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Applied Philosophical Anekantavada: The Original Substance of the Human and Non-Human Relationship

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Research Article

Keywords: Climate Change, Ecotheology, Indian Philosophy, Jain Environmentalism, Eco-spirituality, Environmental Ethics

Posted Date: November 26th, 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-10553276/v1

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Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

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Abstract

In situating humanity within earth's living community, India's Jain philosophy of *Anekantavada* (non-one-sidedness) to understand the nature of reality is a useful methodological tool when applied using its three-stage explanatory model of *Utpāda* (origination), *Vyaya* (decay or disappearance), and *Dhrauvya* (the underlying substance remains). In using this three-stage model to explore the relationship that humanity holds with non-human life forms in a broad retrospective survey of global religion, I have found the original substance of the human and non-human relationship to be symbiotic. This is significant as our role began with the understanding that humans are a part of nature which became transformed into a relationship of exploitation that inflicted significant damage to the physical and spiritual well-being of all of Earth's interconnected life-forms and there is a rising awareness for the growth of planetary healing. Therefore, to promote planetary health, mending this relationship necessitates an awareness of the original benevolent state and recommends action through *ahimsa* (non-harm) and *aparigraha* (non-possession).

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Introduction

Anekantavada (non-one-sidedness) applied to the community of life is a successful argument in promoting *ahimsa* (non-violence) through carefully modified *aparigraha* (non-possession) to reduce demands which harm non-human life forms. This is a sensible argument as life on earth is a holistic system which must act benevolently towards each other or face mutual extinctions. The framework of the three stages of *Utpāda* (origination), *Vyaya* (decay or disappearance), and *Dhrauvya* (the underlying substance remains) found within anekantavada has been traditionally used to understand the nature of reality in Jain traditions. In using this traditional structure as a methodological model, the interconnected system of life on earth as a symbiotic relationship becomes clear as a linear sequence for a cylindric cycle.

The format of this discussion aligns with the methodology to situate this treatment within the framework of the traditional three-stage model. Therefore, this paper is outlined as a three-part analytic study through a linear account of history that spans from antiquity to the present. This pattern suggests a circular cycle that returns to a positive relationship in the human and non-human relationship. Part 0: will briefly define what anekantavada is and

explain how it is a useful philosophical method. Part 1: Utpāda surveys ancient and Indigenous religions to provide a broad scope of perspectives on the original worldviews about the relationship between humans and non-humans which shows evidence that it was one of equanimity and balance from the beginnings of our oral and written traditions. Part 2: Vyaya discusses how the effects of colonization, capitalism, and consumerism in a disposable world driven by progress has caused great harm to humans and non-humans as they are an interconnected life system. Part 3: *Dhrauvya* shows how the negative transformation on the stage of Vyaya has led to increasing awareness and actions towards a pro-life future. Part 4: concludes with how the discussion of the original substance of a holistic and benevolent human and non-human relationship, as co-inhabitants in the community of earth, leads to the solution of modified aparigraha as a philosophical goal.

The inspiration for this essay was a synthesis of many scholars on how to approach the human and non-human relationship through *anekantavada* and in defining its significance. The discussion is grounded in the scholarship of Johannes Bronkhorst and Ramakant Sinari for understanding anekantavada and its depth of religious meaning. In doing so, Bronkhorst (2024) first offers a framework for the historical uses of anekantavada as an answer to Bimal Krishna Matilal's 1981 "paradox of causality"[1] (Bronkhorst, 2024) and, as a secondary usage for "classifying non-Jaina philosophical positions" (Bronkhorst, 2024). Bronkhorst's enlightening examination of the past usage of anekantavada is clarifying, but what was pertinent for this research was his clear explanation of the traditional analogy of clay and pot to solve the paradox in asking if the clay is the cause of the pot or is the pot the cause of the clay. This is literally a discussion of the nature of reality that is found in the Aristotelian question of whether the egg or the chicken came first, or rather, if the chicken was first in the egg or the egg was first in the chicken. This is significant as Indian traditions' worldview as cause and effect are integral in exploring dharma and karma which, in essence, is crucial because dharma, or duty of behaviors, and karma, or consequences of action, provide the basis for a religiously guided life. Sinari's (1969) contribution focuses on bringing clarity to the purpose of anekantavada to examine the point of view of others as a stance of certainty with the admittance that no ordinary

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[1.] To oversimplify, Matilal's paradox explores the intersection between cause and effect to determine if the effect of actions is within the action itself, or if an expected result is correlation. This is important when seeking Jain liberation as analyzing the cause of action to determine preconditioned results is an analysis of the best courses of action towards reaching *moksha*, or liberation from the cycle of reincarnation, which is an ultimate goal in Jain traditions. In discerning right conduct, one of the Three Jewels of Jain Traditions along with right faith and right knowledge, the result of actions is a weighty topic that affects the decisions made on the quantity and type of the karmic matter that stains the soul which may hinder the path towards liberation. However, contrarily in some Buddhist traditions, effect is separate from the cause (See Perrett, 1998).

individual perspective could ever hold the entirety of truth as knowledge is "fractional" (Sinari, 1969, 60). Sinari explains that the view of the nature of reality is polyperspectival and complex which offers ethical guidance for Jain practitioners. Placing Bronkhorst and Sinari in conversation provided much clarification for how anekantavada is formulated as a multi-perspectival system for analytical application.

