

# The Limits and Promise of Environmental Ethics: Eco-Socialist Thought and Anthropocentrism's Virtue

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	35
I. FOUR PROMINENT WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES .....	37
A. Deep Ecology .....	38
B. Ecocentrism.....	38
C. Hardin's Tragedy of the Commons .....	39
D. Ophuls's Neo-Hobbesianism.....	40
II. ASPECTS OF ECO-SOCIALIST THOUGHT.....	40
A. Searching For Ecological Concern in Marx and Engels.....	41
B. Beyond Searching For Green in Marx and Engels: The Utility of Eco-Socialist Insight .....	44
III. ANTHROPOCENTRISM'S VIRTUE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF RED- GREEN COORDINATION.....	48
CONCLUSION: A REASON FOR OPTIMISM BEYOND RED AND GREEN.....	56

## INTRODUCTION

Are Greens (environmentalists) naturally Red (socialists)? Some environmentalists have been characterized by segments of the American public as *Watermelons*: "green on the outside, red on the inside."<sup>1</sup> This description,

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<sup>1</sup> The original use of the term is attributed to controversial conservative commentator David Horowitz. Several examples of the term's use in current popular conservative commentary can be

taking advantage of mainstream American antipathy to “Red” politics and implying that Greens deceitfully harbor radical leftist sympathies under the guise of “concern for nature,” may of course be dismissed as a caricature. Yet behind this portrayal lurks an interesting question: Are environmentalists adopting a Marxian ideology while simultaneously popularizing apparently benign ideas about sentience and nature’s inherent worth through philosophies like “Ecocentrism” and “Deep Ecology?”

The short answer to this question is that while there is a Red-Green combination in some limited facets of the global environmental movement, environmental ideologies often see a central focus on human needs and desires — “Anthropocentrism” — as hindering ecological interests. As the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* puts it,

When environmental ethics (“EE”) emerged as a sub-discipline of philosophy in the early 1970s, it did so by posing a challenge to traditional anthropocentrism. In the first place, [EE] questioned the assumed moral superiority of human beings to members of other species on earth. In the second place, [EE] investigated the possibility of rational arguments for assigning intrinsic value to the natural environment and its nonhuman contents.<sup>2</sup>

Philosopher William Grey notes that “[i]ndeed the search for a credible non-anthropocentric basis for value in nature has been the central preoccupation of environmental philosophy.”<sup>3</sup> Grey says that anthropocentrism “is used to draw attention to a systematic and unjustified bias in traditional Western attitudes to the non-human world.”<sup>4</sup>

found on the internet. For example, readers deride “Watermelons” in their comments praising an alleged exposé of environmentalists’ anti-capitalist goals. See Jaysun, *Environmentalist [sic] Exposed- Damning Proof of Their True Intent*, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1108499/posts> (last visited Nov. 13, 2006). Leftist investigative journalist Jeffrey St. Clair has the following analysis of the response by those he terms “rightwingers” to the perceived threat of environmentalists: “Back in Reagantime the rightwingers smeared environmentalists as watermelons: green on the outside, red on the inside. . . . Now that cap-C Communism has faded into the oblivion of high school history text books, the corporate world’s p[ublic] r[elations] mavens have had to concoct a new spine-tingling metaphor to evoke the threat environmentalism poses to their bottom line: eco-terrorism.” Jeffrey St. Clair, *The Great Green Scare*, COUNTERPUNCH, Oct. 3, 2005, <http://www.counterpunch.org/stclair10032005.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Brennan & Norva Yeuk-Sze Lo, *Environmental Ethics*, in STANFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY (Edward N. Zalta ed., Summer 2002), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2002/entries/ethics-environmental>. Brennan and Lo add that “[i]t should be noted, however, that some theorists working in the field see no need to develop new, non-anthropocentric theories. Instead, they advocate what may be called *enlightened anthropocentrism* (or, perhaps more appropriately called, *prudential anthropocentrism*).” *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> William Grey, *Anthropocentrism and Deep Ecology*, 71 AUSTRALASIAN J. PHIL. 463, 463 (1993).

