to the creation of the universe. It is noteworthy that creation is not a one-time act but rather a continuous process where God grants creation its existence at every instance and if He stops doing so even for a moment, the entire universe will fall into non-existence. This points to the constant nature of God's love for creation.

Every moment the world is renewed, and we are unaware of its being renewed whilst it remains (the same in appearance).

Life is ever arriving anew, like the stream, though in the body it has the semblance of continuity. From its swiftness it appears continuous, like the spark which thou whirlest rapidly with thy hand.

If thou whirl a firebrand with dexterity, it appears to the sight as a very long (line of) fire.

(M I: 1144-1147)

It was briefly mentioned above (section 5.1.3.) how love serves as the ultimate driving force for Rumi's view of cosmic evolution. Accordingly, not only does love initiate the act of creation, it also powers the cosmic and natural processes in creation. In doing so, it also interconnects things in the universe and maintains the cosmic order. As the Divine attribute, love takes its origin in God; however, throughout its movements in this world it also strives back towards its origin in God. This universal cycle of love can be said to be theocentric in

which the original love of God for creation is transformed into the love of creation for God. This cycle also corresponds to the metaphysical stages of human love explained by Sufis. These stages are as follows: 1) God's love for Himself; 2) God's love for creation; 3) human love for God and 4) human love for other beings which is a part of human love for God (Nasr 2007). The first two stages explain the origin of love, i.e. God's desire to manifest His attributes through the creation of the universe whereas the last two stages represent the return of love to God. The latter, however, is not as straightforward as the former as it can be concluded from the following passage:

So it is with all desires and affections, all loves and fondnesses that people have for every variety of thing—father, mother, heaven, earth, gardens, palaces, knowledge, things to eat and drink. The lover of God realizes all these desires are truly the desire for God, and they are all veils covering humanity's eyes. When we pass into the next world and behold Reality without these veils, then we realize all those were veils and coverings, and that our true quest in reality is for one thing. (FMF 9)

From the standpoint of human being, all forms of desire felt toward worldly things is ultimately love for God. However, when this fact is not recognized love for worldly things becomes a veil between human and God. As discussed earlier (section 5.2.1.), limited perception of reality bounded by veils is a state that must be overcome for Rumi despite the great wisdom behind the existence of veils.

To summarize the foregoing discussion, both the spiritual and physical dimensions of reality, whether human being recognizes or not, are sustained by ever-active love. Therefore, for Rumi nature is not a lifeless matter or a dull mechanism; it exists through God's love and is filled with love for God which animates the entire universe.



#### 5.2.4. God's relation to creation

Concerning God's attitude toward creation, it has been discussed that God creates the universe out of love. There are also other themes in Rumi's thought which characterize God's relation to nature. First of all, God says that He created creatures for a good cause so that they can benefit from Him.

Since Thy mercy, O Self-subsistent Living One, said, "I created the creatures that they might profit by Me,"  
(And since Thy saying) "Not that I might profit by them" is (the expression of) Thy munificence, by which all defective things are made whole, (M V: 4173-74)

The Prophet has declared that God said, 'My purpose in creating was to do good:  
I created to the intent that they (My creatures) might draw some gain from Me, and that they might smear their hands with My honey; (M II: 2635-36)

This view seems to be paradoxical in how God's motives for creation are articulated. On the one hand, God creates the world to make Himself known and this seems to hint at some form of instrumentality in which creation serves God's purpose. However, on the other hand, the notion that God brings creation into existence so that they can benefit from Him, which in some sense suggests that they were created for their own sake, challenges this instrumentalist view. This indicates that the reason for the creation of the world is more complex than it appears. It is not by default instrumentalist and may accommodate the idea that God creates for a non-instrumental benefit of creation.

God is unequivocal about his absolute ownership of creation. Every single being in creation belongs to God. Therefore, He rejects any mastery or authority over nature other than His own and threatens anyone who claims such authority with the direst of consequences. Rumi puts it this way: "(He is) One: He hath no associate in Kingship; His slaves have no master but Him. His creatures have no other owner: does anyone claim partnership with Him except one that is doomed to perish?" (*M IV: 2325-2326*). The gravity of the matter comes from

Islam's view of associating partners with God (*shirk*) which is considered the severest and unforgivable sin<sup>59</sup> because it rejects the fundamental Islamic doctrine of *tawhid* (absolute monotheism). In this position of authority, God's attitude toward creatures remains to be that of mercy, care and compassion. Rumi often emphasizes the precedence of God's mercy over His wrath and the universality of God's mercy which encompasses the entire creation: "He wishes that that mercy should shine upon all, on the evil and the good, because of the universality of His mercy." (M I: 3614). Perhaps, the most compelling expression of this fact is found in the following verse of the *Mathnawi* I where creatures are described as God's family and God as the nourisher and sustainer of this family of creation.

Similarly you may take (every animal) from the gnat to the elephant: they all have become God's family (dependent on Him for their nourishment), and what an excellent nourisher is God! (MI: 2295)

### 5.3. Value of nature

Rumi's worldview is suggested to be theocentric (Ozdemir 2005). However, the implications of such theocentrism on the value of nature and human-nature relationship are not clear (see sub-chapter 2.1.). Therefore, it would be useful to examine theocentrism from an ecological perspective and explore its connection to Rumi's case. In sub-chapter 3.1., I examined Hoffman and Sandelands' (2005) view of theocentrism as a middle ground between two extremes of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. Anthropocentrism invests all meaning and value in human beings and denies any meaning to nature while ecocentrism does not attribute special meaning to human beings reducing them to a mere fact of nature. Hoffman and Sandelands' analysis of theocentrism seems to be conceptually suitable for this study too despite its background in the Christian metaphysics. Therefore, I will draw upon their

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<sup>59</sup> The Qur'an describes it this way: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin" (4:48).

analysis to examine the ecological implications of Rumi's theocentrism without committing to its original Christian content. There are three pillars of Hoffman and Sandelands' analysis which will frame the discussion of theocentrism in this study: (a) human and nature are separate creations of God and are both good; b) meaning and value of human and nature are assigned by God; c) relationship between human and nature is determined by God.

The four images of nature described in the previous sub-chapter appear to signify the fundamental goodness of nature. What is clear from the foregoing discussion is that God did not leave the job of defining nature's purpose and value to human beings. The purpose is clearly pre-determined by God and is essentially of spiritual as opposed to material character. According to this teleology, nature works as the cosmic manifestation of the Divine signs. Moreover, Rumi's understanding of God is not that of transcendence from the world where God first creates and then disengages with creation. God is rather actively present in the affairs of creatures and relates to them with love, mercy and compassion. Furthermore, in creating the world, God wishes certain good for His creatures which is intended for their own sake. God also accepts no mastery and dominion over nature other than His own because everything in creation belong to God and He holds the ultimate ownership of everything. Finally, nature itself is not a lifeless machine; it is imbued with a profound spiritual vitality animated and sustained by the cosmic flow of love and where every single creature glorifies God. These views of nature are starkly different from the dominant images presented by the mechanistic and anthropocentric, whether religious or philosophical, conceptions of nature. As such, these views also form the basis for the non-instrumental value of nature within Rumi's theocentric cosmology.

It must be noted, however, that nature's non-instrumental value is different from an intrinsic value since it is only God who can be said to have a value in and of Himself, i.e. intrinsic value, which is objective (inherent) as opposed to being subjectively defined. Therefore, nature's non-instrumental value is based on its reflection of the intrinsic value of God and the fact that it is not determined by human beings. In this respect, even human beings do not have an intrinsic value in and of themselves since their value too comes from their relationship with God. Although between the non-instrumental values of humans and nature there is a difference of degree because humans through the pattern of their creation has a greater capacity to reflect God's value. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Apart from its non-instrumental value, nature also has an instrumental value in that it serves human being in certain ways. This service is of two kinds: biophysical (material) and spiritual. In a way, the material service of nature is not unique to human beings. In Rumi's world, all natural elements benefit from the material services of nature because all natural entities are interlinked in a complex web of relationships. This is not to diminish the uniqueness of human faculties and the extent of benefits that he can draw and, in many cases, force out from nature. I will examine this aspect of human-nature connection later on. For now, my focus is on the spiritual benefits nature provides to human being. By displaying the signs of the Divine in its being, nature helps human being recognize and understand God. This service is of critical importance for human's spiritual development. This feature constitutes the human-oriented part of nature's axiology (*human-oriented spiritual axiology of nature*). Such axiology is theocentric because even in its instrumental sense nature's value is ultimately defined by God.

In this chapter, I have discussed the major themes of Rumi's cosmology and the images of nature. I have also examined how theocentrism shapes the axiology of nature based in Rumi drawing on the conceptual model of theocentrism suggested by Hoffman and Sandelands (2005). Based on this model, it has been argued that in Rumi's cosmology creation is good and God is viewed as the source of both non-instrumental and instrumental values of nature. I will continue to explore the implications of this model with a particular focus on the human and the human-nature relationship after having examined Rumi's conception of human flourishing in the next chapter.

## 6. Human flourishing in Rumi

The overall aim of this chapter is to examine Rumi's version of human flourishing from an environmental point of view. It will be achieved in three steps. First, the general understanding of human nature in Rumi will be outlined. Second, Rumi's analogue of the concept of human function will be established. Third, based on Rumi's understanding of human nature and human function his conception of human flourishing will be explored and evaluated from an environmental perspective<sup>60</sup>. In addition, I will examine the link between Rumi's understanding of human being and his broader theocentric thought. Finally, I will analyse how his conception of human flourishing interrelates with his idea of nature's spiritual value.

The rationale for understanding Rumi's idea of human nature and human flourishing is two-fold. First, along with Rumi's broader cosmological framework discussed in the previous chapter, it would provide a conceptual background for a holistic understanding of Rumi's EVE. The need for providing such a background is explained by the fact that virtues and vices often operate within a particular account of human flourishing. Second, the current ecological analyses of Rumi focus on his views of nature. However, it would be equally important to understand the ecological ramifications of his conception of human flourishing and how such conception corresponds with his ecologically relevant views of nature. In addition, this analysis will offer some insights into how Rumi's thought given its overwhelming emphasis on human being can remain relevant for environmental ethics and EVE against possible claims of radical anthropocentrism. These two components of the following discussion will define the contribution of this chapter in the field.

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<sup>60</sup> It must be reiterated that concepts such as human function and flourishing will be used as conceptual tools without committing to their different philosophical contents. The neutrality of the concepts has been emphasized in the virtue ethics literature (Rasmussen 1999).

## 6.1. Human nature

In Rumi's universe, human beings are a unique combination of two diametrically opposing principles – physical and spiritual. Despite his focus on the mystical side of human existence, Rumi also characterizes human being in naturalistic terms, that is, human being is a part of the natural system. The basis of their physical existence is water and clay<sup>61</sup>. In fact, of the two cycles of evolution mentioned in the previous chapter the evolution of matter culminates in human beings, who incorporate in themselves the properties of natural elements and organisms preceding them in the process of evolution. Therefore, the evolution of human beings starts well before they enter the human state; it starts while they are in the inorganic state and constantly move upward throughout different stages of the natural cycle.

I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to the animal.  
I died from animality and became Adam: Why, then should I fear? When have I become less by dying?  
(M III: 3901-3902)

Not only does Rumi firmly situate human being in the realm of nature, he also emphasizes the significance of human body which is not to be denigrated because of the profound Divine wisdom that exists behind bodily existence (FMF 5, FMF 15). For Rumi, there is no notion of the original sin that would lead to the fall of body and matter. As stated in the Qur'an (95:4), human being is the best pattern of God's creation which includes human body and soul. In Rumi, there is no place for the duality of body and spirit as they are both good and interdependent (Chittick 1983). He says that "the spirit cannot function without the body;

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<sup>61</sup> "Your glorification (of God) is an exhalation from the water and clay (of your body): it became a bird of Paradise through the breathing (into it) of your heart's sincerity". (M I: 866)

"What wonder if the mountain became a venerable Sūfi? The body of Moses also was (formed) from a piece of clay". (M I, 868)

The roots of this view in the Qur'an are found in "And We did certainly create man out of clay from an altered black mud." (15:26)

your body is frozen (inanimate) and cold (inert) without the spirit” (M V: 3423). Body is the manifestation of the spirit in the material world. “God made the body the locus of manifestation for the spirit” (M VI: 2208). If the body is devalued for any reason by Rumi it is because of its association with carnal desires and not because of its material as opposed to spiritual nature. As far as carnal desires go, Rumi does not suggest to ignore them completely but rather take them under control and find a balance in satisfying them. This becomes clear in the verse below when Rumi defines the mean in relation to greed.

If anyone has an allowance of four loaves and eats two or three, that is the mean;  
But if he eat all the four, it is far from the mean: he is in bondage to greed, like a duck.  
If one has appetite for ten loaves and eats six, know that that is the mean. (MII: 3533-35).

Of course, human beings are not only a natural being either. The fact that the entire phenomenal realm consists of two dimensions (spiritual and material) holds true for human beings too. In fact, their spiritual dimension is of far greater importance than their body because it is what distinguishes them from the rest of creation. A Prophetic tradition which Rumi recounts in detail in both the *Mathnawi* (M IV: 1497-1536) and *Fih Ma Fih* (FMF 17; see below) explains human beings in a broader scheme of creation according to which beings are grouped into three categories: angels, animals and human beings. In this scheme, angels are described as pure intellect and animals as pure lust. Having no power to alter their conditions, they are in a state of peace within their *modus vivendi*. Human situation, in this account, is a complex one because humans are trapped in a duality of angelic and animalistic qualities as they have both intellect and lust as parts of their nature. In parallel to this categorization, Rumi introduces three types of human beings. The first group are those whose intellect dominates their lust and they live by the demands of their angelic nature. The second are those whose lust overcomes their intellect and they live in the realm of their animal



nature. The third group consists of people who live in an intermediate state struggling between the opposing sides of their existence.

There are three kinds of creatures. First there are the angels, who are pure intelligence. Worship and service and the remembrance of God are their nature and their food: that they eat and by that they live. Just so the fish in the water lives by the water; its mattress and pillow is the water. Angels are not under any burden of obligation. Inasmuch as the angel is divested and pure of lust, what favour does he confer if he does not gratify his lust or conceive and indulge carnal desire? Since he is pure of these things, he has not to struggle them. If he obeys God's will, that is not accounted as obedience; for that is his nature, and he cannot be otherwise.

Secondly there are the beasts, who are pure lust, having no intelligence to prohibit them. They too are under no burden of obligation.

Lastly there remains poor man, who is a compound of intelligence and lust. He is half angel, half animal; half snake, half fish. The fish draws him towards the water, the snake draws him towards the earth. He is forever in tumult and battle. 'He whose intelligence overcomes his lust is higher than the angels; he whose lust overcomes his intelligence is lower than the beasts.'

'The angel is saved by knowledge,  
The beast by brute ignorance;  
Midway between, and struggling –  
Such a predicament is Man's!

(FMF 17)

According to this account, two types of human self can be distinguished - animal and angelic which are often referred to as the lower and higher self<sup>62</sup>, respectively. There are different descriptions of the lower and higher self in Rumi. For instance, he associates the higher self with a number of intellectual and spiritual qualities and pursuits such as knowledge, wisdom and the vision of God. The lower self is associated with carnal desires and pleasures and is described as the enemy to the true identity of human being.

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<sup>62</sup> "We have a similar doctor within our spiritual being. When this **higher Self** is feeble, our inward senses perceive falsely, and whatever we follow is contrary to the truth. So the saints are physicians who guide a person until their instinct is restored to its right balance, and their religion and their heart have gathered strength."  
(FMF 11)

This world and its delights cater to the animal within us. These pleasures all fill our animal nature, while our real self slowly dies. They say, “The human being is a rational animal,” yet we consist of two things. Lusts and desires feed our animality in this material world. But as for our true essence, its food is knowledge, wisdom, and the sight of God. The animality within us flees away from God, while our spiritual self flees away from this world. (FMF 12)

God answers, “The seeker of pleasure in you is your enemy and My enemy.

*‘Do not take your enemy and  
My enemy for a friend.’*

When your pleasure-seeking self is imprisoned, filled with trouble and pain, then your freedom arrives and gathers strength. (FMF 13)

The higher self is regarded as the real identity of human being. This is the state of human consciousness in the presence of God. The evolution of human spirit is a journey of descending from God and ascending back to God; as stated by the Qur’an to God belong the beginning and the end (53:25; 92:13). Rumi alludes to this fact in the following verse: “The (real) beloved is that one who is single, who is thy beginning and end.” (M III: 1418). Human spirit was in God’s presence before being sent into this world which is recounted by the so-called story of the “Covenant of Alast” in the Qur’an<sup>63</sup>. When descending from this state into the created world human beings lost awareness of their original identity. It is possible to restore this identity while in this world and it is this task, according to Sufis and Rumi, in particular, which is the central purpose of human life. Although ordinary human beings may not realize it, the separation from the Divine source causes an immense suffering for the soul. In the opening verses of the *Mathnawi* (M I: 1-18), Rumi deplores this pain caused by the separation of the human soul from its roots and that is why the essence of most of Rumi’s writings can be regarded as a person’s journey to one’s original abode in the presence of God. The following verses of the *Divan* also describe the situation of the soul in this world:

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<sup>63</sup> “And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we have testified.” [This] - lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, “Indeed, we were of this unaware.”” (7:172)

The soul, a stranger in the world, is yearning for the city of placelessness; why, O why does the bestial spirit continue so long to graze?  
Pure, goodly soul, how long will you journey on? You are the King's falcon; fly back toward the Emperor's whistle! (D 4: 9-10)

It is also worth noting that a continuous pursuit of bodily pleasures, wealth, status and power causes a gradual descent to the sphere of the lower self. As a result, human begins to self-identify with the objects of his pursuits and acquires false identities which produce a deviation from his original self. Therefore, for Rumi breaking free from the influence of one's lower self and reinstating one's original identity represents the ultimate goal of human life.

## **6.2. Human function**

It has been established so far that of the two selves the higher self is the essential self or original identity of human nature. As our aim here is to identify the distinctive character of human beings which sets them apart from other creatures and constitutes the basis of human flourishing, some insights into the exact nature of the higher self would be important. Some of the passages quoted above single out intellect as an important element of the higher self. So it would be worth exploring intellect's role in defining human being<sup>64</sup>

Although it is not my aim to engage in a comprehensive discussion of intellect in this chapter<sup>65</sup>, a brief overview will be necessary to understand whether nurturing intellect qualifies as the basis for human flourishing in Rumi. It is true that for Rumi reason is an important human faculty which distinguishes humans from animals (FMF 17). However, the

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<sup>64</sup> It is noteworthy that viewing intellect as the human function would be in line with the Aristotelian conception of human flourishing (eudaimonia) although it must also be noted that Rumi is critical of rationalist philosophers

<sup>65</sup> A more detailed analysis of intellect as an environmental disposition will be presented in chapter 9.

image of reason becomes more nuanced when his references to intellect are examined holistically and in relation to his broader philosophy. Intellect seems to be of rather instrumental value aiming to lead a person to a higher end than intellect or intellectual life itself. In other words, it is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end. In this sense, intellect is of crucial importance for controlling one's carnal desires and attaining to the higher self (M III: 1826-1833) although, for this purpose, reason should be detached from sensuality because the reason governed by sensuality misleads the person. Rumi calls such reason a mere imagination (M IV: 2301-02). Despite its critical role as an instrument of "self" transformation, intellect and reason are limited and can guide the person only until a certain point. Therefore, intellect alone is insufficient for comprehending the deeper aspects of reality including God, the universe and human beings (M V: 1305-1310). Moreover, there is a danger in overstating the importance of reason because it can breed arrogance and become an instrument of destruction if not properly guided by love (Iqbal 1983).

Provided Rumi's complex understanding of human beings as bodily and spiritual beings, reason and intellect do not seem to be the only feature defining human beings. Even in its instrumental role, as outlined above, reason appears to be inadequate to deal with multiple aspects of human existence, in particular, the essential human self which is primarily spiritual. There are also other human characteristics which are said to play an important role in defining human beings. As will be discussed shortly, intellect in Rumi's conception is rather a part of a broader whole, which seems to more adequately characterize human beings.

In the Qur'anic understanding, what distinguishes human beings from the rest of the creation is the fact that God breathed into them of His own spirit. In the Qur'an, God mentions this fact after explaining how He creates human out of clay and orders angels to prostrate before

human being: “And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, “I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud. And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration.” (15:28-29). This view is of central importance to Sufi metaphysics. According to Hakim (1959), defying any reduction of human to a merely biological being, Sufis base their understanding of the human self on this Qur’anic notion and emphasize the identity between God and the human soul. Therefore, Rumi considers the Divine spirit as the central aspect of human nature (see FMF 16; M I: 2964). This initial analysis demonstrates that the Divine character of the higher self is human being’s distinct aspect which, as Rumi holds, distinguishes humans from other creatures. Thus, it seems possible to conclude that realizing the higher self is constitutive of human flourishing. However, to understand the specifics of such notion of human flourishing, we need to explain the implications of the higher self for human life.

In FMF 4, Rumi engages in a vigorous discussion regarding the teleology of human life. A single task is presented as the purpose of human creation without accomplishing which human life would be considered to have gone in vain. Although Rumi does not provide a detailed explanation of the task in this discourse, he mentions the Qur’anic verse “And We have certainly honored the children of Adam” (17:70). The same Qur’anic verse is quoted in FMF 2 while explaining human nature and seems to provide an important insight into the substance of the higher self. In FMF 4, the idea of honouring human being is mentioned to explain why it is only human beings among all creatures who can perform the task which is presented as the highest purpose of human life. In FMF 2, the same verse is referred to in order to explain the reason why it is only human beings who can be the astrolabe<sup>66</sup> or mirror of God. The two explanations of the same verse point to a crucial link between the purpose of

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<sup>66</sup> “A compact instrument used to observe and calculate the position of celestial bodies before the invention of the sextant” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

human life and the ability of human beings to be the mirror of God that makes them honoured creatures.

Someone said: “There is something I have forgotten.”

Rumi replied: There is one thing in this world that must never be forgotten. If you were to forget all else, but did not forget that, then you would have no reason to worry. But if you performed and remembered everything else, yet forgot that one thing, then you would have done nothing whatsoever.

It is just as if a king sent you to the country to carry out a specific task. If you go and accomplish a hundred other tasks, but do not perform that particular task, then it is as though you performed nothing at all. So, everyone comes into this world for a particular task, and that is their purpose. If they do not perform it, then they will have done nothing.

*“We offered the Trust to the heavens,  
The earth and the mountains,  
They refused to carry it and were afraid of it,  
But humans carried it.  
Surely they are foolish and sinful.”*

All things are assigned a task. The heavens send rain and light for the herbs of the field to germinate and spring into life. The earth receives the seeds and bears fruit, it accepts and reveals a hundred thousand marvels too numerous to tell. The mountains give forth mines of gold and silver. All these things the heavens, the earth and the mountains do, yet they do not perform that one thing; that particular task is performed by us.

*He said “we have certainly honoured the children of Adam”  
He did not say “We have honoured the heaven and earth”*

So, people are given a task, and when they perform it all their sinfulness and foolishness is dissolved. (FMF 4, pp 26-27)

Just as this copper astrolabe reflects the movements of the heavens like a mirror, so the human being is the astrolabe of God. “We have honored the children of Adam.” (FMF 2)

The idea that human is an astrolabe of God will be explained in detail below. But before that, two additional points which emerge from FMF 4 are worth mentioning here. *First*, it is interesting that talking about the ultimate purpose of human life, which refers to human capacity to mirror God, Rumi quotes the verse from the Qur’an which talks about the notion of trust<sup>67</sup> (*amana*) that was offered to certain creatures but only human being dared to assume it because of foolishness. The link between *amana* and human capacity to mirror God is clear in this context. On the other hand, *amana*, as discussed earlier (sub-chapter 2.2.), is an

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<sup>67</sup> The notions of trust and responsibility will be discussed in detail later in chapter 11 as I define them as environmental virtues in Rumi.

important concept in the environmental literature, as it relates to human responsibility for the creation. There seems to be an important link between the two dimensions of *amana* – human capacity to mirror God (spiritual or inner trust) and responsibility to care for creation (physical or outward trust). From this, it is possible to conclude that our spiritual trust is the basis of our physical trust. In other words, only by realizing the spiritual trust in their inner being, can humans become qualified for carrying out their physical trust and eliminate foolishness from themselves. *Second*, it is noteworthy how Rumi’s argument for the purpose of human life resembles the standard explanation of the function argument in virtue ethics. Arguing that all beings are assigned a certain task, Rumi seems to point to the most important capability or defining quality of every creature. It seems the definition of the function argument fits Rumi’s understanding of the teleology of creatures including human beings.

As noted earlier, any sort of identity between God’s essence and creation is categorically rejected in Islam. Instead, God’s relationship with creation is expressed through God’s names or attributes. This identity of attributes is most pertinent to human beings’ relationship with God. In Sufism this idea is emphasized in what is quoted as a Prophetic tradition which, in the manner of the Hebrew Bible, holds that God created Adam in his own image where Adam is the prototype of humanity. According to this notion, the higher self which originates from the Divine spirit gives human beings the capacity to manifest the Divine attributes in their own being. Therefore, Rumi metaphorically calls human beings the mirror or astrolabe of God and urges them to beautify their character with the Divine qualities.

“God created us in His image: our qualities are instructed by (are modeled upon) His qualities.” (M IV: 1194)

Inasmuch as thou art endowed with the qualities of the Almighty, pass beyond the fire of the maladies (of the sensual self), like Khalīl. (M III: 9)

Since God's purpose in creating the universe was the manifestation of His names in the phenomenal world, there are two entities which are capable of doing so through their existence. On the one hand, we have natural entities and processes and, on the other hand, human being's inner self which can reflect the Divine attributes. While the former is the outward manifestation of the attributes in the corporeal world, human beings denote their inward manifestation in the spiritual dimension. The idea that the universe and human beings are the manifestations of God is reminiscent of the ancient Greek concepts of macrocosm and microcosm. Human being - microcosm - reflects the universe - macrocosm - and vice versa. However, for Rumi human being is microcosm in form although in reality he is macrocosm.

Explaining that (while) philosophers say that Man is the microcosm, theosophists say that Man is the macrocosm, the reason being that philosophy is confined to the phenomenal form of Man, whereas theosophy is connected with the essential truth of his true nature. Therefore in form thou art the microcosm, therefore in reality thou art the macrocosm. (M IV: 521)

Rumi holds this view by arguing that phenomenally the fruit is the result of the branch, however, in the realm of meanings the branch is created for the sake of the fruit. For without the fruit there would be no reason to plant and grow the tree.

"Externally the branch is the origin of the fruit; intrinsically the branch came into existence for the sake of the fruit.  
If there had not been desire and hope of the fruit, how should the gardener have planted the root of the tree?  
Therefore in reality the tree was born of the fruit, (even) if in appearance it (the fruit) was generated by the tree". (M IV: 522-524)

This view may create a major challenge for an ecological interpretation of Rumi's thought because it makes Rumi appear radically anthropocentric<sup>68</sup>. If proven positive, such

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<sup>68</sup> The ecological implications of anthropocentrism were discussed in sub-chapter 2.1.



anthropocentrism may affect the possibility of developing a viable environmental ethics from Rumi's views. This is one of the fundamental questions that has not been addressed by current attempts to examine Rumi from an ecological perspective. The major repercussion of this view for this research is whether the positive images of nature outlined in the previous chapter lose their ecological significance provided that nature is after all created for human and whether in such context it is relevant to talk about any theory of EVE.

There are at least two aspects of this question. First, it is important to recall that the foundation of Rumi's worldview is theocentric and his environmental ethics unfolds within such theocentric cosmology. Therefore, his cosmology, at least on a theoretical level, must not be readily receptive to other forms of centrism such as nature-centrism, be it biocentrism or eco-centrism, and anthropocentrism. However, at the same time, one of the premises of this study is that for Rumi nature serves human-oriented goals as part of its theocentric value. Even if these goals are essentially spiritual, nature is still considered to be a spiritual resource for human being. In this context, even if a certain degree of anthropocentrism is allowed in defining human relation to nature, it must be considered in the background of Rumi's theocentric worldview and its ethical implications.

Second, the macrocosm denotes human ability to reflect God's attributes. The reason why human is regarded as the macrocosm can be related to the idea that God breathed His own spirit into human being and created human in His own image. According to this view, a single human being has the potential to reflect the Divine to at least the same extent as the entire universe. Therefore, human is considered the macrocosm and not the microcosm since the ultimate goal of creation is a single being who can manifest God in the best way possible.

This being said, however, the notion of macrocosm in Rumi does not seem to produce the attitude of anthropocentric superiority, which strives to control and dominate the rest of creation, because of the deep-seated moral and spiritual implications of the notion for human life. The macrocosm is not a default state for human. It is a potentiality that has to be actualized through a rigorous struggle to transform one's inner being which requires constant effort and concentration. Moreover, once actualized, the outcome of such transformation is the sense of harmony and peace with the world rather than the desire to control and manipulate it for human ends. On the moral side, it also involves the responsibility to preserve the well-being of nature. I will discuss these implications in chapter 11.

In addition, understanding human as the macrocosm does not reduce nature to a pure material matter or machine as anthropocentrism would demand it through its dualistic and mechanistic notions of nature. The universe is still the microcosm reflecting the signs of God with their profound spiritual dimensions.

### **6.3. *Human flourishing***

The essential nature of human being is the higher self and that the defining feature of the higher self is its capacity to reflect God. Therefore, the idea of cultivating the human self to reflect the Divine attributes can be regarded as an equivalent or analogue of human flourishing in Rumi. However, human flourishing is not a fixed state; it is rather an on-going process with a specific goal. Exploring the purpose and substantive content of human flourishing in Rumi will be critical for a better understanding of the concept.

### 6.3.1. Human flourishing as a process

It has been suggested that realizing one's true identity implies a shift from the lower self toward the higher self. In the Qur'anic terminology, *nafs* is the word used for the self. Based on the Qur'anic occurrences of the concept, Sufis have developed three categories of human self: *nafs ammara* (evil commanding self), *nafs lawwama* (rebuking self) and *nafs mutma'inna* (self at peace). These categories of self are regarded as successive stages in the transformation of the inner self. They correspond to the three types of human beings described by Rumi. Those whose lust dominates their lives belong to the category of *nafs ammara*. Those who live in the intermediate state fighting their lower self are in the category of *nafs lawwama*. Those who have brought their carnal self under control and live by the demands of their true nature are in the category of *nafs mutma'inna* because they are no longer in a state of fight with their baser instincts.

The process of transition from *nafs ammara* to *nafs mutma'inna* is based on two Sufi concepts – *fana* and *baqa*. *Fana*, meaning “passing away”, involves annihilation of the self or dying in oneself and *baqa*, meaning “subsistence”, implies subsisting or living in and through God. These concepts have complex mystical ramifications in regards to the nature of existence and human perception of reality. However, *fana* and *baqa* are not solely spiritual concepts, at the core they are also ethical (normative) concepts (Schimmel 2017). Therefore, ethics is central to the project of personal transformation which underlies Rumi's notion of human flourishing. First of all, it is necessary to clarify that the concept of self-annihilation does not imply the complete elimination of the self and shift into selflessness. Such a view would be tantamount to the denial of one's own existence and personality which would

controvert Rumi's approach<sup>69</sup>. Annihilation is rather understood as the purification of the self from the qualities of the lower self which veil the vision of one's true identity or higher self.

Thus, in ethical terms, eliminating the dominance of baser qualities such as lust, selfishness, anger, arrogance and envy is the foundation of *fana*. Removing the barriers to achieving the higher self enables a person to perceive his true self and cultivate the qualities associated with it. One must keep in mind that the essence of the self are the Divine attributes which are placed in human soul in the form of dispositions. "He hath passed away (faná) in relation to (the passing away of his attributes in) the Divine attributes, (but) in passing away (from selfhood) he really hath the life everlasting (baqá)."<sup>70</sup> (M IV: 399). Therefore, the true self does not imply cultivating something from non-existence (FMF 14; see below). It is rather dependant on eliminating the veils of the lower self and creating conditions for the practice/manifestation of the qualities of the higher self. This is the state of *baqa* – living through the Divine element of one's nature. This analysis demonstrates that moral development is essential to the process of personal transformation through *fana* and *baqa* and as such can be viewed as the engine of human flourishing in Rumi. Therefore, Rumi's conceptions of ethics and human flourishing can be readily integrated to a virtue ethics framework.

You cannot see these attributes within yourself—look and you will find nothing there—so you believe yourself empty of these infinite attributes. These attributes do not come forth and change you into something else from what you were. Rather, these qualities are hidden in you, like the water in the sea. (FMF 14)

<sup>69</sup> The persistence of personality after annihilation is a controversial theme in Sufism. However, Hakim (1959), Iqbal (1983) and Can (2004) agree that for Rumi the self does not entirely perish after annihilation but continues to exist in different form and state. For instance, Hakim put it this way "God has a power of nourishing and transforming the imperfect to raise it to perfection. By losing itself in God, individuality is not annihilated but transformed". Iqbal similarly states the perfect man (the "Man of God") "assimilates God himself but does not lose his own individuality". A reference to this position is found in the following verse: "Since it has been delivered from "I," it has now become "I": blessings on the "I" that is without affliction." (M V: 4140)

<sup>70</sup> The terms faná and baqá in brackets appear in the original translation

As noted, *fana* and *baqa* also relate to the nature of existence and perception of reality. These aspects are also ecologically important. In Rumi's understanding, the created realm, like human self, subsists in God, that is, it cannot have an independent existence from God. Creation is seen as the shadow of God's existence and knowledge. Rumi sees God everywhere and in everything reflecting His beautiful names. This state of perception is the foundation of his ecological vision which is built on the ecologically relevant themes outlined in the previous chapter because only by attaining that state of consciousness can one perceive the Divine presence and spiritual vitality in nature<sup>71</sup>.

### 6.3.2. Purpose of human flourishing

God created the world to be known through His attributes and acts. This is also the reason why human beings are given the totality of the Divine attributes; so that they know God not only through the signs in the external world but also in their inner being. The Qur'an says "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves" (Qur'an 41:53). However, the proper knowledge of God is possible only through experiential understanding which implies that humans should live out those attributes in their character in order to properly comprehend God. Therefore, the principal reason for actualizing the Divine potential in oneself is to know God. However, for Rumi the knowledge of God would be

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<sup>71</sup> The original version of *Fihi Ma Fih* I used in this study was based on Arberry's translation but was not Arberry's translation itself. As a result, the passage from FMF 17 quoted on page 104 was translated as "pure sensuality, having no spiritual conscience to restrain them" instead of "pure lust, having no intelligence to prohibit them".

