

Eco-Onenessism: An Environmental Ethics of Interconnectedness for Addressing Climate Change

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Abstract

Climate change represents one of the most pressing global challenges of the 21st century. The rising of global temperatures, extreme weather events, melting ice caps, and shifting ecosystems are impacts of climate change. The moral implications of climate change have far-reaching effects on biodiversity, global stability, and ecological well-being. Using the philosophical method of analysis, the study finds that the cause of climate change is the human inability to see Earth as one and the lack of oneness; the ecological trinity in the hierarchy of being. The objective of the study is to recommend eco-onenessism by policymakers through teaching and learning in schools to affirm the unity of existence in the state of being. This philosophy stresses the interconnectedness of nature. Although the study finds that the implementation of Eco-onenessism is challenged by human anthropocentrism, yet it offers humanity a comprehensive framework that aligns environmental preservation with a sustainable future.

Keywords: Eco, Onenessism, Interconnectedness, Climate change, Eco-trinity, Native-centric-ecology, Nature, Spirits.

Introduction

Climate change is one of the most pressing global challenges of our time, significantly affecting natural systems and human societies worldwide (Osebor, 2024c). Climate change is caused by human activities on the environment, and its impact is multifaceted, influencing weather patterns, sea levels, ecosystems, agriculture, health, and more (Trenberth, 2018). The average global temperature has risen by about 1.3°C (2.3°F) since the late 19th century, primarily due to human activities like burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes. Increased temperatures lead to more frequent and severe heatwaves, which pose health risks, especially to vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing conditions (Brohan et al., 2006). Glaciers and polar ice caps are melting at unprecedented rates,

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contributing to sea-level rise. The Arctic is warming at twice the rate of the rest of the world (Brohan et al., 2006). Sea levels have risen about 8–9 inches since 1880, with the rate accelerating in recent decades. This threatens coastal communities with increased flooding, erosion, and saltwater intrusion into freshwater supplies (Osebor, 2023b; Monday, 2020d). Climate change has been linked to more intense and frequent weather events such as hurricanes, typhoons, droughts, and floods. Warmer ocean temperatures fuel stronger storms, while altered precipitation patterns lead to prolonged droughts in some regions (Francis & Hengeveld, 1998). Extreme weather damages infrastructure, disrupts transportation, and imposes significant economic costs on governments and communities. Changing temperatures and precipitation patterns disrupt habitats, leading to shifts in species distribution. Many plants and animals cannot adapt quickly enough, resulting in population declines and extinctions (Francis & Hengeveld, 1998). Ocean warming and acidification have devastated coral reefs, which are critical marine ecosystems. Coral bleaching weakens reef structures, threatening marine biodiversity and fisheries. Climate change affects crop yields through changes in temperature, precipitation, and the increased frequency of extreme weather. Droughts, floods, and heat stress reduce agricultural productivity. Warmer conditions expand the range of pests and diseases, which can further reduce crop and livestock productivity, threatening food security, especially in vulnerable regions (Praveen & Sharma, 2019). Shifts in precipitation patterns can lead to droughts in some regions and excessive rainfall in others, impacting water availability for drinking, agriculture, and industry (Praveen & Sharma, 2019). Rising temperatures increase the incidence of heat-related illnesses and deaths, particularly in urban areas. Warmer temperatures and changing precipitation patterns can expand the range of vector-borne diseases like malaria, dengue, and Lyme diseases have gone on the increase, regarding the danger of environment (Aigbovia, 2016). This condition has led to ecological grief or posttraumatic disorder linked to climate change (Monday, 2020a). The objective of the study is to address climate change through the teaching and learning of eco-onenessism in schools, and to recommend policies to policy-makers in Nigeria