<sup>4</sup> William Grey, *Environmental Value and Anthropocentrism*, 3 ETHICS & THE ENV’T. 97, 97 (1998).

In this Article, I argue that deemphasizing human-centered approaches to environmental problems is problematic. Prominent elements of Western environmental ethics do not adequately consider the fundamental link between economic deprivation and environmental degradation, neglecting to give sufficient attention to an important human issue: class. There is, in essence, a shortage of “Watermelons.” Environmentalism can benefit from directly adopting commonly shared democratic and anthropocentric values, for which aspects of Eco-Socialist thought can provide useful insights and an analytical framework for better understanding the causes and possible solutions to certain environmental problems.

I first briefly explain the key elements of four prominent environmental philosophies that illustrate important aspects of the dominant anti-anthropocentric EE discourse: Deep Ecology, Ecocentrism, Garrett Hardin’s Tragedy of the Commons, and William Ophuls’s Neo-Hobbesianism.<sup>5</sup> I then analyze elements of Eco-Socialism in theory and practice. I explain that striving to find evidence of Marx’s own environmental concern is a prominent academic aspect of Eco-Marxism.<sup>6</sup> However, a more fruitful aspect of Eco-Socialism lies in applying certain socialist and democratic ideas to environmental concerns.<sup>7</sup> As a recent analysis of the impact of EE in the United States illustrates,<sup>8</sup> EE has had a very limited influence on policy. Such a limited impact suggests a need for different theoretical underpinnings that more accurately reflect the inevitable and important interests of humans in environmental conflicts. Both EE as an academic sub-discipline and environmental activism generally can benefit from embracing an anthropocentric approach rather than rejecting such a perspective as insufficiently or inaptly motivated.<sup>9</sup>

## I. FOUR PROMINENT WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

Within EE, attitudes to anthropocentrism vary, from acknowledging “weak anthropocentrism” in Ecocentrism to deemphasizing the human species in the ideology of the group *Earth First!* In this Part I briefly describe four prominent environmental philosophies and their uneasy relationship with anthropocentrism: Deep Ecology, Ecocentrism, Garrett Hardin’s Neo-

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<sup>5</sup> See *infra* Part I.

<sup>6</sup> See *infra* Part II.A.

<sup>7</sup> See *infra* Part II.B.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher D. Stone, *Do Morals Matter? The Influence of Ethics on Courts and Congress in Shaping U.S. Environmental Policies*, 27 ENVIRONS ENVTL. L. & POL’Y J. 13 (2003). Stone’s paper, prepared for a 2003 symposium titled “Environmental Ethics and Policy: Bringing Philosophy Down to Earth,” although containing some methodological weaknesses relating to the limited scope of his statistical analysis, illustrates well the minimal impact of EE beyond the academic EE community.

<sup>9</sup> See *infra* Part III.

Malthusian concerns in “The Tragedy of the Commons,” and William Ophuls’s Neo-Hobbesianism.

### A. Deep Ecology

Philosopher Arne Naess coined the term “deep ecology” in 1973.<sup>10</sup> The notion was then developed and popularized by sociologist Bill Devall and philosopher George Sessions.<sup>11</sup> Deep Ecology arose out of dissatisfaction with materialism in attitudes toward nature<sup>12</sup> and with the anthropocentric emphasis of “shallow ecology” in fighting for limited concerns like a mere reduction in pollution for human benefit.<sup>13</sup> Influenced by certain artists, philosophers, and the field of ecology, it advances the idea that humans are a *part* of nature rather than merely *in* an external nature.<sup>14</sup> Deep Ecology posits “biospherical egalitarianism — in principle,” and a desire to adopt an “anticlass posture” in any group relationships.<sup>15</sup> Its theorists seek to employ what they see as a traditionally Eastern and Native American understanding and respect in human interaction with other forms of life.<sup>16</sup> In Deep Ecology, humans are more than just dependent on nature — humans *are* nature, and attempts to dominate nature alienate humans from themselves.<sup>17</sup> Instead, symbiotic relationships and the preservation of bio-diversity are essential, keeping in mind human and other species’ interests, including in the fight against pollution and resource depletion — which needs to be for “deep ecological” reasons. In sum, deep ecologists advocate holistic (deep, spiritual) and “wholistic” (integrated) individual and societal actions, with some decentralization and local autonomy.<sup>18</sup>