This raised an important question about how spiritual vitality applies to non-human animals who are "pure sensuality, having no spiritual conscience". Arberry's original translation seems to be more accurate; it is in agreement with the Turkish translation of the passage which also translates it as "intellect to prohibit them". The same tradition also appears in the *Mathnawi* IV. In both the English and Turkish translations of the *Mathnawi* IV, "intellect" is translated as "knowledge" which is still in line with Arberry's translation of the word.

Overall, when saying animals are "pure sensuality" and lack "intelligence to prohibit them" Rumi seems to imply that animals follow their carnal desires with no free choice to change this pattern lacking the intellect that such choice would require. Thus, the emphasis seems to be on the lack of free will rather than spiritual capacity of animals. In this sense, the phrase is much less likely to contradict the "spiritual vitality of nature".

insufficient. Knowing God properly would also require human love for God. Therefore, love for the Divine (*ishq ilahi*) is the cornerstone of Rumi's mystical thought; it is the ultimate goal and culmination of his notion of human flourishing. As he puts it: "My longing is not stirred save by His wind; my captain is naught but love of the One." (M I: 3798)

### 6.3.3. External aspects of human flourishing

The concept of human flourishing outlined so far focuses predominantly on the internal states and attributes of individual. However, as noted above, human being is understood to be a composite being and therefore a complete account of human flourishing would need to take into consideration not only individual's connection to his inner self but also his connection to other human and non-human entities in the surrounding world (Spencer 2007). It seems to be particularly relevant to examine this theme in the Sufi tradition, which Rumi represents, due to its focus on spiritual development and mystical experience in individual's religious life and consciousness. As a starting point, it should be noted that Rumi renounces a passive life and urges effort and hard work. A number of verses and passages in Rumi point out this fact (e.g. M II: 729-733, FMF: 44). It was discussed in chapter 2 that Rumi rejects disengagement from the worldly affairs. Therefore, as also becomes clear from the following passage by Iqbal (1983), active effort in Rumi's view encompasses the inner as well as the outer or social dimensions of life:

"He is emphatically opposed to those pseudo-mystics, other-worldly idealists, and self-centred aesthetes who would cheerfully ignore the evil, injustice and imperfection of this world, and abandon all active effort on behalf of its reconstruction and seek a cowardly compensation in pursuing their own selfish interests - intellectual, artistic and spiritual - in seclusion. It is only by flinging ourselves into the struggle that we can fulfil the purpose of our life - not by shunning the struggle on earth because our head is in the clouds"

Thus, for Rumi living as a true human being requires one's active involvement with the problems of one's community and society as there are great benefits of engaging and living with people. Rumi bases this view on a Prophetic tradition: "There is no monkhood in Islam<sup>72</sup>; community is a blessing" (FMF 15 & 20). Being socially involved does not diminish one's religiosity or relationship with God. In fact, it becomes a part of religious life. He gives the examples of Moses and Muhammad as the role models of religiosity whose lives involve social engagement. Adanali (2007) calls this combination an "existential synthesis" of two dimensions of Rumi's thought - "dimension of depth" and "dimension of width". The former represents one's journey toward one's inner self, whereas the latter symbolizes the journey toward the world outside. The outer world in Rumi's case, Adanali further observes, encompasses not only fellow human beings but the entire creation.

I have argued so far that the real identity of human being is comprised of the Divine attributes, realizing which is the highest goal of human life and the basis of human flourishing. Many of these attributes are characteristic of human relationships with other beings both human and non-human, that is, for these attributes to be materialized human being must interact with other beings. These interactions can be considered to be the spheres of operation for those qualities. On account of multiple spheres of life in which the Divine attributes can function including personal, physical, and social spheres as well as human interactions with non-human beings, human being is regarded as a multidimensional and composite being. It is for this reason that Rumi discourages a life in solitude and calls for engagement with people. He is aware of all the pains, frustrations and hardships which come

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<sup>72</sup> "Ibn 'Abbas narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: "There is no monasticism in Islam.""  
(Sunan Abu Daud no: 1729)  
See also Qur'an 57:27 for Islam's position on monasticism

with social life<sup>73</sup>. But he considers them necessary for a person to mature, to rid himself of selfishness, pride, arrogance and envy and develop patience and forbearance (FMF 15 & 20).

#### **6.3.4. Theocentrism and human flourishing**

I examined the implications of Rumi's theocentric worldview on the value of nature in subchapter 5.3. It is also important to examine how theocentrism shapes the conception of human being. The goodness of human beings is apparent in Rumi. They are created in the best pattern of creation with a special purpose and meaning. They are blown the Divine spirit and are created in God's image and as such have the highest capacity to reflect God among all creatures. As a result, they are given the role of God's vicegerent on Earth. However, they also the ones who can fall below the lowest of creatures if they abuse their position and their unique faculties. They are the ones who can live in a complete denial of God and shed blood on Earth and bring about destruction of massive proportions. In this regard, they are uniquely situated in between the opposite aspects of creation – spiritual and material, good and evil, right and wrong – and given a freedom to choose. Due to this choice, they must make an effort to live up to the potential goodness in their nature. Moreover, like nature, humans have no absolute value of their own; their goodness come from the absolute goodness of God. Their unique faculties are granted to them by God and their special status among creature is appointed again by God.

So far I have examined that the creation of nature and human being is good and that their values are determined by God. The task of evaluating the implications of Rumi's theocentric worldview on human-nature relations will be carried out in the next chapter when examining Rumi's virtues and vices from an EVE perspective.

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<sup>73</sup> A prime example of socially engaged life for human beings are their own family lives (FMF 20)



The theocentric worldview allows axiological pluralism in which nature can be defined as a spiritual resource based on its human-oriented spiritual value. For the purpose of this study, the spiritual value of nature has been defined as nature's capacity to facilitate human beings' multiform search for a deeper meaning and purpose of life which connects them with a) their inner identity; b) all living beings; and c) God (see sub-chapter 3.1.). The analysis of the ecologically relevant images of nature and the conception of human flourishing demonstrate that nature is indeed of important spiritual value since by attuning to nature's spiritual reality a person can establish a deeper connection not only with other living beings - the concept of life is understood in spiritual terms in Rumi - but also with his innermost self and God. Such multi-dimensional connection is based on the common foundation of comprehending the Divine signs (attributes) in human self and nature by perceiving which human beings come to better understand God.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to derive Rumi's analogue of human flourishing. It was based on his view of human nature and the concept of human function – the defining feature of human nature. It was discussed that human flourishing in Rumi, being a process of inner transformation, is directed primarily toward God. However, it was revealed that it is also concerned with one's relationship with the surrounding world, whether human or non-human. Therefore, the concept has been argued to be not only spiritually but also ethically and environmentally significant. The concept also provides a framework for Rumi's conception of virtues. Examining Rumi's account of environmental virtues and vices will be the goal of the next chapter.

## 7. Account of environmental virtues and vices

The aim of the last two chapters was to explore whether there is any basis in Rumi's cosmology for an ecological, whether non-instrumental or instrumental, value of nature and whether the conception of human flourishing is related to such value in any positive manner. It was argued that certain themes point to nature's non-instrumental value in Rumi's theocentric worldview. It was also suggested that comprehending the realities described by those themes may prove instrumental to human flourishing. Therefore, in addition to its non-instrumental value, nature also presents an instrumental value for its role as a spiritual resource in human being's moral, spiritual and intellectual development. This is supplemented by the fact that in Rumi's understanding human flourishing itself leads to a greater recognition and appreciation of nature's value which places the link between nature and human flourishing into a positive correlation.

Against this background, in the following five chapters (chapters 8-12) I will examine the third component of Rumi's EVE - an account of environmental virtues and vices. There will be two specific outcomes of this component – catalogue and typology of environmental virtues and vices derived from Rumi's thought. In achieving this goal, two different systems of categorization will be drawn upon. I will explain each of these systems below and provide the rationale for using them.

In developing a version of EVE from Rumi's views, providing a proper account of his virtues from an environmental perspective would play a critical role. Such account would have to explain the individual and collective environmental implications of his virtues. Accomplishing a task of this nature with a single analytical framework would be a challenge.

Therefore, to make the task more manageable two analytical tools, that is, systems of categorization will be used to organize the discussion of Rumi's virtues in the following chapters. One is based on the innate properties of individual virtues and the other on the process of inner transformation driven by these virtues. Therefore, I will refer to the former as *the property-based* and the latter as *the process-based categorization* of Rumi's virtues. These typologies are not mutually exclusive as each of them serves a different purpose. They can, in fact, complement each other and in combination produce a more complete understanding of the EVE emerging from Rumi.

The property-based categorization consists of moral, intellectual, emotional virtues and the virtues of stewardship. Moral, intellectual and emotional virtues are prominent categories in moral philosophy and, in particular, the Aristotelian virtue ethics. The virtues of stewardship has been important in religious ethics and, more recently, in religious environmental ethics. The property-based categorization is useful because it allows to group virtues based on their shared features pertaining to different domains of human activity such as moral sense, mind, emotions and actions. Unlike the process-based categorization where the process is the central principle, the property-based categorization focuses on character traits themselves, their innate qualities and interconnections. This makes it more suitable for a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of virtues. Therefore, this categorization will be applied to examine the environmental implications of individual virtues in Rumi. Such approach is particularly valuable because those virtues dating to a pre-environmental period have not been analysed from an ecological perspective. In this case, an extensive and thorough analysis would be required to establish the ecological content of individual virtues. The latter would be critical to any further (meta-level) analysis of Rumi's virtues from an EVE standpoint.

The process-based typology includes such categories of virtues as (a) fundamental virtues, (b) virtues of deep perception, (c) virtues of respect for nature and (d) virtues of stewardship as well as corresponding categories of vices such as (a) fundamental vices, (b) vices of shallow perception, (c) attitudinal vices, and (d) vices of action and behaviour. This typology was inspired and adapted from Sandler's (2006) typology of EVE discussed in chapter 3. It is important to note that the process-based typology is not a new set of virtues but a reclassification of the virtues emerging from the property-based typology but directed towards a different goal. Moreover, the process-based typology does not disregard the innate characteristics of virtues; it simply focuses on a different task relying, where necessary, on the outcomes of the property-based categorization. As such, this typology plays an important role in explaining the collective impact of Rumi's virtues for the environment at different stages of inner transformation.

The major rationale for using this typology comes from the fact that Rumi's virtues function within a specific teleological concept of human flourishing. Accordingly, apart from the specific benefits of each virtue for human life, there is an overall goal to which all virtues contribute collectively. The process-based typology aims to explicate the relationship of virtues and vices with this broader goal. Moreover, some character dispositions such as reason and love consist of different elements within themselves such as selfish reason, moral reason and discursive reason in the case of reason and selfish love and love of creation in the case of love. Each of these virtues belongs to a different category in the process-based typology. The major challenge of relying on the process-based typology alone would be that the discussions of those virtues could end up being fragmented and somewhat confusing. That is, the discussion of love, for instance, would not be conducted in a single chapter or

sub-chapter but appear in bits and pieces as part of different chapters and sub-chapter. Therefore, to avoid such fragmentation, first, a complete analysis of individual virtues within the property-based categorization will be presented. Once individual virtues analysed and their environmental repercussions drawn out, they will be re-classified based on their collective effects through the process-based typology.

It must be stated here that although both typologies are employed for an effective discussion of the material, the process-based typology represents a more unique contribution of this research since taking this research beyond mere ecological reading of Rumi's virtues it offers a specific interpretation of those virtues as a path of inner transformation with important ecological implications.

Discussion in the next four chapters (chapter 7-11) will be organized according to the property-based categorization and thus focus on the analyses of individual virtues. Each category will consist of a set of major virtues, which will be subject to a detailed examination, as well as a set of complementary virtues, which will be discussed in relation to the major virtues. Chapter 12 will first present a catalogue of Rumi's environmentally relevant virtues which includes a total of 23 virtues and 28 vices. It will then discuss the process-based typology of Rumi's EVE.

## 8. Moral virtues and vices

In Aristotelian terms, moral virtues are concerned with the practical life (e.g. liberality or gentleness) and bodily desires (e.g. temperance or self-control) and as such are contrasted with intellectual virtues<sup>74</sup> or the qualities of mind. Although the category of moral virtues per se is not mentioned by Rumi, the fact that he underscores greed, lust, eminence and worldly desire as the fundamental bodily vices<sup>75</sup> that must be countered by respective virtues points to a certain sense of moral virtues in Rumi. In addition, there are some other characteristics of moral virtues that also seem to pertain to Rumi's understanding of virtues. For example, moral virtues are often specified as the mean between deficiency and excess. The same pattern applies to some of Rumi's virtues too. For instance, humility appears as the middle ground between arrogance and false humility whereas moderation and temperance are virtues which stand between excessive desire and complete lack of desire. Both of these examples will be discussed later in this chapter. Another feature of moral virtues stems from their relationship with reason. Moral virtues, although often compared with intellectual virtues, cannot be strictly separated from intellect because reason can affect and be affected by moral virtues. This seems to hold true for Rumi to a certain degree since intellect can aid in regulating desires and nurturing virtues while virtues themselves can positively affect reason. This similarities provide a basis for examining some of Rumi's virtues under the category of moral virtues. However, it must be emphasized that the category will be employed here only as a conceptual tool without adopting its Aristotelian content. In other words, specific choice of virtues and their substance discussed in this category will reflect Rumi's thought and will not have to correspond to Aristotle's or other theories of moral virtues.

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<sup>74</sup> Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

<sup>75</sup> I will discuss Rumi's view of these vices in sub-chapter 8.1.

Six major character traits will be examined in this chapter. They will be divided into three groups based on their interconnections: a) greed and moderation; b) gluttony and temperance; and c) arrogance and humility. There are also other traits of character discussed in this chapter which work in connection with the major vices and virtues. They are briefly discussed throughout the chapter and include vices such as ingratitude, selfishness, short-sightedness, lack of reason, lack of spiritual depth and misanthropy (false humility) as well as virtues such as gratitude, unselfishness, foresight, reason and spiritual depth.

### **8.1. Greed and moderation**

Greed has a long intellectual history. It is viewed as a prime vice in the world's major religious traditions and has deep roots in the history of moral thought. Greed can go under different names such as avarice, covetousness, acquisitiveness, avidity, gluttony, miserliness and so on (Tickle 2004). Underlying many of these vices associated with greed is an overwhelming desire or appetite for more of something. Therefore, most definitions of greed characterize it as an intense, excessive and selfish desire which can target different goals<sup>76</sup>. This variety of goals defines different forms of greed such as greed for money, power, recognition, time, food and sex (Crawshaw 1996; Winarick 2010; Wang and Murnighan 2011). Social impacts of greed are often regarded as key determinants of its moral character. According to Wang and Murnighan (2011), a fundamental moral dilemma regarding greed is the inherent tension between self-interest and the well-being of others which implies that a greedy person's selfish tendency to prioritize his self-interest over those of others and to act in greedy ways to maximize it inflicts certain costs on the welfare of others. Therefore, greed has traditionally been regarded as immoral and reprehensible. However, this view is not the

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<sup>76</sup> "Intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power, or food" (Oxford Dictionary); "A selfish desire to have more of something (especially money)" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary); "An excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one needs or deserves, especially with respect to material wealth" (American Heritage Dictionary); "Greed is the desire to have more of something, such as food or money, than is necessary or fair" (Collins Dictionary)

only approach to greed. Some disciplines such as economics, social psychology and political science do not approach greed from a moral perspective and, therefore, are less concerned with its negative aspects. Vedwan (2009) explains this ambivalence around greed examining its intellectual evolution in the West. Greed had a largely negative reputation from the time of the ancient Greeks throughout the medieval period. With the advent of the Reformation, however, greed's negative image began to subside because of the emphasis Protestantism put on material progress, associating it with God's grace. Thus, pursuing success in the material realm became congruent with the religious worldview of the Reformation. This granted a certain legitimacy to greed since it was now re-conceptualized as self-interest and seen as the engine of the capitalist economy. Further rationalization of greed came with Adam Smith's "invisible hand" which resolved the fundamental conflict between self-interest and public good by maintaining that in pursuing their self-interest individuals benefit their society. Wang and Murnighan (2011) observe that Smith's theory justifies selfishness as a social virtue which produces public good as its unintended outcome. However, there is an increasing disenchantment with this model of rational economic agent promoting public good while maximizing self-interest because of the failure of markets to properly factor in such irrational impulses as greed and fear which underlie most of the recent corporate scandals (Vedwan 2009). This indicates a fundamental problem of determining the boundary between self-interest and greed. A key challenge is to establish exactly at what point self-interest begins to turn into greed (Wang and Murnighan 2011).

### **8.1.1 Environmental aspects of greed**

For environmentalists, greed leads to not only social but also environmental consequences (Cafaro 2005a). There seem to be two ways in which greed impacts the environment: direct and indirect. The existing eco-literature focuses primarily on the direct impact of greed on the welfare of non-human others; however, there is also a more implicit link between greed and



the environment which will be explained below. Greed's direct impact on nature is often related to its ability to fuel overconsumption and consumerist culture (Wensveen 1999; Cafaro 2005a). The core assumption underlying consumerism is that more consumption brings more satisfaction and happiness. While it is true that consumption creates temporary satisfaction, it does not, however, lead to enduring happiness which is related to the insatiable nature of human greed. As a result, instead of producing happiness, greed, in fact, leaves a person "perpetually unsatisfied" (Cafaro 2005a) and pushes him into even more consumptive and acquisitive patterns of behaviour and lifestyles. In this way, greed creates a vicious cycle of continually increasing consumption and dissatisfaction. In ecological terms, such a mode of consumption is unsustainable and dangerous because of the inherent incongruity between greed's defiance of limitations and the limitedness of nature's resources and its life-support systems. Therefore, greed-driven consumption of natural resources and the massive amount of waste produced with it create an enormous pressure on the planet. Moreover, as Wensveen (1999) points out, excessive consumption can create social and economic inequalities and force the poor into living in vulnerable eco-systems which may lead to the degradation or collapse of those eco-systems.

There is another dimension of greed's direct impact on the environment. Aristotle suggests that the urge to acquire more makes the greedy violate the principles of justice and fairness (Shklar 1990). Environmentalists argue that businesspeople driven by greed often violate environmental laws to ensure their profits which they value above everything else (Cafaro 2005a). There seem to be several factors contributing to this mindset. First, as a fundamental element of greed there is an excessive desire to acquire more. Second, selfishness, another crucial element of greed, leads greedy individuals to maximize their self-interest at the cost of violating justice and harming others (Seuntjens et al. 2015). Third, it is held that greed causes

the distortion of reason and leads to blindness to, and the denial of, the known effects of one's actions on the environment. Fourth, by turning a blind eye to the environmental impacts of their actions, they falsely assume they are independent of the wider system ignoring the fact their actions may rebound on them in the future. Such an attitude links greed to pride and arrogance (Long 2009).

In addition to harming others (human and non-human), greed can also cause serious damage to the greedy person himself. Occupied with satisfying their greed, individuals may fail to understand their own nature and “the true nature of a good life” (Wang and Murnighan 2011). Some of this damage to human self may have important environmental repercussions because at least one aspect of a good life involves appreciating the non-material goods provided by nature. In EVE, some character traits are considered to be environmental virtues because they cultivate human capacity to enjoy and utilize these non-material resources for individuals' intellectual, spiritual and moral development (Sandler 2006). While some character traits nurture this capacity, others tend to diminish it and are, therefore, regarded as environmental vices. Greed can be included into this category of environmental vices which have an indirect impact on nature through their harm to the human self.

It seems the dynamics of greed in Rumi can lead to both direct and indirect impacts on the environment, which is why I argue that Rumi's notion of greed can be regarded as an environmental vice. Even though he does not talk about greed in an explicitly environmental context, some characteristics of greed in Rumi correspond to the interpretation of greed in eco-literature. Such correspondence points to a direct link between greed and the environment in Rumi. On the other hand, he often talks about greed's harms in moral and spiritual terms. It affects an individual's moral character and spiritual condition which shape

his perception of, and relationship with, nature. This points to a possible indirect link between greed and the environment. I will examine each of these links in more detail below; however, I will first outline some general characteristics of greed in Rumi to set the stage for further discussion.

### **8.1.2 General characteristics of greed in Rumi**

Greed is a human tendency to desire and consume things in excessive proportions. Although desire/appetite is the engine of greed, not every desire can be regarded as greed. It is when desire gets out of control and one acts by the demand of his excessive appetite rather than his real needs that desire becomes greed.

If anyone has an allowance of four loaves and eats two or three, that is the mean;  
But if he eat all the four, it is far from the mean: he is in bondage to greed, like a duck.  
If one has appetite for ten loaves and eats six, know that that is the mean. (MII: 3533-35).

Based on this, it seems possible to divide desire into three categories: suppressed desire (deficiency), balanced desire which is based on real needs (mean), and greed or extreme desire (excess). Rumi understands greed in terms of the mean, deficiency and excess and focuses on defining the boundary between the mean and excess. While the mean is a recommended state, excess or greed should clearly be avoided. Wang and Murnighan (2001) point out people's tendency to confuse the mean with excess or the real needs with imagined needs as the major psychological problem of greed.

Rumi does not limit greed to one specific type. There are multiple forms of desire such as desire for food, wealth, possessions, fame and knowledge (MIV: 1189-91; FMF 7) so there are multiple forms of greed. However, desire for material wealth seems to be fundamental because it makes the satisfaction of other forms of desire possible (FMF 26 & 69). There also

seems to be a hierarchy between different types of greed. For instance, the greed for food precedes other types of greed because food is essential to supporting human life. Then comes the greed for fame and recognition (MIV: 1189-91). There is also a difference in intensity and magnitude between different types of greed. For instance, the greed for eminence is fifty times stronger than the greed for sensual pleasures while the greed for power (to rule) is twenty times the greed for food and sex (MIV: 517-518).

Rumi is concerned primarily with greed's harm on human self. He sees it as a form of spiritual sickness which is inevitable if a person has greed in his heart:

Greed is like eating raw meat—inevitably it makes you sick. Once we realize we have eaten something rotten, a purge becomes necessary. God, in His wisdom, makes us suffer through ingratitude to purge and rid us of that corrupt conceit, lest that one sickness becomes a hundred sicknesses (FMF 48)

Thus, greed causes a major harm to human heart (MII: 2739-43). It holds soul in captivity causing a loss of connection with one's inner self (MIII: 4063-65). It brings suffering due to ingratitude which itself results from greed. Therefore, Rumi continuously urges people to purify their character from greed and avarice. When the heart is clean from those vices, it becomes the mirror and regains its ability to reflect God's attributes (MI: 3484-85). Getting rid of greed, however, comes with pain. The higher the degree of greed in one's character the more painful is the process of purification (M V: 1149-1153). Breaking free from greed is possible through self-control and discipline (MI: 78-92), illumination of heart (FMF 20) and cultivation of love of God (MVI: 4653-4660). It is important to note that by admonishing to eliminate greed Rumi seems to imply the elimination of excessive desire for worldly things such as wealth, food, fame and possessions. However, as a disposition to want more of something greed, instead of being completely eliminated, must rather be transformed.

Greed for Thy love is glorious and grand; greed for (the love of) any besides Thee is shameful and corrupt. (MIII: 1955)

Seek greed (seek to be eager) in the practice of religion and in good works: they are (still) beautiful, (even) when the greed (eagerness) remains not.

Good works are beautiful (in themselves), not through the reflexion of any other thing: if the glow of greed is gone, the glow of good remains;

(But) when the glow of greed is gone from worldly work, of the red-hot coal (only) the black ashes are left. (MIII: 1131-1132)

Such transformation implies redirecting one's desire toward more noble ends. As a mystic, for Rumi the noblest end in life is the love of God. Therefore, I argued in the previous chapter that the Divine love should be regarded as the ultimate goal of the conception of human flourishing derived from Rumi. Moreover, the love of God provides a basis for other expressions of justified greed such as greed in the practice of religion and doing good deeds. Rumi encourages these manifestations of greed because even when the desire itself is gone its benefits stay behind.

### 8.1.3 Rumi's notion of greed as environmental vice

Rumi emphasizes the insatiable nature of human greed. Greed cannot be satisfied by acquiring more of its objects of desire because it constantly expands (MV I: 1232). Therefore, *moderation*, which aims to restrain excessive desire through self-control, becomes an essential disposition in dealing with greed. In addition, Rumi frequently links greed to the vice of *ingratitude* (M I: 78-92; M IV: 1717-38). He states that "for no matter how much people have, greed wants more. Since they get less than what their heart is set upon, they cannot be grateful" (FMF 48). As greed continuously raises expectations, a greedy person never gets satisfied with what he or she acquires, that is, greed always makes the person wish more. This perpetual feeling of dissatisfaction stemming from greed prevents the person from being grateful for what he or she possesses. Put it differently, one can say that practising *gratitude* can be an important instrument of curtailing greed. We can see that Rumi's notion

of greed shares important similarities with the dynamics of consumerism described above. In both cases, greed creates and drives a perpetual cycle of consumption/acquisition and dissatisfaction and never produces true and lasting happiness. Moreover, considering the fact that excessive desire for material wealth, possessions and food are key ecological vices as well as the foremost forms of greed in Rumi, there seems to be a sufficient ground to consider Rumi's notion of greed as an environmentally harmful vice.

Two other qualities which are closely related to greed in Rumi are *selfishness* and *lack of reason and foresight*. Selfishness seems to be the key characteristic of greed. Rumi defines excessive desires as selfish (M I: 3451-53) and as desires are the basis of greed, greed is necessarily selfish. Therefore, Rumi describes *unselfishness* as the opposite of greed (M II: 2562-63). While selfishness is positively correlated with greed, reason and foresight are the attributes which are undermined by greed. Greed is one of the four principal vices which obstruct reason, other vices being lust, eminence<sup>77</sup> and worldly desire (M V: 1-63). Therefore, when greed prevails in human being it disregards reason and wisdom (M V: 2058-65). It makes a person blind, foolish and ignorant (M V: 2823). This does not mean to say, however, that the greedy do not possess reason. In fact, they do but their reason is self-centred rather than being truth and morality oriented. I will discuss this form of reason in more detail while examining Rumi's views on reason and knowledge in chapter 9. Perhaps the most important repercussion of greed for one's intellect is the person's becoming what Rumi calls "one-eyed" – focusing only on the immediate present and the failure to see the

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<sup>77</sup> Eminence should be understood as desire for eminence because the other three vices indicated by Rumi (greed, lust and worldly desire) are also forms of desire. The Turkish translation of the verse translates eminence as status (*makam*), that is, desire for status. Rumi expresses these "four evil dispositions" through the metaphor of four birds. Worldly desire, that is crow, is different from greed, lust and eminence in that it is not a desire for a specific thing such as wealth, pleasure or recognition; it is the desire to live an eternal or long life: "There is the duck and the peacock and the crow and the cock: these are a parable of the four (evil) dispositions in (human) souls. The duck is greed, and the cock is lust; eminence is like the peacock, and the crow is (worldly) desire. His (the crow's) object of desire is this, that he forms hopes and wishes for immortality or long life" (M V: 44-45).

end or the future (M IV: 1708-1710). Thus, greed concentrates on the short-term gains and pleasures whereas intellect foresees the long-term consequences of one's actions.

Thus, for Rumi greed is an incessant and insatiable desire for more. In addition, it is selfish and defies reason. Preoccupied with satisfying his selfish desire to increase gain and pleasure, a greedy person is unable to think about the well-being of others and the impacts of his/her own actions on others. As a result, when confronted with a choice between promoting his self-interest and preventing a possible harm to others such a person will most likely choose a course of action which promotes his interests best even if such an action implies harm to others. This is exacerbated by the fact that greed blocks the person's ability to reason or to act upon the dictates of his reason. As a result, such a person may not bother calculating the possible impacts of his self-serving actions on others or turn a blind eye when such impact is known because of exclusively concentrating on his short-term goals and interests. Thus, even if not mentioned in a specifically environmental context, the inner dynamics of greed in Rumi seems to be environmentally relevant because it is driven by three principal tendencies – excessive desire to have more, selfishness and tendency to disregard reason which, as described earlier, often lead businesses and industries to break laws and violate justice for the sake of safeguarding their profits.

Apart from its direct environmental impacts, greed also affects the human self morally and spiritually which, as will be explained below, may have important implications for the human-nature relationship. Greed, cupidity and avarice are the attributes of the lower self (MII: 1810-15). However, these vices do not exist in isolation, that is, their presence requires the existence of other dispositions in a person's character such as selfishness, gluttony, arrogance, ungratefulness, stinginess, short-sightedness, heedlessness and ignorance. For

Rumi, cleansing the self from these vices is a pre-requisite for cultivating virtues in human character. He observes:

But they have burnished their breasts (and made them) pure from greed and cupidity and avarice and hatreds.  
That purity of the mirror is the attribute of the heart (which) receives the infinite form.  
(MI: 3484-85)

As noted above, the human heart can be the mirror of God which refers to its capacity to reflect the totality of the Divine attributes in one's character. However, to manifest these attributes, the human self should be purified from vicious character traits. Therefore, cultivation of virtues is contingent upon the elimination of vices. Some of the virtues related to greed in Rumi are benevolence, gratitude, reason, foresight, love, justice and temperance. Greed itself and some of the vices and virtues associated with it have been examined in eco-literature<sup>78</sup>. A common basis for their environmental re-interpretation is the assumption that underlying dispositions behind these character traits are operative in a human-nature context. Thus, for Rumi greed prevents the development of moral character and insight, which often means that a person's character is inhabited with dispositions which may share some qualities of environmental vices and lacks the ones which can be interpreted as environmental virtues.

For Rumi the greedy person is deprived of not only moral but also *spiritual insight*. He notes that "every greedy person is deprived (of spiritual blessings): do not thou run like the greedy, (go) more slowly". (M III: 595). Greed affects the human heart which is the centre of spiritual faculties. As a result of greed's selfishness and fixation on the material, a person is not able to understand the non-material dimensions of existence. However, it is the non-material characteristics of nature which constitute the basis of Rumi's ecological outlook (see chapters

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<sup>78</sup> For instance, see Cafaro's (2005) *Gluttony, arrogance, greed, and apathy: an exploration of environmental vice*.



5 and 6). Therefore, the lack of spiritual depth leads to the failure to understand some ecologically significant aspects of existence. In other words, greed deprives individuals of a crucial insight into existence which can dramatically change the way they understand and relate to nature.

## **8.2. Gluttony and temperance**

It was noted that gluttony is one of the many forms of greed (Tickle 2004). It is defined as a habit of eating and drinking in excessive amounts. However, because of its old-fashioned nature, gluttony is rarely used in environmental literature and appears in the form of excessive consumption or “eating high on the food chain” (Wensveen 1999). In general, one can point out four categories of harm which determine gluttony’s moral designation: first, physical health of the glutton (Cafaro 2005a); second, spiritual health of the glutton; this is the traditional conception of gluttony’s harm (Wensveen 1999); third, social harms of gluttony (Miller 1997); fourth, the burden of overconsumption (gluttony) on the planet and eco-systems (Wensveen 1999; Cafaro 2005a). Two of these harms are of particular interest to us due to the nature of this study: traditional-spiritual and contemporary-environmental.

Rumi views gluttony as excessive eating and drinking as opposed to moderate consumption.

Eat (and drink) in moderation, O greedy man, though it be a mouthful of halwá or khabís.  
The high God hath given the balance a tongue (which you must regulate): hark, recite the Súratu’ l-Rahmán (the Chapter of the Merciful) in the Qur’án.  
Beware, do not in your greed let the balance go: cupidity and greed are enemies that lead you to perdition.  
Greed craves all and loses all: do not serve greed, O ignoble son of the ignoble. (M V: 1399-1402)

His conception of gluttony is more congruent with its traditional definition as his primary concern lies with the vice’s impact on the spiritual state and well-being of a person.

However, does it imply that his notion of gluttony would rule out the possibility of an ecological harm? This is the question I will explore in this sub-chapter.

First of all, it is important to note that the spiritual and ecological harms of excessive food consumption are not, despite their differences, mutually exclusive. Some authors point to a link between the two (see Wensveen 1999). Despite the burden overconsumption of food puts on nature, the ecological implications of gluttony do not seem to be limited to its direct harm on nature. The harm of gluttony on the inner faculties may have its own indirect ecological repercussions. This appears to be in accord with Rumi's understanding of gluttony. We already distinguished two categories of greed's environmental harms – direct and indirect. The same categories can be drawn upon to explain the harms of his view of gluttony on the environment.

Regarding the direct environmental harm, it must be noted that despite their focus on different dimensions of gluttony's harm, the traditional and environmental conceptions of the vice are driven by the same psychological propensity, i.e. excessive desire for the consumption of food. In this respect, there is only a difference of magnitude and scope between Rumi's understanding of gluttony and the present-day habit of overconsumption. It is widely known how the modern degree of sophistication in science and technology, especially in agricultural production, has expanded the variety of foods available to consumers. These advancements complemented with a corresponding philosophical framework encouraging continuous consumption and the improvements in the socio-economic conditions of ordinary people have transformed gluttony into a collective habit of overconsumption. In this context, it is not hard to understand how gluttony which is

traditionally held to cause spiritual harm has now come to put an immense pressure on the Earth's natural resources and eco-systems.

Gluttony's indirect environmental harm works by negatively affecting human being's rational and spiritual faculties. Excessive eating obstructs clear thinking and blocks spiritual growth and insight. Both of these aspects are ecologically important. For example, consider the following passages from Rumi:

The pinion of your thought has become mud-stained and heavy because you are a clay-eater: clay has become to you as bread.

Bread and meat are (originally) clay: eat little thereof, that you may not remain in the earth, like clay.

When you become hungry, you become a dog: you become fierce and ill-tempered and ill-natured.

When you have eaten your fill, you have become a carcase: you have become devoid of understanding and without feet (inert), like a wall. (M I: 2871-74)

For Soul there is other food besides this food of sleeping and eating, but you have forgotten that other food. Night and day you nourish only your body. Now, this body is like a horse, and this lower world is its stable. The food the horse eats is not the food of the rider. You are the rider and have your own sleeping and eating, your own enjoyment. But since the animal has the upper hand, you lag behind in the horse's stable. You cannot be found among the ranks of kings and princes in the eternal world. Your heart is there, but since your body has the upper hand, you are subject to its rule and remain its prisoner. (FMF 4)

When gluttony blocks intellect and understanding, it weakens the ability to rationally control one's behavior. As a result, the person either cannot comprehend the repercussions of his actions or fails to act upon such understanding because of giving into the temptations of his obsessive desire. In any case, the weakening of rational capacity due to the lack of willingness to restrain one's carnal desires may have serious ecological consequences. The constant urge to satisfy bodily pleasures creates a demand for consumption. And food production which produces much of the environmental harm is after all driven and powered by this demand for more consumption (Orecchia and Zoppoli 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to amplify the power of reason by reducing gluttonous tendencies. It is noteworthy

that reason freed from consumptive habits not only better understands and responds to environmental harms of one's habits but also becomes an important mechanism for restricting gluttonous dispositions through what Kruschwitz (2014) calls "corrective reflection" referring to reason's ability to think and rectify a person's eating habits.