Conceptual clarification

The term “eco” refers to the study of life in an environment. It is a short form used to refer to ecology. “Eco” is often linked to questions of existence, identity, and essence. At its core, it explores what it means to be alive, what constitutes the self, and how life forms relate to each other and their environment. Similarly, Onenessism is a term derived from “oneness.” Oneness is a state of being completely united with or a part of someone or something (Philip, 2015). For instance, a feeling of unity with the natural world. Solidarity, kinship, comprehension, empathy, harmony, affinity, compassion, rapport, friendship, peace, compatibility, and concord are synonyms for oneness. The philosophy of onenessism is shaped by interconnected experiences, consciousness, and the interactions between species. Eco-Onenessism promotes a holistic approach to environmental issues, recognizing that the well-

being of humans, animals, and ecosystems are all interconnected. Adoption of the philosophy of oneness with nature, individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and make sustainable choices that benefit the planet. Through Eco-Onenessism, we can work together to create a more sustainable and harmonious world for future generations. This perspective is an evolving story of existence interconnected and shaped by one's interactions, choices, and reflections on what it means to live a meaningful life through peaceful interactions while "ism" is a suffix to denote a system or ideology (Kurunmäki & Marjanen, 2018).

Roots of Eco-Onenessism

The concept of Eco-Onenessism is a prominent theme in both Asian and Western philosophical traditions. It emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all living beings and the environment. This philosophy promotes a holistic approach to understanding the world and advocates for sustainable and harmonious relationships between humans and nature (Lim, 2022). In Asian philosophical traditions, particularly in Taoism and Buddhism, the idea of oneness with nature is central to their teachings. These traditions emphasize the importance of living in harmony with the natural world and recognizing the interconnectedness of all things. The concept of Eco-Onenessism is deeply rooted in teachings of the native centric ecology, which stress the need for humans to respect and protect the environment (Rigley et al., 2023).

In Western philosophical thought, Eco-Onenessism has gained traction in recent years as a response to the environmental crisis facing the planet. Philosophers and thinkers have increasingly recognized the importance of adopting a more holistic and interconnected view of the world in order to address pressing environmental issues. This shift in perspective has led to a greater emphasis on sustainability, conservation, and ethical treatment of the environment.

Overall, Eco-Onenessism represents a convergence of Asian and Western philosophical traditions in their shared commitment to promoting a more harmonious and sustainable relationship between humans and the natural world.

The indigenous and modern systems thinkers like Baruch Spinoza and Arne Naess (the father of deep ecology), emphasized a unity of all things, advocating for the intrinsic value of nature apart from its utility to humans. For Naess, environmental problems are rooted in humanity's separation from nature, which needs to be overcome through a deeper ecological consciousness (Haukeland, 2023). The balance in ecosystems is achieved through the mutual dependence of various organisms (Laszlo, 1995). For instance, plants provide oxygen, animals contribute to nutrient cycles, and microorganisms decompose organic material to sustain life (Vanni, 2002). The human negative activities in the state of being have led to self-disruptions in the cosmic web like the extinction of a species destabilizes ecosystems and, eventually, human life (Tuxill & Bright, 2003).

Spinoza is one of the most famous Western philosophers associated with the unity of existence. In his work *Ethics*, he posited that everything that exists is part of a single substance, which he called God or Nature (*Deus sive Natura*) (Melamed, 2013; Benson, 2022). For

Spinoza, everything in the universe—whether physical or mental—is part of this unified substance (Levy, 1987). There is no separation between the divine and the natural world, and all things are expressions of the same underlying reality. Although the concept of dependent origination explains eco-onenessism as everything arises in dependence upon multiple causes and conditions, underscoring that nothing exists independently (Shulman, 2008). Individuals and things cannot exist in isolation, integrating biological conservation, environmental protection, and sustainable development as fundamental pillars for addressing climate change (Lim, 2022).

Naess is best known for founding the Deep Ecology movement, which argues for a shift from an anthropocentric (human-centered) view of the environment to an ecocentric (nature-centered) perspective to resolve climate change. Deep Ecology emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings, regardless of their utility to humans, advocating for radical changes in our behavior and policies to protect the natural world (Naess, 2019; Monday, 2020d).

