

Green Theory and Praxis Journal



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Richard Kahn, Editor

Green Theory and Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy

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Introduction

Richard Kahn

The Tibetan Buddhists speak of the “pretas,” or hungry ghosts, of existence. These are haunted souls, akin to the “shades” of Ancient Greek literature or the tormented individuals in Bosch triptychs. Seething with unresolved fear and insatiable desire, they prey upon the living beings of this world in the desperate search for a satisfaction that in fact can never be their own. To them is given a kind of eternal hell on earth.

Alarmingly, more and more I sense the pretas at work in the faddish how-to manuals of “green” everything that is the strident chatter and current parlance of increasing numbers of opportunistic ideologues frantic to quench the thirst of their own professional ambitions. We stand in real need of planetary Shambhala but instead what too many academics and blogified intellectual others are producing is a cacophony of voices crying out with a clamor that serves mainly to enclose the spiritual commons of our cosmic silence. While some are hopeful that this confusion of oft competing agendas is but a kind of negative externality of the environmental movement’s move towards achieving a hegemonic position within our social institutions, I can only find it ironic that many of the educators presently offering visions of a cleaner future (usually within a paradigm of technical and market-based solutions) do so in the form of augmenting noise pollution levels. Al Gore may not foul the air as badly as Rush Limbaugh, but it doesn’t mean that his rhetoric or policy represent anything profoundly less toxic in outcome to the children of generations to come.

Isn’t it significant, after all, that in an age of perpetual warfare and unprecedented ecological catastrophe, an annual cult of over 20 million people has arisen that is singularly dedicated to watching *Dancing with the Stars*? Of course, we should *all* be celebrating and cavorting with the stars – the denizens of dark skies. But, sadly, for the worldwide majority of city dwellers living under the surveillance of perpetual light, the celestial firmament is no longer even available to the naked eye. It seems that ours is a time when the twilight of the idols has gone electric.

Yet, entropy can give way to extropy – to the organization of a transformational movement in another direction. I wonder (not overly seriously): do we really have anything like this in regards to contemporary ecopolitics, though? In the lack of any clearly sustained cohesion or dialogue between the myriad philosophical camps and political organizations articulating ecological concerns at this moment, many on the left have begun to adopt the saving clarion call of the autonomous Marxist theory of organization-as-*multitude*.

Perhaps I am too cynical, but I find it difficult to imagine that the “environmental correctness” now overtaking the academy (as well as amongst the Washington consensus elites) is overtly the successful outcome of ongoing spontaneous eruptions of variegated ecological resistance. Rather, it strikes me to be more like a soccer match conducted by kindergarteners – a jumble of children monotonously stampeding around the field in a chaos; twenty-odd legs attempting to kick the ball at once, each child wishing to a potential hero of the game and all without a commitment to a given role or position in the play. Worse still, in the analogous case of today’s environmental discourse, the soccer ball is symbolic primarily of locked vaults of exploitative capital.

Green Theory & Praxis aims to be more than just another shop at the sustainability bazaar. We want to sow the seeds of dialogue between approaches, unionize the vendors, and meaningfully evolve the ways in which people barter in the marketplace of ideas concerned with the state of nature. Personally, I would especially like to see the journal seek out, engage with, or otherwise respond to marginal subcultures and voices, to support those traditionally silenced by the university (or media), to hear their wisdom and to see what if anything there is to teach one another on matters of our mutual interest. Per this line of thinking, the bazaar of which we are here a part must strive seriously to include the bizarre. I say this not to forecast a carnivalesque strategy or future for our journal, much less the environmental movement, but rather to support the poet's insight that truth is beauty and beauty truth; and, in a posthuman age, we must remember that beauty often corresponds to the aesthetic of a nonhuman agent. Therefore, the journal will serve a real role if it can build a bridge between academic protocol and the radical demands of Others and their representatives.

This issue, our December issue of 2008, continues in the tradition of our first offering by blending the viewpoints of leading movement thinkers (such as C. A. Bowers and Greta Gaard in this edition) with that of emerging scholars, and by presenting writing that pertains to a diverse number of perspectives – from those of the ELF and the ALF, to anti-capitalist and environmental justice advocates, all the way down to the demand of rights for microbiotic communities. Further, thanks to the tireless and valuable work of the journal's collective of review editors (please see the Masthead for their names), this issue presents a number of critical reviews of recent literature relevant to ecopedagogy, as well as of another documentary film regarding the green building movement. We also here provide a review of the ASLE 2008 conference, thereby extending the productive partnership begun with the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment that was begun earlier this year.

The next issue of *Green Theory & Praxis* will be in June, 2009 and I have already begun work on a few pieces that let me know that the re-animation of our journal in 2008 is a success that will now continue happily through the following year. The June, 2008 issue was viewed some 4000 unique times in its initial month of publication alone by scholars, activists and public intellectuals the world over. I hope our audience continues to be intrigued by the challenging positions and arguments contained within the present volume.

If you have questions, concerns, an idea for a publishable piece, or would like to undertake for the journal a review of a text, film, other piece of appropriate media, or conference/event, please feel free to contact me. I welcome hearing from you.

In closing, solidarity goes out to the Greek anarchists, student and labor building occupiers, and those who manifest the courage to take direct action against the pervasive development of global systemic violence. Additionally, in acknowledgement of their recent or expected criminal convictions, thanks are extended to Tim DeChristopher and the SHAC 7-UK (as well as the many lesser known activists whose own important work daily engenders repression of a less spectacular but no less unjust variety). Lastly, in speaking of political prisoners, if change has indeed come to America, let us free Leonard Peltier...

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Why the George Lakoff and Mark Johnson Theory of Metaphor is Inadequate for Addressing Cultural Issues Related to the Ecological Crises

C. A. Bowers

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson intended to radically change one of the dominant traditions of Western philosophy, which is the tradition of abstract theory that stretches from the ancient Greeks down through the writings of the contemporary analytic philosophers. In place of de-contextualized and thus culturally uniformed theories about the nature of reality, mind, language, and individualism, Lakoff and Johnson proposed that the task of the philosopher is to clarify how the metaphorical basis of language, and thus systems of knowing, originates in the embodied experience of individuals. Their agenda is summed up in the title of their major book, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999). While they make a cogent case against the many ways in which Western philosophers have framed the process of reasoning, thus achieving little more for humanity than giving legitimacy to their own theoretical edifices, the Lakoff and Johnson argument that metaphorical reasoning originates in the individual's "sensorimotor experiences so regularly they become neurally linked" (1999, p. 555) represents an equally extreme and problematic position. In place of the rational process that is represented as free of both cultural and embodied experiences, they argue that the starting point of philosophy, science, and knowledge generally begins with the individual's perceptual and motor systems – that is, embodied experience.

The word culture occasionally appears in their writings, but they do not examine its complex nature and diversity, and thus the implications it has for bringing into the question the Western notion of the autonomous (that is, the supposedly culturally uninfluenced) individual they take for granted – and upon which their entire theory rests. A word they do not mention is "ecology." This omission leads to their failure to acknowledge that today the ecological crises should frame any discussion of metaphorical thinking. What cannot be explained by their theory is why they share this oversight with key Western philosophers who also ignored how the environments of their era were being degraded. Supposedly, the individual whose sensorimotor experiences and habituated neural connections become the basis for framing the meaning of words (metaphors), and thus for how relationships are understood, is unaffected by the global changes in the natural environment. This is not simply an oversight which has few if any serious implications. It becomes of paramount importance when it is recognized that the extrapolation of the word "ecology," which is the modernized version of the early Greek word "oikos," always situates the individual as a participant within a cultural and environmental context. It is only when the "individual" is treated as an abstraction that these ecological relationships are ignored. In effect, the individual's embodied participation in this larger ecology of relationships includes other people, the semiotic systems of the culturally constructed world, and the complex message

C. A. Bowers has written a number of books on how public schools and universities are complicit in perpetuating the cultural roots of the ecological crises. His most recent writings on linguistic and cultural commons issues are available by Googling C. A. Bowers, and then going to online articles and the Eco-Justice Press.

exchanges (which Gregory Bateson refers to as the “difference which makes a difference,” 1972, p. 318) that sustain the complex and interdependent living systems we refer to as the natural environment.

In order to understand the long-term problem of locating, as Lakoff and Johnson put it, “our conceptual system” in the individual’s “perceptual and motor systems” (1999, p. 555), it is necessary to summarize the changes that the Earth’s natural systems are undergoing. It needs to be recognized that global warming is just one aspect of the ecological crises that is not likely to be addressed by concepts derived from the embodied and thus limited experience of the individual. Indeed, their extreme reductionist understanding of the origins of knowledge leads to a radical difference between what individuals would learn from their embodied encounters with their local environments and what scientists are now reporting. For example, scientists studying the impact of global warming have documented that the Greenland ice cap is melting at an accelerating rate, with one glacier moving to the sea at a rate of 2 meters an hour on a 3 mile front and at a depth of 1500 meters. The melting of the Arctic sea ice and the glaciers in the Antarctic is also accelerating at a rate totally beyond what scientists thought possible. And the glaciers in the Himalayas and the Tibet-Qinghai Plateau that feed the major rivers in India and China are disappearing at a rate of 7 percent a year; with glaciers in other parts of the world disappearing at a similar rate (Brown, 2008). The basic assumptions (listed below) of Lakoff and Johnson limit the individual’s conceptual understanding of the environment to the inherently limited nature of embodied experience. The result would be that grasping the world-wide consequences of global warming would be beyond the individual’s conceptualization.

There are other changes in the life sustaining capacity of the Earth’s ecosystems that would also go unrecognized. In addition to the global threat to the sources of fresh water that hundreds of millions of people face, there are similar changes in the chemistry of the world’s oceans. As the oceans absorb higher levels of carbon dioxide they are becoming more acidic, and this change in chemistry as well as in temperature is threatening the organisms that are the basis of the ocean food chain. Other changes in the world’s oceans include the near extinction of many fisheries that are vital sources of protein that much of the world’s population depends upon (Kolbert, 2006). In addition, droughts are affecting many regions of the world, and vast forests are dying off due to changes in temperatures that make them vulnerable to insects. And the estimated loss of the earth’s topsoil has been put at over thirty percent.

The huge expansion of the world’s population over the last century, along with the spread of economic globalization, have combined into an increasingly destructive force that is undermining the capacity of natural systems to regenerate themselves. Until social philosophers and market liberals turned Adam Smith’s theory of free markets and the “invisible hand” into an abstract and thus universal law of economics, markets were local and integrated into the cultural fabric (including moral norms governing reciprocity) of the world’s diverse communities. This abstract theory has now taken on the same status as the law of gravity, and has become a major force in spreading the industrial/consumer dependent lifestyle that is increasing the rate of environmental degradation. China, for example, is transforming into a consumer-oriented society, and now is first in the production of coal, steel, and cement. It also has 16 of the world’s 20 most polluted cities. China’s current economic downturn is being met by reducing the production of consumer goods for export, which is being replaced by greater investment in infrastructure projects – including the building of more coal fired electrical generating and carbon emitting plants. These plants are being built at a rate of one very week or so. China has already consumed the forests of Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines – and at the current

rate will swallow the forests of five neighboring countries, including the forests of the Russian Far East within two decades. India, Brazil, as well as many other countries are also on the same consumer-oriented cultural pathway of development. Indeed, consumerism and the adoption of Western patterns of thinking and values are now associated with becoming modern and developed, and thus free of being stigmatized as culturally backward.

Since philosophers have a long history of ignoring how cultural belief systems impact the life sustaining capacity of local ecosystems, the question that is likely to come up is: what relevance does this overview of the ecological crises have for assessing what is problematic about the Lakoff/Johnson theory of the embodied origins of our guiding metaphors? What is being overlooked by the scientists and engineers who are trying to develop more sustainable and less carbon producing technologies, and by the general public that has accepted that new technologies are the solution to the ecological crises, is that we need to change the metaphorical language that gave conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the industrial/consumer oriented culture that has become a major contributor to overshooting the sustaining capacity of natural systems. Lakoff and Johnson got it right when they argued in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) that all thought is based on metaphors, When they made the turn toward locating the source of metaphors in the embodied experience of the individual, which was motivated by their concern with the hegemony of abstract theory and language usage by mainstream Western philosophers, they lost sight of the more obvious and now ecologically important characteristic of language. That is, they ignored that words as metaphors have a history and that they carry forward the misconceptions and silences of earlier thinkers who succeeded in establishing the analogs that framed the meaning of words over time. In effect, they failed to recognize that the industrial/consumer oriented culture that is now being globalized, and that is overshooting the sustaining capacity of the natural systems, is based on the metaphorical thinking of earlier thinkers who were unaware of environmental limits.

Before explaining how much of today's ecologically problematic thinking is based on what Gregory Bateson refers to as "double bind thinking," it is necessary to reproduce here the 6 basic assumptions that the Lakoff and Johnson theory is based upon. In order to avoid any misrepresentation of their assumptions, the assumptions shall be presented as they appear in *Philosophy in the Flesh*:

Embodied Reason

- Embodied Concepts: Our conceptual system is grounded in, neurally makes use of, and is critically shaped by our perceptual and motor systems.
- Conceptualization Only Through the Body: We can only form concepts through the body. Therefore, every understanding that we can have of the world, ourselves, and others can only be formed in terms of concepts shaped by our bodies.
- Basic-Level Concepts: These concepts use our perceptual, imaging, and motor systems to characterize our optimal functioning in everyday life. This is the level at which we are maximally in touch with the reality of our environment.
- Embodied Reason: Major forms of rational inference are instances of sensorimotor inferences.

- Embodied Truth and Knowledge: Because our ideas are framed in terms of our unconscious embodied conceptual systems, truth and knowledge depend upon embodied understanding.
- Embodied Mind: Because concepts and reason both derive from, and make use of, the sensorimotor system, the mind is not separate from or independent of the body. Therefore, classical faculty psychology is incorrect (1999, p. 555).

There can be no doubt that many of our metaphors have their origins in bodily experiences, as Lakoff and Johnson point out. Concepts such as up and down, back and forward, full and empty, and even the old British systems of measurement of inch, foot, yard, and mile can be traced back to bodily experiences. Also, their discussion of how different experiences provide generative frameworks (schemas) for understanding an activity, behavior, and policy, where the already familiar becomes the model for understanding something new, has to be taken seriously. It needs to be pointed out, however, that their insight is only partially correct. Some of our concepts do have an embodied origin yet even these conceptual schemas will differ from culture to culture, depending upon the culture's mythopoetic narratives and/or cosmology. For example, while Lakoff and Johnson would attribute the concept that underlies the use of the personal pronoun "I" to the embodied experience of an individual, they overlook that this is a culturally constructed identity – one that can be traced back to the writings of post-medieval philosophers and political theorists. Instead of the "I want" and "I think" habituated pattern of thinking so prevalent in the West, there are profoundly different ways of understanding self which varies from culture to culture. Among the traditional Maori, for example, when a guest enters into the marea (the communal gathering place) she gives her name and then her lineage – followed by an explanation of her ties to the family or group she is visiting. If we consider the Quechua of the Peruvian Andes we find a different way in which this relational self is understood – which can be traced to their cosmivision that represents all aspects of life as interdependent and in constant communication – with plants, animals, and weather patterns communicating what the people's agricultural decisions should be. The key point is that Lakoff and Johnson repeat the silences about the influence of culture that characterizes Western philosophy. One of the consequences of perpetuating this hubris is that readers who take them seriously are not likely to recognize that we have much to learn from cultures that have developed in ways that enabled them to live within the limits and possibilities of their bioregions.

While Lakoff and Johnson also remain silent about the ecological crises, the consensus of the world's scientists is that we are within a few generations of a tipping point when changes in human behaviors will no longer be able to slow the rate of global warming. It is important, therefore, to consider whether the Lakoff and Johnson theory of the embodied basis of metaphorical thinking is useful for understanding why the dominant Western culture continues to promote an industrial/consumer dependent lifestyle when the evidence continues to mount that it is ecologically unsustainable. The other question that needs to be raised is whether their theory of the embodied origins of our concepts can lead to fundamental changes in ways of thinking and behaviors that have a smaller ecological footprint – including changes in our policies of economic and cultural colonization that prevent other cultures from revitalizing their traditions of self-sufficiency and mutual support that are less dependent upon a money economy and that have a smaller ecological footprint.

The Lakoff and Johnson theory of metaphor fails to take into account that words have a culturally specific history. As metaphors whose meanings were framed by analogs established in the distant past by people who were unaware of environmental limits and other cultural knowledge and moral systems, these words continue to influence current thinking in ways that reproduce the misconceptions and silences taken for granted in earlier times. Albert Einstein was aware of this problem when he warned about the danger of relying upon the same mindset that created the problem to fix it. “Double bind thinking” is the phrase Gregory Bateson used to describe this same problem, which he understood as the failure to recognize that the meaning of key words used today as the basis for understanding current problems and relationships were framed by the analogs established by earlier thinkers who were addressing issues in a different historical and cultural era.

The analogs that framed the meaning of words such as “intelligence,” “technology,” “tradition,” “individualism,” “property,” “freedom,” “woman,” “environment,” and so forth, can be traced back to earlier theories, powerful evocative experiences, and even to mythopoetic narratives such as found in the *Book of Genesis*. For example, the limiting analogs that framed how the word “woman” was understood in the West over thousands of years did not arise out of the embodied/sensorimotor/neurally connected experience of today’s individual. Nor do today’s widely accepted understanding, especially within the academic community, of such words and phrases as “tradition,” “artificial intelligence,” “property,” and “enlightenment” have their origins in the subjective embodied experience of the individual. The analogs that continue to frame what is understood today as the meaning of these words can be traced back to earlier events and thinkers. To summarize a key shortcoming of the Lakoff and Johnson theory about the origins of metaphorical thinking: it cannot account for the linguistic colonization of the present by the past.

Nor can their theory clarify the dynamics of the linguistic colonization of other cultures. Indeed, if one gives careful consideration to their 6 key assumptions, it becomes impossible to explain the differences in cultural ways of knowing – including why some cultures have developed in ways that are more ecologically sustainable. For example, the collection of essays by Third World writers in Wolfgang Sachs’ *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (1992) provide examples of how such words as “development,” “market,” “poverty” – whose meanings were framed by the analogs taken for granted by Western thinkers – are understood as the language of cultural colonization. As Gerald Berthoud summarizes the colonizing agenda in the Western use of “development”:

What must be universalized through development is a cultural complex centered around the notion that human life, if it is to be fully lived, cannot be constrained by limits of any kind. To produce such a result in traditional societies, for whom the supposedly primordial principle of boundless expansion in the technological and economic domains is generally alien, presuppose overcoming the symbolic and moral ‘obstacles’, that is, ridding these societies of various inhibiting ideas and practices such as myths, ceremonies, rituals, networks of solidarity and the like (Sacks, p. 72).

Berthoud identifies the analogs that frame the Western idea of development by observing that it subjects Third World cultures to “the compelling idea that everything that can be made must be made, and then sold. Our universe (according the Western way of thinking) appears

unshakeably structured by the omnipotence of technoscientific truths and the laws of the market” (p. 71). The other essays in *The Development Dictionary* explain how key words in the modern vocabulary are not culturally neutral metaphors, but are part of the process of linguistic colonization that serves to legitimate economic colonization. And the combination of linguistic and economic colonization impacts the behavior of individuals – even at the level of the individual’s “perceptual, imaging, and motor systems” – which is the reverse of the Lakoff and Johnson formula that represents bodily experiences as shaping the individual’s conceptual system.

There is another characteristic of metaphorical thinking ignored by Lakoff and Johnson that is critical to whether we are able to adopt a more ecologically informed way of thinking and behaving. The image (or iconic) metaphors they focus on as originating in embodied experiences, as well as image metaphors that come down to us from earlier times (which they do not recognize) are often framed by the prevailing root metaphors of the culture. According to Richard H. Brown (1977), root metaphors are meta-cognitive schemata that are taken for granted and thus frame thinking in a wide area of cultural activity over years – even centuries (p. 125). They originate in the mythopoetic narratives of the culture, powerful evocative experiences that are sustained over generations, and from the processes of analogic-based theories by writers who were able to overturn older root metaphors.

In the West, patriarchy and anthropocentrism are examples of taken for granted explanatory/moral frameworks (root metaphors) that have not only framed how people think and behave, but also what they ignore. Individualism and progress also are examples of root metaphors, and they can be traced back to various political theorists, evocative experiences ranging from the introduction of the printing press to the early successes of modern science. Mechanism is yet another root metaphor whose origin was not in the individual’s bodily experiences, but originated from a combination of historical events – ranging from organizing the rhythms of daily life in accordance with the cycles of a mechanical clock, the successful applications of a mechanistic paradigm by scientists, to advances in medicine and other technologies such as computers. The explanatory power of the mechanism root metaphor used over hundreds of years can be seen in Johannes Kepler’s (1571-1630) statement that “my aim is to show that the celestial machine is to be likened not to a divine organism but to a clockwork;” in Marvin Minsky’s (early leader in the field of artificial intelligence) statement that “our conscious thoughts use signal-signs to steer the engines in our minds, controlling countless processes of which we’re never much aware of,” in Richard Dawkin’s reference to the body as a “survival machine;” in E. O. Wilson’s reference to his brain as a machine; in the current way of identifying a plant cell as possessing a “powerhouse,” “recycling center,” and a “production center;” and in today’s widespread references to the brain as like a computer.

As meta-cognitive explanatory frameworks guide thought and behavior at a taken for granted level of consciousness, they exercise a profound influence on many aspects of culture – and thus on the embodied experiences of the individual. For example, the root metaphor of patriarchy established the analogs for understanding the identity and behavior of women in ways that were highly restrictive. It exercised this control over centuries until recently when the word “woman,” in some sectors of society, became associated with a wide range of new analogs such as engineer, artist, doctor, politician, and so forth. We could take other mutually supportive root metaphors in the West and trace how they create areas of silence, limit the vocabulary to what is conceptually and morally coherent with the root metaphor, and thus control the discourse that frames how political problems are understood and the approach to resolving them. What is

especially important about these Western consciousness shaping root metaphors is that they gave conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the industrial/individually-centered/ consumer-dependent lifestyle that has been a major contributor to global warming and to the economic exploitation of the environment.

As fisheries disappear, droughts become more widespread, storms more violent, and sources of potable water increasingly scarce and contaminated, the embodied experiences that Lakoff and Johnson want to claim as the source of concepts and inferences are unlikely to lead to an awareness that everyday life is being impacted by a symbolic ecology that is still being reinforced at every level of the educational process – and by the media, political pundits, and even by many environmentalists. Embodied experience alone will not provide the conceptual and linguistic capital necessary for recognizing the double bind thinking that limits our ability to renew the intergenerational patterns of self-sufficiency and mutual support that represent alternatives to the industrial/consumer lifestyle that is moving us closer to the tipping point that will have huge consequences for the embodied experience of the individual – such as social chaos, starvation, and toxic chemical caused illnesses and death. What is ironic, especially since the new root metaphor of evolution is now being used to explain how cultural patterns (memes) are subject to the same process of natural selection, is that it is being promoted by professors who are unaware that when evolution is turned into a root metaphor that supposedly explains the symbolic world of culture it supports the market liberal ideology that, in being globalized, is exacerbating the ecological crises.

While Lakoff and Johnson claim that “our conceptual system is grounded in, neurally makes use of, and is crucially shaped by our perceptual and motor systems,” it turns out that their writings and ways of understanding political issues have been heavily influenced by the root metaphors they take for granted – and of which they are not explicitly aware. For example, Johnson responded in a letter to my earlier criticism of Lakoff’s lack of historical accuracy and misuse of our political categories by claiming that there is nothing problematic with Lakoff’s reference to environmentalists as progressives. The point to keep in focus is that Johnson’s association of environmentalism with the forces of progress and Lakoff’s reliance on the same political language that underlies the cultural forces that are pushing the world beyond what the ecosystems can sustain is that their concepts are not derived from their own embodied experiences. If they had done an ethnographic description of their own embodied experience (or what Clifford Geertz calls “thick description”) they would have found that their use of the context free vocabulary of freedom, individual autonomy, and linear progress are derived not from their own experience but from the reification of analogs derived from Enlightenment thinkers that are reproduced in the languaging/socialization processes. A self-focused ethnography would lead to a different vocabulary, one that takes account of how the description of embodied experiences foregrounds the many biological and cultural conserving processes. This includes the language and thought patterns derived from the past, the temperamentally conserving of what one is comfortable with in food, conversations, friends, of how their own DNA and RNA conserves physical traits that are intergenerationally connected, and all the taken for granted cultural patterns that sustain everyday life. In effect, a description of embodied experience that is not distorted by ideology and the formulaic use of language would be a description of conserving biological and cultural processes and patterns – with only minor ethnobiographic differences.

Lakoff, in particular, is unable to rely upon his own theory when it comes to justifying his political preferences, and to stigmatizing his political opponents. In his *New York Times* best

selling book, *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (2004) Lakoff makes an important contribution to understanding how the use of language frames what is given attention and what is marginalized in today's political discourse. He makes the point that language is not politically neutral. Instead, the group that is able to establish its preferred vocabulary (including its silences and metaphorically based prejudices) will control the policies that are conceptually consistent with its language. In effect, a group cannot achieve its own political goals if it is forced to think in the opponent's language.

Instead of following what is derived from his own embodied-based reasoning, Lakoff adopts the Orwellian vocabulary that is now current at every level of American political discourse. This discourse labels as conservatives the market liberals who derive their ideas about free markets and the invisible hand from the abstract theories of classical liberal thinkers – and the religious fundamentalists who derive their guiding principles from the equally abstract idea that the *Bible*, which has undergone many translations, represents the actual word of God. Lakoff's historically uninformed thinking leads to identifying as progressive the social groups concerned with conserving our civil liberties (the American Civil Liberties Union), the environmentalists working to conserve species and habitats, the people who translate their religious traditions into social justice activism, and ethnic groups working to sustain the connections between their identities and their traditions (p. 14).

Lakoff also labels as conservatives the CATO, American Enterprise, and Hoover Institutes. If he had checked out their websites, rather than relying upon popular misconceptions, he would have found that all three identify the expansion of free markets, individual freedom, and a strong defense as their primary political agenda. He would have found the following on the website of the CATO Institute: "'Conservative' smacks of an unwillingness to change, of a desire to preserve the status quo. Only in America do people seem to refer to free-market capitalism—the most progressive, dynamic, and ever-changing system the world has ever known—as conservative." Lakoff is old enough to remember Ronald Reagan introducing the General Electric weekly television program where the GE mantra of "Progress is our most important product" served as the analog the public was to identify with GE technologies. Surely, he is aware that the techno-scientific/industrial culture has always claimed the role of being the primary progressive force in society. It has only been in recent years that, out of widespread ignorance that can be partly attributable to the failure of universities to introduce students to the historical roots of current ideologies, that the ever changing system of free-market capitalism has been labeled as conservative (Hartz, 1955).

As pointed out, one of the characteristics of a root metaphor is that its supporting vocabulary does not include the words that enable the basic taken for granted cultural assumptions upon which it rests to be questioned. In the case of the root metaphor of progress, the two words that are either proscribed or mis-represented are "tradition" and "conserving." By relying upon the root metaphor of progress to frame his analysis of liberalism and conservatism, Lakoff falls into the conceptual trap of letting the root metaphor of progress dictate what should not be questioned: namely, whether interpreting all forms of change as the expression of progress is partly responsible for undermining the traditions that should be conserved such as habeas corpus, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Since the early days of the 1900s, there has been a movement to conserve the environmental commons, which includes what remains of the natural systems that have not been taken over by private and corporate ownership and turned into market opportunities (which is considered by market liberals as progress). The cultural commons, which both Lakoff and Johnson could have made the focus of their discussion of

embodied knowledge, includes the intergenerational knowledge, skills, and mutually supportive relationships that enable people to live more community-centered and thus less money dependent and less environmentally destructive lives. Yet it is these communities that are sources of resistance to the market system that the CATO Institute celebrates as the engine of progress. In short, by uncritically accepting an interpretative framework (root metaphor) that can be traced back to the 17th century shift in Western consciousness, Lakoff abandons his own prescriptions for how to account for “Embodied Reason.” In lacking an historical knowledge of the origins of philosophical conservatism, which led to our checks and balance system of government, and of the abstract theories of classical liberalism, Lakoff unknowingly aligns himself with the environmentally destructive and cultural colonizing forces of the market liberals who promote progress as though it is a law of nature.

The questions that should be asked about the Lakoff and Johnson theory of the embodied reason and the embodied origins of metaphorical thinking go far beyond their inability to abide by their own guiding assumptions. The deeper problem is their lack of awareness that we are not only at a tipping point in terms of the rate of environmental changes, but also at a tipping point as to whether human kind can move beyond the myths that underlie the individualistic/consumer-oriented/industrial culture. The tipping point, in effect, involves the choice of following the current cultural agenda of economic globalization that is being adopted in many regions of the world or revitalizing the local cultural and environmental commons that represent a post-industrial consciousness based on the ancient root metaphor that defines the biological and cultural renewing processes as an ecology. Fortunately, many environmentally oriented scientists have moved beyond the mechanistic root metaphor by learning to think of the natural world as living ecologies, and many Third World cultures have not entirely lost their ecologically informed traditions.

The main challenge will be for philosophers and social theorists such as Lakoff and Johnson to explain the dangers of accepting without question the root metaphors that were constituted before there was an awareness of ecological limits and to explain, in ways that can be widely understood, how our everyday vocabulary in the West needs to be framed by analogs that are culturally and ecologically informed. Given their unquestioning embrace of the root metaphor of progress and their commitment to assuming that embodied experience is the primary source of the metaphors that guide thought and behaviors, it is doubtful that their contribution will be little more than yet another distraction as we move closer to the ecological tipping point. Perhaps if they were to start not with the embodied experience of the supposedly autonomous individual, but with the individual’s culturally mediated embodied experience, they would have the conceptual opening for considering the influence of culture, the role of language in the cultural construction of identities and ways of thinking, the impact of diverse cultures on embodied experiences, and the ecological implications of doing a “thick description” or personal ethnography of the interdependencies within the local cultural commons. This would have represented a genuine departure from the silences and hubris of most Western philosophers.

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Toward an Ecopedagogy of Children's Environmental Literature

Greta Gaard

The world we remember from our childhoods – whenever and wherever those childhoods were – is changing. Gone are the strawberry fields and orange groves, the stark blue skies and purple mountains from my childhood in the San Fernando valley of Los Angeles. Gone are the days of running through water sprinklers for hour after unthinking hour on summer afternoons, the water running off the thick grassy lawn and into the streets so that cars would splash through it, too. Gone are the mountains covered with sage and yarrow, orange poppies and purple lupin and yellow daisies, mountainsides where coyotes and jackrabbits and bluejays alike found food, water, and freedom enough for their wild lives. Gone are the days of gasoline at .25 cents a gallon, days of backyard trash incinerators, days of unlimited hours spent tanning and talking and playing on the beach without sunscreen protection against skin cancer, without fears of swimming in and through plastic bags, rusting metal, needles and broken glass.

Some of these losses are cause for grief; others signify long-needed changes in heedless behaviors. As temperatures around the planet rise, as safe drinking water becomes scarce and costly, as food costs soar, populations swell, clearcutting continues, and the global violence against women, children, animals, and ecosystems proceeds unabated – what in the world are we doing by reading environmental literature?

This is the question raised by ecopedagogy, a specific field of praxis that grows out of the work of eco-activists who are also writers, teachers, and scholars of environmental literature. To explain ecopedagogy and its importance to children's environmental literature, I want to first contextualize ecopedagogy in terms of its evolution from both environmental literary studies as well as the activist and social movement practices that so many of us articulating an activist ecopedagogy have brought along with us: our histories as social change artists.

From Ecocriticism to Ecopedagogy

Ecocriticism's formal beginnings are often identified with the founding of the organization ASLE: The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment in 1992, followed by the organization's journal, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* in 1993, and with the publication of Cheryl Burgess Glotfelty and Harold Fromm's anthology *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* in 1996. Glotfelty's Introduction to that volume defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (p. xviii). Initially, ecocriticism's aims were fairly simple: first, to provide a home, a community, and some academic legitimacy for the work of a new generation of literary

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scholars who were discovering, discussing, and interpreting literary texts about the environment; second, to examine representations of nature and environmental values in literary texts; third, to explore the interconnections between nature and culture; fourth, and most important, to respond to environmental problems and “contribute to environmental restoration, not just in our spare time, but from within our capacity as professors of literature” (p. xxi). Acknowledging that “ecocriticism has been predominantly a white movement,” Glotfelty believed “it will become a multi-ethnic movement when stronger connections are made between the environment and issues of social justice, and when a diversity of voices are encouraged to contribute to the discussion” (p. xxv).

In its first articulation, then, ecocriticism was developed primarily by white, middle-class and predominantly heterosexual scholars who are also environmentalists, and who chose the liberal strategy of creating an additional organization within their field to bridge their activism and their intellectual/professional studies.

The next articulation of ecocriticism, ecocomposition, has brought more radical pedagogies to the field. It purposefully addresses first- and second-year college students, community college students, and explores social differences and their analogues in biodiversity. Ecocomposition expands ecocriticism with greater awareness of class differences as well as feminist analyses. The field of ecocomposition has developed from textbook anthologies to theoretical articulations, formally taking shape through the publication of Christian R. Weisser and Sid Dobrin’s edited volume, *Ecocomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Practices* (2001), soon followed by Dobrin and Weisser’s co-authored *Natural Discourse: Toward Ecocomposition* (2002). A number of texts providing both environmental essays and rhetorics appeared throughout the 1990s (Anderson and Runciman, 1995; Levy and Hallowell, 1994; Morgan and Okerstrom, 1992; Ross, 1995; Slovic and Dixon, 1993; Verburg, 1995; Walker, 1994), but the one that connects social and environmental justice issues – Anderson, Slovic and O’Grady’s *Literature and the Environment: A Reader on Nature and Culture* (1999) – clusters readings in such a way that a dialogue emerges among different perspectives distinguished by race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Making these same connections between environmental problems and the issues of social and economic justice, ecofeminist literary criticism developed soon after, bringing the insights and activism of ecofeminists to the study of literature. In brief, ecofeminism is a perspective that sees social and environmental problems as fundamentally interconnected. Beginning with a recognition that the position and treatment of women, animals, and nature are not separable, ecofeminists make connections among not just sexism, speciesism, and the oppression of nature but also other forms of social injustice – racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and colonialism – as part of western culture’s assault on nature. Ecofeminism studies the structure of oppressive systems, identifying three steps in the “logic of domination” (Heller, 1999; King, 1989; Warren, 1990): first, alienation (the belief in a separate self-identity, individualism, autonomy), then hierarchy (elevating the self based on its unique characteristic), and finally, domination (justifying the subordination of others based on their inferiority and lack of the Self’s unique characteristic).

Ecofeminist activism preceded scholarship, involving diverse actions such as Feminists For Animal Rights’ work to coordinate shelters for battered women and battered animals, the Women’s Pentagon Actions, WomanEarth Feminist Peace Institute’s work for antiracist education, the Left Greens work in organizing the 1990 Earth Day Wall Street Action, work in the Green Party and the Communist Party as well as in anarchist organizations, and other actions

to organize diverse groups to resist corporate dominance. In literary scholarship, separate but simultaneous work by Patrick Murphy in *Literature, Nature, and Other: Ecofeminist Critiques* (1995) and Greta Gaard in forming the Modern Language Association panel on Ecofeminist Literary Criticism (a special session that was denied by MLA for 1995) led to our collaboration on editing a special issue of *ISLE* on “Ecofeminist Literary Criticism” (1996) which was soon expanded into a book in 1998. Work by other feminist and ecofeminist literary scholars (Anderson, 1991; Norwood, 1993; Bigwood, 1993; Westling, 1996; Stein, 1997; Gates, 1998) all provided new texts and new readings of women’s environmental art, literature, science, scholarship, and activism. By the year 2000, which saw the publication of both Glynis Carr’s *New Essays in Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* along with Lorraine Anderson and Thomas S. Edwards’ *At Home on This Earth: Two Centuries of U.S. Women’s Nature Writing*, the significance of women’s environmental work in the arts and humanities, and the field of ecofeminist literary criticism, were firmly established.

At the end of their Introduction to *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* (1998), Gaard and Murphy concluded:

To the extent that ecofeminist literary criticism illuminates relationships among humans across a variety of differences and between humans and the rest of nature, exploring ways that these differences shape our relationships within nature; to the extent that it offers a critique of the many forms of oppression and advocates the centrality of human diversity and biodiversity to our survival on this planet; and to the extent that it emphasizes the urgency of political action aimed at dismantling institutions of oppression and building egalitarian and ecocentric networks in their place – to the extent that it does all these things, ecofeminist literary criticism has a vital contribution to make (p. 12).

And to the extent that it does *not* do all these things, then ecofeminist literary criticism makes no contribution at all – in fact, it fails to be ecofeminist, and becomes instead merely another variation of literary criticism. This radical call for recognizing interdependence and requiring theory connected with practice (“praxis”) resounds with the fourth and “most important” aim of ecocriticism initially articulated by Glotfelty (1996), and was soon joined by similar articulations from scholar-activists developing the related fields of environmental justice and ecopedagogy.

In 1999, at the biannual ASLE conference in Kalamazoo, a Diversity Caucus was formed to encourage the presence and participation of non-white ecocritical scholars, environmental writers and artists. The initial organizers were predominantly white, middle-class ASLE ecocritics and ecofeminists who were active antiracists committed to diversifying the field, and who had grassroots connections with eco-activists of color. Including their diverse perspectives fundamentally changed the scope of ecocritical study, from “nature writing” – which had focused primarily on the essay – to “environmental writing,” which included not only essays, fiction, and poetry, but also mystery, science fiction, interviews, position statements, editorials, and other forms of media. This shift popularized ecocriticism along with developing a new ecocritical pedagogy – ecopedagogy – one that emphasized civic engagement as a fundamental component of the ecocritical classroom. Early leaders of the ASLE Diversity Caucus, Rachel Stein and Joni Adamson, went on to produce *The Environmental Justice Reader* (2002) and *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice* (2004), the latter volume purposefully foregrounding environmental

justice activisms and the components of race, culture, and sexualities as part of the nexus of nature and social identities suitable for ecocritical exploration.

Few noticed that all of this ecocritical attention was focused primarily on the environmental literature of adults. Slowly, an affiliated ecocriticism of children's environmental literature began, with a special issue of *The Lion and The Unicorn* on "Green Worlds: Nature and Ecology" (1995) and another special issue on "Ecology and the Child" in the *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* (Winter 1994-95). Around the same time, *ISLE* ran a cluster of essays on Dr. Suess's *The Lorax* (Winter 1996), raising critical questions about environmental rhetoric in children's books. There followed a decade of individually focused book chapters and essays, each contributing significantly to the development of a rhetorically-focused ecocriticism of children's literature (Bradford, 2003; op de Beeck, 2005; Monhardt and Monhardt, 2000; Sturgeon, 2004). The field formally took shape through the publication of Sid I. Dobrin and Kenneth B. Kidd's *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism* in 2004. Of necessity, given the predominance of animal fables in children's literature, this branch of ecocriticism has developed an emphasis interrogating the relationship of culture and nature through the relationships of children and animals, with particular scrutiny on the subjectivity or objectivity of the animals depicted in these narratives.

Exploring the intersection of interspecies relations or "animal studies," children's environmental (and environmental justice) literature, ecofeminism and ecopedagogy is the focus of the following sections.

Ecopedagogy and Children's Environmental Literature

It is bedtime, naptime, storytime, and I am reading picture books to my daughter, books that articulate in words and images the ecological values I hold as dear as my own child. After she falls asleep in my arms, I put the books away, lay her down on the bed and she murmurs, "Mosquitoes," meaning that she lives in Minnesota and knows about West Nile virus carried by these little hummers, knows about deer ticks and lyme's disease, frogs deformed from agricultural pesticides, turkey farms where real birds live in crowded filthy conditions until their deaths. If I choose her stories carefully, she will dream of birds escaping captivity, human communities supporting local organic farmers, caring for the earth, and listening to the animals. Her picture books can teach her this, and more.

Ecopedagogy raises important questions of praxis – the necessary unity of theory and practice--for ecocriticism. Noting the disjunct between theories and activisms focusing on *either* social justice *or* ecological and/or inter-species justice, ecopedagogy raises questions that challenge the backgrounding and invisibility of animal studies in ecocriticism, and argues for the necessary confluence of social, ecological, and inter-species justice as central to an inclusive and liberatory praxis (Humes, 2008). Ecopedagogy clearly distinguishes itself from a type of environmental education that seeks accommodation within a global neoliberal framework, championing "sustainable development" without challenging the unsustainability of an economy advocating endless growth. In his provocative essay, "From Education for Sustainable Development to Ecopedagogy: Sustaining Capitalism or Sustaining Life?," Richard Kahn (2008) identifies three varieties of ecoliteracy as goals for an ecopedagogy that aims to develop a "more just, democratic and sustainable planetary civilization" (p. 9).