Gluttony reinforces carnal inclinations and confines a person into the lower domain of human existence<sup>79</sup>. A person in such a situation cannot cultivate his faculties of rational and spiritual perception and, consequently, has a significantly limited comprehension of reality. Therefore, he misses the fundamental aspect of creation. He fails to recognize the Divine purpose in creation and profound meanings which connect creation to the Divine as well as the spiritual vigor with which creation glorifies the Creator. Not only does he fail to recognize but also utilize these aspects of nature as a moral, spiritual and intellectual resource. Kaza (2000) emphasizes similar effects of consumerist tendencies on "spiritual and psychological groundedness" in his analysis of a Buddhist stance on consumerism:

The impact of consumerism on the psyche and spirit of the consumer runs counter to environmental sustainability - much because of the crucial loss of grounded awareness of other worlds outside the realm of manufactured products.

As much as he condemns the gluttonous consumption of food, for Rumi a complete removal of desire from human being is not a solution to the problem. He deals with the topic in a section of the *Mathnawi* (MV: 574-585) where he provides a commentary on the tradition, quoted earlier, which states that "There is no monkery in Islam"<sup>80</sup>. He is very realistic about human nature and needs. It may seem counterintuitive but he argues for the wisdom behind the presence of desires in human nature. He states that "There can be no self-restraint when

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<sup>79</sup> "This righteous man is himself a king, he is free, he is not the prisoner of lust and gluttony". (M IV: 3122)

<sup>80</sup> Sunan Abu Daud no: 1729

thou hast no desire; when there is no adversary, what need for thy strength?” (576) since “heroism cannot be displayed against the dead.” (578). Therefore, the solution lies in the regulation rather than elimination of desires. He notes that “Hence (the command) ‘Eat ye’ is for the sake of the snare (temptation) of appetite; after that (comes) ‘Do not exceed’: that is temperance” (582). The reference here is to the Qur’anic verse: “eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess” (7:31). Thus, for Rumi *temperance* emerges as a disposition to counter gluttony. Here the notion of *golden mean* seems to be at work in Rumi’s approach to gluttony. Accordingly, it is not desire itself but an unbridled extreme desire which is a vice. Since desire is not a vice by itself, attempts to eliminate it may in fact become a vice, especially in view of its positive role described above, and between these extremes regulated desire or temperance stands as a virtue.

In conclusion, besides their traditional conceptions, both greed and gluttony can be conceived of as vices with significant ecological repercussions. Once they dominate human character and behavior, they can cause a substantial increase in human footprint on nature on both individual and collective level. In an indirect manner, they can considerably impair a person’s willingness and ability to engage with nature in non-material ways. In efforts to restrain these vices, moderation and temperance play a critical role and must be cultivated in human character. Therefore, they can also be regarded as important environmentally relevant virtues in Rumi’s thought.

### **8.3. Arrogance and humility**

Arrogance (pride) and humility, qualities traditionally operative in interpersonal and human-Divine relationships, have more recently been re-examined for their relevance in human-nature contexts (Hill 1983; Frasz 1993; Wensveen 1999; Gerber 2002; Cafaro 2005a). It must

be noted that these character traits have a checkered record in the history of Western thought. They have not always been viewed uniformly as vices or virtues. Their designation would often depend on how different traditions and schools of thought understood them. In general, Judaism, Christianity and Islam view humility as a virtue because modesty is deemed to be a proper attitude toward God and for a similar reason pride is viewed as an impermissible attitude and, hence, a vice (Kellenberger 2010). By and large, secular virtue ethics has been hostile or at best indifferent toward humility because the disposition is associated with low self-esteem and tends to dismiss individual strengths and potentials which makes it hard within a secular worldview to justify its individual and social benefits (Hare 1996). Similarly, some philosophers, most notably Aristotle, had a positive view of pride because, as an opposite of humility, it was believed to be necessary for realization of one's talents. However, even those who would approve pride in the sense described above would often condemn the type of pride known as *hubris* or *superbia*, an exaggerated self-esteem which treats others with a sense of self-superiority and dismisses their accomplishments. They would agree that this type of pride was foolish and immoral. On the other hand, there have been some attempts to reinterpret humility as a secular virtue by focusing on "an accurate sense of oneself" which is thought to address the problems arising from overestimating and underestimating oneself and one's abilities (Richards 1988).

We can point out three distinct states of character and mind emerging from this conceptual background: a) *arrogance* or extreme pride which stems from a lack of humility and overestimation of oneself; b) *humility* which is based on an accurate assessment of one's potentials without under- or overestimation; c) *excessive humility* which results from underestimating or negating oneself and one's accomplishments. These concepts can be placed on a continuum where arrogance and excessive humility would be regarded as two

opposite ends of the spectrum and humility as the mean. A similar approach has been used by some EVE scholars to the analysis of environmental humility. For example, Hill (1983) develops his theory of humility toward nature by identifying some aspects of arrogance toward nature such as self-importance and the lack of self-acceptance. Frasz (1993), building upon Hill's analysis, defines balanced or proper humility in relation to arrogance or "closed-mindedness", on the one hand, and extreme "openness" or misanthropy which he describes as "false modesty", on the other. He argues that only proper humility can be defined as a virtue while both extremes of proper humility are vices. Arrogance and humility are two important themes in Rumi. This study reveals that their relationship can be effectively explained by applying the arrogance/humility/false-humility scale proposed by (Frasz 1993). I will use it as a conceptual framework to examine the environmental significance of Rumi's conceptions of arrogance and humility.

One potential problem with the applicability of this approach to Rumi's case should be noted here. As noted above, monotheistic religions are positive about humility because it is a fundamental pre-condition of a proper relationship with God. The question is whether Rumi's theocentric monotheism which requires radical humility in one's relationship with God, a shared feature of many Sufis, can be receptive to the notion of false or excessive humility which is more characteristic of the philosophical conceptions of humility. It seems possible to reconcile this seeming paradox. I will revisit this question at the end of this chapter after I have reviewed some other views around humility and arrogance.

### 8.3.1. Arrogance

Environmentalists have traditionally viewed pride and arrogance<sup>81</sup> as key problems in human attitudes toward nature because of their deep connection to anthropocentrism (Wensveen 1999). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *arrogance* as “an insulting way of thinking or behaving that comes from believing that you are better, smarter, or more important than other people” and *pride*<sup>82</sup> is defined as “a feeling that you are more important or better than other people”<sup>83</sup>. Belief in one’s superiority over others is the central aspect of these definitions. Both arrogance and pride are premised on a character disposition to over-valuate one’s self-importance and under-valuate others (Cafaro 2005a). In virtue ethics, arrogance is designated as a vice for other-regarding and self-regarding reasons. An arrogant person’s (mis-) treatment of others and their opinions with disdain and dismissal is a major example of other-regarding reasons. Arrogance also harms the arrogant person himself in a moral sense. It impairs his ability to build true friendships and makes him closed to an important source of self-knowledge coming from his social environment (Tiberius and Walker 1998). In ecological terms, the category of others who are under-valuated by human arrogance and subject to human-induced harm include not only other humans but also nature and its constituents. In fact, as Cafaro (2005a) notes, arrogance toward people and arrogance toward nature go together. It explains in some way why most cases of arrogance-induced environmental harm also include instances of social harm. Perhaps one of the best-known examples of combined socio-ecological harm is the impact of oil extraction by Texaco in Ecuador’s Amazon region known as *el Oriente*. Arrogance and lack of care displayed in the

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<sup>81</sup> Wensveen (1999) notes that “ecologically minded people” consider human arrogance to be a form of pride which is operative in relation to nature

<sup>82</sup> Wensveen (1999) suggests that “the Latin term for pride, *superbia*, translates the Greek *huperbios*, which means ‘above life’”

<sup>83</sup> Cambridge and Oxford online dictionaries provide similar definitions of the term: Arrogance - unpleasantly proud and behaving as if you are more important than, or know more than, other people; pride - the belief that you are better or more important than other people (Cambridge Dictionary); Arrogance - having or revealing an exaggerated sense of one's own importance or abilities; pride -the quality of having an excessively high opinion of oneself or one's importance. (Oxford Dictionaries)



company's violation of the most basic operational standards for the sake of bigger revenues resulted in a devastating harm to one of the most biodiverse ecosystems on the planet, on the one hand, and the livelihood of indigenous population due to aquatic contamination, deforestation and air pollution, on the other<sup>84</sup>.

Much of the eco-literature has focused on the role of arrogance in shaping human understanding of and attitude toward nature which is expressed through the notion of anthropocentrism<sup>85</sup>. The main criticism of anthropocentrism, which was discussed in chapter 2, can be summarized in three fundamental assumptions: human-nature dualism, denigration of nature and denial of nature's moral standing. In the religion and environment debate, the Judea-Christian tradition has often been criticized for its role in advancing the anthropocentric worldview<sup>86</sup>. Here too there are three main views believed to underlie the religious version of anthropocentrism: de-sacralisation of nature, human domination of nature and degradation of nature (Kinsley 1996a). Essentially, both philosophical and religious versions of anthropocentrism establish a radical division between human and nature and, on this premise, argue for the superiority of human beings and inferiority of nature. In this regard, Plumwood's (2002) explanation of anthropocentrism is particularly relevant. She views anthropocentrism as a human-centred equivalent of hegemonic centrism which is the basis of other forms of centrism such as *androcentrism* and *eurocentrism*. In all forms of centrism, there are two main elements: (a) the primary - *the one* - who is defined as the centre and (b) the secondary - *marginal other* - who is defined as deficient and inferior in relation to

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<sup>84</sup> Other examples of arrogance-induced socio-ecological harm include the impacts of oil extraction in the Niger Delta and the intensive cotton production by the Soviets in Uzbekistan which put the Aral Sea on the brink of disappearance.

<sup>85</sup> It may need to be reiterated here that my references to anthropocentrism imply the negative conception of the term often related to Cartesian dualism and I acknowledge the presence of other, more positive, forms of anthropocentrism in the environmental ethics literature.

<sup>86</sup> See Lynn White's (1967) seminal article *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* identifies anthropocentrism embedded in the Judeo-Christian notion of human superiority over nature as the major source of ecological problems

the primary (Plumwood 2002). It is clear that the core assumptions of anthropocentrism corresponds to the key elements of arrogance defined above. On the one hand, we have human beings who are over-valued and held to be superior and, on the other, there is nature that is under-valued and believed to be inferior in relation to humans. I will examine Rumi's views of arrogance based on this conceptual background. I will argue that arrogance is an environmental vice because a closer look into Rumi's thought shows that it is an objectionable attitude not only towards God or human beings but also towards non-human nature. His worldview rejects arrogance as a character trait but it also rejects the two assumptions of anthropocentrism outlined above.

Wensveen (1999) points to an important difference between religious and ecological conceptions of pride. Religiously, pride is a vice because by engaging in excessive pride human beings put themselves in place of God and do not recognize any authority above themselves. Ecologically, it is a vice because as a result of their pride human beings fail to recognize their "proper place within a web of earthly relationships". Notwithstanding the theoretical value of this distinction, there seems to be no strict demarcation between the two ideas. Being ecologically relevant is not limited to ecological conceptions of pride; religious interpretations of the vice may also have ecological implications. For example, in a monotheistic framework arrogance in relation to God may have a significant impact on human views of nature. Indeed, this topic figures prominently in the religion and environment discourse. For instance, approaching the matter from an Islamic perspective, Setia (2007) observes that when acting arrogantly human beings usurp both God's right and the rights of other creatures which are given to human beings' care as trust. Indications of a similar link between arrogance to God and arrogance to nature can be found in Rumi's thought as well.

As noted, Rumi's worldview is theocentric and pride is a major vice because it is an improper attitude toward God. The Qur'anic figures such as Satan, Pharaoh and Qarun (Korah) are portrayed as the archetypes of arrogance. For instance, pride was the reason of Satan's fall from God's favour and being eternally cursed. It also brought the destruction of Pharaoh and Qarun.

[Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay." [Allah] said, "Descend from Paradise, for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased. (Qur'an 7: 12-13)

And Pharaoh said, "O eminent ones, I have not known you to have a god other than me. Then ignite for me, O Haman, [a fire] upon the clay and make for me a tower that I may look at the God of Moses. And indeed, I do think he is among the liars." And he was arrogant, he and his soldiers, in the land, without right, and they thought that they would not be returned to Us. (Qur'an 28:38-39)

Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, "Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant. (Qur'an 28:76)

In all of these stories, one can observe that defying God's authority and pretending to some sort of Divinity are presented as the prime expressions of arrogance. Moreover, by displaying arrogance in relation to God, human also rejects God's ownership over creation and, in some cases, attributes that ownership to himself. The following exchange between Moses and Pharaoh demonstrates this fact.

My original lineage (is derived) from earth and water and clay: God gave unto water and clay a soul and heart. (M IV: 2313)  
 When the spirit departs, it (the body) will again become earth in the dreaded and horrible grave. Both thou and we and all who resemble thee will become earth, and thy power will remain no more."  
 He (Pharaoh) said, "Thou hast a name other than this lineage: truly that name is more proper for thee—'Slave of Pharaoh and slave of his slaves,' (a slave) whose body and soul were first nurtured by him Pharaoh), (M IV: 2318-2320)  
 He (Moses) said, "Far be it that any other person should be a partner in Lordship with that King. (He is) One: He hath no associate in Kingship; His slaves have no master but Him. His creatures have no other owner: does anyone claim partnership with Him except one that is doomed to perish? (M IV: 2324-2326)

The first three verses are the words uttered by Moses. He emphasizes the earthly origin of his own and Pharaoh's body and the Divine origin of the soul which shows that there is nothing in human that inherently belongs to him. Therefore, human power and authority are temporary; they disappear when the spirit and body return to their origins. Rejecting Moses' words on human condition, Pharaoh rather describes Moses as his slave or the "slave of his slaves" referring to the fact that he was raised in Pharaoh's household. By doing so he rejects the Divine ownership of Moses and attributes it to himself. In response, Moses declares that the real mastery of all creatures including human beings belongs to God and whoever tries to appropriate this position is "doomed to perish". This exchange points to an ecologically important aspect of arrogance in its religious interpretation, that is, by claiming the ownership of creation one denies the critical connection between God and His creatures.

Thus, there seems to be another reason to view arrogance as morally reprehensible because disregard for God implies disregard for nature. However, human attitudes toward God and nature are not always positively correlated. It is possible that human beings disregards nature without defying God's authority over it. The dominion principle put forward by some ecological critics of the Judaeo-Christian tradition can be an example of this view. According to their argument, the Bible by advancing the idea of human creation in God's image (Genesis 1:26-29) establishes human mastery over the rest of creation without putting humans in disagreement with God (White 1967; Kinsley 1996a). Put differently, as long as human beings relate to God with humility it is permissible not to feel the same way towards nature because it is God's will that human beings be superior to nature and exercises dominion over it. We can call it *God-sanctioned dominion of nature*. As examined above, for Rumi if human beings do not recognize God's authority over creation there is little to prevent them from arrogance toward nature because they will most likely attribute God's authority to

themselves. In this regard, an important question is whether Rumi's worldview is receptive to the notion of God-sanctioned dominion over nature, put differently, whether one can claim the mastery of nature without challenging God's authority because it is a part of God's will for human beings to dominate it.

The core of the question is whether it is possible to combine humility toward God with arrogance toward nature. Rumi repeatedly condemns arrogance while continuously attributing a special status or superiority to human beings among creation. To address this seeming contradiction, one needs to fully understand the meaning and implications of human superiority in Rumi. The matter was partly discussed in the previous chapter and will further be explored in sub-chapter 9.1. For now, I will only summarize the idea to advance the argument at hand. As noted earlier, reason is one of the most distinct attributes of human beings which distinguishes them from other creatures. However, a holistic reading shows that Rumi takes a conditional approach to reason. When used properly reason can deliver humans from the grip of bodily desires and serve as a guide throughout their moral and intellectual development. However, when attributed excessive importance it can take a form of rationalism and starts to reject other aspects of existence and modes of perceiving reality. In particular, Rumi stresses the limitation of reason in the moral and spiritual domains of human life. If not balanced by other human faculties, reason can also become the source of arrogance. Given these characteristics, reason cannot on its own be the ultimate determinant of human distinctiveness. Rather, it is the totality of human faculties, reason being one of them, which makes humans unique. These faculties have their infinite origins in God and granted to human beings in limited proportions. For instance, reason itself which Rumi calls the Partial Intellect is a limited reflection of the Universal Intellect on human beings.

You who are in love with your intellect, deeming yourself superior to worshippers of form,  
 That (intellect) is a beam of (Universal) Intellect (cast) on your sense-perception; regard it as borrowed  
 gold on your copper.  
 Beauty in humankind is like gilding; else, how did your sweetheart become (as ugly as) an old ass?  
 She was like an angel, she became like a demon, for that loveliness in her was a borrowed (transient)  
 thing.  
 Little by little they take away that beauty: little by little the sapling withers. (M II: 710-14)

Thus, the unique status of human beings is derived from their capacity to actualize God's attributes in their being. In this sense, true superiority is the measure of one's moral, spiritual and intellectual excellence. This notion of superiority is different from *false superiority* associated with arrogance and condemned by Rumi (M V: 544-556; M I: 3397-3399). To avoid slipping into false superiority, one, first of all, needs to recognize that one's inner faculties do not ultimately belong to oneself. One is not the owner but a temporary holder of the Divine trust<sup>87</sup> which consists of one's inner attributes<sup>88</sup>. Second, those attributes are only potentials which have to be actualized. In fact, one's true humanity is contingent upon the degree to which one realizes one's potential attributes. Otherwise, human being is not necessarily higher and, in some cases, may even go lower than non-human beings (FMF 29). Third, in actualizing one's potentials one must eliminate disdain and develops "lowliness" (MV: 544-556) because arrogance contradicts the goal of moral excellence which is essential to human uniqueness.

In fact, it is of critical importance to recognize the distinct aspects of human nature because disregarding them may lead to false humility or misanthropy which is itself a vice. Because of its relation to humility, I will come back to this theme at the end of this chapter after

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<sup>87</sup> The notion of the Divine trust was partly discussed in the context of the Islamic and environment debate in sub-chapter 2.2. It was also examined in relation to Rumi's notion of human flourishing. I will further discuss the concept in more detail in sub-chapter 11.1.

<sup>88</sup> Abraham said, "God is He who gives life and death." Nimrod said, "I give life and death." When God gave Nimrod kingship, he deemed himself omnipotent as well, not attributing this credit to God. Nimrod said, "I too bring life to some and cause others to die, and what I desire throughout my kingdom comes from my knowledge." When God bestows knowledge, sagacity and shrewdness, people claim all credit for themselves, saying, "Through my skill and abilities, I gave life to these actions and have attained ecstatic joy." Abraham said, "No, it is God who gives life and brings death." (FMF 55)

examining humility as an environmental virtue in Rumi. It is also important to properly acknowledge human place among creation due to his role as God's vicegerent (*khalifa*) or steward on earth. I provide a detailed analysis of this concept in chapter 11. For now, it is clear that there is no real paradox in denouncing arrogance and embracing superiority in Rumi because superiority, properly understood, requires the rejection of arrogance and adoption of humility. In this respect, there seems to be no room for the God-sanctioned domination suggested by the dominion principle because, in this view, there is no room for selective arrogance, which works only toward non-human creatures, or selective humility, which works only towards God.

Another important element of arrogance is the *sense of self-perfection* or flawlessness. It is not the same as the sense of superiority which has been discussed so far. Although both are different aspects of arrogance there is a subtle difference between the two. Superiority contains some sort of comparison of oneself and one's abilities with others and their abilities while perfection is more inward-oriented and does not necessarily involve comparison. Rumi regards the sense of self-perfection as an illusion (FMF 6) and the worst illness of heart. For human being true perfection lies in the recognition of one's faults and deficiencies because doing so is a precondition for improving one's character. Therefore, the "conceit of perfection" is viewed as a major obstacle to one's moral and spiritual growth (M I: 3210-3219). However, a major problem of an arrogant person is that he denies his limitations and deficiencies and, instead, exhibits self-complacency (FMF 6). This attitude results in the person's moral and spiritual degradation and, in some cases, physical destruction. In addition to its self-regarding harms, it may also lead to indirect harms to nature. In his *The Arrogance of Humanism*, David Ehrenfeld (1978) argues that "a supreme faith in human reason – its ability to confront and solve the many problems that humans face, its ability to rearrange ...

the world of nature” prevents us from recognizing our delusion of limitless power and the widespread failure of our ambitions to control the environment through science and technology. Ehrenfeld emphasizes how our reluctance and refusal to acknowledge our faults and limitations prevents us from recognizing the destructive consequences of our actions. Although Rumi talks about this tendency as a primarily individual vice and not in explicitly environmental terms, it is not difficult to imagine how this disposition, when adopted as a prevailing attitude by humans as a species and applied in human-nature context, can produce a form of ecological crisis similar in nature and scale to the one we are facing today.

I have tried to derive a possible response to the idea of human superiority from Rumi’s thought. I can now briefly examine the second element of the anthropocentric worldview which promotes domination and mistreatment of nature. Such notion of anthropocentrism upholds human superiority by denigrating nature, presenting it as deficient in comparison to human beings. In its philosophical interpretation, this view of nature is supported by the notion of “rationalist dualism” which defines humans being as reason and nature as body and declares the primacy of reason over body. As an extension of this mind-body dualism, such anthropocentrism maintains the superiority of human being over nature (Plumwood 2002). It also holds the mechanistic conception of nature which views animals as machines or *automata* that lack consciousness and the ability to feel pain (Wilson n.d.). In its religious version, degradation of nature is linked to the process of desacralizing nature which is considered to result from the idea of transcendent God and the demise of the pagan views of nature (Kinsley 1996). Much like Cartesian dualism, de-sacralisation reduces nature to a material entity, but it does so by rejecting its spiritual dimension.



Sufis generally tend to perceive reality in deeply spiritual ways. They understand God to be both transcendent and immanent which stands in stark contrast to other traditions of Islam that believe in the absolute transcendence of God from the created realm. Rumi is certainly no exception as far as this aspect of Sufism is concerned. From his view of creation as the manifestations of the Divine to his attribution of spiritual consciousness to inanimate entities one can see his profoundly spiritual cosmology in play. In fact, the denial of the non-material reality of nature leads to the rejection of its important relationship with God. Therefore, Rumi's conception of nature cannot be restricted to the exclusively material realm. This challenges the fundamental premise of anthropocentric domination, that is, nature being a mere matter and as such inferior to human being must be dominated and exploited to serve his purposes. Moreover, the inability to sense the spiritual in nature is in itself a result of arrogance and pride which along with other character traits numb human capacity for a deeper perception of reality. Talking about the effects of arrogance Cafaro (2005a) notes that "the arrogance of anthropocentrism cuts people off from the reality of nature.... as we ignore nature's stories and tell truncated and false stories about ourselves". A similar dynamics seems to be in place in Rumi's interpretation of arrogance. It affects human openness to nature and creates a spiritual disconnect between the two which is primarily a result of a moral failure and character deficiency.

To conclude, Rumi rejects any form of superiority which is driven by arrogance because arrogance is unacceptable as part of one's proper relationship with God. By implication, arrogance also produces disregard for God's ownership and authority over creation. However, there is also a positive form of superiority which refers to a potential moral excellence in human being which is contingent upon the state of a person's character. Such conception of superiority rejects the sense of self-importance and self-perfection and requires

humility, care and sense of responsibility for creation. Rumi also rejects the materialistic perception of creation. Creation's relationship with God cannot be severed or denied just because someone fails to perceive it in more than a material way. Thus, Rumi's philosophy does not accept the two fundamental elements of anthropocentric domination of nature: arrogant superiority of human and inferiority of nature. Therefore, the sense of human supremacy or arrogance toward nature can be regarded as environmental vice in Rumi.

### 8.3.2. Humility

It was pointed out that there are some differences in how religious and philosophical traditions understand humility. Kellenberger (2010) suggests the cognitive or experiential aspect to be common to various religious accounts of humility. While it is not always present in secular notions of humility, it is essential to their religious counterparts. The cognitive aspect consists of three components. *The first* component is awareness or recognition of God. It involves turning away from self and directing toward God or from self-centeredness toward Reality-centeredness. It is important to note that in non-religious contexts the shift occurs toward a transcendent reality which may be conceived of as people, nature or the cosmos<sup>89</sup>. *The second* component is the knowledge and experience of oneself as one is. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing "the blinding nature of pride". Pride, being the opposite of humility, induces an inflated self-perception and thereby prevents one from seeing oneself as one really is. *The last* component is the recognition of oneself in relation to God. Developing a proper understanding of oneself and God requires a proper awareness of one's relation to God which includes bringing one's actions and reactions in harmony with such awareness.

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<sup>89</sup> Kellenberger (2010) explains Iris Murdoch's (1992) view of humility who argues for a theory of humility which can operate outside of a theistic framework.

Kellenberger's account of religious humility seems to provide an appropriate general framework for examining Rumi's notion of humility because both are theistic in nature. In addition, Kellenberger's account is also consistent with the existing environmental accounts of humility. I will use both religious and environmental accounts of humility in developing a conceptual framework for my analysis. In particular, I will focus on two expositions of humility in eco-literature: Hill's *Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments* (1983) and Gerber's *Standing Humbly before Nature* (2002).

In his pioneering article, Hill (1983) examines indifference to (the destruction of) nature from a virtue perspective and suggests three possible root causes of this attitude: ignorance, self-importance and lack of self-acceptance. He recognizes that overcoming these deficiencies may not necessarily result in humility, but doing so constitutes an important psychological preliminary for the cultivation of the virtue. Gerber (2002) proposes humility as an important virtue for human-nature relationships and identifies three aspects of humility: experiencing a larger and more complex reality, overcoming self-absorption, and gaining a perspective on oneself and the world<sup>90</sup>. A closer look reveals a great deal of resemblance between the three elements of these accounts, which can be paired under three broader themes. Below I will examine each of these themes and use them as benchmarks for evaluating Rumi's views for the possibility of developing a coherent theory of environmental humility.

#### **a) Proper awareness of nature**

Proper awareness of nature is an essential element of environmental humility because it helps appreciate nature as more than a physical resource or background for supporting human life.

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<sup>90</sup> The original order in which Gerber discussed her three components is slightly different from the way it is presented here. She first talks about self-absorption and then about experiencing nature as a larger, more complex reality. I have switched the order because this way it is easier to compare it with Hill's elements of humility and to point out the parallels between these two accounts. This will also be the order in which I will examine Rumi's notion of humility toward nature.

Hill examines whether the failure to demonstrate such humility toward nature may stem from ignorance, which he defines as the lack of appreciation of one's place in the natural world. One way of addressing this lack of appreciation is to gain a deeper understanding of nature by acquiring scientific knowledge about the world. Hill, however, is aware that factual knowledge by itself is not always enough to make one properly appreciate his place in the world - a certain perspective or "normative attitude" may be required to gain such appreciation. For one may know scientific facts about nature but still consider it as a mere resource. While Hill focuses more on the scientific understanding of nature<sup>91</sup>, Gerber makes a case for confronting the vastness and complexity of nature through direct experience which would have a powerful humbling effect. In both cases, understanding nature, whether theoretically or experientially, is argued to provide a perspective on oneself which would challenge what Frasz (1993) calls "an inflated sense of self-worth" and is therefore important for inducing humility. In other words, by facing a reality bigger than ourselves we acquire a more realistic self-image because we get the chance to see ourselves in relation to that reality.

In Rumi's world, a proper awareness of nature is based on perceiving creation beyond its material form. I propose to call this the *deep perception* of reality. It is about recognizing and appreciating the spiritual dimension of nature and its connection to God. Major themes around the spiritual reality of nature in Rumi were discussed in chapter 5. The deep perception contrasts with what I suggest to call the *shallow (superficial) perception* which is about fixating one's view on the outward appearance only, perceiving reality purely through its material dimension and failing to see the inward. Rumi urges to minimize the focus on the outward form and penetrate into the inward meaning. Therefore, for Rumi understanding nature is not about encountering an aggregation of matter but experiencing a reality with a

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<sup>91</sup> Hill recognizes the role of experiencing nature in fostering humility and in particular, the role of living in natural surroundings in developing a proper understanding of oneself as part of nature. However, he dedicates much of the discussion to the importance of scientific understanding of nature in addressing ignorance.

deep spiritual connection to God. Perceiving nature in this manner may challenge one's inflated self-image and prompt him to reconsider his position in relation to nature in which case nature ceases to be a lifeless, meaningless and passive entity.

There is one potential challenge that needs to be addressed here. It was noted above that the accounts of environmental and theistic notions of humility are consistent with each other because each involves recognizing a greater reality and, as a result of this cognitive shift, taking a different perspective on oneself. However, there seems to be one important difference. In environmental theories of humility the greater reality that must be encountered is nature whereas in theistic conceptions of humility it is primarily God. In this respect, a problem with developing an environmental virtue within a theistic context is to keep God and nature in the same framework. In other words, the question that needs to be answered is how an awareness of nature can be accommodated within a theistic view where the awareness of God is the primary goal.

A similar challenge applies to Rumi as well. Although humility is a frequently mentioned character trait, he talks about it as an appropriate attitude toward God and human beings. He does not specifically mention it as an attitude that must be adopted toward nature. However, if one frames humility as a proper awareness of a reality larger than human being, one can see that the awareness of God and the awareness of nature are not mutually exclusive because understanding nature is regarded as a way of understanding God which happens through understanding the Divine signs in nature. This view aims to comprehend the universe as the Cosmic Book of God (see sub-chapter 5.1.). Therefore, in evaluating Rumi's conception of environmental humility it is possible to adopt the notion of proper awareness of nature as a

benchmark in spite of Rumi's theistic worldview because knowing nature is in itself an important form of knowing God.

### **b) Overcoming self-centredness**

Coming into contact with nature and appreciating one's place in it can be impeded by a form of self-centredness. Hill frames it as *self-importance*. Self-importance is "a tendency to measure the significance of everything by its relation to oneself and those with whom one identifies". In human-nature relationship, it would be valuing nature by its utility to human beings without attributing it a value of its own. Hill points to two strategies for overcoming self-importance. One is to establish the importance of (non-sentient) nature based on its objective properties so that one values nature for its own sake. The second strategy appeals to moral character and is the subject of Hill's focus. It maintains that as part of cultivating humility one has to learn to feel that things have value apart from their use and impact on oneself. He also argues that feeling in this way cannot be limited to human beings and animals and exclude non-sentient beings if one is to truly overcome self-importance. In other words, true humility is possible only when one has developed the general capacity to appreciate things for their own sake. The form of self-centredness Gerber is concerned about is *self-absorption*. Self-absorption involves preoccupation with oneself and the matters of everyday life to the extent that one fails to appreciate the beauty and majesty of the natural world even when confronted with it. She puts this way:

Suppose a person is hiking in the Rocky Mountains and she is thinking about her job. She laments that she should have finished the project she started last week, and that she should have said something different to her colleagues. Perhaps she thinks about having a little party or muses about the great tennis match on television. These thoughts have nothing to do with hiking in the Rocky Mountains and in fact detract from her ability to be humble before nature.

Therefore, she argues that a self-absorbed person must change his focus from self toward an external reality so that a deeper awareness of nature can develop.

For Rumi, one's lower self is a major obstacle to the proper perception of reality. As explained earlier (see chapter 6.), for Rumi human flourishing involves a transformation from the lower self to the higher. The lower self is associated with negative qualities such as egoism, arrogance, greed, gluttony and lust all of which are some forms of self-centredness. Progress towards the higher self involves overcoming these character weaknesses and cultivating positive qualities such as benevolence, generosity and humility. Although such transformation of character has a strong moral component, it does not take place in a spiritual vacuum. It involves deepening of a spiritual insight into the inner nature of reality. Such insight is a result of a gradual shift toward the higher self and counters heedlessness and ignorance which result from abiding in the lower self. However, preoccupation with sensuality, wealth, status and matters of everyday life impairs one's capacity and willingness to see the reality beyond oneself and to be attuned to the meanings present in the surrounding world. Therefore, a self-centred person cannot develop the proper perception of nature.

Although Rumi does not talk about self-importance specifically in connection to nature, one can find in him certain views which may be constitutive of the two strategies to overcoming self-importance explained above. One way to address self-importance is to demonstrate the importance of nature for its own sake beyond human utility and interests. It has been explained that nature in Rumi has a strong spiritual connection to God and although a part of its spiritual value is directed toward human beings in that it makes God known to human beings the overall importance of nature stems from its relationship with God. The other way to overcome self-importance is to develop as a part of one's character the feeling that things

have a value apart from their use to human beings. One of the central premises of this study is that virtue ethics among dominant theories of ethics is the one which best captures Rumi's notion of ethics because it places a central emphasis on the character of the moral agent rather than duties, rules and consequences in determining the morality of actions. This is evident in the fact that purification and cultivation of moral character is the primary goal of his ethics. Therefore in Rumi's theocentric universe, where things derive their ultimate value from their relation to God, developing one's attitudes and behaviour in line with this value must become a part of one's character rather than just a matter of duty and utility. Thus, since it is God who assigns the value of everything in the universe and since cherishing this value must be cultivated as a part of one's character, it can be maintained that approaching nature with the sense of self-importance toward nature would be unacceptable in Rumi's thought.

### **c) Self-acceptance**

A form of viewing oneself as part of nature is another component of humility toward nature. Hill calls it *self-acceptance* which is about recognizing the fact that despite our distinct capacities we still share many of the features of the natural world such as living, growing and dying and are, therefore, a kind of natural being. He regards the lack of such self-acceptance as an obstacle to ecological humility and links it to a human tendency to deny our embeddedness in nature by, for example, replacing our natural environments with artificial ones. Gerber defines this aspect of humility as self-knowledge which includes a proper perspective on one's capacities and achievements. Like Hill, she accepts that the denial of our embeddedness in nature points to a lack of humility. However, she argues that relating to nature with humility does not require us to concentrate on our lowliness but rather to respond to nature with wonder and awe. While humility is an antidote to an over-valued sense of self, it is not about underestimating or denigrating oneself either. Hill also seems to caution



against the latter when saying that “self-acceptance is not passive resignation, for refusal to pursue what one truly wants within one’s limits is a failure to accept the freedom and power one has”. Both authors avoid associating humility with a low opinion of oneself, perhaps, because such association is the reason why humility has until recently been rejected as a virtue in secular ethics (see Hare 1996). Such conceptualization of humility seems to accord with the above noted definition of the virtue as the mean between arrogance (overestimation of oneself) and misanthropy (underestimation of human being) proposed by Frasz (1993).