Eco-eco-onenessism is non-duality but ecological monism is the hierarchy of being. It is a philosophy of one reality (Brahman), and that all apparent distinctions between self and other, subject and object are ultimately illusory. The unity of existence is seen as the realization that the individual self (Atman) is identical to Brahman, the ultimate, all-encompassing reality (Douglas, n.d.). The true nature of reality is found in the interdependent nature of all things, rejecting any notion of inherent existence. Nature has intrinsic value beyond its usefulness to humans.

Heraclitus, an ancient Greek philosopher, proposed that everything in the universe is in constant flux, yet there is a unity in this change. His famous doctrine of the unity of opposites suggests that the world is governed by a cosmic order or logos, where seemingly opposite forces are interconnected and interdependent, creating a harmonious unity (Guthrie, 1974). There is a need for a profound rethinking of our relationship with nature, moving beyond superficial environmental fixes to deeper, systemic changes (Bhaskar, 2013).

Aldo Leopold (1887–1948) introduced the concept of the “land ethic,” which expands the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, collectively known as the land. His philosophy urges humans to view themselves as members of a larger ecological community rather than conquerors of the land (Leopold, 2017). Ethical consideration should extend to the land and ecosystems, not just humans. Sustainable and respectful coexistence with the environment stresses the importance of biodiversity and the complex interrelationships in ecosystems. It promotes an ethics of care and responsibility towards the environment.

Speciesism (the discrimination against non-human species) promotes environmental impacts that harm sentient life, including habitat destruction and climate change (Jaquet, 2019). Humankind must rethink human-nature relationships, emphasizing ethics, culture, and history in addressing climate change. This paradigm emphasizes the importance of all aspects of human life, from philosophy and literature to politics and economics, guiding society towards a more sustainable future and embracing bio-environmentalism to reshape a future where human prosperity and ecological health coexist.

Eco-Onenessism challenges anthropocentric approaches that prioritize human convenience and profit over ecological balance. The anthropocentric practices do not consider long-term ecological health or the recognition of the interconnectedness of all life forms. It is a reductionist view that ignores the broader ecological context and disrupts natural systems, underscoring the importance of protecting diverse ecosystems (Rigley et al., 2023). Despite this challenge, eco-onenessism, if implemented, will help to restore biodiversity, increase resilience against climate disruptions, maintain ecological balance, and provide essential services like carbon sequestration, water purification, and soil fertility. This approach advocates for restoring degraded ecosystems through actions such as reforestation, wetland restoration, and soil rehabilitation. Restoring ecosystems helps capture carbon dioxide, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve climate adaptability. It emphasizes the sustainable use of natural resources, including promoting organic agriculture, reducing overfishing, and minimizing deforestation. Sustainable resource management ensures that human activities do not exceed the environment's capacity to regenerate.

The Concept of Eco-Onenessism

Eco-Onenessism is a growing field of study that explores how myths, mysteries, common sayings, and beliefs can contribute to the promotion of a sustainable future (Owoseni, 2024). It offers a unique philosophical framework that includes concepts like Deep ecology, Cartesian ecology, and others. While these ecological concepts share some philosophical roots, they emphasise' different aspects. The central concept of Eco-Onenessism is the spiritual interconnectedness and holistic unity among humans, nature, and spirit (Eco-Trinity). Eco-Trinity refers to the interconnected relationship between three key components of the earth: spirit, human, and environment, which sustain life and ecological balance (Edwards, 2012). It affirms the unity of the cosmos and the harmonious whole emanating from the First Cause (God) where all beings strive to actualize their purpose in harmony (Haq, 2014).