First, ecopedagogy seeks to develop basic environmental literacy, which often means bioregional literacy, developing an understanding of the ways that local, regional, and global

ecologies interact for better and for worse. Its second feature, cultural ecoliteracy, involves both a critique of unsustainable cultures and the features thereof, as well as a study of sustainable cultures and their strategies for resisting assimilation, strengthening community, developing appropriate technologies, and organizing collective knowledge. Kahn cites C. A. Bowers' view that "cultures centrally predicated upon Western individualism tend to produce ecological crisis through the pervasive homogenization, monetization and privatization of human expression" (p. 10). Developing cultural ecoliteracy leads to the third aspect of ecopedagogy, a critique of the anti-ecological effects of industrial capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, and ruling-class culture (which involves defining humanity over and against all that is "other" – lesser humans, animals, and nature). This third aspect of ecopedagogy involves visionary and activist dimensions as well, striving "to mobilize people to engage in culturally appropriate forms of ecological politics and . . . movement building" (p. 11).

Environmental justice and ecofeminist literary critiques of children's literature also articulate and echo this radical ecopedagogy. Observing that "some ecocritics choose not to interrogate either the literature or physical environment for an understanding of their links to culture, human society, politics, or history," Kamala Platt dismisses this strain of ecocriticism as merely "a form of literary criticism" where "the text is not seen as an expressive agent for social change" (Dobrin and Kidd, 2004, pp. 183-84). Instead, Platt chooses to study "texts that are created to promote both environmental well-being and social justice, texts that expose environmental racism and the closely linked degradation of the earth" (p. 184). Compatible with Kahn's definition of ecopedagogy, Platt defines environmental justice children's literature as "stories for children that examine how human rights and social justice issues are linked to ecological issues, how environmental degradation affects human communities, and how some human communities have long sustained symbiotic relations with their earth habitats" (p. 186).

An ecofeminist perspective on children's environmental literature might look for ways that these narratives provide an antidote to the logic of domination. That is, if the logic of domination is rooted in alienation and the myth of a separate self, then undoing this logic would require narratives of connection, community, and interdependence among humans, animals, and the natural world. Similarly, if the second step in the logic of domination is hierarchy, then the literary antidotes would offer narratives of anarchy, or an absence of hierarchy and a presence of diverse human-animal-nature communities and participatory democracy. Resolving these two operations leaves no room for domination, the third step in the logical sequence of oppressive thought.

The confluence of ecopedagogy, ecofeminist and environmental justice literary criticisms raises at least three important questions about children's environmental literature, its rhetoric, and its capacity to develop environmental and cultural literacy, providing an antidote to alienation and mobilizing readers to take appropriate actions toward ecological democracy and social justice:

First, how does the text address the ontological question, "who am I?" Is the human self-identity constructed in relation or in opposition to nature, animals, and diverse human cultures/identities? In other words, how does the narrative/text provide an antidote to the first step in the logic of domination?

One well-known narrative illustrating the alienated child-self can be found in Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* (1964). This story describes a little boy who asks for everything

from his tree, beginning with a swing and ending by cutting off its branches and then its trunk. In this oppressive vision of human-nature relations, the tree stands in for the all-sacrificing mother in a hetero-patriarchal culture, and the narrative constructs humanity as a narcissistic little boy who keeps asking more and more of nature (the tree) until there's nothing left (Gaard, 1993). This narrative endorses roles for humans and nature that are not reciprocal, and moreover not sustainable. The little boy never questions his right to ask for more, nor does he question his own identity in relationship to the tree/nature.

In contrast, the boy child in John Burningham's *Oi! Get Off Our Train* communicates with nature, and through this dialogue changes his actions. The narrative describe his dream-self aboard a night train during which he and his dog take on a series of endangered animals as each species addresses their request, he rejects it, they communicate, and their dialogue persuades him to take them aboard. Realizing that the fate of these animals has everything to do with his own, the boy's decisions in this narrate promote "an ecological democracy in which human subjects listen to what the nonhuman world has to say . . . [and] the child is constructed as an environmental subject open to reformulation and change through interaction and empathy" (Bradford, 2003, p. 119).

Because animals often "speak" through behavior, sometimes just observing animal lives can be enough to inform those humans capable of listening. In *And Tango Makes Three*, Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell recount the story of Roy and Silo, two chinstrap penguins in New York's Central Park Zoo who mated in 1998 and raised a chick together in 2000. Although animal rights advocates will cringe at the implicit acceptance of zoo environments, the narrative nonetheless defies cultural constraints of heterosexuality as normative behavior, and endorses the practice of humans observing, "listening to," and responding to the messages of other species. Thanks to the zookeeper's recognition of Roy and Silo as a couple, and their nesting behaviors as a instinctual desire to rear a chick, when another penguin lays two fertile eggs (penguins can only raise one chick at a time), the zookeeper transfers the extra egg to Roy and Silo's nest. These penguin fathers happily nest, raise, and care for their little chick together. The picture book's rhetoric constructs Roy, Silo, and Tango as a family comparable to any other family in the zoo, human and nonhuman animals alike – and by reading these human-nonhuman animal connections in both directions, the narrative also constructs human sexualities as "natural" in all their diversity.

Second, how does the narrative define the ecojustice problem? Does the narrative conclusion offer an appropriate strategy for responding to the problem posed in the story, rejecting hierarchy in favor of community and participatory democracy? Are children left alone to solve ecojustice problems originally created by the adults?

As Clare Bradford (2003) argues, many environmental children's books are "strong on articulating ecological crises, but weak on promoting political programs or collective action" necessary to address these crises effectively (p. 116). This rhetorical disconnection between narrative problem and the narrative solutions can be seen in *The Lorax* (1971), where the problem of deforestation, species loss, pollution, and overproduction/consumption driven by industrial capitalism's profit motive and the "jobs-jobs-jobs" rhetoric is "solved" through a private conversation between the industrialist Once-ler and the environmentalist boy. Narrated by the Once-ler, *The Lorax's* solution involves the Once-ler handing off the last Truffula tree

seed to the boy, thereby defining “social and environmental change on an individual, limited level” which cannot possibly address the community and systems-based problems of overproduction and overconsumption (op de Beeck, 2005). Most poignant is the observation that the Once-ler’s anguish over the consequences of his actions “leads to no personal volition other than to pass on the responsibility of righting his wrong to a young boy,” exemplifying a “standard adult practice” (Henderson, Kennedy, and Chamberlin, 2004, p. 139). One collaboration of eco-scholars contrasts this “standard adult practice” with indigenous cultures that “speak of an awareness of decision-making as a ‘seven generation’ concern” (p. 139), and rewrites the ending of *The Lorax* with this question: “Wouldn’t it be grand if the Once-ler emerged from his Lerkim, returned the boy’s payment for the story, and joined the boy in planting the last Truffula seed to ensure the Truffula forest’s regeneration? The message [would become] one of intergenerational action, concrete and participatory” (p. 142) – but this is not the story’s actual ending.

In fact, *The Lorax* depicts missed opportunities for building community that provide evidence of an alienated self-identity. The Once-ler expresses definite remorse for the clearcut forest of Truffula Trees, the foul odor of air and darkening skies, the loss of Swomee-Swans, Bar-ba-loots, and Humming-Fish, yet the indignant Lorax does nothing to address the Once-ler’s real concerns for nature. According to the principles of classical rhetoric, the Lorax fails at persuasion through his ineffective use of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* (Marshall, 1996). First, the Lorax’s character and credibility (*ethos*) are not effective, since his tone is insulting, “sharpish and bossy.” He does not appeal to the Once-ler’s appreciation for nature (*pathos*), nor does his use of reason (*logos*) challenge the Once-ler’s beliefs that progress requires the exploitation of nature, that this exploitation can continue indefinitely, and that progress is an automatic and inevitable good. In fact, as Ian Marshall argues, both the Lorax and the Once-ler assume that the truffula forest and its inhabitants are property – their debate is whether the property belongs to the Lorax for preservation, or the Once-ler, for development. Instead of seeing the ecosystem as property, Suzanne Ross (1996) has argued that the Lorax missed the opportunity to define the ecosystem rhetorically as community – and one that would include not just place, plants, and animals, but also himself and his alleged adversary, the Once-ler. With a community both more diverse and more complex than originally imagined, the Lorax could invoke strategies of negotiation and cooperation, appealing to the needs of each segment in this complex community. Most significantly, Ross argues that the Lorax’s failure – as well as the Once-ler’s – is individualism: “each sees himself as an individual standing out in bold relief against a background environment” (p. 103). Seeing himself as connected, a member of the ecosystem community, the Lorax’s rhetoric might have succeeded by “favoring inclusion over exclusion, participation over competition, inducement over domination, identification over isolation” (p. 103). Instead of “speaking for the trees” or “speaking at” the Once-ler, a connected-self Lorax would have created a collaborative “speaking with” others (p. 103).

Like *The Lorax*, Dana Lyons’ *The Tree* (2002) also addresses the problem of clearcutting, the associated deaths of animals and loss of habitat, this time through the voice of an old-growth Douglas Fir. However, the solution is equally unfit to the problem: the narrative concludes with children holding hands around the base of the tree, and an image of one child holding the tree in her hands with reverence. Although the story advocates environmental stewardship, holding hands around a tree – alluding variously to India’s *chipko* movement as well as to Julia Butterfly Hill’s two-year tree-sitting project – offers only one strategy of resistance, and virtually no strategy for alternative community economics. The book preaches to the converted and

sentimentalizes nature and childhood by its “presumptuous miming of the tree’s voice [as well as by] the simplistic cry for children’s help” (op de Beeck, 2005, p. 270). Hand-holding around a tree is a last-ditch strategy for stopping bulldozers, when what is needed is a cultural and economic reevaluation of human-nature interdependence.

In contrast to the U.S. mass culture children’s series about Dora the Explorer and her cousin Diego the Animal Rescuer, who swoops in to save wildlife from minor perils (getting lost, getting stuck in bushes), a growing body of children’s environmental narratives show animal rescue in a more accurate way, describing real problems that need real solutions. In Dav Pilkey’s *’Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving*, children take direct action worthy of the Animal Liberation Front after their class visits a turkey farm, bonds with the birds, and realizes the farmer intends to kill them. The children each liberate a bird, shoving it under their shirts, sweaters, or coats, and bringing the bird home for Thanksgiving to join their family in a communal vegetarian meal. Pilkey’s narrative provides children an image of a connected (not alienated) self-identity by showing us children’s natural empathy with animals, along with a strategy for their collective action that succeeds in saving animals from becoming meat for human consumption. Another story from India, *Rani and Felicity: The Story of Two Chickens* (1996) compares and contrasts the lives of two different chickens, one subjected to industrialized animal agriculture (“factory farming”) and the other living her life on a low-impact family farm (Platt, 2004). This story exposes the problems of alienation and hierarchy in human-nonhuman animal relations, and an alternative that has implications for sustainable agriculture, animal welfare (if not animal rights), and community-based economics. Going a step towards animal rights, in a picture book from Canada, *Mojo’s Story of Clara the Chicken* (n.d.), the crow Mojo narrates the relationship between a factory-farmed chicken, her self-rescue through outsmarting her captor and escaping the cage, followed by her rescue and resuscitation from a woman who befriends her, bringing her to the Wild Bird Care Centre and allowing her to live out the rest of her life in companionship with other birds. Another Canadian narrative, *Lena and the Whale* (1991) depicts the various animal rescues a young girl provides, each one culminating in the recuperation and release of the animal; the final episode involves the rescue and return of a baby beached whale, and act that requires mobilizing Lena’s entire community. *Buddy Unchained* (2006) describes the brutal lives of dogs who are kept on chains, a narrative that is framed by the reassuring facts of the family who befriended Buddy and made him “part of their family for always” (Bix, 2006). Each of these narratives about children and animals shows a child (alone, or leading an adult, or a community) repairing unequal human-animal relationships, building connections of friendship and reciprocity.

Third, what kind of agency does the text recognize in nature? Is nature an object to be saved by the heroic child actor? Is nature a damsel in distress, an all-sacrificing mother, or does nature have its own subjectivity and agency?

Children may read veiled narratives about colonialism, industrialism, and the ecological damages produced by western culture’s domination of animals and the environment through books like Bill Peet’s *The Wump World*, but learn nothing about how to combat these problems. In *The Wump World*, the Wumps are helpless animals who retreat underground while the Pollutians ravage their planet and then move on in search of “virgin” planets to despoil, their culture, consumption, and production patterns unchallenged. When the Wumps finally return above ground, they are saddened by the paving, pollution, and deforestation of their planet, and

wander until they find one last nature preserve, where they can eat and play until the planet's flora eventually reclaim the ground. The Wumps are acted-upon objects; they do not have agency to resist the Pollutians: they flee, or must be saved, and no external saviors are forthcoming.

But in stories like *Abigail the Happy Whale* and *The Harvest Birds*, the animals themselves have agency, an important characteristic for eco-narratives committed to restoring the subjectivity of nature.

As the humpback whales in her pod swim sadly to a mass suicide on the Santa Monica beaches, Abigail the Happy Whale meets one marine friend after another and finds that dolphins, clams, bluefish and goldfish, swordfish, octopus, and ducks alike are trapped, injured, or entangled with the pollution that litters the bay. The narrative turning point occurs when Abigail talks with the duck whose body is coated with oil, styrofoam, plastics, and garbage: "We have to let the Land People see us, so they'll stop polluting," Abigail suggests, but the savvy duck informs her, "That won't accomplish anything. After all, they see me and they still pollute." Recognizing that even the spectacle of a "die-in" will not puncture the Land People's wall of apathy, Abigale chooses direct action instead: she begins eating the garbage and spewing it out her spout and onto the beach. Soon her marine friends and the rest of her pod pitch in, resulting in the complete transfer of garbage from ocean to shore, and forcing the Land People to haul away the garbage to "the real junkyards." The picture book's penultimate pages show people picking up garbage on the shore and holding signs that read "don't pollute" and "clean up the beach," while the whale tails swim away. Although the most persistent and toxic forms of pollution are not so easy to clean up, the book's rhetorical message seems to be that people will only be moved from apathy to action (in this case, cleaning up their garbage) when direct action from the oppressed makes them so uncomfortable, they have no other choice but to respond.

One book that epitomizes the values articulated from an ecofeminist, environmental justice ecopedagogy is Blanca López de Mariscal's *The Harvest Birds*. In this folktale from the oral tradition of Oaxaca, Mexico, a common farmer, Juan, fulfills his dream of successful farming through the help of an elder and a bird. Called Juan Zanate because he is always accompanied by one or two zanate birds, this young man dreams of farming but is so poor he has to work for others. Finally, Juan gets the courage to ask for a piece of land to farm: after the richest man in town denies him, Juan goes to an old man everyone calls Grandpa Chon, who agrees to loan a piece of land to Juan with the caveat that if he fails to grow food, Juan will repay Chon for each day he has used the land by giving him a day of work for free. Villagers scoff at what appears to be a Mephistophelean deal, but Juan goes to work. Guided by his bird friend Grajo, Juan offers to exchange his labor for seeds from a shopkeeper; planting the seeds, he listens to the zanate birds, and plants the corn, squash, and beans together. He gives the birds some of his leftover seeds after planting so that they too will not go hungry. When the seeds begin to sprout, the zanates advise Juan to plant the "weeds" on the borders of his land (evidently these plants contain a natural insecticide), and his harvest is "magnificent." Juan sells the crop at "an excellent price" and shares the wealth with Grandpa Chon, who gives him the land as promised and asks for his secret. "The zanates taught me that all plants are like brothers and sisters," Juan replies.

This narrative operates on a number of levels: empowering landless peasants to grow their own crops, advocating "listening" to the animals, and creating a legacy of ecological preservation and transmission outside the heteronuclear family norm.

Toward an Ecopedagogy of Children's Environmental Literature

When we read, study, and teach children's environmental literature, what effect do we want it to have it on our children? Certainly, I want my daughter to act courageously and passionately in defense of nature and to work for global justice. I want her to have the capacity to analyze ecojustice problems in a holistic way so that these problems can actually be solved. But to develop this problem-solving capacity, and to nourish herself through a lifetime of persistent action for social justice and environmental sustainability, she will need the resilience that can only be found through a connected self-identity: a connection with and a joy in nature, and a connection across cultures.

As Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods* (2005) attests, nature deficit disorder is growing among urban children who have not played in wild places and do not have an attachment to nature because they have no experiences with nature. Research shows that children who learn about nature from an intellectual standpoint don't change their behaviors and don't remember the information several months after the class lessons (Monhardt and Monhardt, 2000; Sobel, 1996). Instead, when assessing ecojustice problems, students seem to rely more on their emotions than on their intellectual knowledge of environmental science. While the first and strongest emotional connection with nature may be children's innate love of animals, children's environmental literature also has the capacity to address children's emotions and make deep, lasting impacts because it appeals to both the emotions and the intellect. And as these examples of children's environmental literature from India, Mexico, Canada and the United States show, picture-book narratives have the capacity to build cultural literacy as well, encouraging children to make connections across cultures and across differences.

All these types of connections are the foundation for ecological literacy as well as a commitment to social justice. To build these connections, I offer six boundary conditions for an ecopedagogy of children's environmental literature:

Praxis. Ecopedagogy articulates a commitment to the coherence between theory and practice, along with a reluctance to pursue texts, scholarship, and activities that lead away from the goal of putting theory into action. Praxis manifests in simple choices, such as using once-used paper for the course syllabus and encouraging "dumpster diving" in paper trash so that all student papers are written on the backs of once-used paper, or using internet course sites for writing, reading, discussion and response. Ecocritics have already noted the rhetorical disconnection between the values espoused in children's environmental literature and the pages on which those books are published (Mockler, 2004; op de Beeck, 2005). Praxis for publishers of children's books could mean the commitment to print only on post-consumer recycled paper, and joining the Green Press Initiative. Praxis might encourage sustainable transportation for students going to and from the class, and it often builds in a unit of engaged citizenship, experiential learning, service learning, or other types of civic engagement to help students test and synthesize classroom knowledge as well as intervene in anti-ecological social practices or support sustainability. If the root of the ecojustice problem is alienation, the separate self, and the severing of connections, then ecopedagogy argues that the solutions must come in restoring these connections – between theory and practice, reading subjects and actions, narrative and print alike.

Teaching ABOUT the Social and Natural Environment. Ecopedagogy looks at children's environmental texts for their potential to illuminate current environmental issues, as well as the

roots of those issues, and the strategies for responding to those issues, both individually and collectively.

Teaching IN the Social and Natural Environment. Ecopedagogy brings students into awareness of their relationship with environments, both social and natural. Practitioners may take their classes out of the classroom and (a) into the streets, (b) into the streams and streambanks, (c) into the woods, mountains, oceans, (d) into the experiences and perspectives of nonhuman animals, as well as culturally diverse others.

Teaching THROUGH the Social and Natural Environment. Ecopedagogy adapts class assignments, writing exercises, group projects, service learning, experiential learning, and civic engagement to serve the larger purpose of putting knowledge into action for social and environmental justice, health, and sustainability.

Teaching the Connections of Sustainability. Ecopedagogy illuminates connections and system-flows as simply "the way things really are" (the truth of ecology) and divisions between human and nonhuman animals, humans and nature, or humans of diverse kinds as just more ways of promoting hierarchy and domination. These sustainable connections involve the interdependence of social justice and environmental health, the interdependence of human and non-human animal species, the impossibility of an autonomous self, the interdependence of unsustainable economic practices, social injustices, and unsustainable environments, and other possibilities for coherence between theory and practice.

Urgency. Particularly true for children's environmental literature, ecopedagogy emphasizes the need for action, commitment, change – now! It asks for personal and sociopolitical changes for the health of the earth as well as its inhabitants. It can include those types of ecocriticism that are more than mere scholarship--but they must be activist in orientation, dedicated to teaching children and their adults the strategies of sustainability, connection, and democratic community-building that considers and involves all life on earth.

Articulating this ecopedagogy, I cannot conclude this essay considering contexts and connections while ignoring the context in which I am writing. In the United States and increasingly around the world, abandonment of traditional plant-based foods in favor of unhealthy Western-style fast food has led to more and more environmentally destructive factory farms such as the one from which Clara in *Mojo's Story of Clara the Chicken* escaped. Children's literature falling within the ecopedagogical boundary conditions I've outlined above might prepare children all over the world to resist such culturally and environmentally destructive developments. Let us create intergenerational, inter-cultural, and inter-species communities committed to living and reading narratives of resistance, narratives of social and environmental justice. And let's do it now.

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Just War and Warrior Activists

Lisa Kemmerer

Just War Theory

Just war theory dates back at least to the ancient Roman Empire. The Romans envisioned their empire as “a global concert under the direction of a single conductor, a unitary power” that maintained social peace and produced universal ethical truths (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 10). Just wars can be fought at home or abroad. Rome, for example, conducted “‘just wars’ at the borders against the barbarians and internally against the rebellious” (p. 10).

Just War Theory was developed and shaped by such notable Christian theologians as Ambrose and Augustine, who labored to make sense of what must have seemed an oxymoron (given Jesus’ strong pacifist leanings): “Christian soldiers.” Augustine’s writings sought “authorization for the use of violence,” and the “use of Biblical texts to legitimate participation in war” (Langan, 1984).

Just war theory continues to outline conditions under which a nation has the right to *make war* (*jus ad bellum*) and the proper means of *conducting warfare* (*jus in bello*). While notions of just warfare are now much more complicated, Just War Theory continues to explain and justify “how and why wars are fought” through two primary considerations: what kind of war might be justified, and how ought we to behave once in combat?¹

In *Empire* (2000), Hardt and Negri note that we are now watching the growth of a new empire similar in key ways to the Roman Empire. This new empire does not have just one single government, and is “characterized fundamentally by a lack of boundaries” (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. xiv). The ethics and laws of this new empire therefore have “no limits” (p. xiv). In the face of this new and limitless Empire, rooted in the ancient Roman conception of just war (*justum bellum*), a new sense of just war is emerging.

Just Declaration of War

If we are to use Just War Theory to assess cotemporary forms of political violence, we must first have a working understanding of Just War Theory.

Under Just War Theory, moral grounds for the declaration of war rest on five conditions.

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Just war must be declared:

1. by a legitimate authority,
2. for a just cause,
3. as a last resort,
4. with a reasonable hope of success, and
5. with right intention.²

1. Legitimate Authority

What is a “legitimate” authority? A medieval war satisfied the criterion for legitimate authority if undertaken by the highest authority, which at the time was an independent prince. From the 18th century through World War I “each nation was deemed the sole judge of its need to wage war” (IEP, 2008); whoever ruled determined whether or not warfare was justified.

If a legitimate authority is merely a ruler who is recognized by other rulers, how many leaders of state must recognize a king or president to lend them credence as a leader? Which rulers will be relevant to an assessment of new rulers? Must we consider the point of view of *all* extant leaders? Do we need a consensus between rulers, or a certain percentage?

Yet more startling than the uncertainty of how to determine a “legitimate” leader, is the reality that fighting for independence will always be considered unjust warfare. When U. S. settlers declared war on the British, unrecognized upstarts fighting an established nation, US aggression was unjust by definition under Just War Theory. Can *any* revolutionary war qualify as a “just war”? Might Tibetans in the 20th century or Native Americans in the 18th century, wage a Just War against their cruel and greedy oppressors?

Just War Theory reserves “just war” for those *already established in power*, for leaders broadly recognized as rulers of established nations. Just War Theory is therefore less interested in justice than in maintaining the status quo.

There are, however, exceptions:

[T]he more removed from a proper and just form a government is, the more reasonable it is that its sovereignty disintegrates. A historical example can elucidate the problem: when Nazi Germany invaded France in 1940 it set up the Vichy puppet regime. What allegiance did the people of France under its rule owe to its precepts and rules. . . ? [A] poorly accountable, inept, or corrupt regime possesses no sovereignty, and the right of declaring war (to defend themselves against the government or from foreign power) is wholly justifiable. The notion of proper authority therefore requires thinking about what is meant by sovereignty, what is meant by the state, and what is the proper relationship between a people and its government. (IEP, 2008, p. 4)

Modern Just War Theory holds that a *legitimate* authority must be accountable, competent, and free of corruption. While this seems a tall order, any government that fails in any of these, fails as legitimate leadership, in which case the people are justified in launching a defense against the government. Again, questions arise. At what point is a government incompetent? Is near financial collapse enough to warrant an uprising? What forms of corruption might be tolerated? Is a sex scandal enough to tip the scales, or does condemning corruption

indicate more serious crimes, such as tampering with votes, accepting bribes, or wallowing in wealth while some or many citizens go without food or medical care? While Just War Theory allows for aggression that arises as defense against a corrupt or inept leadership, or leadership who fails to be accountable to the people, it is not always clear how to define corruption, ineptitude, a lack of accountability, or “proper” relations with citizens.

2. *Just Cause*

In the works of Saint Augustine, up through the Counter-Reformation, just cause was defined as an act of “defense or resistance” (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 13). Initiating aggression has long been considered unjust, while defending ones nation and people against an aggressor falls under the umbrella of just warfare (IEP, 2008, pp. 3-4). In 1945 the United Nations Charter limited legitimate warfare to self-defense, and to UN actions to enforce international security (IEP, 2008).

To qualify as just aggression, entering into warfare must not only be *defensive* in nature, but must also lack ulterior motives (such as land acquisition, access to resource, or economic gain). To qualify as just warfare, “consensus is that an initiation of physical force is wrong and may justly be resisted. Self-defense against physical aggression, therefore, is putatively the only sufficient reason for just cause” (p. 4).

This stipulation, while imminently reasonable, is not without complications. For example, Romans claimed that their acts of imperialist aggression were provoked:

Romans were the masters of manipulation of circumstances to force opponents to behave in a way they could interpret as provocative. Therefore, the Roman interpretation of ‘just wars’ and... a universal aim to conquer need not be contradictory. The concept of ‘just war’ may have justified any given war but does not explain the perpetual Roman readiness to go to war. ...Finally, it must be remembered that in some instances it was clearly the Roman commander who provoked the war in order to plunder and to win a triumph (e.g., Licinius Lucullus, governor of Nearer Spain, in 151) (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2008).

Just war expectation of “self-defense” is now further complicated by modern weaponry.

The UN Charter's provision for self-defense leaves in doubt when such defense may begin. An armed attack may be preceded by subversion by the aggressor state and by its advance toward the border of the threatened state. The launching of nuclear missiles may provide little time for defense. Hence, the case has been made for preventive action by a defender (IEP, 2008).

Self defense might now legitimately manifest as a preventative action. The “principle of self-defense can be extrapolated to anticipate probable acts of aggression” (p. 4). For example, stated reasons from the White House for engagement with Iraq were twofold: security and morality (Bradol, 2004, p. 13). The security portion rested on the supposed “need to disarm Iraq and thus prevent the possibility of Al-Qaida gaining access to ‘weapons of mass destruction’” (p. 13). The Iraq war is therefore envisioned as an act of self defense.

To further complicate matters, Just war, which has universal morality and a sense of “right” since the times of ancient Rome, has recently brought into vogue a new category of warfare – humanitarian intervention. Humanitarian intervention is rooted in this ancient sense of universal right, eternal moral truth, justly defended against those who would infringe those truths (Hardt and Negri, 2000, pp. 11-12). Just warfare can therefore be waged in defense of others *even before those others have been harmed*. Just cause allows aggressors to assist

others against an oppressive government or from another external threat (interventionism). Therefore it is commonly held that aggressive war is only permissible if its purpose is to retaliate against a wrong already committed (i.e., to pursue and punish an aggressor), or to pre-empt an anticipated attack (IEP, 2008, p. 4).

The “right of intervention” is “commonly conceived as the right or duty of the dominant subjects of the world order to intervene in the territories of other subjects in the interest of preventing or resolving humanitarian problems, guaranteeing accords, and improving peace” (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 18). Humanitarian intervention is justified in cases of “domestic brutality” and “political tyranny,” such intervention is necessary when “what is going on cannot be tolerated,” such as a power “set over and against a mass of victims. The intervention then has an aim that is simple as well as negative: remove the tyrant” (Walzer, 2004, pp. 68-70).

Sometimes the oppression is “internal, the inhumanity locally and widely rooted, a matter of political culture, social structures, historical memories,” and therefore much more difficult to uproot. But intervention is deemed “morally necessary whenever cruelty and suffering are extreme,” and the intent of such intervention is “to put a stop to actions that. . . ‘shock the conscience’ of humankind” (p. 69). In such cases, “anyone near enough and strong enough to stop what needs stopping” ought to act on behalf of the oppressed (p. 70).

Humanitarian intervention carries a renewed commitment to the ancient idea of “just war” as protected by universal moral truths, legitimizing deadly aggression on behalf of the beleaguered. This right of intervention, grounded in just war theory, is legitimized by the assumption that those who march into battle are guided by universal truths, universal moral principles, which they are obligated to enforce and defend (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 18). Such intervention “is conducted under the banner of collective security and universal morality” (Bradol, 2004, p. 10), and is rooted in a cultural sense of global order, justice, and the moral high ground (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 19).

Overall, Americans “believed that, during the recent Persian Gulf War, [they] rightly risked – and in thousands of instances actually sacrificed – the lives of Iraqi citizens (as well as the lives of many soldiers) merely to keep down the cost of energy and to dispose of a tyrant” (Callicott, 1995). While Just War Theory does not permit warfare for ulterior motives such as material gain, humanitarian intervention allows for the disposal of tyrants.

Humanitarian intervention is perhaps best exemplified by the Kosovo war. Tony Blair noted that the Kosovo war was truly a war of:

values, not interests...In other words, it was a war of altruism, the sort of war in defense of populations at risk and against the perpetrators of massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law (as distinguished from wars over

money, territorial aggrandizement, or national defense) that seemed to conform to the precepts of a new human rights-based internationalism” (Rieff, 2004, p 286).

Humanitarian justifications for aggression are now critical to just warfare, “compelling the use of a humanitarian justification as the ultimate sanction for” a just war (p. 292). As Rieff (2004) notes, “It was as if humanitarian imperatives and the need to enforce human rights norms offered the only credible moral warrants (besides self-defense, obviously) – for war to which a Western politician could appeal” (p. 292).

3. *War as a Last Resort*

Jus ad bellum also requires that war be declared as a last resort. This means that war is to be declared when all other options have failed, and when no other means have been found to settle a dispute.

It is both impossible and unreasonable to expect nations to exhaust *all* possible alternative means of resolving a conflict. Nonetheless, it is much more clear when an aggressor wages without attempting to settle the problem through other means, such as negotiation or the use of economic pressure. While perhaps the requirement is stated a little too strongly, just war theory rightly requires those who would be aggressors to exhaust other clear methods for resolving conflict before resorting to armed aggression.

4. *Reasonable Hope for Success*

Just war theory requires that war be declared only when there is a reasonable expectation of success. “Deaths and injury incurred in a hopeless cause are not morally justifiable” (Ferraro, 2008). However, just war theory also recognizes that those underpowered and overburdened, with no expectation of victory, may have just cause to engage in battle even when there is no hope of success.

As the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2008) asks: “Is it right to comply with aggression because the costs of not complying are too prohibitive? Is it not sometimes morally necessary to stand up to a bullying larger force, as the Finns did when Russia invaded in 1940” (IEP, 2008, p. 5)? As noted under the stipulation for a sovereign ruler, leadership can lose the right to rule, and those oppressed under such leadership may use aggression to defend their most basic rights – no matter how hopeless their plight. As the Nazi’s prepared to invade Britain, Winston Churchill spoke only of courage and battle, though the fear of defeat was very real: “What is our aim? . . . Victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival” (Speeches to Parliament, 1940, in IEP, 2008, p. 5).

While Just War Theory recognizes the costs of war, and encourages battle only when victory seems possible, just warfare includes those battles which may seem hopeless, but which morality and justice inspire, and require.

5. *Right Intention*

The final just war condition that is to be satisfied before entering into combat is right intention – “a nation waging a just war should be doing so for the cause of justice and not for

reasons of self-interest or aggrandizement” (IEP, 2008, p. 4). Most often, right intention has translated into hope for lasting peace.

As with other just war criteria, right intention is complicated and problematic:

[A] nation may possess just cause to defend an oppressed group, and may rightly argue that the proper intention is to secure their freedom, yet such a war may justly be deemed too expensive or too difficult to wage; i.e., it is not ultimately in their self-interest to fight the just war. On that account, some may demand that national interest is paramount: only if waging war on behalf of freedom is also complemented by the securing of economic or other military interests should a nation commit its troops. The issue of intention raises the concern of practicalities as well as consequences, both of which should be considered before declaring war (p. 4).

While there are many just causes for which any one nation might engage troops, whether North Korea or Tibet, Angola or Somalia, right intention requires an assessment of both consequences and practical matters such as loss of life or expenditures which may bankrupt an otherwise healthy nation. Engaging in warfare merely for humanitarian reasons without considering other affects is not expected of nations under just war theory.

Just Warfare

Just war theory provides two additional conditions for “just war” once a battle has begun: discrimination and proportionality. Discrimination requires that combatants distinguish between civilians and “soldiers,” only targeting the later. Proportionality requires that military action be exacted in proportion to the situation at hand.

Just war theory is rooted in a belief that methods of war are limited. By setting limits on armed conflict, just war theory asserts that the rightful “aim of warfare is to incapacitate the armed forces of the enemy and not to cause severe, indiscriminate suffering among combatants and civilians alike” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2003). “The principles of proportionality and discrimination aim to temper war’s violence and range” (IEP, 2008, p. 7).

In waging a war it is considered unfair and unjust to attack indiscriminately since non-combatants or innocents are deemed to stand outside the field of war proper. Immunity from war can be reasoned from the fact that their existence and activity is not part of the essence of war, which is killing combatants. Since killing itself is highly problematic, the just-war theorist has to proffer a reason why combatants become legitimate targets in the first place, and whether their status alters if they are fighting a just or unjust war. Firstly, a theorist may hold that being trained and/or armed constitutes a sufficient threat to combatants on the other side. Voluntarists may invoke the boxing ring analogy: punching another individual is not morally supportable in a civilized community, but those who voluntarily enter the boxing ring renounce their right not to be hit. Similarly, those who join an army renounce their rights not to be targeted in war. (p. 6)

Discrimination is designed to protect noncombatants from purposeful attack. For example, Just War Theory forbids a soldier from attacking families in their homes. Just War Theory aims to protect those who are old, young, disinclined to violence, and unable to defend themselves by claiming that such individuals are not legitimate targets of warfare. “Readily it can be accepted that soldiers killing other soldiers is part of the nature of warfare, but when

soldiers turn their weapons against non-combatants, or pursue their enemy beyond what is reasonable, then they are no longer committing legitimate acts of war but acts of murder” (p. 7).

Just War Theory assumes that soldiers will wear uniforms and carry weapons openly, working under an identifiable commander, which aids in the discrimination required by *jus in bello*. In requiring discrimination, Just War Theory assumes that soldiers and civilians are distinct, but “the nature of war is not so clean cut when military targets can be hidden amongst civilian centers” (p. 3). In the ugliness of the Viet Nam War, even children and young mothers became undercover combatants, toting bombs and spying on the enemy. Even without bomb-toting mothers, the lines between combatants and noncombatants are inevitably blurred. Some argue “that the nature of modern warfare dissolves the possibility of discrimination” because civilians are as necessary “for the war machine as are combatants, therefore, they claim, there is no moral distinction in targeting an armed combatant and a civilian involved in arming or feeding the combatant” (p. 7).

In light of these combat complications, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and their Protocols of 1977, held that guerrillas must be under a commander's control, carry arms openly, and wear uniforms during military operations “or face punishment as illegal combatants.” But war theorists now include a new category of warfare, “asymmetric war,” which further complicates Just War Theory, and speaks to the ineffectiveness – even injustice – of these Protocols.

Asymmetric war defines combat in which the two warring sides have significantly different powers and resources at their disposal, including such important resources as soldiers, technology, or weapons. In such warfare, unconventional means of aggression are often employed by the disadvantaged side. Without these unconventional means, the disadvantaged side would have no hope for success. For example those with fewer soldiers and weapons might resort to harassment, guerrilla warfare (individuals acting as independent cells, relying on civilians to provide supplies and intelligence), or urban warfare (blending into urban centers where sympathetic civilians shield warriors and satisfy their basic needs). Both guerrilla warfare and urban warfare require the cooperation of civilians.

In spite of these truths of combat, just war asserts that a “lack of identification does not give a government the right to kill indiscriminately – the onus is on the government to identify the combatants” (p. 7).

It is now clear that a soldier need not be armed to be a combatant. This is not only true of guerilla and urban warfare, but also of powerful nations; death can now be dealt with the touch of a button. Even this complication fails to delve into the deeper problems of discrimination. Civilians are often strategically important, actively involved in acts of aggression against the enemy. Therefore, merely being

a civilian does not necessarily mean that one is not a threat and hence not a legitimate target. If Mr. Smith is the only individual in the nation to possess the correct combination that will detonate a device, then he becomes not only causally efficacious in the firing of a weapon of war, but also morally responsible; reasonably he also becomes a legitimate military target. His job effectively militarizes his status. The underlying issues that ethical analysis must deal with involve the logical nature of an individual's complicity, or aiding and abetting the war machine, with greater weight being imposed on those logically closer than those logically further from the war machine in their work (p. 7).

While it is increasingly difficult to clearly identify combatants, targeting those who appear to be noncombatants remains contrary to the rules of engagement of Just War Theory.

This does not mean that civilians will be spared. Military operations in Iraq shed light on some of the problems inherent in the implementation of discrimination. “How is it possible to ensure a decisive victory and keep allied and civilian casualties to a minimum when the adversary, weakened by several defeats and more than a decade of sanctions, concentrates its troops in the largest urban centers? In other words, how do you drop vast quantities of explosives on the most densely populated zones in the shortest possible time and still spare non-combatants?” (Bradol, 2004, p. 14).

In light of such complications, just war theory now includes the doctrine of double effect, which instructs soldiers to avoid *intentionally* attacking noncombatants. Under the rule of double effect, noncombatants “can never be the objects or the targets of military activity” (Walzer, 1977, p. 151). Nonetheless, warfare

sometimes unavoidably involves civilians. Whilst the principle of discrimination argues for immunity from war, the practicalities of war provoke the need for a different model. The doctrine of double effect offers a justification for killing civilians in war, so long as their deaths are not intended but are accidental. (IEP, 2008, p. 7)

In any act of aggression, there are two effects which must be noted – those which are intended, and those which are unintended. In order to justify the killing of noncombatants, a deadly act must be a legitimate act of war, harm done to noncombatants must be incidental, and the intended good must outweigh the unintended and unfortunate consequences of harming noncombatants (Walzer, 1977, p. 153).

Animal and Earth Liberation and Just War Theory

In defining “just” aggression, just war theory also defines “unjust warfare.” Through the lens of Just War Theory, combined with a working definition of terrorism, we might assess whether or not certain acts fall under the canopy of *just* aggression.

Defining Warrior Activists

Earth and animal liberationists are often labeled “eco-terrorists” and “animal rights terrorists.” Where does the aggression of “warrior activists” fit into just war theory? How do acts of aggression on behalf of animal and earth liberationist stand up to the criterion of just warfare? Are these “aggressors” social activists, terrorists, or are they soldiers engaged in humanitarian intervention against brazen indifference?

Social activists work to bringing about change, including such acts as protests and lobbying. Generally, social activists use education and political pressures to bring about legal and social changes. In the process, some activists use legal methods, while others do not. Those who do not use legal means might be viewed as “warrior activists” because they come into conflict with the governments (and often the citizens) of the nations in which they live. For the purposes of this paper, I am interested only in activists who use *illegal* means: *warrior* activists.

Rousseau noted that the first person who claimed a “piece of nature as his or her own exclusive possession [as] private property, was the one who invented evil” (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 303). Animal and earth liberationists are social activists not unlike those fighting for civil liberties or women’s equality. Animal liberationists, for example, argue that there was nothing about the color of one’s skin that might indicate where one should sit in a bus, and there was nothing about gender which rightly determined whether or not one ought to vote, and that speciesism, like racism and sexism, discriminates without using morally relevant criteria. There is nothing about species which makes the pain, suffering, or life of a pig or chicken morally irrelevant. To suggest that exploiting turkeys or cattle for profit, that imprisoning and slaughtering these sentient social beings is not morally relevant, is untellable if one believes that human suffering matters. Such a point of view is mere prejudice – morally unjustifiable. Earth liberationists might similarly argue that to be concerned only about the human species, or only about human “habitat” is a gross injustice. Inasmuch as any one species matters, all species must matter, and so must the earth on which we all depend. Furthermore, the wealthy residents of this earth own and control much of nature, and do much damage to the air, water, and land itself, which affects the life of all peoples, and which disproportionately affects the poor, who cannot simply move to cleaner environments, buy bottled water, or acquire the medical care they might need when affected by unclean air or chemical contaminants.

Those fighting for earth and animal liberation tend to oppose powerful corporations and struggle against general public apathy. Meanwhile, death and destruction continue at an alarming rate. In response, some of these activists have moved from protests and lobbying to bombing and property destruction. They feel that the oppression they fight demands a response, and they are obligated to bring change as quickly as possible on behalf of the voiceless and defenseless, to bring about justice and establish a relative peace for pigs and turkeys, forests and the oceans, and the poorer peoples of the earth.

Memorable and effective social movements, whether the civil rights movement or the abolitionists movement, crossed a line at some point in their struggle, which I will define as that of social activist versus “warrior activist” – the latter being those activists prepared to use aggression against the oppressors. The Women’s Social and Political Union, for example, employed arson and bombings; John Brown attempted to lead an armed rebellion against slave owners. Physical aggression has “played a crucial role in progressing social and political movements. . . internationally throughout history” (Rosebraugh, 2003, p. 13).