If we understand ecological humility as a process of personal transformation, self-acceptance is perhaps the consummation of this process. While in the EVE literature self-acceptance implies the acceptance of one’s rootedness in nature, in Rumi one can distinguish two aspects of self-acceptance. Examining Rumi’s notion of human nature (sub-chapter 6.1.) in the previous chapter, I mentioned that human being consists of physical and spiritual elements and is therefore connected to the corporeal and spiritual realms of existence. This explains why human being occupies a unique place in Rumi’s physico-spiritual process of evolution. The material stage of the evolution ends in human being before transitioning into the spiritual realm. Therefore, human beings are composed of the elements and properties of the natural entities preceding them in this process of evolution. Such complex physical composition signifies the fundamental embeddedness of human beings in the natural world. Human beings are a part of nature and depends on it to sustain their existence in this world. In this regard, it is particularly noteworthy that it is the biological aspect of human nature that Rumi uses in countering arrogance. Above I mentioned the dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh where Moses admonishes Pharaoh to abandon his pride. A central message of this story seems to be that if we as human beings fail morally then we have nothing essentially to be proud of because ultimately we are a product of nature and are no better than other entities in it. This

view may provide a solid ground for human beings to view themselves as part of the natural world. However, such view would be one-sided and incomplete without a proper regard to inner aspects of human beings which includes their intellectual, moral and spiritual faculties. For Rumi these faculties have their origins in God and although they are given to human beings as the Divine trust<sup>92</sup>, they have freedom in disposing of them and recognizing their Divine ownership. This view was partly discussed above. While making human beings special among creatures these faculties also create a room for arrogance and pride provided he attributes their ownership to himself. In this context, we can distinguish another form of self-acceptance in Rumi which is about accepting the fact that human faculties belong to God and that humans do not hold ultimate ownership over them. Thus, as far as Rumi's idea of human being is concerned, there are two forms of self-acceptance - natural and spiritual - and both seem to be important for countering arrogance toward nature. One reminds human beings of their roots in the natural realm and the other of the fact that the uniqueness, which is often the basis of human arrogance toward nature, does not belong to human beings. While these forms of acceptance are about human beings, there seems to be one more form of acceptance which is about nature. It is about recognizing that God is the sole creator and possessor of non-human creation. The three forms of acceptance are critical steps in developing an ethics of ecological humility in Rumi.

There is one more aspect of humility figuring in Hill's and Gerber's accounts which is relevant for Rumi. It is the recognition of one's place in nature not only intellectually but by, as Hill puts it, "understanding, facing squarely, and responding appropriately to who and what one is". It involves a deeper level of self-acceptance which requires corresponding moral responses and bringing of one's actions into harmony with such self-acceptance.

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<sup>92</sup> See sub-chapters 2.2., 6.2. and 11.1.

Gerber seems to point to these emotional and behavioural aspects of humility when she explains the two ways the lack of humility can manifest itself: a) when one is not properly moved by nature which shows the absence of the emotional component of humility; b) when one intentionally destroys a part of nature which shows that humility has not become a part of one's character which governs his actions.

Developing self-acceptance on an emotional level and turning it into a character trait is different from simply perceiving it as a theoretical concept. In the ways Rumi depicts nature and human relation to it one can see a constant emphasis on the fact that all of those depictions are real experiences which he constantly lives through. We have seen Rumi admonishing those who perceive the vitality of nature as a theory. Therefore, he frequent criticizes philosophers and theologians who unlike true mystics lack the experiential knowledge of reality and perceive it in a purely theoretical way. The fact that Rumi urges to purify oneself from selfishness and negative traits in order to perceive the deeper aspects of nature reveals a strong experiential character of his teachings.

The presence of the three elements discussed above is an important indicator of humility toward nature in Rumi. However, as noted above, some eco-writers and virtue ethicists differentiate between proper and false humility and reject the latter as a virtue. Proper humility is understood as an accurate assessment of one's abilities without arrogantly assuming superiority while false humility is associated with low self-esteem and disregard for one's potentials. False humility is argued to lead to misanthropy, distrust and dislike of human beings. Frasz (1993) notes that in an ecological context false humility is expressed as an excessive "devaluation of humankind". According to him, the idea figures prominently in the writing of some eco-thinkers who in order to challenge human "speciesism" argue that in

moral evaluations human beings' moral status should be no different from that of other species. In a more radical manner, some of these thinkers express this view in an implicitly misanthropic sense claiming that we have too many human beings on the Earth and some decrease in number would be necessary. Frasz further argues that this has become "the primary danger of environmental holism, forcing many environmental ethicists to reevaluate and more carefully present their own positions". The tendency of holistic ethics to radically devalue the moral status of human beings has led such thinkers as Regan (1983) to label holism as "environmental fascism".

Therefore, it would be important to understand where Rumi's understanding of humility stands on this spectrum. This theme was briefly touched upon earlier in this section when talking about human uniqueness. Rumi does not dismiss the qualities which make humans potentially superior to other creatures. However, nurturing those qualities has to be done with humility and awareness of the fact that human beings hold their unique faculties in trust. This is one of the forms of self-acceptance discussed above – acknowledging the Divine origin and ownership of one's properties. Thus, superiority is a result of moral excellence rather an expression of arrogance and pride. While Rumi clearly condemns any form of arrogance including arrogance toward nature, his idea of humility does not lead to the dismissal of human potentials which can lead to misanthropy. So his humility seems to be different from the false humility. This makes it possible to locate Rumi's views of arrogance and humility on a continuum conceptually similar to the one suggested by Frasz (1993) where arrogance towards creation acts as one extreme and false humility which is a complete self-negation and resignation as another extreme. Between these extremes is the mean of proper humility which acknowledges human beings' unique capacities and position in the general scheme of creation but at the same time condemns arrogance and pride.

Finally, the question that I posed at the outset regarding the compatibility between Rumi's monotheistic view of humility and the philosophical notion of false humility must be addressed now. Rumi has a radical understanding of humility in that he does not put any limits on the extent of humility in relation to God. One cannot underestimate oneself enough when it comes to one's position before God. This view is clear in the following passage:

Take the famous utterance, "I am God." Some people think this is a great pretension, but "I am God" is in fact a great humility. Those who say, instead, "I am a servant of God" believe that two exist, themselves and God. But those who say, "I am God" have become nothing and have cast themselves to the winds. They say, "I am God" meaning, "I am not, God is all. There is no existence but God. I have lost all separation. I am nothing." In this the humility is greater. (FMF 11)

However, the self-effacement which Rumi frequently talks about refers to the banishing of one's ego, pride, selfishness and other attributes of the lower self. These qualities lead human beings to claim self-reliance and self-sufficiency as well as the ownership of their powers and abilities and, in some cases, the ownership of others including natural entities. However, the elimination of the lower self does not imply the dismissal of the higher self. Rumi is clear about the fact that developing the qualities of one's higher self is the most important goal of human life because it is crucial for the proper knowledge of God. In fact, the elimination of the lower self and the cultivation of the higher are proportional to each other. Therefore, absolute humility before God and the realization of one's potentials are not mutually exclusive. Humility does not require the underestimation or denial of the true self of human being.

## 9. Intellectual virtues and vices

As noted above, intellectual virtues are often defined by contrast to moral virtues despite some controversy around this distinction. For the most part, the controversy stems from the fact that while some intellectual virtues, e.g. open-mindedness and inquisitiveness, are distinctly intellectual many others, e.g. courage, humility and respect, are both intellectual and moral virtues. This makes a sharp distinction between the two categories problematic although it does not mean there is no meaningful distinction at all. Indeed, certain definitions of intellectual virtues seem to better capture the difference between intellectual and moral virtues. Such definitions do not limit intellectual virtues to the qualities of mind, but includes the virtues which, although not being the qualities of minds, may play an important role in the acquisition and application of knowledge. For instance, Stafford (2010) defines intellectual virtues as the qualities which regulate our cognitive activity and are structurally related to knowledge which make them distinct from moral virtues. This definition also explains how some moral virtues may be considered intellectual virtues because they support cognitive activities. For instance, humility, being primarily a moral virtues, may play an important role as intellectual virtue helping us acknowledge the limitations of our knowledge. Similarly, patience as a moral virtue assists us in bringing our bodily appetites under control; it becomes an intellectual virtue when it helps us to be perseverant in studying difficult subjects. There is a similarly complex interplay between intellect and morality in Rumi with similar implications for the contrast between intellectual and moral virtues. Therefore, defining virtues by their cognitive functions and relationship to knowledge may render the concept of intellectual virtues a useful category for the discussion of Rumi's virtues.

It is noteworthy that intellectual virtues have not received a wide-spread attention in the environmental virtue discourse which, in turn, reflects the broader position of intellectual

virtues in the virtue ethics field. EVE writers have mostly focused on practical wisdom/judgement or *phronesis* because of its relevance to practical decisions and actions on environment related matters (e.g., Shaw 1997). Of course, sound judgement in practical situations is not the only intellectual virtue. Aristotle himself includes *sophia*, *nous*, *episteme* and *techne*, in addition to *phronesis*, into his list of intellectual virtues. *Sophia* is wisdom as in the word *philosophia* - “love of wisdom”. However, it is defined as theoretical wisdom which is distinct from the practical wisdom of *pronesis*. As such, *sophia* is a combination of rational intuition and scientific knowledge. *Nous* stands for rational intuition or the ability of intellect to grasp fundamental principles through intuitive understanding. *Episteme* stands for scientific knowledge and understanding. *Techne* refers to the knowledge of crafts and skills. Although these other intellectual virtues are rarely discussed in the EVE literature, such concepts as reason and knowledge which can be related to *episteme* and *nous*, respectively, have figured in the general environmental literature and, in particular, in feminist environmental thought<sup>93</sup> (e.g., Plumwood 2002, Keller 1985). Although this literature does not address reason and knowledge from a virtue ethics perspective, they challenge their position as absolute values or virtues within the modern rationalist thought for their implications for ecological mindsets and attitudes.

The two intellectual virtues of reason and knowledge have an important place in Rumi’s writings as well. Reason or intellect, as partly discussed in Chapter 6, and knowledge are important human faculties and therefore this study defines them as intellectual virtues in Rumi’s thought. A comparative analysis reveals a great deal of similarity between Rumi’s

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<sup>93</sup> It is worth recalling that the ecological evaluation of Rumi’s virtues goes beyond the EVE framework and extends to the broader environmental thought. A piece of environmental analysis, whether it comes from EVE or the general environmental literature, is considered to be EVE relevant as long as it reasonably explains the environmental significance of a virtue or a vice. See Chapter 3 (sub-chapter 3.3.) for a detailed discussion of this point.

conception of these virtues and their counterparts in the environmental literature. Therefore, these concepts can also be regarded as environmentally relevant intellectual virtues in Rumi.

Last but not least, unlike moral virtues, intellectual virtues do not generally operate along the spectrum of deficiency, mean and excess although there are certain instances where reason can be considered excessive. However, such excess is not so much about the excess of reason itself but the extreme emphasis placed on reason in human affairs. In other words, such critique of excessive reason is about a balanced development of different aspects (e.g. moral, emotional, intellectual, etc.) of human nature. It seems useful to view Rumi's approach to reason through the same lens. Thus, his main criticism is aimed at the exclusivist conception of reason which overemphasizes reason and arrogantly rejects its limitations, especially, in comprehending the non-rational aspects of reality and human nature. Thus, Rumi takes a critical approach toward reason and knowledge which is more in line with the ecological accounts of the concepts mentioned above. This will be discussed in detail in the following sub-chapter.

## **9.1. Reason**

There are several types of reason arising from Rumi's thought and his stance toward each of them is different. As a result, he has both positive and negative views of reason. Therefore, to explore the connection between reason and environmental thought, one has to examine each type of reason separately. This should help us arrive at a more accurate and comprehensive rather than a partial account of reason as environmental virtue or vice.

### **9.1.1. Types of reason in Rumi**

Rumi divides reason into two broad categories – Universal and partial reason. The Universal reason is complete and comprehensive while partial reason is deficient and limited.



Ontologically, however, there is a connection between the two types of reason because partial reason is in itself a limited expression of the Universal reason and as such derives its existence from it. Therefore, it can be said that the two levels of reason differ from each other not in essence but in scope and depth. Thus, for Rumi partial reason consists of the manifestations of the Universal reason in the corporeal realm and the latter is itself partial and limited in comparison to other dimensions of existence. The partial reason in human beings can be divided into three main categories: self-centred, moral and theoretical reasons<sup>94</sup>. Below I will discuss each of these forms of reason and examine their ecological significance.

*Self-centred reason* is preoccupied with securing the physical and material interests of an individual. Such reason operates at the level of the lower self and is, therefore, regarded as the lowest level of intellect. In general, Rumi views ego and reason as the qualities which are “at war” with each other. However, the form of reason which is opposed to ego is the moral reason which will be discussed later. As far as selfish reason goes, not only can it coexist with one’s carnal self but is also subservient to it. Although self-centred reason is necessary for survival, Rumi condemns the type of people who do not advance their reason in order to liberate it from the bondage of the carnal self. It is noteworthy that at times Rumi attributes this level of reason to animals as well which he otherwise depicts as lacking in reason.

If the intellect of the beast can choose something better than what it inherited from its parents, it is monstrous and horrible that a human being, superior to all the inhabitants of the earth in reason and discrimination, should be less than a beast. (FMF 29).

This base intellect has become of the same temperament as the ass: its (only) thought is how it shall get hold of fodder. (M II: 1857)

Again, the Creator, whom thou knowest, was leading him (Man) from the animal (state) towards humanity.

Thus did he advance from clime to clime (from one world of being to another), till he has now become

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<sup>94</sup> For a slightly different categorization of reason in Rumi see Safavi 2007

intelligent and wise and mighty.  
He hath no remembrance of his former intelligences (souls); from this (human) intelligence also there is a migration to be made by him,  
That he may escape from this intelligence full of greed and self-seeking and may behold a hundred thousand intelligences most marvellous. (M IV: 3646-3649)

This form of reason guides animal behaviour toward survival and self-preservation. However, there are two challenges of selfish reason for human beings. First, unless transformed into higher levels of reason, such reason can inhibit human flourishing – the development of character and reason. Second, self-concern often transcends the boundaries of survival and begins to take the form of greed which becomes difficult to control because greed by its nature resists limitations.

When you knock at the door of Reality, it will be opened to you: beat the pinion of thought, in order that you may be made a king-falcon.  
The pinion of your thought has become mud-stained and heavy because you are a clay-eater: clay has become to you as bread.  
Bread and meat are (originally) clay: eat little thereof, that you may not remain in the earth, like clay. (M I: 2870-2872)

Since selfish reason is guided by greed, it is short-sighted<sup>95</sup>. It follows the commands of the ego and is out of touch with reality. Rumi urges not to trust selfish reason because following the wishes of this reason brings a moral and spiritual decline. Therefore, selfish reason cannot be accepted as an appropriate form of reason for human beings. It must be rejected and resisted because doing so would be instrumental to overcoming it. It would also be an important step in bringing one's actions in line with the demands of true reason.

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<sup>95</sup> "Since (the power of) the donkey's eye (to see) the beginning is not accompanied by (power to see) the end, it (the donkey) is in the same case as the one-eyed man, (even) if it has two eyes." (M IV: 1715)

The second type of reason in Rumi is what may be called *ethics-oriented reason*. This is the form of reason which is, as noted above, in conflict with human ego. Its aim is to take control over the lower self and guide human beings through their moral and spiritual development.

How the grace of Reason, which is of goodly nature, of goodly lineage, brings the entire body into discipline (M I: 2826)

Therefore, Rumi often refers to this reason as the one which distinguishes human beings from animals. It is often closely associated with *discernment* - the capacity to discriminate between good and evil, right and wrong. This capacity helps a person foresee the end or consequences of one's actions and behaviour and it is instrumental to subduing and establishing the control over the carnal self and selfish desires. There seems to be an interesting interrelation in how ethical reason strives to restrict the lower self in order to liberate the same reason from the grip of desires so that it can perform its function(s) properly. As much as the selfish reason triggers a vicious cycle of bondage to ego, ethical reason can be a catalyst for a positive cycle of freeing the intellect from ego.

The (bodily) senses and (sensual) thoughts are like weeds on the clear water— covering the surface of the water.

The hand of the intellect sweeps those weeds aside; (then) the water is revealed to the intellect. (M III: 1826-27)

So, when the intellect becomes thy captain and master, the dominant senses become subject to thee. He (who is ruled by the intellect), without being asleep (himself), puts his senses to sleep, so that the unseen things may emerge from (the world of) the Soul. (M III: 1832-33)

When senses and thoughts are driven by desires, they become an obstacle (“weeds”) to a clear perception of reality (“the water”). Intellect has a dual role in dealing with this state as can be concluded from “The hand of the intellect sweeps those weeds aside; (then) the water is revealed to the intellect”. On the one hand, it plays an instrumental role in restraining

desires as it should be made a “captain and master” over senses and desires. On the other hand, when desires are removed, intellect regains its ability to perceive one’s inner aspects as they are, without obstruction and distortion. In this regard, intellect as moral reason rescues itself from the captivity of ego and restores its essential function,

The third type of reason is *discursive reason*. It is necessary for such activities as acquiring knowledge, learning sciences and dealing with theoretical matters. Rumi recognizes the benefits of discursive reason<sup>96</sup>; however, he is more concerned about the limitations and possible dangers of such reason when not regulated properly. There are two major risks of exclusively relying on discursive reason. First, the most important goal of reason for Rumi is to elevate human beings from bodily existence and transform their inner being or character. The problem arises when reason does not carry out this task. It may be occupied with sciences and sophisticated theories, but be little concerned about the moral development of an individual. This is when the ethical implications of acquired knowledge for human life is of no concern. Therefore, he condemns the scholars who study sciences in and out but are unaware of their own essence.

In this same way, the great scholars of the age split hairs on details of all matters. They know perfectly and completely those sciences that do not concern Soul. But as for what is truly of importance and touches us more closely than anything else, namely our own Self, this your great scholars do not know. They make statements about everything, saying, “This is true and that is not true. This is right and that is wrong.” Yet, they do not know their own Self, whether it is true or false, pure or impure. (FMF 4)

Not only is such reason useless for evolving ethical life, it may also work against ethics itself because a possible outcome of reason which strives to acquire knowledge without changing human character is arrogance.

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<sup>96</sup> “Not everything can be known by reason and logic.” But this doesn’t mean that everything outside of reason and logic is true. “Every nut is round, but not every round thing is a nut,” is a sign of that”. (FMF 42)

You who are in love with your intellect, deeming yourself superior to worshippers of form,  
That (intellect) is a beam of (Universal) Intellect (cast) on your sense-perception; regard it as borrowed  
gold on your copper. (M II: 710-711)

Second, for Rumi discursive reason deals with the articles of faith from a theoretical point of view. Such an approach may increase the knowledge of religion itself; however, if it is not supported by religious practice, it does not attain the experiential depth of faith. In addition, there are certain aspects of faith which are non-rational; they can only be perceived by spiritual perception as opposed to intellectual perception<sup>97</sup>. The spiritual meanings in the surrounding world are some of the aspects of existence which cannot be comprehended by analytical reason alone.

Notwithstanding their merits, Rumi views ethical and, even more so, discursive reason as incomplete and deficient. Their deficiency comes from the presence of ego in the human self which indicates that reason in its struggle with the ego has not yet fully overcome it. Therefore, both of these forms of reason fall into the category of “partial reason” (*‘aql-i juz*) for Rumi. The most important repercussion of this shortcoming is the partial reason’s inability to see the complete nature of reality. Therefore, Rumi often contrasts partial reason with ***the Universal Reason*** (*‘aql-i kull*) or what he calls the “Intellect of the intellect” (M I: 2498) which, unlike partial reason, is complete and inclusive. The most important characteristic of the Universal Reason is the fact that it is completely freed from the lower self and perceives reality holistically looking through material and spiritual dimensions of existence (M III: 1823-1834). However, the partial reason must not be completely disregarded or abandoned because, even though it is deficient, the partial reason is

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<sup>97</sup> See page 203 for different modes of perceiving reality in Rumi

instrumental to achieving the highest level of reason. Therefore, for Rumi the Universal Reason is attained through the unification of the partial reason with the Universal Reason.

Everyone who possesses a partial intellect is in need of learning, and the Universal Intellect is the source they are seeking. The prophets and saints have united the partial intellect and Universal Intellect so the two have become one.... So the partial intellect is like a tool for the Universal Intellect, and we learn and find our purpose from there. (FMF 38)

### 9.1.2. Reason from an environmental perspective

The foregoing discussion presents an account of reason according to which intellect is not and must not be in a static state. It should rather be understood as a process of transformation where reason should constantly evolve into higher states and forms. On this continuum, the Universal Reason is the ultimate goal and the forms of reason between the selfish (animalistic) and the Universal Reason are important stages of the evolution<sup>98</sup>. These stages of reason exhibit a certain correspondence with the main stages of personal transformation. This explains why Rumi holds both positive and negative views of reason, which varies depending on which type of reason is in question. It is clear that he is unequivocally critical of the selfish reason and positive about the Universal Reason - the two ends of the spectrum. He considers moral and discursive reasons as two important aspects of the human intellect, but he views them as means that must help realize the ultimate form of reason - the Universal Reason. This being said, there is a key difference between moral and discursive reasons as far as their virtue status is concerned. I will return to this question at the end of this discussion. Now I will examine the environmental implications of each form of reason discussed above.

**Selfish-reason:** The idea of reason being dominated by self-interest and greed is a long-standing theme in the philosophical and psychological analysis of the contemporary

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<sup>98</sup> “Once more, a reason that flees from the Reason of reason (Universal Reason) is transported from rationality to (the grade of) the animals.” (M I: 3320). This verse demonstrates that reason should eventually evolve into the Universal reason. Otherwise, it can fall to the animal (selfish) reason.

ecological crisis. A number of economic theories since Adam Smith have viewed human beings, *homo economicus*, as naturally disposed to use his rationality to maximize self-interest and utility. By holding this view, these theories essentially legitimize greed in the form of self-interest and consider it the engine of material progress (Vedwan 2009). The central problem of this economic approach is that in its sanctification of utility maximization it disregards ethical norms and the social impacts of greed-driven behaviour (Wang and Murnighan 2011). In the corporate sphere, the demand for profit maximization at all costs leads corporations to deny the reality of the environmental risks associated with their activities (Long 2009). A similar pattern of ecological denial can be observed in the consumption habits and choices of individuals and societies, in general. Thus, the form of rationality driven by unbridled self-interest often leads to social and environmental consequences. It also tends to deny these consequences when it perceives a threat to self-interest. In this manner, this rationality violates the principles of reasonable behaviour itself.

Although Rumi talks about selfish rationality as an individual vice rather than a systemic ill and does not address it from an economic standpoint, some of the key psychological elements of selfish rationality discussed above are relevant to Rumi's understanding of the term. In brief, selfish rationality confines reason to self-centred concerns and hinders the development of the higher forms of reason. Instead of being an ethical guide, it denies ethical values and standards in its pursuit of self-interest. It makes one insensitive and blind to the effects of one's selfish actions. These features may become a driving force behind environmentally harmful behaviour. Through producing such behaviour selfish reason can lead to a direct harm to nature and its ecosystems. At the same time, it may prevent a person because of its narrow focus on self-interest from seeing nature as more than a material resource and having a more meaningful engagement with it. Therefore, under certain circumstances selfish reason

may turn into an ecological vice. By acting as an instrument of selfishness and greed it can become complicit in the ecological destruction that these vices can bring about.

**Moral reason:** The ecological importance of moral reason stems from its role in restraining the carnal desires and setting a person on the path of moral and spiritual growth. By liberating from the control of the lower self, moral reason gradually distances the person from the behaviour and habits characteristic of the selfish reason which can be ecologically harmful. On the other hand, by invoking moral insight and the ability to foresee the consequences of one's actions moral reason awakens human consciousness to the detrimental effects of selfishness and greed to the person himself and his environment. Moreover, moral reason being an important stage in the evolution of reason toward its final end, i.e. the Universal reason, is instrumental to achieving the ultimate vision of the world in Rumi which offers some important ecological values<sup>99</sup>.

Thus, as much as the reason serving the lower self can be considered an environmental vice, the reason which delivers human from the lower self can become an ecologically relevant virtue. While the former, because of its subservience to greed, is a major contributor to the growing human footprint on the planet's ecosystems, the latter, by urging people to live a moral and spiritual life, encourages them to live simply by focusing on the non-material aspects of life.

**Discursive reason:** Much of Rumi's critique of reason has to do with the way discursive reason deals with reality. He is critical of its tendency to accept only rational aspects of reality and particularly unsympathetic to rationalists who reject the possibility of non-rational

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<sup>99</sup> I will touch upon those values when discussing the environmental aspects of the Universal Reason



dimensions. This is why Rumi views reason as an obstacle to deepening one's faith. Reason tackles the articles of faith as abstract concepts<sup>100</sup> with little attention to experiential aspects of faith. Some aspects of Rumi's criticism of restrictive (reductionist) rationality seem to be echoed, although in a different context, by the ecological critique of modern rationality. Notwithstanding the contextual differences, there are certain similarities of substance and structure between the two forms of critique which may help explore the ecological implications of Rumi's criticism of rationality. To this end, I will examine Rumi's criticism of rationality against the key arguments and assumptions of its ecological counterpart.

Val Plumwood is one of the most prominent eco-critics of rationalism. I will draw upon Plumwood's (2002) analysis as a theoretical framework and outline its relevant aspects below. There are three aspects of the Cartesian conception of reason pointed out by Plumwood which are important for our purpose here. *First*, reason is considered to be the highest value in the universe. The universe is considered to be governed by a set of rational principles and it is only human beings, in whom reason is the highest faculty, who are capable of grasping those principles. *Second*, reason underlies the radical separation between mind and body which, in turn, produces human/nature dualism. This dualistic framework is used to emphasize the supremacy of reason paving the way for "rationalist dualism". Therefore, dualism and rationalism go side by side in a mutually supportive relationship. In human-nature dualism, reason is associated exclusively with human beings and used to justify human superiority and domination over nature which is associated with body. *Third*, reason is considered to belong to a higher abstract realm of existence which is beyond the material sphere and as such superior to "bodily, emotional and personal elements of human lives". Conceived in this way, reason has to be impartial and disengaged. Given such

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<sup>100</sup> It is noteworthy that abstract thinking is on the list of environmental vices compiled by Wensveen (1999)

emphasis on reason, in the process of knowledge acquisition non-rational forms of engagement with nature such as bodily, emotional, ethical, and spiritual on the part of human beings are considered to be irrelevant and misleading.

In the rest of this discussion, I will examine Rumi's views related to the three aspects of rationalism discussed above. **First**, Rumi is opposed to the view that reason is the ultimate nature of reality. Therefore, he criticizes rationalist philosophers who consider reality to consist of what is mentally intelligible and reduce all forms of knowledge to what is acquired through reason. The same rationalists, according to Rumi, also reject the non-rational or spiritual dimensions of existence because they cannot be comprehended by mind.

The explanation (of the mystery) thereof is not (given) by the meddlesome intellect: do service (to God), in order that it may become clear to you.

The philosopher is in bondage to things perceived by the intellect; (but) the 'pure (saint) is he that rides as a prince on the Intellect of intellect (M III: 2526-2527)

It was already noted that for Sufis<sup>101</sup> and Rumi, in particular, reality consists of multiple dimensions as opposed to being limited to a single one<sup>102</sup>. Beyond the phenomenal world perceived by senses and comprehended by intellect, there are levels of reality closed to the perception of senses and reason<sup>103</sup>. Such notion of reality is consistent with Rumi's gradation of the modes of perception, i.e. sense-perception, intellect and spiritual perception.

I hide myself for a moment from this world, I shake the leaves of sense perception from the tree (of my bodily existence)."

Sense-perception is captive to the intellect, O reader; know also that the intellect is captive to the spirit. (M III: 1823-1824)

<sup>101</sup> For the explanation of the general Sufi doctrine of reality see Nasr 2007

<sup>102</sup> "If the worlds are eighteen thousand and more, these eighteen (thousand) are not subject (accessible) to every eye" (M I: 3756).

<sup>103</sup> "You are an idol-worshipper when you remain in (bondage to) forms: leave its (the idol's) form and look at the reality" (M I: 2893).

Beyond reason there are a hundred stages: deem not the intellect to be acquainted with that caravan.  
(M V: 1306)

Therefore, limiting the reality and modes of perception to any particular level would result in deficient knowledge and understanding of the world. It is noteworthy that Rumi specifically emphasizes, as a response to the rationalist worldview, the inability and incompetence of reason alone in perceiving the ultimate nature of reality. Reality is rather perceived by spiritual faculties or the inner senses (see MI: 3575-76, MII: 3236-39) which he often compares with the five outer senses (D 22: 4-6). This clearly demonstrates that the fundamental nature of reality is spiritual and the rational is only a level of existence preceding it. Thus, Rumi rejects the rationalist conception of reality, which is in line with the first pillar of rationalism criticized by eco-thinkers, because in his world reason is neither the highest faculty nor the supreme principle of existence.

**Second,** Rumi has a conditional approach to discursive reason. While often denouncing reason and rationalists, he also sees reason as a defining quality of human beings. Therefore, an important question to be addressed when talking about ecological repercussions of reason is whether reason leads to a form of mind-body or human-nature dualism and whether such dualism is conducive to the domination of nature by human beings. At first, some sort of separation seems to exist between humans and nature, animals in particular, and reason appears to have a central place in this dualism (see FMF 17). However, there are two important aspects of such dualism which must be emphasized. First, Rumi's affirmative view of reason must be understood in the context of his focus on morality as he considers reason (moral reason) to be an instrument of morality. Therefore, he often mentions reason with the aim of reminding human beings of their moral purpose in life.

In addition, the themes which underlie nature's non-instrumental value do not seem to accommodate the form of hierarchy endorsed by the rationalist human-nature dualism. The non-human world embodies the names and attributes of God and it is in a state of continual submission to and glorification of God. These views render natural entities too important to be reduced to a collection of dull matter just because they lack the intellect of human beings. It is true that the qualities of the lower self, e.g. desires and anger are often associated with animals, but such associations appear to serve a different purpose. "They lack tenderness, kindness, and affection, because animality predominates over their (human) nature. Love and tenderness are human qualities, anger and lust are animal qualities". (M I: 2435-36) They aim to remind human beings of their true nature and in order to bring out this nature humans have a responsibility to transform their lower self which is associated with the animal state. This being said, Rumi acknowledges that for animals their state is their nature<sup>104</sup> and, unlike human beings, they have no free will and, consequently, responsibility to alter it even if such state would be inappropriate for human beings to adopt (FMF 17).

Thus, reason is important only for human beings because it is only human beings who tend to fall out of his nature and is in need of restoring it by the use of reason. As a result, reason must not be used as a universal criterion to judge the value of all creation. The absence of reason is not a shortcoming for non-humans because they fulfil their purpose without reason by simply following their nature. Disregarding reason would be a significant deficiency for humans because they cannot achieve the purpose of their creation without using it. This also

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<sup>104</sup> The following story from Rumi's life points to this: "It happened that the godly companion, the reciter Shehab al-Din was also riding a mount. Suddenly, his donkey began to bray. In anger Shehab al-Din hit the donkey on the head several times. Mowlana said: "Why are you hitting this wretched animal? Because he bears your weight about? Aren't you thankful that you are the rider and he is your mount. If – *God forbid* – matters were the other way round, what would you do? In fact, his braying is only one of two reasons: either because of his gullet or because of this genitals. All created beings share in this activity and are always involved in this activity and are active in this because of the seed of lust. So you should hit everyone on the head and reproach everyone. Shehab al-Din felt repentance and dismounted. He kissed the hood of his riding animal and treated it kindly." (Aflākī 2002)

implies that simply possessing the potential to reason does not yet determine the value of human beings because it is more important to use reason in the right way and for the right purpose in order to become a proper human being. Therefore, Rumi states that some human beings can live by their lower selves provided they do not use their reason. Using reason for the right purpose involves bringing one's emotions, thoughts and acts in harmony with one's true nature which fulfils the Divine purpose in human creation. It is important not to engage in actions which violate this purpose. Such violation may include a wide range of activities from neglecting one's ritual prayers to committing injustice to others.

Since reason should be morality-oriented and should not be used as a measure of nature's value, the form of separation between humans and nature found in Rumi cannot be described as a hierarchical one which would require nature to be conquered and exploited. It would be more appropriate to describe it as a form of moral dualism, as opposed to rational dualism, which sets ethical goals and imposes certain criteria and responsibility for the use of reason as well as other human faculties.

**Third**, it has been established that the perception of reality is not restricted to the principles of logic and rationality. As there are higher levels of reality beyond the rational, there are also higher levels of perception beyond the intellectual. Consequently, for Rumi reason is neither the only nor the highest form of engagement with the world of nature. He is emphatic about the insufficiency and inability of reason to comprehend the true nature of reality which can be argued to be a central idea of his thought. The highest aspect of existence consists of the meanings and spiritual realities behind the visible forms of the world. Therefore, the objective understanding of the world would have to include the perception of the spiritual dimension of existence. This is of crucial importance because it is at this level that Rumi's

ecological vision begins to reveal itself. That is why Rumi emphasizes the need to transcend rational forms of engagement with the surrounding world in order to comprehend its ultimate nature. For example, in the verses quoted below Rumi stresses the inability of reason to perceive true reality which makes the rationalist philosopher interpret it as an absurd phantasy.

Every piece of the jar is in dance and ecstasy, (though) to the partial (discursive) reason this seems absurd.” (M I: 2868)

The philosopher who disbelieves in the moaning pillar<sup>105</sup> is a stranger to the senses of the saints. He says that the beam (influence) of melancholia brings many phantasies into people's minds. (MI: 3279-80)

So far I have tried to demonstrate that the ground on which Rumi criticizes discursive reason is ecologically relevant. His criticism poses a challenge to the fundamental assumptions held by Cartesian rationalism<sup>106</sup> on nature and human-nature relationship which are often linked to the roots of the ecological crisis. However, his critical stance toward discursive reason, however forceful it may become at times, must not be taken in absolute terms. After all, Rumi sees reason as a defining feature of human nature and discursive reason is a type of reason without which learning and science would not be possible. Indeed, a certain degree of rational knowledge is required for understanding the worldly as well as religious matters. However, discursive reason becomes of no use as far as a deeper understanding of God and existence is concerned which is the realm of inner understanding or the Universal Reason. In this sense, discursive reason, if handled properly, can be used as a foundation for transitioning into the Universal Reason.