### B. Ecocentrism

Any discussion of Ecocentrism must begin with the influential Aldo Leopold, for whom “[a] thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community.”<sup>19</sup> Ecocentrism is influenced by evolutionary

<sup>10</sup> Carolyn Merchant, *Introduction to ECOLOGY: KEY CONCEPTS IN CRITICAL THEORY* 1, 8 (Carolyn Merchant ed., Prometheus Books 1999).

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> Bill Devall, *The Deep Ecology Movement*, 20 NAT. RES. J. 299 (Spring 1980), reprinted in *ECOLOGY: KEY CONCEPTS IN CRITICAL THEORY*, *supra* note 10, at 125, 126.

<sup>13</sup> Arne Naess, *Deep Ecology*, reprinted in *ECOLOGY: KEY CONCEPTS IN CRITICAL THEORY*, *supra* note 10, at 120, 120.

<sup>14</sup> Devall, *supra* note 12, at 131.

<sup>15</sup> Naess, *supra* note 13, at 121.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*; see also Devall, *supra* note 12, at 129.

<sup>17</sup> Naess, *supra* note 13, at 121.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 122-23.

<sup>19</sup> Aldo Leopold, *The Land Ethic*, in *A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC: AND SKETCHES HERE AND THERE . . .* (Oxford 1949), reprinted in *ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE* 412, 412 (Richard G. Botzler & Susan J. Armstrong eds., McGraw-Hill 1998).

theory, ecological science, and the Copernican revolution in astronomy.<sup>20</sup> Both Ecocentrism and Deep Ecology advocate respect and moral responsibility toward nature, ethical actions by individuals, and the intrinsic value of nature as a whole. J. Baird Callicott's representation of Leopold attempts to show that the land ethic is primarily holistic rather than weakly anthropocentric.<sup>21</sup> Ecocentrism does however see some "weak anthropocentrism" as natural, while Deep Ecology sees anthropocentrism as illusionary. For example, Leopold, while affirming the right to continued existence of other species, also says "a land ethic cannot prevent the alteration, management, and use of these 'resources.'"<sup>22</sup> Extreme Deep Ecologists (some in *Earth First!* for example) find this an ethically weak position, since they tend to deemphasize the importance of the human species.<sup>23</sup> Another difference between the two philosophies lies in Leopold's critique of the kind of local autonomy that Arne Naess believes in: Leopold is unwilling to trust the vision and actions of the local community or private owner, believing that "land-use ethics are still governed wholly by economic self-interest."<sup>24</sup>

### C. Hardin's *Tragedy of the Commons*

Garrett Hardin's influential "Tragedy of the Commons" is a strong critique of what can happen when a society allows "individual wills" and "self interest" to rule freely.<sup>25</sup> Hardin is critical of what can happen in a system or community "where we behave only as independent, rational, free-enterprisers."<sup>26</sup> His understanding of human nature is that individuals as rational beings will act in their perceived self-interest, which ultimately proves calamitous if individual actions are allowed to reign unregulated. For example, overpopulation occurs if individuals are allowed to breed freely and with no limits placed on them.

In order to avert some of these problems, Hardin recommends that human

<sup>20</sup> J. Baird Callicott, *The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic*, reprinted in ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE, *supra* note 19, at 425, 429.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 426-36.

<sup>22</sup> Leopold, *supra* note 19, at 413.