To further research on how to view the human and non-human relationship, Samani Charitrapragya, Vandana Shiva, Kalpita Bhar Paul, and the study on the connection through anekantavada between altruism and empathy that was published in 2025 by Mannu Brahmi, Riya Jaur, Ahana Viegas Raman, Gautami Sureslr, and Jyoti Kumar were influential in determining how anekantavada is tied to the Jain concepts of environmental ethics through ahimsa and aparigraha. Charitrapragya (2004) stated, "An approach imbued with *anekāntavāda* spawns tolerance. Thus, in this sense, *anekānta* is also an essential precondition of *ahimsā*"[2] (pp. 83). This statement then implies that the acknowledgement of other viewpoints leads to a place where peace, or ahimsa as non-harm, is logically sequential and this creates a unique background from which to study the relationship between human and non-human living beings. Shiva (2005) provided impetuous for applicable thought to the discussion with:

> The result [of Capitalistic growth] is a high level of ecological instability, as illustrated in the ecological crisis created by commercial forestry, commercial irrigation, and commercial fishing. To resolve ecological conflicts and regenerate nature, these economies[3] must be given their due place in the foundation of a healthy nature. (pp. 52)

Shiva's perspective not only connects human and non-human life through cause and effect with the deleterious efforts of capitalism acting upon the non-human living environment but stresses how an unhealthy environment acts on human sustenance. Through the lens of Shiva, this is not only a situation of accountability but a call of human action for "healthy nature" (2005, 52). Her solution of promoting local purchasing for environmental health support this essays' suggestion for a socially modified version of aparigraha by decreased consumerism. To nuance Jain environmental ethics in context, Paul's (2019) discussion of ahimsa as a central tenet being "the core concept around which all other vows revolve" (p. 76) as counsel for vegetarianism, situates human positionality with animal-life as

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[2.] The connection between anekantavada and ahimsa is meaningful in Jain context as ahimsa is one of the five minor vows (anuvratas) of a Jain layperson and in the first of the ten vows (mahavratas) for mendicants.

[3.] Shiva's three economies are the Market, Sustenance, and Nature's economies which is a balance of commercial interests, people's living requirements, and the resources of nature in discussion of global agriculture. For further reading on the three types of economies (See Shiva, 2005, pp. 14-19).

sensitive earthly cohabitants while disavowing the reality of one type of creature being the capitalistic resource of the other. Paul furthers the discussion to show how placing the perspective of ahimsa on fellow life achieves empathy and reinforces compassionate actions for regenerating the human and non-human relationship through religiously prescribed ethics. Brahmi et al.'s study on altruism and empathy demonstrates how anekantavada is a useful method for examining abstract relationships such as motivational feeling in finding that empathy often spurs altruism. This finding supports a recommendation for the awareness of the perspective of other beings. In exploring another's perspective, it is found that sympathy through awareness produces altruistic results. These scholars are pertinent to the background of this discussion as Charitrapragya, Shiva, Paul, and Brahmi et al. create a base from which to commence a discussion that analyzes the human and non-human relationship as a multiply sided conversation.

Shelby L. Crosby and Malea Powell were foundational in this research in framing how belief is projected into the future for hope and for underscoring the importance of different approaches to knowledge. Crosby's definition of visionary activism oriented this essay's approach as it "is concerned with and build toward a freer world that focuses on social justice for all" (2021, 221) and it is "a way to reimagine and heal the world" (Crosby, 2021, 228). Crosby instills the discussion with a vision for the future through practicing healing behaviors. By imagining the future as a better place, it gives a vision for which to strive and this is pivotable when seeking to balance the disproportionate price that nature pays as a resource to human activities. Powell, as a Maimi and Shawnee scholar, proposes, when studying Indigenous American religion, that Indigenous Americans and Western scholars commit to each other as "If we are to be allies, we must share some understanding of one another's beliefs" (Powell, 2004, 42). This perspective is relatable to anekantavada as it suspends disbelief of another's perspective through openness for understanding which allows for a cooperation of viewpoints towards shared goals. This is insightful; as in accepting that another's viewpoint is different but valid, it shows how the use of anekantavada can promote empathy which brings forth compassion to create an atmosphere for the growth of ahimsa. This in turn relates to the discussion as it shows how a call for ahimsa can lead to seeking a solution of care which can be supported through modified aparigraha as a concept to bridge competitive world perspectives and work as allies. This is important as, although anekantavada, ahimsa, and aparigraha are initially Jain concepts, the structure of them upholds a foundation for environmental healing and therefore they can become pan-religious goals. In essence, Shelby L. Crosby and Malea Powell provide a basis of cooperation for multi-sided conversations and underscore

how outside perspectives are crucial to understanding so common goals can be reached from a foundation of scholarship to discuss human and non-human relationships.