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<sup>105</sup> *The moaning pillar* is reference to a tree called *Hannane* against which the Prophet Muhammad used to lean during his sermons. The Prophet and his companions were reported to hear the tree moaning on one occasion (see M IV: 2418).

<sup>106</sup> Wensveen (1999) includes both rationalism and intellectualism in her catalogue of environmental vices.

Reason is fine and useful until it brings you to the door of the King. Once you have reached His door, give up reason, for in that hour reason is a sheer loss to you, a highway robber. When you have reached the King, surrender yourself to Him, you have no use then for the how and wherefore. (FMF 26)

Thus, it would be appropriate to say that Rumi's criticism of reason is conditional; he is critical of a particular state of discursive reason characterized by reductionism, which limits reality to the phenomenal realm, and arrogance. Such type of discursive reason can be regarded as a vice as it becomes a potential obstacle to the development of intellect and moral character. Due to its ecological implications explained above, such reason can also be designated as an environmental vice in Rumi.

**Universal Reason:** The Universal Reason is diametrically opposed to the selfish reason. While one is defined by a complete control over the ego, the other is characterized by the total dominance of human self by the ego. There is a parallel between the ecological implications of the two forms of reason. As noted, selfish reason has direct and indirect consequences for the environment. Likewise, there are two major - direct and indirect - environmental implications of the Universal Reason. First, when the lower self is subdued, the negative tendencies of the carnal self which present potential ecological harms are also subdued. This represents the reduction of the environmental harm on the behavioral level. Second, the Universal Reason is the ultimate state of reason where Rumi's ecological vision is realized in its fullest. Through a long and thorough process of personal transformation, human intellect becomes liberated and purified from the ego and gradually begins to participate in the Universal Reason. This is when the original (primordial) state of human intellect and consciousness are restored and achieve a union with the Universal Reason. At this level, human mind perceives both the outer and inner, material and spiritual dimensions of reality which is starkly different from the sense-perception: "Compared with the town, (which is) Universal Reason, these senses (of ours) are like asses (going round and round) in

an ass-mill with their eyes bandaged” (M III: 523). Such perception of reality is the form of engagement with the world that Rumi calls for which transforms the matters of theoretical knowledge into experiential understanding. Such engagement does not aim to discover the laws and principles of nature in order to manipulate them for human goals. Instead, it aims to see the Divine in nature<sup>107</sup>, discover the inward unity of nature behind its outward multiplicity and experience its spiritual liveliness.

The table below depicts the types of reason and their ecological status emerging from Rumi’s thought.

**Table 4:** EVE typology of reason in Rumi

<b>Types of reason</b>	<b>EVE status</b>
Selfish reason	Vice
Moral reason	Virtue
Discursive reason	Conditional: Virtue (if limitations and moral risks are recognized) Vice (if dominated by reductionism and arrogance)
Universal Reason	Virtue

In general, reason can be understood as an evolution from selfish reason towards the Universal Reason. However, it seems more appropriate to view moral and discursive reasons as the instruments rather than stages of this process. They are not endpoints in themselves since the ultimate goal is the realization of the Universal Reason. A critical aspect of reason’s progression towards the Universal Reason is the gradual process of limiting ego’s influence

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<sup>107</sup> When the intellect, (which is) the husk, offers a hundred evidences, how should the Universal Intellect take a step with out having (intuitive) certainty?  
The intellect makes books entirely black (with writing); the Intellect of intellect keeps the horizons (the whole universe) filled (with light) from the Moon (of Reality). (M III: 2530-31)



on human mind and character. This demonstrates that reason is not a mere concept in Rumi's thought but rather a virtue which needs to be regulated and advanced through exertion. In other words, the potential to reason does not automatically translate into an active ability to reason and the state of moral character plays a crucial role in the flourishing of reason. Each of the four categories of reason, as argued in this sub-chapter, may lead to certain ecological benefits or harms according to which they have been designated as environmental virtues or vices.

As noted above, moral reason is instrumental and as such deficient unless transformed into the Universal Reason. However, despite its relative status in comparison with the Universal Reason, moral reason is a virtue since it helps to prevent the ecological harms which may result from selfish reason and contribute towards achieving the ecological benefits of the Universal Reason. Discursive reason has a conditional status; it is a virtue when directed toward the right goals. Its ecological value comes from its role as a bridge to the Universal Reason whose ecological implications have been discussed above. For instance, the fact that creation manifests the Divine is an ecologically relevant theme in Rumi. It is best comprehended through experiential understanding. However, any experiential understanding will initially require a certain degree of theoretical knowledge, in this case, the knowledge of the Divine names and of the natural phenomena related to those names. Acquiring theoretical knowledge is possible by the use of logic and theoretical reason. In this regard, discursive reason is instrumental to the experiential or deeper understanding of reality. Therefore, it may be regarded as an environmental virtue in the context of Rumi's thought provided it is not regarded as an endpoint in itself.

## 9.2. Knowledge

Knowledge has been regarded as both a virtue and vice in the ecological literature. In general, ecologically positive or negative character of knowledge seems to depend on a particular conception of knowledge and its broader philosophical background. Wensveen (1999), for example, includes the quality of “being informed/knowledgeable” into her catalogue of environmental virtues compiled from the environmental literature to date. On the other hand, some eco-feminist writers such as Val Plumwood (2002) and Evelyn Fox Keller (1985) critique the modern understanding of knowledge presented by the dominant conception of rationality. Although the authors do not deal with knowledge in specifically virtue terms, their analyses of knowledge have certain ethical implications for human attitudes toward nature. Therefore, in this sub-chapter key arguments put forward in their analyses will be used as conceptual tools to evaluate the environmental implications of Rumi’s understanding of knowledge. It must be reiterated, however, that the arguments will only be employed to explore if and how Rumi’s view of knowledge relates to the current analysis of the concept in eco-literature. It is not my goal to adopt their broader philosophical background as a framework for my analysis. Therefore, I will later present a separate analysis where I will examine the general ecological aspects of Rumi’s view of knowledge.

### 9.2.1. Knowledge in eco-literature

Two features of the rationalist approach to knowledge stand out in the ecological literature: *reductionism* and *instrumentalism*. According to Plumwood (2002), rationalist understanding tends to reduce knowledge to “pure thought” due to its notion of objectivity. From the environmental perspective, there are two major problems with this understanding of objectivity. First, in the process of knowledge acquisition objectivity requires that the subject, human being (*knower*), is disengaged bodily, emotionally, ethically and politically from the

object, nature (*known*), because such forms of engagement may compromise the objectivity of scientific judgement. Keller (1985) notes that insistence on impartiality enforces a strict barrier between humans and nature rejecting any non-rational modes of engagement based on such emotions as care, sympathy and concern for the fate of nature. This aspect was partly discussed above. The second problem with the rationalist notion of objectivity is that the requirement for disengagement and neutrality “creates a commitment vacuum in science, reduces the ability to resist cooption by economic forces, and works systematically against a science committed to social responsibility” (Plumwood 2002). Therefore, excessive focus on objectivity eventually leads to the instrumentalization of knowledge by other forms of rationality, e.g. economic rationality. The roots of the instrumentalist approach can be traced to the Baconian creed of viewing knowledge about nature as a means of exercising power over nature which established the “utilitarian humanist” orientation of science (Pepper 1984). The overall result of such a conception of knowledge is the closure of human beings to nature and to the impacts of his activities on nature.

Of course, such conception of knowledge has not developed in a vacuum either. The Cartesian notion of human-nature dualism which is the extension of mind-body and subject-object dualisms laid the philosophical foundation for the development of this form of rationalism. As explained earlier, the Cartesian dualism also paved the way for the anthropocentric worldview (Keller 2010). Thus, operating within the dualistic framework, Cartesian rationalism justifies the dominion of human, who is associated with reason, over nature, which is associated with matter. However, it must be recognized that not all forms of rationalism are based on Cartesian dualism. Similarly, not all conceptions of knowledge and science are Cartesian and Baconian and therefore reductionist and rationalist in character. For instance, ecology as a branch of modern science takes a different approach to knowledge and

reason. It is important to make this distinction because the aim here is not a wholesale critique of rationalism and science but of their particular elements which adopt the Cartesian dualistic framework.

### **9.2.2. Rumi's views on knowledge**

Having outlined this account as a theoretical background, it would be important to understand how Rumi's theory of knowledge relates to the ecological criticism of knowledge. In general, one can distinguish two dimensions of knowledge acquisition from Rumi's views: personal and public. The first sphere comprises Rumi's ideas regarding the proper value and aim of seeking knowledge as a personal endeavour. The second sphere is about the ethical standards of scholarship and the public role of scholars. Although there are important similarities between the two spheres, they seem to differ in how they frame those similarities.

For Rumi, acquiring knowledge is a commendable endeavour. In fact, he condemns ignorance, "deficiency of mind", and underlines the difference between ignorance and physical disability, "bodily deficiency". There is no cure to a physical disability and, therefore, the physically disabled are not condemned but rather treated with mercy and compassion. By contrast, ignorance can always be eliminated by acquiring knowledge. Therefore, the failure to seek knowledge, when possible, is condemned (M II: 1536-1541). Within Rumi's conception of human nature, reluctance to seek knowledge comes as an effect of certain qualities of the baser self, e.g. lust, gluttony, greed and arrogance which dominate human character. These qualities collectively bar one's desire to acquire knowledge and thus, prevent the proper functioning of one's reason. This seems to further explain why Rumi criticizes ignorance because it indicates not only the lack of knowledge and willingness to learn but also the presence of some negative tendencies in human character.

For thou art (in reality) that (spiritual) intelligence, and (all) the rest (of thee) is a mask concealing the intelligence. Do not lose thy (real) self, do not strive in vain!  
 Know that every sensual desire is like wine and beng: it is a veil over the intelligence, and thereby the rational man is stupefied.  
 The intoxication of the intelligence is not (caused by) wine alone: whatsoever is sensual shuts the (spiritual) eye and ear.  
 Iblís was far removed from wine-drinking: he was drunken with pride and unbelief. (M IV: 3611-3614).

Much as pursuit of knowledge is important, it is also important to pursue it for the right purpose. For Rumi, knowledge should not become an instrument of one's greed and desires because it diminishes the true value of knowledge. The purpose of knowledge is to give proper knowledge of God, a deeper understanding of reality, morally and spiritually transform its possessor and benefit others. However, pursuing knowledge for worldly gains does not yield these results. Therefore, Rumi distinguishes "imitative knowledge" from true knowledge. Imitative knowledge is the knowledge which is acquired to boast about and to be eventually "sold" (FMF 26).

Dialectic knowledge, which is soulless, is in love with (eager for) the countenance of customers;  
 (But) though it is robust at the time of disputation, it is dead and gone when it has no customer.  
 (M II: 2436-2437)

Such knowledge does not get internalized and change the moral character of its possessor (see FMF 26). Although the possessors of imitative knowledge "split hairs on details of all matters", their knowledge does not help them understand their own Self which is, as noted previously, the basis of Rumi's morality (FMF 4). Imitative knowledge, instead of triggering "spiritual enlightenment", brings about moral and spiritual decline<sup>108</sup>. As such, it creates a vicious circle between uninternalized knowledge and character degradation. However, if

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<sup>108</sup> "Knowledge is conventional and acquired (not real), when he (its owner) laments because the hearer is averse to (hearing) it.  
 Since it is (learned) as a bait (for popularity), not for the sake of (spiritual) enlightenment, he (the seeker of religious knowledge) is just as (bad) as the seeker of vile worldly knowledge" (M II: 2429-2430).

pursued for the right purpose, knowledge initiates a virtuous circle between deeper understanding of one's nature, reality and moral purification.

Rumi outlines the public role and integrity of scholars by describing certain forms of relationship between scholars and political leaders (see FMF 1). In this account, Rumi talks about scholars in general. Thus, according to Rumi, scholars should not be subject to the control of rulers. Their dependence on rulers may be due to a number of reasons such as fear of oppression, seeking esteem from them, promotion to public office and some material gains. These sources of dependence become the factors which motivate them to acquire knowledge and reinforce their dependence on the political leaders. However, the proper reason for pursuing knowledge should be the search for truth. But such pursuit of knowledge is not a purely intellectual exercise; there is an important ethical dimension to it, that is, the personal conduct and actions of scholars should be in harmony with the moral implications of their knowledge and become part of their character. By living up to this ideal, scholars become role models who affect and inspire people for moral excellence. Such scholars master knowledge in order to give to people and not take from them.

### **9.2.3. Environmental analysis of Rumi's idea of knowledge**

For Rumi, knowledge is much more than theories and concepts. It has to be experiential in terms of understanding the religious values and precepts as well as perceiving the deeper aspects of reality. It is through this experiential engagement that one attains a profound comprehension of his or her theoretical knowledge. Therefore, knowledge which is not put into practice is of little value. In this regard, moral and spiritual elements have a crucial place in Rumi's epistemology as proper understanding of reality cannot properly happen in a moral and spiritual vacuum. This indicates that Rumi's conception of knowledge is a complex one because it requires multiple ways of knowing and cannot be reduced to a single, in this case,

rational form of knowledge. Unlike its rationalist counterpart, it does not require disengagement with nature as an object of knowledge. To the contrary, given its ethical and spiritual elements corresponding forms of engagement with nature are necessary for the proper understanding of reality. Therefore, Rumi's idea of knowledge cannot be considered as *reductionist* as it urges to go beyond the rational forms of knowing the world.

Rumi is also strongly critical of idle knowledge and, consequently, the pursuit of knowledge must be directed toward specific goals. In other words, it should not happen in what Plumwood (2005) calls a "commitment vacuum". From the foregoing account, five major goals of knowledge acquisition in Rumi's thought can be differentiated: a) knowledge of God; b) proper understanding of reality; c) improvement of moral character; d) search for truth; e) social benefits. The absence of these goals may create the void which can lead to the appropriation of knowledge by other goals such as the use of knowledge for political and material interests. Therefore, Rumi warns against *instrumentalization* of knowledge by greed, personal interests and ambitions as well as political influence.

From the foregoing analysis it seems to be clear that Rumi's view of knowledge would not align with the key aspects of the rationalist conception of knowledge criticized in eco-literature. Although the analysis provides preliminary insights, it may not be sufficient to establish, with a greater degree of certainty, the ecological implications of his idea of knowledge given the historical gap between the two systems of thought. Therefore, in the remaining part of this section I will examine the concept from a general environmental perspective.

For Rumi the ultimate goal of knowledge is to know God<sup>109</sup>. Knowledge of various disciplines and sciences must ultimately translate into the knowledge of God. When knowledge does not result in knowing the Divine, something of essential importance about that knowledge will be missing even though all the details of that knowledge would be correct (FMF 4). There are two important sources of knowing God – human self and the creation. “We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth.” (Qur’an 41:53). The two sources complement each other. Knowledge of the realities contained in human self is the foundation of knowing the phenomenal world. Rumi sees a continuum between the knowledge of various sciences and trades, on the one hand, and the knowledge of the self, on the other.

Humanity is a mighty volume. Within the people of this world all things are written, but veils and darkness do not allow men and women to read the knowledge within themselves. .... After all, all these trades and professions—tailoring, building, carpentry, goldsmithery, science, astronomy, medicine and the rest of the world’s countless and innumerable callings—all these were discovered from within by some person, they were not revealed through stones and dirt. (FMF 11)

A critical implication of self-knowledge is the vision of the subtle connection between the self, the universe and God which comes from the manifestations of the Divine signs. As noted above, for Sufis human beings and the universe are the reflections of the same reality on different scales. Thus, the type of knowledge that Rumi urges to seek allows one to understand and perceive the harmony that exists between human beings and the universe. Despite certain dualism and multiplicity in creation, there is a fundamental continuum and unity which is of greater importance<sup>110</sup>. This harmony and sense of unity constitute the foundation of Rumi’s ecological ethics.

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<sup>109</sup> It is based on the tradition quoted in sub-chapter 5.1.: “I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known. So I created the world”. So, the ultimate purpose in God’s creation of the world is to be known through His signs in the universe. This makes knowing God an ultimate purpose of all forms of knowledge pursuit.

<sup>110</sup> “In one he said: “All this (multiplicity) is one: whoever sees two is a squint-eyed manikin.” (M I: 495)



The idea that experiential knowledge is of ultimate significance implies that the harmony between humans and the rest of creation cannot be conceived of as a mere concept. In this regard, it would be important to examine Rumi's notion of experimental knowledge in relation to the notion of certainty espoused by Muslim scholars and Sufis, in particular. There are three levels of certainty in regards to knowing: a) *'ilm al-yqain* (knowledge of certainty) is the level of certainty based on inferential or theoretical knowledge and it is the weakest level of certainty among the three; b) *'ayn al-yaqin* (vision of certainty) comes from seeing or observing a thing instead of knowing it from a book and it has a stronger degree of certainty than knowledge of certainty; c) *haqq al-yaqin* (experience of certainty) is the highest level of certainty acquired by direct experience, by participating in the reality of a thing (see Schimmel 1975; Laliwala 2005). A classic example used to explain these stages of certainty is the one of fire. The distinction is made between knowing the description of fire, seeing the flames of fire by direct observation and touching or burning in the same fire. Given these degrees of certainty, for Rumi theoretical knowledge has no real value unless it is advanced to an experiential level.

If your knowledge of fire has been turned to certainty by words (alone), seek to be cooked (by the fire itself), and do not abide in the certainty (of knowledge derived from others).  
There is no intuitive (actual) certainty until you burn; (if) you desire this certainty, sit down in the fire.  
(M II: 860-61)

They have relinquished the form and husk of knowledge, they have raised the banner of the eye of certainty. (M I: 3493)

Therefore, the idea of knowing nature in profound ways is more than a theory or philosophical concept, it has to be experienced in practice for its deeper meanings to be grasped. This indicates that Rumi's ecological vision has a firm footing in the practical (behavioural) dimension of human-nature relationship because achieving the experiential

level of certainty requires, as Lewis (2009) notes, a thorough process of inner purification, on the one hand, and proper spiritual concentration, on the other, both of which are ecologically important. While the former would help decrease the human footprint on nature by reducing consumptive tendencies, the latter would require more time in direct contact with nature in order to acquire a deeper understanding of human-nature harmony.

In this respect, there seems to be an important interplay between knowledge and ethics in Rumi. There is a structural similarity between his conceptions of discursive reason and knowledge although he is much less emphatic in his criticism of the latter. As a result, his stance toward both is conditional and morality plays a crucial role in defining this stance. Ignorance would clearly be a vice for Rumi. As becomes clear from the passage below, it is not a desirable state even if it comes with other moral virtues. However, at the same time the act of acquiring knowledge must be supported by a corresponding fortification of moral character. Thus, a combination of knowledge and a virtuous character is the ideal (“blessed and prosperous”) state for Rumi.

There is giving, and there is knowingness. Some have generosity and compassion but no true knowledge. Some have knowledge but no self-sacrifice. When both are present, that person is blessed and prosperous. Such a being is truly incomparable.

A stranger is going along a road, but does not know where the road begins or ends, or whether they have wandered the wrong way. They go on blindly, hoping that perhaps a cock will crow, or some other sign of habitation will appear. How can such a stranger be compared with those who know the road and travel at ease, not needing sign or waymark? They have their assigned task clearly before them. Therefore, knowing exceeds all else. (FMF 12)

The emphasis placed on knowledge in the passage above and elsewhere in Rumi’s works shows that gaining knowledge, whether theoretical or experiential, is an important virtue. However, increase in knowledge comes with certain risks such as misuse of knowledge. Falling into these traps is a vice which is much more likely in the absence of certain virtues.

In this regard, the risks associated with increasing knowledge do not to make it a vice as knowledge seems to be an absolute virtue in Rumi<sup>111</sup>. However, failing to take precautions against these risks or limiting knowledge to its certain forms is more likely to produce a vice.

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<sup>111</sup> In this sense, knowledge as an intellectual virtue in Rumi does not seem to fall along the pattern of deficiency, mean and excess.

## 10. Emotional virtues and vices

The relationship between emotions and virtues is a disputed theme in the history of Western thought. Moral philosophers (e.g. the Stoics and, later, Descartes, Kant, Spinoza and Nietzsche) have generally regarded emotions as a problem for morality. They have often been argued to obstruct sound judgement and therefore lead to moral failures. They have also been criticized for their negative effects on social relationships. However, other philosophers have held a positive view of the role of emotions in moral philosophy. Most notably, Aristotle attributed an important role to emotions in developing a virtuous character. In addition, emotions have played a central role as virtues in Christian moral thought and ethical life (see Roberts 1992; Corcoran 2004).

In this chapter, I will define love and the sense of beauty as ecologically important emotional virtues in Rumi. However, in light of the above-mentioned debate regarding the virtue status of emotions it would also be important to establish that these virtues are indeed (emotional) virtues and not simply emotions. I will use two criteria to deal with this task. According to the first, the presence of some “cognitive content” is an important determinant of emotions in moral theories (Nussbaum 1998). In this view, emotions are not mere instincts and impulses; there is a rational component and thought process involved in emotions. They are also connected to judgements, worldviews and beliefs. Second, moral virtues are cultivated through practice and self-regulation<sup>112</sup>. This criterion distinguishes emotions from emotional virtues. For Rumi, love and sense of beauty are not mere instinctive emotions toward something loveable and beautiful. Theologically, they are based in a fundamental belief that God is the ultimate source of all love and beauty in existence. In the worldview defined by such belief, the emotions must be transformed from the basic state to the highest where they

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<sup>112</sup> Particularly, in the Aristotelian and Christian moral systems (see Corcoran 2004)

are directed towards the Divine. This transformation involves important cognitive and volitional elements<sup>113</sup> since it requires comprehending the ultimate goal of the emotions, self-regulation and gradual habituation in line with the fundamental notion.

Below I will discuss in more detail why love and sense of beauty can be conceived of as virtues in Rumi; my further goal is to demonstrate why these virtues are at the same time ecological virtues.

### **10.1. Love**

Given its nature and breadth, love can become an important environmental virtue and a critical component of Rumi's EVE. In this sub-chapter, I will first outline general features of love in Rumi. I will then discuss the reasons justifying Rumi's idea of love as an environmentally relevant theme. In particular, I will explain why the scope of love in Rumi is not restricted to human beings but also extends to non-human creation. Finally, I will explore Rumi's love of nature in relation to its counterparts in the EVE literature with the aim of demonstrating its role as an environmental virtue. I will specifically focus on the works which propose the concept of *biophilia* as an ecological virtue.

#### **10.1.1. Nature of love**

In some philosophical discussions of love, the nature of love is stated to be beyond rational explanation (Moseley n.d.). The same idea is central to Rumi's view of love, which is characteristic of mystical thought in general. The fact that love defies reason is related to its profoundly experiential nature. It is a reality which cannot be properly understood, more so described, without experiencing it (M II: Preamble). Despite its non-rational nature, it is

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<sup>113</sup> The volitional element is particularly important in the case of love since Aristotle did not consider it as a virtue. However, in Rumi's case, as will be demonstrated below, love has a significant volitional aspect.

possible to derive a somewhat coherent understanding of love's origins and its cosmic role. These aspects of love can be examined by distinguishing two spheres of love's function as (a) metaphysical reality and (b) human disposition.

I provided a detailed metaphysical account of love in sub-chapter 5.2. From the account, it becomes clear that love is in all regards the basis of existence in Rumi. Similarly, in human beings, who are the highest form of creation, love is the essential disposition. Human beings of all creation have the greatest potential for the love of God. In Rumi, one can distinguish three general levels of human love. The lowest level of love is the love of the self which includes attachment to one's pleasures, wealth, possessions, status and everything else which satisfies one's lower self. However, there is also another form of self-love which is diametrically opposed to the selfish love of the self; it is the love for one's higher self in its actualized form which is when the Divine attributes in one's character are brought about. Rumi equates this form of self-love with the love of God.

As the stone that is entirely turned into pure ruby: it is filled with the qualities of the sun.  
That stony nature does not remain in it: back and front, it is filled with sunniness.  
Afterwards, if it love itself, that (self-love) is love of the sun, O youth;  
And if it love the sun with (all) its soul, 'tis undoubtedly love of itself.  
Whether the pure ruby loves itself or whether it loves the sun,  
There is really no difference in these two loves: both sides (aspects) are naught but the radiance of the sunrise (MV: 2025-2030).

Thus, these two forms of self-love can be differentiated as the love of the lower self and the love of the higher self. Obviously, it is the former that is defined as the lowest level of human love. This form of love imprisons human beings in the realm of their baser qualities and prevents the development of higher forms of love. The next level of love in human beings is the love of other creatures which includes humans, e.g. family members, friends, neighbours and fellow human beings, as well as non-humans, e.g. animals, natural entities, places,

countries and so on. The highest level of human love is the love of God and it can take different forms. As much as the love of self can become the love of God, the love of anything other than self can also become the love of God. However, the transformation of the worldly love into the love of the Divine is contingent upon certain conditions.

There are three concepts of love in the Western tradition of thought. *Eros* is a passionate desire for something, typically sexual desire. On account of its emphasis on desire, *eros* is sometimes regarded as selfish and egocentric (Helm 2013). However, in Plato's theory of love *eros* refers to ideal (transcendental) beauty which is behind the beauty of particular objects (Moseley n.d.). By contrast, the love indicated by *philia* is an affection for one's friends as well as loyalty to one's family members, community and country, in general. *Agape* refers to God's love for human and the human love for God and, by extension, for other human beings. Moseley (n.d.) notes that *agape* contains elements of *eros* and *philia* as it aims to find a perfect love which combines friendship, "transcendental beauty" and love without reciprocity. Sufis have developed their own categories of love. One may notice certain parallels between the Western and Sufi understanding of love, especially as far as *agape* is concerned. However, there are also significant differences. Sufis distinguish two major forms of love by their relation to God - true love and derivative love. True love is the human love of God and derivative love is the love of anything other than God. The latter is called derivative because it derives its essence from God's infinite love (Chittick 1983). Rumi admonishes against loving things other than God in isolation from God, the Creator, because their beauty which attracts human love is not of their own making and ultimately belongs to God. Therefore, love for anything other than God should be put in a proper perspective and directed toward God. Only then derivative love becomes permissible because it is seen as a path leading towards the true love of God.

All this beauty and attractiveness in the face of the black earth has shone forth from the Moon of the Unseen: It is a ray of Perfection's Light. (D 14289)

Love is (one) of the attributes of God who wants nothing: love for aught besides Him is unreal, Because that (which is besides Him) is (but) a gilded beauty: its outside is (shining) light, (but) 'tis (like dark) smoke within.

When the light goes and the smoke becomes visible, at that moment the unreal love is frozen up.

That beauty returns to its source; the body is left—foul-smelling, shameful, and ugly.

The moonlight is returning to the moon: its reflexion goes off the black (dark) wall; (M VI: 971-975)

### 10.1.2. Love of nature

Love of nature has been integral to many theories of environmental (virtue) ethics developed before and after the advent of the ecological age. It has often been suggested as an ecological alternative to the anthropocentric and instrumentalist views of nature. Despite its wide occurrence in eco-literature, only a few attempts have been made to develop a comprehensive theory of love of nature. The most notable exposition of the notion is the concept of *biophilia* developed in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The term was coined by Erich Fromm in his 1973 book *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. The concept was popularized with Edward O. Wilson's 1984 book titled *Biophilia*. Since Wilson's book the term has been widely used to signify human attraction to live nature. Wilson defined *biophilia* as "an innate love for nature" or "an innate tendency to focus on life and life-like processes". According to Wilson's hypothesis *biophilia* is a result of "bio-cultural evolution" and is genetically inherited. *Biophilia* triggered a host of literature in a number of disciplines (Rogers 2016). While most of the literature on *biophilia* has focused on finding scientific evidence to support or disprove the hypothesis, it has enjoyed a certain degree of attention in environmental theory. Wilson himself developed a conservation ethics based on *biophilia* and placed it within an (enlightened) anthropocentric framework. There is a major difference between *biophilia* and Rumi's idea of love for non-human creation which stems from the fact that Rumi's attribution of life is not restricted to biotic elements in nature; it encompasses both animate and inanimate entities and describes life in a predominantly spiritual sense.



Therefore, *biophilia* would not be a proper concept to articulate Rumi's notion of love. However, some authors have applied a virtue ethics framework to their analyses of *biophilia* and have suggested it as an environmentally important virtue (e.g., Santas 2014; Clowney 2013). Some of these works will help us contextualize Rumi's equivalent of love of nature in the current literature and identify some of its environmentally relevant characteristics.

Common to different expositions of love in environmental ethics is the fact that it is considered to be an emotional attraction to non-human forms of life. Variations occur in the ways each of these theories attempts to justify love as an environmental virtue, and I will discuss some of them later in this sub-chapter. For now, my goal is to demonstrate why love can be regarded as an environmental virtue in Rumi. There seem to be at least three reasons for concluding that love in Rumi's understanding is a disposition operative in a human-nature context. First, it was noted that God's attributes and acts provide the ultimate model and guidance for human beings to organize their inward (e.g., emotional, intellectual, moral) and outward (e.g. actions, relationships) life. In accordance with this view, God's relation to creation serves as a paradigm for human attitude and actions toward nature. In this respect, some characteristics of God's relation to nature are important to note. Above all, God's attitude toward creation is not that of abandonment, that is, God did not create the world as a mere background for human life on earth<sup>114</sup> and did not abandon it as such. On the contrary, there are several indications of God's continuous and affectionate relation to His creation. As mentioned earlier, God created the world out of desire or love to be known. As such, the world and its constituents act as the "mirror" of the Divine attributes such as beauty, power and wisdom. Thus, God loves the creation because it contains the signs of the Divine. One

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<sup>114</sup> Christian tradition was often criticized for promoting an idea of the world which sees it as a material background for human sojourn in this life (Kinsley 1996a).

can also find more direct references to God's loving attitude toward creation in Rumi's thought.

In this world thousands of animals are living happily, without up and down (anxiety).  
The dove on the tree is uttering thanks to God, though her food for the night is not (yet) ready.  
The nightingale is singing glory to God (and saying), 'I rely on Thee for my daily bread, O Thou who answerest (prayer).'  
The falcon has made the king's hand his joy (the place in which he takes delight), and has given up hope of (has become indifferent to) all carrion.  
Similarly you may take (every animal) from the gnat to the elephant: they all have become God's family (dependent on Him for their nourishment), and what an excellent nourisher is God! (MI: 2291-2295)

This is reinforced by the notion that love (*wadud*) itself is an important attribute of God and the comprehensiveness of the Divine love provides a blueprint for the scope of human love. One can find numerous references to the all-encompassing nature of God's love in Rumi. Thus, God's relation to His creation not only gives a foundation for an independent value of nature but also provides a model for human beings to relate to nature with a loving attitude.

Second, when properly conceived, human love for creation can be a form of love for God. Rumi rejects the love of the world for its own sake because the properties of the world that attract human love are extrinsic and temporary.

Showing that the lover of this world is like the lover of a wall on which the sunbeams strike, who makes no effort and exertion to perceive that the radiance and splendour do not proceed from the wall, but from the orb of the sun in the Fourth Heaven; consequently he sets his whole heart on the wall, and when the sunbeams rejoin the sun (at sunset), he is left for ever in despair: "and a bar is placed between them and that which they desire." (M I: Title for 2801-2804)

However, Rumi condones the love which properly recognizes the Divine origin of the beauty in creation because such love would in essence be the love for God. This is the love which God expects from human beings because He created the world so that through His signs in

creation He would be known and, consequently, loved. This does not mean that loving non-human creation is the only way of loving God. Feeling love for fellow human beings is also a form of loving God which is clear in Rumi's passionate love for his close companions such as Shams Tabrizi. This love, however, is more than everyday love between man and woman, parents and children, close friends and so on. This is the love for the Divine manifestation in human beings which is expressed through humility, piety and spiritual excellence. Similarly, in his attitude toward nature human beings should focus on nature's connection with God. Human love for nature is justified and even desired as long as it does not fall short of recognizing the Divine roots of nature's beauty and eventually leads to the love of God.

Finally, for Rumi love is the creative force in the universe which must be comprehended and tapped into. All relations in the universe are sustained by this cosmic love proceeding from God's love for creation. For Rumi this is an objective fact about the universe whether people realize it or not. For human beings, recognizing this love is not granted. They must cultivate their inner faculties in order to comprehend and experience this love. Once humans awaken to love, it will most likely prevent them from relating to nature with indifference or, at least, treating it with aggression, and foster a certain degree of affection and care toward creation. Thus, God's all-embracing love of creation is the moving force behind the universe and sets an example for human attitude toward nature. For Rumi, it is an important goal of human life to attune to this universal reality and relate to the rest of creation with love. The latter, if put in a proper perspective, becomes a medium for loving God. The operation of love in this triangular relationship between God, human and nature provides a moral framework and justification for adopting and cultivating love as a principal attitude toward non-human creation. This makes love a potential environmental virtue in Rumi's cosmology.

### 10.1.3. Love of nature and EVE

The ecological status of love in Rumi's thought established, it would also be important to explore where the notion stands vis-à-vis its counterparts in EVE theory. One of the key contentions regarding the virtue approach to environmental ethics is about its purportedly anthropocentric orientation. The major question around anthropocentrism in EVE is whether certain dispositions are justified because of nature's intrinsic value or because the possession of those dispositions contributes to human flourishing. In addition, there is also a pluralistic framework (see sub-chapter 3.3.) which incorporates both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric views of environmental virtues. This points to a plurality of positions around anthropocentrism in EVE. The claims of anthropocentrism are also pertinent to *biophilia*<sup>115</sup> with a similar pattern of conceptual variety. For instance, Kellert (1993) developed a typology of *biophilia's* value suggesting among others utilitarian, aesthetic, symbolic, humanistic and moralistic attitudes toward nature. As a result, a similar variety of views arises when *biophilia* is addressed from an EVE perspective. Two views in this respect are of particular interest to us.