Violence and illegal actions have been a part of every major social movement throughout history. [In] the fight to end slavery, establish worker rights, and enfranchise women, broken laws and bloodshed have been justifiable steps in these noble pursuits. To completely rule out similar actions on behalf of non-human animal nations [and the natural environment] is a speciesist insult (*Bite Back*, 2003, p. 2).

The methods of animal and earth liberationists now include forms of combat used by nations at war. They fight on behalf of those who cannot defend themselves, on behalf of those overpowered and downtrodden:

Animal liberation is . . . a war. A long, hard, bloody war in which all the countless millions of its victims have, so far been on one side only, have been defenseless

and innocent, whose tragedy was being born nonhuman. The oceans, the land and the sky should be free to all rather than be the domain of whoever is most powerful in the human world. The methods to achieve a just world are many and varied, but all tactics are important (Webb, 2004, p. 80).

Simply and clearly defined, terrorism is a form of combat that targets noncombatants for political ends (Walzer, 2004, p. 51). Terrorists do not honor the just war requirement of discrimination, or even the doctrine of double effect. Terrorists *purposefully* target noncombatants for political ends.

Animal and earth warrior activists meticulously avoid harm to noncombatants. They target those who participate willingly in the exploitation of nonhumans, those who show blatant disregard for the environment, and those whose actions directly and comparatively severely affect streams, oceans, wilderness, or nonhuman animals. The government, capitulating to the pressures of big business and big money, now labels such warrior activists as “terrorists.” Even social activists (as opposed to warrior activists) can now be tried and convicted as terrorists because actions which harm the profits of animal industries, for example, are now illegal – are now acts of terrorism. Harming these businesses – driving them out of business – is, of course, the point of social activism. Repressive legislation targeting both warrior activists and social activists has been “the result of alliances between corporations and professional lobbying groups, and their goal is to thwart any challenge to industry rights to killing and predation” (Best, 2004, p. 313). Corporations and their profits are protected above life itself:

[W]ithin the exploitative and materialistic ethos of capitalism, property and inanimate objects are more sacred than life, such that to destroy living beings and the natural world is a legal and (to all too many) ethically acceptable occupation, while to smash the things used to kill animals and to plunder the earth is illegal, immoral, and even an act of ‘terrorism.’ Mink farmers are good citizens, but those who release their captives before their necks are snapped are ecoterrorists. Individual or corporate property rights over animals and the earth are protected and privileged over our common inheritance of the planet and the well-being of all future generations. The state unleashes draconian rule with legislation such as the Patriot Act, but champions of animal rights and radical ecology are smeared for using intimidation tactics . . .

Torching a research or vivisection laboratory is considered more heinous than anally electrocuting foxes or conducting LD50 tests, [pouring] industrial chemicals into the bodies of animals until half of them die. The loss of one building is deemed more noteworthy than the devastation of rainforests or the eradication of species. Critics whine about the possibility of physical violence by the ALF but fall silent before the actuality of state terrorism, animal massacres, and environmental destruction on a global scale. They decry death threats but never death (Best and Nocella, 2004, p. 48).

This reality is not lost even on the U.S. government. An official FBI definition of eco-terrorism notes that warrior activism “is a crime committed to save nature” (Best, 2004, p. 309). This “speaks volumes about capitalistic society. . . [where] actions to ‘save nature’ are classified as criminal actions while those that destroy nature are sanctified by God and Flag” (p. 309).

We have laid out the framework for Just War Theory, and provided a working definition of terrorism, social activism, warrior activism, speciesism, and the animal and earth liberation movements. By examining the tactics of these liberation movements, we can now determine how these aggressive activists are to be assessed in light of Just War Theory.

Animal and Earth Liberationists and Jus ad Bellum

Just War Theory requires that just wars be declared by a legitimate authority, for a just cause, as a last resort, with a reasonable hope of success, with right intention.

1. *Legitimate Authority*

Animal and earth liberationists are engaged in asymmetric warfare. The resources of the state – bolstered by big business interests that wish to continue exploiting earth and animals – vastly outstretch those of liberationists. Just War Theory therefore allows that liberationists cannot be expected to have a clearly identifiable leader. If such a leader were to surface, she would quickly be tracked down and imprisoned by a force with seemingly unlimited employees, resources, and intelligence operations. Asymmetric warfare allows for covert leadership on the disadvantaged side.

While Just War Theory allows that warrior activists might have legitimate leadership without putting forward an identifiable commander, what of the U.S. government's status under Just War Theory? Does Just War Theory recognize the U.S. government as a legitimate leader?

Just War Theory acknowledges that a government which is not “accountable,” or which is “inept, or corrupt,” loses the right to rule, and those oppressed under such leadership may use aggression to defend their most basic rights – no matter how hopeless their plight might be (IEP, 2008, p. 4).

Those fighting for earth and animal liberation, particularly in the U.S., are likely to believe that their government is no longer a legitimate authority. Such a belief is well grounded in the government's alignment with big businesses that profit from the lives of billions of animals and without regard to the environment. For example, the government supports and protects the meat and dairy industries, even against social activists whose information, were it to reach the public, might harm the profits of these mega-businesses. Similarly, the U.S. government has aligned with the huge auto and oil industries to sanction drilling for oil in the Arctic, while failing (for decades) to support alternative energy sources – or even public transport. U.S. leaders have even held a stake in agribusiness and the oil profits – the Bush administration has links to weapon, oil, and ranching.

The U.S. government might legitimately be considered corrupt and inept in the eyes of those fighting for earth and animal liberation. Consequently, aggression on behalf of the oppressed and slaughtered, the endangered and overlooked, satisfies the criteria for just warfare.

The U.S. might also be considered corrupt for recent moves to repress social activists. Hardt and Negri discuss the new Empire (in which the US is a primary actor), offering insights on asymmetric warfare and warrior activists. In this growing battle, “ethics, morality, and justice are cast into new dimensions,” by the government (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 20). “Peace equilibrium, and the cessation of conflict are the values toward which everything is directed” (p. 14), and the world's leaders deploy “a powerful police function against the new barbarians and rebellious slaves who threaten its order” (p. 20). But this peace is founded on the peace of big

business, profit, and protecting the current power structure – which disregards the lives of animals and the earth itself. In the quest for this illusive peace, the Empire deploys “prevention, repression, and rhetorical force” (p. 17). Liberationists become the targets of such persecution.

The states power against these activists is practically limitless. In the eyes of the Empire, as defined by Hardt and Negri, “[t]ruth will not make us free, but taking control of the production of truth will” (p. 156). The state can redefine terrorism, for example, to include social activism. They need only spread this idea through the population, and without any understanding to the contrary, the population will generally believe what they are told. If told that liberationists are terrorists, on what grounds might they believe otherwise when the U.S. government controls the media? The new Empire controls “thought and practice, sanctioning and prescribing normal and/or deviant behaviors” (p. 23). The powers of the present Empire control the media, education, and public discourse so that the agenda of the Empire is “distributed throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens” (p. 23).

Through its power within the media, and through the power of mega-corporations within the media, the Empire has effectively labeled both social activists and warrior activists as “terrorists.” Indeed, they have become so in the eyes of most civilians. Society, swayed by such media, “reacts like a single body. Through the media, power (governmental and industrial) “extends throughout the depths of the consciousness and bodies of the population” (p. 24). Norms and moral imperatives are thereby “interiorized within the subjects themselves” (p. 23). In this way the Empire effectively “constructs social fabrics that evacuate or render ineffective any contradiction” (p. 34). Liberationists, who attempt to contradict the Empire’s assertion that big businesses, which profit from the lives of turkeys or by destroying ecosystems, become the enemy of the state and the citizenry.

Warrior activists tend to recognize the state as “a bureaucracy that monopolizes the means of violence and exists largely as a political tool for the economic interest of ruling elites” (Best, 2003, p. 323). Big business is the primary enemy, protected and supported by the state. “The great industrial and financial powers . . . produce needs, social relations, bodies, and minds – which is to say, they produce producers” (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 32). Big business creates an attitude of earth and animal exploitation in order to sell flesh and autos. The absolute power of the Empire is inextricably linked with the “machine of production and reproduction” ; in Empire’s regime of power over people, “economic production and political constitution tend increasingly to coincide” (p. 41).

After decades of nonviolent social activism, aware that governments have joined big business to create an almost impervious bastion of power, and aware that they control the media for the cause of big business, warrior activists have launched a counteroffensive against such unjust powers, against these aggressors, who support and defend exploitation of the earth and slaughter of billions of nonhumans for profit.

In response to these activists, the Empire has taken on a “messianic” tone in the media, demonizing activists in the news, as terrorists, while presenting superpowers as saviors to those who are “victims of ‘evil,’” including such “victims” as agribusiness and pharmaceuticals, developers and the logging industry (Bradol, 2004, p. 12). Hardt and Negri (2000) note that the Empire “wields enormous powers of oppression and destruction,” and “is continually bathed in blood,” yet always presents itself as “dedicated to peace” (p. xv) – a peace that is as ironclad and ephemeral as the Empire itself. The empire fights terror, and in the process exports the “doctrine of human rights and ‘free-market democracy’ – by force of arms and disregarding international law if necessary” (Bradol, 2004, p. 3). Activists are repressed as “a moral front for the defense of

the interests of the most powerful,” thereby justifying the government’s “right to intervene,” and creating a massive “war on terror” (p. 11).

Since September 11, 2001, U.S. civil liberties have been trampled in a witch-hunt for terrorists under the guise of universal moral truth. Enemies of the Empire, those who stand against the Empire’s rhetoric and economic giants, are labeled “terrorists” (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 37). “The alleged dangers posed by foreign terrorists” have been “used to justify the attack on ‘domestic terrorists,’” and a domestic terrorist is “any and every citizen expressing dissent” (Best and Nocella, 2004, p. 10). The “Bush administration took firm measures to criminalize animal rights and environmental protests and, indeed, nearly every form of dissent” (Best, 2004, p. 305). The “FBI’s policy is to treat citizens exercising their constitutional rights like terrorists” (p. 330). Activists threatening big business are demonized, and are recast as terrorists. Leaders who demonize concerned citizens and treat them like terrorists while aligning with powerful members of society simply because they are powerful, constitutes corruption.

When “morality rages against the machine of corporate-induced” immorality, when “the common voice is not heard, when right becomes wrong in a world contaminated by the waste of corporate excess, the . . . passionate lover of life, becomes a criminal” (Sampson, 2004, p. 186). The U.S. government has lost legitimacy. U.S. activists “are being attacked in the name of ‘security’” (Best and Nocella, 2004, p. 10), accused of terrorism in order to permit “severe political repression” (p. 10).

A handful of dedicated activists have recently been tried under post 9/11 laws that treat social activists as if they were terrorists, providing strict sentences for those who threaten the interests of big business. Josh Harper of the SHAC 7 (6 activists and the organization Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, USA) writes, “The SHAC 7 were only accused of speech related activity. I personally was convicted for two lectures I gave . . . I wasn’t advocating shooting vivisectors . . . but [was advocating] sending black sheets of paper through fax machines to tie up phone lines. I’m serving three years in a medium security federal prison for talking about electronic civil disobedience” (Harper, 2007). Darius Fullmer, another member of the SHAC 7, notes that he was accused of violating the Animal Enterprise Protection Act, for which he was also fined \$1 million. Though he was protesting, he was not breaking the law, so “the week before our [the SHAC 7] arrests, the senate judiciary committee met, at the request of the pharmaceutical industry, to discuss the ‘problem’ of [SHAC 7 activism]. Since none of us were doing anything illegal, they changed the law so [that] we would be. I remember learning in kindergarten that you don’t change the rules in the middle of the game – I suppose they forgot” (Fullmer, 2007). The U.S. government is now catering to the interests of mega-businesses at the expense of citizens, free speech, and civil liberties in general.

According to Just War Theory, warrior activists (who engage in asymmetric warfare) need not have an identifiable legitimate authority in command. They must, however, avoid corruption and ineptitude. The U.S. government, aligned with big business against activists, has become corrupt, and is therefore no longer a legitimate authority. Consequently, the U.S. government cannot engage in just warfare.

2. *Just Cause*

Animal and earth liberationists are fighting for nations and communities – albeit not human nations and communities – to prevent and end oppression, exploitation, and outright,

ongoing slaughter. *Animal and earth liberationists are fighting a battle synonymous with humanitarian intervention.*

Humanitarian interventions are carried out “against people who are already using force, breaking the peace. [Combatants] will be ineffective unless there is a willingness to accept the risks that naturally attach to military acts – to shed blood, to lose soldiers. In much of the world, bloodless intervention, peaceful peacekeeping is a contradiction in terms: if it were possible, it wouldn’t be necessary” (Walzer, 2004, p. 73).

In this ongoing humanitarian intervention on behalf of earth and nonhuman animals, the establishment seeks to protect the interests of big business, such as the logging industry and pharmaceuticals, while animal and earth liberationists seek to protect the last stands of virgin forests, the final handful of rhinoceroses. Warrior activists seek to protect the natural world from those who see trees and water, deer and elephants as “resources” to be exploited for human profit. Warrior activists defend and protect habitat – homes that are critical for the lives of other species. Warrior activists work to alleviate the suffering of farmed animals and animals exploited in laboratories, of those slaughtered for food and afflicted in the name of science.

Western cultures are inherently, broadly violent to earth and nonhuman animals. Western societies tend to support

[v]iolence inflicted upon the Earth through the coal, hydro-, and nuclear powered facilities that generate the electricity we co-depend upon; violence against indigenous peoples, animals and the environment to extract and burn the fossil fuels that power our cars; violence committed by the polluting and animal torturing companies that produce an endless stream of unnecessary luxuries; and the violence our police and military forces exercise daily across the globe to supposedly protect our freedom to live in such a violent way.

When CNN or FOX TV asks whether we are seeing an increase in violence, the answer is yes, but not from our [warrior activists] side. The timber, oil, agricultural, biomedical, pharmaceutical, and even entertainment industries profit quite nicely from physical violence so why aren’t they ever held up to the same moral yardstick the ALF [Animal Liberation Front] and ELF [Environmental Liberation Front] are?

...Far from being terrorism, such [direct activism is] the only avenue left available as self defense. (Coronado, 2003, p. 6)

When prosecuted for breaking ranks from the traditional sign-holding and lobbying to sabotage a research lab, or burn down a new housing development, warrior activists often feel that only *they* are expected to be non-violent in a society *saturated* with violence. For eco-warriors and animal liberationists, who are dedicated to a more peaceful world – for those with a vision of peace few dare to imagine – the natural world and nonhuman animals deserve the same response as did slaves and those dying in concentration camps – moral outrage – and the same dedication and diverse means necessary to bring change. For animal advocates, the desperate plight of pigs and chickens is morally critical, as would be the plight of humans similarly abused, exploited, and slaughtered. Yet eco-activists and animal advocates are too often expected to fight death camps with petitions, without raising a hand against killers and exploiters who prosper on profits garnered from others whom they have subjugated, disregarded, devastated, and ultimately destroyed.

Warrior activists, who recognize oppression and mass destruction whether it is aimed at a turkey or a child, argue that counter-aggression is “not only morally permissible but also obligatory” (Finsen and Finsen, 1994, p. 277). Some animal and earth warrior activists feel morally obliged to sabotage life-destroying property, such as animal research labs and whaling vessels, heavy machinery and developments springing up in pristine wilderness. If these businesses employed instruments of *human* death and torture, wouldn’t we all? Activists who target property and profits in the hope of saving animal lives and/or preserving the planet are “doing only what morality demands” (p. 277). Animal and earth advocates feel that “turning away from” activism – whether sabotage, arson, or liberations – is tantamount to abandoning “the only true road to peace” (Coronado, 2003, p. 7). No peaceful method has even put dent in the activities of those who profit from exploitation and death.

Animal industries, one of the primary industries linked with global warming, water pollution and dead zones, and the depletion of fresh-water reserves, a primary cause for the destruction of rainforests, and a major customer for oil and pesticides, animal agriculture threatens not only the animals who are its direct victims, but also the very earth itself – all of us, and all life. “A supreme emergency exists when our deepest values and our collective survival are in imminent danger” (Walzer, 2004, p. 33). In such times, rash actions are often to be expected, if not morally obligatory.

Animal and earth liberationists employ aggression on behalf of the defenseless – nonhuman animals. Their aggression is not preemptive, but is a response to ongoing crimes against life, crimes that have claimed more lives than any other aggression in the history of humankind. In the eyes of warrior activists “it isn’t enough to wait until the tyrants . . . have done their filthy work,” then rush in to aid survivors (p. 81). Whenever such cruel exploitation, such blatant disregard for life “can be stopped, it should be stopped. And if not by . . . the supposedly decent people of this world, then by whom?” (p. 81). Where such ongoing crimes against life are perpetrated, it is “not possible to wait; anyone who can take the initiative should do so. Active opposition to massacre . . . is morally necessary; its risks must be accepted” (p. 75). Warrior activists place their own lives “in harms way for a cause more important” than their personal freedom or safety (Wicklund, 2004, p. 237). Warrior activists are engaged in an asymmetrical war of humanitarian intervention.

The causes of animal and earth liberation are just, and desperate. In warfare, one is allowed to use desperate means in desperate times, such as when one is under a global threat:

There are limits on the conduct of war, and there are moments when we can and perhaps should break through the limits (the limits themselves never disappear). “Supreme emergency” describes those rare moments when the negative value that we assign – that we can’t help assigning – to the disaster that looms before us devalues morality itself and leaves us free to do whatever is militarily necessary to avoid the disaster, so long as what we do doesn’t produce an even worse disaster (Walzer, 2004, p. 40).

There was perhaps never such a strong argument for aggressive counter-action for a humanitarian cause. While military aggressors have, in the past, threatened autonomous nations, cultures, and races, they have never threatened the balance of the planet itself. Animal agriculture and other large businesses are now doing just that.

3. *As a Last Resort*

Animal and earth liberationists have been working to protect the earth and nonhuman animals for more than a century, employing every imaginable tactic to halt aggression and bring a lasting peace for all creatures and the earth itself. From education to lobbying, social activists for the earth and nonhuman animals have employed every legal means available to save lives and preserve ecosystems and species.

Some activists feel the cruelty and slaughter of the aggressor, and their lack of response to peaceful means of protest, *require* a more aggressive response:

While some in the animal rights movement may still believe that passive resistance and Gandhian tactics will reverse the lack of morality among the world's most powerful industries and governments, the ALF abandons this naiveté. The escalation of institutional animal exploitation in this last century continues, as abusers are guided by profit, not moral imperatives. (Coronado, 2003, p. 179)

So far, legal means have failed even to reduce, let alone halt, animal exploitation and environmental destruction.

Ongoing legal abuses and government repression – trying activists as terrorists, for example – have recently motivated yet more activists to engage in underground resistance (Watson, 2004, p. 284). “It is not the oppressed who determine the means of resistance, but the oppressor” (Nelson Mandela in Coronado, 2003, p. 182). Ronnie Lee, founder of Band of Mercy and the Animal Liberation Front writes of the common frustration felt by many animal liberationists, speaking of the formation of a more militant group, the Band of Mercy.

All of us were either vegetarians or vegans and had been involved in various animal protection organizations. We shared the common feeling that those organizations were failing to stem the tide of animal persecution because their tactics weren't hard-hitting enough.

We felt it was vital to embark on a campaign of direct action in order to try to turn things around. We had no idea whether or not we would succeed, but we felt there was no other choice and we had to give it a go” (Lee, 2008).

For those determined to protect and save the oppressed, those who cannot defend themselves, the only viable option has become counter-violence. Warrior activists are reacting to repression, and to a culture of indifference, which “does not offer any legal form of redress and thus spawns the frustration and the anger” (Watson, 2004, p. 284). Meanwhile, the slaughter continues.

Counter violence is also called for in light of massive ignorance and indifference – if not overt resistance – among the general population. As was the case in Nazi Germany, the wider U.S. citizenry, for example, lacks information on what transpires in the animal industries, and on the state of the environment, and so it is not surprising that they lack the sense of justice necessary to bring about needed reforms. In any event, most people have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo – they like their steak and their automobiles:

The fundamental problem . . . is that [nonviolent political action] requires the opponent to have a healthy and working conscience to decipher between right and wrong, good and evil, just and unjust. Do executives from cigarette corporations, who have knowingly and purposely sold deadly products to people for years, have healthy and working consciences? Do vivisectors, who continue their fraudulent and appalling research . . . have healthy and working consciences? Do executives of corporations such as Pacific Lumber, who have been engaged in chopping some of the last remaining old-growth trees in this country strictly for financial gain, have healthy and working consciences? (Rosebraugh, 2003, p. 13).

Many activists feel that, if the slaughter and degradation are to stop anytime soon, change must be forced.

Tom Regan (2004) notes that activists have stepped outside the law because they believe they have “exhausted nonviolent alternatives,” and “they believe the time for talking is past” and that “the time for acting has arrived” (p. 235). Consequently, overt combat – the taking of human life – cannot be ruled out in this escalating battle between a repressive government backed by big business and the ignorance and indifference of the masses, and dedicated warrior activists. Activists have been forced to decide how much death and destruction ought to be tolerated before morality requires that they respond in kind.

In the early eighties, warrior activists began to move in more militant directions, insisting that exploiters “sample a taste of the fear and pain they dole out to animals, and they intend to fight violence with violence” (Best, 2004, p. 304). Warrior activists have grown weary of lobbying and protesting while nonhuman animals died at the hands of their exploiters, bringing profits to their killers, while forests and species continue to disappear. Warrior activists sometimes note that “fear is the strongest motivator and that the death of some vivisectors would send the strongest possible signal that vivisection is a bad investment and certainly not a good choice for a promising long-term and lucrative career” (Dawn, 2004, p. 224). Warrior activists have grown:

tired of adhering to a nonviolent code of ethics while violence from the enemy increases. Realizing that nonviolence against animal exploiters in fact is a pro-violence stance that tolerates their blood-spilling without taking adequate measures to stop it, a new breed of freedom fighters has ditched Gandhi for Machiavelli and . . . embraces animal liberation “by any means necessary” (Best, 2004, p. 301) .

These warrior activists feel that the ongoing struggle for animal and earth liberation must “advance beyond property destruction” (p. 304).

In the wake of 9/11, warrior activism has become yet more risky. Terrorism has been misconstrued in order to target warrior activists who work to protect and preserve nonhuman animals and the environment. Big businesses, eager to protect their personal interests in logging, mining, energy, factory farming, laboratory research, and weapons, for example, have urged the government to crack down on these dedicated activists; civil liberties have been hard hit by the powerful interests of such corporations. But their methods have backfired. Repressive legislation, instead of preventing protests, has pushed some social activists into the realms of warrior activism. Instead of employing methods of protest that were legal until just recently, such as

workshops on how to waste company ink, the U.S. government has closed these doors, forcing activists to look in new directions. If one is to be imprisoned, why toy with industry ink rather than explosives? If activists are to risk arrest, and can expect to receive significant sentences, they may as well burn down a building as teach others how to clog phone lines. If an activist is going to be punished for threatening big business, why not go underground and threaten these corporate giants in a big way?

While animal and earth liberationists have thus far avoided killing anyone in their humanitarian intervention on behalf of earth and animals – no matter how bloody the hands of the exploiters – recent legal maneuvers, pushed forward by big business, have changed the landscape. Can there continue to be a civil dialogue when the slaughter continues unabated and activists are jailed for means of protest that were recently legal? “The answer, to be sure, is – *must* be – an unequivocal ‘no’” (Churchill, 2004, p. 3).

Warrior activists feel that the time for talk is long over. The destruction and slaughter continue, with little indication of even the slightest change, and the time has arrived for “direct action of the sort designed to disrupt – and at an optimum halt – the process” (p. 3). Frustrated activists, who have seen little change in several decades of hard work, and who now see decreased avenues for legal protest, are gravitating toward illegal means. Such tactics are likely to lead to serious injury or loss of life on the side of the oppressors – those who work in or support big businesses that destroy billions of nonhuman animals or do massive damage to the environment. In light of global warming and species eradication, in light of billions of farm animals exploited without regard to their most basic needs, and in light of so many years of less aggressive methods of protest, such means seem reasonable, expected, legitimate – even morally necessary in the realms of humanitarian intervention.

In light of the gravity of the problem, the sheer numbers and sufferings involved, to continue long-range, non-violent methods of protests seems blatantly irresponsible to some warrior activists. Did the moral conscience of slave owners end slavery? Can those who feast on flesh be expected to voluntarily give up cold cuts and chicken McNuggets in preference for protecting the lives of the vulnerable? Some activists feel that a pervasive lack of moral conscience not only justifies but *requires* moving from social activism to warrior activism – the use of force, aggression, and violence – even against human aggressors.

4. *With Reasonable Hope of Success*

Animal and earth liberationists do not have a reasonable hope of success in any overt humanitarian counter-attack on behalf of nonhumans and the earth, at least not in the near future. Just War Theory recognizes that those with no expectation of victory, those who are at a tremendous disadvantage in asymmetric warfare, may nonetheless have just cause to engage in a battle on behalf of what is morally right – to move against a powerful, immoral aggressor (IEP, 2008, p. 5) – especially on behalf of noncombatants who are suffering at the hands of a more powerful aggressor.

It might also be argued that warrior activists have a tremendous chance of success *in the long run*. Examples of asymmetric wars that were won by the “weaker” party include the American Revolution and the Viet Nam War. Guerrilla warfare is notoriously difficult to defeat. When the massive forces of established armies do not know who the warriors are, or where they will next strike, they have little hope of subduing the opposition.

5. *Right Intention*

Just as one must understand Jim Crow laws, segregation, and slavery to understand John Brown's violent acts – his willingness to break laws and use aggression to further his humanitarian cause – an intimate knowledge of the pressing problems facing planet Earth, and the horrors brought to animals in labs and factory farms, is critical to understanding the response of warrior activists who fight to liberate nonhumans animal and the earth. Motives are critical to just cause. One must understand ravaging of the rainforests, the spreading of dead zones, and the actions of Huntingdon Life Sciences in order to assess animal and earth liberationists.³ Warrior activists

recognize a profound crisis in the human relation with the natural world, such that the time has long passed for moderation, delay, and compromise. They can no longer fiddle while the earth burns and animal bodies pile up by the billions; they are compelled to take immediate and decisive action (Best and Nocella, 2004, p. 11).

Warrior activists are motivated to move from legal to illegal means by the unjust aggression of others. They employ counter-aggression because they feel an “intense sense of urgency” (p. 11). “When the corporate-state complex cautions, ‘It is only a matter of time before somebody gets hurt’ in the direct action movements on behalf of animals, they ignore the fact that someone already has been hurt-the billions of animals killed every year in factory farms, slaughterhouses, vivisection laboratories, and the ‘entertainment’ industries” (Best, 2004, p. 319). They ignore the fact that our earth is in dire straights, and that industries continue to contribute to the ever-worsening crisis of environmental degradation – and that their profiteering actions continue to be protected by law.

Those who are aware of what happens in slaughterhouses, those who are aware of the state of the earth's seas and ever diminishing forested lands, are likely to experience sadness, “anger and even rage” (Finsen and Finsen, 1994, p. 278). Animal activist Steve Hindi writes, “I have witnessed and documented more scenes of grotesque and indefensible cruelty and brutality than I want to remember. I regularly experience anger and rage over the way animals are treated” (Hindi, 2003, p. 12).

Just War Theory allows personal (national) interests to override the need for humanitarian interventions. Many nations look first to their own self-preservation, and then to the needs of others. This is not the case with animal and earth liberationists. They do not place their personal interests – freedom and safety – above their humanitarian duty to defend the defenseless (IEP, 2008, p. 4). There are few combatants whose intentions are as honorable as those of animal and earth liberationists. Unlike their opponents, these warrior activists have no ulterior motives, only a commitment to justice and a defense of the voiceless and oppressed.

Just War Theory, and the cause of humanitarian interventions, explains why many activists who plainly state that nonhuman lives are as precious as human lives, do not consequently put their lives on the line to save nonhuman animals. Just War Theory notes that “a nation may possess just cause to defend an oppressed group, and may rightly argue that the proper intention is to secure their freedom, yet such a war may justly be deemed too expensive or too difficult to wage; i.e., it is not ultimately in their self-interest to fight the just war” (p. 4). It is reasonable for a nation, or an individual, to preserve life and freedom rather than risk their own

life or freedom for the cause of another. Just War Theory notes that practicalities and consequences are rightly weighed against justice when contemplating humanitarian intervention (p. 4). Those activists who do not choose to risk their lives or their freedom for the cause are not hypocrites, they are simply acting as states do – self preservation before heroics.

Animal and Earth Liberationists and Jus in Bello

Once combat has begun, Just War Theory requires that combatants use discrimination and proportionality. Do animal and earth liberationists satisfy these just war criteria?

As noted, terrorism is easily identified by *tactics*: terrorists threaten the lives of noncombatants; terrorists fail to comply with the *jus in bello* requirement of discrimination. Combatants are those who are “trained and/or armed,” and “those who “voluntarily enter the boxing ring,” or “join an army.” What does this mean in the realms of warrior activism?

For warrior activists on behalf of nonhuman animals, those who have “entered the ring” are those who slaughter billions of cattle and chickens, pigs and turkeys, who inflict millions of rats and mice with diseases, or anally electrocute thousands of fox and mink and rob them of their furs – or the owners of such companies. These citizens are all trained and “armed” with dangerous weapons, with which they kill the innocent.

Warrior activists on behalf of the earth identify combatants as those who endanger individuals who are members of threatened species, erect building complexes in fragile ecosystems, or log virgin forests, for example. Through such acts, these individuals “enter the boxing ring.” Such people are deadly to nonhuman animals, and anathema to the earth. On behalf of the earth and nonhumans, animal and earth liberationists offer humanitarian counter-forces in hopes of aiding these defenseless victims of powerful and immoral businesses, who rob them of their lives and destroy the earth itself.

Such profit-seeking businesses are aware of their combatant status. Social activists have lobbied and protested against their practices for decades. Those who build golf courses and resorts in delicate ecological zones know that such enterprises run a high risk of sabotage. Those who run fur farms know that their captives might be released, and those experimenting on animals know that blood-smeared labs run a high risk of being sacked, that their “subjects” (victims by any other account) might be liberated. These types of businesses are increasingly difficult to insure.

Warrior activists do not target random civilians; they target oppressive, exploitative big businesses. In fact, most warrior activists do not target people at all, *even flagrant exploiters*. Ronnie Lee writes of his early activities for the cause of animal liberation:

We decided that our campaign should be against property and that no violence should be used against people, except in self-defense. For some of us, this was for moral reasons, but for others it was purely tactical. I personally now regret this, as I feel there would have been a place for the limited use of violence against animal abusers (Lee, 2008).

While most warrior activists have not directly threatened violent and dangerous combatants, a handful of more radical liberationists have reluctantly adopted these tactics as necessary to their humanitarian intervention. For example the Hunt Retribution Squad (HRS), Animal Rights Militia (ARM), Justice Department (JD), and Revolutionary Cells (RC) have

dispensed with the usual commitment to nonviolence, and openly engage in a humanitarian counterattacks against the aggressors, a counterattack in which violent profiteers and exploiters might reasonably fear for their lives. Using reason to draw their conclusion and guide their actions, these groups “openly espouse physical violence against animal oppressors, unable to fathom why some believe that human life has absolute value” (Best and Nocella, 2004, p. 35), while other lives seemingly have absolutely no value – except as is measured by the dollar.

New forms of liberation, including warrior activists who are willing to endanger or destroy the lives of aggressors, intend “exploiters to sample a taste of the fear and pain they dole out to animals,” and they are now choosing to fight “violence with violence” (Best, 2004, p. 304). These new groups offer clear arguments “in favor of inflicting serious injury, even death, upon animal abusers” (Webb, 2004, p. 79). They ask:

“Do you believe in animal liberation? Do you therefore believe that speciesism is as indefensible as racism? Did you support the African National Congress during its policy of armed struggle against apartheid? Would you therefore support an ‘armed struggle’ by the ARM or Justice Department?” (p. 79).

Their logic is difficult to refute if one values life, and when one recognizes that humans are just one of many sentient species who prefer not to suffer, who can be exploited and killed, but who prefer not to be exploited or killed.

HRS, formed in 1984, distinguished itself from earlier animal protection groups by noting that they were willing and ready to inflict physical harm on those who harmed nonhuman animals (p. 76). ARM was formed in 1985, “sending letter bombs to prominent vivisectionists. The ARM would surface sporadically to ever more dramatic effect; its city center arson attacks in 1994 caused over \$6 million in damages” (p. 78). In the early nineties, ARM launched a series of incendiary devices against abusers, including large pharmaceutical companies (p. 79). In 1993 JD sent out “booby-trapped videocassette boxes and poster tubes, [and] metal mousetraps primed with razor blades [which] soon began to reach their targets. Siding firmly with the Animal Rights Militia, the JD declared ‘We won’t be asking anyone to stop messing with animals and will make no excuses for our violent intervention – they’ve had it too good for too long’” (p. 79). The JD understood that they were fighting a war of “intervention” on behalf of nonhuman animals. Though willing to use violence against human life in their humanitarian intervention, each of these groups has targeted only combatants, those engaged in direct and heinous destruction of nonhuman animals.

Such scrupulous attention to the Just War requirement of discrimination is the norm among warrior activists. Ronnie Lee, founder of Band of Mercy and the Animal Liberation Front, notes: “I am not ethically opposed to violence against animal abusers. But I think great care has to be taken not to endanger ordinary members of the public” (*Bite Back*, 2003b, p. 9):

It is a very strong tenet of the animal rights movement that the end doesn't justify the means. Thus we hold it wrong to carry out painful experiments on animals no matter what would be the benefit to humankind (if indeed there be a benefit, and many would argue that there isn't). By the same token it must be wrong to deliberately kill or injure an innocent human (or other animal) as part of a campaign for animal liberation (Lee, 2008).

Lee remains one of the most radical warrior activists, and he does not engage in terrorism – he does not target noncombatants.

To date, *no* animal liberationist has deliberately targeted human life – even combatants – to achieve political ends. This restraint despite the ongoing slaughter – billions of nonhuman animals every year. This despite the fact that the vast majority of civilians are, in lesser but significant ways, *guilty* in the eyes of activists.

Most U.S. citizens, for example, contribute to horrific violence against nonhuman animals; they are abusers and exploiters, destroyers and enablers who consume large quantities of flesh and support research on defenseless animals. These “noncombatants” habitually *cause* non-human animals to endure intense, prolonged misery and premature death, and contribute freely to unnecessary damage to earth, water, air, and ecosystems. Such dangerous civilians might legitimately be considered targets warrior activists fighting to protect animals and the earth.

At a deeper level, one can consider the role that civilians play in supporting an unjust war; to what extent are they morally culpable, and if they are culpable to some extent, does that mean they may become legitimate targets? (IEP, 2008, p. 7).

So far, warrior activists have been contented to go after the biggest killers – the giant corporations that profit from nonhuman animal and earth exploitation and destruction. As long as warrior activists can attack these major aggressors, there is little justification for attacking individuals who are largely guilty of ignorance. When offending big businesses topple, the behaviors of the masses will change accordingly. When there are no McBurgers, there will be no McBurger customers. But if these big businesses become so well insulated by the government that they are virtually impossible to breach, if warrior activists are denied these larger targets, it is conceivable that they will feel morally obligated to settle for lesser targets rather than turn a blind eye to the ongoing exploitation and death.

In an asymmetric war of humanitarian intervention, all *oppressors* are legitimately considered combatants, and might therefore be legitimate targets. If those who ran the Nazi death camps were legitimate war targets, then so are researchers who exploit rabbits and factory farmers who slaughter pigs for warrior activists who are fighting an asymmetric humanitarian counterattack against nonhuman animal oppressors. Furthermore, those who would argue that it was a legitimate war strategy to destroy the railroad tracks that carried victims to death camps – even if it risked the lives of those operating the trains – cannot argue that destroying the means of transporting pigs and hens to slaughter, or burning down buildings that experiment on animals, are not also legitimate tactics – even if human beings die in the process. Even if these people are deemed innocents, unwillingly working for the oppressors because they must pay the bills, the doctrine of double effect justifies incidental noncombatant deaths for those engaged in just warfare. Finally, those who argue that stealing slaves was a legitimate means of liberation, cannot argue that releasing mink is not also a legitimate act in this humanitarian counter-offensive on behalf of nonhuman animals.

Animal and earth liberationists are not “terrorists”; they use discrimination in combat. These dedicated warrior activists target specific aggressors; they do not randomly attack noncombatants as do terrorists. In truth, warrior activists fighting to protect the environment and non-human animals have, thus far, never targeted life of *any* kind. However, Just War Theory

permits these warrior activists to target combatants, and even to harm noncombatants incidentally through the doctrine of double effect. We might expect animal and earth liberationists to increasingly target combatants – those who exploit and kill nonhumans for profit in spite of thirty years of protests, pleading, and picketing on behalf of the defenseless. Those who willfully continue to slaughter the defenseless do not qualify as innocents.

Conclusion

Just War Theory defines acts of aggression that “civilized” societies consider to be justified and therefore morally acceptable. Just War Theory, initially designed to justify state’s violence, offers guidelines as to what many “civilized” nations believe to be justified violence.

Under the guidelines of Just War Theory, the ongoing battle to free nonhuman animals and the earth from industrial exploitation is an asymmetric war of humanitarian intervention on behalf of a beleaguered and abused population, on behalf of the earth itself – these warrior activists are engaged in a counteroffensive on behalf of the exploited, and are, by all counts, engaged in just warfare. Their tactics conclusively demonstrate that these warrior activists are not terrorists – they do not target noncombatants. New legislation is therefore necessary for trying cases of warrior activists, a distinct form of combat which the U.S. government wrongly labels as terrorism. These combatants, instead of being tried as terrorists, ought to be offered the protection of soldiers engaged in just war, and captured by the enemy – which happens to be their own government. (Alternatively, the government could cease to be the enemy of warrior activists by ceasing to align with big business against nonhumans, earth, and civil liberties.)

Warrior activists fighting for earth and nonhumans, who work with few resources and no paychecks, have no ulterior motive – they are fighting to protect the oppressed. Their aggressions are undertaken as a last and desperate measure on behalf of the oppressed, in the hope of protecting and defending the voiceless and defenseless. Contemporary counter-aggression on behalf of the exploited and abused – whether coyotes, cats, or cattle, whether wilderness, wetlands, or prairies – provides a textbook model of asymmetric humanitarian intervention, and ought to be treated as such in our legal system.

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Notes

¹ See the entry for "Just War Theory" at: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/j/justwar.htm>. In future textual citations, this is cited as (IEP, 2008).

² For a short synopsis on the subject, see “Principles of the Just War” (<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pol116/justwar.htm>), or *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Just War,” (<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/j/justwar.htm>). There are a number of good books on the subject as well, including Douglas P. Lackey, *The Ethics of War and Peace* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 1989) and Robert L. Holmes, *On War and Morality* (Princeton, 1989).

³ For information on factory farming and laboratory animal research, for example, visit VIVA! USA (<http://www.vivausa.org/visualmedia/index.html>), PETA (<http://www.petatv.com/>), HSUS (<http://video.hsus.org/>), PCRM (<http://www.pcrm.org/resources/>), Farm Sanctuary (<http://www.farmsanctuary.org/mediacenter/videos.html>), and/or Vegan Outreach (<http://www.veganoutreach.org/whyvegan/animals.html>). These sites provide undercover footage documenting what goes on behind the scenes in our food industry.

Understanding the Ideology of the Earth Liberation Front

Sean Parson

We are the burning rage of this dying planet.
– Beltane communiqué 1997 (Pickering, 2006)

Many in the environmental movement view their struggle as a war – a just war that holds all life on this earth in the balance. On a seemingly daily basis now, news stories and scientific research papers emerge that detail the anthropogenic role in burgeoning environmental crisis. For the movement, this gives credence to their perspective. To deal with the ongoing destruction of the natural world, the movement's most militant wing, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), proudly proclaims that they "work to speed up the collapse of industry, to scare the rich, and to undermine the foundations of the State" (Pickering, 2006, 20). Though many environmental activists have engaged in ecotage – from the Fox in Chicago¹ to Dave Foreman and early Earth First!ers (EF!ers) – the ELF is arguably the first to move towards an eco-revolutionary program. In carrying this out the ELF rejects not only State Marxism, but also liberal, identity or other forms of single-issue politics.

Most attempts at researching the ELF have failed to address the complexity and diversity of its members' ideology. Part of this failure rests in the fact that social scientists have spent little effort studying the radical environmental movement on the whole; and the majority of this research has dealt with either Earth First!, Greenpeace or the Sea Shepard – three organizations that embrace variants of biocentrism and/or deep ecology (Manes, 1990; Scarce, 1990; Ingalsbee, 1995; Wall, 1999). By only focusing on the deep ecological influence, social scientists have neglected the historic role of social ecology and the contemporary affect of anti-civilizational thought on the radical environmental movement. This academic mischaracterization has produced an image of the radical environmental movement as under the hegemonic sway of deep ecology – a view of the movement that is not shared among activists. What is required, then, is academic research that better accounts for the ideological position of anti-civilizational thought within the current radical environmental movement, and more importantly for this essay, with those who promote the ELF.