It is from the groundwork of Johannes Bronkhorst, Ramakant Sinari, Samani Charitrapragya, Vandana Shiva, Kalpita Bhar Paul, Brahmi et al., Shelby L. Crosby, and Malea Powell that a lens of anekantavada was built upon to examine the human and non-human relationship. With this foundation, I argue that placing the human and non-human relationship in the framework of anekantavada promotes awareness of its original substance as a beneficial and symbiotic relationship. This awareness supports ahimsa through empathy and compassion which can be useful to increase planetary health through carefully modified aparigraha. The purpose of this discussion is to promote planetary healing through compassionate awareness for life. In Jain traditions the values of ahimsa, anekantavada, and aparigraha are a path to liberation as freedom from rebirth. In society, these philosophies can be integrated to promote responsiveness to fellow life, provide drive for environmental awareness through empathy, and offer a solution to reinforce ethical living by decreasing consumerism.

Part 0: What is anekantavada and how do you use it?

Anekantavada is a complex and nuanced understanding of reality. One basic explanation for this philosophy is in the form of seven polyperspectival statements.[4] Another is in equation with the analogy of a clay pot. Both explanatory models communicate the same idea. The idea that there is a multifaceted dimension to defining truth or, in other words, reality. In this treatment the analogy of the clay pot will be used as a thoughtful methodologic template applied to study the standpoints that frame the human and non-human relationship.

The Jain traditional use of the clay pot is based on historically sacred scriptures. Sixth century Svetambara Acharya[5] Jinabhadra's *Visesavasyaka Bhasya* reads:

> For example, a pot is being produced having been produced in the form

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4. The seven positional statements of anekantavada sound contradictory but clarify the range of perspectives that can be produced depending on from where something is viewed. This is a viewpoint of modification, *saptabhangi*, that acknowledges that all perspectives can only be partial. The seven stances that can be taken are 1. It is, 2. It is not, 3. It is and is not, 4. It cannot be described, 5. It is and cannot be described, 6. It is not and cannot be described, and 7. It is and is not and cannot be described (Sinari, 1969, 61).

5. A note on the identifiers *Svetambara* Acharya in reference to Jinabhadra for a deeper understanding is as follows. Svetambara is the Jain denomination where the monks and nuns wear white clothing in contrast to the Digambar tradition, in which monks are skyclad or, in other words, nude. Interestingly, this presents the main dogmatic difference between the two traditions as the *Svetambara* tradition allows that woman can be full nuns with *moksha*, liberation from the cycle of rebirth through reincarnation, attainable; whereas, the *Digambar* tradition maintains that women cannot become full nuns with the opportunity for liberation as they cannot adhere to the sky-clad requirement in a public setting. *Acharya* is a title of reverence for a spiritual and administrative leader within the monastic order.

> of clay etc., because it is made of that. That same [pot] is being produced not having been produced concerning its a particular shape, because that was not there before. (Bronkhorst, 2004)

This analogistic description contains three parts and it is from these three parts that the analysis of the relationship between humans and nature will stem. Utpāda is origination whereby new states continually arise. In this state the clay is the substance of the pot, the clay is where the pot lives before it has taken shape. It is there and it is not there in the clay. It cannot be described because it is not there, and it can be described because one can imagine what it will be. Vyaya is a phase of decay or disappearance, in this mode previous modes end so that new ones may begin. In this phase the shape of the clay is decayed or destroyed as it takes the form of the pot. This is a transformative time where the substance stays clay, but the shape of the clay is no longer a lump of clay. It is a pot, but not only a pot as it is clay. The clay is still there but it cannot be described as clay as it is now described in definition as a pot, so the clay is indescribable. Dhrauvya cycles this back to the understanding that the underlying substance remains the same. Although the clay has become a pot, the pot is still clay.

In basing the understanding of the analogy of clay and pot through Johannes Bronkhorst, the analogy of clay and pot outlines the idea of reality as permanent and affirms the fluidity of its changing modes. This analogy pairs well with the nature of reality but also is applicable when examining a human and non-human relationship. The human and non-human relationship is a cycle that has changing modes which begin with the origination of life as kin, which changed to a mode of decay and destruction, yet, in the end, the holistic substance of human beings and nature remains the same. In considering the present age as a phase of Dhrauvya, it can be noted for its examples of renewal and revitalization for kinship with other life forms that mirrors the orientation found in the earlier views in the phase of Utpāda.

Part 1: Utpāda (origination)

In the origination of Utpāda, it is notable as to how many varieties there are for the message of the interconnectedness of all life as fellow life. The common substance of life identity was a global archetype to describe the relationship between humans and nature of which the origins of can be found in the oral traditions and oldest of texts of cultures globally. Looking at the origins of the human and non-human relationship is to look at the religious cosmologies that began and grew out of global cultures. The cultures of many countries hold in their religious perspectives, as a substance of their cosmology or world orientation, guidance for human interactions with

nature from a reciprocal viewpoint of teaching kinship and respect. These views are pluralistic and can be inspected globally through a religious lens. To examine the cultural range of these perspectives an examination of comprehensions, explorations of incarnations, and discussion on nature of the soul and afterlife in a diversity of religions was necessary. These pluralistic narratives reveal how humans have conceived the perspective of nature that instructs kinship with fellow, yet non-human, life and therefore is evidence for a holistic and healthy relationship with nature.