Clowney (2013) makes the case for *biophilia* as an environmental virtue based on eudaimonistic grounds. While he is reluctant to call his position openly anthropocentric, his arguments for the disposition, in line with those of Wilson's, are human centred. He argues that *biophilia* is justified because nature serves human flourishing in two major ways by providing "ecosystem services" as well as being a "spiritual, psychological, cognitive, imaginative, or emotional" resource. Although he differentiates between justification for *biophilia* and its target and emotional content, the latter being directly responsive to nature, his overall case for *biophilia* is not based on an intrinsic value of nature. In fact, he explicitly

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<sup>115</sup> As noted above, Wilson's *biophilia* theory espoused a conservation ethics founded on anthropocentric grounds.

avoids situating his view of *biophilia* in a biocentric framework. In contrast, Santas (2014) takes a non-anthropocentric approach to *biophilia*. He suggests broadening the scope of *biophilia* from the sphere of human emotions to the sphere of interspecies relationships. He conceives of *biophilia* as a disposition which interconnects biotic elements and systems and considers human affection for living things to be a part of this broader phenomenon. Thus, *biophilia* is not only an excellence of human character but, more importantly, an excellence characterizing the relationships among species. He justifies *biophilia* on a naturalistic rather eudemonistic ground, that is, *biophilia* is a desirable trait primarily because it is characteristic of the relationships between species rather than because of its contribution to human flourishing<sup>116</sup>.

In Rumi's case, justifications for the love of nature are in accordance with the pluralistic approach that was adopted to the analysis of his EVE. There are four types of justifications: theological, cosmological, axiological and human-flourishing. The first three have already been partly discussed. The theological justification implies God's loving attitude towards creation which provides a model for human beings. The cosmological argument is based on the universal movement of love which maintains all the interrelations in creation. It is similar to Santas's naturalistic view in that it advises human beings to follow the natural pattern of interspecies relationships based on *philia* except that Rumi's cosmology is based in a theistic religious framework. The axiological view justifies love of nature due to nature's non-instrumental value which is itself based on the purpose and functions God assigned to creation. Therefore, nature deserves to be treated with respect and affection regardless of its value for human beings. Finally, cultivating love of nature plays an essential role in human flourishing. The state of character and consciousness which are developed as a result of

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<sup>116</sup> Santas acknowledges that his understanding of *biophilia* which is based Aristotle's theory of friendship (*philia*) may contribute to *eudaimonia*, however, human flourishing is not the centrepiece of his argument.

human flourishing necessitate that human beings perceive the profound spiritual meanings and beauty contained in nature. Without the ability to appreciate and to be attracted to these aspects of nature the development of human character cannot be deemed complete. In other words, one cannot claim to be flourishing as a human being while perceiving nature as a material, lifeless and dull matter. An important question that arises in this context is regarding the cause-effect relationship between love and human flourishing, i.e. whether love of nature results in human flourishing or human flourishing brings about love of nature. In Rumi, they seem to be interlinked in a positive cycle. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that at least in one sense love of nature serves human flourishing. This positive link, where the love of nature leads to human flourishing, forms an agent-relative (human-flourishing) justification. Thus, Rumi's pluralistic framework can accommodate both agent-independent and agent-relative considerations for the love of nature. Human beings may love nature for nature's own sake as God's creation and for the sake of their own flourishing as human beings.

As mentioned at the beginning, emotional virtues must have cognitive and volitional elements to be distinguished from mere emotions. In EVE, for instance, Clowney (2013) applies this criterion of volition to *biophilia* according to which the love of nature must come through practice in order to qualify as a virtue. For Rumi love has different levels between selfish love and the love of God. Although every human being has the capacity to love, this capacity must be actualized. As becomes clear from the verses below, nurturing the seeds of love in one's heart requires a conscious effort. The first step in cultivating love is to remove the obstacles which come from the baser self. This, in turn, requires a certain understanding of love and the possibility of its higher states. This makes love both an emotion and a virtue. Although love is found in human nature as a basic emotion, it must be transformed into its ultimate form, i.e. love of God, to become a moral quality.

When you find love in your heart, then encourage it to grow. When you see the original investment within yourself, namely the desire for God, increase it through searching. “In movement is blessing.” If you do not build on it, even the original desire will leave you. (FMF 60)

## **10.2. Sense of beauty**

Beauty is an important concept in Rumi’s spiritual thought. To establish its relevance to EVE, it will be important to examine its ecological significance as well as ethical implications. I will explore its ecological aspects in two steps. First, I will outline Rumi’s conception of beauty and argue for its broader significance for environmental thought. Second, I will examine it in relation to the aesthetics of nature. In particular, I will aim to explore how Rumi’s notion of beauty, ecologically conceived, relates to some criticisms which are often levelled at the aesthetics of nature questioning its ability to fully embrace the demands of an environmental agenda. It is of particular interest to evaluate whether similar arguments can prevent Rumi’s view of beauty from being appropriately related to environmental ethics.

Finally, I will explore the ethical aspects of beauty in Rumi’s thought. In doing so, my ultimate goal will be to identify the virtues and vices which relate to his conception of beauty. As a result, I will propose the *sense of beauty* as a major environmental virtue and *attentiveness* and *heedlessness* as relevant environmental virtues and vices, respectively, in Rumi’s EVE.

### 10.2.1. Rumi's notion of beauty

One of the foundational views of beauty in Rumi is based on a Prophetic saying “God is beautiful and He loves beauty”<sup>117</sup>. The saying mentions the fact that beauty is a Divine attribute. Like all attributes of God, beauty reveals itself in the phenomenal world to a limited degree. As such, it signifies God's existence by pointing to His attribute of Beauty (*jamal*). Beauty is placed in everything in the universe although God is the single source of all the beauty possessed by each being in creation. While God's beauty is absolute and infinite, the beauty reflected in the world is relative and finite. Sufis espouse a hierarchy of beauty similar to the hierarchy of love discussed earlier (Nasr 2007). God's beauty is the highest level of beauty in this scheme and beauty of the material realm is the lowest one. Despite being hierarchically represented, it is important to note that all the levels of beauty originate from the absolute and supreme beauty of the Divine and although the spatiotemporal realm is the lowest level, it can still reflect the beauty of the highest realm.

This world is but foam full of floating jetsam. Yet, through the turning of the waves, and the rhythmic surging of the sea in constant motion, this foam takes on a certain beauty. But this beauty is a borrowed thing coming from elsewhere. (FMF 2)

All this beauty and attractiveness in the face of the black earth has shone forth from the Moon of the Unseen: It is a ray of Perfection's Light. (D 14289)

Ecologically, there are at least three aspects of this notion of beauty. First, everything in nature is granted a limited share of the Divine beauty. So nature carries something of utmost value in the universe. Second, it manifests this beauty to communicate an essential message to human beings about the source of the beauty. So it accomplishes an important mission appointed to it by God. Third, since God loves beauty and creation is beautiful, God loves His creation. Although this love is ultimately the love of God for Himself, nature by virtue of

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<sup>117</sup> *Al-Tabarani al-Mu'jam al-Awsat* no: 6902; There are references to this saying in Rumi. See, for example, MII: 79.



holding the Divine beauty becomes the object of God's love in the phenomenal world. This adds an aesthetic dimension to the axiology of nature with certain bearings for human view and treatment of nature.

### 10.2.2. Beauty and environmental aesthetics

The account above provides a preliminary framework for what can be called Rumi's idea of natural aesthetic. In general, the aesthetics of nature is the subject matter of environmental aesthetics which has developed into a sub-field of philosophical aesthetics in the last forty some years. Despite being a part of environmental aesthetics, the aesthetics of nature has a longer history than its parent discipline<sup>118</sup>. With its roots in the eighteenth century Europe, the aesthetics of nature had a major influence on the writings of North American nature writers such as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir and Ralph Waldo Emerson who are regarded as the early predecessors of the environmental movement<sup>119</sup>. Although it is recognized that natural aesthetic had a critical role in the development of environmental thought<sup>120</sup>, more recently, as Carlson (2010) points out, there has been some criticism about the compatibility of the traditional aesthetics of nature with the goals of environmental protection. He identifies five arguments which underlie this criticism. For a further insight into Rumi's natural aesthetics, it would be interesting to see how it relates to this criticism. Therefore, three of the five arguments – *anthropocentrism*, *scenery-obsession* and *subjectivity* – will be drawn upon in this section to examine Rumi's natural aesthetics from an environmental perspective. In

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<sup>118</sup> In fact, the aesthetics of nature provided the main impetus within the broader field of aesthetics, which had been predominantly concerned with the aesthetic appreciation of art, for the emergence of environmental aesthetics.

<sup>119</sup> For a historical overview of environmental aesthetics see Carlson (2016).

<sup>120</sup> To underscore this role, Callicott (2008) notes that in the nature conservation movement in North America the impact of natural aesthetics has been significantly stronger than that of environmental ethics. He notes that many natural parks has been designated as such because of aesthetic rather than ethical considerations.

addition, the *moral vacuity* argument will be examined in the next section when discussing the ethical aspects of Rumi's idea of beauty<sup>121</sup>.

First, as the aesthetic of nature was shaped by the notion of the picturesque, an influential tradition in aesthetics, it is often claimed to be *anthropocentric*. According to this claim, natural aesthetics is human-centred because it appreciates nature as long as it is deemed enjoyable and pleasing to human beings, that is, it reduces nature's value to serving human needs and aesthetic pleasures. The second argument, *scenery-obsession*, is concerned with the exclusive emphasis of the traditional aesthetics of nature on scenic elements that often goes to the level of obsession. Such focus becomes problematic when it excludes ecologically important elements of nature from aesthetic evaluations because they do not comply with the conventional notion of scenic landscapes. The third argument is related to the *subjectivity* of natural aesthetics. It is premised on the claim that aesthetic opinions are formed based on the subjective experiences of individuals rather than the objective properties of natural elements. This makes it difficult to justify environmental protection altogether because no viable ethical principles and policies can be derived from subjective judgements and experiences which lack at least some degree of objectivity.

In regards to **anthropocentrism**, the notion, as explained elsewhere, does not accord with the general character of Rumi's worldview. His conception of creation, although human-oriented in some respect, is fundamentally theocentric. The key aspect of its theocentricity lies in the fact that the goals and values of creation are assigned by God and when those values aim at human beings, their goal is to invoke God's presence in human consciousness. Similarly, Rumi's idea of beauty is also theocentric because the primary purpose of beauty in the

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<sup>121</sup> One of the five arguments – *superficiality and triviality* – was deemed irrelevant to Rumi's case at least for the purpose at hand. It holds that the traditional nature aesthetics does not see nature for what it is because it heavily relies on artistic standards in its understanding of aesthetics.

universe is not to satisfy human aesthetic pleasures but to manifest the absolute beauty of the Divine. In this conception, the aesthetic value of nature is determined by God and has to be appreciated by human beings. Moreover, the scope of beauty in nature is not limited to what can be appreciated only aesthetically. As will be discussed in the next argument, it goes far beyond human aesthetic pleasures and enjoyment.

The question posed by the second argument, **scenery-obsession**, is whether the manifestations of the Divine beauty in the material world are restricted to only those natural entities and environments that fit the traditional views of the beautiful or scenic. In particular, it is important to understand how beauty relates to those aspects of nature which are described as wild, dangerous and unpleasant. A simple answer to this question seems to be that beauty is present everywhere. Every single being exhibits some degree of beauty. But what does it imply? It has already been mentioned that beauty in creation comes from the Divine name Beauty. However, a deeper look into the theory of the Divine names in Islam reveals that the source of beauty is not restricted to the single Divine name. In foundational Islamic sources, all of the Divine names are considered to be beautiful and are collectively called “the most beautiful names” of God or *al-Asma al-Husna*. As Murata and Chittick (1994) explain, the reason why God’s names are called “the most beautiful” in the Qur’an is because they express the beauty and goodness of God and since God is the most beautiful, the names which express His beauty are also “the most beautiful”. Thus, while there is a specific Divine name which refers to God’s beauty (*jamal*) in a general sense, all of the Divine names through their specific meanings express different dimension of God’s beauty. More specifically, the Divine names such as the Knower, Powerful, Wise, Merciful, Beneficent, Sublime, Forgiving and Just cover a certain aspect of God’s beauty. It is also noteworthy that out of the two basic words for beauty in Islamic and, in particular, Sufi terminologies *jamal* is

used for the Divine name Beauty while *husn* is used to describe the beauty of the Divine names collectively as in *al-Husna*, “the most beautiful”. In Arabic *husn* has several meanings such as beauty, goodness and virtue and is applied in relation to God, human beings and, most notably, to Sufism because the word *ihsan*, which is a derivative of *husn* and translated as *excellence* or *doing what is beautiful*, refers to the mystical path in Islam (Nasr 2007).

There is another classification of the Divine names that can be found in Islamic sources on the subject. It seems to be particularly relevant for our discussion. It differentiates between the names which represent God’s nearness and kindness and the names which indicate God’s distance, transcendence and severity. The former are collectively called the Divine names of beauty or *jamal* and include names such as the Merciful, Loving, Compassionate and Forgiving. The latter are called the Divine names of majesty or *jalal* and include such names as the Wrathful, Severe, Majestic, Just and Vengeful.

This description leaves us with three meanings of beauty in relation to the Divine names. In the broadest sense, all of the Divine names, regardless of their content and character, are beautiful because all of them express the beauty and excellence of God. In a narrower sense, among all the beautiful names of God, a group of names are regarded as particularly beautiful because they signify God’s nearness, mercy and kindness. In the narrowest sense, we have a particular name of God which is used in reference to God’s beauty. In terminology, the *husn* is used only for the first sense of beauty while *jamal* is used for the other two. Rumi frequently uses both of these terms in reference to the beauty of God in creation. For instance, in M V: 3277-78 and M VI: 3641-42 (see below) he uses *husn* while in M IV: 3264 and M VI: 3743-44 he uses *jamal* in reference to the reflection of God’s beauty in the forms of this world.

In (the hour of) separation Love fashions forms (of phantasy); in the hour of union the Formless One puts forth his head,  
Saying, "I am the ultimate origin of sobriety and intoxication: the beauty in (all) forms is reflected from Me. (M V: 3277-78)

In order that, whatever animal or plant they look upon, they may feed on the meadows of Divine Beauty.  
Hence He said unto the company (of mystics), 'Wheresoever ye turn, His Face is there. (M VI: 3641-42)

At every moment (appears) a new form and a new beauty, so that from seeing the new (visions) ennui dies away. (M IV: 3264)

Sometimes the Formless One graciously shows His face to the forms from the concealment (veil) of non-existence,  
In order that every form may thereby be replenished with some perfection and beauty and power. (M VI: 3743-44)

Therefore, beauty in nature should be understood broadly which includes both aesthetic elements resulting from the Divine name Beauty and beauty/excellence manifesting the totality of the Divine names. Moreover, in Rumi there is no indication that beauty is restricted to what is scenic. To the contrary, the fact that a great variety of the Divine names can be reflected in nature provides a far greater possibility for natural elements and phenomena to be beautiful since they do not have to correspond to the traditional definition of scenery to be considered as such. In this case, even the wild and unscenic aspects of nature can potentially fall within the category of "beautiful" because of their role in manifesting the names of God, e.g. the Creator (*al-Khaliq*), the All-Embracing (*al-Wasi*<sup>122</sup>), the Giver of Life (*al-Muhyi*), the Powerful (*al-Qadir*), the Wise (*al-Hakim*), the Originator (*al-Bari*'), the Fashioner (*al-Musawwir*) and the Provider and the Giver of Sustenance (*al-Razzaq*).

As far as **subjectivity** is concerned, for Rumi the presence of beauty in the universe is objective and real; it not just a matter of subjective experience. He acknowledges that not everyone may be prepared to recognize and understand this beauty (see, for example, M III:

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<sup>122</sup> *al-Wasi* can also be translated as *Boundless*

4591-94) because a certain perspective, state of character and spiritual depth are required to perceive this beauty. Anyone adopting this perspective and undergoing such character transformation can in some degree perceive beauty. Of course, despite Rumi's full confidence in the objectivity of his view of reality, his perception may not be possible universally across the cultural and religious boundaries. Since his perception operates within the monotheistic worldview of Islam with a specific focus on its mystical tradition, a similar framework may be necessary to perceive the universe in similar ways. Certainly, Rumi is not the only one within his own tradition to describe the universe in the way he does and, as discussed above, his view of beauty in the phenomenal world represents more or less the standard Sufi view of existence. Therefore, the objectivity of Rumi's idea of beauty can potentially be shared by people who adhere to Rumi's faith and tradition within that faith. However, it may be relevant to other faiths as well whose worldview is premised on some form of theism and which in some way views the universe as the cosmic manifestation or theophany of God.

### **10.2.3. Sense of beauty as an environmental virtue**

Natural beauty *per se* is not an ethical concept. Therefore, there are some important questions around its relevance to EVE and environmental ethics that need to be addressed. Some EVE scholars have proposed certain ethical concepts that pertain to natural aesthetics. In essence, these concepts prescribe some kind of response to natural beauty and are therefore considered to be environmental virtues. For instance, Cafaro (2005b) identifies the aesthetic appreciation of nature and sensibility to beauty as crucial virtues for Leopold's and Thoreau's EVE, respectively. A critical question in this respect is whether Rumi's thought contains an equivalent concept which deals with the human ethical response to nature. I suggest that the *sense of beauty* is such a concept in Rumi. To evaluate if the concept is an instinctive emotion or a virtue I will examine it against the two criteria – *cognitive and volitional* - established at the outset of this chapter.

First, as is evident from one of the earlier discussions, in Rumi's view complex knowledge of the Divine names is required for a proper understanding of natural beauty. This shows that a *proper perspective* or cognitive framework is essential to the sense of beauty. Second, a certain degree of *inner depth* is another precondition for perceiving the beauty of nature. In addition to the universe, there is another place where the Divine beauty manifests itself and that is the human heart. There is an intimate connection between the beauty of the world and the beauty of heart. The latter must be attained so that the former may be perceived<sup>123</sup>. In this regard, the beauty of heart is not only a spiritual but also an ethical concept because it involves the purification of character from vices and simultaneous cultivation of virtues<sup>124</sup>. Moreover, by realizing the beauty of heart human beings complete the manifestation of the Divine beauty in creation which would be deficient otherwise. However, the state of perceiving natural beauty depends on effort and exertion, that is, some kind of volitional component is in place.

The presence of cognitive and volitional components demonstrates that the sense of beauty must be cultivated based in a certain worldview and can therefore be considered an environmental virtue in Rumi. Moreover, in the context of this discussion *heedlessness* figures as a vice which inhibits the sense of beauty. For Rumi heedlessness results from body, i.e. the dominance of *bodily appetites* in human self, and indicates the *lack of spiritual depth*. As such, it restrains a deeper perception of the surrounding world which is essential to the sense of beauty.

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<sup>123</sup> They that burnish (their hearts) have escaped from (mere) scent and colour: they behold Beauty at every moment without tarrying. (M I: 3492)

<sup>124</sup> This is the reason why the notion of *ihsan* coming from the root *husn*, beauty, is often translated as *excellence, virtue or doing what's beautiful* pointing to an important ethical aspect of Islam represented by Sufism.

**Setting forth that whatever is (denoted by the terms) heedlessness and anxiety and indolence and darkness is all (derived) from the body, which belongs to the earth and the lower world.**

Heedlessness was (derived) from the body: when the body has become spirit, it inevitably beholds the mysteries (of the Unseen).

When the earth is removed from the celestial atmosphere, there is neither night nor shade nor sunset.

(M III: 3566-67)

In response to heedlessness, *attentiveness* emerges as an important character trait which is instrumental to the sense of beauty. A proper perspective and moral character must be supported by presence and attentiveness for perceiving the subtle beauties of the phenomenal world.

Keep ear and mind (attentive) to these (spiritual) influences, catch up such-like breathings.”

The (Divine) breathing came, beheld you, and departed: it gave life to whom it would, and departed.

Another breathing has arrived. Be thou heedful, that thou mayst not miss this one too, O comrade.

(M I: 1952-54)

Another major concern regarding the relevance of natural aesthetics to environmental ethics is around its ability to trigger a serious moral response and action in relation to the beauty of nature. It is addressed by the *moral vacuity* argument mentioned above. It is argued that the traditional aesthetics of nature can create only vacuous responses to the parts of nature deemed scenic and picturesque. In Rumi’s case, a partial answer to this concern may come from the complex notion of beauty discussed above which could possibly produce a proper ethical response to it. However, Rumi’s thought seems to offer a more comprehensive and fundamental framework for determining the human relation to natural aesthetics and its preservation. Such a framework may be based on his notions of trust and stewardship which will be examined in the next chapter.



## 11. Virtues of stewardship

Stewardship ethics has been among the key concepts in philosophical and religious discussions of environmental problems. In the religious context, stewardship has often been regarded as an influential paradigm offered in response to the dominion principle which has been prominent in the Christianity and environment debate since its beginning. Stewardship has also been a cornerstone of the Islamic eco-theology expressed through the notion of *khalifa* (vicegerent)<sup>125</sup>. In Islamic understanding, stewardship is not an isolated concept. There is a set of interrelated concepts such as trust and responsibility which are the pillars of the stewardship ethics and without which the ethics could not function within Islam's theological understanding. Since personal transformation is of central importance for Rumi, stewardship, with some mystical overtone, figures as a critical component of his theology. There are four major virtues which support his notion of stewardship ethics: sense of trust, sense of responsibility, prudence and justice.

### 11.1. Trust

The idea of trust (*amanah*) is the foundation of stewardship ethics in Islam. It explains the purpose of human creation and defines the nature of stewardship. The following verse of the Qur'an summarizes trust as follows:

Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant. (33:72).

The verse keeps the nature and substance of trust unspecified. Instead, it narrates the primordial story of its designation to human being. Therefore, trust has been a subject of rigorous discussion among Muslim scholars which produced a multitude of views as to what

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<sup>125</sup> See section 2.2.1. on Islam and the Environment for a detailed discussion of *khalifa*

constitutes the trust. According to Sachiko and Chittick (1994), the Qur’anic verse refers to the totality of attributes which distinguish human beings from the rest of creation. Therefore, in the broadest sense, the Divine attributes in human nature which set it apart from other beings is the foundation of trust in human beings. Although the trust can take different forms, it is this principal form of trust which makes the fulfilment of other forms of trust possible and make human beings the vicegerent (*khalifa*) of God on earth. Rumi too talks about trust, first and foremost, in the context of human being’s inner reality. It is carried in the human heart as the manifestation of the Divine treasures (FMF 4, FMF 28, FMF 50), a symbolism which comes from the tradition quoted elsewhere in this research where God is reported to say “I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known, so created the world”<sup>126</sup>. In creation, humans in their inner being have the highest capacity to reflect the Divine signs (FMF 17).

The human self is not the only form of trust. It is important to underline that despite being created in God’s image, human beings can only potentially become the vicegerent of God. His success in carrying out his mission is conditional upon realizing this potential, i.e., using his inner trust in the right direction and for the right purpose. This makes the fulfilment of the trust a long and painstaking path. Of course, this moral struggle does not take place in a vacuum. A significant part of it plays out in social contexts as many of the human attributes can only manifest themselves in one’s relationships with others. Therefore, the trust has an important social dimension. Rahman’s (1980) understanding of the trust as human duty to create “a moral social order on earth” seems to point to this aspect of the Divine trust.

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<sup>126</sup> For God declares, “I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known.” This is to say, “I created all the world to manifest My Reality, now through graciousness, now through severity.” God is not the kind of king for whom one voice is sufficient. If every atom in the world became God’s herald, they would still be unable to properly proclaim His Truth. (FMF 46)

Rumi's perspective on the trust incorporates both inward and outward aspects of human existence. Despite his prevalent focus on the inner dimension, his approach to social aspects of human life is different from the mystics of the earliest periods of Sufism<sup>127</sup>. He does not advise an ascetic lifestyle and isolation from the society. For him involvement in the world and concern with people's problems is an important aspect of religious life and instrumental to one's moral and spiritual progress. It is a part of the trust for which human beings will be held accountable.

Moses was occupied with the affairs of his people. Although he was at God's command and completely served God, yet one side of him was occupied with humanity for the general good. Khadir was occupied with God completely; he hid himself from the sight of others. Mohammed was occupied at first wholly with God, then he was told, "Call the people. Counsel them and reform them." Mohammed wept and lamented, saying, "Oh, my Lord, what sin have I committed? Why do you drive me from Your presence? I have no desire for this world." God said to him, "Mohammed, do not despair, I will not abandon you. Even in the midst of others you shall be with Me. When you are occupied with people, not one hair of the head of this hour with Me, not one, will be taken from you. In whatever work you are engaged, you will be in very union with Me." (FMF 15)

The outward dimension of trust is particularly important for our discussion because one's concern for others is not limited to fellow human beings. Most Muslim scholars regard nature as a form of trust and propose this concept of trust as a foundation for Islamic environmental ethics (see sub-chapter 2.2.). The axiological status of nature emerging from Rumi's theology is in harmony with this view of trust. God is the sole creator and owner of creation. Therefore, human relation to nature can be that of a trustee, not of a master, who derives his authority over nature from God and exercises it according to God's will. Moreover, as God's viceroy human treatment of creation must emulate that of God and the latter is characterized by God's love and care for creation (M I: 2291-2295). God also assigned important spiritual functions to nature such as manifesting God and glorifying Him. These are the primary

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<sup>127</sup> The earliest period of Sufism coincides with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. This period is generally characterized by abstinence, otherworldliness and asceticism of early Sufis. See Nasr (2007) for further discussion on the early Sufism.

functions of nature. It is critical that nature does not cease to perform its spiritual functions in order to satisfy the material interests of human beings. It does not mean there is a contradiction or incompatibility between the spiritual and biological functions of nature. In his idea of evolution, Rumi seems to recognize the significance of both functions and sees them as interdependent. He also sees different elements of nature as interconnected through physical and biological processes. However, selfish and greedy use of nature by human beings may disrupt nature's balance and eventually diminish its ability to perform its functions. This background points to some parameters for human stewardship of nature. Above all, human beings must acknowledge nature's independent value and accept nature as a trust of God and their own role as the stewards of God. He must treat nature with care and compassion and make sure that nature continues to perform its functions, the spiritual ones in particular, by preserving the rich variety of processes and forms of life that God placed in nature.

There is a critical link between human self as the inner trust and nature as the outer trust. Their fulfillment is closely related and interdependent. On the one hand, the true self of human cannot be fully carried out without engaging with the world around, human or non-human. In this regard, one could argue that in an ethics inspired by Rumi something important would be missing from human character, morally and spiritually, if one remained indifferent to environmental degradation and rejected any responsibility to restore nature. Such character deficiency would be a serious obstacle to human flourishing. This provides, in addition to nature's spiritual value, a self-regarding reason for the proper treatment of nature. On the other hand, a respectful attitude toward nature itself would be dramatically dependent on one's state of mind and character. When cultivated in a holistic and balanced way, positive

character traits would induce a more favorable attitude towards nature and prevent one from engaging in ecologically destructive actions and practices.

In Rumi's worldview, free will is an essential element of trust. The whole notion of offering the trust to human being would make no sense without giving him the freedom of choice. Therefore, free will itself is often understood as a form of trust (Schimmel 1975). Free will entails a certain responsibility in relation to trust. Responsibility, in turn, requires that trust be handled according to some values and principles. In this regard, the notion of responsibility becomes yet another reason for the proper treatment of nature. Thus, there are three main reasons which justify nature as part of the Divine trust: a) nature has a non-instrumental value; b) care for nature advances human flourishing; c) failure to care for nature entails responsibility. Any of these justifications require that nature must be treated through some positive character traits. While some of these traits such as knowledge, attentiveness, humility, and love have already been examined in this research, some other qualities which often operate in relation to trust and stewardship require further attention. Two such qualities – prudence and justice – are of particular importance in Rumi.

### **11.2. Prudence**

Prudence, Latin *prudentia*, is a contracted form of *providentia* which means "seeing ahead". In modern English, it is most commonly used to denote cautiousness<sup>128</sup> or the ability to apply a careful and sound judgement in order to avoid dangers and unnecessary risks. There are two important components of prudence. First, it requires reason and "the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Second, prudence, especially in its religious interpretation, requires *temperance* for the proper use of reason. In

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<sup>128</sup> See Oxford and Cambridge English Dictionaries

this view, desires are thought to obscure good judgement and negatively affect decisions and, therefore, have to be restrained through the exercise of temperance (Floyd n.d.). Apart from being a classical virtue, prudence is also regarded as an ecological virtue<sup>129</sup>. It is supposed to guide individual and collective decisions and actions on environmentally-relevant matters, from the management of natural resources to individual consumer choices with a careful evaluation of their long-term effects. Thus, prudent decision making must be based on facts and sound judgement instead of being driven by “the narrow selfishness of immediate, short-term gratification” (Hull 2005). Although often mentioned in the context of the anthropocentric theories of environmental ethics<sup>130</sup>, prudence as a principle and virtue has broad-based relevance to environmental thought<sup>131</sup> and environmental policy.

The translations of Rumi’s works use the words foresight<sup>132</sup> and prudence<sup>133</sup> as the human ability to see the end or consequences. Rumi provides the following definition of prudence:

What is prudence? Precaution in (the case of) two (alternative) plans: of the two you will take that one which is far from craziness.  
One person may say, “On this road there is no water for seven days, and there is foot-scorching sand.” Another may say, “This is false: push on, for you will find a running fountain every night.”  
It is prudence that you take water (with you), so that you may be saved from dread and may be on the right (side). (M III: 2842-2845)

Thus, prudence requires a person to be considerate about a course of action with a view to its consequences. Intellect (judgement) plays a critical role in this process as it helps to foresee

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<sup>129</sup> In his analysis of Aldo Leopold’s *Land Ethics*, Shaw (1997) identifies prudence as one of the three ecological virtues, the other two being respect and practical judgement.

<sup>130</sup> Prudence is integral to a certain brand of anthropocentric environmental theories known as *enlightened or prudential* anthropocentrism. See, for instance, Norton (1987).

<sup>131</sup> For example, Shaw (1997) includes prudence among the three land virtues central to Leopold’s environmental ethics which is known to be eco-centric.

<sup>132</sup> “There was a righteous godly man: he had perfect intelligence and a (great) foresight as to the end.” (M V: 1473)

<sup>133</sup> “A candid adviser said to him, “O imprudent man, think of the end (consequence), if thou hast (any) skill. Consider reasonably the future and the past: do not let thyself be burnt like a moth.” (M III: 3812-3813).  
See also M III: 2841, M VI: 475

the long-term effects<sup>134</sup>. It ensures that free will is exercised in accordance with certain principles but also with a view to the end of one's decisions and actions. The consequences can be this worldly or eschatological which will be faced in the Judgement Day.

This is what is deserved by him who, (when) the cry of a ghoul came to him, without rational foresight chose to move (towards the ghoul). (M III: 643)

O children of the Vicegerent (Adam), deal justly: act with prudence for the sake of the Day of Tryst (Judgement). (M III: 2847)

That (foresight) was (derived) from the vision of the end that was seen by Ahmad (Mohammed), who even here (in the present life) saw Hell, hair by hair, (M VI: 1358)

The working of prudence in regards to this worldly and eschatological consequences of actions can be applied to human relationships with nature. In this case, acting with prudence would require that human beings not only avoid actions with obviously harmful consequences but also think carefully to calculate all possible outcomes of each course of action available so that long term damage to nature can be avoided. In this world, the harm inflicted on nature can rebound to human beings in the form of physical and non-physical consequences. In eschatological terms, the harm would imply accountability before God and consequent punishment. In some cases, prudence implies not only prevention of harm but also the improvement of the well-being of nature and natural entities. This is an aspect of the human role as the steward of God and of nature as the Divine trust to human beings.

Prudence aims to counter the tendency to focus on immediate (short-term) outcomes which, often being driven by selfishness and greed, is characterized by a lack of good judgement. In fact, submission to greed and carnal pleasures obstructs the use of reason and forethought. Such a state of character produces *short-sightedness* which, in turn, undermines the proper

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<sup>134</sup> See M V: 1473, M V: 3576, M III: 4570, M VI: 3369

care for the trust regardless of its forms. In this regard, exercising control over one's desires or temperance becomes instrumental to developing prudence. However, the relationship between temperance and prudence is not one-way because prudence often helps temperance in exercising control over the carnal self. As Rumi states: "Exercise prudence in eating (and drinking), for this (food and drink) is poisonous herbage: to exercise prudence is the strength and light of the prophets." (M III: 213-214). Thus, their relationship can be said to be cyclic and mutually supportive.

Two extremes often associated with prudence are recklessness and excessive cautiousness. Therefore, prudence is often defined as the middle ground between thoughtless hasty action and reluctance to act because of over-cautiousness (Shaw 1997). From the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that for Rumi acting with no concern for possible risks and consequences is a vice. That's why he frequently encourages foresight as a necessary trait. A remaining question is whether such foresight due to over-cautiousness may lead to passivism. In general, Rumi does not endorse quietism and urges active participation in life. Quietism would contradict the entire notion of stewardship and trust because they demand that human beings take actions and responsibility. In addition, free will being a unique feature of human beings is given to be exercised in their struggles to become the vicegerents of God on earth and live up to the trust. All of these suggest that active effort is the recommended path for human beings. Furthermore, in the verses of the *Mathnawi* quoted above (M III: 2842-2845) Rumi himself defines prudence as choosing the middle ground of acting with precaution when the other two options are either not acting at all or acting recklessly. This demonstrates that in Rumi's understanding prudence is a disposition which promotes cautious and careful action as opposed to the two extremes of complete passivism and careless activism.



The nature of prudence in Rumi displays certain environmentally-relevant characteristics. It relies on judgement, foresight and resisting the temptations of the carnal self. It is defined as the mean between the extremes of recklessness and over-cautiousness. Given these properties of prudence, Rumi describes it as a key aspect of human stewardship on earth (see M III: 2847 above) and as nature is an essential component of the Divine trust prudence becomes an important ecological virtue in human's relationships with nature.

### **11.3. Justice**

Environmental justice is an area of interdisciplinary literature which deals with the application of justice principles to ecological matters. As a concept environmental justice appeared in the 1980s as a result of a social movement in the US which was concerned with the equitable distribution of environmental harms and benefits between different groups of society. Therefore, for many years environmental justice has been viewed as an extension of the social justice debate. In recent years, however, there has been a growing recognition among scholars that environmental justice must go beyond the social justice framework to include the human relationship with the natural environment itself (Silveira 2016). In this sub-chapter, I will focus on this aspect of environmental justice and will explore how Rumi's notion of justice in the context of his stewardship ethics relates to the human treatment of nature.

In Rumi's world, justice operates as a theological, cosmological and moral principle. Theologically, the Just, *al-Adl*, is among the main names of God which means God is absolutely just (M I: 3982) and is the source of all justice in creation. Therefore, everything God does is just and no injustice can be found in His acts. This theological notion of justice provides the basis for the cosmological manifestation of justice. Being absolutely just, God

created the world upon justice in such a way that there is no inherent transgression and injustice in creation.