The Metaphysics of Eco-Onenessism

Spirit—————Human—————Environment

The metaphysics of Eco-Onenessism is rooted in African eco-philosophies, such as the Yorùbá concepts of *Ìgbàgbà* and *Ìmílà*, which explore environmental sustainability beyond the context of one local community (Owoseni, 2024). It refers to a triadic metaphysical interconnectedness between God (or the Divine), Environment, and humans. This affirms that the Earth is interconnected and sacred as a creation of a higher power (Lawal, 2024). For example, African indigenous belief systems see nature as alive with spirit, while Christian theology speaks of "Creation care" as a moral obligation and the Eastern religions like Buddhism and Hinduism promote balance and non-harming (*ahimsa*) toward all life. Eco-onenessism is synonymous with holistic sustainability of human, nonhuman animals, and environmental well-being (Owoseni & Olatoye, 2022). It has a rich tapestry grounded in Tawhid (Divine Unity),

which naturally leads to the idea of ecological oneness—the spiritual and moral unity between God, humans, and nature. The spiritual responsibility of humans is seen as caretakers or stewards of the Earth, not just users. Nature is a divine emanation—not random or meaningless. Each creature plays a purposeful role in the cosmic system, suggesting interdependence. Human well-being is tied to environmental health through balance and moderation (*mîzân*) (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025). However, metaphysical investigations have been rejected by the logical positivists because it lacks an empirical attitude, to understand the ontological meaning of environmental interconnectedness (Lawal, 2024).

The moral stance of eco-onenessism emphasizes treating nature not just as a system to protect, but as a spiritual extension of the self, on par with human life. It focuses on unity, and harmony with the earth, often invoking spiritual or metaphysical connections. For example, in African eco-philosophy, this might mean that humans are not stewards above nature but relatives within it. While Deep Ecology advocates for the intrinsic value of all living beings, regardless of their utility to humans, it was developed by thinkers like Arne Naess as a Western eco-philosophy critiquing anthropocentrism (Naess, 2019). The Ethical Stance of deep ecology calls for radical shifts in consciousness and society to value all life equally. It suggests population control, simple living, and bio-centric equality, while focusing on ecocentric ethics and deep questioning of human/nature dualism and industrial society. Eco-onenessism is unlike Cartesian ecology (where mind and matter are separate). It holds a holistic, animist, and relational ontology—closer to process philosophy or panentheism (Clark, 2004).

Eco-oneness, emerged as a new term in the field of native-centric ecology coined by Osebor (2023), argues that *Native-centric Ecology* refers to the interconnectedness and interdependence of all living beings and ecosystems on Earth. Eco-oneness emphasizes a holistic approach to addressing environmental issues, particularly climate change. It recognizes the wisdom and knowledge of indigenous cultures and their deep connection to the natural world (Osebor, 2024e, Osebor, 2024 f). Eco-Onenessism is an ecological value and practice that have been used to sustainably manage ecosystems for centuries. In Africa, it is often referred to as Ubuntu, Ukama, or ecological communalism, which emphasizes the deep relationship between humans and their environment. The harmony of the natural world reflects divine order. Humans, by acting rationally and ethically, should uphold cosmic balance.

It is rooted in the ideal unity and existence of all beings or the well-being of individuals is intertwined with the well-being of their community and the natural world. The individual and the community are seen as interdependent with nature. This interdependence prioritizes harmony between individuals and their environment, rejecting the excessive individualism found in Western thought and integrating indigenous knowledge systems to offer unique insights into the environmental management and fostering community involvement to enhancing conservation (Osebor, 2024b).

The aphorism “I am because we are” implies eco-onenessism between people and the natural world, suggesting that neglecting the environment disrupts the community’s spiritual

balance (Egri, 1997). It includes strategies that not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also adapt to the impacts of climate change. This involves developing climate-resilient agricultural practices, protecting coastal zones from rising sea levels, and creating urban green spaces. The promotion of green technology, such as renewable energy, waste-to-energy systems, and sustainable urban planning, is crucial in bio-environmentalism. These innovations aim to reduce the environmental footprint of human activities while supporting economic growth. Effective environmental policies and governance frameworks are necessary to implement bioenvironmental strategies. This includes international agreements, national laws, and community regulations that support biodiversity conservation, pollution control, and sustainable development. Although the implementation of Eco-Onenessism in combating climate change is challenged by inadequate funding, conflicting policies, a lack of awareness, and the need for greater international collaboration. Moving forward, it is essential to scale up bioenvironmental initiatives, invest in green technologies, and foster global cooperation to address climate change effectively. The ethics of eco-onenessism emphasizes the right and wrong of ecological interconnectedness (Osebor, 2023a). It seeks to cultivate harmony, cooperation, and mutual respect among all forms of life, viewing them as expressions of one fundamental source or principle. The ethical code guides environmental relationships without harming others, emphasizing a deeper sense of a unified whole.