While the heightened influence of the philosophy of social ecology and of green anarchism, in particular, on ELF communiqués seems clear upon their analysis, of the few studies that seek to specifically analyze the ELF, all have more specifically dealt with the historical, ethical, and organizational components of the organization and in doing so all contend that the ELF is deep ecological in its outlook (Taylor, 1998; Leader and Probst, 2003; Long, 2004; Somma, 2005; Vanderheiden, 2005; Liddick, 2006).² This paper attempts to patch a hole in the current research by analyzing the ideology of the ELF as stated in key communiqués as I

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move towards an explanation of how the ELF differs from previous environmental movements. By analyzing ELF communiqués between 1996 and 2003, a complex and multi-variant group ideology emerges, one that I argue shifts away from the deep ecology perspective of EF! in favor of its own unique perspective of “revolutionary environmentalism.” This revolutionary environmentalism, I maintain, incorporates components of deep ecology, social ecology, and increasingly over the last decade, green anarchist thought.³

I begin this essay with a brief history of ecotage, or environmental sabotage, and the rise of the ELF, followed by a summary account of the dominant theories within radical environmentalism. These sections are meant to provide an historical and theoretical ground for analysis which will then be used to examine the five most detailed ELF communiqués in an attempt to map a plausible overarching political ideology for the group despite its rhizomatic, non-hierarchical structure.

The History of Ecotage and the Rise of the ELF

The founding of EF! is clouded in mystery and myth. The common story is that five environmental activists – Dave Foreman, Mike Roselle, Bart Koehler, Howie Wolke, and Ron Kezar – who had become outraged with the political compromises made by mainstream environmentalism, went on a camping trip to the Pincate Desert in northern Mexico 1979 and formed EF!. According to Dave Foreman, EF! was meant to be a no-compromise environmental group that put the needs of the earth and the natural world above the needs of humans (Foreman, 1991). The group openly supported the philosophy of deep ecology and radicalized the environmental movement by promoting non-violent direct action, civil disobedience, and ecotage as legitimate political tactics in defending the earth.

The tactic of ecotage, or environmental sabotage, was the most controversial tactic that the early EF! used. Ecotage ranged from the monkeywrenching, or sabotaging, of logging equipment to spiking trees in order to destroy saw blades and its intended goal was not to radically alter society, but rather to allow individuals to actively protect the forests and wilderness they visited from the encroachment of corporate and other poachers. The early conception of ecotage is thus defense minded. Dave Foreman in *Ecodefense* (1991) writes, “MONKEYWRENCHING IS NONREVOLUTIONARY, Monkeywrenchers do not aim to overthrow any social, political, or economic system” (p. 10). By contrast, Foreman viewed monkeywrenching as a means to delay development. In his view, the tactic would cause economic damage and slow down the processes of industry in outlying areas, but it was not meant to confront and alter the economic, social, or political world in its totality. Still, as a result of the use of ecotage by EF! and like-minded groups, all western states passed laws increasing the prison sentences those deploying such action, and stopping ecotage became a central concern for federal employees in both the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service (Manes, 1990).

Around this time a new generation of activists joined EF!. These new activists embraced social justice and labor politics as well as ecological concerns. These new activists, combined with the new ecotage laws and increased media pressure that accompanied them, made EF! change its organizational stance on ecotage, thereby shifting the politics and tactics of the group. While the United States EF! debated the tactic of ecotage, activists at Hasting College in East Sussex England formed the first lasting European chapter of EF! in 1991. One year after its formation the group engaged in its most popular campaign, the anti-roads campaign at Twyford

Down. In the Twyford Down campaign, EF! (UK) occupied a controversial road being built through scenic and ecologically-rich grasslands and so halted its development, thus allowing more mainstream groups time to lobby politicians and initiate litigation. By 1992, the camp had become a meeting ground for a wide variety of environmental activists, New Agers, hippies, and punks. This campaign lasted into 1994 and became a model for other anti-road campaigns that followed throughout England, even though the Twyford Down campaign itself ultimately failed in its immediate objective. During the many-year campaign, activists utilized a wide array of tactics, ranging from non-violent civil disobedience to covert and unreported acts of ecotage (Wall, 1999).

In 1992, at the EF! (UK) national gathering, EF! (UK) decided to abandon the tactic of ecotage. Instead EF! (UK) decided, to "neither condemn nor condone" ecotage but instead allow the formation of an "Earth Liberation Front, which would promote a radical political agenda and repertoires of sabotage" (Plows and Wall *et al.*, 2004, p. 202). The hope of the ELF founders was that "illegal action would aid the earth liberation movement in exactly the same way similar actions had helped the animal liberation movement" (Molland, 2006, p. 50).

The organizational structures of the ELF (e.g., leaderless, decentralized cells), and its guiding principles, were borrowed from the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), an organization known for successfully liberating animals from vivisection laboratories and factory farms. At the 1992 EF! (UK) meeting it was decided that the ELF would attempt:

- 1) To cause as much economic damage as possible to a given entity that is profiting off the destruction of the natural environment and life for selfish greed and profit.
- 2) To educate the public on the atrocities committed against the environment and life.
- 3) To take all precautions against harming life.⁴

Yet, the ELF (UK) failed to gain the popularity and influence that the ALF had achieved throughout Europe, in part because they rarely engaged in large-scale acts of resistance. Instead, they more often committed small-scale acts termed "pixieing" (Molland, 2006). Such pixieing included diverse tactics like super-gluing locks or damaging construction machinery to the intentional spoiling of food in upscale grocery stores.

The ELF (UK)'s one large action, a "night of action" waged against Fison, an English company that was draining peat bogs through the English countryside, resulted in nearly \$100,000 (US) worth of damage. This was also the only action for which the ELF (UK) posted a communiqué. It was published in *Green Anarchist*, stating:

All our peat bogs must be preserved in their entirety, for the sake of the plants, animal and our national heritage. Cynically donating small amounts will do no good. The water table will drop, and the bog will dry out and die, unless it's preserved fully. FISON MUST LEAVE ALL OF IT ALONE – NOW (Molland, 2006, p. 52).

Shortly following the Fison action, members of the ELF published the journal *Terra-ist*, which detailed ecotage happening throughout the world. Through *Terra-ist*, green anarchist zines such as *Green Anarchist* and *Do or Die*, and an organized road show across Europe, the

militant focus of the ELF (UK) readily spread. By 1996, actions of ecotage had been reported in most western European countries. That year also marked the end of the ELF (UK) as a group, and since then there have been no actions claimed by the group, and ethnographic research has shown “no evidence of a continued ELF presence” (Plows and Wall *et al.*, 2004, p. 203).

Coincidentally, in 1996, small groups of revolutionary environmental activists started engaging in ecotage throughout North America. The first known ELF actions in North America occurred in British Columbia, Canada in June of 1995 by “The Earth Liberation Army.”⁵ They committed vandalism against trophy-hunting stores throughout the region and committed arson against a British Columbian guide outfitter. A similarly minded group of activists committed arson on Oct. 8, 1995, against the lumber company Weyerhaeuser's pulp mill in Alberta, Canada.

The first presence of the ELF in the United States was during the spring of 1996 when activists engaged in small acts of vandalism throughout Oregon. Quickly, the so-called “Elves” in the Pacific Northwest escalated their tactics, as they started pixieing logging equipment and engaging in arson. Before the first ELF (US) communiqué was published, in March 1997, ELF actions were reported throughout Michigan, Oregon, Washington, Northern California, and Indiana. The group's ideology had spread from the Douglas Fir forests of the Pacific Northwest to the industrial cities of the Great Lakes, and beyond.

There are two interesting points to notice in the provided narrative about ecotage and the history of the ELF. First is the changing nature and dynamic of ecotage from *Ecodefense* to the ELF. As was stated earlier, Foreman and early EF! activists viewed ecotage as “non-revolutionary” This understanding of ecotage is echoed by Steven Vanderheiden (2008) in his article, “Radical Environmentalism in the age of Anti-terrorism.” In this article, Vanderheiden claims that ecotage is meant to delay and stall environmentally destructive actions only and that a strong public relations campaign and litigation are correlatively needed for a truly successful monkeywrench campaign. He further states that currently ecotage promotes a negative public image for the environmental movement and has provided opportunities for the entire movement to be cast by its opponents as “ecoterrorists.” Because of this, he feels, the movement needs to discuss dropping the tactic entirely.

What Vanderheiden misses is that the logic grounding ecotage shifted with the ELF. In its hands, the tactic has become offensive, at least in theory, and has become conceived of as a bonafide stand-alone strategy. In this way, the ELF believes that if enough economic damage is done to an industry or development project, the industry or project will be eradicated. This form of revolutionary ecotage then does not require coupling with additional legal action and should not be conceived of as a mere stalling tactic.⁶ In addition, ELF ecotage is also meant to question and confront the social, economic, and political realities of the world and to undermine them through their active problematization. This is part of what marks the move from a radical to a revolutionary environmentalism.

Secondly, we should recognize the important role that political compromise and “moving to the center” plays in radicalizing activists. For example, in both the United States and the United Kingdom the ELF formed only after many environmental activists rejected ecotage as a valid tactic. Likewise, the complacency and compromise found in the environmentalism of the 1970s was itself the necessary spawn for the original EF!. Vanderheiden warns radical groups about this problem in passing when he states that,

Moving towards the centre, in the environmental movement as in other struggles in which moderate factions exist in occasionally uneasy tandem with radical ones, can push extremists to the fringe and cause them to reject what they take to be the efficacy-limiting constraints embraced by those seen as too willing to compromise with the opposition (Vanderheiden, 2008, p. 314).

Moving to the "center," then, appears to have the effect of further increasing militancy on the "fringe."⁷ Thus, paradoxically, as today's mainstream environmentalism moves away from the offensive conception of ecotage promoted by the ELF, it runs the risk of marginalizing and frustrating radical activists and thereby further revolutionizing them.

The Radical Ecological Tradition

This section is meant to give a basic overview of the three dominant theories that have influenced the ELF: deep ecology, social ecology, and anti-civilization (or green) anarchism. These philosophical positions all believe that a radical change is required in society in order to protect the natural world from further anthropogenic destruction. They also lament the loss of natural diversity in the face of civilization, promote either the radical decentralization of power or the abolition of corporate and state power altogether, and want to restore humankind's intimate connection with the natural world. But, even though these theories share some similar short term goals, they have historically been hostile towards each other on the whole. For example, the founding social ecologist Murray Bookchin openly rebutted and refused to support EF! During the 1980s and 1990s because he believed that the deep ecological philosophy that it waved as its primary banner was inherently racist, classist, sexist, and authoritarian (Bookchin and Foreman *et al.*, 1991; Bookchin, 1995). At the same time, many green anarchists lambaste both social ecology and deep ecology as being reformist and reactionary because of their support for civilizational progress and enlightenment sensibilities.

a. Deep Ecology

Deep ecology is a philosophical movement based on the works of the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, though in North America many environmentalists have been more directly influenced by the work of Bill Devall and George Sessions (1985) that sought to interpret Naess's insights on behalf of a syncretic worldview. As it developed, then, deep ecology mixed New Age, eastern, feral and shamanistic notions of spirituality with concerns of liberty, freedom and democracy. From this, deep ecology formulated an 8-point program in which the central tenet is that the natural world has intrinsic value separate from its value to humans (Point 1). To a deep ecologist, the current horrors of capitalism and western civilization are the byproducts of the human disconnection from the natural world, which is typified by anthropocentric thinking (human-centered thinking). For example, in this respect Chellis Glendinning (1995) argues that Western culture is suffering from "Original Trauma" or PTSD which was caused by "the systemic removal of our lives from nature, from natural cycles, from the life force itself" and that "the ultimate goal of recovery is to refind our place in nature" (Glendinning, 1995, pp. 37-39). Consequently, for deep ecology it is only with the return to the natural that humankind and the natural world can be saved.

One means of bridging the gap is “living as though nature mattered” (Devall and Sessions, 1985). To do this, deep ecologists want society to give moral weight to the natural world in making political and social decisions. Therefore, a deep ecological society would take into consideration the effects of a political decision not only upon humans but on the entire ecosystem. Such a community would reject modern development protocols because of their negative impact on ecosystems unless such development could be shown to provide an essential service for the community.

The other major component of deep ecology is its promotion of small, decentralized communities. In this view, decentralized development promotes freedom, diversity (both socially and ecologically) and limits centralized power. In addition, deep ecologists argue, centralized planning cannot take into account the needs of local bioregions. For example, the Cascadia bioregion (which covers Northern California through South British Columbia) has unique regional characteristics, socially and environmentally, that only those with intimate knowledge of the area can address. Therefore, deep ecological political theory tends to believe that local decisions should be made locally and regional decisions should be federalized upwards. Because of the value on keeping power situated locally, some deep ecologists like Kirkpatrick Sale and Ernest Callenbach have even become vocal supporters of secessionism believing that the centralized United States government should be removed and regions should form their own independent nations based on the ecological principle of bioregions (Callenbach, 1981; Callenbach, 1990; Sale, 2000).

b. Social Ecology

Social ecology contends that environmental destruction is epiphenomenal of *hierarchical* human societies, which also generate all manner of social oppression. Therefore, in order to stop environmental destruction – logging, climate change, pollution – humans need to heal the social rifts caused by hierarchy and political domination. By contrast, Murray Bookchin argues that prior to the formation of hierarchies, human communities existed as organic components of the natural world (Bookchin, 1991). Over time hierarchies formed – first by elders then by shamans and clerics and finally by warriors – which promoted a division of labor and other hierarchical social relationships. These developments led to increased tensions between men and women, the rich and the poor, and also created a disconnect between humankind and the natural world.

Illustrating this, Bookchin's contends that technology is not inherently oppressive, as many green anarchists and at least some deep ecologists argue. Against other environmentalist camp thinking, Bookchin argues that small-scale technologies can themselves be brutal and repressive while large-scale industrial technology may be liberating under certain conditions. What matters, according to Bookchin, are the social relationships and power dynamics surrounding the generation and use of such technology. Therefore, technological advances, like the green revolution in agriculture, are not inherently oppressive but only become so through the development of power relationships, such as private ownership and specialization that are their context. Because of this Bookchin promoted green power sources – such as solar, wind, and geothermal – as well as communally-owned factory production as important components of his socially ecological sustainable society.

Yet, there has been some disagreement by other social ecologists with Bookchin over the ecological value of large-scale technology (such as industrial factory production). Perhaps the most notable of Bookchin's critics in this vein is Dave Watson.⁸ Watson contends that

technological systems are inherently hierarchal and require a strict and important division of labor to maintain. For this reason, factory production inherently recreates social hierarchies. In addition, Watson argues that industrial production is always environmentally destructive. Instead, he thinks that what is required is a radical decentralization of human societies, the rejection of modernist technology, and a return to a small-village or gatherer-hunter existence. In getting to this decision, Watson contends that the only way to remove human hierarchies, and thus heal our separation from the natural world is by returning to a simpler existence.

c. Green Anarchism

Green anarchism, or anti-civilizational anarchism, is a branch of anarchist thought that contends that civilization, along with domestication, is responsible for environmental destruction and human subjugation. Unlike social ecology and deep ecology, green anarchism is generally anti-academic and the vast majority of green anarchist writings are written by activists and found in zines,⁹ such as: *Green Anarchy*, *Green Anarchist*, *Do or Die*, *Species Traitor*, *Arson*, *Fifth Estate* and *Anarchy: a Journal of Desire Armed*. Borrowing from the radical activist movement, authors commonly use pseudonyms, such Feral Faun, Mr. Venom, or Felonious Skunk. The use of pseudonyms is common within the radical environmental movement as a safeguard against government surveillance.¹⁰ Even though green anarchism does not appeal to academic authority, it has had increasing importance within anarchist communities and has influenced the radical environmental movement, the anti-globalization movement, and the youth dropout movement. According to Bron Taylor (2006), green anarchism's influence on EF! had led to a "decreasing importance of Deep Ecology" in the radical environmental movement and an increased importance for primitivism (Taylor, 2006, p. 2). It is also important that there are at least two distinct strands of anti-civilizational anarchism, one that is promoted by the journal *Fifth Estate* and another by the Green Anarchy Collective. For this project the divide is not crucially important but readers should be aware that for this section most of my notes will be from the Green Anarchy Collective strand of anti-civilizational anarchism. This strand has been more generally influential to the development of Earth First!, the forest defense movement, and northwest radical activism.

Emerging from the influence of writers like Lewis Mumford, Claude Levi-Straus, Stanley Diamond, and Jacques Ellul, green anarchists contend that civilization is devouring the natural world and suppressing human desires. According to Derrick Jensen (2006), a civilization is,

a culture – that is, a complex of stories, institutions, and artifacts– that both leads to and emerges from the growth of cities, with cities being defined– so as to distinguish from camps, villages and so on– as people living more or less permanently in one place in densities high enough to require the routine importation of food and other necessities of life" (Jensen, 2006, p. 17).

In this definition, one of the defining characterizes of a civilization is that it requires the importation of resources (e.g., food, oil, etc.) to continue its existence. To green anarchists, the need for external resources is why "civilization originates in conquest abroad and repression at home" (Diamond, 1974, p. 1).

In order to ensure its own survival, civilization must homogenize and domesticate life on the planet in an attempt to control the wild. This control is required to ensure a continual flow of resources, to break apart older cultures, and also to create social and political stability. This is done by military/economic force or by domestication. Domestication is the process through which animals (human and non-human) and plants are controlled for societal benefit. Human domestication,

takes many forms, some of which are difficult to recognize. Government, capital and religion are some of the more obvious faces of authority. But technology, work, language with its conceptual limits, the ingrained habits of etiquette and propriety – these too are domesticating authorities which transform us from wild, playful, unruly animals into tamed, bored, unhappy producers and consumers (Faun Work in Progress, p. 28).

In other words, our social system – morality, work, and education – domesticates and placates humanity for the benefit of the social order. To green anarchists, this domestication removes spontaneity, passion, freedom, and liberty from life. Domestication, according to John Zerzan (1999), requires "initiation of production, vastly increased divisions of labor, and the completed foundations of social stratification" (p. 77). Due to this, Zerzan, much like Fredrick Engels, claims that domestication is the root cause of sexism, racism, war, and capitalism. To confront the totality of civilization and return us to our natural ways of life, green anarchists support undermining and destroying civilization and modern forms of living.

As a means of resisting domestication, some green anarchists look to the process of "rewilding." Rewilding occurs when an individual rejects civilization and attempts to reconnect with the natural world by embracing the lessons and lifestyle of gatherer-hunters and other a-civilizational peoples. Through learning primitive, or earth, skills people can reconnect with the natural world and embrace their lost instincts. The practical goal of rewilding "involves both accessing our present situation and looking back to what has been done before by people" in an attempt to survive in modern civilization and prepare for a post-civilizational world (Anarchy and Collective, 2004, p. 31).

Green anarchists' hostility towards civilization leads to the rejection of traditional liberal and leftist organizations as reformist. In "The Ship of Fools," Theodore Kaczynski (1999) develops the following claim: If a ship is heading towards an iceberg, worker concerns for better wages, and minorities' concerns for equal rights become insignificant. Because of this, green anarchists reject unionism, anti-racism, and traditional class-based political action as reifying civilization and therefore being counter-revolutionary. The disdain for leftist groups is seen through "News from the Balcony," a common feature in the zine *Green Anarchy*. In this section, the authors – using the pseudonym's Waldorf and Stalter (the old cynics from the Muppet show) – heckle and joke about the ineffectiveness of traditional anarchist organizations and the labor union movement. This hostility to unionism and class-based movements has placed green anarchists at odds with anarcho-communists, social ecologists, and other members of the political left, limiting any collaboration between the groups.

The final component of green anarchist theory is its belief in an imminent collapse of industrial civilization. This collapse will be the result of civilization's unsustainable quest for resources and its resulting environmental damage. Authors such as John Zerzan, Derrick Jensen and Dave Watson all argue that if we do not abolish civilization soon then the collapse will only

be made worse. This desire is expressed in Dave Watson's article "We all Live in Bhopal" (1996) where he argues that "industrial civilization [is] one vast, stinking extermination camp. We all live Bhopal, some closer to the gas chambers and to the mass graves, but all of us close enough to be victims" (p. 45). To Watson, the destruction of civilization must occur abruptly. If not, he wonders, what will happen when "we all live in Bhopal and Bhopal is everywhere?" This is the worst-case scenario for him: an environment too ravaged for human life to survive. Watson, Zerzan, and Jensen, all believe that ending civilization now, and not waiting for the planet to do it for us, is more sympathetic and compassionate than any technological humanist venture.

The ELF Syncretic Ideology

Between 1997 and 2002 ELF cells distributed forty-six communiqués for actions ranging from petty vandalism to animal liberation to arson. These communiqués, and statements by unofficial spokesmen Craig Rosebraugh and Leslie James Pickering (who started the Earth Liberation Front Press Office), are the only overt documents which allow for an understanding or an analysis of ELF ideology.¹¹ Since the ELF is a leaderless resistance movement, without central authority, each communiqué differs in its reasons and its goals depending on the activists involved in a given action. Paradoxically, though, since the ELF is decentralized and leaderless it requires a powerful and encompassing ideology in order to attract and retain supporters.

Of course, defining an ideology is a difficult task. Ideologies can cover wide ranges of thought and are often tied together by a few guiding principles (points of unity). These points of unity are similar to the celestial bodies; they provide the needed mass and gravitational force to create and maintain the orbits of that which surround them. The ELF's ideology is no different in this respect. However, what does make the ELF's ideology unique is that being a leaderless movement anyone who wants to act and speak for the ELF theoretically can do so. Because of this, the communiqués express justifications and political philosophy freely. All of this makes ELF ideology dynamic and fluid (within the scope of the organization's guidelines). In the early years of the ELF, the communiqués ebbed and flowed – expressing a deep ecological view in one communiqué while articulating more of a social ecological vision in another. Still, by the end of the seven-year period that I am examining, the ELF communiqués started to coalesce around certain ideas and concepts. I contend that these concepts are the current ELF points of unity and so constitute its ideological centerpiece.

To show how the ELF has been forging this ideology, I will look at five of the most influential and detailed communiqués.

a. Beltane communiqué, July 1997

Welcome to the struggle of all species to be free. We are the burning rage of this dying planet. The war of greed ravages the Earth and species die out every day. The ELF works to scare the rich, and to undermine the foundations of the state. We embrace social and Deep Ecology as a practical resistance movement. We have to show the enemy that we are serious and about defending what is sacred. Together we have teeth and claws to match our dreams. Our greatest weapons are imagination and the ability to strike when least expected...(Pickering, 2006, p. 18).

The Beltane communiqué was the ELF's first US communiqué. It was written in connection with political actions occurring throughout Oregon during the summer of 1997. The name Beltane comes from the ancient Gaelic holiday that marks the beginning of the summer, and was commonly associated with massive bonfires and the kind of elf and faerie imagery in vogue with neo-Pagan communities. The use of Beltane in the communiqué is similar to ELF (UK) appropriations of mythical and pagan images in their sabotage manual *The Book of Bells*, which was a play on a Gaelic book, *The Book of Kells*.

This communiqué introduces the ELF as a unique group that bridges the gap between social and deep ecology. The statement, "the ELF works to scare the rich, and to undermine the foundations of the state" resonates with the political philosophy of Murray Bookchin. Unlike traditional deep ecology statements, this appears to place a larger burden on the evils of the state than on a collective anthropocentric consciousness. On the other hand, the statement, "we have to show the enemy that we are serious about defending what is sacred" goes against social ecology's rejection of the rhetoric and rituals of spiritualism and sacredness more typical of deep ecology. What this communiqué does is explain how the ELF plans on being an umbrella group for all those who wish to engage in revolutionary action in defense of the Earth.

b. *Rhode Island, December 19, 2000*

...Our earth is being murdered by greed corporate and personal interests. The rape of the Earth puts everyone's life at risk due to global warming, ozone depletion, toxic chemicals, ect. Unregulated population growth is also a direct result of urban sprawl. There are over 6 billion people on this planet of which almost a third are either starving or living in poverty. Building homes for the wealthy should not be a priority...The time has come to decide what is more important: The planet and the health of its population or the profits of those who destroy it...we are but the symptoms of a corrupt society on the brink of ecological collapse...(Pickering, 2006, pp. 35-36).

In the second of half of 2000, the ELF repeatedly struck against housing developments throughout Long Island. The above communiqué is attached to a December 19, 2000 action, and is the most detailed communiqué associated with this string of incidents. Its argument has two facets. First, it states the environmental dangers of overpopulation. This concern is historically aligned with deep ecology and green anarchism. Followers of deep ecology and early EF! in particular viewed overpopulation as one of the main ecological problems facing the world. Some early EF! activists argued that overpopulation is depleting natural resources and is the primary cause of environmental destruction. But social ecologists and ecofeminists in turn rejected the reliance of environmentalists' use of the population model as evidence for environmental harm. Particularly they claimed that this strategy was at least implicitly racist and classist, because it criticized the poor in the developing world and did not confront the high levels of consumerism and waste in the developed world, as well as sexist, because it targeted women's reproductive cycles as the main cause of environmental degradation (Bookchin and Foreman *et al.*, 1991; Seager, 1993).

The second facet of the communiqué's argument is the claim that class and capitalism are driving urban sprawl. The ELF cell here states that "building homes for the wealthy is not a priority...the time has come to decide what is more important: The planet and the health of its

populations or the profits of those who destroy it.” Finally, it is claimed that the ELF are themselves but the “symptoms of a corrupt society on the brink of ecological collapse.” In their view, since urban sprawl and overpopulation are destroying the world and making an ecological collapse imminent, the only acceptable response is ending urban sprawl. To them, this means abolishing capitalism and civilization.

c. Gifford Pinchot National Forest, WA, July 27, 2001

...We want to be clear that all oppression is linked, just as we are all linked, and we believe in a diversity of tactics to stop earth rape and end all domination. Together we can destroy this patriarchal nightmare, which is currently in the form of techno-industrial global capitalism. We desire an existence in harmony with the wild based on equality, love, and respect. We stand in solidarity with all resistance to this system, especially those who are in prison, disappeared, raped, tortured...we are all survivors and we will not stop!

The forest service was notified of this action BEFORE this years logging season so we could take all precautions to assure worker safety. We must ask why they never made this public. We were trying to let them cancel this sale quietly. However, as bosses jeopardize worker's lives every day we realized that we needed to make this public...(Pickering, 2006, pp. 50-51).

Timber sales have been a popular target for ELF cells. This communiqué concerned a tree-spiking action,¹² during July of 2001, in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. First, the communiqué takes up a common deep ecological concern: that humans should live in “harmony with the wild based on equality, love, and respect.” This sentiment is counter to green anarchist beliefs of rewilding. In the green anarchist pamphlet, “Beyond Veganism” (2003), the author argues that eating and killing is natural and that veganism, in promoting non-violence, is oppressive and domesticates. The concept of living “in harmony with the wild based on equality, love, and respect” does match well with the green anarchist ideological focus on the ethos of primary survival. On the other hand, this communiqué combines a deep ecological concern with a green anarchist interest in ending the “patriarchal nightmare” that is currently expressed through “techno-industrial global capitalism.” This expands upon the philosophy of deep ecology to demand an environmentalism that encompasses the systemic problems of industry, technology and, by proxy, civilization. The next paragraph in the communiqué expands the argument by claiming solidarity with workers. The quote “as bosses jeopardize worker's lives every day we realized that we needed to make this public” bears more of a resemblance to the thoughts of Judi Bari or Murray Bookchin than it does to John Zerzan or Arne Naess. This concern with workers rights, which in other ELF communiqués goes as far as to express solidarity with Third World workers, is here combined with a green anarchist critique of techno-industrial civilization.

d. Minneapolis, MN, January 26, 2002

...We are fed up with capitalists like Cargill and major universities like the U of M who have long sought to develop and refine technologies, which seek to exploit

and control nature to the fullest extent under the guise of progress. Biotechnology is only one new expression of this drive. For the end of capitalism and the mechanization of our lives...(Pickering, 2006, p. 52).

Genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, have been a concern for environmental activists for decades. GMOs are impossible to control, potentially destructive for the environment and carcinogenous. Because of this, activists have called for an immediate ban. When that does not happen, often times the only option that appears immediately effective is the destruction of laboratories and test sites involved in GMO research (Plows and Wall *et al.*, 2004, p. 205). The January 26, 2002 ELF communiqué, written to claim responsibility for an arson at a University of Minnesota research lab, is typical of ELF communiqués issued in conjunction with anti-GMO actions.

In general, the anti-GMO actions of the ELF are the most openly green anarchist in approach. The ELF argues that GMOs are an assault on nature and justifications of high technological solutions to social problems. Since biotechnology is interwoven with the dominant social hegemony of industrialism and capitalism, the ELF argue that the only way to liberate nature from this menace is to abolish capitalism and the mechanization of scientific and industrial “progress.” However, the communiqué does not mention civilization in total as being a culprit. Similar to the communiqué from December 19, 2000 (section IV, b), there is no open rejection of civilization period. Instead the civilization arguments are obfuscated and only latently visible in this communiqué because the ELF here deals with issues that anti-civilizational green anarchists also often confront.

e. August 11, 2002

...Their blatant disregard for the sanctity of life and its perfect Natural balance, indifference to strong public opposition, and the irrevocable acts of extreme violence they perpetrate against the Earth daily are all inexcusable, and will not be tolerated. IF they persist in their crimes against life, they will be met with maximum retaliation.

In pursuance of justice, freedom, and equal consideration for all innocent life across the broad, segments of this global revolutionary movement are no longer limiting their revolutionary potential by adhering to a flawed, inconsistent “non-violent” ideology. While innocent life will never be harmed in any action we must undertake, where it is necessary, we will no longer hesitate to pick up the gun to implement justice, and provide the needed protection for our planet that decades of legal battles, pleading, protest, and economic sabotage have failed so drastically to achieve.

The diverse efforts of this revolutionary force cannot be contained, and will only continue to intensify as we are brought face to face with the oppressor in inevitable, violent confrontation. We will stand up and fight for our lives against this iniquitous civilization until its reign of TERROR is forced to an end – by any means necessary (Pickering, 2006, pp. 54-55).

This communiqué is controversial and was immediately denounced by mainstream environmental groups. Some activists believed that the FBI forged the communiqué in order to undermine the radical environmental movement. This communiqué critiques non-violence, one of the guiding principles of radical ecological politics, and indeed, a fundamental postulate of the original ELF guidelines themselves. In doing so, it denounces non-violent political tactics such as tree-sits and protests (and even pixie-styled ecotage) as failures. Here the ELF argue that with the failure of non-violent tactics to combat an overwhelming enemy bent on wreaking planetary terror, the only resistance tactic left is confrontational political violence. Note that there is a condition in this fatwa that distinguishes between innocent and non-innocent forms of life, and it suggests that such violence will protect innocent life while only targeting those who directly profit from the destruction of people and the earth. This attempt to reclaim the moral high ground, even while justifying political violence, is reminiscent of 19th century anarchist developments of what is known as “propaganda by the deed.”

This ELF communiqué is also notably the only one that openly confronts “civilization.” Unlike previous communiqués, which allude to anti-civilizational arguments, this communiqué openly pictures civilization, rather than capitalism or the state, as the appropriate target. This form of anti-civilizational argument, because of the immense scope of its conclusion, therefore requires the movement to conceive of itself as global and so there is also a strategic attempt to portray the ELF as a member of a broader revolutionary movement still. The difficulty of traditional green anarchist theory, with its ideological defenses of personal autonomy, was to find a practical way to attack the largesse of civilization while retaining an individualist approach. This communiqué does something that traditional green anarchist theories do not in that it claims solidarity with all forces fighting injustice. It also expands the domain of traditional green anarchist politics from the “insurrectionary” to the guerilla.

f. Their Syncretic Ideology

These communiqués are examples of a developing political ideology that cannot be defined as either deep ecological, social ecologist or green anarchist. This ideology combines tenets of all these theories as it seeks to formulate an emergent and encompassing political worldview. The ELF ideology connects the extraction of resources, and destruction of the natural environment, with the role of the state and historical oppressions that gird the progress of civilization. What the communiqués reveal is that the practical way of destroying this pathological system is through attacks upon its harmful industries, as well as their peripheral economic supports, that are essential to maintaining its sense of well being. Because of this, the ELF strikes against forestry and resource extraction as well as research labs and housing developments. By cutting off the flow of resources and attacking destructive industries, the ELF envisions itself as striking, in however a limited fashion, at what they see as the crux of what fuels the agenda of civilization as socio-political project. Unlike Marxism, and unlike classical anarchism, the ELF does not portray any group as being the key actor in this revolution and instead places the impetus for change on those simply willing to act.

Overall, the ELF communiqués argue that:

- 1) Capitalism must be abolished in order for nature to be liberated.
- 2) Workers are harmed by capitalism and are not the enemy of the natural world.

- 3) Environmentally destructive industries – logging, mining, construction, industrial agriculture, and biotechnology – are essential for the maintenance of the state and need to be abolished.
- 4) Humans are animals, and should relish their animal instincts and natural spontaneity.
- 5) All living entities should be wild and free from coercion.
- 6) Earth liberation, animal liberation, and human liberation are all intertwined into one revolutionary struggle.

In forming such arguments, the ELF has taken an intersectional ideological turn by seeking to find solidarity with worker rights and social justice struggles while integrating these with a general hostility towards civilization's wrecklessness. The ELF, then, rejects the green anarchist critiques of unionism and workerism, as well as Bookchin's pronouncements against technological determinism and primitivism. In this, the ELF is forging a flexible and fluid ideology. This fluidity and flexibility allow proponents of social ecology to engage in actions to protect workers, while also working in concert with attempts to undermine civilization.

This flexibility might be a direct result of the ELF's organizational structure and its rejection of hierarchical authority. It also differentiates them from many failed US revolutionary movements such as the Weather Underground. The flexibility of the ELF ideology should allow their ideology to shift pragmatically according to the political climate and thereby allow them to remain politically influential far longer than they might otherwise as a militant group on the margins of mainstream environmental struggle.

Conclusion

In closing, the ELF does not wish to alter public opinion or to lobby politicians; nor do they embrace Gandhian understandings of violence. What the ELF does is target environmentally exploitative industries, which they claim are essential to the maintenance of capitalism and the kind of civilization which is fueled by it. Their goal is nothing less than the destruction of the state, the abolition of capitalism as an economic reality and the end of western civilization as currently practiced. Derrick Jensen, in his *Endgame* series, discusses the difficulty of destroying civilization. He writes:

Bringing down civilization is millions of different actions performed by millions of different people...it is everything from comforting battered women to confronting politicians and CEOs. It is everything from filing lawsuits to blowing up dams. It is everything from growing ones own food to liberating animals in factory farms to destroying genetically engineered crops and physically stopping those who perpetuate genetic engineering...it is destroying the capacity of those in power to exploit those around them. In some circumstances this involves education. In some situations this involves undercutting their physical power, for example by destroying physical infrastructure...in some circumstances it involves assassination (Jensen, 2006, p. 252).

Jensen here realizes the enormity of the task and that it requires a wide range of tactics and individuals. The ELF is obviously unable to openly confront, let alone destroy, civilization by itself. Currently, the number of ELF actions in the United States has dropped precipitously

since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Before 9/11 the ELF and ALF combined for an average of an action every 2.3 days, which has since lessened to one every 4.7 days (Somma, 2005). This drop in actions has not meant a decrease in intensity, though. The most costly action in the ELF history, an arson against a housing development in San Diego, which caused more the fifty million dollars in damages, occurred in 2003. This was well after 9/11 and the government's increasing crackdown on "eco-terrorists."¹³ With the recent arrival of a highly visible press office on the Web (<http://www.elfpressoffice.org>) that documents actions taken in the ELF's name across the world, it is clear that the ELF remains a viable force worthy of our attention.

It even appears that Operation Backfire, the FBI campaign against the ELF and ALF, may have backfired in eradicating environmental militants. For every member of "The Family" that is arrested and charged with terror enhancements, new alter-globalization activists around the world are engaging with ELF ideology and confronting the long histories of genocide, ecocide, and colonialism. This will only result in the ongoing transformation of the movement, moving it ever forward and onward in the fight for planetary freedom.

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Notes

¹ The Fox was an ecoteur in Chicago during the early 1970s that plugged up industrial drainage pipes and ran an individual campaign against industrial polluters.

² While not a specific study of the ELF, Kahn (2005) correctly cites the influence of green anarchy on the ELF, though he does so as part of a critique suggesting that today's radical environmentalists may be guided by "questionable readings and uses of the philosophy of anarcho-primitivism" (p. 3).

³ For this project I am looking at the communiqués because they serve as a better example of what on-the-ground activist's support. The only other alternative is to accept the views of the unofficial spokespeople, such as Craig Rosebraugh and Leslie James Pickering, both of whom have since left their positions related to the ELF in order to generate a revolutionary movement through the Arissa organization.

⁴ These guiding principles can be found at: <http://www.elfpressoffice.org/theelf.html>.

⁵ There was also a group of Santa Cruz activists in the 1970s that engaged in acts of ecotage under the moniker ELF (Environmental Life Force). The current ELF has no formal connection to the older group, but does share a commitment for direct action, and a fervent desire to protect the natural world.

⁶ It is important to note that a more offensive conception of ecotage is, and should be, up for debate. I want here only to highlight that there is a difference between the defensive (or stalling) kind of ecotage that is promoted by Vanderheiden, Foreman and others and the more aggressive and “revolutionary” version promoted by the ELF.

⁷ There does appear to be problems with the use of the political hermeneutic categories of center and fringe by Vanderheiden. For one, “center” implies that liberal groups represent the center while more radical organizations are the “fringe.” This often leads to a normative claim in favor of the liberal perspective, which I do not support. In addition, using “fringe” to describe the more radical elements of the environmental movement devalues their contribution to the larger struggle and ostracizes a rather large and active subset of the activist community. The so-called “fringe” of the environmental movement has in fact been influential in campaigns against dams, urban sprawl, old-growth logging, nuclear power, neo-liberalism, mountain top removal, wetlands protection, whaling, hunting, etc.

⁸ Dave Watson is a figure who blurs the distinction between social ecology and green anarchism. He is inherently anti-civilizational but argues that this is the only way of human life that is not hierarchal. Watson is not concerned with biocentrism, and openly rejects and criticizes it in the article “How deep is deep ecology?” which was published by *Fifth Estate*.

⁹ Zines are independently produced and distributed magazines that are most commonly associated with punk, anarchist, or sci-fi subcultures.

¹⁰ This is generally expressed through the term “security culture” and includes such rules as not disclosing full names, one’s activist history, or anything else that could be used to identify oneself or others to authorities. The goal of security culture is to weaken the influence of infiltrators and “snitches,” which allows groups to more readily engage in illegal acts with less concern for arrest.

¹¹ As mentioned, I am looking specifically at communiqués because I feel that Rosebraugh and Pickering, though dedicated to the mission of the ELF, promoted their own ideological views which went beyond those contained within the ELF communiqués themselves.

¹² Tree spiking consists of hammering a nail, usually ceramic, into the trunk of a tree. Since a metal detector cannot detect the ceramic nail, the trees either need to be x-rayed, or the mill has to take the risk that the ceramic nails will not severely damage the sawmill blade.

¹³ For more information on the government crackdown, from an activist perspective, see the website, <http://www.greenscare.org/>, and the blog, <http://www.greenisthenewred.com/blog/>.

Being Sentient and Sentient Being: The Animal Rights Movement and Interspecies Boundaries

John C. Alessio

Background and Purpose

The inclusion of non-human life in sociological analysis has been sparse. Sanders and Arluke (1993) made a plea for sociologists to become more involved in the study of relationships between humans and non-humans, specifically focusing on inter-subjective understanding between humans and non-humans. That challenge was answered by Hilbert (1994) who, in responding to Sanders and Arluke, argued that the focus might better be on the study of sentience rather than mind. Neither of the above recommendations drew much attention in sociology, and little has been done along those suggested lines. This paper touches somewhat on the issue raised by Hilbert, but is broader in scope.

Non-human life has also been conspicuously absent from the sociological analysis of the politics of food and the environment, an area of study integrally related to the intersection of human and non-human treatment around the world. A major breakthrough in this field was accomplished by David Nibert (2002), who showed the connection between non-human animal treatment and corporate domination. At the same time, Nibert linked Sociology to the rapidly growing animal rights (AR) literature. With AR-related sessions recently appearing at major sociological conferences, sociologists are now part of the animal rights/liberation discussions and have an important role to play. Serious students of social problems can no longer avoid the pressing sociological issues imbedded in the AR movement – and there are many. This paper deals with just one of those important issues.

Through my involvement in the AR movement I have made some observations of the AR literature and conference presentations – attending AR2001 through AR2003 and AR2007 conferences in Washington DC/Los Angeles, two of the Canadian Brock University conferences, and academic conferences that include sessions on animal rights. This paper, initially presented at the first Brock University Conference in 2003, is based on a sociological interpretation of those observations and is offered for two reasons. First, it is hoped that this analysis will serve as a catalyst for important dialogue among AR activists/scholars. The purpose of this dialogue is not to weaken the AR movement - but to provide a context that supports strengthening it by provoking internal discussions about some difficult issues. Secondly, this paper integrates concerns about non-human life forms with some of the long standing concerns, quite prevalent in the Social Problems literature, about human groups. It should be stated directly that there is a driving assumption behind the analysis herein. That assumption is that greater freedom for all

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beings is positively valued. The arguments for and against this particular assumption will not be part of this paper.