<sup>23</sup> Ecocentrism has also been attacked from an eco-feminist perspective. Karen J. Warren sees three main flaws in ecocentrism: One, that ecocentrism fails to accurately represent human history, as it does not acknowledge the "historical feminization of nature and naturalization of women as part of the exploitation of nature." Two, that ecocentrism fails to notice the conceptual framework of the "logic of domination" that has resulted in the coupled and inescapably interconnected domination of nature and women together. Three, that by not including the notion or even the label of feminism at a time when the notion is most pertinent and needed, ecocentrism does not recognize the need to abolish patriarchy which hinders the liberation of nature. Karen J. Warren, *The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism*, in ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE, *supra* note 19, at 471, 478.

<sup>24</sup> Leopold, *supra* note 19, at 415.

<sup>25</sup> Garrett Hardin, *The Tragedy of the Commons*, 162 SCIENCE 1243, 1243 (1968).

<sup>26</sup> *Id.* at 1245.

communities have “mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon by the majority of the people affected.”<sup>27</sup> Taxation, for example, is prevalent in this model in which politics and economics go hand in hand in regulating individual excesses. Hardin never actually says satisfactorily *how* we should achieve mutual coercion, such as to implement his view that “Freedom to Breed Is Intolerable.”<sup>28</sup> However, for some major community decisions and actions he advocates privatization through market mechanisms.

#### D. Ophuls's Neo-Hobbesianism

William Ophuls advocates human existence in balance with nature, keeping in mind overall Malthusian concerns and the need to regulate our ecological footprint.<sup>29</sup> In order to do this, Ophuls desires that we regulate population growth and live on our “ecological income” instead of exploitative capitalism.<sup>30</sup> Since he takes a harsh view of humans as inherently violent and prone to blatant self-interest, Ophuls finds natural Hobbesian notions of fear governing human relations, forms of hierarchy, and elitism. Democracy is not natural according to this account, and survives merely because of fortunate economic factors. Acknowledging that the environment is a common property resource, he does not see privatization of all resources as the answer.<sup>31</sup> Instead, he supports external control either in the form of a Rousseau “general will” or in the form of an elected sovereign.<sup>32</sup> Ophuls sees a strong government regulating individual interests for the common good as the only effective solution to the tragedy of the commons:<sup>33</sup> the issue then becomes how best to shape the Leviathan, and ensure that it is benevolent and does not fall prey to totalitarianism.

## II. ASPECTS OF ECO-SOCIALIST THOUGHT

Eco-Socialism has several dimensions and nuances. One aspect of Eco-Socialist thought — a narrow form of Eco-Marxism — involves trying to discern and examine ecological concerns in Karl Marx’s writings. Another element involves analyzing how Marxian insight is relevant to broader environmental concerns, leaving aside the explicit ecological concerns or lack

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<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 1247.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.* at 1246.

<sup>29</sup> William Ophuls, *Locke's Paradigm Lost: The Environmental Crisis and the Collapse of Laissez-Faire Politics*, in BEYOND GROWTH: ESSAYS ON ALTERNATIVE FUTURES 146 (William Burch Jr. & F.H. Bormann Jr. eds., 1975).

<sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 147.

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* at 153.

<sup>32</sup> *Id.* at 156.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.* at 160.

thereof in Marx's own philosophy. This latter element is a more fruitful application of Red-Green ideology, since it is useful in understanding actual environmental movements. I present both elements, since Eco-Socialism must be seen in its intellectual context.

#### A. *Searching For Ecological Concern in Marx and Engels*

Marx argues that the material conditions in which we live have a preeminent role in shaping our reality, including human nature and behavior. We are not isolated, autonomous individuals; rather, we are shaped by our social relations. Marx argues that "[b]ourgeois industry and commerce create these material conditions of a new world in the same way as geological revolutions have created the surface of the earth."<sup>34</sup>