For Jains, the explanation for soul and afterlife creates an irrevocable bond between all living things through the mechanics of *samsara*, or rebirth in reincarnation. This is not a unique concept as Brahminic[6] traditions believe in reincarnation in a similar sense as Jain traditions. In comparing Brahmanical and Jain traditions, what is significant is, although theoretical conditions have some crucial differences, there is a common belief in species fluidity in rebirth. The Jain canonical text, the *Acharanga-Bhasyam* states of the *jiva*, or soul:

> There is no discrimination about the nature of soul, the distinction
> being only in respect of the degree of their knowledge, intuition, etc.,
> owing to the difference in the karmic veils that cover or distort them.
> (Acharya Mahaprajna, 2001, p. 34)

The Brahminic epic *Bhagavad Gita* supports the Jain viewpoint in discussing the transmigration of *atman*, or soul, from one life to the next:

> Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, O son of Kunti,
> that state he will attain without fail [which is furthered in Prabhupada's commentary
> with] Maharaja Bharata, although a great personality, thought of a deer at the end of
> his life, and so in his next life he was transferred into the body of a deer.
> (Prabhupada, 1983, p. 330)

Therefore, the Jain jiva and Brahminic atman, of all living things are known to be of the same substance whether human, animal, plant (Jain), or butterfly. The only difference between souls is not categorization through species. For Jain traditions, it relies on the types and quantity of *karmas*, particles acquired upon the soul by life actions, that

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6. Here I use the word Brahminic as I am referring to the ancient beginning philosophies of Hinduism. This set of religions was not referred to as Hindu until after British colonization.

have been accrued through a lifetime. For Hindu traditions, the soul form crosses boundaries between species through thoughts projecting into the next life upon death. It is then relatable that if an individual can pass from a human life to take rebirth as a plant or an animal; then the cycle of life would necessitate interconnectedness through common soul matter, else the various systems of rebirth forms would be incompatible. Textually, life assignments are fluid between distinct species forms for rebirth in Jain and Brahminic understandings.

Outside of traditions with an Indian origin, the strength of argument in Utpāda as an original substance for a convivial human and non-human relationship is in the ethical reflection found in the beliefs of the historical Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. The Caxcan of Oaxaca, Mexico endorses plants, animals, and other features of the natural world framed in shared kinship in the ancient oral tradition of their creation story. The value of a creation story is its' function to orient the behaviors of humans as a loadstar, or guiding star, narrative to their worldview. This worldview pinpoints their place in the cosmos to instruct them in relationships with life factors such as non-human living beings. The Caxcan creation story says:

> Father Snake and Mother Crow became responsible for teaching
> the first people how to live in balance with their earthly relatives.
> … The people and the birds spoke the same language at this time.
> (Ocampa, 2023, p. 63)

The word "relatives," instructs a proper orientation for the type of knowledge that Father Snake and Mother Crow will impart. This perspective is not one of dominance as can be noted in the use of the word "balance." Balance indicates equality and therefore invests power and agency of equal worth to all groups of living beings. As there are first people, it is easy to then construct in the designation "earthly relatives" several things. One that they are relatives, therefore related through some type of common substance to the first people as family. Secondly, they are not people as they are outside the group of first people and so cannot be people as they were in existence when first people arrived amongst them. Another considerable point is that human and non-human life had conversations using a shared language. Being able to converse in a shared language provides a connection for conversation, and, therefore, a perspective of sentience for non-human life forms. The creation story of the Caxcan is a perspective of non-human life forms as kin, with the ability for human and non-human egalitarian communication.

In validating a perspective for non-human life, the ability to communicate plays a vital role in the agency to have a perspective. In South America's Amazon region, Jeremy Narby interviews co-author Amazonian Indigenous

healer, Rafael Chanchari Pizuri who maintains "when you drink *ayahuasca*[7], it tells you, 'this person is unwell and needs to take such-and-such plant"(Narby and Pizuri, 2021, p. 45). This relationship underscores that non-human life forms hold knowledge which it can share. The human and nature relationship in the Amazon is not one of dominance over substance but a source of education for humans where survival is aided by plant knowledge in a benevolent relationship. In the original fabric of South American Amazonian groups, non-human life was crucial for the continuation of humanity.