Moral issues

The moral implication of Eco-Onenessism to restraining climate change has a profound and far-reaching effect. Eco-Onenessism emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life and the planet itself, suggesting that human beings are not separate from nature but an integral part of it. This perspective holds that the well-being of the Earth and all living beings is deeply interconnected, and therefore, ethical responsibility extends to all forms of life and the environment.

Everything in the universe is seen as interrelated and interdependent, forming a cohesive system where the well-being of one affects the whole (Thompson, 2016). From this view, individualism is redefined: one's personal well-being depends on the collective well-being of the entire system. An important ethical principle in eco-onenessism is compassion, born out of empathy. Because everyone and everything is part of a greater whole, compassion is a natural response to the suffering of others.

Ethical behavior in this system is rooted in extending care and empathy to all forms of life as their experiences are intertwined with one's own existence. Drawing from philosophies like Buddhism and Jainism, eco-onenessism promotes the idea of "ahimsa," or non-harm. Since harming others is seen as harming oneself, ethical behavior calls for minimizing violence and harm toward other beings, whether through direct action or indirectly (e.g., through ecological destruction) (Fitz, 2002). This concept embraces diversity and acknowledges differences in form, nature, and experience, placing moral responsibility on individuals not just for their

personal actions but for the well-being of the broader system, including communities, ecosystems, and future generations.

Onenessism is an ethical action encouraging a deep respect for nature. Since humans are part of the broader ecosystem, their survival and flourishing are contingent on the health of the planet. Ethical behavior in this context involves caring for the environment, reducing one's ecological footprint, and ensuring the sustainability of natural resources for future generations. Justice, in Eco-Onenessism, is about restoring balance and harmony rather than punishment. It advocates for restorative justice, where conflicts are resolved through understanding, healing, and reconciliation rather than retribution. This ethical framework focuses on healing the relational bonds that have been damaged and re-establishing equilibrium within the community or society.

The ethical principles of eco-onenessism are often anchored in spiritual or metaphysical beliefs that see the divine or universal consciousness as being present in all things. From this perspective, ethical living is not just a social duty but a spiritual practice, aligning oneself with the divine unity that pervades existence.

Eco-Onenessism often incorporates non-dualistic thinking, which transcends traditional binary distinctions such as good/evil or self/other. Ethical decisions are made with the understanding that such dualities are illusions and the aim is to act in ways that dissolve these false separations, fostering greater unity and understanding. The ethics of eco-onenessism naturally extend beyond local or national boundaries, emphasizing the global interconnectedness of human societies (Cunha, 1989). According to the principles of onenessism, individuals can cultivate a sense of interconnectedness with all living beings and the planet, leading to a more compassionate and sustainable way of life. This ethical framework encourages us to consider the impact of our actions on others and the environment, promoting a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of all. Through practising ethical behavior based on the principles of onenessism, we can contribute to a more peaceful and harmonious world for present and future generations.