These are the verses of Allah. We recite them to you, [O Muhammad], in truth; and Allah wants no injustice to the worlds.  
To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And to Allah will [all] matters be returned. (Qur'an 3:108-109)

Such extension of the Divine justice into the cosmic realm changes when it comes to the human domain. For human beings, who possess free will, justice is a matter of choice. He is free to uphold or violate this otherwise universal principle. Not only are human beings left free to choose between justice and injustice or good and evil, they are also prone by the dual tendency of their nature to commit injustice. This is one of the negative aspects of human uniqueness among creation. Rumi says that injustice and oppression on earth started with human beings. Therefore, justice became a core element of their moral struggle in this-worldly life.

“The first blood (shed) in this world of iniquity and justice was shed by Qábíl (Cain) for the sake of a woman” (MVI: 4471).

Critical to understanding Islamic notion of justice is the “reflexive” nature of injustice (Rahman 1980). The Qur'an repeatedly mentions that any injustice inflicted by a person on others is, first and foremost, injustice toward the person himself or self-injustice (*zulm al-nafs*). For instance, Qur'an states “And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah has certainly wronged himself.” (65:1)<sup>135</sup>. This allows to divide injustice into two broader categories – self-regarding and other-regarding or the inward and outward injustice. Rumi's notion of

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<sup>135</sup> Also see 2:54, 57, 231; 65:1; 27:44; 28:16; 3:117; 7:23, 160, 177

injustice and oppression can also be explained in these two terms<sup>136</sup>. We can consider the inward and outward injustice in the context of the inner and outer trust. There is a correlation between these categories. The reflexivity principle implies that injustice to the outer trust (outward injustice) leads to injustice to the inner trust (inward injustice) and vice versa. In addition to self-injustice, there are two other consequences of injustice – this-worldly and eschatological. While this worldly consequences may not always materialize in this life, the eschatological responsibility, like self-injustice, will certainly transpire, although in the long term.

With regards to the content of injustice, Rumi offers several definitions which conform with the original definition of injustice (*zulm*) in Arabic “to put something out of its proper place”<sup>137</sup>.

What is injustice? To put (a thing) out of its proper place: beware, do not let it be lost (by putting it) out of its place.” (M VI: 1558)

What is justice? To put (a thing) in its (right) place. What is injustice? To put it in its wrong place. (M VI: 2596)

The Day (of Judgement) is justice, and justice consists in giving (to every one) what is proper: the shoe belongs to the foot, and the cap belongs to the head. (M VI: 1887)

According to these definitions, putting nature out of its proper place and not giving its due is injustice toward nature. It is noteworthy that injustice is not restricted to a tangible form of injustice. It may manifest itself in a latent non-material form as lack of recognition or misrecognition. In justice theory, the form of justice known as *justice as recognition (of others' rights, needs and agency)* is compared with more tangible forms of justice, e.g. equitable distribution, equal participation and equal capabilities (Silveira 2016). Injustice in

<sup>136</sup> For Rumi's mentions of self-injustice see M I: 3818,

<sup>137</sup> See Rahman (1980) “Major Themes of the Qur'an”.

the form of misrecognition is viewed as an underlying psychological cause of other forms of injustice.

This definition can be applied to Rumi's conception of injustice. It expresses itself in one's views and perceptions of nature as opposed to actions toward it. This enables us to differentiate two forms of injustice in Rumi: cognitive and actual. While actual injustice would include tangible harm to nature (the Divine trust) resulting from human greed and carelessness, cognitive injustice includes viewing nature in exclusively materialistic terms. The latter is not so much the failure to experience the non-material dimension of nature as the absolute denial of even the possibility of such dimension. As noted earlier, Rumi is highly critical of people who reject the spiritual aspects of nature. Such rejection becomes the form of cognitive injustice which, in turn, produces self-injustice. The following verse of the Qur'an points to the same fact: "How evil an example [is that of] the people who denied Our signs and used to wrong themselves". (Qur'an 7:177).

In this respect, it is particularly noteworthy that Rumi links Satan's fall from God's favour to such cognitive injustice. Satan (Iblis) was a believer before God created Adam and commanded the angels to prostrate to Adam. Satan refused to do so and disobeyed God. He argued he was better than Adam because Adam was made of clay while Satan was created of fire. Rumi links this rebellion to Satan's failure to see the spiritual part of Adam's existence. For example, consider the following verse: "Iblis saw (only) the dust, and said, "How should this offspring of clay (Adam) be superior to me of the fiery brow?" (M I: 3961). Satan's blindness was caused by his pride and envy and made him the origin of injustice<sup>138</sup>. "The origin of the injustice of the oppressors was from the devil: the devil is in bondage: how did

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<sup>138</sup> There is no contradiction when Rumi calls both human and Satan as the origins of injustice. While human is the first perpetrator of injustice on earth, Satan is the source of injustice in creation.

violence appear?” (M III: 4638). This story is of critical importance because it serves as a paradigm example of how envy and arrogance may eventually lead one to committing injustice. The form of injustice in question is the cognitive injustice – inability to see something’s reality as it is. Satan’s tendency towards arrogance and failure to see the inward is present in human too: “The fault of Iblīs lay in thinking “I am better (than Adam),” and this disease is in the soul of every (human) creature.” (M I: 3216)<sup>139</sup>. It can operate in human relation to nature; just as Satan failed to see human’s spiritual reality, human, due to his arrogance and greed, can and often does fail to see the spiritual dimension of nature reducing it to a lifeless matter.

Just as, to the Prophet, this world is plunged in glorification of God, while to us it is heedless (insensible).  
To his eye, this world is filled with love and bounty; to the eyes of others it is dead and inert.  
(M IV: 3532-3533)

According to the principle of reflexivity, unjust treatment of nature occurs in correlation with self-injustice. That is, oppression of nature will inevitably result in oppression of the self. It is important to note that sometimes self-injustice may be committed apart from the outward injustice, that is, inward injustice can occur even when there is no outward injustice. Such self-injustice happens when negative dispositions are not taken under control and consequently dominate human soul and mind. These dispositions are ecologically relevant because they diminish human sensitivity and attentiveness to the surrounding world of nature. Such state of mind and character can, in turn, produce outward injustice, be it cognitive or physical.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Also see MI: 430; M III: 2299-2300; MV: 3451-3453

<sup>140</sup> In M III: 2434-2439, Rumi explains how the carnal soul, the oppressor inside human being, can produce an external oppression

What is justice? Giving water to trees. What is injustice? To give water to thorns.  
Justice is (consists in) bestowing a bounty in its proper place, not on every root that will absorb water.  
What is injustice? To bestow (it) in an improper place that can only be a source of calamity.  
Bestow the bounty of God on the spirit and reason, not on the (carnal) nature full of disease and complications. (M V: 1089-1092)

Thus, according to Rumi, not giving the trust its proper recognition and treatment is the violation of justice. Therefore, justice becomes an important principle and character trait which must inform and shape the human relationship with nature. The reasons for defining justice as an ecological virtue are in line with the pluralistic notion of virtues because there are both other-regarding and self-regarding justifications for the just treatment of nature in Rumi. On the one hand, nature has to be treated with justice because it has a value regardless of human ends and carries out vital functions, both physical and spiritual, in the broader scheme of creation which make it an integral part of the Divine trust. However, Rumi's theology does not leave the job of upholding environmental justice to virtues and axiology only. It presents certain responsibility and repercussions for the failure to deal with nature justly which may come in the form of this worldly consequences or the ultimate responsibility in the hereafter. On the other hand, justice vis-à-vis nature is important for human flourishing because injustice, in any of its forms, negatively affects human character which is in itself a form of trust to human beings.

Last but not least, the idea of "giving water to the right trees" instead of "letting them be" quoted in the verse above seems to have some implications for environmental management as it can be interpreted as a form of intervention with the processes of nature. In general, certain degree of intervention seems to be in line with Rumi's ethics of stewardship as the role of God's vicegerent on earth requires care and responsibility for the well-being of human and nature as part of the trust. In this regard, non-intervention in the face of basic human needs would be a form of passivism and perhaps misanthropy and contradict the idea of

stewardship. Moreover, not all intervention is directed toward human ends; after all, a certain degree of management may be required in protecting the entirety or certain elements of nature itself. The idea of “giving water to trees” and not to “thorns” itself implies some form of management based on some understanding of natural processes and systems in delivering effective services to nature. Generally speaking, the notion of EVE resulting from this study and, in particular, Rumi’s stewardship ethics may provide some ethical parameters for human intervention with nature. They require that nature be treated with a sense of trust, responsibility and justice applying foresight and prudence and avoiding greed, arrogance and profligacy.

## 12. Typology of Rumi's environmental virtues and vices

The preceding chapters have offered a number of environmentally relevant virtues and vices based on the property-based typology. In this chapter, those character traits have been compiled in what is proposed as a catalogue of Rumi's EVE (see Table 5 below). The property-based typology has been used in this research to organize various traits according to their shared properties. This was important for a detailed and coherent analysis of the content of those character traits. In addition, natural links between some virtues and vices made it necessary to examine them together, for example, arrogance and humility or greed and moderation are best explained in relation to each other. In organizing the catalogue, both major and complementary virtues have been paired up with their respective vices. This has produced a list of 23 virtues and 28 vices where some virtues correspond to more than one vice.

**Table 5:** Rumi's catalogue of environmental virtues and vices

<b>Virtues</b>	<b>Vices</b>
Acceptance of human uniqueness	Misanthropy (false humility)
Attentiveness	Heedlessness
Proper awareness of nature	Disregard for nature
Cognitive justice	Cognitive injustice
Positive discursive reason	Negative discursive reason
Prudence/Foresight	Short-sightedness
Gratitude	Ingratitude
Humility	Arrogance
Justice	Injustice
Knowledge	Ignorance, instrumentalist and reductionist views of knowledge
Love of creation	Selfish love
Moderation	Greed



Moral reason	Selfish reason
Proper perspective	Lack of proper perspective
Self-acceptance	False superiority, self-centredness, self-perfection
Sense of beauty	Heedlessness
Responsibility	Irresponsibility
Sense of trust	Missing sense of trust
Spiritual depth	Lack of spiritual depth
Stewardship	Passivism
Temperance	Gluttony
Universal reason	Selfish reason, negative discursive reason
Unselfishness	Selfishness

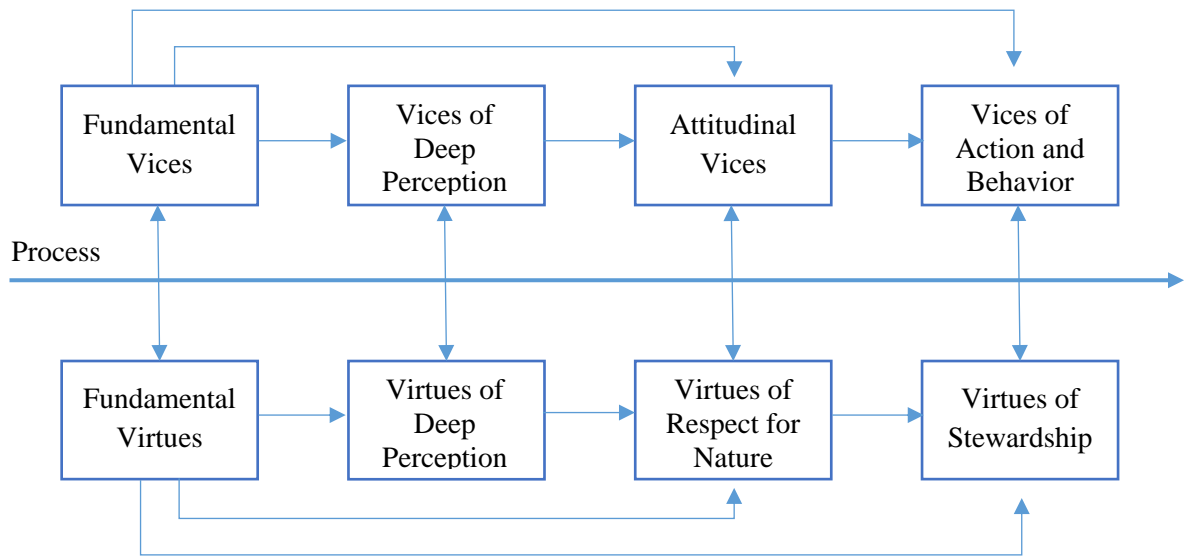
What becomes clear from the foregoing discussions is that the relationships between Rumi's virtues and vices are complex and multifaceted. Capturing such complexity within a single catalogue would be near impossible. This creates a need for an additional way of presenting the material that explains the complex relationships between virtues and vices. Therefore, this chapter proposes a typology drawing upon a process-based conception of virtues and vices which offers a nuanced understanding of how virtues and vices interact and influence each other. Such typology is also necessary for a better articulation of their ecological implications. While the purpose of such typology is ecological, it is also in alignment with Rumi's broader philosophy and ideas of morality.

The central theme of Rumi's philosophy is to realize the true human identity through a path of moral, spiritual and intellectual transformation. The ultimate purpose of such transformation is a profound understanding and love of God and creation. Such view, as it has been suggested in the previous chapters, has a significant ecological value. It offers a

vision of reality that provides a substantial ground for developing a version of environmental ethics. Moreover, it renders ecologically relevant the idea of character transformation leading to such vision of reality and its implications for human attitudes and actions toward nature which constitutes the basis of Rumi's EVE. In this context, the typology of virtues and vices proposed here is particularly valuable as it aims to explain the process of self-transformation and its environmentally positive outcomes. It offers some insights into how virtues can be internally organized to serve certain environmental goals.

First of all, to set the general framework, it would be important to define and outline the basics of the process-based typology. It is called as such because it tries to explain the fact that character transformation is a gradual process consisting of certain stages and working toward a specific goal. The basis for the process-based understanding comes from the conception of human flourishing which was developed from Rumi's views of human nature in Chapter 6. In this framework, the process of self-transformation can start anywhere along the broad spectrum between the lower and higher aspects of human nature and move in either directions. The course of the process depends on certain moral choices that a person makes as part of exercising his free will. The person is deemed progressing or flourishing if his choices are leading him toward the higher self and regressing if those choices are moving him toward the lower self. His position along the spectrum determines his state of character represented by a set of vices or virtues or some combination of both which has important implications for his intellectual and spiritual capacities. It must be noted that character cultivation is a painstaking process and requires effort and determination whereas regression is easy and relatively quick needing only to stop making effort and resisting the temptations of the lower self.

The process represented by the typology can be located within this general process of transformation from the lower to the higher self. However, the focus of the typology is on a particular aspect of the transformation process, i.e. its implications for the human relation to nature. It organizes virtues and vices into specific groups based on their role in realizing personal transformation and defines these groups as the stages of the process. Its ultimate aim is to address the collective environmental impact of these virtue and vice categories. Within such framework, *fundamental vices and fundamental virtues* are the starting point of the process-based typology. They function as interacting forces representing opposite aspects of human nature where the ultimate goal is to gradually eliminate vices by developing virtues. Such interaction is the essence of the moral struggle in human beings. Moreover, fundamental vices and virtues contain the roots of other vices and virtues and provide a basis for their development and functioning. Unlike fundamental vices, other vices are divided into different categories based on their collective outcomes. The first group of vices produces a failure or inability to perceive deeper reality of nature and therefore I suggest to call this group the *vices of shallow perception*. Similarly, the second category contains vices which underlie negative attitudes toward nature and are therefore called *attitudinal vices*. The last group leads to harmful actions or prevents positive ones in relation to nature. Accordingly, they are called the *vices of action and behaviour*. These categories along with fundamental vices constitute the vice aspect of the typology. There are also three categories of virtues which correspond to the three groups of vice. They include the *virtues of deep perception*, *virtues of respect for nature* and *virtues of stewardship*. Like other vices, the classification of other virtues is based on their combined environmentally relevant outcomes. Together with fundamental virtues, they are the virtue basis of the typology.



**Figure 4:** Process-based typology

*Fundamental vices* are a central aspect of Rumi’s ethics. The list of fundamental vices emerging from this study includes greed, gluttony, arrogance, selfishness, ignorance and selfish reason. These dispositions can operate in social and nature-related contexts. They are environmentally relevant because of their direct and indirect impact. Their direct impact results from their role in driving ecologically unsustainable life styles and behavior. The indirect impact is based on their relation to other character traits which can take two forms. The first includes their relation to other vices. Fundamental vices are not abstract entities existing in isolation from other vices. They often drive and manifest themselves through other vices in different ways and in different spheres of human activity such as mind, emotions and behavior. Therefore, the negative environmental implications of other vices can at the same time be regarded as the indirect impact of fundamental vices. The second form of indirect impact comes from the inhibitive effect of fundamental vices on virtues. Therefore, environmentally positive outcomes precluded by the dominance of fundamental vices can be viewed as their indirect environmental impact.

**Table 6:** Typology of Environmental Vices

<b>Fundamental Vices</b>	<b>Vices of Shallow Perception</b>	<b>Attitudinal vices</b>	<b>Vices of action and behaviour</b>
Greed	Self-centredness	Ingratitude	Misanthropy
Gluttony	Negative discursive reason	Selfish love	Passivism
Arrogance	Instrumentalist knowledge	False superiority	Short-sightedness
Selfishness	Reductionist knowledge	Self-perfection	Injustice
Ignorance	Lack of proper perspective	Disregard for nature	Irresponsibility
Selfish reason	Lack of spiritual (inner) depth		Lacking sense of trust
	Heedlessness		
	Cognitive injustice		

***Fundamental virtues*** are crucial for countering fundamental vices by controlling, moderating or transforming the dispositions underlying those vices. For example, moral reason can transform the selfish reason into higher forms of reason. Knowledge, even if theoretical in its initial form, may tackle ignorance while moderation and unselfishness can be instrumental to taking greed under control. Exercising temperance can curtail gluttony and fostering humility can gradually eliminate arrogance and pride. Like fundamental vices, these virtues can apply to human and nature-related contexts. They can also have a dual environmental impact. As for direct impact, fundamental virtues are more likely to lead to environmentally friendly attitudes and behavior. Indirectly, they offset the environmental impact of fundamental and other vices and are conducive to nurturing other virtues that have positive environmental implications.

**Table 7:** Typology of Environmental Virtues

<b>Fundamental Virtues</b>	<b>Virtues of Deep Perception</b>	<b>Virtues of Respect for Nature</b>	<b>Virtues of Stewardship</b>
Unselfishness Moral reason Temperance Moderation Humility Knowledge	Universal Reason Positive discursive reason Self-acceptance Proper perspective Proper awareness of nature Attentiveness Spiritual (inner) depth Sense of Beauty Cognitive Justice	Humility Love of creation Gratitude	Acceptance of human uniqueness Stewardship Sense of Trust Responsibility Justice Prudence/foresight

Rumi's major concern with fundamental vices is that they constrain reason<sup>141</sup> and appropriate view of reality, which have significant environmental implications. This takes us to the second group of vices, namely, the *vices of shallow perception* (or perceptual vices), which are the consequence of fundamental vices expressed in a particular area of human activity, namely, human thought and understanding. This category of vices includes self-centredness, negative discursive reason, instrumentalist knowledge, reductionist knowledge, lack of proper perspective, lack of spiritual (inner) depth and heedlessness. Collectively, they produce a superficial perception of reality. They largely stem from fundamental vices and therefore eliminating the latter is instrumental to tackling perceptual vices. Despite the role fundamental virtues play in dealing with fundamental vices, their presence does not automatically entail proper thinking and accurate perception. Therefore, in addition to

<sup>141</sup> It was discussed in sub-chapter 8.1. that Rumi distinguishes four key vices such as greed, lust, eminence and worldly desire for their role in obstructing reason (M V: 1-63).

fundamental virtues, there is also a need to attain a certain state of mind and proper knowledge of reality. This is the aim of the *virtues of deep perception* (or perceptual virtues). For example, knowledge, as mentioned above, aims to eliminate ignorance. However, for knowledge to translate into a profound understanding of nature not only does character have to be purified from fundamental vices, but there is also a need to focus on a particular dimension of knowledge which explains the surrounding world and its deeper dimension. This also involves adopting a proper perspective on nature by expanding one's awareness of it and accepting one's proper place within it. This in turn requires attentiveness to nature and appreciation of its beauty which must be supported by a certain spiritual depth given the profound spiritual connection between nature and human being's inner reality. Thus, for the process of transformation to advance, moral change must be followed by a cognitive and spiritual change to acquire a deeper perception of reality. The virtues in this category aim to achieve this goal based on the outcomes of fundamental virtues and countering the vices of shallow perception.

*Attitudinal vices* are negative dispositions of mind and emotion operating in nature-related contexts. They can be attributed to perceptual and fundamental vices. To develop a positive attitude toward nature one needs to understand it in deeper ways beyond regarding it as a purely material entity. It is unlikely that someone who perceives nature as a dead matter can relate to it with positive feelings. The following verses seem to support this cause-effect relationship between perceptual and attitudinal vices.

By love the dead is made living; by love the king is made a slave.  
 This love, moreover, is the result of knowledge: who (ever) sat in foolishness on such a throne?  
 On what occasion did deficient knowledge give birth to this love? Deficient (knowledge) gives birth to love, but (only love) for that which is (really) lifeless. (M II: 1531-33)  
 Intellect, by its proper nature, is a seer of the end (consequence); 'tis the fleshly soul that does not see the end.

The intellect that is vanquished by the flesh becomes the flesh: Jupiter is checkmated by Saturn and becomes inauspicious. (M II: 1548-49)

Rumi points out that love is a result of proper knowledge and later in the same section he states that intellect which acquires such knowledge should be pure of carnal desire (“the flesh”). The latter, moreover, points to an indirect relation of attitudinal vices to fundamental vices considering the fact that desire is a key disposition underlying greed and gluttony.

Overall, these verses indicate a general pattern of relationship between different types of vices. One can observe this pattern in the case of specific perceptual and attitudinal vices. For example, lack of proper perspective can lead to a false sense of superiority and self-perfection while self-centredness, lack of inner depth and heedlessness can produce disregard for nature. At the same time, disregard for nature can be attributed to reductionist and instrumentalist view of knowledge and negative discursive reason because they can produce a limited conception of nature’s reality. Moreover, some vices of attitude seem to result directly from fundamental vices. For example, ingratitude, as discussed in sub-chapter 8.1., is a result of greed, which prevents one from being content with and grateful for what one has, whereas selfish love, the inability to love other than oneself, is a result of selfishness.

*Virtues of respect for nature* are dispositions that signify appreciation and reverence for nature due to its spiritual qualities and functions. They are cultivated building on the virtues of perception, as was concluded from the verses quoted above. The virtues of respect aim to tackle the vices of attitude. Key virtues in this category are humility, love of creation and gratitude. As mentioned above, humility is a fundamental virtue; however, in this category it specifically applies to one’s attitude toward nature. It is based on such perceptual virtues as proper awareness of nature and self-acceptance. At the same time, it aims to eliminate such



attitudinal vices as the sense of superiority and self-perfection. The love of creation results from the sense of beauty, attentiveness and spiritual depth and aims to counter selfish love and disregard for nature. Gratitude is related to the fundamental virtue of moderation. Just as greed produces ingratitude, moderation, by virtue of restraining greed, fortifies gratitude. Gratitude is a counterweight to such attitudinal vices as ingratitude and disregard for nature.

***Vices of actions and behavior*** define the moral quality of human actions. They are a natural consequence of the previous groups of vices. In other words, it is reasonable to conclude that a person who has some fundamental vices in his character is more likely to treat nature unjustly, with no regard for the consequences of his actions and failing to recognize nature as part of the Divine trust because such person fails to see nature for what it is which, in turn, determines his attitude and behavior toward nature. Thus, the presence of fundamental, perceptual and attitudinal vices may collectively result in destructive actions toward nature. Rumi makes an explicit connection between the failure to control and transform vices, in particular, fundamental vices, and destructive actions.

“Let us implore God to help us to self-control: one who lacks self-control is deprived of the grace of the Lord. The undisciplined man does not maltreat himself alone, but he sets the whole world on fire.” (MI: 78-79).

In similar vein, short-sightedness can be attributed to such traits as greed, selfishness, arrogance and self-centredness while injustice may result from arrogance, greed and cognitive injustice. Irresponsibility and lacking sense of trust may stem from selfishness, greed, ignorance, lack of proper perspective, reductionist knowledge and disregard for nature. Interrelated vices of misanthropy and passivism are different from other vices in the group in that they specifically characterize inaction. They signify a lack of action in the face of challenges and responsibility. Moreover, these vices, unlike others in this category, appear to

originate from a virtue, namely, humility, as they are defined as an excess of humility. However, a closer analysis shows that they in fact denote misconstrued humility, hence the term - *false humility*. Instead of humility, they can rather be linked to the vices of ignorance and lack of proper understanding of the human position in creation.

This brings us to the last category in this typology, namely, *the virtues of stewardship*. These virtues, like the vices of action, apply to human action and behavior in relation to nature. In a straightforward manner, the virtues address their corresponding vices in the category of action-related vices. For example, stewardship responds to passivism, accepting human uniqueness addresses misanthropy, foresight is a counterbalance to shortsightedness, justice to injustice and so on. Moreover, like other virtue categories, the stewardship virtues depend on the presence of other virtues in human character. For instance, it becomes apparent from the verse below that helpfulness is a function of love, mercy and justice. Those who possess these qualities are the human embodiments of the Divine attributes.

The valiant (holy) men are a help in the world when the wail of the oppressed reaches (them).  
 From every quarter they hear the cry of the oppressed and run in that direction, like the mercy of God.  
 Those buttresses for the breaches of the world, those physicians for hidden maladies,  
 Are pure love and justice and mercy; even as God, they are flawless (incorruptible) and unbribed.  
 (If you ask one of them), "Why dost thou give him this aid all at once?" he says, "On account of his grief and helplessness." (M II: 1933-37)

The verses indicate the relationship between attitudinal and stewardship virtues. We can also recall the attribution of love to proper knowledge mentioned above which points to the link between perceptual and attitudinal virtues.

The foregoing analysis provides a basis to conceive of Rumi's typology of environmentally relevant virtues and vices as a process of transformation. The corresponding groups of virtues

and vices represent different stages of transformation and pertain to different aspects of human nature.

## **13. Rumi's EVE in context**

In the previous chapters, I have tried to construct a holistic account of EVE from Rumi's mystical worldview. In this chapter, I will aim to identify the place of Rumi's EVE in two areas of literature and highlight its distinctive aspects in more concrete terms. The two areas include EVE and Islamic environmental ethics including Rumi's environmental ethics. The former will be discussed in sub-chapter 13.1. while the latter will be examined in sub-chapter 13.2.

### **13.1. *EVE context***

In this sub-chapter, I will engage in a detailed discussion of how this study, in general, and its components, in particular, compare with other accounts of EVE in the literature. To this end, the discussion will be conducted in two parts: general and specific aspects of Rumi's EVE in the broader EVE context.

#### **13.1.1. General aspects of Rumi's EVE**

Rumi's theocentric worldview makes the account of EVE emerging from his teachings unique in the field for two important reasons. First, it contributes to the diversity in the field in a specific way. Most existing accounts of EVE have been developed within secular philosophical frameworks. In such context, developing theocentric accounts would increase the theoretical richness which may, in turn, broaden the scholarly and popular appeal of EVE. The second reason is related to a potential concern regarding the possibility of a viable environmental ethics and, by extension, EVE within theistic and theocentric backgrounds. In general, as Sandler (2005) notes religious cosmologies can be a source for developing accounts of environmental virtues where virtues to a great extent function in relation to the Divine or some cosmic force. However, according to Grim and Tucker (2014), religious

responses to environmental challenges have been varied. They further note that the role of religions with a strong concern for personal salvation, afterlife and Divine-human relations are often seen as “limiting” and unproductive for the environmental agenda<sup>142</sup> because those concerns may overshadow the environmental ones. Although there are some accounts of EVE based in religious worldviews, e.g. the EVE analysis of Buddhist views discussed in sub-chapter 2.2., the point made by Grim and Tucker seems to apply more to theistic and, even more so, monotheistic religions. Therefore, due to the contested nature of relationship between theistic religions and environmental concern, the attempt to produce an EVE from a (monotheistic) theocentric worldview is of special significance.

To be sure, there are some cursory analyses of monotheistic traditions from an environmental virtue perspective. Taliaferro (2005), for instance, points out three main tenets of theistic environmental ethics of Christianity, Judaism and Islam within which certain environmental virtues can be cultivated. These tenets include creation, Divine ownership and association of nature with the Divine presence. However, Taliaferro’s aim is not to provide a detailed analysis of an EVE emerging from any of these traditions but rather to outline the general parameters of their common foundation for EVE while his primary aim is to make a case for religion’s broader relevance to EVE. The current research attempts to further this effort by delving into Islam - one of the major monotheistic traditions. Moreover, the fact that it searches for a version of EVE within the mystical tradition of Islam, as represented by Rumi, where there is an even stronger stress on theocentrism, is indicative of this study’s unique aspect. Furthermore, Sufism contains diverse attitudes toward the material world and different ideas of existence. While some of these attitudes and ideas can be viewed as ecologically positive, others may be interpreted as ecologically harmful (see section 2.2.2.).

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<sup>142</sup> It must be noted that this is not the only type of religious responses to environmental problems. Indeed, Grim and Tucker (2014) examine positive or “liberating” religious responses as well.

Given this ambivalence a careful examination of Rumi from an EVE perspective provides further insights into the ecological relevance of the Sufi tradition itself which contributes to the scholarly value of this research.

### **13.1.2. Specific aspects of Rumi's EVE**

In this section, I will examine specific components of Rumi's EVE in the context of existing EVE literature. This study has relied on a holistic framework which includes three pillars – cosmology, human flourishing, and environmental virtues. I will analyze each of these pillars in comparison to relevant parts of current EVE studies.

#### **a. Cosmology**

The fact that Rumi's notion of ethics is shaped by a distinctive cosmology distinguishes his account from other accounts of EVE in the literature. As a key component of his EVE, his conception of nature's axiology is essentially defined by the cosmological background of his thought. Perhaps, it is noteworthy that not all writers refer to the notion of intrinsic value in developing their EVE; such writers place enlightened self-interest at the centre of their theories and regard nature as instrumental to such interest (e.g. Welchman 1999, Clowney 2013). Notwithstanding this relatively small trend, most existing accounts of EVE operate with a certain notion of intrinsic value worked out from relevant conceptions of nature. For instance, in Shaw's (1997) analysis of Aldo Leopold's EVE, the foundation of nature's intrinsic value is eco-centric. In this view, natural systems and elements form a biotic (living) community and the harmony of this community is defined as "the ultimate good". As a result, everything that maintains such harmony, e.g. natural entities, their habitats and their complex relationships, is of intrinsic value. Similarly, Cafaro (2005b) account of Rachel Carson's ecological virtues grounds moral status of wild nature in its complexity and interconnectedness which must be appreciated and celebrated. In both accounts we can

observe how the arguments for the intrinsic value of nature are grounded in certain views of nature. This is partly true for Rumi too as his notion of nature's value results from certain images of nature. However, it must be kept in mind that the notion of *non-instrumental divine value* instead of intrinsic value is a more appropriate concept for Rumi's axiology of nature<sup>143</sup>. Another major difference between Rumi and the others is that Rumi's images emerge from his cosmology and cannot be explained without reference to his cosmological views. For instance, the spiritual dimension of nature in Rumi cannot be properly understood without understanding the metaphysical dimension of God's relationship with creation.

Moreover, a distinctive feature of Rumi's cosmology is that it is rooted in a specific religious tradition. There are several studies of EVE based in religious cosmologies such as the ones mentioned in chapter 2. However, among those studies, Wensveen's (1999) account of Thomas Berry's *The Dream of the Earth* is particularly relevant to this research because both Berry and Rumi are based in theistic religious cosmologies. Given this fundamental similarity, there are other themes which display certain parallels between Rumi and Berry. However, there are also important differences between the two and one of these differences concerns the place of God in their respective cosmologies. For one thing, God seems to occupy a far greater place in Rumi's viewpoint. For Berry the numinous (Divine) energy

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<sup>143</sup> Although Rumi's environmental ethics shares some similarities with some major environmental ethics theories, there are also some key difference which determine its unique position in relationship to them. Such position can be attributed to the theocentric character of Rumi's worldview. Like non-anthropocentrism (ecocentrism), it suggests human independent value of nature; however, such value cannot be defined as intrinsic because nature does not seem to have a value of its own which could exist independently of a value-giver. Even though not assigned by human beings, the properties that make nature valuable are assigned to it by God and serves God's purposes, hence the term non-instrumental Divine value. At the same time, nature also has an instrumental value which is assigned to it for spiritual attributes. Another major distinction between ecocentrism and Rumi's environmental ethics is the central place given to human beings in Rumi's scheme of creation. Due to their unique attributes, humans can play a critical role as God's stewards which stands in contrast to the non-interventionist stance of ecocentrism. They do have the responsibility to protect nature because of its non-instrumental Divine value, on the one hand, and the benefits and services, primarily spiritual, it provides to humans, on the other. Although it must be kept in mind that unlike more dominant notion of anthropocentrism, it does not sanction domination and material exploitation of nature because, first, nature's ultimate value is defined by God which prevents its whimsical treatment by human beings, and second, human-related (instrumental) value is primarily spiritual which necessitates the preservation of the material well-being of nature for its sustained use as a spiritual resource.

while being a creative force of the universe remains in the background of “a grand drama” whose main focus is the unfolding of the universe. This is understandable given that Berry attempts to create “a contemporary cosmological narrative” (Wensveen 1999) which combines modern scientific views with traditional creation stories. Therefore, while only one quality of Berry’s cosmology emphasizes its Divine character, other qualities such as dynamism, violence and orderly structure are more about the universe itself. As a result, most of Berry’s virtues, e.g. attentiveness, critical reflection, creativity, resistance and resignation are presented as proper responses to the cosmic aspects of the universe. By contrast, the focus of Rumi’s thought is predominantly God. Even when talking about the universe or human beings his ultimate goal is often God. Consequently, the majority of his virtues are above all directed toward God. Therefore, although both Rumi’s and Berry’s cosmologies are theistic, it seems more appropriate to describe Rumi’s cosmology, considering all of its mystical implications, as theocentric.

As repeatedly stressed in this research, theocentric worldviews may define the value of nature in ways that are different from their non-theistic and philosophical counterparts. In theocentric axiology, values originate in God and not in human beings nor in certain properties of nature. We can recall that in Rumi’s account theocentric axiology sets the parameters of not only non-instrumental but also the instrumental value of nature. We can also recall that both of these values are spiritual in character (see sub-chapter 3.1.). This seems to be another point of divergence between Rumi and Berry because Berry’s cosmology is based on a more positivist, rather than spiritual, understanding of the universe. To be sure, there are some spiritual themes in Berry such as the numinous energy, which seems to be a spiritual quality, and the fact that the physical reality has an inner dimension characterized by subjectivity and spirit. However, such themes in Berry are less resounding when compared to



the spiritual aspects of Rumi's worldview and may not provide a sufficient ground for the deep notion of spiritual value found in Rumi. Moreover, there is no notion of instrumental value in Wensveen's study of Berry. So it is not clear if and how spiritual value may also function as an instrumental value in Berry, that is, whether the spiritual quality of the universe can be framed as a spiritual resource which contributes to human flourishing.