In-group – Out-group Distinctions

Drawing on the conceptualization of William Graham Sumner (Davie, 1963) and other sociologists that followed, I propose that the language being used to define which animals should and should not be protected by the AR movement constitutes projecting in-group and out-group distinctions. For numerous examples of in-groups and out-groups among humans, see directly related early works such as Spiegel and Keith-Spiegel (1973); or indirectly related more recent works such as social justice anthologies (e.g., Andrzejewski, 1996), and race, class and gender anthologies (e.g., Cyrus, 2004). The social function of in-group and out-group distinctions made by AR activists relative to different species is similar to the social function of in-group and out-group distinctions made by humans about human groups. In both situations efforts are made to justify special rights for some beings at the expense of others. The inclusions and exclusions are most often rationalized according to identifiable group differences. The identifiable differences are chosen based on what is most easily discerned and, hence, most convenient – rather than on a universally meaningful set of criteria. From the ground breaking work of Peter Singer in 1975 (Singer, 1990) to the excellent advancement of Joan Dunayer in 2001, and the recent work of Tom Reagan (2004), there continues to be awkward and problematic boundaries drawn in the AR movement as scholars and activists strive to determine who should have rights and who should not have rights among living beings.

This paper explores the existing arguments surrounding the above issue and challenges AR activists/scholars to openly face the contradictions in our own lives and thinking. Accepting this challenge will hopefully have the long term effect of helping us avoid future dilemmas and corresponding problems as we strive to construct systematic theory and data that can be used to help make the world safer and more peaceful for non-human and human animals.

Advancement of Animal Rights

Animal rights literature, conferences, and academic course-work are increasing exponentially. There are most likely a number of factors contributing to the accelerated attention being given to this very important topic. We have seen a dramatic increase in agribusiness, which is displacing the somewhat less oppressive family farm. There has been an increase in the number of meat-related “human” diseases identified (e.g., bovine spongiform encephalopathy/Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease) and increased information about the connection between eating meat and long standing diseases, such as heart disease and cancer (Lyman, 1998; Robbins, 2001; Schlosser, 2002). Furthermore, the ability to avert human diseases through animal experimentation has been convincingly challenged (Greek and Greek, 2000; 2002). We have also witnessed the biological revolution toward genetic engineering, which raises important questions about on what, if any, living beings genetic modification techniques should be used (Shiva, 1995; Rifkin, 1998).

Finally, there has been a flood of new information about the mistreatment of animals: under- cover videos of vivisection and experimental science labs; detailed information about, and videos of, current farming and slaughtering techniques; similar information about abuses in the form of rodeos, hunting/trapping, circuses, and the companion animal industry. There are numerous sources for each of these areas of animal mistreatment, but one can become familiar

with the basics for most of them through Andrew Harnack's (2001) anthology or Kim Stallwood's (2002) anthology. It should be noted that the animal rights label is a canopy for discussing the treatment of all non-human life. Some AR scholars may not agree with this statement, but that cannot be helped since drawing boundaries is the crux of the problem at hand.

Out of the conditions associated with the above mentioned abusive practices came a powerful concern for the animals directly affected by those practices: Cows, bulls, pigs, chickens, rabbits, monkeys, deer, fox, mink, elephants, tigers, dogs, and cats. There can be no doubt that these animals suffer greatly at the hands of humans, and do so through planned deliberate processes involving maximum control, confinement, and/or severe pain, torture and violence. The driving force behind most of the just mentioned processes is corporate profit maximization, the most integral component of a "free" capitalist economic system. It is not a coincidence that corporate profit maximization is the primary motivation behind environmental and human abuses as well (Nibert, 2002). Hence, human rights activists are frequently drawing attention to corporate government control activities that result in massive human rights violations around the world.

One of the most important strategies inherent within the corporate government control model is the creation and maintenance of the previously mentioned in-group and out-group distinctions. Once these distinctions are in place the average citizen participating in the economy through everyday life activities becomes complicit in the abuse of others. This complicity manifests itself by prosperous in-groupers believing they deserve what they have and also believing that suffering out-groupers should be satisfied with the conditions they have "earned" for themselves. It should not surprise students of sociology to learn that this same self-interest based process extends to the treatment of non-human animals as well. However, an important issue is how deeply the in-group and out-group thinking extends into the human subconscious. Are people who are concerned about the rights of others still acting out the in-group and out-group tendencies that help perpetuate exploitation and oppression?

Herein I am focusing on characteristics of the AR discussion about whether non-human forms of life should have rights; and more directly, what forms of life should be included in that discussion. Moreover, what is the thinking process by which animal rights activists are, and should, make decisions about "who" does and does not have rights?

Animal Rights Issues

An important question that is begged by human acts of oppression is, "should humans have the right to do whatever they please with and to other animals?" With increasing numbers of people answering that question "no", a second question emerges as, "what then are the rights of animals that, if legally recognized, should serve to protect non-human animals from the abusive practices of humans?" This question has led to a number of books and articles written on the treatment of animals, including a declaration of animal rights endorsed by over forty organizations (uncaged campaigns, 2003). The animal rights movement overall can be visualized as a continuum, with absolute liberationists on one end and animal welfare advocates on the other end. The liberationists believe that no living being can be said to have rights as long as it is under someone else's control. Hence for the liberationists, "animal rights" means animal liberation – nothing less. The animal welfare advocates argue it is unrealistic to think that animals can be completely liberated, so we must do what we can to reduce their suffering as much as possible. For an excellent presentation of this debate see Francione (2003).

Most of what is seen in the relatively recent, but fairly extensive, general literature that has evolved is an implicit, if not typically explicit reference to animals used for entertainment, food, clothing, pets, and laboratory experiments. The animals that tend to be highlighted are the animals with which humans have the most deliberate contact, and which humans, therefore, most directly exploit and oppress. Hence, there is a sense of closeness to these animals and a sense of responsibility to them which seems to be related to the concern for their rights in the AR movement.

A second probable reason that the above mentioned particular non-human animals are highlighted is that they, mostly mammals and birds, are the most like human animals in appearance and/or behaviors. Indeed, early animal rights activists often referred to the existence of a face as an indicator of where to draw the proverbial line relative to granting animal rights. A primary strategy in convincing other humans to show compassion toward non-human animals has been to demonstrate how much non-human animals are like humans - how they think, feel pain, take care of their young etc. Abuse of animals similar to humans is more likely to draw the "moral shock" (Jasper and Poulsen, 1995) needed to bring people into the AR movement. This "just-like-us strategy is an effort to, in effect, blur the traditional in-group and out-group boundaries that separate humans and non-human animals. As the strategy is actualized, however, new boundaries are drawn. To understand the application of in-group/out-group distinctions to non-human animals a brief discussion of in-group and out-group behavior among humans will be helpful.

In-Group and Out-Group Behavior Among Humans

Current practices of discrimination toward various groups in the United States and elsewhere are based on explicit or implicit understandings of differences. These understandings of differences allow some groups of people to identify themselves as separate from other groups of people. This identification of separateness is the basis for what William Graham Sumner first identified as in-group and out-group behavior (Davie, 1963). When humans have found it beneficial to persecute other humans, they have consistently throughout history created artificial ways in which the exploited other humans are identifiable as different, sometimes using actual differences in physical appearances or cultural tendencies as the bases for their arguments. The slaves brought to the United States from Africa didn't look like white Northern Europeans, so it was relatively easy to convince white people that black people were not human. The patriarchal Catholic Church, run exclusively by men, continues to overtly exclude women from full ministry and leadership - as do many western institutions. And during the Vietnam war we saw General Westmoreland talking about the Vietnamese on nationwide television as if they were not as human as us - making claims that they do not value life as we do in the United States. In the process of training soldiers for war one sees the importance of stereotypes of the "enemy" and dehumanizing the people targeted as the "enemy", so it will be possible to kill the targeted people without hesitation or guilt. International racism is systematically produced through military training: us against the "gooks" us against the "rag heads" etc. "Us" represents the in-group and the "gooks" and "rag heads" are deliberately the out-groups. The artificially instilled hatred and corresponding artificial in-group and out-group boundaries make the torture and deaths of innocent civilians and prisoners acceptable to the status quo, and inevitable; as was seen in Vietnam and more recently in Iraq.

The extent to which one can identify others as sufficiently different, is the extent to which

one is able to justify treating others as outside one's domain of preferred qualities. Once a person or group of people are judged as being outside of a domain of preferred qualities the judged are vulnerable to being subjected to a lower status than those doing the judging. Hence, discrimination based on race, gender, sexual preference and other characteristics is still very prevalent in the United States and in other parts of the world as well. In-group and out-group behaviors are alive and well in many aspects of human social life. Indeed, in the debate for equal rights for women we continue to see the imperative of proving that women are sufficiently similar to men in order for women to realize their rights. If men had to prove they were "sufficiently" like women in order to maintain the rights they have, the world would most likely be a notably different place. In order to avoid oppression, therefore, out-groups are thus put in the predicament of proving they are just like "everyone else". In this case, "everyone else" refers to the dominant group acting as the in-group.

Human Groups and Similarity

People who identify themselves as members of a lower status group strive to minimize the differences between themselves and higher status groups by noting the similarities between themselves and the higher status people. Additionally, lower status groups will try to change their appearances and behaviors to make themselves more like the higher status group. The greater the similarity between oneself and higher status beings the more one can expect to enjoy the benefits that come with alignment with those beings. So we see that the history of human rights and social justice advocacy has included efforts to demonstrate that slaves are fully human, that women are fully human, and that other disenfranchised groups are fully human as well. Even the continued IQ debate, relative to racial group comparisons, is one of segregationists arguing important group differences based on IQ scores, and social justice advocates emphasizing similarities i.e., they argue tools like IQ tests are used to create the appearance of differences that do not really exist (Feagin and Feagin, 1999).

The movements toward assimilating persecuted groups in the United States throughout the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, demonstrate the attractiveness of being similar to the higher status groups – to avoid further persecution, and to enjoy the privileges of the higher status dominant group. The Irish and the Italian ethnic groups are perhaps the greatest examples of this type of assimilation. Many Italian families would forbid their children from speaking Italian so they would more easily blend into the dominant white society. Assimilation was easier for light skinned Northern Italians than dark skinned Southern Italians, and it was clearly easier for white Europeans in general than people who have dark skin.

One can now see the problem with arguments such as "people of color are just as intelligent as white people" as a way of defending the humanness and corresponding rights of people of color. The concepts used to document similarity and differences are created by the higher status white dominant group, and the tools for measuring those concepts are created by the same dominant group. IQ score differences have no real meaning when used to compare groups, and attempts to use IQ tests for such purposes should be considered unacceptable. Yet, IQ tests are, indeed, used to compare out-groups with the dominant in-group that created the IQ test. A related example can be found in the recent resurrection of in-group and out-group criteria for teaching certification. The testing movement in education is part of a very calculated plan to assure hegemony of privilege (which has a bias to the political right) in the educational system (Symcox, 2002).

Today we are witnessing a movement toward appreciation for the importance of differences through the diversity/multiculturalism movement, a movement that promotes the benefits of differences among groups, and offsets some of the trends toward homogeneity. Increasingly we are hearing people from out-groups (today more commonly referred to as excluded groups) saying that they want their rights and they do not want to be like the dominant white people who oppress them. Notwithstanding, the notion of equal rights is still largely dependent upon assumptions of similarity.

The criteria for determining the rights (or lack thereof) of any one group of people always include an underlying agenda. One group needs another for its labor. One group wants to monopolize resources or justify taking resources from another group. One group wants to make sure available information works to its advantage for attaining control over others and/or resources.... etc. So it goes. What is there to gain? What is there to lose? Prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination follow from the answers to those questions.

Accordingly, some groups strive to create the perception of differences between themselves and others while other groups strive to show that the differences between themselves and others are small or irrelevant. Those who start from a position of social control have the advantage of creating, defining, and applying the key concepts that ultimately determine who is in and who is out. The nature and importance of differences will be constructed by any means necessary to include or exclude others - whatever is most advantageous. Arguments of similarity between groups in order to increase inclusiveness do not guarantee the desired result of inclusion. The rights that have been gained by people of color and women over the years were not based on white men finally agreeing that the differences between themselves and other groups were insignificant. The attained rights were based on political pressure created from well organized social movements. Superiority of white males over peoples of color is still claimed today via such indicators as the intelligence tests referred to above; and superiority is still claimed over women by using criteria such as differences in brain characteristics and certain specific physical abilities.

Additionally, efforts to argue that group B is similar to group A contribute to the notion that group B should be like group A, or that if group B is not like group A, group B is of less value. Arguments of similarity also establish a framework for pitting excluded groups against one another. Indeed, we have seen hierarchies of excluded groups constructed in order to praise the ones that are most like the dominant group and shame the ones that are least like the dominant group (Takaki, 2000). The position of any one group, relative to the inclusion criteria established by a dominant group, might best be to say they do not care if they meet the artificial inclusion criteria of the dominant group. Their existing qualities should be sufficient to secure any and all rights of any other group. Unfortunately, conditions of power and control make taking such a posture extremely difficult.

Sentience and the Fallacy of Similarity Criterion

As pointed out by Elstein (2003), scientists do not share a common understanding of what constitutes legitimate boundaries between species; creating more than a dozen different versions of what constitutes a species. He writes, "Biologists whose main interest is in evolution tend to use species concepts that focus on evolution; ecologists tend to use species concepts that stress ecological niches; biologists interested in morphology focus on morphological characteristics in their species concepts, etc. Thus there is currently no universally accepted species concept in the

scientific community” (Elstein, 2002, p. 3). This important point notwithstanding, an imperative of similarity of other species to humans has emerged in the AR movement as a basis for determining who will and will not deserve to have rights. Perhaps more importantly, this imperative of similarity determines which life form attains human respect and which life form does not.

Relative position of origin in the universe and corresponding DNA contain no intrinsic qualitative positive or negative value of their own. Qualitative values are attributed artificially as a result of the desire of some humans to separate themselves from other humans and other beings in general. One of the most important ways in which the imperative of similarity manifests itself is through the use of “sentience” as the criterion for determining – not just rights – but status as a notable living being.

What is a sentient being, and what does it mean to be sentient? Because the term seems to be misused and not clearly defined in the animal rights literature, it is necessary to refer to traditional definitions. One such definition of “sentient” states that a sentient being is, “capable of feeling, having the power of sense perception” (New Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1992, p. 908). According to WordNet Dictionary (2004), a sentient being is one who is “endowed with feeling and unstructured consciousness (p. 1). Sentience is sometimes confused with sapience, which “...is the ability of an organism or entity to act with intelligence (TheFreeDictionary, 2004, p. 1). When sentience is confused with sapience it directly implies human-like qualities since humans generally give little recognition to non-human intelligence. It is difficult to effectively understand human intelligence, since there are so many cultural and sub-cultural differences in the way intelligence is identified and treated. Moreover, non-human intelligence is much farther from our grasp than human intelligence. This does not, however, mean that non-human intelligence does not exist as status quo thinking tends to suggest.

Since AR activists are primarily concerned about the suffering of other animals, there is also a notable connection of sentience with pain – especially in the thinking of those who represent a Buddhist orientation (e.g., Phelps, 2004). Sentience is about feeling, and pain is one of many sensations a being may feel. Humans assume their own sentience, and they experience pain, so the connection seems natural. Animals that look and act somewhat like humans are granted the benefit of being sentient like humans, which means they must also feel pain. The AR line of thinking on the issue of sentience and pain is that it is only beings that suffer with pain that we need to worry about. Beings that don’t suffer do not need our concern or protection or, hence, rights. If a human conditions her/his body to not feel pain, should they lose their rights? The direct association of sentience with pain is problematic – regardless of which beings do and do not experience pain. Moreover, we have no way of knowing beings the experiences of beings that are not like us – primarily because we cannot relate to their experiences.

What about beings that do not resemble humans? This is where the question of “what will humans eat?” becomes very important. AR scholars and activists have boxed themselves into a corner by assuming that they cannot eat any being that is sentient because doing so would involve bringing pain to that being. It is important to AR advocates, therefore, that a line is drawn between those beings that are and are not sentient. Indeed, from an AR perspective, the affirmation of human sentience is inseparable from humans protecting other sentient beings. But where does one draw the sentient/non-sentient line? There needs to be an identifying characteristic that can allow one to make a clean incision. For many years the issue was ignored and the line remained blurred, but that produced criticism from the critics of AR. In 2001 Dunayer took a bold step and defined sentience in terms of a nervous system. If you have one

you are in and if you do not have one you are out. It appears, therefore, that AR scholars may have committed themselves to a “sapience” interpretation of “sentience”. While a sentient being may experience feelings through a nervous system, a nervous system is not necessarily required. The intended meaning of “sentient” is focused on the feeling sensations themselves and not how those feeling sensations occur.

So having a nervous system has become an important part of the similarity criterion that determines which forms of life should have rights. Animals and other forms of life that do not resemble humans are defined as out-groups based on their failure to have an identifiable nervous system. Making sentience strictly a function of a nervous system simplified the in-group/out-group selection process by providing an identifiable physical characteristic as the basis for decision-making. One no longer had to worry about whether a being really had feelings. One simply had to look at the physical make-up of the being and assume sentience or non-sentience from that physical make-up.

Sentience, however, is about feelings, and not the mechanisms by which feelings are created and interpreted. When one speaks of humans as sentient beings one is not speaking of sensory processes, but a myriad of possible feelings – positive and negative – that humans are capable of experiencing. Not all humans experience the same feelings. Feelings are processed with a nervous system in the case of humans and many non-humans, but the feelings are not the nervous system, and the nervous system is not the feelings. We do not know what all the possible mechanisms are in the world by which organisms experience feelings – not just pain, but all sorts of feelings. There may be feelings that humans do not know about because of our limited ability to communicate with, and sufficiently identify with, other forms of life.

Sentience has been an important piece of the AR imperative of similarity. The two notions, sentience and similarity, are joined in a reciprocal relationship of one reinforcing the other. What the above discussion demonstrates is that both sentience and the imperative of similarity are based on false premises. Sentience does not require similarity and similarity does not define, nor necessitate, sentience. Let us look more closely at how the imperative of similarity and sentience have been used to construct in-group and out-group differences in the AR movement.

Projected In-Group and Out-Group Behavior for Non-Humans

The imperative of similarity is often expressed in terms of certain other non-human animals having qualities “just like us”. One of the most recent examples of “just-like-us” thinking comes from Tom Regan, an early pioneer in the animal rights movement. Attempting to break away from the AR focus on the notion of sentience, Regan (2004) establishes as the primary criterion for animal rights the condition that nonhumans, like humans, be able to identify themselves as “subjects-of-a-life”. The notion “subject-of-a-life” means that an animal is aware of what happens to him/her and cares about it. As stated by Regan (2004):

Like us, these animals are in the world, aware of the world, and aware of what happens to them. And, like us, what happens to these animals matters to them, whether anyone else cares about this or not. Despite our many differences, humans and other mammals are the same in this crucial, fundamental respect: we, and they, are subjects-of-a-life (p. 59).

Establishing such a criterion, which cannot be demonstrated definitively for most non-human forms of life, takes a very species-centric approach to advocating animal rights and sets a solid foundation for the principle that life is hierarchical in value i.e., some animals are more important, or of a higher status in some respect, than others. Hence, all of the animal rights arguments based on selective non-human animals being like humans imply that there is a hierarchy to life with human life having the highest value. Those animals that are like humans feel pain and reflect on their existence, earning them sentient status and, therefore, “humane” treatment. What universal platform might one stand on to make pronouncements such as the “feel pain” or “subject-of-a-life” or narrowly defined “sentience” criterion? Such a platform does not exist.

Buddhist AR scholars seem to make the most concerted effort to refute the notion that life is hierarchical. Buddhism, as a religious practice and way of life, denounces status differences among sentient beings (Drolma, 2003; Phelps, 2004). But here again we see the same problem identified above. While more flexible than most, Buddhists also place limitations on who qualifies as a sentient being. As stated by Phelps (2004), “At some point as we descend the scale of complexity, we probably reach a place where the physiological mechanism is no longer adequate to support consciousness, and animals become like plants, capable of reflexive responses to stimuli, but not sentient (p. 30).” However, in a refreshingly honest afterthought, Phelps concludes his argument by saying, “Precisely where this line between sentient and insentient beings should be drawn, I do not know (p. 30).” Clearly Phelps senses the inherent contradictions that he struggles to semantically eliminate.

One of the more challenging Buddhist concepts for Buddhist AR scholars is the notion of “precious human birth” i.e., the belief that being born as a human is more desirable than being born as a non-human. Human birth is more desirable because it provides a being with an opportunity to use human intelligence and corresponding Buddhist teachings to gain positive Karma. Positive karma then helps one avoid being put into a “lower” form of life or state of existence and moves one toward the ultimate goal of enlightenment. Any level less than enlightenment is a purgatory-like state called “samsara.” Avoiding a lower-than-human realm is desirable because there is, purportedly, more suffering for beings in the lower realms; and because there is less opportunity to have the intelligence necessary to deliberately generate positive karma.

In a concerted effort to denounce thinking about life among species as hierarchical in value, Phelps (2004) states, “The hierarchy of samsara is a hierarchy of suffering, not a hierarchy of beings. All inhabitants of samsara – which is to say, all sentient beings – are not simply equal, but are indistinguishable in their essential nature. The realms we inhabit are only temporary abodes, and as we travel on in search of enlightenment, we will move about from one to another as easily as moving from one floor to another” p. 97). If, however, lower level (non-human) states involve more suffering, and one arrives in a lower state because of negative karma generated in higher states, then it would seem that there is a judgment passed on beings of the lower states – albeit they supposedly brought this lower state unto themselves. The relative position of lower states is clearly symbolized in Buddhist teaching by the term “lower.” That is, many beings suffer in a lower state because of their lack of compassion when given the opportunity to practice compassion – as humans. Moreover, these lower states provide little opportunity for knowingly generating positive karma, because within these states one lacks the intelligence to practice Buddhism. Yet, Phelps, who demonstrates an excellent understanding of speciesism, does not seem to see the speciesism in his own defense of Buddhism on the issue of

animal rights? From the standpoint of “precious human birth” movement toward greater enlightenment in the universe implies a movement away from the existence of non-human beings, since non-human beings represent states incapable of enlightenment.

Peter Singer (1990), considered by many to be the founder of the modern animal rights movement, argued that all sentient beings should be spared unnecessary pain and suffering. Under the influence of Singer’s work, it was derived that sentience is the critical determinant of which animals should fall under the protective canopy of having rights. As discussed above, sentience has more recently been associated with having a nervous system. As stated by Joan Dunayer (2001), “Using *who* for every creature with a nervous system avoids dismissing any sentient being (p. 154).” Dunayer then defends her statement as not being too inclusive, saying she would rather fault on the side of generosity than risk allowing a being to suffer.

Dunayer is to be applauded for taking on such a thorny issue. Apart from using the broad notion of sentience as discussed above, few animal rights advocates have articulated specifically which animals qualify for rights and which do not. Most authors and speakers on the topic have proceeded as if everyone should, or would, know who they were talking about. Indeed, usually they are talking about farmed animals, animals used for entertainment, “sport”, laboratory research, and occasionally animals used for companionship. Dunayer tackles the extremely difficult question of “how far do we go in extending rights to other forms of life?” Her response includes all beings typically classified as animals with the exception of two - two that do not have a nervous system. Regan (2004) goes through a similar process built around the “subject-of-a-life” criterion discussed earlier.

Plants as an Out-group

A primary focus of Singer is to address a question raised by the critics of the animal rights movement, which is, “why don’t you defend plants if you are so concerned about the suffering of living beings?” The implication of this question is that if AR advocates defend plants then there is nothing left for humans to eat and we would starve to death. Singer’s response to this question is both profound and troubling. The troubling part is that he gives the following reasons for not considering plants sentient beings:

“There is no reliable evidence that plants are capable of feeling pleasure or pain....In the absence of scientifically credible experimental findings, there is no observable behavior that suggests pain; nothing resembling a central nervous system has been found in plants; and it is difficult to imagine why species that are incapable of moving away from a source of pain or using the perception of pain to avoid death in any other way should have evolved the capacity to feel pain. Therefore the belief that plants feel pain appears to be quite unjustified (Singer, 1975, p. 235).”

He goes on to argue that even, in the very unlikely event, if scientists were to demonstrate that plants feel pain, they would certainly feel less pain than animals, further justifying the killing of plants over animals.

With the above arguments, Singer has fallen into what I have referred to as the trap of similarity; and that seems to be where the animal rights movement continues to be located. The trap of similarity drives much of what is done in science and much of what is done among social

groups. Indeed, it is the basis for determining who is a member of an in-group and who is a member of an out-group. One must be careful not to conclude that in-groups and out-groups are based on a predetermined classification of differences. In many instances an inclusion or exclusion decision is made first and the justification for such decisions is then created by identifying differences or similarities. An important example of how this process works can be seen in the development of racial classifications. As Europeans traveled about the world, beginning in the fifteenth century, searching for resources and labor to extract from other lands, they created what are referred to as folk classifications of humans. These folk classifications, based on subjective interpretations of encounters with other people - interpretations largely driven by an exploitation interest, eventually became the basis for "scientific" racial classifications (Macionis, 2002). It has since been effectively argued that there are more differences within racial groups than there are between racial groups. Notwithstanding, racial classifications still exist in everyday life and continue to serve the unfortunate social function of justifying continued colonization and much of the division of labor around the world - as well as in the United States.

The animal rights movement recognizes the economic motives driving the development of science in the seventeenth century, which led to the domination of humans over all of nature (Mason, 1993; Nibert, 2002), and which led to Descartes's classification of non-human animals as non-sentient beings (Mason, 1995; Singer, 1990). The AR movement does not, however, seem to recognize how this same type of motivation is shaping its own classification process relative to sentience. Consistent with the evolution of science in general, the animal rights movement has proceeded by searching for differences to justify decisions of exclusion, and searching for similarities to justify decisions of inclusion. AR critics have, in effect, successfully corralled AR scholars and activists into the same mind set as that of the critics themselves. That is, to defend the right of humans to survive by eating plants, humans have been separated from plants (as well as many other forms of life) by identifying differences: plants can't move, plants can't feel pain, plants don't have a nervous system etc. Once again we can quote Phelps (2004): "Here, it is instructive to note that if Buddhism regarded plants as sentient beings, there would be a 'plant realm' located somewhere on this scale, but there is not because plants are not sentient beings and therefore are not subject to suffering, karma, and rebirth" (p. 96).

Essentially, the arguments can be summarized by simply saying plants and selected other forms of life are not sufficiently similar to humans - just as was once openly said about Africans by plantation owners and just as was once openly said about women by all male run Western institutions. Oppression from the later two examples is still felt in the United States and elsewhere today. If there is an in-group need or desire that can be satisfied by excluding some other particular group, human or non-human, it is not difficult to make up reasons to carry out the exclusion. It can be done in a way that sounds perfectly reasonable because most humans identify with the in-group and see the world from an in-group perspective.

Let us look once again at Singer's arguments regarding plants. First, it is important to point out that his claims are not accurate, which also means that Phelps claims are not accurate. There is evidence, based on scientific research, that plants respond to stress much in the same manner as animals i.e., they display behavioral symptoms of avoidance (Center for Genomics & Bioinformatics, 2003); they send warning signals, via the gas ethylene, to the rest of the plant as a protection from further harm (Science Line-Biology & Medicine, 2003); they have very complex sensory systems (NASA/NSF Research Network, 2003; ASGSB, 2003; Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, 2003); and plants do move - both as a means of taking

advantage of physical support conditions in the local environmental and as means of seeking optimum conditions for growth (Center for Genomics & Bioinformatics, 2003). Indeed, time-lapse photography and even real-time photography of plants responding to various circumstances are fascinating to watch. The Mimosa plant's response to danger is quick and convincing. There is clearly more to this living being than meets the human eye. "In Mimosa, the mechanical or heat stimulus induces an electrical signal, similar to the electrical potentials in nerve cells, that can move from cell to cell at a high rate" (Center for Genomics & Bioinformatics, 2003, p. 1).

I have encountered statements by animal rights activists that are disparaging of the dignity and sentience of very elegant sensitive living beings. One philosophical comparison identified a plant's response to stimuli as being no different than a doorbell responding to the touch of a finger (Khutoryansky, 2003). Some vegetarian website comments regarding the discovery that plants have a fairly sophisticated response to stress and danger seem defensive in nature and quite insensitive (e.g., VeggieBoard, 2003). Another quote from Regan accentuates the AR movement's commitment to the "just-like-us" imperative, which is a primary micro level catalyst for maintaining in-group and out-group boundaries:

Think about the various considerations presented in support of recognizing that the animals I have just mentioned are subjects-of-a-life. Considerations relating to common sense and common language, common bodies and common systems, for example. How does rhubarb measure up, given these considerations? Do tomatoes share our structure, anatomically and physiologically? Does kudzu have a central nervous system like ours, and a brain? If someone says, "The fescue wants to go out for a walk," do we have the foggiest idea what they mean (Regan, 2004, p. 63)?

Are the above statements about living organisms how sentient beings respond to other beings: discounting - disparaging - with contempt etc.? These are the kinds of arguments one might hear from vivisectionists justifying their treatment of animals in laboratories. Their in-group and out-group boundaries are simply drawn in different places than those in the animal rights movement, but the boundaries are still there. People concerned about preserving the value and quality of life may want to examine their thinking about the socially constructed categories that govern their decisions about who to defend.

Those in the animal rights movement might want to consider the role of their own needs and interests in the determination of their in-group and out-group boundaries, since this is what they are asking of the non-supporters of animal rights and the overt oppressors of animals. As is the case with stereotypes of humans, the disparagement of identified "lower forms of life" feeds back to maintain and justify the in-group and out-group statuses assigned to specific life forms.

There is, therefore, reason to question Singer's and his followers' position regarding the sensitivities and experiences of living organisms they don't categorize as sentient. Supposing, however, that the arguments of Singer, quoted earlier, were sound and clearly defensible - what then? One might argue that it is irrefutable that it is humans that are defining and categorizing other beings according to their own human existence criteria. This simple reality must in itself challenge one to question the AR status quo positions: we feel pain, so others must feel pain or they don't count; we have a nervous system and so others must also or they don't count; we have consciousness so others must be prepared to display their consciousness to us in a familiar way or they simply do not count; we can move about from place to place, so anything that cannot

move about must have somehow come up short in the evolutionary process. For a sociological understanding of how this process works one might refer to the extensive literature on the social construction of reality that comes from both symbolic interactionism and critical conflict theory.

Humans tend to approach analyses from the viewpoint of themselves, employing socially constructed value based group comparisons. The results are predictable: our country is better than that country; our team is superior to that team; our way of life is better than their way of life; our race is superior to the other races; and our species is the most advanced species in the history of the world. These overt manifestations of in-group and out-group behavior are especially common among western cultures where “success” is most often dependent upon competitive advantages over others. These arbitrary classifications and corresponding life arrangements are almost always designed to serve the interests of the group claiming superiority and asserting that superiority over the other groups through some form of domination and oppression. Hence, all of the various isms are born: ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, looksism, ageism, and yes, speciesism – the tendency for members of one species to view members of another species as inferior in a specific or general way. Speciesism, like all the other isms, means that an in-group species claims the right to make judgments about an out-group species based on in-group self-identified qualities, and the out-group does not have the same opportunity.

There are, however, many species. Some people benefit from discriminating against one race, but not another. Likewise, some people benefit from speciesist behavior toward some forms of life but not others. What do animal rights activists have to gain or lose in the arguments for better treatment of non-humans? Can the AR movement participate in the construction of a science that will face its values and internal contradictions in a non-speciesist manner?

Viruses, Bacteria, and Other Tiny Creatures

In addition to the plants and animals assumed by AR activists to be non-sentient because they do not have a central nervous system or cannot demonstrate to human satisfaction that they are subjects-of-a-life, one can take the analysis still farther to other forms of life. What about viruses and bacteria? If it is difficult to attribute human qualities to plants and animals without nervous systems we certainly cannot expect to be able to attribute human-like feelings to viruses and bacteria. Observe the following statement from one animal rights author when describing bacteria:

Bacteria, on the other hand, just like plants, and just like rocks, do not possess anything similar to a nervous system, nor do they exhibit any behavior which would indicate that they possess consciousness. Bacteria are not capable of feeling pain or suffering. Bacteria are not capable of feeling a desire to live. Bacteria, just like plants, and just like rocks, are not capable of feeling anything whatsoever (Khutoryansky, 2003, p. 1).

It is quite unfortunate that humans do not know how to communicate with bacteria because I suspect that if we could read this statement to a group of bacterium they would swell with all kinds of feelings - all of which would be based on how little humans actually know about the experiences of bacteria. In discussing bacteria we are referring to a species of life that has existed for billions of years - one of the earliest life forms on earth. Bacteria make up the

largest bio-mass in existence. Observe the following statement from an American Society for Microbiology website:

Bacteria consist of only a single cell, but don't let their small size and seeming simplicity fool you. They're an amazingly complex and fascinating group of creatures. Bacteria have been found that can live in temperatures above the boiling point and in cold that would freeze your blood....There's even a species of bacteria...that can withstand blasts of radiation 1,000 times greater than would kill a human being (American Society for Microbiology, 2003, p. 1).

How could species of bacteria survive billions of years if they do not (as suggested by Khutoryansky), in some sense, have a desire to live? At the rate humans are destroying their own habitat – not to mention the habitats of others - one could effectively argue that it is we that have no desire to live. We contaminate our food, water, and air and then busy ourselves trying to find cures for cancer. Given these indicators, one might legitimately question the extent to which humans represent intelligent life. If humans had the resilience and durability of bacteria as identified above, we would consider it further evidence of our superior powers as a species. However, since the comments were made about bacteria, the human tendency would be to find a way to discredit the bacterium's qualities as primal or crude - something that smacks of being inanimate - like a rock perhaps. Never mind that these are creatures with various means of mobility.

Viruses are also fascinating creatures. Unlike plants, animals, or bacteria, viruses do not have cells; hence, they are not even considered living by some scientists. They are considered to have the approximate standing of a chemical. Yet, we know that viruses travel, adapt to new environments, and while they are incapable of reproducing themselves, they have the uncanny ability of tricking their host cells into reproducing them - not a small accomplishment.

There are other very small beings, some of which have only a single cell, like the paramecium, that are very mobile, and which have, without "nervous systems," complicated sensory capabilities. They can measure light to assure that they have the optimum amount, and can make various adjustments accordingly. Some of these tiny little beings have what are called nerve nets, which are not actually nervous systems, but connected nerve-like endings that sense various sorts of stimuli. Many of these little creatures respond to various sorts of threat in a variety of manners.

I moved directly from plants to a discussion of viruses, bacteria, and other microorganisms because they are probably of the least concern to the AR movement. Even though some of them affect us daily and we carry them with us always, they have little noticeable presence in our lives. We don't observe their suffering; nor do we have to think about whether we should eat them. Hence, from an AR perspective it is as if they don't exist. One will also note that this paper has not dealt with insects. From an AR perspective, insects would be somewhere just above microorganisms and plants. They are often included in the in-group discussions of Buddhists, but are rarely addressed by the AR movement in general, even though they do have what constitutes a nervous system. The most notable exception to being ignored is the honey bee. There are AR discussions about the exploitation of honey bees for the production of honey. Based on the general imperative of similarity that I have discussed in this paper, it would seem that insects will not find a significant place in the AR movement any time soon, regardless of how resourceful, clever, and responsive they may be.

The general point that is made with the discussion of plants, bacteria, viruses, and insects, is that we cannot judge and categorize what we do not know, and we know very little about what other beings experience - even the ones we work so hard to protect - the ones with faces - the ones we see suffering in the labs and on the farms – and yes, the ones we decide we must eat. We know nothing of their “wisdom”, of their “thoughts”, their “fears” or their “hopes.” We know very little about the possible experiences they have, perhaps many of which we cannot mention because we are incapable of imagining them – let alone experiencing them or observing them. This is probably true of the animals that are most like us, and it is almost certainly true of the other forms of life we encounter.

Native American cultures, and other long standing belief systems, such as Buddhism, seem to contain a deeper understanding of the interrelatedness of all existence - across space and across time – than do contemporary western cultures. Whatever one chooses to eat, the life that is taken is not considered of lesser importance or value than one's own life. As pointed out in the earlier discussions of the Buddhist notion of “precious human birth”, no cultural perspective is without contradictions and shortcomings. There is, however, much that European-based Western cultures can learn from long standing non-Western cultures. As stated by Winona LaDuke (1996), “...reciprocal relations...defines the responsibilities and ways of relating between humans and the ecosystem. Simply stated, the resources of the ecosystem - whether wild rice or deer - are, with few exceptions, recognized as animate and, as such, gifts from the creator. Thus one could not take life without a reciprocal offering...Within the practice of reciprocity is also an understanding that you take only what you need and leave the rest (p. 300).” While there are issues raised in this statement that many may find problematic, the sense of interrelatedness of life, and the humble appreciation for all life, including the life we must consume, comes across very clearly.

So how do sentient humans decide what to eat? How do we decide what has standing in the universe? How do we decide who has rights and who does not? How do we decide what those rights are? What gives us the right to determine the rights of other non-human beings? Should we be thinking of something other than rights relative to other beings? Should we be thinking more of liberation than rights for other forms of life - perhaps for other human cultures as well? These are questions that social scientists and philosophers must continue to address in an open minded fashion.

Back to Singer

You may recall that I alluded to there being a profound part of Singer's argument as to why we should eat plants instead of animals. Observe the following statement from Singer (1990):

Indeed this conclusion would follow even if plants were as sensitive as animals, since the inefficiency of meat production means that those who eat meat are responsible for the indirect destruction of at least ten times as many plants as are vegetarians (p. 236)!

AR advocates do not want to support the cruelty of factory farming; nor do they want to support the cruelty of using animals for “sport” or experimentation. However, as sentient beings, in the broad sense of the word “sentient”, AR advocates should also want to avoid diminishing the value of any living being. Perhaps the goal of AR scholars and activists, therefore, should be

to focus on and denounce any form of exploitation for profit (Nibert, 2002), with the understanding that humans will eat what is healthiest for them and what is available to them within those parameters. Frutarians may have something to offer in this regard. A corollary to this position will be to organize eating behaviors in such a way as to minimize loss of life - as per Singer's (1990) argument. This approach of minimizing lives lost is also taken by some Buddhists, which is sometimes a way of rationalizing eating meat from large animals. However, they do not seem to acknowledge the many beings living on and within the animals they eat, and the many beings injected into those animals; nor do they factor in the enormous human and non-human habitat and life destruction carried out by corporate meat producers, as clearly laid out by Nibert (2002).

Embedded in the above position is the understanding - put forward by Mason (1999) - that we must move toward an economic system based on the common good of all life rather than competitive unregulated capitalism. It is also understood from this position that something like Francione's incremental approach to establishing non-human rights should be developed and implemented. Presumably this approach would govern the rights of all living beings - those we eat and those we do not. Actualizing our own true sentience would dictate that all life deserves the greatest respect and highest standing available. We do not have to minimize the value or sentience of the life that sustains us. Bacteria for example, threaten us, but they also keep us and the earth alive. Indeed, there are cultures where people believe they should be humbled by and reverent toward that which nourishes humans and the earth in general.

Conclusion

I am not raising questions about sentience to stall the AR movement, but to challenge AR scholars and activists to sharpen our thinking about what beings should be protected, what protection means, and under what circumstances that protection should occur. Humans still have a long way to go in assuring the rights of all humans. For many, and I'm sure this includes many sociologists, the notion of rights for animals is still pretty far fetched. Whatever arguments are put forward need to be logically consistent sociologically. They must also be related to the root causes of oppression among all forms of life (again, see Nibert, 2002, and also Spiegel, 1996). Clinging to the "trap of similarity" plugs us into a framework of thinking that doesn't really make sense when one carefully analyzes the possible outcomes. It is the basis for long standing social problems related to in-group and out-group behavior - problems stemming from humans artificially separating humans from one another. If this is a mistake among humans why wouldn't it be a mistake among all forms of life? Natural scientists have come to realize that everything in the known world is intricately connected to a much greater degree than appears to be the case within the average human's daily experience. AR scholars, especially those coming from social science traditions, might want to consider this point and apply it to their work as they continue to move the AR literature forward.

From the standpoint of social change and social movements in general, this paper provides evidence of group processes that sociologists have documented in various settings and from within quite different theoretical perspectives. From a symbolic interactionist perspective one can see the internal social construction of the reality of sentience revolving around the response of AR activists to two logical traps. One trap is the "trap of similarity" as a test for inclusion. As documented several times, AR scholars set as their primary criterion for in-group status the extent to which other beings are like humans. This line of thinking directly suggests

that humans are the standard by which the value, importance, and sentience of all other forms of life should be judged. Such a position sets the stage for trying to identify a cutoff line – a line below which one need not acknowledge the value of beings at all.