A serious attempt to defend the supposed ecological character of Marx's work is made by Howard L. Parsons in his edited selection, *Marx and Engels on Ecology*.<sup>35</sup> As Parsons points out, Marx described man's interdependence with nature at both the biochemical and the psychological levels.<sup>36</sup> Parsons argues that Marx and Engels were aware that just as man himself is the evolutionary product of natural processes, man as a social being tries to change nature and direct it according to his purposes.<sup>37</sup> However, Parsons wishes to rescue Marx and Engels from claims that they had no ecological concerns, stating that:

Though they held to a unitary, dialectical concept of nature, they developed a *social* or *human* science not only because they wished to combat the conservative effects of mechanistic materialism, supernaturalism, and idealism, but also because as radicals they desired to affirm the creative role of man in shaping history and nature.<sup>38</sup>

Parsons observes that Marx and Engels accepted the capitalist "stratagem" to "subdue" nature for the sake of "human requirements."<sup>39</sup> He holds that the position of Marx and Engels is ecologically superior to that of capitalism by maintaining that: a) this mastery would benefit all people, thus being true to Marxist ideals while combating capitalist elitism and inequalities, and b) it should "maintain the dialectical balance of natural ecology in harmony with human needs," instead of destroying nature.<sup>40</sup>

Whether Marx demonstrated significant ecological concerns is disputed. John

<sup>34</sup> Karl Marx, *On Imperialism in India*, reprinted in THE MARX-ENGELS READER 653, 664 (Robert Tucker ed., Norton 1978) (1853).

<sup>35</sup> MARX AND ENGELS ON ECOLOGY (Howard L Parsons ed., Greenwood 1977).

<sup>36</sup> *Id.* at 132.

<sup>37</sup> Howard L. Parsons, *Introduction* to MARX AND ENGELS ON ECOLOGY, *supra* note 35, at 3, 9.

<sup>38</sup> *Id.* (emphasis in original).

<sup>39</sup> *Id.* at 67.

<sup>40</sup> *Id.* at 67-68.

Clark, for example, argues that Parsons “fails entirely to demonstrate that Marx’s predominant perspective toward nature was ecological.”<sup>41</sup> He says that “despite numerous references to ecology and ecological problems and valiant attempts to relate these to Marx, [Parsons] presents little evidence of truly ecological analysis in Marx’s own writings.”<sup>42</sup> Clark argues that Parsons’s scrutiny of Marx “yield[s], at best, a reformist environmentalism, rather than assuring a radically or even strongly ecological position.”<sup>43</sup>

John Bellamy Foster takes a different view. Foster contends that Marx did provide a powerful analysis of the main ecological crisis of his day, while raising “fundamental issues about the antagonism of town and country, the necessity of ecological sustainability, and what Marx called the ‘metabolic’ relation between human beings and nature.”<sup>44</sup>

In Marx’s view, when we speak of the value of a commodity, we are referring to exchange value. An increase in value occurs when human labor is added, and it is by the quantity of labor involved that the value of a commodity is measured.<sup>45</sup> One of the questions arising, then, is whether Marxism treats nature itself like an object or commodity.

In the “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” Marx indicates that he believes there is an interdependence of man as a living being that is a part of nature.<sup>46</sup> His approach, though, can be read as being deeper than a mere recognition of instrumental value:

Nature is man’s *inorganic body* — nature, that is, in so far as it is not itself the human body. Man lives on nature — means that nature is his *body*, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die. That man’s physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature.<sup>47</sup>

Even though Marx is concerned with the self-interest of the human species, the “nature as body” claim might appear to support an ecological reading of the passage. However, Clark thinks that such a reading implies a “highly distorted body-consciousness.”<sup>48</sup> According to Clark, “Marx’s vision of nature is . . . far

<sup>41</sup> John Clark, *Marx’s Inorganic Body*, in ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY: FROM ANIMAL RIGHTS TO RADICAL ECOLOGY 390, 391 (Michael E. Zimmerman et al. eds., Prentice Hall 1993).

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> *Id.* at 393.

<sup>44</sup> John Bellamy Foster, *Marx’s Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology*, 105 AM. J. SOC. 366, 373 (1999).