Although there is a growing recognition of nature's role as a spiritual resource among EVE scholars (Cafaro 2002; Sandler 2006, 2013), there has been no account of EVE which draws upon spiritual themes as its primary framework. Rumi stands out in this regard since his EVE represents an attempt to recognize, appropriately value and preserve the spiritual reality of nature. Moreover, the spiritual dimension of nature is also a critical pillar of Rumi's holistic outlook - another distinctive aspect of his thought I will discuss below.

### ***Holism***

Holism is an important concept in environmental ethics, often suggested as an alternative to the dualistic paradigm - the latter being thought to produce a hierarchical divide in the human-nature relationship. One can notice some indications of holistic thought in Rumi and some of his holistic views are critical to understanding his EVE. To explain Rumi's holism it would be important to contextualize holism in the EVE literature. In general, there are different notions of holism, two of which characterize the existing studies of environmental role models - ecological and material-spiritual holisms.

Ecological holism emphasizes interconnection and continuity between humans and nature as interdependent parts of the same whole. The holistic worldviews expounded in the studies of Leopold, Thoreau and Bookchin are examples of ecological holism. Leopold's notion of

holism, as studied by Shaw (1997), stresses the centrality of biotic community instead of individual species, in particular, of human being. In this scheme, human is only a part of the community and not its master. Such holism aims to eliminate or minimize the ontological divide between human and nature. Shaw points to some difficulties inherent in this approach, i.e. the basis for assigning intrinsic value to the biotic community and evaluating the competing interests of the community. To tackle this problem, Shaw suggests that Leopold's environmental ethics be viewed from a virtue perspective by which it can appeal to character-based reasons to treat non-humans as essential parts of the biotic community.

Cafaro's survey of Thoreau's EVE is another example of ecological holism which also refers to virtue ethics. "The Ponds", as Cafaro suggests, offers a holistic environmental ethics which focuses on both individual species, e.g. woodchucks and trees, and the wholes they constitute, e.g. ponds and forests, rather than concentrating only on individual species. The author recognizes the theoretical difficulties around evaluating the interests of wholes and presents Thoreau's case as a practical model of appreciating wholes without resolving those theoretical issues. In doing so, he also argues for an ethical holism in Thoreau which includes concerns for the value of wholes and human happiness.

Thus, while acknowledging human being's unique ethical role, both Leopold and Thoreau emphasize the interconnection between nature and human. A similar interrelationship is present in Rumi's worldview which is indicative of some form of holism. Needless to say, Rumi does not express such interconnection in the language of ecology nor is he as emphatic about this fact as the others. However, the natural cycle of matter from minerals to humans and back to minerals and human being's dependence on this cycle (sub-chapter 5.1.) displays

some form of ecological interdependence. Thus, at least at the biophysical level there is a holistic understanding of human and nature in Rumi.

The second type of holism, the matter-spirit holism, implies that there are more than one dimension of existence and that these dimensions are different expressions of the same reality. An example of such holism is found in Berry. Wensveen (1999) calls this a strong type holism as compared to the weak type of holism espoused by Bookchin. Berry's holism sees the universe as a whole with physical and non-physical aspects. The latter is the inner dimension of reality imbued with spirit, subjectivity and person attributes. It is the numinous quality of the energy event whose multiform expressions can be observed in the phenomenal realm. For Rumi too the spiritual and material are two faces of the same reality. Like Berry, for Rumi the basis of such holism is the fact that both dimensions of existence have their common origin in God. Although at times Rumi seems to overemphasize the spirit at the expense of sacrificing the matter, such utterances should be read contextually since his aim is to deal with fixation on the material and shallow (superficial) perception of existence. One can see him explain the significance of physical forms elsewhere<sup>144</sup>.

Another possible ground for holism in Rumi is his theocentric teleology. It can be regarded as an outcome of his other holisms explained above. Such holism is related to the fact both human and the universe have the common goal of manifesting the signs of the Divine through their existence – human as the macrocosm and the universe as the microcosm. If either of them fails to fulfil its goal the Divine purpose in creation is prevented from its full-scale realization. In this equation, humans have the potential to disrupt their own and the universe's, at least some of its elements', ability to realize this purpose. In this way, humans

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<sup>144</sup> For example, see a passage from FMF 5 on page 100.

and the rest of creation are teleologically interrelated and interdependent. It is also important to keep in mind that since humans are given higher faculties and consequently more responsibility, there is a differentiation of roles in Rumi's teleological holism.

To sum up, Rumi's thought contains some holistic views similar in essence to the holisms prominent in the EVE literature. However, some general aspects of his worldview determine the hierarchy of these holisms. The basis of all holisms in Rumi lies in the rootedness of all existence in the Divine. In this context, one can observe less emphasis on ecological holism and more attention to the holistic understanding of matter and spirit in Rumi. This makes an important contrast when Rumi is compared with modern examples of ecological thought. Moreover, a distinct form of holism which arises from Rumi is teleological holism which in addition to physical and existential interconnection also provides a goal-oriented interconnection for human and nature.

### **b. Human flourishing**

The conception of human flourishing is an important pillar of Rumi's EVE. It has multiple aspects which make it a complex and distinctive account among other studies of EVE. It is particularly interesting because of the broad variety of existing approaches to human flourishing in EVE. Therefore, below I will examine Rumi's human flourishing in relation to other case studies of EVE and highlight its distinct aspects.

It must be noted at the outset that while human flourishing is a central concept in virtue ethics, not all accounts of EVE include a distinct notion of human flourishing. For instance, Welchman's (1999) version of environmental stewardship draws on the Humean criteria of agreeableness and usefulness to human beings rather than any notion of human flourishing

for specifying environmental virtues. Welchman seems to be sceptical about the idea of human *telos* as a standard against which human dispositions should be evaluated. As a result, while her stewardship virtues of benevolence and loyalty do serve some environmental ends for enlightened self-interest, she is not concerned about their contribution to human flourishing. Unlike Welchman, Rumi's EVE operates with a distinctive notion of human flourishing which is derived from his views of human nature. The latter is not a neutral concept in Rumi; it is teleological and as such prescribes an ultimate goal for human life. In such a framework the virtuous life becomes a vehicle through which this goal can be attained.

In employing the concept of human flourishing in EVE, it is important to understand how human flourishing is being defined. Current studies of Leopold's EVE are particularly interesting in this regard for they seem to cover a broader spectrum of definitions. On the one hand, there is Shaw's (1997) analysis which uses the concept of the human good. He defines the concept in eco-centric terms where the human good is regarded as a "subset" of the good of the biotic community. It is not clear if concerns for moral, mental and social well-being are included in such notion of the human good. In this sense, Leopold's concept of human flourishing seems to be naturalistically construed by Shaw. On the other hand, there is Cafaro's (2005b) review of Leopold which focuses on the inner aspects of human flourishing. For Cafaro, Leopold's environmental ethics despite its moral extensionism offers a great opportunity for self-development and enriched life experience through better knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of the natural surroundings. It recognizes the complexity of human nature and views healthy ecosystems as integral, among others, to intellectual and aesthetic needs of human being. In addition, Cafaro's (2005b) study of Carson's EVE reveals some parallels between Leopold's and Carson's understanding of human flourishing. Like Leopold,

Carson emphasizes the aesthetic and intellectual aspects of human flourishing which are cultivated through encounters with wildlife.

The primacy of the non-physical dimension of human flourishing evident in Leopold and Carson is pertinent to a certain degree to Rumi as well. Rumi is well aware of the human embeddedness in the physical realm; however this fact does not define the ultimate human identity. Humans are intimately linked with the non-physical realm of existence and this attribute makes up the core of their real self for Rumi. Therefore, cultivating this aspect of identity is the essence of human good, *telos* or flourishing. This being said, non-physical flourishing may take many forms and Rumi's distinctiveness lies in the combination of inward (intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual) and outward (involving one's relations with social and natural entities) faculties included in his view of human flourishing.

In terms of spiritual development, Berry's (Wensveen 1999) and Thoreau's (Cafaro 2000) EVE can make interesting points of comparison with Rumi. There are some important similarities and differences among them. As noted above, Berry's cosmology is similar to that of Rumi's in some important ways: both are embedded in theistic frameworks and emphasize, although to different degrees, the spiritual dimension of existence. In Berry's view human beings are less specialized compared to non-humans. Therefore, humans possess greater possibilities for flourishing. Thus, human flourishing can be manifest in a wider variety of ways such as physical, cultural, social, artistic, intellectual and linguistic. Similarly, one can find numerous references to a variety of faculties and potentials present in human beings in Rumi which is a result of their being mirrors to infinite attributes of the Divine. These aspects of Berry and Rumi being in some ways similar, an important divergence arises when it comes to specifying the defining aspect of human nature. According to Wensveen,

intellect is the ultimate determinant of human flourishing as Berry defines humans as the “brains and celebrators of the universe”<sup>145</sup> while for Rumi it is rather spiritual faculties which determine the end goal of human flourishing.

Among the current accounts of EVE role models, Thoreau displays perhaps the strongest focus on the spiritual value of nature as well as the spiritual dimension of human flourishing. Cafaro (2000) points to the role of nature, among others, as a spiritual value for Thoreau in the following passage:

*Walden* suggests the rudiments of an environmental virtue ethics which sees human excellence and nature's excellence as necessarily intertwined. We cannot flourish without a healthy, diverse, and partly wild environment, to take us outside ourselves and open up possibilities for physical, spiritual, moral, aesthetic and scientific development.

In this, Rumi and Thoreau share a great degree of similarity. Moreover, they both have comprehensive understanding of virtues as moral, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual excellences. Yet, Rumi seems to exhibit a deeper spiritual orientation as his thought unfolds within a religious, theocentric and, more importantly, thoroughly mystical background. There are of course other fundamental differences between Rumi's and Thoreau's ethics but what is most significant for our purpose here is Thoreau's overwhelming, almost exclusive, focus on self-development often at the expense of disregarding social virtues. According to Cafaro (2000), Thoreau goes as far as to suggest that the common good can be better advanced through self-development than benevolent and charitable actions. One can see in Thoreau how the “ethic of aspiration” dominates the “ethic of social obligation” (Cafaro 2000). It is not clear though how Thoreau's EVE based on the knowledge and appreciation of nature as an important component of self-development would translate into concrete actions to

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<sup>145</sup> It is interesting that Wensveen applies the function argument to defining the ultimate aspect of human being which is the strategy employed in this study as well.

preserve the environment. This is, of course, where Rumi is starkly different from Thoreau. The duty to be engaged with the affairs of creation which encompasses humans and non-humans is a Divine command and significant dimension of human flourishing in Rumi and is, therefore, central to his ethics and EVE.

Among different accounts of EVE, this study can also be compared with Wensveen's (1999) survey of Murray Bookchin due to their significant focus on social engagement despite some important differences. Wensveen emphasizes Bookchin's role as a long-time "spearhead of ecological consciousness" in the US and engages in an analysis of virtue discourse in his ecological thought. She argues that "rich and in many ways uncommon" virtue language can be found in Bookchin's works. She specifically looks into *The Ecology of Freedom* which Bookchin himself describes as the cornerstone of his thought. In this work, he relates both social and ecological problems to social domination and hierarchy. Therefore, his emphasis on social and ecological engagement is a function of his social theory rather than cosmology<sup>146</sup>. This being said, however, virtues and vices have an important place in his vision as well. As Wensveen notes, for Bookchin social and ecological problems are a complex combination of human vices and social order.

Unlike Bookchin, Rumi does not present a systematic theory of social change. His social and environmental virtues are an outcome of his religious cosmology and conception of human being according to which reconnecting to one's Divine roots is the principal goal of human life. Therefore, Rumi relates worldly problems to the lack of such connection with God because a person lacking spiritual enlightenment fails to perceive the connection other

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<sup>146</sup> It is noteworthy that Wensveen describes Bookchin's social ecology as a conceptual scheme rather than cosmology.



creatures have with God which prevents the person from positively engaging with them. Moreover, such failure bars the person's own moral progress as human being.

In this context, a distinct aspect of Rumi's notion of human flourishing is its rare synthesis of the self-regarding with the other-regarding. It combines the Thoreauvian focus on personal enlightenment, which is lacking in Bookchin, with Bookchin's emphasis on social engagement, which is underemphasized in Thoreau. In Rumi's understanding, the inner and outer dimensions of human existence are inseparable. They both are instrumental to realizing the Divine purpose in human life and are essential components of human flourishing. They both serve environmental ends by revealing the sacredness of nature in the inner realm and by acting as its stewards in the outer one. Such a notion of human flourishing is another dimension of Rumi's holistic ethics and EVE.

### **c. Environmental virtues**

In general, existing versions of EVE, whether developed from the lifework of environmental role models or from scratch, can be divided into two groups. The *first group* includes accounts concentrating on a few individual virtues but examining them in depth. Examples of such accounts include Hill's (1983) humility, Frasz's (1993) arrogance and humility, Welchman's (1999) benevolence and loyalty, Clowney's (2013) and Santas' (2014) *biophilia*, Ferkany's (2011) mercy and so on. Most of these studies focus on the substance of their respective virtues and vices drawing on no or vaguely-defined notions of environment and human nature. In the *second group* are more comprehensive studies of environmental virtues and vices. They work with a larger number of virtues but with significantly less attention to the content of individual virtues. They rather tend to focus on connections between virtues and vices and the philosophical background in which they operate. In this group, Wensveen's

(1999) surveys of Bookchin's and Berry's thoughts include perhaps the most extensive catalogues of environmental virtues and vices in the field drawn from a single source (system of thought). Wensveen gives a great deal of attention to specifying the cosmological/philosophical context for these virtues. By contrast, Sandler's (2006) account, although not as extensive as Wensveen's, concentrates on the relationships between virtues and develops conceptual categories for classifying virtues into coherent groups<sup>147</sup>. Despite its valuable contribution to EVE, Sandler's survey is not an in-depth analysis of individual virtues and does not deal with their respective vices.

This research, in line with the comprehensive approach it has taken to analysing Rumi's EVE, combines the major elements of the two groups of EVE accounts. Its comprehensiveness goes beyond examining environmental virtues in their cosmological background; it develops an extensive catalogue of Rumi's virtues and vices, undertakes a detailed analysis of most individual virtues and vices and focuses on connections between these character traits by classifying them into distinct groups. Thus, in its scope and depth this research has a distinct place among the existing accounts of EVE.

Rumi's EVE lays out a process of inner transformation which has moral, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. This makes another unique aspect of Rumi's EVE for a number of reasons. It was explained above how various categories of environmental virtues and vices in Rumi correspond to different stages of inner transformation. In this respect, Rumi is the first EVE role model where Sandler's approach to categorizing virtues has been applied<sup>148</sup>. However, it must be noted that Sandler's theory and virtue categories are not intended as

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<sup>147</sup> We can recall that some of Sandler's categories with certain modifications were used to classify Rumi's virtues in this study.

<sup>148</sup> To my knowledge, there is no other account in EVE which presents its virtues through specific categories or groups similar to Sandler's.

stages of personal transformation. Not only does he not present them as parts of a process, he does not also include vices in his account, which would be critical to any process of character transformation. His groups are rather stand-alone categories and he does not elaborate on relationships between these groups. By comparison, Rumi's categories of environmental virtues in the context of his thought and teleological understanding of human nature can be regarded as successive stages of inner transformation.

The transformation-based understanding is also present in some of Rumi's virtues which distinguishes them from their counterparts in EVE. Notable examples of such dispositions are love and reason. It was discussed how love may have different forms or stages from the selfish to all-inclusive Divine love. The existing accounts of love or *biophilia* arguing for a love-like attitude toward nature imply some process of extending interpersonal love toward natural beings (Clowney 2013) or interactions (Santas 2014). However, they do not elaborate on how to cultivate this form of love and what are the possible obstacles. In this regard, Rumi's idea of love comprises a more expansive process of transformation. In this process, love as an emotion is present in every human, even if in the form of selfish love, and can be used to transform human nature if understood and controlled properly. By describing love's role and place in the universe and human nature, Rumi gives a clear idea of how love works as a universal phenomenon and what are the factors which can foster or preclude its growth in human nature.

Reason as such has not received much attention as an environmental virtue although some form of intellect seems to be implied in such environmental virtues as prudence and practical judgement in Shaw's (1997) study of Leopold. A more direct account of reason as an ecological virtue is found in Berry's EVE developed by Wensveen (1999). In most of these

cases, however, intellect seems to be understood as a fixed state rather than a dynamic process. This is where Rumi's understanding of reason is different from others. For Rumi reason with its multiple forms is a progressive disposition and each form of reason has a certain environmental implication.

A similar progression is also evident in Rumi's account of arrogance and humility as an environmental virtue and vice, respectively. Although it must be noted that some current conceptions of humility in EVE have a similar approach and, as seen above, some of these studies helped shape the framework for examining Rumi's notion of environmental humility. The bottom line is that Rumi's virtues and vices represent a process of transformation which involves the change of attitudes and ways of thinking as well as the transition of the human identity from the lower to the higher self. Moreover, such transformation also entails a shift from a partial and fragmented toward an integrated and holistic perception of reality.

### **13.2. Islam and environment context**

In this sub-chapter, I will identify specific aspects of Rumi's EVE which, I suggest, offer new insights into the Islam and environment discourse and our understanding of Rumi's environmental ethics. Three broader themes resulting from this study are important in this regard: a) notion of inner trust; b) conception of human flourishing; c) theocentric axiology. Of these themes, the first primarily contributes to the Islam and environment debate, the second to both Islamic and Rumi's environmental ethics and the third primarily to Rumi's environmental ethics

In general, Islamic eco-thinkers consider creation or the environment as part of the Divine trust (*amana*) to human beings (e.g. Izzi Dien 1990; Khalid 1998). However, for Rumi as a

Sufi thinker the notion of trust includes, first and foremost, the inner dimension of human self which has a Divine element. “And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration.” (Qur’an 15:29). And although some authors such as Chittick (1986) and Haq (2003) emphasize the theomorphic nature of human beings in relation to the trust, they frame the concept in term of human power over creation. Rumi’s approach is distinct in this regard since he relates human beings’ Divine aspect to their potential to reflect God’s attributes in their inner selves. Such notion of trust has two key implications. It provides a basis for developing Rumi’s understanding of virtues and has major repercussions for how human relates to the outer trust of nature. As far as the latter is concerned, the *inner trust* facilitates the fulfilment of other forms of trust and at the same time the other trust is necessary to actualize the inner trust to its full extent. Moreover, most writers also underline the idea of moral responsibility to care for nature in relation to trust (e.g. Ouis 1998; Khalid 2002; Saniotis 2012). In Rumi’s case, such responsibility also implies one’s duties toward the inner trust. Thus, there is a dual responsibility - to cultivate one’s inner faculties and care for nature and other forms of outer trust such as family, community and country – which go hand in hand.

Cultivating one’s inner attributes happens within the ecologically relevant conception of *human flourishing* which I developed from Rumi’s views on human nature. This conception has a distinct place in the context of the existing literature. Most proponents of Islamic eco-theology point to a profound spiritual dimension of nature (Ouis 1998; Haq 2003; Ozdemir 2003). They also make a case for an ethics of stewardship (*khalifa*) which incorporates the principles of trust and responsibility mentioned above. Although these themes and principles are essential for building a viable environmental ethics, they must be supplemented with a right state of mind and character to recognize nature’s profound reality and fulfil one’s role as

the steward of God. Emphasis on this aspect of Islamic environmental ethics seems to be for the most part missing in the current literature. The same holds true for the current works on Rumi and the environment (see Clarke 2003; Ozdemir 2005; Foltz 2009). In this regard, Rumi's conception of personal transformation offers certain insights into how the transition between different levels of the human self can be carried out as articulated in the typology of environmental virtues and vices suggested in this research.

Regarding creation as the Divine trust suggests some sort of human-independent value of nature. This study proposed two types of value that underlie Rumi's *theocentric axiology*: *non-instrumental divine value of nature and instrumental divine value of nature*. Within such framework defining a part of nature's value as non-instrumental seems to be important to understanding the complexity of nature's axiology. Some images of nature proposed by Rumi scholars suggest a certain instrumental element. For example, the notion of the universe as a book (Ozdemir 2005) points to such instrumentality since the universe is viewed as a medium of God's self-revelation to human. At the same time, some other images around the spiritual vitality of nature and the cosmic love (Clarke 2003; Foltz 2009) seem to point to what some may call intrinsic value of nature. However, as suggested in this study intrinsic value may not be a suitable category to describe nature's value in Rumi because nothing other than God has a value in and of itself and consequently in some cases the material aspect of nature is demeaned in the absence of its Divine value (see FMF 2 on page 224). Therefore, I proposed *non-instrumental divine value* as a more appropriate term to articulate the non-human value of nature which is a unique conceptual contribution of this research.

Knowing God through His signs in the universe is not the only aspect of nature's *instrumental value*. While knowing God is the highest goal in life, knowing one's inner

reality is crucial for one's spiritual growth and nature can play an important role in this process. The significance of knowing one's true self in order to know God has been emphasized in the literature on Rumi (e.g. Altintas 2010). However, observing the universe in order to better comprehend the mysteries of one's inner reality has not been emphasized in the Rumi literature. Rumi mentions the following verse of the Qur'an - "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth." (41:53) – which underlines the connection between the universe and human self. There is a positive correlation between the two essential sources of God's knowledge. Therefore, this research framed the instrumental component of nature's value as a *spiritual resource* which connects human beings to their inner self, the rest of the universe and the Divine. This can be regarded as another distinct contribution of this research.

## 14. Conclusion

The idea of this research was conceived as a result of the need to bridge two different areas of research – Rumi studies and environmental virtue ethics (EVE). Therefore, the aim of this research has been to develop a model of EVE from Rumi's mystical worldview. Below I will summarize how this broader aim has been achieved in this research. I will also specify the contribution of this research.

### **14.1. Research aim and objectives revisited**

The need for a holistic and comprehensive approach to working with ecological virtues was emphasized in the EVE literature (Wensveen 1999; Hull 2005). This approach requires that environmental virtues be examined in the broader context of their relation to other traits of character, their respective notions of human being and their background philosophies and worldview. In accordance with this holistic approach, three objectives were identified for this research which have been carried out based on the tripartite holistic model developed from the current EVE theory. The objectives will be revisited in order to conclude this research.

**Objective 1:** *To examine Rumi's cosmology and conception of nature from an ecological perspective.*

Several images of nature indicate the ecological significance of Rumi's worldview. These images include nature's spiritual vitality, God's self-manifestation in nature (cosmic book), cosmic love and God's relation to creation. However, determining the ecological implications of his thought goes beyond understanding his views of nature. Two assumptions included in the holistic theoretical model are important in this regard. They posit that nature has both instrumental and non-instrumental values and those values are primarily spiritual values. It was particularly important to investigate the instrumental value of nature in Rumi given that



the concept has been heavily criticized in eco-literature. Thus, it was revealed that while the images of nature point to the non-instrumental value of nature due to the Divine purpose behind their existence, they also present an instrumental value because developing the sense of those realities in nature is crucial for moral, intellectual and spiritual growth. Therefore, in Rumi's EVE nature can be defined as a spiritual resource for its role in connecting human beings to God and their inner self. The coexistence of non-instrumental and instrumental values is made possible by the theocentric foundation of Rumi's cosmology where God is the source and ultimate goal of both values.

**Objective 2:** *To examine Rumi's notion of human flourishing and evaluate its ecological implications.*

Rumi's analogue of human flourishing is derived from his idea of personal transformation from the lower self to the higher. It also provides a foundation for his views of ethics and morality. There are several ecological implications of Rumi's notion of human flourishing.

Against the claims of potential anthropocentrism, Rumi's human flourishing must be considered in its theocentric context with its moral and spiritual dimensions. In the final analysis, it is not anthropocentric in the ecologically negative sense, i.e. sanctioning the domination of nature for human's selfish interests. Although it is human-centred in some regard, it does not produce the sense of anthropocentric supremacy due to its deep-seated repercussions for ethics and spirituality. In addition, Rumi's notion of human flourishing is ecologically valuable because it is essential for perceiving the spiritual reality of nature. At the same time, nature itself is instrumental to human flourishing as a spiritual resource. Finally, as human flourishing is a normative concept with certain external (social and

ecological) aspects, care and responsibility for nature figure as crucial dimensions of becoming a complete human being.

**Objective 3:** *1) To develop Rumi's account of environmental virtues and vices*

*a) To identify Rumi's environmental virtues and vices by analysing their ecological implications for nature and human flourishing;*

This study has produced an extensive catalogue of virtues and vices. It contains 23 virtues and 28 vices of certain ecological significance. They were presented in four thematic groups: moral virtues, intellectual virtues, emotional virtues and the virtues of stewardship. The majority of these virtues and vices are designated as environmentally important for two reasons. *First*, they function in relation to Rumi's ecological vision of nature in certain ways. They operate within Rumi's notion of human flourishing. The virtues are the driving force of moral, intellectual and spiritual transformation. By leading such transformation they enhance human ability to perceive the spiritual dimension of nature. The vices, in turn, inhibit the perception of such aspect of nature. *Second*, the virtues and vices may have immediate impact on the environment. Although not explicitly regarded as nature-hostile by Rumi, vices such as selfishness, greed, gluttony and arrogance are driven by psychological tendencies that may operate in the human-nature context and can produce the same results as their ecological counterparts.

*b) To offer a categorization of Rumi's environmental virtues and vices.*

Four ecologically-based categories of virtues and vices emerge from this research. The virtue categories include (a) fundamental virtues, (b) virtues of deep perception, (c) virtues of

respect for nature and (d) virtues of stewardship. The vice categories include (a) fundamental vices, (b) vices of shallow perception, (c) attitudinal vices and (d) vices of action and behaviour. Such categorization is important because each category serves certain environmental goals. Moreover, the categories make up the typology of Rumi's EVE. Viewed as a whole, the typology presents an added value for EVE because it describes a process of character transformation toward an ecologically virtuous life.

Thus, in congruence with its aim, this research has produced a holistic model of EVE from Rumi's thought. The model is not just an account of a few individual virtues and vices. It presents a comprehensive notion of EVE which is developed in connection to the broader aspects of Rumi's thought and attempts to articulate the complex relationship between his virtues and vices. As a result, the study has resulted in an extensive catalogue and typology of Rumi's EVE.

#### **14.2. Contribution of this research**

This study has been an interdisciplinary analysis and as such contributes to three areas of research. *First*, it contributes to the general theory of EVE and this contribution comes in two forms. *Firstly*, the study provides accounts of specific environmental virtues (vices). There are several aspects to this. To my knowledge, some of the virtues resulting from this study such as reason, knowledge, spiritual depth and the sense of trust as well as the vices such as cognitive injustice, passivism and heedlessness have not been examined in the EVE literature<sup>149</sup>. In this respect, this research offers detailed accounts of those character traits. In addition, even if some of the virtues and vices that appear in Rumi are already included in the EVE literature, they are still of certain interest because their substance and meaning are

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<sup>149</sup> It is important to note that although Wensveen (1999) catalogues a long list of environmental virtues and vices, she does not provide their detailed explanation or definition.

defined by Rumi's particular worldview. Furthermore, this study offers categories and typology of environmental virtues and vices which have been uncommon in the EVE field<sup>150</sup>. All of these aspects define this study's contribution to the theory of EVE.

*Secondly*, religious perspectives are generally underrepresented in the current EVE studies. In particular, no detailed and comprehensive account of an Islamic EVE has been carried out so far. Therefore, Rumi's account of EVE provides some preliminary insights into what an Islamic version of EVE may look like. Last but not least, examining the lifeworks<sup>151</sup> of environmental role models has been a prominent approach to identifying environmental virtues. Most of the existing studies in the field propose notable individuals from the Western tradition such as Thoreau, Leopold and Carson as environmental role models. The fact that this research proposed a non-Western thinker as an environmental role model defines its unique contribution to the field.

*Second*, studying Rumi's EVE does not only bring an Islamic perspective into EVE research but also adds a new dimension to the general area of Islam and ecology. A virtue-based approach to Islamic environmental ethics would be particularly valuable since writers in the field have primarily focused on building an environmental ethic drawing upon the cosmological and legal aspects of the tradition with little attention to the character-based aspects of Islamic ethics.

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<sup>150</sup> To my knowledge, Sandler's (2006) is the only detailed typology of virtues in the field.

<sup>151</sup> "Lifework" is a term used by (Hull 2005) with regard to personal examples and philosophical views of "paradigmatically environmentally virtuous individuals".

*Third*, there is a host of secondary literature exploring various themes in Rumi's thought. However, the ecological dimension of his views has received only a limited attention from Rumi scholars. In this sense, this study is the first extensive analysis of Rumi's environmental ethics. A few works that analyze his ecological significance mainly focus on his views of nature. This study is different in that it examined the virtue dimension of Rumi's ethics in order to complement the existing works.

## Glossary of terms

**Agape** – one of the Greco-Christian terms for love denoting God’s love for human and the human love for God.

**Al-Adl** - God’s name: the Just.

**Al-Asma al-Husna** – the most beautiful names of God.

**Al-Bari’** – God’s name: the Maker.

**Al-Ghaffar** – God’s name: the Forgiving.

**Al-Hakim** – God’s name: the Wise.

**Al-Khaliq** – God’s name: the Creator.

**Al-Muhit** – God’s name: the one who surrounds.

**Al-Muhyi** – God’s name: the Giver of Life.

**Al-Mumit** – God’s name: the Giver of Death.

**Al-Musawwir** – God’s name: the Fashioner.

**Al-Qadir** – God’s name: the Most Powerful.

**Al-Razzaq** – God’s name: the Provider and the Giver of Sustenance.

**As-Sami** – God’s name: the All-Hearing.

**Al-Wasi** – God’s name: the All-Embracing or the Boundless.

**Amana** – trust; moral responsibility offered to human being by God as declared in the Qur’an (33:72).

**‘Aql-i juz** – partial reason.

**‘Aql-i kull** – Universal Reason.

**Arete** – virtue or excellence.

**Asma** – God’s names.

**Ayat** – “sign” of God in creation and “verse” of the Qur’an.

**‘Ayn al-yaqin** – “vision of certainty”: seeing or observing a thing instead of knowing it from a theory or a book.

**Baqa** (literally, “subsistence”) – in the practice of Sufism: subsisting or abiding in God.

**Dervish** – mystic.

**Dhat** – God’s essence and being.

**Episteme** – scientific knowledge and understanding.

**Eros** – one of the Greco-Christian terms for love denoting a passionate desire for something, typically sexual desire.

**Eudemonia** – happiness or welfare.

**Fana** (literally, “passing away”) – in the practice of Sufism: annihilation of the (lower) self or dying in oneself.

**Fitrah** – the natural pattern of creation or the original state of human nature as created by God.

**Hadith** – a record of the sayings, actions and the silent approval of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. It is regarded as the most authoritative source of religious knowledge after the Qur’an.

**Haqq al-yaqin** – “experience of certainty”: the highest level of certainty acquired by direct experience, by participating in the reality of a thing.

**Haram** – a legal principle of inviolable zones.

**Hima** – a legal principle of conservation zones.

**Hisba** – an agency comprised of a public inspector who ensures the proper use and protection of public and private resources.

**Husn** – beauty.

**Ihsan** – excellence or perfection in faith; doing what is beautiful and excellence.

**‘Ilm al-yqain** – “knowledge of certainty”: the level of certainty based on inferential or theoretical knowledge.

**Iman** – Islamic faith and belief.

**Insan-i kamil** – Sufi doctrine of the Perfect or Universal Human.

**Ishq ilahi** – love of God.

**Jalal** – God’s majesty; from the name al-Jalil – the Majestic.

**Jamal** – God’s beauty; from the name al-Jamil – the Beautiful.

**Kalam** – Islamic theology.

**Khalifa** – the doctrine of the human vicegerency and stewardship on earth.

**Khalq** – Qur’anic term for creation.

**Ma’** – water.

**Ihya al-mawat** – a legal principle of the reclamation of uncultivated land.

**Mawlawi order** – a Sufi order established by the followers of Rumi.

**Mithaq** – the primordial covenant between God and human beings.

**Mizan** – balance in the natural order.

**Muslim** – a follower of the religion of Islam; someone or something in a state of submission to the Divine will.

**Mu’tazilites** - a rationalist school of Islamic theology.

**Nafs** – Qur’anic term for self, soul or ego.

**Nafsi ammara** – in the practice of Sufism: “evil commanding self”.

**Nafsi lawwama** – in the practice of Sufism: “rebuking self”.

**Nafsi mutma’inna** – in the practice of Sufism: “self at peace”.

**Nous** – rational intuition or the ability of intellect to grasp fundamental principles through intuitive understanding.

**Philia** – one of the Greco-Christian terms for love denoting an affection for one’s friends and loyalty to one’s family, community, country, etc.

**Phronesis** – practical wisdom.

**Qadr** – measure in the natural order.

**Qur’an** – the holy book of Islam.

**Shaikh** – a Sufi master; leader of a Sufi order.

**Shari’ah** – Islamic Law.

**Sifat** – God’s attributes or qualities.

**Shirk** (literally, “making or associating a partner”) – Islamic term for polytheism, associating partners with God.

**Sophia** – (theoretical) wisdom.

**Tanzih** – Islamic doctrine of God’s transcendence, distance and incomparability with creation.

**Tasawwuf** (also known as Sufism) – the inner dimension or spiritual tradition of Islam.

**Tashbih** – Islamic doctrine of God’s immanence, nearness and similarity with creation.

**Tawhid** (literally, “asserting unity”) – the central doctrine of the oneness of God (monotheism) in Islam.

**Tazkiya-i nafs** – in the practice of Sufism: the process of purifying the soul from carnal desires and evil qualities.

**Techne** – the knowledge of crafts, art and skills.

**Wahdat al-Wujud** – a prominent Sufi doctrine of the “unity of existence” or “unity of being”.

**Waqf** – donating land for public good including conservation purposes. In a broad sense, *waqf* refers to different forms of endowment, e.g. land, money, property and even one’s life, made to a religious or charitable cause

**Wudu** – ritual ablution Muslims perform before their daily prayers.

**Zuhd** (literally, “detachment”) – Islamic term for asceticism.

**Zulm** – injustice, oppression, wrongdoing.

**Zulm al-nafs** – self-injustice.



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