The second trap, which might be called the “trap of plants as food”, is set by the critics of the AR movement when they taunt AR activists to treat plants in the same manner as animals, knowing that within the current AR environment AR participants would lose their primary source of food. The AR response to these logical traps, and the corresponding reality that is constructed, can be further explained by the critical conflict model that tells us groups tend to behave toward one another from the standpoint of self interest – i.e., there is an underlying, if not overt, struggle for control of resources that benefit one’s own group. The most fundamental example, and one pertinent to this paper, is the reality created surrounding the definition of what constitutes healthy food. The struggles for control of that reality cut across multiple interests. One such interest-based struggle is conducted by the corporate food industries to maximize their profits, as documented by Nibert (2002).

The primary critical conflict example represented in this paper, which is far less obvious than the just given example, is the underlying struggle of AR scholars to maintain a source of food while at the same time claiming rights for non-human forms of life. The struggles represented in both examples also represent conflict between the corporate food industries and the AR movement. That is, most of the corporate food industry opposes eliminating meat as a legitimate source of food, while the AR movement demands the elimination of “meat” as food; or at the very least, the elimination of the current means of “producing” meat. The projected realities of corporate food industries and AR advocates involve the systematic construction and enforcement of in-group and out-group boundaries.

There is implicit within the AR arguments about who is and who is not sentient, a very soft underlying rumble that says something like, “a line must be drawn and I don’t care where, as long as it leaves me with a sufficient source of food.” The AR dilemma regarding food is very real, but also unnecessary, because treating all forms of life as if they are sentient and of the same value could lead to the same AR conclusions about what to eat. As Singer (1990) partially pointed out, and others have since followed, there are very practical health, environmental, and broader social justice explanations for why humans might want to consider eliminating meat from their diets. These alternative explanations make it possible for AR scholars to abandon their “just like us” and “plants feel nothing” arguments.

It is also noteworthy that the “trap of similarity” and the “trap of plants as food” are not mutually exclusive. There are many plants that humans do not eat that still fall into the same discounted category as do the edible plants. It would be difficult to discount some and not others. More importantly however, plants, like microorganisms and many unusual insects, are not like humans. Plants are, in effect, victims of both traps – “similarity” and “plants as food.”

AR scholars and activists must somehow transcend their current in-group and out-group status and similarity-based boundaries if they want the movement to succeed long term. This does not mean that AR advocates should not be concerned about, and try to do something to stop, the suffering of others when they know suffering is occurring. It means that AR advocates might want to also consider recognizing the potential suffering of beings that may not express their suffering in a familiar manner. Humans may have to acknowledge that eating anything that sustains us may involve, perhaps even in the case of eating seeds, the taking of life, and possible suffering. The question then becomes “how can we survive so as to minimize harm to all other forms of life?” rather than “which forms of life are sufficiently different that we need not be

concerned about their suffering?"

Additionally, AR activists may want to explore alternative theories for why humans should eat some forms of life and not others. For example, perhaps there is a significance to plants being different than humans that is not based in relative appearances or the assumption that plants are insentient and do not feel pain. As we observe what is happening now in the world relative to meat and dairy carrying diseases, perhaps it could be argued that the best reason to not eat forms of life that are similar to ourselves is that they carry micro organisms, such as harmful bacteria, viruses and preons, that can readily adapt to the human body as a habitat. This may also turn out to be the most logical argument for organisms tending to not eat members of their own species. While I first wrote up this idea three years ago, I recently heard it expressed in a speech by Michael Greger (2006).

As we look at other social movements such as the women's movement, the civil rights movement, and the GLBT movement, we find similar patterns of internal in-group and out-group boundaries that work against the long term successes of those movements. There are struggles over who qualify as the real feminists, whether Africans in the United States suffer as much as African Americans, and whether bisexual people are truly gay. The construction of internal exclusionary distinctions within out-groups strengthens the dominant in-groups, and social movements consequently suffer. In-group activities to deliberately create conditions that foster divisions within out-groups have been quite successful in dramatically slowing social movements, and hence, social change: pitting conservative women against feminists; peoples of color against other peoples of color; non-union workers against union workers etc. However seriously one may choose to think about the AR movement itself, or the issue at hand in this paper, the social construction of in-group and out-group boundaries within an already existing out-group is likely to have negative consequences for that existing out-group in the long term. The AR movement is still relatively young and is quite capable of recognizing and escaping the quagmire in which it currently finds itself.

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Capitalist Discipline and Ecological Discipline

Samuel Day Fassbinder

Capitalist Discipline: Contours and Limitations

The issue is no longer that ‘capitalism’ is showing signs of collapse, and ‘socialism’ is around the corner. *What is failing today is not capital but the capacity of society and nature to support its discipline* (van der Pijl, 1998, p. 48).

Capitalism has been a globally triumphant economic system since the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, if not earlier. Historians date capitalism back to at least 1688, when the Glorious Revolution in England ushered in a regime where business interests were in control of the government. But history has not ended with capitalism’s triumph; its future is uncertain.

The investment banker Harry Shutt imagines that the capitalist system has been irreparably flawed by a surplus of capital: investable funds with no meaningful expectation of profit. He suggests that the imbalances of the capitalist system will lead to an increasingly unstable global economy. Yet there is no revelation in his books of the definite end of the system as a whole.

Global warming also poses an interesting threat to the system. The system’s most celebrated attempt to deal with human-caused climate change was, and is, the Kyoto Protocol (substantiate) to deal with this; yet “carbon dioxide emissions” actually increased afterward. Climate scientists have predicted catastrophic consequences for global climate, barring an 80% reduction in “carbon dioxide emissions” by the year 2050; yet, as Walden Bello (2008) points out, this demand is probably on a scale that the consumer nations cannot meet: “Psychologically and politically, however, the North at this point does not likely have what it takes to meet the problem head on.” (p. 2)

For hundreds of years, as capitalism spread across the globe, through trade or through conquest, systemic crises would periodically erupt in the functioning of the system itself. In past eras, economic crisis was something that the system could survive through adaptation. The crisis engendered through the downturn of 1929-1932, creating long-lasting distrust of the credit economy, was eventually resolved through the adoption of Keynesian macroeconomic policies, the jump-starting of the American economy by the war efforts of World War II, and by the Marshall Plan, through which the rebuilding of Europe and Japan jump-started those economies.

The crises of the 21st century, however, appear to be a different animal, one far less amenable to the old solution -- growth. “A rising tide lifts all boats,” a saying popularized by John F. Kennedy, was the slogan of the old consumer society – economic growth will solve all of our problems. The 21st century, however, is not likely to respond to “growth” solutions, as “growth” is itself the cause of its impending crises. In arguing thusly, this essay is partially in

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agreement with the “limits to growth” thesis, as argued in texts such as the *Club of Rome* report, and Donella Meadows *et al.*’s follow-up volume *Beyond The Limits*. As with these texts, I argue that there are objective limits to economic growth. However, I do not imagine such limits to be represented by specific, objective resource numbers; rather, there are natural limits to the ability of “resource substitution” to make up for world society’s depletion of natural resources. The cornucopians (e.g., Julian Simon: *The Ultimate Resource II*) argue that, with sufficient intelligence applied to the problem, we will eventually find “resource substitution” to be infinite. Here I disagree: intelligence is not like a substance to be applied onto a problem, leading automatically to its solution, but rather a comprehension of the structures of universes both physical and social. The advances of science and technology can only do so much to ameliorate the physical problem: as capitalism proceeds from cheap and easily-obtained resources to expensive and difficult-to-obtain ones, there are consequent degradations of nature which cannot be engineered away. The fragility of the natural order is such that if it is smashed to bits it cannot be glued together like broken porcelain and made to look “good as new.” So, then, there are limits to growth, and our ability to overcome them (through the applied use of brainpower, science, or technology) is itself limited.

The most significant of the “limits to growth” is abrupt climate change, but also deserving of our attention is the matter of “peak oil,” by which is meant the coming, and irreversible, decline in world oil production with the depletion of global crude oil reserves. Our technological civilization’s dependence upon crude oil is the primary illustration of the limits of “resource substitution” in allowing capitalist economies to expand. Global demand for crude oil expands by 2% per year, each year, yet new discoveries of crude oil are unable to keep up; it is assumed that “alternative energy” is to fill the gap, yet, as Walter Youngquist argues in his 2000 summary of alternative energy sources, no other energy source will equal that of oil, and there are problems with all of the substitutes. Thus this generation’s energy problems will boil down to a fundamental contradiction: the dominant economic systems require economic growth, which requires an increased access to energy sources; global ecosystems, however, are increasingly limited in their ability to cater to needs for increased access. As Minqi Li puts it in a recent issue of *Monthly Review*, “after centuries of global capitalist accumulation, the global environment is on the verge of collapse and there is no more ecological space for another major expansion of global capitalism” (Li, 2008).

In looking at the capitalist system as a whole, moreover, it seems rather unlikely that systemic reform will relieve the current crises, as such reforms would merely tinker with particular aspects of the existing system while leaving its micro-level structure as is. Capitalism will persist, in one form or another, as long as people are preparing for it every day. For reasons stated above, moreover, it also seems unlikely that the current system will “grow its way out” of its problems. So the approach I will recommend here will look carefully at the micro-level operating principle that has guided capitalism so far, “capitalist discipline,” and recommend a new way of functioning, and a new set of basic habits for the citizens of world society, so that this new way may gradually replace the old way. “Ecological discipline” will, to a certain extent, go against how we have been taught to act; but its intent will be to place the will to survive on a much more solid basis than what we have now.

To get at the micro-level functioning of the capitalist system, it is important to look at the set of bodily habits, the discipline, that keeps the system functioning. Now, what I mean by “discipline” is more or less what Michel Foucault means by “discipline” when he discusses the invention of discipline in his book *Discipline and Punish*:

What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A 'political anatomy,' which was also a 'mechanics of power,' was being born; it defined how one could have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile bodies.' (Foucault, 1979, p. 138)

So, "discipline" by this standard is like the discipline that acts upon the bodies of, for instance, soldiers when they are standing "at attention," the example Foucault gives in his book (pp. 135-136). Soldiers' bodies are made to behave in a particularly rigid way, every body-part under control. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault calls such bodies "docile bodies;" by this he means bodies which are malleable, or which can be fitted to work in institutions. Discipline, then, constructs institutions (armies, schools, factories, prisons, hospitals, etc.) by "composing (bodily) forces in order to obtain an efficient machine" (p. 164). That's what discipline is; so what's capitalist discipline?

Foucault did indeed describe capitalist discipline in one of his lectures. In a lecture in early 1976, he argued that the "seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" saw the invention of a "new mechanism of power." From his *Knowledge/Power* (1980):

This new mechanism of power is more dependent upon bodies and what they do than upon the Earth and its products. It is a mechanism of power which permits time and labour, rather than wealth and commodities, to be extracted from bodies. It is a type of power which is constantly exercised by means of surveillance rather than in a discontinuous manner by means of a system of levies or obligations distributed over time. It presupposes a tightly knit grid of material coercions rather than the physical existence of a sovereign. (p. 104)

Under feudalism, the nobility "profited" by taking part of what the workers produced, and royal power claimed the surplus from workers through sheer physical force (as, today, it does so through taxes). At some point, though, the dominant classes of Europe began to profit off of the labor of wage laborers in a money system. Thus began the invention of capitalist discipline.

More recently, the term "capitalist discipline" can be traced back to Aihwa Ong's stellar (1987) ethnography *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline*. Capitalist discipline, for Ong, means labor discipline; but it also involves the sense of identity that accrues when workers are subject to labor discipline (Ong, 1987, pp. 142-143). Workers must continue to work throughout their work-shifts; and Ong's ethnography is about how the bodies of women in stressful work-situations in Malaysian factories sometimes "snap," after which such female factory workers are said to be "seized upon by vengeful spirits" (p. 203) which inhabit the "rural Malay universe."

So capitalist discipline is a measurement of how the bodies of labor, the "docile bodies" that Foucault talks about above, are re-ordered by the practices of the capitalist system. For a worker, being a wage laborer is a form of discipline, which becomes a form of self-discipline, even for the self-employed: one needs to regulate one's own bodily movements in order to

maintain a job, and that is “capitalist discipline.” So capitalist discipline is work discipline, extended across the lifetimes of the workers, in the working class as a whole. But capitalist discipline extends outward from that work discipline, to cover the sum of reflexes of a society conditioned to life under competitive, accumulative economic regimes in a world dominated by capitalism. It is this capitalist world-domination that structures life according to the prerequisites of capitalist discipline. The things of the world are made to behave as commodities, in much the same way as the labor-time of workers has been made into a commodity.

Even nature is affected by capitalist discipline. The things of the natural environment are re-ordered by “capitalist discipline,” as for instance the land is re-sculpted by tractors and fertilizers to permit capitalist agriculture, or subdivided for the pouring of concrete foundations in anticipation of real estate sales. As we change the land, we change our bodily orientation to it; the suburb defines our relation to the land just as the wilderness once did. The process of human alteration of nature under the principle of convenience has become universal, as Bill McKibben points out in his book *The End of Nature* (2006). Ultimately, planet Earth itself becomes a docile body to be re-arranged by the machines of capitalism.

We can use a definition of the word “capitalism” as a starting point for understanding “capitalist discipline.” From Ellen Meiksins Wood’s *The Origin of Capitalism* (2002):

Capitalism is a system in which goods and services, down to the most basic necessities of life, are produced for profitable exchange, where even human labor power is a commodity for sale, and where, because all economic actors are depend on the market, the requirements of competition and profit maximization are the fundamental rules of life. (p. 2)

All of these specifications point firstly, to profit, but how is profit measured? There must be a money economy for Wood’s version of capitalism to be effective. Capitalist discipline, then, is that which people do to prepare themselves for exchange on the money economy. Consumerism is the fruit of that preparation; it is an extension of capitalist discipline, it’s the “off-time” counterpart to the capitalist discipline which adapts one to life during the “on-time” hours.

So, for the objects of capitalist discipline, it’s about marketing one’s power to perform wage labor. Its written record is the business resume, or, more properly, the *curriculum vitae*, the Latin phrase for the “course of one’s life.” If one is successful, one has won competitions for select varieties of employment; and for the successful, their jobs define who they are. Those are the stakes in the competition for employment – can one submit a *curriculum vitae*, a “course of one’s life,” compelling enough to get a job over other job candidates who can also be expected to prepare their lives with the prospect of job entry in mind? The curriculum vitae, then, is to show that one has lived a life-course appropriate to being hired for a particular job.

The point, then, is that capitalist discipline has both an individual and a *global* character. Its scaffoldings, including consumerism, must reshape the world to make it into a global market; consumerism, today, fashions the individual from early childhood to live in a world of commodities. Later life, involving work discipline, fashions the individual to *be* one of those commodities, at least in the sense of selling one’s labor-time to an employer.

In a capitalist economy, capitalist discipline uses dependency upon the money economy as its principle of control. If people are to work together for, in Wood’s term, “profitable exchange,” regardless of who profits, then the individual must become a disciplinary entity, like

a machine, for the sake of the machine-like production of capitalist businesses. To stay in paying jobs, people must adapt to work routines as such, thus capitalist discipline.

However, capitalist discipline need not be based entirely upon money. Money is important because the money system offers a locus of social control; it keeps individuals “in line” to a productive principle. Capitalist discipline, then, extends beyond capitalism itself, to a world in which national economies compete for the sake of economic “development.” In differing circumstances, nation-states have imposed capitalist discipline upon their subject economies through the principle of the command economy. The Soviet Union is the most famous example of this development -- from its beginnings as a nation of peasants hemmed in by warfare and embargo, the USSR imposed capitalist discipline upon its subjects in order to achieve national development goals (while at the same time, ironically, flying “Communism” upon its ideological banners). This begun with Lenin’s endorsement of Taylorism, the doctrine of “scientific management” that promised “One Best Way” of doing each task. The main difference between the Soviet version of Taylorism and the mainstream capitalist version was one of which tool was used to motivate workers to increase efficiency in factory production. Instead of merely paying the workers more, as Frederick Winslow Taylor suggested in his book *Principles of Scientific Management* (1947, p. 11), in order to get them to submit their bodies to Taylorist work management, the Soviets employed a propaganda campaign around a system which became “Stakhanovism” (Merkle, 1980, pp. 127-134), an attempt to create a series of heroic producers using the model of one such producer named Stakhanov.

Thus what conditions capitalist discipline, and made it the universal adhesive binding individuals to social systems, was a system of productive competition. Under the Five-Year Plans of Joseph Stalin’s regime, the Soviet Union was in competition with other nations to “catch up” in economic development, and so it created the conditions for capitalist discipline within its domain. Within capitalism, individual firms are in competition with each other to gain higher profits, and so capitalist discipline will train the workforce to help firms achieve their profit goals. The firms exist in a framework of nation-states which are in competition to “develop”; thus idiosyncratic differences in economic policy do not matter as much as the drive to “develop” the world. This is what drives the phenomenon that Alf Hornborg (2005) calls “machine fetishism.” The machines, metallic, human, and social, which drive the global production system(s) are thereby “animated and attributed with autonomous powers of productivity and growth” (p. 147); through them, the increase in worker productivity becomes the fundamental goal of society.

Moreover, capitalist discipline need not be predicated upon the form of the commodity we are talking about. Workers are subject to capitalist discipline whether they be factory workers, cashiers, or software designers; they can produce goods, services, or intellectual properties. Baldoz *et al.*’s anthology *The Critical Study of Work* (2001) summarizes investigations into all three domains, finding capitalist discipline in each. What is important in making capitalist discipline is the organization of space (Foucault, 1980, pp. 141-149) and time (pp. 149-162) to bring humans and nature together in the form of efficient work-machines.

Capitalist Discipline: Ultimate Ends

Capitalist discipline, then, fashions individuals, production lines, firms, nation-states, and parts of the world economy into commodity production machines. But to what end? The ultimate end of the machine that is capitalist business is, of course, profit – but, generally, capitalist discipline

is supposed to produce a surplus, or, more generally, wealth. Now, wealth can mean a number of things to any number of different people. But, generally, there are capitalist standards for naming wealth. Lewis Mumford, who understood the machine-like nature of capitalism, defined capitalist values as follows:

In sum, where capitalism prospered, it established three main canons for successful economic enterprise: the calculation of quantity, the observation and regimentation of time ('Time is Money'), and the concentration on abstract pecuniary rewards. Its ultimate values – Power, Profit, Prestige – derive from these sources... (Mumford, 1967, p. 279).

To apply Mumford's observations: wealth is the calculation, and the maximization of things, "goods and services," and the goal of the system to speed up the generation of wealth as measured in money, thus more power. These are the ultimate social goals, broadly speaking, of capitalist discipline, and their progress is typically measured through the growth in "Gross Domestic Product." This definition of "wealth" provides the contours of capitalist discipline, in terms of it being the maximization of commodity production as a route to the individual and group possession of power.

Now, there are plenty of texts advertising the benefits of the capitalist system as it stands. Two of these will be noted here: Alvin Toffler's (1970) book *Future Shock*, which influenced my intellectual thinking when I was growing up in the 1970s, and Thomas L. Friedman's (2007) *The World Is Flat*. These two books, part of the genre of capitalist hagiography, mark important points in the development of the capitalist system: the first book came at the beginning of neoliberalism and was in some senses its herald; the second book deals with the rise of the Internet and with the vast and current expansion of the Chinese and Indian economies.

Toffler's book celebrated the acceleration of social life with advancing technology and increasing urbanization. Within *Future Shock* there were repeated warnings of "future shock," that people used to the old ways of doing things might not be able to adapt; but this sort of "warning" was intended mostly to coach readers into readiness for a new, accelerated future. Other, later authors, have declaimed the speed of our society's movement as excessive: Teresa Brennan, in *Globalization and its Terrors* (2003), suggests that the primary problem of world society is that it moves too fast, and depletes nature's resources faster than they can be regenerated. In *Future Shock*, Toffler thought speed a cause for celebration.

Friedman's *The World Is Flat* offers an argument that world society is "flattening out" – that the world's people are finally coming together as equals. The question being begged by such an analysis, however, is one of the sense in which the world's people are ostensibly "equals." Friedman's ultimate argument, larded with endorsements of capitalist business, is that the Internet is the main force "flattening out" the world. The statistics he cites in arguing that capitalist globalization is ending poverty, moreover, have been significantly adjusted downward – having been previously miscalculated to fortify the prestige of India and China.¹

The point, then, is that there are indeed "good aspects" to life under the capitalist system, and its hagiographers are professionally adapted to pointing them out, without any comprehensive, systemic assessment to what capitalism is doing to the environment in which it grows. It is harder to say, however, that capitalism is itself responsible for all of these good things, or that capitalism ought to be preserved indefinitely, or that its machine-like production motion can continue to consume the treasures of planet Earth indefinitely without harm.

A more formal analysis of the effects of capitalist discipline upon the world is given in Kees van der Pijl's (1998) theoretical opus *Transnational Classes and International Relations*. This analysis is meaningful as an examination of the contents of capitalist discipline, of what's inside it. In van der Pijl's estimate of capitalist discipline, its origins are to be found in the processes of "commodification and alienation" (p. 36). In short, capitalist discipline is to be found in how people are made into wage laborers, how their labor-time is made into a commodity to be sold for an hourly wage. Van der Pijl also, however, extends the term "capitalist discipline" to mean the effects of capitalism upon any and all social practices. Consider, for instance, his description of the historical development of capitalist discipline:

...we can deduce three terrains upon which capitalist discipline is imposed, and where it can and usually will be resisted. The first is original accumulation – the process in which, by imposing the commodity form upon social relations including productive relations, capital itself crystallizes as an autonomous social force (p. 36).

When people acquired roles as wage laborers (or slaves), capitalist discipline created a world of commodities, of things and work-time to be bought and sold. That's what "original accumulation" is about – "taming" the world through imperialist conquest so that the social ground can be cleared for capitalist discipline.

The second is the capitalist production process, the exploitation of living labour power, in which the technical labour process and all that it implies of human autonomy and creativity has to be subordinated to the process of expanding value, the valorization of capital invested (van der Pijl, 1998, p. 36).

In the early capitalist world workers had to produce more efficiently if businesses were to make a profit, so the work process was controlled and made subject to "scientific management"; production was moved onto an assembly line; labor-saving machinery was introduced into the factories. This was made famous through Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1947) and by Henry Ford, whose assembly lines applied Taylor's methods to produce the Model A car. Production itself was thus greatly expanded, as was the consumption of natural resources for manufacturing.

The third is the process of *social reproduction* in its entirety, the exploitation of the social and natural substratum, which likewise has to be made subject to the requirements of capital accumulation (van der Pijl, 1998, p. 36).

Thus the consumer society was created, as the vast expansion of produced goods had to be sold to the public. Consumerism can also be regarded as part of the world created by capitalist discipline. If businesses are to profit off of production, the public must be made, somehow, to buy the products which they manufacture, regardless of what those products happen to be. The "exploitation of the social substratum," to use van der Pijl's language here, is made possible through advertising, the language of sales. The capstone book of social histories of advertising is still Leiss, Kline, and Jhally's (1986) *Social Communication in Advertising*. Histories of advertising typically reveal a process of ever-increasing sophistication, proceeding from the

advertisers' immediate needs to sell products to the creation of whole cultures around the notion of "lifestyles." The process of enculturation through advertising begins at an early age: Juliet B. Schor's (2004) *Born to Buy* chronicles the extent to which childhood has been commercialized by advertisers in the interest of creating lifelong consumers in this era.

In van der Pijl's analysis, moreover, the capitalist system as a whole goes through several "modes of accumulation," which can be placed in history according to which were the dominant industries in any particular time and place. So, to get where we are now with the capitalist system, four modes of accumulation, corresponding to four different periods of history, had to happen:

- 1) "Extensive accumulation," corresponding to the "textile and food industries," in the US before the Civil War.
- 2) "Intensive accumulation," corresponding to the "metals, oil, and engineering" sectors, in the US between the Civil War and World War I.
- 3) "Progressive accumulation," corresponding to the "automobile, chemicals, and electrical engineering" industries, starting earlier but really taking off after World War II, and corresponding to the "New Deal," the "Fair Deal," the "New Frontier," and the "Great Society" social programs.
- 4) "Neoliberalism," the current problematic phase, with the dominance of communication, nanotechnology, biotechnology, and finance, in the US after the 1970s.

The history of capitalism, then, is this vast, and accelerating, process of accumulation. At the end, van der Pijl suggests, is a process of "exhaustion," as the world cannot take any more of capitalist discipline. Here's how van der Pijl sees it:

First, a crisis of exhaustion of the biosphere will most directly compound the ongoing processes of original accumulation - urbanization in the poorest parts of the world. Second, a regression from international socialization of labour to disjointed circuits of money capital with a strongly speculative bent, undermining the world's productive capacity. Finally, there will come a crisis of the geopolitical expansion of the Lockean heartland - entailing a withering of transnational civil society and a regression to bellicose imperialism (van der Pijl 2001, p. 12)

The disjoint, at its most basic level, between capitalist discipline and ecological discipline, can be illustrated in the difference between the life-cycles of natural organisms and the "lifetimes" of commodities. A natural organism starts from seed or embryo, lives out its lifetime, dies, and thereafter its body decomposes and forms the seed-bed for future life. Similarly, a commodity is manufactured from natural resources, lives out its shelf-life, is consumed, and afterward thrown out as garbage. Garbage, however, accumulates as an environmental hazard; landfills fill up, rendering the land underneath as largely unusable, and then requiring trash to be taken further distances to be buried. Recycling, then, has been mandated by certain nations under late capitalism as a solution to the garbage problem. But

recycling has its own costs, as Heather Rogers points out in *Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life of Garbage* (2006), and is at best a partial solution to the expanding amounts of garbage produced by our global capitalist civilization. Meanwhile, an enormous clutter of plastic garbage accumulates in the Pacific Ocean over an area “maybe twice the size of the continental United States” (*The Independent*, 2/5/08).

Exhaustion: dynamics and entropies

All of which brings us to the relevance of the Kees van der Pijl quote above. How will “society and nature” fail to support capitalist discipline, as it attains this global character? Since capitalist discipline is a preparation for the market, we can only assume that “society and nature” will only support so much of that preparation before it is “exhausted.” How is this so? Van der Pijl cites such things as the overwork of portions of the labor market, and the decline of “social capital” in the sense of the spread of loneliness described in Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone* (2001). But the most concise reason of the exhaustion of “capitalist discipline” was given by Teresa Brennan (2003): the system is exploiting the natural world faster than it can regenerate itself.

Now, Brennan lists a series of problems, from air pollution to global warming to soil degradation to out-of-control genetic engineering to poverty, which point to the continuing malaise of world-society. It is hard to say where all of these trends will go in the immediate future, toward collapse, or toward more of the same, intermittent crisis with occasional prosperity.

The continuing crisis of the capitalist system does point to a failure among the elites, the wealthy and powerful who have an inordinate amount of control over the system, to stabilize capitalism ecologically or to maintain the well-being of world-society as a whole. Nevertheless, a system which is held together by capitalist discipline will not deviate significantly from its given path.

If the system continues to burn fossil fuels to power its machines at the rate it currently does, however, the world will look something like one of the abrupt climate change dystopias predicted in Mark Lynas’s *Six Degrees* (2008). This book offers a series of narratives of what is likely to happen with abrupt climate change. Large scale environmental effects, such as the melting of the polar ice caps, will catalyze even larger effects in terms of changes in global weather. As frozen water disappears from the surface of planet Earth, huge communities will be left without water supplies. Faster evaporation rates will bring about the spread of deserts. Agricultural failures will bring about economic and political chaos. Lynas has combed the literature on abrupt climate change to dramatize the best-supported models of future climate in this book. His conclusion is that world-society has about eight years to learn how to cut its aggregate fossil-fuel use if it is to avoid bringing to life the worst predictions, which would precipitate the eventual breakdown of civilization itself.

This isn’t a moral critique of capitalist discipline. It is what it is. If the world is to be prepared for an all-encompassing global capitalist system, capitalist discipline will be the disciplinary standard. But, if world-society is to survive the exhaustion of capitalist discipline, a new standard for discipline will have to be erected: ecological discipline.

Ecological Discipline: A Proposal

At any rate, the old era of assured progress through capitalist discipline appears to be confronted by forces with the potential to disrupt the system beyond recognition. What defined that old era was economic vulnerability – the “underdeveloped” nations were vulnerable to imperialism, businesses were vulnerable to bankruptcy, individuals were vulnerable to “poverty.” Today, the world-society as a whole is vulnerable to ecosystem collapse, as a consequence of the system of production which relied upon capitalist discipline.

I am making no ethical judgments here about “capitalism” per se, toward those who participate in the money economy. Nevertheless, our relations to nature have to be understood on the level of habits of action. The past has guided us to this point, where our habits of action (conceived in terms of “capitalist discipline”) have led to the creation of an ecosystemic state of emergency. It is now time for world-society to develop different habits.

So what is ecological discipline? It is, at present, impossible to say what ecological discipline is with the same degree of accuracy with which one can pinpoint capitalist discipline. Ecological discipline is, as with all social binding-agents, something to be invented.

The starting point for ecological discipline is what John Dryzek (1986) calls “ecological rationality.” In *Rational Ecology*, where this is elucidated, Dryzek spells out what is meant by “rationality”: each form of “rationality” is meant to be the governing principle of a specific social order. Ecological rationality, then, would place ecological concerns at the top of the list of governing principles of a possible social order. This is what Dryzek means when he cites the “indexical priority” of ecological rationality. A society must take care of its ecosystem substrate first; otherwise it will remove its natural basis for existence.

This governing principle must, however, be solidified in practice as a *discipline*. A world society held together by ecological discipline would be guided by a scientific paradigm emphasizing not mechanics, but thermodynamics. As a science, thermodynamics is about the ability of heat (or, more specifically, heat differentials) to do mechanical work; the archetypal thermodynamic engine is the piston engine, which converts generated heat from the burning of gasoline into rotary motion to move the wheels of a vehicle. Thermodynamics studies the conversion of energy between different forms, especially from heat to motion to do work.

But, generally, the principle used to connect thermodynamics and the social sciences is that of the Second Law of Thermodynamics: when energy is used to perform work, there is a resultant increase in “waste energy,” energy that cannot perform work: i.e. entropy. This principle, the Second Law, is then used to critique machine-like social systems (e.g. capitalism): capitalism is criticized as being too entropic, i.e. generating too much waste energy, thus dissipating the energies of the world. This theme has its historical roots in the 19th century, as Joan Martinez-Alier well documents in *Ecological Economics* (1987). It has been used to broadcast a pop-sociology prophesy of impending doom: this is what Jeremy Rifkin does in *Entropy: Into the Greenhouse World* (1970). And, significantly, Paul Prew criticizes capitalism for concentrating too much energy in “centers of accumulation” at the expense of “zones of extraction” in his essay “The 21st Century World Ecosystem.”

However, the point of this essay is to concentrate upon solutions to capitalism’s entropy problem, rather than merely detailing the criticisms. Ecological discipline will be the measure of our ability to create the new “dissipative order” which Prew proclaims. From the thermodynamic metaphor, all of the academic and technical disciplines, and all of the technologies, will be re-incorporated into one all-encompassing science: ecology. Society will adopt what Joel Kovel (2007) calls “ecocentric production” (pp. 234-241) in which the production of useful objects will

be undertaken as a conscious manipulation of the ecosystem of production. We can expect, for instance, much of the philosophy that is called “permaculture” to be integrated into production.

Ultimate ends will change: whereas capitalist discipline is oriented toward *progress* (measured in terms of technological sophistication and of an increasing surplus), ecological discipline is oriented toward *survival*, conceived globally in terms of the survival of world society and the perpetuation of worldwide ecosystem resilience. Individuals will pursue individual survival; yet this, too, will be an act of social labor, working towards (and not detracting from) the survival of world society. The pressure to develop such an ultimate end will come from forces which respond to the death of earlier forms of social existence: for instance, the death of the suburbs will oblige suburban communities to adopt low-to-the-ground measures for mutual survival, and so on.

Ecological discipline must be brought into being through a philosophy of environmentalism. Capitalist discipline chooses its philosophies by aligning them with the activities of for-profit businesses; ecological discipline will spring from the activities of environmental movements. Joan Martinez-Alier, in *The Environmentalism of the Poor* (2002), identifies three distinct types of environmentalism:

- 1) The “cult of wilderness,” preservationism which “arises from the love of beautiful landscapes and from deeply held values, not from material interests.” (p. 2) In this thread Martinez-Alier includes the “deep ecology” movement and the organization “Friends of the Earth.”
- 2) The “gospel of eco-efficiency,” connected both to the “sustainable development” and “ecological modernization” movements and to the notion of the “wise use” of resources. Martinez-Alier tells us that “ecological modernization walks on two legs: one economic, eco-taxes and markets in emission permits; two, technological, support for materials- and energy-saving changes” (p. 6). This, then, is a reformist movement attaching itself to industrialism, and for it, ecology becomes a managerial science mopping up the ecological degradation after industrialization” (p. 6). It promotes “eco-efficiency,” which “describes a research programme of worldwide relevance on the energy and material throughput in the economy, and on the possibilities of ‘delinking’ economic growth from its material base” (p. 6).

And most importantly –

- 3) the “environmentalism of the poor,” which has as its main interest “not a sacred reverence for Nature but a material interest in the environment as a source and a requirement for livelihood; not so much a concern with the rights of other species and of future generations of humans as a concern for today’s poor humans.” This is the “environmental justice” movement, and it is centered around what Martinez-Alier calls “ecological distribution conflicts” (p. 12). Its protagonists are locals whose livelihoods are threatened by environmental impacts. It “receives academic support from agroecology, ethnoecology, political ecology and, to some extent, from urban ecology and ecological economics” (p. 12).

Martinez-Alier broadens the category of “ecological distribution conflicts” to involve those living in the “rich nations” – the idea being that environmentalist values are not reducible to monetary values, and so we identify “ecological distribution conflicts” as posing those who use nature for subsistence purposes versus those who pursue for-profit environmental “harvesting” regardless of the income situation.

The first type of environmentalism, as listed above, counts as a sort of Romantic nature worship, without regard to the role which we human beings inevitably assume in light of our dependency upon nature as a source of sustenance. Ecological discipline is not a preservationist set of practices; we will, at best, be able to celebrate pristine nature from afar, whereas what needs reworking are our practices in living in natural settings. The second type of environmentalism is largely a response to environmentalist complaints about the despoiled character of the natural environment once it has been invaded by industrial pollution. “Eco-efficiency” can be faked, at least as regards the “Eco-“ part of the term. Josee Johnston (2003) describes how this works for, for instance, the mining industry’s attempt to project an image of sustainability:

A vague commitment to improving the state of the earth and reducing business risk is mentioned, but the fundamental practices of mining are not challenged, even though they typically involve removing entire surface areas of complex ecologies and frequently garner fierce resistance from affected communities (p. 11).

Only Martinez-Alier’s third category, the “environmentalism of the poor,” to which he later adds the environmental justice movement, is therefore a viable candidate for the spread of ecological discipline. The representatives of the “environmentalism of the poor,” as such, provide the most fertile of the many seed-beds which exist in the world today for the cultivation of ecological discipline.

Ecological Discipline: Some Possible Transitions

Ecological discipline will, once it is established as the primary motivating force and habit-formation of world society, persist for centuries, as a sustained effort will have to be made to reclaim biospheric relationships destroyed by rampant urbanization. If history is to be any guide, a change-over in world systems will be accompanied by a disastrous collapse of old power structures followed perhaps by a gloomy interim period. But there are perhaps some significant ways in which the transition to ecological discipline can begin now.

- 1) We need to be undoing the division of labor between countryside and city, now, through urban gardening and the creation of a means of subsistence within urban environments. Said urban gardening, more than an attempt to import agriculture into cities, will be small-scale and conducted according to scientific parameters in agroecology or philosophical parameters in permaculture.
- 2) There needs to be a phase-out in fossil fuel use combined with an aggressive non-fossil-fuel energy program posed as a guarantee of minimum living standards. The phase-out in fossil fuel use will have to abandon coal mines and cap oil and natural gas wells. The

problem of abrupt climate change is a direct result of profligate fossil-fuel burning; if it is to be stopped, the “production” of fossil fuels must be halted.

- 3) The collapse of debt-based money systems must be followed by the creation of a credit-based money system along the lines of “social credit” as speculated in Hutchinson, Mellor, and Olsen’s *The Politics of Money* (2002). The point of adopting schemes such as “social credit,” LETS (Limited Exchange Trading Systems), and so on, is to allow people, constituted democratically and in small groups, control over the money supply. The goal is to employ ecological discipline to create a sustainable world society within resilient ecosystems. If this is to happen, people must control money; money cannot be in a position to control people. One of the primary faults of neoliberal global governance is that out-of-control money systems, rather than imperatives of ecosystem resilience, dictate business policy. The purchase of the Pacific Lumber Company by MAXXAM Corporation is a fitting illustration of this principle.
- 4) Educational methods must prepare future generations for a world in which ecological triage will be the primary institution for creation of life-economies. The operative word there is “triage” – future generations will spend lifetimes restoring ecosystems damaged by centuries of capitalist “development,” and thus making hard decisions as to what can be preserved and what cannot be saved.
- 5) A geo-political world-situation which stresses local autonomy and democracy in the absence of imperialist modes of political economy and with the assistance of a global network in which there is a genuine community of nations – i.e., the United Nations. Such a world-situation is recommended at the end of Kees van der Pijl’s *Nomads, Empires, States* (2008). With such a framework, ecological discipline would have a state framework of its own, binding empowered local people (people who care about local ecosystems because “they live there”) to a framework of global governance.

Conclusion: Some Notes on Greenwash

The above list of suggestions offer a set of proposed transitional strategies to proceed from a system based upon capitalist discipline to one based on ecological discipline. However, if essays such as this are to “do work,” their foci must be on the micro-level changes necessary to invent an ecological discipline that is “up to the task” as ecosystem dysfunction is more and more likely to be conceptualized as a society-wide “challenge.”

The language that Rom Harre *et al.* call “greenspeak” has never been more popular. Environmental discourse, once merely the purview of activists and literary figures (Rachel Carson combined these two roles), has made it into the corporate boardroom, the legislative hall, the academic classroom, the city hall, the living room, and the kitchen. Yet much of this “greenspeak” will not really signify anything more than the mainstream absorption of environmentalist rhetoric.

Josee Johnston’s observations that “eco-efficiency” can be faked illustrate the need to focus upon “greenness” as a strategy that cannot be pursued merely at the level of fashionable discourse. Demands that participants “walk the talk” are likely to multiply when large numbers of people see that green rhetoric has little to do with physical reality. Arguably, then, the bodies

have to go where the mouths have indicated – we need an ecological discipline to go along with green rhetoric.

More talk, then, will not in itself give us ecological discipline. Emphasizing the need for a different system of political economy will not give us ecological discipline – “Marxist polemic” will not by itself change the world as such. Democracy, and democratization at the local level, will provide effective tools for ecological discipline – most of the positive effects of democracy, however, will be because democracy empowers (ecologically-conscious) people to operate locally to support local ecosystems. Education can instill ecological discipline, yet this will only come to pass with the active support of students. (Educational institutions typically have little understanding of how contingently they “control” the students they have enlisted.)

Appeals to policy, as the savior of civilization against its environmental problems, miss the disciplinary core of the present-day capitalist social structure. Policy, however, may yet serve in a transitional role, by clearing the ground for the development of an ecological discipline.

Ultimately, ecological discipline will be the product of individuals, as its main connector to discipline per se (what Foucault called “governmentality”) will lie at the level of self-discipline. As the contradictions between capitalist discipline and ecosystem stability widen, we can, however, predict that more and more people will choose to “side with” the cause of ecosystem resilience.

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Notes

¹ The statistics that bear this out can be found on the Daily Kos weblog run by Wufacta at: <http://wufacta.dailykos.com/>.

Book Review

***The Nature of Home: Taking Root in a Place* By Greta Gaard, 2007, The University of Arizona Press, ISBN 978-0-8165-2576-8, 213 Pages**

quin aaron shakra

Since the mid-1970s, ecofeminists have explored the relationship between the domination of women and the other-than-human natural world. Early texts such as Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature* (1978) and Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1980) expose the gendered character of Western scientific discourse and its complicity with environmentally destructive practices. Other books such as Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies' *Ecofeminism* (1993) carefully document how women and subsistence cultures are unevenly affected by the patriarchal and environmentally unsound "maldevelopment" policies of first world countries. Yet perhaps most importantly, ecofeminism has a long-standing activist tradition, with a number of early ecofeminists involved in the direct action anti-militarist, anti-nuclear, and peace movements of the 1980s.

During the 1990s, ecofeminist intellectuals intervened in both the mainstream and radical environmentalist discourses of the animal rights movement, deep ecology, and social ecology. Central to their concerns were the invisible male-biased "human" subject laden within environmental theory and the need for activists to conceptualize social and ecological oppressions as inseparable. Books such as Val Plumwood's *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) explore how Western philosophical discourses of reason are patriarchal and have been used to justify the destruction of nature. Additionally, Plumwood problematized the deep ecologist conception of an "expanded Self," for its inability to take issues of otherness and difference seriously.