The Relevance of Onenessism for Climate Change

Climate change is a universal issue that is present in almost every country and requires urgent attention and action (Oluwasanya et al., 2023). Eco-Onenessism, a philosophy that emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living beings and the environment, offers valuable insights and solutions for addressing this global challenge such as climate change. One of the key principles of Eco-Onenessism is the recognition that all living beings are interconnected and interdependent. This interconnectedness means that the actions of one species can have far-reaching effects on the entire ecosystem. The understanding and embracing this interconnectedness, we can develop a deeper sense of responsibility towards the environment and take actions to mitigate climate change. Additionally, Eco-Onenessism promotes a holistic approach to environmental issues, recognizing that solutions to climate change must consider the well-being of all living beings, not just humans. This perspective encourages us to think

beyond our own interests and consider the impact of our actions on the entire ecosystem. Furthermore, Eco-Onenessism emphasizes the importance of living in harmony with nature and respecting the inherent value of all living beings. By cultivating a sense of reverence and respect for the natural world, we can develop a more sustainable and ethical relationship with the environment (Osebor & Irabor, 2023).

Eco-Onenessism carries a moral dimension that demands humans recognize their role as stewards of the environment. It rejects the idea of domination over nature, urging humanity to act responsibly, considering the well-being of all life forms and future generations. The ethics of eco-onenessism are often embraced within spiritual and psychological frameworks. Many spiritual traditions regard nature as sacred and embody the belief that humans should live in harmony with it. It is eco-psychology, a field that explores the psychological relationship between humans and nature, asserting that the separation from nature is a source of mental and spiritual disconnection. Spiritual ecology is a field that blends environmentalism with spiritual awareness, advocating for a deeper connection to nature through rituals, meditation, and conscious living. Indigenous cultures, for instance, have long-held beliefs that regard the Earth as a living being with whom humans must maintain a respectful and reciprocal relationship.

The implantation of the morality of eco-onenessism will reshape the discourse on climate change, often by addressing ethical, moral, and philosophical issues (Jamieson, 2015). Although different approaches to addressing climate change include the adoption of political and moral institutions, they have failed due to global, intergenerational, and ecological complexities. For example changes in the ecosystem can affect climate, which in turn affect the ecosystem (Gardiner, 2011). Gardiner (2013) argues that the dispersion of cause and effect, the fragmentation of decision-making and institutional inadequacy complicate ethical responses to climate change. The manipulation of scientific information affects public understanding of climate change, and doubt is deliberately cast on scientific consensus by some groups to delay action, highlighting the moral responsibility of scientists and policymakers to address misinformation (Oreskes, 2004). This is dangerous; misinformation could lead to unintended and irreversible consequences on the planet addressing climate change. The ethics of eco-onenessism call for a greater responsibility to reduce the impacts of climate change and assist poorer nations in adapting through the implementation of eco-onenessism, an ethical obligation to consider the suffering of future generations due to current actions (Singer, 1993). Although this framework is complex to understand, it implores metaphysical comprehension. Humans perceive and interact with the environment (Morton, 2018). The intrinsic value of nature and the moral responsibility humans have toward protecting ecosystems is a reevaluation of human values and our place in the natural world (Rolston III, 2020). Capitalism has failed to address climate change. The fossil fuel economy is deeply intertwined with capitalist structures, and addressing climate change requires confronting these economic systems as they transition to a post-carbon society (Malm, 2019). Anthropocentric and patriarchal attitudes contribute to environmental degradation. What we need now is a relational and interconnected understanding

of nature to recognize the value of all life forms and challenge the dominance of human-centered thinking in environmental policy (Plumwood, 2003).

Conclusion

This study focuses on climate change and its implications. The study finds that the rationale for climate change is the human inability to see the earth as one. The objective of this study is to suggest the implementation of eco-onenessism to policymakers because it is a valuable framework for addressing climate change. This philosophy promotes interconnectedness, holistic thinking, and respect for all living beings. It encourages a sustainable and harmonious relationship with the environment, ultimately helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Although the implementation of Eco-Onenessism is challenged by human anthropocentrism, it offers a profound lens through which to view and address environmental issues. It fosters a holistic perspective that moves beyond fragmented or anthropocentric approaches, advocating for harmony between humans and nature through a reorientation. It challenges us to rethink our relationship with the planet and to act as responsible stewards of the Earth, acknowledging that our survival and well-being are deeply intertwined with the health of the natural world.

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