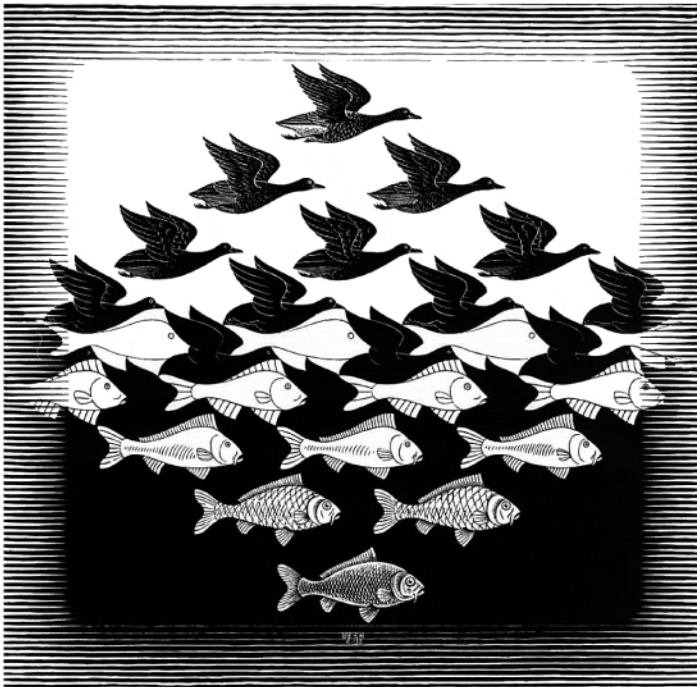


6. Environmental protection – Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility

I.



M. C. Escher: Sky and Water

Discussion questions:

1. What is meant by ecological footprint?
2. To what extent is the Malthusian theory valid in the 21st century?
3. What are the current major issues in environmental protection in our days?
4. What is development management?
5. Why is sustainable development a crucial issue for companies?

II. QUOTES

“The Tata group’s beliefs on sustainability have led to a corporate policy that emphasises environment preservation. Tata companies work on projects that include repairing green cover, reducing effluents and emissions, maintaining local ecologies and improving long term corporate sustainability.”³¹

“This is the new politics. Personal responsibility. Not leaving it to others. I am my planet’s keeper.”
Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (UK)

“The road to climate stability is straight and the solutions simple, and yet scientists, economists, industrialists and politicians are busy making them complicated” Satish Kumar, founder of the Schumacher College, UK – a centre for ecological studies

³¹ http://tata.com/ourcommitment/sub_index.aspx?sectid=L02ygg9/+tg=

III. DEFINITIONS

Environmental protection refers to any activity to maintain or restore the quality of environmental media through preventing the emission of pollutants or reducing the presence of polluting substances in environmental media. It may consist of:

- (a) changes in characteristics of goods and services,
- (b) changes in consumption patterns,
- (c) changes in production techniques,
- (d) treatment or disposal of residuals in separate environmental protection facilities,
- (e) recycling, and
- (f) prevention of degradation of the landscape and ecosystems.³²

Sustainable development (SD) is a pattern of resource use which aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come (sometimes taught as ELF-Environment, Local people, Future). The term was used by the Brundtland Commission, formally the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), which coined what has become the most often-quoted definition of sustainable development as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”³³



IV. READING COMPREHENSION

Are Malthus’s Predicted 1798 Food Shortages Coming True?

In 1798 Thomas Robert Malthus famously predicted that short-term gains in living standards would inevitably be undermined as human population growth outstripped food production, and thereby drive living standards back toward subsistence. We were, he argued, condemned by the tendency of population to grow geometrically while food production would increase only arithmetically. For 200 years, economists have contended that Malthus overlooked technological advancement, which would allow human beings to keep ahead of the population curve. The argument is that food production can indeed grow geometrically because production depends not only on land but also on know-how. (...) More generally, advances in technology in all its aspects—agriculture, energy, water use, manufacturing, disease control, information management, transport, communications—can keep production rising ahead of population.(...) These critiques of Malthusian pessimism have long seemed irresistible. Indeed, when I trained in economics, Malthusian reasoning was a target of mockery, held up by my professors as an example of a naive forecast gone wildly wrong. (...) Some economists have gone so far as to argue that high and rising populations have been a major cause of increased living standards, rather than an impediment. In that interpretation,

³² <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=836>

³³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_development