The affirmation and validation for a perspective that originates from animals and plants is substantiated in many other schools of religious thought beyond Jain, Brahminic, Caxcan, and Amazonian Indigenous traditions. In Christianity there is an undeniable understanding of the human and non-human connection was exemplified in the thirteenth century by St. Francis of Assisi who preached to the birds. This is the story as related by scholar Roger D. Sorrell:

> Francis and his brothers, traveling toward Bevagna, chance to see a flock of ravens, doves, and other birds in a field nearby. Francis, leaving his disciples, runs to the birds, greets them, and urges them to listen to the word of God. After he preaches to them, the birds extend their beaks, flap their wings, and rejoice in their way while Francis moves among them, blessing them, and giving them permission to leave. (Sorrell, 1983, p. 400)

Albeit, St. Francis was known to have been innovative almost to the point of obsession as he clung to poverty beyond even papal understanding, but his Sermon to the Birds is recollected most upon hearing his name. Saint Francis, in his expression, can be interpreted as confirming birds with comprehension and worthy of soul salvation. The Bible instructs in Mark 16:15 "And he said to them, go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Coogan et al., 2018, p. 1863) and states in Psalm 33 "From where he [God] sits enthroned he watches all the inhabitants of the earth" (Coogan et al., 2018, p. 808). The Bible then supports Saint Francis in ministering to the birds as part of the whole of creation and as an inhabitant of the earth that is worthy of the

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[7.] Ayahuasca is a traditional sacred plant concoction used under the guidance of religious specialists for sacred journeys and for the gaining of knowledge in the upper South American Amazon region.

attention of the Abrahamic God. Therefore Saint Francis, through Christian authority, attributes a logical viewpoint to non-human life as capable of comprehending speech to promote salvation.

In conclusion of this portion of the analysis, the status assigned to human and non-human life interactions is confirmed through the origin of global belief structures as an underlying substance. The historical vantage point to analyze the human and non-human relationship is apparent as Jain, Brahminic, Caxcan, Amazonian, and Christian traditions legitimize a sentient viewpoint for non-human life. The pluralistic aspects centered around a relationship with nature in cross-cultural examination of ancient texts and representational cosmologies recognized a beneficial association between them. In Jain traditions, this historical evidence could indicate the original substance of the human and non-human relationships resided in a state of ahimsa (non-harm). Although countless ancient cultural diets required the hunting of animals and gathered plants for food and survival resources, ancient cultures also have traditions of wisdom, relatability, and reciprocity embedded in their worldview. It is this natural order of things, as a shared and recognized substance of equal worth, that is the original substance, or Utpāda, for human and non-human relationships.

Part 2: Vyaya (decay or disappearance)

Vyaya then is a transformative phase of decay or disappearance wherein previous modes pass away such as the traditionally held viewpoints of fellowship with nature. In this phase the modes of positive co-existence between all life on earth have been silenced or made extinct. Here the view of nature as fellow life, as seen in earlier cosmological constructs and philosophies, has entered a Vyaya condition. In the past several hundred years, the convivial nature of human and non-human dynamics was altered by rampant capitalism, consumerism, and greed in vast segments of the world population. This condition had produced immensely destructive impacts on life sustaining factors for nature, people, animals, soil, air, water, and biodiversity which threatens even the endless quantities of the smallest living beings on this planet. In this stage, the relationship has become covered in concrete, asphalt, litter, and pollution and been removed from Indigenous stewardship for economic gain in industry and tourism.

The first complex manufacturing company began a transformation which unbalanced the established relationship between human and non-human life. Capitalism drove businesses to become bigger and fight competitively for economic gains that came at the cost of human and non-human lives to benefit short-turn humanity. The first recorded U.S. complex manufactory facility was The Boston Manufacturing Company of 1813

which housed all stages of cotton cloth production for the first time under one roof and employed a vast number of young farm girls who lived in company boardinghouses between 1817-1881 (Baker Library, 2024). The holdings from the company grew and "By the 1840s, nearly 10,000 Yankee women had … work in Lowell's ten major textile corporations" (Tsongas Industrial History Center, n.d., p. 2). These cotton mills provide a continuous source of employment and were an economic boon, but they also did great harm to the environment. Historical reports conclude that "during the 19th century, serious pollution of the air and the watershed dramatically degraded the environment"(Tsongas Industrial History Center, n.d., p. 5). The watershed they are referring to is the Merrimack watershed which is an ecosystem of 2.1 million acres that crosses over the New Hampshire and Massachusetts state lines and is a critical resource for terrestrial, aquatic, and marine life (Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forest, 2016a). It is this vast stretch that was logged, cleared, dammed, and redirected to produce power for the boom of massive textile manufacturing (Tsongas Industrial History Center, n.d., p. 5). As a critical resource for life, the Merrimack watershed is decidedly crucial and when capitalist businesses made the decision to promote manufacturing in the watershed, it was a clear decision to devalue the lives of an infinite number of species. The industrialization of America is an instrumental action that diverged the courses of reciprocity and kinship between human and non-human life. Industrialization, in essence, is the process of viewing non-human life as a commodity.

The example of the textile industry of The Boston Manufacturing Company was only a foreshadow of the global expansion of multibillion dollar corporations that produce infinite numbers of goods at infinitely rising costs to fellow life forms. This is noteworthy as many species are facing extinction because of capitalist priorities over nature. It is scientifically proven and supported by common sense that all life needs clean air, clean water, and reliable food for a survivable climate. When the extinction of non-human life is commonplace, human beings also suffer and decline. The Merrimack watershed supports thousands of species but is also the source of drinking water for 2.6 million humans (Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forest, 2016a). The co-decline of the health of human and non-human life parallels the affinity of the two and offers proof that the relationship of humans and non-humans is an original substance, for although the relationship has changed, it has not gone away.