Karen Warren's *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters* (2000) not only rigorously established ecofeminism as a philosophical standpoint in its own right but also responded to and reconciled some of the most pointed critiques directed toward ecofeminists. These include the questionable relationship between ecofeminism and spirituality, ecofeminists' use of biologically essentialist definitions of gender, and activists' questionable commitment to an anti-racist standpoint. This latter point was extensively documented in Noël Sturgeon's *Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and*

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Political Action (1997), which is both a history of ecofeminist activisms and an internal, anti-racist critique of ecofeminism.

Yet while ecofeminists have arguably written some of the most provocative political and environmental theory of the past few decades, and even a few works of fiction (e.g. Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*), the discourse has given rise to few creative nonfiction books. Greta Gaard, another important contemporary ecofeminist writer, has stepped in to fill this gap. Gaard previously edited the ecofeminist anthology *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (1993), authored *Ecological Politics: Ecofeminists and the Greens* (1998), and co-edited *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* (1998) with Patrick D. Murphy. She has also written "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism," a germinal essay that cogently establishes material and historical linkages between the oppression of queers and destruction of nature.

Gaard's most recent work, *The Nature of Home: Taking Root in a Place* is a personal narrative written from a "queer feminist environmental" (p. vii) perspective that addresses "the power of non-human relationships in shaping self-identity" (p. viii). She writes primarily about her relationships with the bioregions she has traveled throughout her life, especially focusing on the past 10 years of her personal history (1997-2007). The mountains and rivers of Southern California, urban and rural areas of Minnesota, and the forests of Washington State are primary characters in the text, alongside Gaard's dog Sequoia and her female partner Shawn.

One important element of the nonfiction genre is that it allows the author to address personal experience directly rather than anecdotally. In the essay "Queering Environmental Education," Constance L. Russell, Tema Sarick, and Jacqueline Kennelly (2002) point to the importance of "using our bodies as a source of and site for knowledge production" (p. 59). Their attentiveness to the politics of sexuality and gender reveal that "experience cannot be universalized" or "assumed to be interpreted in the same way by all people at all times" (p. 58). Similarly, Karen Warren has argued that personal narratives "provide a way of conceiving of ethics and ethical meaning as *emerging out of* particular situations... rather than being *imposed on* those situations" (p. 136). Nonfiction writing can potentially advance ecological praxis by exposing how differential life experiences condition an activist response. This is not simply a matter of "compare and contrast," but a vital avenue for understanding the plurality of tactics necessary to respond to environmental destruction. As Gaard (1997) herself suggests, "the future of progressive organizing may well depend on how effectively scholars and activists can recognize and articulate our many bases of coalition" (p. 114).

Two interrelated themes are present throughout *The Nature of Home's* "spiraling narrative that brings together place and perspective in a loose chronology" (p. ix). The first is Gaard's relationship with wilderness. She is clearly unsatisfied with simplistic understandings that permeate mainstream environmental discourse and advances a perspective of wilderness with which the dominant society is intrinsically connected. Place is "both wild and cultured, both ecological and economic" (p. viii). This links to the second prevalent theme of the text: Gaard's struggle to find a meaningful sense of place-based belonging outside the context of academia. Numerous points in her narrative are catalyzed by a desire to question or leave behind the academy altogether or move from an urban space to a wild one. The concept of "home" emerges as a focal point for these narratives, suggesting an "intimacy, a kind of knowledge of place, a set of relationships and commitments" (p. 7) that companions Gaard wherever she goes.

Gaard focuses on the many dimensions of "wildness" primarily through accounting for how race, class, and gender condition her experiences. For instance, she juxtaposes her attendance at a Vipassana meditation retreat in Washington with a National Outdoor Leadership

School backpacking trip she took in the mountains of Wyoming. Internal and external geographies become the separating factor of these experiences. During the backpacking trip, she notes each of her mountaineering companions “seemed devoutly heterosexual, white, and middle class” (p. 54). Later, she links her reliance on capitalist beauty products to her sense of identity – “I still didn’t feel like a woman in the wilderness.” In contradistinction, she likens her experience on the mountain to “being stripped of all external gender” and leaving “behind things that I thought were essential aspects of who I was, things that I relied on and took for granted” and (p. 60).

Naming her production-based writing and teaching schedule in academia “antiecological and unsustainable” (p. 62), it is unsurprising Gaard seeks refuge in a meditation retreat where the teachers encourage the attendees to explore “the wildness of our own minds, hearts, bodies,” (p. 56). As she encounters a clearcut during one night of walking meditation, she questions whether the Buddhist concept of metta or lovingkindness could be a “force more effective than rage” (p. 63). While books such as Derrick Jensen’s *Endgame* (2006) have lambasted lovingkindness as an inappropriate response to environmental destruction (p. 290), Gaard grapples with both its ineffectiveness *and* potential to promote a fiercely compassionate activism.

Race and sexuality also mediate spaces that are ostensibly about interacting in wild nature. During her time in Washington, Gaard attends the annual Deming Logging Show with her partner Shawn. As she sizes up the social context of the event, she notes, “Without our consent, our white skin serves as a form of protective coloration; we see no people of color the entire afternoon” (p. 109). Yet whereas her white skin functions as protection within the event, Gaard and Shawn’s sexuality potentially expose them to violence. “We aren’t quite sure how to carry ourselves, whether it’s safe to stand and look... or whether our curiosity will betray us and we’ll be thrown out,” she writes (*ibid.*). Their queerness offers insight into how the dominant industrial logging cultures proscribe a form of white, heterosexist patriarchal masculinity that reinforces a destructive attitude toward forests.

Earlier portions of *The Nature of Home* focus on Gaard’s childhood in Southern California, her adult life in Washington (in “Women/Water”) and search for family history in the Sierra Nevada Mountains (in “Family of Land”). Early on in the book, she describes the mountains of the San Fernando Valley of the United States (where she grew up) as “the most compelling force in my life” (p. 5). She discovers her family “extended both vertically through the blood lines and horizontally through the land, both past and present” (p. 3). Her search is not only about returning to the places of her earliest memories, but also learning the histories of the land, the indigenous communities, and other-than-human inhabitants. For instance, she elegantly weaves bioregional history with human settlements in the chapter “Whatcom Creek,” where she “companions” (p. 48) the water back to its origins through urban and wild spaces, noting “industrial culture puts water and its creatures in the background” (p. 49). Water is another an essential ingredient of Gaard’s text, symbolizing the interconnectedness of all life, but remaining highly politicized. Poetic observations such as, “Impermanence is water’s kindest lesson” (p. 142) are politicized, such as the example above or perhaps more directly when Gaard narrates the 1999 Whatcom Falls pipeline disaster. When she describes the 277,000 gallons of gasoline that spilled from a ruptured pipeline into Whatcom and Hannah Creeks, “creating a four inch layer of gasoline on the water,” (p. 139) the interconnections between wildness and industrial civilization are brought into full relief.

Gaard stumbles a bit in the chapter “Food and Shelter,” which explores her experience with charity work in both a food bank and soup kitchen in Bellingham, Washington. Noting that

one of her co-workers creates a professional, courteous relationship with food bank visitors by using the word “client” rather than “recipient” for food bank visitors, Gaard remarks that charity is “a situation potentially ripe with shame and judgment” (p. 166). Yet a page later, Gaard herself insensitively uses the term “recipient” (p. 167), subtly reinforcing a diminutive attitude toward those at the food bank. In the same chapter, she describes the instructions for food handling she receives from another co-worker: “Once you give the plate to the guest, you never touch it again” (p. 170). While the co-worker is ostensibly concerned about the transmission of infectious diseases, the very act of assuming that those who visit soup kitchens are “dirty” carries a classist sensibility that reinforces a literal separation and unnecessary difference between those serving (clean, privileged) and those being served (dirty, underprivileged).

While the above examples might be mere linguistic quibbles, more problematic is Gaard’s frequent use of the term “sustainable,” which remains largely undefined throughout *The Nature of Home*. For instance, she goes searching for “sustainable townships” (p. 4), or finds “sustainable relationships with place” (p. ix), which alternatively suggest ecological and personal connotations of a term that carries a great deal of cultural and political complexity. Perhaps the most egregious example is when Gaard posits wind power as a “more sustainable” means of energy usage than “nuclear, hydro or coal” (pp. 29-30). This assertion obviates a critical discussion about the ecological effects of supposedly “green” technologies that re-entrench the idea mass society can be made ecologically healthier via technological progress. “More sustainable” would more truthfully imply an *already* sustainable relationship with the planet in which even more is given back to the landbase. Instead, Gaard might have discussed whether or how wind power is *less destructive* than other sources, but perhaps the nonfiction medium is why this was left uncommented upon.

Despite these potential issues, *The Nature of Home* offers an intersectional and compelling conceptualization of self that is both relational and bioregional in nature. Many environmental writers are quick to comment on modern humans’ alienation, rootlessness and lack of commitment to place. What makes Gaard’s narrative unique, however, is how she reconciles place-based and nomadic existence within a modern setting. In the very first lines of the book, she reminds us, “As long as humans have been around, we’ve had to move in order to survive” (p. 1). Toward the very end, in the wake of her separation from Shawn, Gaard realizes that human relationships are “part of an ecosystem, rooted in connection to other living beings and places” (p. 190) and cannot simply be moved around without being significantly altered. These perspectives offer the possibility of a place-based nomadism that is not environmentally destructive as well as an opportunity for us to challenge our commitments to and dependencies upon the reproduction of large-scale social institutions rooted in a model of industrial-age monoculture. Interestingly, this perhaps places Gaard in close affinity with anarchist primitivists, and thereby moves ecofeminist discourse closer to a form of social critique that remains vital within large swathes of the radical environmentalist community today.

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Book Review

Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need A Green Revoution, and How It Can Renew America

By Thomas L. Friedman, 2008, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, ISBN 978-0374166854, 448 Pages

Samuel Day Fassbinder

Some readers of this review may remember Thomas Friedman from his previous books. Friedman is known as the *New York Times's* (NYT) in-house columnist in support of neoliberalism and capitalist "globalization," "free trade" and the glories of the Internet. Friedman is an enormously popular author, cranking out #1 selling nonfiction bestsellers (e.g., *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 2000; *The World Is Flat*, 2007) in addition to his NYT work. He is thus an important scriptwriter for the Washington Consensus, and the fact that he has "gone green" in the process of writing this book deserves notice as a positive development. The "green word" will therein make itself known to large numbers of book-buying members of the public.

The title of this most recent bestseller, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, comes from three trends the author sees in world society. We will be "hot" because of global warming, "flat" because more and more people are joining the "middle classes," and "crowded" because there will be more and more people. This is, then, the Friedman book on the environment.

To be sure, much of what Friedman says in *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* was prefaced in a small section of *The World Is Flat*, his last big book. The template for this more recent book is given there on pp. 570-579, where Friedman cites "Too Many Toyotas" as the reason he gives for why the world is in fact not really flat, despite his book title.

Friedman has apparently gotten himself to accept many of the environmentalists' major premises, even talking to such global warming experts as climatologist Joseph Romm. Friedman recognizes that rates of carbon dioxide emission are in fact accelerating (p. 214). Friedman's environmental consciousness is not limited to global warming but has extended to the problem of shrinking global biodiversity. He has a stirring chapter, complete with exciting anecdotes about traveling the world, exploring biodiversity and natural beauty in Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil, and warning of the dire threat global growth poses to biodiversity. Friedman has also heard apposite philosophy from good philosophers. Michael J. Sandel, whom he quotes on p. 192, suggests that an ethic of conservation would instill in people a sense of stewardship for (and trusteeship of) the natural world. It is encouraging to read such stuff.

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Given this combination of interests, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* alternates descriptions of green business, travel anecdotes, philosophical statements, and discussions with environmental experts, in the context of a sales-pitch for a “green revolution.” Friedman has raised the banners of history and of government intervention: he claims that we are now in the “Energy-Climate Era,” in which we must reconfigure our energy network and deal with climate change. He imagines that the government will create the right package of incentives and “price signals” to get our free enterprise system to accomplish this reconfiguration.

Seasoned readers of environmentalist discourse may instead wish to read other books in which the patrons of mainstream environmentalism more seriously question the given parameters of the system they’ve devoted their lives to supporting. James Gustave Speth’s *The Bridge at the Edge of the World* (2008) – which Friedman has himself read! – may be something they would like. But, before the environmentalist bookworms disregard this book entirely, they should be alerted that there are three discursive elements that stand out in *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, which are important to observe as they are endemic to such writing but observably foregrounded in Friedman.

The first: *Friedman has naturalized the capitalist system so thoroughly that he is praising its merits even where routinely discussing something else. Thus it is easy to read “between the lines” to imagine that Friedman thinks people are naturally capitalists.*

Friedman suggests, for instance, in the midst of a conversation about Chinese economic growth, that Chinese growth is the product of some sort of “unleashing,” with ecological consequences. “When you unleash that much capitalist energy from so many people,” he argues, “the effect on our natural resources can be staggering.” (p. 58) The idea of “capitalist energy” is a curious one, the notion that capitalism is itself a physical force; and of course the notion that capitalism is a matter of “unleashing” this energy, rather than of creating a social system where a few may be capitalists while the masses play the important role of the “working class.”

Thus also Friedman cites “the consumption volcano that is erupting in the former Communist and socialist worlds after people’s desires were artificially suppressed for so many years” (p. 60). Of course, capitalist consumption is a matter of the availability of effective demand, demand backed by money, and not merely of “desires;” thus the former Soviet Union reacted to the liberation of its desires by going through a decade-long economic depression, because its people were deprived of effective demand.

Environmentalist readers, then, should not be surprised to see such thinking elsewhere.

A second notable discursive element in Friedman: *This naturalization of capitalism leads Friedman’s argument into contradiction – at points in his narrative he is obliged to recommend capitalism as the remedy for ailments whose cause is capitalism itself. This trope is, of course, not new: but Friedman takes it to new rhetorical levels.*

The contradiction brings Friedman to new, interesting ideals: on p. 69 he suggests that “ideally, we will find a more sustainable growth model.” The question of whether growth is or isn’t sustainable is bypassed by the qualifier “more sustainable.” Friedman interviews a futurist who argues:

“Our prosperity is now threatened by the very foundation of that prosperity – the nature of American capitalism,” said Wacker. “We have to fix the foundation before we can live in the house again. China’s foundation cannot be the same foundation we built America on. And America’s foundation can no longer be the same. We have reached the physical limits of building on this foundation. It has to

be a different foundation. The problem is that we have not invented that new foundation yet” (p. 57).

Though we are led to blame “American capitalism” here, for the rest of the book American capitalism is our savior. This, as well, may be a common element of environmentalist discourse.

The final discursive element in Friedman’s book worthy of our attention is that: *Friedman’s nationalist pride leads him to ask, of all questions, how the United States can be the leader in the saving-the-world business. The last fifty pages of this book are exclusively devoted to this task. It’s not enough that the world be saved, as daunting a task as this may appear: the US must take the lead in this task. But why the US must play this role is not questioned when, in all reality, it should be examined carefully.*

Friedman may argue that the US has the best university systems: at one point he insists that “America’s capitalist system and research universities are, in combination, still the most powerful innovation engine ever created” (p. 175). This reasoning, however, requires an examination of how research universities are used in this era (social mobility, i.e. degree-collecting for career advancement, being another important purpose), and of who benefits the most from US universities (not necessarily the US). My own experience can be taken as an example: one of my best friends at Ohio State, where I got my doctoral degree, is now the Foreign Minister of Senegal, Cheikh Tidiane Gadio. America is now where the world gets its degrees, so it can be credentialed for what it knows, and then goes back to being the world.

In sum, the question begged by *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* can be posed as follows: ingenuity may be a positive value and a prized talent, but readers should ask about the direction of our ingenuity, about whether our massive brainpower is being led in a direction that will really save us.

At any rate, though capitalism must (in Friedman’s eyes) be saved, a new ideal of harmonious existence with nature must still be proclaimed. This is laid out on p. 243, where Friedman describes the new energy system he wants, powered by the new energy source he hopes will exist:

The Energy Internet I described in the previous chapter would be at the core of such a revolutionary new power system. That smart grid is vitally necessary to drive energy efficiency, to reduce demand, and to reduce emissions, but it alone is not sufficient. We also need abundant, clean, reliable, and cheap electrons to feed into that smart grid and create a complete Clean Energy System – from the power plant, to the transmission line to your home and business, to your car.

Note the strategically-placed word “cheap” in the above paragraph. The problem, which Friedman does not quite investigate here, is that no energy source is really quite as cheap as oil, and that our capitalist world society has become so glued to this cheap energy source that it burns 85 million barrels of the stuff every day. So, if we are to replace this energy source with another, less environmentally “costly” one, it must still be cheap energy, so that all of the capitalists can continue to profit while the system continues on its voracious energy diet.

This example suggests a sort of “dead weight” which the capitalist system places upon attempts to perpetuate civilization past the environmental crisis it has caused. Saving the environment is not enough; we must duplicate a staggering energy diet on eco-friendly grounds,

too. We can't, in other words, just plug up the oil and natural gas wells and close down the mines, forcing those who want energy to make do with the present-day imperfect yet clean alternative energy sources. Innovation must be held to bring us into a specifically capitalist alternative energy era. There is a catch to this idea, and Friedman knows it. His advice to the innovators:

We are bumping up against the current limits of physics, chemistry, thermodynamics, nanotechnology, and biology, and we need to push out the frontiers in each of these discipline (p. 243).

Can one really give an effective pep talk to scientists to make reality better? In Friedman's thinking they are naturally capitalist scientists, though, so ostensibly they will understand when he tells them, at the bottom of the page, not to mess with capitalism:

If you take only one thing away from this book, please take this: We are not going to regulate our way out of the problems of the Energy-Climate Era. We can only innovate our way out, and the only way to do that is to mobilize the most effective and prolific system for transformational innovation and commercialization of new products ever created on the face of the earth – the U.S. marketplace. There is only one thing bigger than Mother Nature and that is Father Profit, and we have not even begun to enlist him in this struggle (pp. 243-244).

I suppose one reason for a famous, well-connected writer to sign on with environmentalism is to be in an appropriate position to tell it where it can and can't go. The environmentalist movement, then, is ostensibly to run with Friedman's chosen agent for positive change: "venture capitalists ready to make big bets for big returns" (p. 174).

To be fair, Friedman's idea of the role of the government extends to the "taxes and incentives" (p. 250) he thinks will allow alternative energy to compete with fossil fuels. This corresponds to the "Green New Deal" Friedman invoked in *The World Is Flat*. At some point, moreover, Friedman even retreats to a sort of defensiveness about his agenda that promises to contradict his bold assertions about "Father Profit":

Does (environmental responsibility) mean that we, as individuals, have to edit our lifestyles down to a bare minimum, or get by with much less than the average America upper- or middle-class family consumes today? There is an anticapitalist, anticonsumerist, back-to-nature wing of the environmental movement that believes we should and almost delights in advocating that. By the way, that might be right, and should not be dismissed. My point is that we don't know yet, because we have not tried even the obvious stuff that we do know would have real effects and would not involve fundamental changes in our lifestyle (p. 193).

One problem with this is that its "we have not even tried" argument is only partially true. Back at the beginning of the book, Friedman notes that Denmark tried, and was rather successful at it (p. 18), though of course there Friedman is cherry-picking his statistics, since (in another part of the book) Denmark is also listed as a significant oil producer. Oil producers can afford to be creative with their economies; they're being subsidized. Another problem is that, for all that Friedman

may still think that “the world is flat” (the title of his last book), the world could be a lot flatter than it in fact is. As Ronald Aronica and Mtetwa Ramdoo point out in their critique of Friedman’s last book, *The World Is Flat?*, the actual middle classes in India and China are still much too small relative to total population, and the US middle class is itself shrinking.

Overall, the price world society pays for maintaining an elite class of at least 946 billionaires is a bottom 40% which lives on less than \$2/ day. Friedman needs to do the math. He wants to make cheap energy available to the Third World; now, let’s calculate the aggregate effect upon planet Earth if this bottom 40% population is all plugged into his “Energy Internet.” Remember, the rather catastrophic figures we currently have on abrupt climate change are about global warming events which occurred when the planet had a proportionally small middle class, and Friedman’s magic energy bullet is (by his own admission) still not available. And this isn’t to take into account arguments Friedman makes about the effect of global growth upon biodiversity. It’s easy to doubt that the resultant math will make Friedman’s plan look feasible.

There are indeed some fun anecdotes that can be gleaned from this book. Friedman, ever the world traveler, goes to Africa, and to India, to find interesting examples of energy poverty; to Russia to find growth: his chapter on China deals with the explosive growth of the Chinese economy, and the incredible difficulties it faces in becoming “Green China” where once it was “Red China.” I suppose this is why Friedman is a popular writer; good chatty anecdotes about why you had a lot of trouble getting out of Moscow can make your audience feel like they were at a great cocktail party listening to a prominent yet accessible thinker.

In the end, environmentalism appears in Friedman’s new book as a prominent adjunct to business boosterism. What’s left, after you subtract his new environmentalism from his old business boosterism? Simply the talismanic invocation he’s developed that “innovation” will save the world. To be fair, much of America is headed in Friedman’s direction.

In real life, innovation need not be capitalist innovation. Capitalism and creativity got married because they were stuck in the same room together, not because they were made for each other. The creative individual is not necessarily a product of capitalism, nor is the creative individual necessarily “capitalist” in any ideological way. Creative personalities are typically inducted into capitalist business by the need to eat and to “make a living” in a capitalist context; creative personalities who lived outside of capitalist economy, e.g., in the Soviet Union¹ were victims of authoritarian government drives to substitute brute force for the economic pressure which we may, following Aihwa Ong, call capitalist discipline.² Capitalist discipline is, of course, the uncreative side of capitalism, the side that has billions of workers around the world doing boring, repetitive tasks day in and day out. The celebration of capitalist creativity, then, is a celebration which should more properly value creativity (available in all eras, all times and places) for its contribution to capitalism, and not vice versa.

Notes

¹ See Tony Cliff for a construction of the USSR as capitalist at:
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1955/statecap/>.

² See Ong’s *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline* (SUNY, 1987).

Book Review

Rural Literacies

**By Kim Donehower, Charlotte Hogg, Eileen E. Schell,
2007, Southern Illinois University Press, 978-0809327492,
256 Pages**

Wanda Baxter

I anticipate that sustainability – as a metaphor, a design problem, a cultural imperative, and a social and ecological necessity – will become one of the new paradigms shaping much of our work as teachers and scholars. If it doesn't, so much the worse for us. – Derek Owens, *Composition and Sustainability: Writing for a Threatened Generation* (2001)

Rural Literacies, a collection of connected essays by Kim Donehower, Charlotte Hogg, and Eileen E. Schell, (professors of English and rhetoric at the Universities of North Dakota, Texas Christian, and Syracuse, respectively), is written primarily for composition teachers and literacy researchers within the academy. Their goals are broad (too broad in my opinion, as I will address), but their focus on the importance of examining rural representations of identity and place grounds their work. *Rural Literacies* is written as a response to “the lack of engagement with rural contexts in the field’s existing literacy and rhetorical research.” It opens a neglected topic of conversation and assessment, and posits that there is a role for university writing classes to play in reconnecting to rural America.

The authors suggest that literacy promotion and composition classes are avenues for disseminating a shift in thinking about rural areas (from within and without), with the ultimate goal being a shift toward sustainability. “Sustainability” is a term used loosely in *Rural Literacies*. It is applied to mean economic sustainability; sustainability of culture and infrastructure (i.e., the family farm); of community and identity, of the environment, etc. The authors write, “Like (Derek) Owens, we embrace a multidimensional definition of sustainability, one that is informed by ecological, economic, political, and social factors and the interdependence of the factors. Our view of sustainability, though, emphasizes analyzing the ‘social sustainability’ of rural communities” (pg. 6). This clarification is important. While Donehower, Hogg, and Schell use the term in a number of ways, they are most concerned with

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the socio-cultural realities and prospects of rural places. And, while social sustainability is an aspect of what sustainability most commonly signifies (at least in current dialogue), environmental sustainability is generally implicit to the term “sustainability,” unless specified otherwise.

Rural Literacies openly builds on Derek Owens’ book of 2001: *Composition and Sustainability: Writing for a Threatened Generation*. While his book proposes how (and why) composition teachers and writing classes may respond to and deal with the “complex web of environmental crises,” the three authors of *Rural Literacies* are more concerned with how rural areas are (mis)interpreted, stereotyped, and ignored. In other words, they are interested in revealing literate activities taking place in rural communities at the grassroots level, and how these activities may be affecting society at large in positive ways – and vice versa.

The authors self-identify as “rural” – though they no longer live in rural areas – and they are personally invested in helping to connect students and the academy to “real” stories of rural life. The stories they are interested in are not the all-too-common stories of diminished potency and reduced viability of rural America. Instead, they collect and relate stories of adaptation and celebration.

There is a tendency here to frame rural ways of life in rhetorical terms, perhaps in an effort to elevate traditional activities and ways of knowing. Charlotte Hogg’s description of the “normal” activities carried out by at least some women in most communities writes in her essay, “Beyond Agrarianism,” that:

Through performing literacy work that both contributes to and disrupts public memory – compiling histories, writing memoirs, and working to preserve records and places – the Paxton women enact a multifaceted notion of rural literacy that has preservationist qualities but also gives an alternative understanding of rural community largely absent in much scholarship on rural life, providing tools to forward a critical pedagogy of place (p. 122).

This kind of statement typifies the approach of *Rural Literacies*. Yet, while a critical pedagogy of the rural may be desirable, as it overcomes a major blind spot in the large body of critical pedagogical theory in North America, there are potential issues with reading this into work of women in places such as Paxton, Nebraska. If such an understanding of rural community as they appear to exhibit is absent in the scholarly work on rural life, it strikes me as backward for Donehower, Hogg, and Schell to frame what they deem “literacy work” in a community as tools to forward the larger project of theorizing a critical pedagogy of place. What the women in Paxton are doing is what people have always done: they are passing down the stories that came down to them, and they are passing down the stories and memories of their place. If such a basic understanding of rural ways of knowing are absent in much scholarship, what needs doing is not a rhetorical rewrite of rural activities. Instead, perhaps scholarship needs to reassess its own tendency to categorize and re-name, and to spend more time with the people they theorize about, working with and for them on their own terms.

“Imagine if the work of the Paxton women could be seen to forward decolonization and reinhabitation instead of as static historical documents” (p. 147) write the authors of *Rural Literacies*. In this regard, they reference David Gruenewald’s paper, “The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place” (2003), for its introduction of these terms (decolonization and reinhabitation). Donehower, Hogg, and Schell define them thus: “Decolonization (unlearning

much of what dominant culture and schooling teaches), and reinhabitation (learning to live-in-place in an area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation)” (p. 181). But again, these concepts/goals seem a lot to put on the women of Paxton, Nebraska, and their personal and community-oriented activities. One must first ask if the women are interested in forwarding decolonization and reinhabitation, or at least discover the generative themes at work in their cultural understanding that anticipate their potential involvement in this socio-political project for rural sustainability.

Eileen E. Schell’s chapter, “The Rhetorics of the Farm Crisis: Toward Alternative Agrarian Literacies in a Globalized World,” is a more grounded analysis of how the farm crisis and Farm Aid were communicated to the public. It is a useful assessment of how the beginnings of a problem may be voiced as a cry for help (i.e., “Save the Family Farm!”), and then build as support grows for the cause into a more sophisticated message: “The well being of our land, food and water supply depends on a network of family farmers who care about how our food is grown.” One aspect of Schell’s analysis is bang-on. She refers to Kenneth Burke’s *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1969) and his discussion of identification as being “joined or identified with another through the art of persuasion.” Schell further distinguishes the idea of identification into two streams: “sympathetic identification, which involves feeling sad or sorry for others going through hardship ... and mutual identification, which involves feeling a sense of connection and solidarity with the struggle of others” (p. 94). This is a useful distinction, especially when applied to non-human elements of a land ethic and environmental sustainability, and I feel it is an important contribution of this collection.

While this section is a highlight, I found the chapter as a whole contradictory and strangely limited in scope. For instance, Schell reports that: “Farm Aid was an outgrowth of Live Aid, the July 13, 1985 rock concert to provide relief to famine-stricken residents of Ethiopia. At the Live Aid concert, Bob Dylan made the comment on stage: Wouldn’t it be great if we did something for our own farmers right here in America?” (p. 99). But then she doesn’t discuss the impact of Dylan’s statement on the farm crisis, nor does she consider the import of other musical heavyweights like Neil Young, Willie Nelson, and John Mellencamp stepping up to make what might only have been an insightful suggestion into reality. In other words, Schell somehow overlooks the huge influence of fame and mass media on her topic of rural literacy: the farm crisis. This kind of influence needs to be better integrated into a theory of a critical pedagogy of place.

A final issue that I would like to raise with this text is how Donehower, Hogg, and Schell demonstrate little to no consideration of the research and work outside their disciplines that might dovetail with their own. For instance, there is no discussion of sociology, or geography, or planning, fine arts, architecture, social work, environmental studies and/or environmental ethics. And, even more telling, there is no consideration of the developing field of ecocriticism! Still, at its best, *Rural Literacies* teases out how the development of a sustainable politics of mutual identification might take place in/with rural communities in ways that neither romanticize, stereotype, assimilate, nor obliterate rural peoples and ecologies. Besides containing a slate of useful references, it has elements of both insight and in-depth analysis. While not a perfect book, *Rural Literacies* is useful in that it relates stories of rural life that encourage those concerned with sustainability to make of it a serious topic for their dialogue, debate, and renewed consideration.

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Rural Voices: Place Conscious Education and the Teaching of Writing

**By Robert E. Brooke (ed.), 2003, Teachers College Press,
ISBN 978-0807743669, 240 Pages**

Fred Waage

In his *Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World* (1993), Scott Sanders insists that “People who root themselves in places are likelier to know and care for those places than are people who root themselves in ideas” (although one could argue this is a false dichotomy). Nonetheless, Sanders claims that “When we cease to be migrants and become inhabitants, we might begin to pay enough heed and respect to where we are. By settling in, we have a chance of making a durable home for ourselves, our fellow creatures, and our descendants” (pp. 106-107). Rob Thayer’s *LifePlace: Bioregional Thought and Practice* (2003) builds upon Sanders towards the development of a theory of place-based education, wherein he imagines colleges that would allow students to “major in place,” and thereby become “intimate with a life-place in which to develop into full human beings and participating members of a community of all life forms” (p. 244).

Rural Voices, “a book for writing teachers, written by other writing teachers” (p. ix) and based on actual pre-college courses taught in rural Nebraska primary and secondary schools under the sponsorship of the University of Nebraska’s Nebraska Writing Project, provides experientially-based guidance in effectuating Thayer’s proposal. Given its premise, I hoped that *Rural Voices* would engage place in an ecological manner, as being more than just an environmental set of cultural relations. Further, the book might also have attempted to show the connections between regional place-consciousness and global concerns. Unfortunately, this volume does not deal adequately with either of these matters.

The Nebraska Writing Project’s Belief Statements and Goals center around intra-teacher networking and communication. It is “the state affiliate of the National Writing Project, a federally funded network of teachers that works to improve students’ writing abilities by promoting teacher development through summer institutes, year-long continuity and school inservice programs”.¹ Brooke developed the text, consisting of his own introductory essay and eight pedagogical chapters by Nebraska teachers, between 1999 and 2002, so the teaching initiatives it describes are still relatively current and relevant to writing teachers in any rural and semi-rural school districts.

Fred Waage is a professor of English at East Tennessee State University, and has taught at numerous colleges from coast to coast. He is the author of many papers and articles on environmental literature and history, a biography of George R. Stewart (Mellen, 2006), the editor of a founding text in the environmental literature movement, *Teaching Environmental Literature* (MLA, 1985) and the co-editor of its much expanded successor, *Teaching North American Environmental Literature* (2008). His manuscript, *Climacterical Year: An Environmental Book of Days*, is seeking a publisher. He lives with his wife, Ginger Renner, 3 cats, and 3 border collies, on Sinking Creek on the edge of the Cherokee National Forest, TN.

Brooke's governing claim echoes that which resonates throughout Sanders's *Staying Put*: that there is a critical contrast between "migratory" and place-based cultures. Brooke also emphasizes in *Rural Voices*, as Thayer does in his own, the importance of "intradependence" (a term, along with "place-conscious education," borrowed from Paul Theobald's influential *Teaching the Commons: Place, Pride and the Renewal of Community* [1997]). For Brooke, in this context, intradependence "captures both human interdependence and our necessary relations to the natural world" (p. 6). The structure of the book emerges out of a condensation of the issues raised by Haas and Nachtigal (in their *Place Value*, 1998) that place-conscious education must necessarily address. *Place Value*, according to Brooke, seeks to unpack intradependence by defining five issues necessary to place-conscious education: "a sense of place, or of living well ecologically;" "a sense of civic involvement, or living well politically;" "a sense of worth, or living well economically;" "a sense of connection, or living well spiritually;" and "a sense of belonging, or living well in community" (pp. 10-12). Repacking these principles, the three sections of *Rural Voices* cover essays about making students "active learners" (p. 31), giving them a "deep knowledge of local place" (p. 63), and collectively developing them into a "place-conscious citizenry" (p. 119).

The eight essays of *Rural Voices* are lively and engaged writing, incorporating a great variety of pedagogical ideas applicable to K-12 students living in small communities, and excellent commented examples of these students' own work. However, the reader with a proclivity toward ecological concepts of place (as in bioregionalism) may regret that the majority of the essays are more focused on human community than on the relation between human and non-human communities. Indeed, this emphasis on the narrowed reading of the "cultural" contradicts Brooke's central claim, in that it implicitly affirms the autonomy of social concerns, something which is antithetical to "intradependence" as it has been defined. The only writer in *Rural Voices* who emphasizes a robust sensibility to the cultural/natural interface is Sharon Bishop in "A Sense of Place" (Section II). She asserts that her students "need to understand the importance of the natural environment of a place" and emphasizes "place-conscious stewardship" (p. 67). She describes enactment of the latter through her students' "outdoor classroom," a 30-acre tract of pre-white settlement mixed-grass prairie, and through their encounters with McMurtrey Marsh, a nearby wetland being reclaimed from agricultural use. To learn lessons on reclamation from human use on site, she says, "is more relevant than through lectures and reading about the politics of conservation" (p. 79).

Of course, Brooke's premises for the volume do not require an ecological component in student activities, but it is surprising to a non-Nebraskan such as myself how anthropocentric are the foci of the writers besides Bishop. Other field experiences are directed toward such sites as a home for the elderly, the commercial evolution of a downtown, the relic and artifacts which convey family heritage. These activities are worthy but only rarely, particularly in the final essay (by the late Carol MacDaniels, edited by Robert Brooke), do we encounter a strong discussion of how the human communities in a sense taken for granted by other writers are breaking down, and "what it means to live in a small town" is developing an increasingly "negative image" (p. 155).

An earlier essay, by Amy Hottovy, "What to Preserve in Rising City?" does discuss the flight away from that small town, population 350, as a result of internecine warfare over consolidating its schools with those of a larger system. In fact, Hottovy's project for her students had them journaling their own community's decline, its "natives moving away from the area, businesses closing...new people moving in" disunifying it (p. 128). As I understand it,

MacDaniels's approach, by contrast, is to use students' writing projects not to chronicle decline, but to motivate them *not* to abandon, and to enhance, their rural small-town cultural environments, as part of a counteraction to the town's "negative image."

Unfortunately, the implicitly advocative writing implied by Bishop's bioregionalism and MacDaniels's interrogation of rural community decline is not promoted by the majority of the *Rural Voices* authors. A case study is the essay by Phip Ross, "A Geography of Stories." Ross teaches at Waverly High School, whose students, he says "come from six different population centers, plus the suburbs of Lincoln" (p. 45). Waverly is a northeastern suburb of Lincoln. Ross's attitude as a teacher is certainly enlightened: "The more I understand about myself and my immediate place, the more I understand the outside world and the better I can interpret it" (p. 45). He says that the direction often needed for education is "away from school" (p. 57), and therefore his students compile "Travel Portfolios" of poetry and prose about people and places they visit on field trips (as well as people and places near home, the latter seemingly interiors, as in one student's poem about the people in the Elks Club men's room). Unfortunately, to this reviewer, the "away" seems generally a rural space seemingly exotic to these suburban students; they are never described as taking field trips "inward," to the city of Lincoln itself.

Hence, another potential limitation of the volume presents itself: despite its explicit title, would not most of the student writing activities it describes be, with minor tweaking, equally effective in an urban school setting? Why do the writers ignore cultural and natural contrasts between the "declining" rural communities where they teach and those of the urban/suburban sprawl that are part of the spur of this decline? If the teachers are seeking to enhance place-conscious learning, in opposition to "migratory" life styles, would not their students of any age benefit from lessons which brought out contrasts between the two? Would rural students benefit from writing about non-rural environments? Wouldn't such activities make them appreciate their home places more? Or would such exposure risk making them aware that urban dwellers can have just as deep a "place consciousness" as ruralites?

And then, a final *caveat*: the editor dismisses a "migratory educational system" as inherently flawed. I wonder, is this inherently true, or does the seeming consensus of the text's contributors on this matter merely beg the question? Writer Robyn Dalton describes a "career discernment unit" (p. 138), in which her students use field experience to explore possible careers; all the field activities in this unit are in her town of Cedar Bluffs. She says this unit "helps students discover the choices available to them in their place" (p. 152), but previously has asked "Will they be able to meet their objectives in our rural community, or must they migrate away to meet their needs?" (p. 152). If the unit leads students to the latter alternative, does that make such a career choice flawed? If the rural student as adult follows a career path that requires migration, and if that student has children who grow up migrating with that parent from place to place (often due to economic necessity), is this a bad thing? In this sense, *Rural Voices* overly essentializes "place" in terms of an idealized vision of stasis.

Still, *Rural Voices* is definitely a provocative collection of pedagogical essays. The course activities described are generally imaginative, and judging from the students' excerpted work, very effective. But this ecologically-oriented reader feels less confident about the pedagogical premises of the activities than about the activities themselves. Robert Thayer's *LifePlace* is distinguished by his persuasive and praxis-based argument that "the effects of globalism are experienced locally" (Thayer, 2003, p. 245). The essays under review here do not address this. Nonetheless, any contribution to the cause of place-based education, however subject to debate, is welcome.

References

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Notes

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- ¹ See the Nebraska Writing Project's website at: <http://www.unl.edu/newp/about/index.shtml>.

Book Review

Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics

By Timothy Morton, 2007, Harvard University Press, ISBN 978-0-674-02434-2, 262 Pages

Antony Adolf

Are you comfortable? I mean, is the temperature where you are now just right or just off? The sounds around are to your liking, or distracting? Rhetorics aside: Is there nuclear waste dripping beside you, or is that something that happens only to poor bunny rabbits in/and a forest far, far away? Rhetorics as the point: Which of these questions refer to the “environment” or, more directly, which questions most constructively question the “environment” as we have so contentedly come to imagine, revere and destroy it?

These are, of course, my opening questions to you. Timothy Morton’s opening question to us in *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* may be put: Why are environmental aesthetics a pressing issue when global climates are changing and sea levels are rising? Because the aesthetization of nature creates convenient distances between “ecology over there” and “humanity over here” that make both inconvenient truths necessary and the lies they are meant to rectify possible. In this context, what the book’s marketing blurb touts as a new vocabulary — say, traits of what Morton begins the book by analyzing as “ambient poetics” that create, sustain and subvert the illusion of human-made natural beauty (e.g., rendering, the medial, the timbral, the Aeolian, tone and re-marks) — actually form a bold new set of critical-theoretical tools and approaches ecocritics can, nay should, use to self-consciously collapse this dangerous distance. By questioning the terms which situate nature-as-object, Morton proceeds to enable readers for a head-on encounter with, or immersion in, ecology-as-subject. Some books are to be read and talked about, others worked through and debated. *Ecology without Nature*, to Morton’s merit and the benefit of environmentalist endeavors, is one of the latter.

By acknowledging that in etymological, philosophical and artistic senses the environment is literally everywhere, Morton makes clear we must accept nature as (just as literally) nowhere except in our own minds. Environmental artists, such as canonical nature writers like Henry David Thoreau, simulate nature being right here in the palm of our hands. Environmental activists want to save and protect that natural place in the neighborhood, or our natural national treasures. But in each case the purpose could be, in the end, to put us in the precarious position of

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consuming a commoditized “natural” environment as uncritically, or as unconsciously, as many do a Big Mac or SUV. Such deceptively simplistic representations Morton discusses in detail as examples of *ecomimesis*: a conscious or unconscious act that is part rhetorical device, part ideology, and wholly ecologically hazardous if left unexamined. The metonymic lists that reify but can never comprise nature, kitsch Monet or Ansel Adams prints, the branding of “organic” or “recycled” products, turn ecology into something that needs to be owned and/or consumed in order to be appreciated (capitalism), or mastered in order to be dignified (imperialism).