<sup>45</sup> For Marx’s explication of the labor theory of value, see 1 KARL MARX, CAPITAL (Penguin 1992) (1867).

<sup>46</sup> Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, reprinted in MARX AND ENGELS ON ECOLOGY, *supra* note 35, at 132.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 133 (emphasis in original).

<sup>48</sup> Clark, *supra* note 41, at 390.

from ecological . [I]n his anthropocentrism, his instrumentalist view of nature, and in his problematic of liberation through technological domination he failed to overcome the fatal anti-ecological dualisms of the Western tradition."<sup>49</sup> Clark's perspective on Marx's use of "body" seems persuasive, given that the "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" also reveal that Marx uses the terms "nature" and "natural" in a different sense than a modern day environmentalist might use them:<sup>50</sup>

Man is directly a *natural being* . *Hunger* is a natural *need*; it therefore needs a *nature* outside itself, an *object* outside itself, in order to satisfy itself, to be stilled. Hunger is an acknowledged need of my body for an *object* existing outside it, indispensable to its integration and to the expression of its essential being.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, Engels expresses an idea in the "Dialectics of Nature" which succinctly demonstrates the perceptiveness of the Marx-Engels environmental analysis, yet allows for radically different ecological implications than he appears to have intended:

Man alone has succeeded in impressing his stamp on nature, not only by so altering the aspect and climate of his dwelling-place, and even the plants and animals themselves, that the consequences of his activity can disappear only with the general extinction of the terrestrial globe.<sup>52</sup>

What Engels neglected to add, however, is that human activities have consequences that may themselves contribute to the extinction of the globe. As becomes quite evident, searching for the kind of ecological concern we are looking for in Marx and Engels is a limiting endeavor. I would question, for example, the relevance of John Bellamy Foster's premise in his book, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*, in which he argues that the view that Marx lacks ecological concern is flawed.<sup>53</sup> While this might be the case, in an

<sup>49</sup> *Id.* at 402.

<sup>50</sup> In making the case here for a particular reading of Marx's understanding of nature, buttressed by his non-ecological use of "body," I am aware that this is a subjective interpretation of the context in which he uses these terms. Above all what I am trying to emphasize is that circumspection is needed in imputing modern day ecological concerns to Marx merely because he uses terms like "nature."

<sup>51</sup> Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, *supra* note 46, at 133-34 (emphasis in original).

<sup>52</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, reprinted in MARX AND ENGELS ON ECOLOGY *supra* note 35, at 138. I am aware that this conflation of Marx and Engels may be unsatisfactory for scholars who seek to understand the nuances in their philosophical differences; however, I think the example I use is appropriate in this context. For a detailed treatment of Engels's political philosophy and divergence from Marx, see ENGELS AFTER MARX (Manfred B. Steger & Terrell Carver eds., Penn State Univ. Press 1999).

<sup>53</sup> JOHN BELLAMY FOSTER, *MARX'S ECOLOGY: MATERIALISM AND NATURE* (2000).

important sense this analytical scholarship of the real or perceived Eco-Marx misses the boat.

*B. Beyond Searching For Green in Marx and Engels: The Utility of Eco-Socialist Insight*

It is not by struggling to find ecological concern in Marx and Engels that Eco-Socialism can be fruitful, but through creative extension of Marx's analysis of class, alienation, the labor theory of value, and the capitalist production system. As Ted Benton reminds us:

The question is not solely one of identifying the ecological crisis tendencies of specific modes of social and economic life. It is the further one of interpreting the . . . interactions of these diverse mechanisms at the level of the ecosphere itself. More, even, than this, "the point is to change it."<sup>54</sup>

A broader conception of Eco-Marxism employs an enhanced utilitarian framework, critiquing capitalism while seeking to protect the bases for human subsistence. This framework departs from traditional Marxism on two key issues: Most Eco-Marxists have given up on, first, the idea of an objective course to history, and second, of control over the means of production, via the Frankfurt School.<sup>55</sup> Frankfurt School revisionist William Leiss<sup>56</sup> argues that capitalism poses problems for a sustainable world: "Capitalism gives rise to a form of need-satisfaction (commodity production) in which there is no limit to the demands placed on the natural environment by humans."<sup>57</sup> Leiss believes

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<sup>54</sup> Ted Benton, *Marxism and Natural Limits: An Ecological Critique and Reconstruction*, in *THE GREENING OF MARXISM* 157, 180 (Ted Benton ed., 1996).