The effects of industrially produced climate change have been actively encouraged by human behaviors and these in turn have affected all living beings on the planet to make life less tenable. In presenting one example[8], the

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[8.] For a supportive secondary example, the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) in the urban areas of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and London has declined by as much as 90% (De Laet and Denis Summers-Smith, 2007, p. S277). As urban areas have a high density of human populations, the decline of the house sparrow does provide much for

plight of the Yellow Cedar shows the decline of life clearly in the real possibility of extinction. Lauren Oakes studied the effects of climate change on the Alaskan, or yellow, cedar, *Callitropis nootkatensis,* over the course of six years. This is significant as mass die offs of a species is a signal that the planet is in distress and is losing biodiversity. Lack of biodiversity causes even more extinctions as the life cycle of an ecosystem is dependent on the ability of all factors to find or become resources on which other species rely. Essentially, biodiversity is a necessary factor as all life is interconnected within an ecosystem and all ecosystems are interconnecting in earth's biosphere.

Lauren Oakes interviewed a noted environmental Pacific Northwest scientist, Dr. Paul Hennon, who explains how rising seas, warmer temperatures, and melting ice are causing the Yellow Cedar die offs. Hennon credited the high mortality rate of yellow cedars as a product of the unnaturally high temperatures in Alaska in comparison with the global average. This increased heat causes early snow melt, which exposes the roots, as it did during the Little Ice Age, so the snow is gone when a Spring cold snap occurs after first thaw. As a result, the tree roots have lost their insular snowy protection, and, without it, they die (Oakes, 2018, p. 26-27). The Yellow Cedar die offs affect humans by negatively impacting cultural continuation as the Yellow Cedar provides traditional Chilkat weaving materials for the Northern Pacific Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian (Oakes, 2018, p. 142-143). This destruction underscores the interconnected transformation that had occurred in the human and non-human relationship. In the Yellow Cedar die off, the substance of the human and non-human relationship is violently reshaped with destructive measure on both sides, which fits squarely in definition of the Vyaya phase as outlined in anekantavada.

Another type of deleterious effect that capitalism had initiated in disavowing a positive human and non-human life relationship is through tourism. The Caxcan of Oaxaca, Mexico are a fitting example of this problematic view. Tourism brings money into an area but governmental policies to develop a tourism economy are harmful to non-human and human life. It strips people of their sacred landscapes and identity while inhibiting the human and non-human relationship. The Caxcan life view is based on Father Snake and Mother Crow and is anchored in the knowledge that humans were born from a cave on Tlachialoyantepec Mountain. On this mountaintop in July, the yearly Xuchitl Dance celebration of the human and non-human relationship hereditarily took place. This is key as "histories embedded into performative cultural practices such as the Xuchitl Dance establish Caxcans' place in the

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suggestive thought as De Laet and Summers-Smith rightly acknowledge in ending their report with "the miner's canary" (De Laet and Denis Summers-Smith, 2007, p. S278).

world and guide their preservation practices" (Ocampo, 2023, p. 60). Tlachialoyantepec is also the site of the Mixton War Massacres[9] that occurred in the sixteenth century, and it is this aspect of history that Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) is interested in for a "boost to the local economy" (Ocampo, 2023, p. 59). However, in doing so, INAH's focus on a colonial narrative has cut off access to Tlachialoyantepec for Caxcans which erases its traditional history. Daisy Ocampo's research defines the importance of these traditional celebrations in remarking "A disruption to the Xuchitl Dance will ripple into people's livelihoods, spiritual connections, and sense of themselves as caretakers of the land" (Ocampo, 2023, p. 69). So, without access to the mountain, traditional reaffirmations of human and non-human networks cannot be reinforced in its traditional landscape. Therefore, the Mexican government through INAH has performed damage to the relationship between human and non-human friendships for monetary gain. In doing so, the alterations upon the Caxcan people is harmful to their identity and inflicted damage to their situational placement and connection with non-human life forms.

Vyaya is a time of transformation, as previous modes pass away, an original substance is not lost but is reshaped. In the analogy of the pot, this would be the time that the clay is being smashed and squished to destroy the shape of clay to form the shape of the pot. As a stage of Vyaya, the connection that capitalism has with consumerism is driven by greed that reshaped ethics and values from a perspective of sharing the soul substance to that of human supremacy for exploitation. For progress, people have bulldozed, built factories and shipping facilities, and terminated vast stretches of living nature while threatening the world's water supply, like that of the Merrimack, to produce more products for consumption by consumers. Parallelly, greed through tourism has reformed the spiritual relationship that the Caxcan have with world life. And climate change has endangered trees which provide a way of being for the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian. Because reshaping destroys the old form and, when the transformation ends, there is a new shape, it is reasonable, that in creating the new shape, the original substance remains unchanged as a pot formed of clay is still clay. The lesson is when humans disregard the truths of non-human life, it destroys everyone's environment. Therefore, the evidence follows that the original substance of the human and non-human relationship is an integrated system, which when harmed, causes endangerment and extinctions on both sides. The bond between human and non-human life is a conditional environment that derives life from the same source, the planet Earth. The conclusion of the Vyaya phase is that the deaths of other species are signs of doom for us all.

