

Summary oversimplification of worldview differences

Christian

View of Reality	Creation – created, sustained, and redeemed by transcendent and good God
How is it known	Understood best through worship of creator in light of creations order, bounty, and beauty
Role of Nature for Humanity	Nature serves as witness to God’s providence and as resource for sustaining God’s people
Human vocation	Humanity as steward of creation
Authors	Biblical, Bouma-Prediger

Enlightenment

View of Reality	Material Mechanism – operates according to universal causal laws, materialistic
How is it known	Understood through mathematics, objective rational inquiry, science
Role of Nature for Humanity	Nature as Resource for Human Progress
Human vocation	Humanity as knower/user of natural resources
Authors	Paley, Newton, Darwin

Romantic

View of Reality	Organic “work of art” imbued with aesthetic beauty and sacredness
How is it known	Understood best through art, poetry, music and immediate experience
Role of Nature for Humanity	Nature as sublime Garden with which to find ourselves and God
Human vocation	Humanity as appreciator of nature
Authors	Emerson, Thoreau

Ecological (Land Ethic)

View of Reality	Holistic ecological system
How is it known	Understood best through emotional attachment and intellectual science
Role of Nature for Humanity	Nature as valuable in itself, for the sake of itself and humanity
Human vocation	Humanity as plain citizen and member of ecosystem
Authors	Muir, Leopold

Buddhism

View of Reality	Holistic existence undergoing suffering on way to enlightenment
How is it known	Understood best when we destroy desires and egotistical view of self
Role of Nature for Humanity	To provide the sacred ontological context for the movement toward enlightenment
Human vocation	Destroy desire and egoism, widen one's sensitivity to Buddha-nature, achieve self-mastery
Authors	Swearer, Gross

Confucianism

View of Reality	Holistic
How is it known	By filial piety, or recognizing our kinship with all that is in the cosmos
Role of Nature for Humanity	Our spiritual home, within which we find our place
Human vocation	Live in harmony with nature by actively cultivating the harmony within nature
Authors	Kinsley, Snyder

Taoism

View of Reality	Holistic, interrelated, and continuous cosmos with no creator; the universe is all there is
How is it known	Understood best when we destroy desires and egotistical view of self
Role of Nature for Humanity	Our spiritual home, which establishes the rhythms and patterns by which we develop
Human vocation	Humanity is to live in harmony with nature by <i>Wu-Wei</i> (letting be)
Authors	Kinsley, Snyder