The fundamental paradigm shift *Ecology without Nature* begins to bring about is one from *ecocriticism* to *ecocritique*. More precisely, Morton sets out how the two must coexist in productive contention if either is to survive as disciplines and vital parts of an enterprise of social justice. If *ecocriticism* is concerned with environmental art, *ecocritique* is concerned with *ecocriticism* itself. *Ecocritique* is in no way a “new and improved” version of *ecocriticism*, as Morton repeats, but a reflexive and so self-empowering means for *ecocriticism* to renovate by criticizing itself. Like literary criticism was, environmental criticism – whether in regard to analytic questions of avant-garde art or what we should do with our garbage – is at risk of becoming an exercise in self-defeat if it does not come to terms with its own terms. That is, if those who practice *ecocriticism* do not stop blindly using the critical tools at their disposal and instead develop their own tools with those terms, Morton contends that the environmental crisis (so called) has come home to roost. Theory itself can become a kind of activism when it is targeted towards complacent criticism. This said, awareness of our unawareness is one necessary step, but only the unworking of the very concept and concreteness of aesthetized nature itself can bring us face to face with the ecological systems upon which our worlds depends.

Building on his previous work on Romanticism, poetics, food and cultural studies, rather than using it as a crutch, Morton traces the genealogy of consumerist environmentalism from its origins in early modern times, through 19th-century *flâneurs*, to today. The potential impact of this book to ecopedagogy is immense in that it provocatively destabilizes tendencies to canonize certain aesthetic values and critical traditions as most appropriate to environmental politics and practices. Waking up to the realization that this kind of canonical attitude amounts to an actual and/or ideological consumerism can transform classrooms and seminars into teach-ins, the goals of which are to reciprocally challenge status quos through critique while learning about them through joint (re)interpretation. In a vivid analogy, Morton compares two forms of the environmentalist project to two genres of detective fiction: “one type is the detective as the master, floating above the story and knowing the answers beforehand,” while the “*noir* detective story implicates the detective in the plot” (p. 187). The deeper we go into nature (that is, the more we are able to debunk its aesthetization), the closer we come to ecology.

The environment – as in what surrounds us everywhere all the time – is just that, and Morton believes that environmentalists would do themselves a favor to dwell upon this rather than objectifying it as something that needs to be saved *over there*, so we can stay comfortable *over here*. In strict theoretical terms, tearing apart the lines between subject and object, content and frame, inside and out, only to posit them as decidedly either/or, Morton forces us to chose *between* nature and ecology. For reasons of life and death, he favors the latter, even though he also insists that the former has been and can be an insightful if roundabout path to it. *Noir* detectives become a metaphor, then, for the “dark ecology” Morton promotes as a scalpel to pragmatically reshape the ideas and beliefs that can inhabit the deep ecological and related attitudes that continue to be mainstays for many environmentalists, both inside and out of academia.

Book Review

***Retrieving Nature: Education for a Post-Humanist Age* By Michael Bonnett, 2004, Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, ISBN 978-1405108836, 192 Pages**

John Bruni

Michael Bonnett's book, *Retrieving Nature: Education for a Post-Humanist Age*, should elicit a sympathetic response from anyone who has tried to teach about sustainability in the classroom, only to be frustrated by how economic considerations force either a complicit agreement with capitalist agendas or a retreat into political quietism. For those of us who feel that current decision making about environmental issues is, at best, shortsighted, and, at worst, politically regressive, and would like to engage students with these matters in the course of building ecopedagogies, Bonnett suggests some ways of introducing a critically self-reflexive analysis of the environment into education. The heart of Bonnett's work is a critique of sustainable development, pointing out its semantic, ethical, and epistemological flaws. These problems can be stated as the following: How can we avoid the tendency to discuss sustainability in ways that are favorable to our current non-sustainable policies? Who gets to decide what the ethical relationship of humans to the natural world should be? How can we know in advance that whatever solutions we propose will not damage the environment further?

Asking these questions showcases Bonnett's ability to focus on the key points of the environmental debate and critically reflect on them. He is suspicious of postmodern arguments that reduce nature to a "cultural artifact" and claim that "there are no universal, genuinely global, conceptions of nature and environmental problems" (p. 45). It seems we should not be so quick to throw out an ecological meta-narrative, for doing so empties "globally oriented discourse of any real intellectual or moral gravitas" (p. 45). At the same time, Bonnett does not fall back on the natural as a metaphysical cure to our crisis: "ecological problems are not natural but social problems" (p. 52).

Credit should be given to the book's interrogation of what we call natural and social spaces, and how they are and are not connected. Bonnett does not believe that we are "nature's author," and further he feels we have been misdirected by the argument that "nature is merely a social construction," for that argument confuses the differences between "nature as a concept" and "nature as a realm of experience that people have under that concept" (p. 57). His project, as an example of a form of ecological inquiry that should be applauded, helps to clarify the muddled thinking about our relationship to nature (chronicled in a somewhat lengthy account in Chapter 3).

John Bruni is an assistant professor of English at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. He has published articles on evolution and ecology in the novels of Jack London and Edith Wharton. Currently, he is completing a book manuscript: *Scientific Americans: The Making of Popular Science and Evolution in Early-Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture*.

However, the closer he moves to articulating his proposal for education, the more problems arise with his theoretical framework. Bonnett recreates an impassable divide between natural and human realms when he describes nature as “self-arising” or “self-authored otherness” and “sustainability as a frame of mind – nature only has significance in that space that is human consciousness” (pps. 62, 68, 133). To an observer, it appears that Bonnett’s argument repeatedly circles around this nature-human binary. To be less charitable, Bonnett seems less willing to address the other conscious *non-human* lives with which we share the planet, thus forgetting about the planetary mode of thinking he elsewhere in the book endorses over and against a fractured, politically-weakened, localized viewpoint. In a further retreat, his model of sustainability (which tries to establish an ethical relationship with nature) is “rooted in the notion of truth and its centrality to human being;” as he puts it, “For authentic human being, the attitude of sustainability is . . . a necessity” (p. 134).

This model, I think, is uncomfortably close to the classic liberal humanistic philosophy that produces the idea of objective knowledge-making that rationalizes natural exploitation and which Bonnett earlier in the book denounces. It impedes the project’s goals in three ways, as we shall see. First, it leans towards anthropomorphism, that is, while he sees it as serving to question the arbitrary “equal worth” of humans, animals, and plants, it in no way gets beyond a planetary hierarchy that reintroduces the very problems of human dominance over nature. Second, it undercuts the most valuable part of the book, the proposal for a radicalized environmental education. Third, it is ill-suited to meet the challenges posed by technology and the post-human, which any idea of an education, he rightly suggests, will have to face.

Part of the problem, I would point out, is the lack of engagement with critical theoretical approaches that question foundations for a liberal humanist self without stating in advance the outcome of ongoing and emergent cross-species relationships. Although Bonnett thinks giving up a foundational location from which to argue about ecological issues is too costly, the price of giving up the very tools for which to construct a non-essentialist ecological model is, it turns out, far greater. For example, Cary Wolfe has already found, in the Great Ape Project, the consequences of nature as *only* recognizable by human consciousness. We inevitably, in this humano-conscious frame, give a humanistic set of “rights” only to animals “most like us.”¹

That said, Bonnett’s recommendations for education are sound. He illuminates the dangers of disciplinary approaches that “set up eco-problems in a way that conceals their own contribution to them – remembering that many disciplines have their roots in a cultural milieu whose dominant aspiration was and is to conquer and exploit the natural world” (p. 141). He cautions, moreover, against the adaptation of rationality-based models, pointing out their complicity with free market consumerism and environmental denigration (p. 144). Then, in perhaps his most radical move, he advocates for an “emergent” curriculum (p. 145), for “the unity of the curriculum,” he posits, will come forth not from “pre-formed academic interdisciplinary connections, but [from] developing, consciously-felt demands, of calls to thinking that arise from ongoing engagement with the currently unknown” (p. 145). Such thinking provides a greater role for art and literature, often regarded as secondary to addressing environmental problems, but their imaginative views on the world foster just the kind of approach that Bonnett counsels. And, as such, it is hoped that these practices will pressure the standard philosophical foundations for constructing worldviews; in this light, Bonnett remarks, “traditional – that is, Cartesian – dualisms of self and world, knowledge and action, will need to be reviewed” (p. 146). Here, too, he makes the valid point that a humanism that concentrates

upon “the self and its perfectibility” supports an agenda of anthropocentric “progress” that has ill-effects upon the natural environment (p. 155).

But in considering the demands of a post-humanist age, Bonnett is too apt to fall back on ready-made distinctions between a “real” nature and a “fake” virtual reality. While we might feel inclined to dismiss technologically-built environments as a poor copy of an un-mediated nature, such critical shortsightedness may close off paths worth pursuing in the future. Granted, there are problems with our technological present and future. For instance, Bonnett incisively references Michael Heim’s observation about how the Boolean logic behind Internet search engines reproduces and furthers an epistemological distancing effect from nature on our inquiry: Boolean logic is “a move away from Aristotelian logic based on direct statements/propositions (which itself is already at a remove from the sensuous intuition of things themselves) to an abstract system-oriented symbolic logic based on algebra. With this mindset, systemic consistency becomes more important than the direct reference to things addressed in our experience” (p. 163). And Bonnett is right to surmise that such a mindset standardizes knowledge and shuts down the very dynamic, contingent processes that shape the natural world (p. 164). Citing C. A. Bowers, he finds a return to anthropocentrism, in the guise of “reenforcing the idea of a universalised (and thus abstracted) autonomous individual as the basic social unit” that overlooks how “individuals are embedded in social systems that are in turn embedded in natural systems” (p. 165). Yet his definition of cyberspace forgets what he said just a few pages earlier, setting nature somehow apart from technological systems and re-establishing a divide between (techno)culture and nature. Such a move is not satisfying because of the elisions that lurk in his strategy, which become all the more pronounced in his rather cursory and counterintuitive treatment of Donna Haraway. He tries to cordon off Haraway’s cyborg from the post-human, when, in actuality, the two are co-constituted. Thus his closing statement that draws a crucial connection between post-humanism and environmental concerns lacks a critical historicity that could better ground such a connection.

Finally, not to put too fine a point on it, but given the title of the book I expected a more sustained discussion of “the post-humanist age.” As much of the book is a rehearsal and critique of past environmental arguments, Bonnett takes a rather long time to get to *his* argument. The result is that his own promising ideas for a politically progressive curriculum appear rather rushed in this text. Overall, Bonnett is not slow to see the challenges of critically interrogating sustainable development in the classroom, yet he still seems a ways off from a “retrieval of nature” that treats the natural environment as interpenetrated by technological and social systems. As ecopedagogical curriculums emerge, they will need to encompass a variety of discourses. What Bonnett gets close to showing, but not fully so, is how resistance to an ethical environmental policy arises out of the misapprehension of the differences between social and natural systems. Fleshed out, Bonnett’s educational plans might lead to a post-humanist ethics of sustainability that recognizes how all biotic and a-biotic systems must operate within shared environmental limits.

Notes

¹ See Cary Wolfe’s *Animal Rites* (2003, University of Chicago Press): 192.

Book Review

Deliberative Environmental Politics: Democracy and Ecological Rationality

By Walter F. Baber and Robert V. Bartlett, 2005, The MIT Press, ISBN 0-262-0258706, 276 pages

Richard D. Besel

Walter F. Baber and Robert V. Bartlett begin their book *Deliberative Environmental Politics: Democracy and Ecological Rationality* with a review of the scathing indictments that have been made by environmentalists against a view of democracy typically described as “interest-group liberalism.” Charged with using language that is “stunted and shallow” (p. 1) and being “virtually obsolete” for the environmental movement (p. 2), how can democracy be rehabilitated from its less than stellar performance in handling the world’s most pressing problems? In other words, is green democracy theoretically possible? For Baber and Bartlett, the answer is yes.

Trained in the fields of Public Policy Studies and Political Science, respectively, Baber and Bartlett attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice that has plagued environmental politics for so long. For these authors, democracy must take a deliberative turn if it is to avoid being relegated to the trash bin of useless ideas. In chapters one and two, Baber and Bartlett follow others in their respective fields who believe a deliberative approach is “the only way to overcome the failings of interest-group liberalism,” contending deliberative democracy has the potential to produce better environmental policy decisions (p. 6). Although Baber and Bartlett acknowledge that “deliberative democracy” is difficult to define, they argue it is a school of political thought that presumes the essence of democracy is “deliberation rather than voting, interest aggregation, or rights” (p. 6). For deliberation to work, participants must also be politically equal and engage one another in the “weighing, acceptance, or rejection of reasons” (p. 6). Of course, the authors also attempt to argue that Horkheimer and Adorno’s observations about instrumental reason in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* can be addressed by deliberative democracy scholars. In chapter three, realizing different conceptions of deliberative democracy have drastically divergent assumptions, Baber and Bartlett wisely take three models of deliberative democracy as their “points of departure.”

In chapters four, five and six, Baber and Bartlett explore the ideas of deliberative democracy as it has been articulated by John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, and thinkers such as Amy Gutmann, Dennis Thompson, and James Bohman. Rawls represents the “public reason” approach to deliberative democracy, Habermas the “ideal discourse” perspective, and Gutmann, Thompson, and Bohman the “full liberalism” version. It is in these chapters that the authors are at their best. Baber and Bartlett tackle complicated material and make it accessible to readers

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who may be encountering it for the first time. Rawls's "initial position" and Habermas's "public sphere" are carefully and concisely addressed. Attempts to join Rawlsian and Habermasian ideas in "full liberalism" are also explained. Based on these three points of departure, Baber and Bartlett go on to argue how deliberative democracy has implications for institutions (chapter seven), expertise (chapter eight), citizenship (chapter nine), and social movements (chapter ten). In their attempts to explore the implications of deliberative democracy the authors encounter a number of problems.

In chapter eight, Baber and Bartlett explore the role of rhetoric in deliberative democracy, claiming that they somehow redeem it. After noting how deliberative democracy scholars like Rawls and Habermas view rhetoric as being "the negation of reasoning" and a concept that can only "distort the deliberative process" (p. 143), the authors attempt to illustrate how "rhetoric and rationality cannot be disentangled by complex human beings who are always simultaneously rational and emotional" (p. 144). Rhetoric "poses difficult challenges to deliberative democracy," but the authors position themselves as the ones who "recovered" and "rescued" rhetoric (p. 162). A more accurate observation would be to say Baber and Bartlett are engaging rhetoric in a way rhetoricians would find acceptable. Baber and Bartlett's claim that they "rescue" rhetoric is overstating their contribution.

Another limitation of this work appears in chapter eleven, where the authors take a step back from specific theories of deliberative democracy to offer a bird's eye view of their project. Turning to Bacon, Baber and Bartlett argue that the Enlightenment still holds promise for environmental politics if we can avoid the Idols of the Mind. From the start Baber and Bartlett were honest about their faith in Enlightenment ideals and chapter eleven further illustrates their level of their devotion. After all, they conclude, "deliberative democracy is (at least in part) an effort to realize more fully the dreams of the Enlightenment" (p. 7). However, this book could have done more to engage authors who have been critical of the Enlightenment project. This lack of engagement may make some readers with postmodern affinities a bit uncomfortable.

In their final chapter, the authors conclude with an optimistic view of future politics. Turning to three cases, Baber and Bartlett attempt to illustrate what deliberative approaches to decision-making would emphasize in real situations. In one example, the authors describe an article written by Thomas Friedman following the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Friedman describes a conversation he observed involving a Pakistani friend and the friend's children. Apparently, the children returned home after hearing rumors that the 9/11 attacks were part of an elaborate Jewish conspiracy. The father engages his children to dispel the myth by giving them all of the practical reasons this was not a possibility. Baber and Bartlett offer this story as an example of how careful critical engagement has the potential to steer us toward proper understandings of the world. The authors also turn to land-use planning in the Pacific Northwest and polling in Connecticut to illustrate their point. However, these examples are minimally engaged. All three examples occupy approximately six pages. Readers who expect to see deliberative democracy in action will find this book's use of examples and textual analysis disappointing.

Overall, my reaction to Baber and Bartlett's book is generally positive. These authors have written a book that does an excellent job of explaining and engaging three perspectives on deliberative democracy, and I would still say that for anyone who wishes to find out more about deliberative environmental politics, the first six chapters are definitely worth reading. However, for readers who are interested in the rhetorical components of deliberative democracy, the

postmodern response to Enlightenment ideals, or how political theories are put into actual practice, this book will be of limited use.

Film Review

***The Greening of Southie*, a film by Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis, Dir. Ian Cheney, 2008, Wicked Delicate Films, ISBN (DVD): 1-59458-766-3, 72 min. (Distributed by Bullfrog Films)**

Brandon Tauscher (with commentary provided by Producer Curt Ellis)

In *The Greening of Southie*, as with their previous film *King Corn* (reviewed in the last issue of *Green Theory & Praxis*, pp. 122-124), co-producers Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis pose questions about the way in which the idea of environmental sustainability might illuminate our contemporary lives. Whereas *King Corn*, a story about U.S. corn production, is located primarily in rural America, *The Greening of Southie* takes us to the heart of urban America as it follows the construction of a “green”¹ building, the Macallen in South Boston.

After viewing the film, I was fortunate enough to discuss the documentary, the Macallen, and issues surrounding green building with *The Greening of Southie* producer Curt Ellis. Excerpts from that conversation are given within this review to provide a backdrop to the film. While Ellis and I are both complimentary of green building, we are also aware of its shortcomings. That is, we both believe that truly sustainable building does not yet exist although contemporary efforts are a step in the right direction: “The story we tell in *The Greening of Southie* is not absolutely complimentary, but it’s hard to completely criticize anybody trying to build a green building” (Ellis, personal communication, 2008).

Criticality should not be abandoned, and yet also requires a positive vision of change that, however limited, represents and attempt to derive a practical alternative. To simply advance a critical posture on green building does not take into consideration that numerous well-organized groups working on the radical edge of green building provide hope for an otherwise environmentally harmful industry. Many agree that green building initiatives, such as those suggested by the U.S. Green Building Council and Architecture 2030, can help reduce global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Such initiatives are important as data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration illustrates that buildings are responsible for almost half (48%) of all GHG emissions annually, and Architecture 2030 reports that seventy-six percent (76%) of all electricity generated by U.S. power plants goes to supply the building sector.² Reversing the growth rate of GHG emissions over the next ten years is the key to keeping global warming under check. Green building is one valuable way to assist in a concerted worldwide effort to counter global warming.

The Greening of Southie is a snapshot of the process that is involved in what is rapidly becoming a crowning achievement to the building sector: green building. For example, the U.S.

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Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating system has attracted much attention, even influencing legislation at the local, state and national levels.³ Powerful organizations, such as the International Code Council, the National Association of Home Builders, and the American Institute of Architects to name but a few are currently working on initiatives and green building rating systems to support this growing industry. The strength and legitimacy of green building standards has therefore grown rapidly as the market for green building has developed. For example, the Cascadia-Region U.S. Green Building Council's Living Building Challenge⁴ is considered the most sustainable form of green building certification in the World. It is a program that requires buildings to operate at net-zero energy, net-zero water, and demands that no new development be built on previously undeveloped land. From self-contained water-reuse systems to buildings that capture as much water as inhabitants consume on a yearly basis "the Living Building Challenge is a whole new level," said Ellis. Thus, for those working at the cutting edge of green development, *The Greening of Southie* does not necessarily offer new technologies or improvements to existing green building technologies. However, what will engage expert and lay viewers alike are issues the filmmakers have shown to exist on the periphery of green building: gentrification and displacement of culture, how to design ecologically-sound buildings that contribute to a community's sense of history and place, and the learning curve that must be addressed in order to strengthen the green building movement.

To reiterate: the documentary explores the story of the Macallen, a condominium complex designed to earn a U.S. Green Building Council "LEED Gold" rating, an objective achieved by collecting points for implementing various green features and technologies in a building's design. The film opens with an orientation sequence for the construction crew, where seasoned workers have gathered to hear about the new green building they are being asked to build. In this scene we find Boston's union plumbers, carpenters and tile-workers responding quizzically, "What's the point?"

"The workers at Macallen couldn't smoke on the construction site," said Ellis. "They couldn't use their VOC paints.⁵ During the course of construction, it was healthier for the workers to be working on building a green building, but the construction management crew had their difficulties in transitioning. Even the construction managers got pretty upset about having to recycle in the office." In building the Macallen, Ellis added, "everyone involved was forced to think about every little choice. It changed the way they were living."

However, as Ellis suggested, despite the initial resistance that may surface in the worker orientation rooms of construction sites, the fact remains that increasingly people are competing within the building sector to build the greenest buildings in the world. Programs like LEED and the Living Building Challenge, Ellis added, "build a framework for entrepreneurial innovation – it's what the U.S. does best. The bar is only getting higher." To highlight this point in the film, time-lapse animation was used creatively throughout *The Greening of Southie* to help viewers understand the project's scope and the building's purpose. Moreover, much like they did with food systems in their previous documentary, *King Corn*, Cheney and Ellis here frame the green building movement with their own presence as members of an American generation that understands and desires a new way of doing business. The emphasis in the film is on an engaged youth culture that has its eye set on the future. Tim Pappas, the 33-year old developer behind the Macallen, admits in the film that he consciously hired the youngest consultants he interviewed to work on the project, apparently believing that youthful logic more likely tends towards sustainable outcomes in this domain. The youth culture emphasis is even reflected in

the film's soundtrack, which was developed and produced by Force Theory, a musical production team out of New York who MTV defined as a "complex layering of traditional and futuristic musical genres that is lighting fires" (Force Theory).

The Greening of Southie is additionally reminiscent of *King Corn* in its use of comic device to communicate the contradictions inherent in present-day conventional building versus green building. Its laughs can be found in entertaining shots of workers clowning around on site or in Carrie Mowbray's character, a woman working for the garbage and recycling company hired to work on the Macallen. At one point in the film, after Mowbray says she "used to think of green as being 'dorky'", she reveals her tattoo of a recycling truck on what she describes as her "bum" as she tells the camera that green is "cool". The film's first point – using locally manufactured concrete and recycled steel – introduces viewers to Bob Gottlich, an ironworker who to his own surprise enjoys the idea of working on a "recycled building." And yet others are more skeptical, like Wayne Phillips, a Trinidadian laborer, who shakes his head at the word "environment." There are self-incriminating statements made by blue collar workers, including, "Double flush toilets? I use that system a lot, the double flush...One never seems to do the job." Tellingly, the dialogue serves not only as comic relief but also as an important example of the class distinctions drawn in the film between fun-loving workers and the stoic personalities of the construction management team and its leader, Pappas. "These were real people and real stories happening during construction," said Ellis. "It was pretty hilarious getting to know the vocabulary. You could find out where people sat on the order of things. You had your developers who were high fashion guys with Italian suits. Then there was the construction management team who wore button down shirts to work everyday. Below them, you had your guys wearing hard hats and steel toes boots."

Even as environmentalists begin to cheer as a paradigmatic shift occurs on screen when the film's characters re-think what it means to be builders, it is hard to overlook the disparities conveyed about who will enjoy the benefits of the Macallen. As one wrinkled ironworker put it, "I'll be able to tell my grandkids, 'Grandpa worked on the first Green Building.' And maybe by the time my grandkids work in this trade, every building will be a green building." Others, including a real estate associate working at the Macallen, reveal that "Macallen is an expensive building" and that green building "...is not going to be the face of a hippie anymore." Instead, it will likely be the converse, an economically driven, upwardly mobile professional with disposable income that is, as the real estate professional suggested, driving the green building movement forward. Thus, it is important to consider that, despite its location in working-class South Boston, Macallen is a luxury building with condominiums ranging from \$500 thousand to beyond \$2 million. Wayne, the skeptical laborer, tells the camera that he wishes he "could live in the environmental building that 'we built'." Yet like most of the locals, he is priced out, and it is here that the inaccessibility of green building gets a poignant critique.

"The building was going up in a place where luxury was not the norm," said Ellis. "This area has been gentrifying over the last 20 years. Instead of moving out to the suburbs, South Boston is now becoming this green enclave. All the Irish bars have been repainted and the puke on the floor cleaned up. The locals may have liked that green is their favorite color, but they were skeptical that this type of development was happening in their neighborhood."

"It was frustrating to see that it was happening so expensively," added Ellis. "It is just a little hard to stomach right now because of the price."⁶ Ellis also noted a point of contention that occurred between himself and the developer during the filming of *The Greening of Southie*. "There was a problem at one point with the builders having to lower steel beams in the parking

garage, which would restrict entrance for large vehicles [potentially owned by future residents]. Of course the development team didn't want that problem, but I thought personally that maybe SUVs should not be allowed in the building." Ellis quipped, "There was a Prius in the car share space for people." Ellis and I both believe that the social and political reasons for the change to green building are something we should all be cautious about. "The real challenge of living this lifestyle is having to give up some things," said Ellis. It is in this arena that *The Greening of Southie* might have potential influence on viewers as they consider the class politics at play. However, the desirability for living in the Macallen as portrayed in the film may provide for a misguided message as the audience hears from condo owner Bill Gleason that "It [green living] can be a little upscale. That never hurts."

For those involved in green building and development, the film offers a realistic portrayal of the inexperience displayed by workers, design team consultants, and owners as they wrestle with the concepts and technologies involved in green building. For example, in the film, when the Macallen project starts to go wrong – the wheat-board cabinets swell, green roof plants don't take, and the bamboo floors are cupping visibly – the crew tears out 75 bamboo floors. Amidst concerns that the team's quest for its "Gold" rating seems precarious, the film leaves the audience to wonder whether the energy consumed in bringing new wood from China or certified wood from South America is worth its global warming cost. It is here we are introduced to Eileen Claussen, President of the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, stating on screen the amount of greenhouse gas emissions coming from buildings. She cautiously adds, "If the building sector doesn't start to do things differently, we are not going to be able to solve the problem of climate change."

In his interview with me, Ellis detailed that from his perspective the story driving *The Greening of Southie* is not necessarily about the building itself, but rather it is concerned with documenting the transformation of the people involved in the building project from beginning to end. "The only way environmentalism takes off," Ellis said, "is if the people who actually build stuff in our world get behind the messages." As the film nears its end, and the sun glints off the façade at the Macallen, we see Southie resident Joe Doherty considering the completed building from his corner bar. He shrugs, and thus, his reaction sums up what most of the building crew and Southie residents seem to think: "we'll see."

Redemption in the film comes in the form of the worker from Trinidad, as Wayne's daughter Ashakie has asked her father for a tour of the building upon completion. As she marvels at all that has gone right with the Macallen, and as new apartment owner Bill Gleason loads boxes into his new residence, reports on the building's success are highlighted on screen. For example, we learn that the Mayor of Boston has announced that all new buildings in the city must be built green, and that the Macallen team has earned its rating for the building: LEED Gold.

Ultimately, *The Greening of Southie* has the ability to affect diverse audiences and drive them to support green building practices. It will certainly raise the consciousness of newcomers to the ideas and concepts surrounding green building by giving a step-by-step, visual introduction to the LEED green building rating system. At the same time, it reminds practitioners in the field of the socio-political factors and pragmatic logistics involved in the process of building in a capitalist society. In the end, the film is an accessible introduction to what is becoming an even more legitimate way to build for the future. The story thoughtfully addresses the benefits and tradeoffs of green buildings, and raises questions for its viewers to consider how the sustainable cities of tomorrow might be (re-) built today.

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Notes

¹ I delimit “green” in quotes to highlight the highly ambiguous nature of this term as an adjective for modern development strategies. While more ecologically sound methods exist to greatly revolutionize building construction, there has been a move by some to green washing, a term used to describe those who will advertise and market their products in terms of nature-friendly values and practices, but which does not in fact represent a qualitative change in economic, environmental, or socio-political procedures. From herein on, however, I use “green” without the quotes in order to mean the same.

² Architecture 2030 used official statistics from the U.S. Energy Information Administration to create a U.S. Building Sector percentage for the year 2000 by combining the following: Residential buildings (operations) sector (20.4 QBtu), Commercial buildings (operations) sector (17.2 QBtu), Industrial sector - buildings operations (2.0 QBtu) and the Industrial sector - annual building construction and materials embodied energy estimate (8.57 QBtu) were combined. Total annual 2000 Building Sector consumption was 48.17 QBtu and the total annual 2000 US Energy consumption was 99.38 QBtu.

³ As of December, 2008, various LEED initiatives including legislation, executive orders, resolutions, ordinances, policies, and incentives can be found in 44 states, including 172 localities (112 cities, 32 counties, and 28 towns), 31 state governments, 12 federal agencies or departments, 15 public school jurisdictions and 39 institutions of higher education across the United States. See: <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1852>. Comment by Curt Ellis: “The mayor of Boston has been pretty incredible and was able to pass a mandate for green buildings – a green building zoning addendum in Boston now exists for large-scale green buildings that is also being built into local building codes.”

⁴ The Cascadia-Region US Green Building Council says that at the heart of the Living Building

Challenge is the belief that society needs to quickly find a state of balance between the natural and built environments. The organization also reports it views the release of the Living Building Challenge as an act of optimism and faith in the marketplace.

The Living Building Challenge is comprised of six performance areas: *Site, Energy, Materials, Water, Indoor Quality, and Beauty & Inspiration*. Projects may apply for individual category designation by satisfying the requirements within each category, or for Living Building Status by attaining all requirements within the system.

1. All elements of the Living Building Challenge are mandatory.
2. Many elements have temporary exceptions to acknowledge current market limitations.
3. Buildings must be operational for one year prior to being evaluated.

⁵ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) contain a variety of chemicals, some of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects. The EPA also reports that concentrations of many VOCs are consistently higher indoors (up to ten times higher) than outdoors.

⁶ Visit the *Boston Herald* to read about the “Pappas’ Plywood Palace,” a tenement built by Pappas in South Boston to satisfy the city’s “affordable housing obligation”. While the story of affordable housing is not covered in *The Greening of Southie*, the *Boston Herald* article highlights how Pappas negotiated to build a separate affordable housing development so to keep rates high for his luxury condos. For the full-text, see: http://www.neorunner.com/archive/2006/08/25/62_2097041.php.

Conference Review

ASLE 2008 (Association for the Study of Literature in the Environment), Edinburgh

Mary Been

The participants at the Association for the Study of Literature in the Environment (ASLE) conference, which took place last summer in Edinburgh, Scotland, appeared to share a common belief: we are at or have passed the tipping point in climate change. The content of many of the presentations echoed that stance. As a result, conference conversations and Q&A's kept circling back to questions concerning what we can do now and how we can do it? If education on global warming and related environmental crises is a clear necessity, then what should be the focus of "green pedagogy?" Along with debates on content came debates on methodology: what are the best strategies for reaching our audiences? This review looks at some of the variations on these questions and the responses in order to better gauge the current discourse of ASLE on matters relevant to the *Green Theory & Praxis* journal.

According to Greg Garrard in his 2004 text, *Ecocriticism*, ASLE is the dominant conference in the field of academic ecocriticism. This year's ASLE took place from July 10-July 13, 2008, with the conference title of "Activism, Apocalypse, and the Avant-Garde." The juxtaposition of the old and the new, both in the conference's Scottish surroundings and in the conference's academic content, gave participants a sense of having their feet in two worlds: the solidly-rooted historic and the rapidly-disintegrating present. The conference was held at the University of Edinburgh, a university founded in 1583. Meetings took place in the "Old College," a building that had its foundation stone laid in 1789, but then had its construction interrupted by the Napoleonic wars and other delays until it was finished in the 1820s.

The sessions were divided between two historic rooms: the Playfair Library and the Raeburn Room. The Playfair Library, a hall with a neo-classical design, is topped with a barrel-vaulted ceiling and filled with marble sculptures of figures ranging from the building's architect, William Henry Playfair to the Scottish icon Sir Walter Scott. The Raeburn Room, a room originally designed for meetings of the University Senate, now houses large portraits of the men who were professors at the University in 1789.

The tone of the conference was set by the plenary talk of Catherine (Kate) Rigby, Associate Professor in the Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at Monash University in Australia, President of ASLE-ANZ, and author of *Topographies Of The Sacred: The Poetics Of Place In European Romanticism* (2004). Her talk, "Negative Ecopoetics and the Prophetic Imagination," discussed the possibility of moving from an apocalyptic to a prophetic discussion of nature in literature. Dr. Rigby compared the contours of the apocalyptic imagination—located in a post-event perception of a collapsing world—to the prophetic imagination which "holds the horizon of the future open to the radically

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unforeseeable.” She argued that the prophetic, far from speaking from a position of irresponsibility or naïveté, demands, to the contrary, awareness, commitment, and engagement.

At the same time, Rigby pointed to the limitations of what writing can do. If poetry focuses on what has traditionally been considered a pre-eminent goal of nature poetry—the faithful representation of nature—then what writers and poets are doing is simply seducing the reader into a relationship with nature’s socially constructed representation, not with the more-than-human world itself. In order to circumvent this “idolatry of the text,” in Rigby’s words, “ecopoetic writing is obliged to both deploy and destroy what Tim Morton has termed ecomimesis.” Thus her phrase, “negative ecopoetics,” comes to represent an ecopoetics that brings the writer and reader into an embodied engagement with her or his surroundings rather than an engagement with the text alone; this reframing moves the poet and reader from an engagement with poetry that is primarily “compensatory” to one that is potentially “transformative,” what Rigby calls “ecoprophetic writing.”

Later comments by Rigby also suggested other ways that poetry, and the humanities in general, can function transformatively. In a Q & A session for a later panel, Rigby told participants about her experiences of having climate scientists in Australia approach academics in the humanities and ask for assistance in getting their concerns broadcast as well as assistance in better understanding the socio-cultural factors constraining people’s readiness to take action. Many of these scientists, said Rigby, felt that they had done everything they could by doing their research on confirming the reality of global warming and in getting it published. Yet still, in their opinion the general public was not really making the link between the science and the need for action on this matter. These scientists recognized that their work needed to be better framed by communicative frameworks and in a persuasive rhetoric to which people could respond, thus they were now seeking to build alliances between the scientific and humanistic communities in academe.

ASLE’s initial plenary was followed by a drinks reception and then a poetry reading (open to the public) in association with the Scottish Poetry Library. Poets Kelley Swain (*Darwin’s Microscope*, forthcoming), Helen Moore (*Hope and the Magic Martian*, forthcoming), and Gerry Loose (*Printed On Water: New and Selected Poems*, (2007) all read from works that touched on themes of the conference. I was lucky enough to run into Helen Moore the next afternoon at a vegetarian restaurant near the college, where we had a long discussion about the dynamics of teaching, writing, and doing ecological work as people in the humanities. Helen commented that she personally had hope that changes would come quickly enough to make a difference in the natural environment, pointing to the ways in which the growing sustainability movement is being largely driven by a grassroots philosophy rather than by a top-down demand for government to “do something.” Unlike the antiwar movement, which was highly dependent on trying to influence top leaders NOT to do something, this movement allows people to pressure government and business to change their priorities while at the same time it organizes communities and individuals to make choices that will effect ecological change now. These kinds of conversations as well as engaged content/practice debates swirled around the conference daily.

The second plenary was given on Friday night by Timothy Morton, professor of Literature and Environment at UC Davis. The July 25, 2008 issue of *Science* had a note about Morton whose talk at the conference on “the implications of nature writing for cognitive science” was delivered via a pre-recorded DVD, followed by a real-time videoconference Q&A with ASLE attendees. In the *Science* blurb, Morton points to the use of videoconferencing technology as “a chance to save energy and save money and reimagine in a good way what a conference could be.” Morton’s talk, “Animals, Vegetables, Minerals, and Other Alien Beings,” was introduced by a colleague who pointed out that Morton’s

presentation would serve double-duty: first to the Davis audience and then to another audience “in England.” At those words, a collective dissenting murmur arose from the Scottish spectators.

Despite this inopportune introduction, Morton’s talk managed, through a series of dizzying references to John Milton, Roman Jakobson, Laurie Anderson, Giuseppe Penone, Dan Flavin, Louise Bourgeois, Eliane Radigue, David Lynch, Keith Rowe, Jacques Derrida, Bill McKibben, Donna Haraway, Donald Rumsfeld, F.R. Leavis, William Wordsworth, John Donne, Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, Eleanor Rosch, William Shakespeare, Angus Fletcher, T.S. Eliot, Charles Darwin, Paul de Man, John Locke, George Spencer Brown, Andy Goldsworthy, Derek Parfit, Martin Heidegger, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Francis Fukayama, and more, to provide an outline of what Morton called, “the ecological thought.” Morton suggested that we begin to understand our age as informed by what he called “post-organicism,” where we move away from a postmodernism that stresses a nihilistic perception of our relationship with the world and instead take the opportunity to move into a postmodern perception of the world as a place where “absolutely everything is connected with absolutely everything else.” Morton’s embrace of this connectedness gave rise to the title of his book, *Ecology without Nature*, in which the word “ecology” moves beyond those elements which we traditionally perceive as natural; instead, the definition of ecology shifts to include all things. Morton calls this “environmentalism without localism,” and suggests developing a relationship with nature founded upon a “radical intimacy,” a postmodern conceptualization of being simultaneously both inside and outside of nature. In his investigation of the term “post-organicism,” Morton suggested that we need to think about how to break down dualistic life/nonlife distinctions in order to avoid characterizing nature as something “out there.” Instead, he recommended viewing nature through a Derridean construct, nature as both here and not-here, there and not-there. When we look at subjecthood, not as a unified whole, but as “processes of interaction with others, however we define those others,” we move into “a very social notion of existence.”

Morton’s themes of opening up the definitions of nature, ecology, human, non-human and more, were reflected in the presentations of other conference attendees. Attendees came from Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Belgium, Taiwan, India, Canada, and the U.S. Overall, the quality of papers was outstanding; papers and presentations ranged from discussions of specific writers, to analyses of scientific discourse, to discussion of classroom pedagogies, and much more. I will mention just a few of the sessions I was able to attend in order to give readers a sense of the variety of topics covered. Elizabeth Vander Meer, from the University of Edinburgh, spoke on “The Language of Biodiversity Conservation” and examined the ways in which conservation language often converts organisms into natural capital when that language prioritizes human use. Louise Westling of the University of Oregon looked at Yann Martel’s novel, *Life of Pi* (2001) in her paper, “Stranded on the Ark,” and considered Martel’s treatment of the lifeboat on which Pi drifts as a metaphor for the planet. Jonathan Coope from the University of Chichester considered in his paper what happens when the communication of climate change incorporates psychological or emotive frameworks in its discourse. Rupert Hildyard’s paper on “Ecocriticism and The Theory of Poetry” looked at the functioning of poetry as both sound and meaning, and at what happens in poems when language reduces, or even destroys, the physicality of nature. Sherry Booth presented the results of building undergraduate communities focused on sustainability in both study and practice at Santa Clara College. Sasha Matthewman of the University of Bristol discussed literary and cultural articulations of the “ecopolis,” a system of intersecting urban and natural forces. Stephen Wood of Liverpool John Moores University examined the permeability of the boundaries of both femininity/masculinity and self/not-self in the nature writing of English novelist Pat Barker.

Richard Kerridge of Bath Spa University offered a meditation on the connections between “Slow Food, Slow Reading” in his paper on the comparable dynamics of alienation when we engage in fast reading and fast food. Petra Hansson from the University of Uppsala conducted a fine interactive workshop on classroom practices that reflect pedagogies of green justice and community.

Throughout, the discussions that followed the presentations were some of the best I have ever experienced at a conference, civil yet passionate, thoughtful and highly informed. Even when conference attendees deeply disagreed, the disagreement seemed to be paired with a common sense of purpose, something along the lines of, “Even if we disagree on the terminology or methodology, we both understand and want to solve the bigger problem: finding a way to make environmental crisis a visible discourse.”

The conference also sponsored a series of short films on eco-themes by five filmmakers from the UK. I was unable to attend, since the screenings coincided with my own panel, but the films included “Sky Hills Sheep Water Grass” by Paul Bush, “Cylch yr Ynys” (Welsh: Circle of the Island) by Sharon Morris, “Hoy” by Christopher Newby, “Vide Voce: The Threes in the Four” by Steve Partridge, and “Aspect” by Emily Richardson. The comments from conference participants who attended were positive. Again, I lucked out and stumbled into a late evening dinner with the filmmaker Sharon Morris with whom I had a fascinating conversation about art, war, the environment, and much more.

The final speaker for the conference, Rebecca Solnit, was unable to attend, so Greg Garrard, author of *Ecocriticism* and lecturer in English Literature at Bath Spa University, pinch-hit very nicely with his summary talk on the links between pastoral ecology and postmodern ecology. Garrard set up an especially useful dynamic with his consistent linking to points from various attendees’ papers as he referenced poems and theories. In this way, he enacted connectedness—one thematic line that had run throughout the conference. Yet at the same time that he enacted it, he challenged the inevitability of it with his own theme, simply stated at the beginning with: “Not everything is interconnected.” If I understood his final remarks correctly, he seemed to be suggesting that theoretical and emotional yearnings for wholeness/ integratedness/interconnectedness need to be tempered by an acceptance of nature and humanity’s intolerance for complete balance. Stochastic, abiotic events and factors are part of the mix in the behaviours of both humans and nature. Garrard finished by suggesting that adopting humility-before-nature as a competitive strategy in the face of disaster is an act of arrogance. Instead, our humility needs to be ironic, as, for example, when we admit that the best way to reduce our carbon emissions is to be poor. Garrard pointed out that low emissions are—overall—much more closely linked to a lack of wealth than to any level of consciousness about reducing emissions, a deeply discomfoting thought for those of us who claim to be working toward being green. I doubt that Garrard’s talk spurred a rush toward downward mobility among conference attendees, nearly all of who were committed to trying to change the exponential rise of global warming. Is that irony, or is it complicity? Garrard suggested, at the end, that if we are to write honest poetry and do honest criticism, we must acknowledge it as both.