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9. The Mixton War Massacres were conducted during the 16th century to subdue Indigenous revolt to European conquest.

Part 3: Dhrauvya

Dhrauvya, as the phase of the present age, follows the linear progression of Utpāda and Vyaya to circle back around to the origination of the human and non-human relationship as a benevolent original substance in the multitude of voices arising from the previously minoritize majority of earth-centric religions that have gone unheard through the phase of Vyaya. The phase of Dhrauvya is one filled with hope as light arises from the renewal of religions, revitalization of philosophies, and is embraced in faith which honors a compassionate existence for all life. The Industrial era has made an impact on this relationship, but the final form has yet to be decided. Today, many have recognized that the industrialization and colonization of people and planet have been increasingly harmful to human and non-human life. This harm has been both in health of bodies and in the health of the spiritual relationship with all planetary life. The Merrimack Watershed plays an important part in understanding this relationship as the harm begun by the cotton mills is being cleaned up being that there has been significant improvement since the 1972 Clean Water Act[10] (Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forest, 2016b). The characteristics noted in this present day of Dhrauvya are the rekindling of life affirmation through activities like garden planting Jains, the publishing of stories for Indigenous Americans based on traditional teachings, and scientific advancements that see potential in the discourse of plants. As the phase of Dhrauvya is a revival of the recognition for a pro-life human and non-human relationship, a balanced perspective on nature as equal and deserving of life courtesies is placed in relation to human beings.

Jain traditions have found ethical values in promoting a greener world based in the concepts of soul matter and ahimsa as was mentioned in the discussion of the Utpāda phase.[11] One of the most beautiful concepts for encouraging a shared life affirming perspective for humans and non-humans as fellow life forms rest in the creation of Tirthankara gardens. Jain Tirthankara Tree Gardens, also known as *Tirthankar Vana* or *Vatika*, are planted to raise awareness, educate, and to maintain a space for human and non-human life connection to be cultivated. For example, Lekhak Goan is full of meaningful trees and herb gardens that "serve as living repositories of ancient botanical wisdom" (Lekhakgaon, 2025). The trees within are each associated with a Tirthankara who gained moksha under a tree of that species. This is significant as *moksha* is liberation from reincarnation and is the highest goal of Jain religious philosophy which suggests the role of trees in the acquisition of *moksha* is a pertinent association. The

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[10.] Interestingly, the 1972 Clean Water Act was a measure passed by Congress against President Nixon's veto.

herb gardens too are replete with similar meanings to construct a beneficial and holistic picture for plants and human beings. The gardens contain plants which align with Vedic Hindu-based knowledge for healing and celestial influences for health and life. The connection between humans and non-human life is the focus of these gardens and they are a voice raised for ahimsa grounded in traditional religious convictions for an unsegregated pro-life world.

Global earth-centric cultures of religion around the world are creating access to their sacred stories which affirm life as a companionable, shared characteristic between human and non-human beings. Pomo and Coastal Miwok Greg Sarris has contributed vastly to the awareness of sacred stories for life connection by retelling ancient Indigenous American narratives and publishing them in volumes where anyone may gain the knowledge. Additionally, Sarris has written a book, *Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts* (1993), that provides research approaches for methodology in the study of Indigenous American worldviews and religions. For a sample of these moralistic retellings, in the story *Centipede Calls for a Footrace* (Sarris, 2019, p. 41-53) the villagers hid by becoming the plants and flowers that were used for their skilled trades after Centipede cheated at footraces to gain their beautiful crafts. Thereafter, to access the plant knowledge for people to use their materials, the plants must be honored with a naming ceremony, feast, and dance. In this way they know that they are respected. Otherwise, the consequence would be a denial of their availability and efficacy. Then their useful wisdom for survival will be lost. In telling these stories, Sarris reaffirms the system of all life forms as holistic and related. When the villagers became plants, it showed the relationship of humans and non-human forms to be migratory which is relatable to the Jain and Hindu belief in the lack of discrimination in soul matter. Sarris' story is also a lesson on co-relationships that demand respect for teachers of knowledge. Both these concepts were found in Utpāda with the Caxcan, Amazonian, and Christian traditions. These touchstones of meaning in the symbolism of Sarris' stories are evidence of a resurgence to the benign state of the human and non-human relationship as an original substance.

The growth of green spaces for reconnection and renewal of stories grounded in faith are a way of believing for some, but other people prefer facts found in empirical science. What science has to say about the living processes of plants is highly suggestive that plants communicate. Joe Patitucci created a device in 2019 that translates the biorhythms of a plant's living processes into music (Brut India, 2021). The sounds are not a repetitive series of noises but, instead, create amazingly complex musical compositions. Musical biorhythms alone would not attest to the sentience of plant life but when added to prior scientific knowledge it does appear confirming. Forest

scientist Peter Wohlleben discusses how trees use electrical impulses to communicate and claims “trees also use the senses of smell and taste for communication” (Wohlleben, 2016, p. vii-viii). He further this in an example of a giraffe eating the leaves of one tree which lets the surrounding trees know of the danger by emitting chemicals which other trees translate through inhalation. Wohlleben’s scientific authority supports the argument for sentience in non-human life forms as communication would mean the transmittal of information. This information must be organized in an understandable way as language, or the information would not be accessible and the attempt to communicate would be purposeless. These scientific findings are therefore relatable to the Amazonian understanding of plant teachers and the Caxcan birds who share the ability for interspecies communication.

The examples of renewal for a positive human and non-human relationship as a phase of Dhrauvya displays a return to the phase of Utpāda. It shows this in modern actions to replant green spaces for awareness, education, and connection in the Jain example. It does this through example of traditional knowledge in storytelling and in literature as renewal through retelling sacred narratives as seen in Greg Sarris. And the perspective of non-human life as communicable is supported in modern science. The present age as Dhrauvya is showing the current, or the final shape for now, of the human and non-human relationship to be one of reconnection and renewal of awareness for the original substance of earthly life as beneficial and interconnected.

Part 4: Conclusion

The result of this inquiry into the condition of the human and non-human relationship is that Dhrauvya, as now, displays a return to the balanced coexistence displayed in Utpāda. Life has been proven interconnected in Vyaya as harm done to one species does harm to them all. These events are traceable through milestones in linear time. They show that as nature is harmed, so, too, do humans harm themselves. The solution for life survival, it can be extrapolated, is to support the current cycle of well-being for the human and non-human relationship. The original state was not harm. It was one where only what was needed was respectfully taken from other life. The original substance was in ahimsa through awareness. Recommendations for supporting a healthy human and non-human relationship are through care and stewardship. The way to this healing is by joining individual efforts with those of others through models of grassroots organizations, adoption of secular ahimsa, and modifying aparigraha to create less demand on earth’s living resources. In doing so, all the small actions taken to cause harm can be replaced with small actions to recover life and living connection.

Assisting grassroots programs is a way to join in pro-life efforts and a likely place to look for grassroots activities is on university campuses. At California State University, Long Beach, the Environmental Science and Policy Club engages in coastal cleanup and native plant restoration (California State University - Long Beach, n.d.b.) and the College Corps Program began campus recycling to reduce entry of waste into the ecosystem (California State University - Long Beach, n.d.a.). Both are viable efforts to reduce ecological damage so all life may prosper. In joining hands with others, trash is removed and green spaces are made for a cleaner and healthier world for all.

Empathy found in grassroots efforts brings compassion for other types of life and urges the adoption of a secular perception for *ahimsa* as a supportive paradigm for the living world. Secularized ahimsa takes the idea of non-harm out of its religious focus in relation to karmic matter and places the concept in the public sphere for avoidance of purposeful harm. In placing ahimsa in such a position as a social construct, it then demands application through communal action. A proposal for communal action may be instituted effectively by decreasing consumptive consumerism through restricting purchases as modified aparigraha. This would create less demand for goods and result in less production to equal less demands upon ecosystems and preserve life from industrial harm. Purchasing less also means less packaging, which reveals a strategy for individual contribution. South Carolina's (S.C.) Statewide Waste Characterization Study for 2026 lists the highest elements in S.C. landfills and "Paper — including cardboard, mixed recyclable paper and compostable paper — was second at 24.4% or 873,943 tons" (South Carolina Department of Environmental Services, 2025).[12] It can be assumed that much of this paper waste was from shipping goods. This is especially disturbing since paper is made from the logging of living trees. Ribble, an U.K. packing company for recyclable packaging, claims "In the last 40 years, paper usage has surged by 400%, resulting in the daily felling of over two million trees"(Riddle, n.d.). In light of these statistics, it seems plausible that boycotting needless shopping would save a lot of non-human, and human, lives. In small ways like this, perhaps the final shape of Dhrauvya will be a communal chain of healing based in individual efforts to support co-life.

In Conclusion, anekantavada applies to the community of life is a three-stage analysis which charts the human and non-human relationship as benevolent in original substance. Utpāda, as a condition of origination in which new modes arise, is a beginning that exhibits a balance which is relatable to ahimsa as a historically

12. Food waste was found to be the largest component of S.C. landfill waste. See South Carolina Department of Environmental Services, 2025.

observable concept. Vyaya is a catalytic process of decay or disappearance in which many worldviews were damaged or erased and lives taken for capitalist gain. Continuing the path shown in Vyaya ends in ruin and death for all, as human and non-human life are intertwined. By preserving the meanings of ahimsa and aparigraha, but outside of religious positioning, they become policies for valuing all life as a pluralistic community and teaches respect accordingly. Therefore, the permanent, underlying substance in Dhrauvya is the regrowth of traditional movements that realize a good human and non-human relationship is the foundation of earthly co-habitation. As Mahatma Gandhi instructs, “Mankind is at the crossroads. It has to make its choice between the law of the jungle and the law of humanity” (Merton, 1965, p. 38), so is up to those living in the phase of Dhrauvya to take accountability to ensure that the final form of the human and non-human relationship remains symbiotic.

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