<sup>55</sup> The "Frankfurt School" refers to a group of European intellectuals (among them Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and Herbert Marcuse) who sought, *inter alia*, to refine Marx's philosophy and apply it to 20<sup>th</sup> century concerns. The Institute for Social Research was founded in Frankfurt in 1924 as a school dedicated to the scientific study of Marxism. In 1930 Horkheimer became director, seeking "to set up, along with my associates . . . a regime of planned work on the juxtaposition of philosophical construct and empiricism in social theory . . . [and to] organize inquiries, on the basis of current philosophical questions, in which philosophers, sociologists, economists, historians and psychologists can unite in lasting co-operation." The Institute's intellectuals, being Jewish and seen as left-wing radicals, were forced into exile in 1933 by the rise of the Nazi Party. Initially scattered throughout Europe, their next base became Columbia University (from 1934 until 1943). The Frankfurt School influenced a number of prominent thinkers, including most famously Jürgen Habermas. For a detailed treatment see ROLF WIGGERSHAUS, *THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL: ITS HISTORY, THEORIES, AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE* (Michael Robertson trans., MIT Press 1994). See also *CRITICAL THEORY AND SOCIETY: A READER* (Stephen Eric Bronner & Douglas MacKay Kellner eds., Routledge 1989).

<sup>56</sup> Leiss, who currently holds the position of Scientist at the McLaughlin Centre for Population Health Risk Assessment, University of Ottawa, is a former student of Herbert Marcuse.

<sup>57</sup> Email from William Leiss, Scientist, McLaughlin Centre for Population Health Risk Assessment, University of Ottawa (Sept. 28, 2007, 14:49:00 EST) (on file with author).

that “as this form of production becomes universal, the natural world is debased into becoming merely a means for human satisfaction. Every attained level of satisfaction through possession of material goods only leads to demands for more, without end; this is the very opposite of a sustainable form of life.”<sup>58</sup> The consequences of this pattern, Leiss argues, are that:

As more and more people around the world try to find the path to happiness through unlimited commodity consumption, there is inevitable environmental risk and degradation; the most serious risk is that of climate change, driven by fossil-fuel energy consumption. Continued degradation of the environment may very well lead to a generalized collapse of industrial society. What will happen thereafter is anybody’s guess.<sup>59</sup>

For Eco-Socialist Murray Bookchin, “social ecology” rejects a biocentrism that denies or degrades human uniqueness, subjectivity, rationality, aesthetic sensibility, and ethical potentiality.<sup>60</sup> Bookchin’s social ecology also rejects “an anthropocentrism that confers on the privileged few the right to plunder the world of life, including women, the young, the poor, and the underprivileged.”<sup>61</sup> For Bookchin, “social ecology... revealed a crisis between the natural world and capitalism that was, if anything, more fundamental than the crisis that was imputed to the falling rate of profit and its alleged consequences.”<sup>62</sup> However, he adds, “[s]ocial ecology does not . . . [condemn] machinery, mass production, or even industrial agriculture.”<sup>63</sup> Fellow Eco-Socialist James O’Connor argues that a “democratic state” with democratically organized social labor is the best solution to address the complexities and problems of both localism and centralism.<sup>64</sup>

An Eco-Socialist approach tries to address the needs of underprivileged humans in a way that Hardin and Ophuls, for example, fail to do.<sup>65</sup> While Hardin was strongly against permitting an individual family to choose its size,<sup>66</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Id.*

<sup>59</sup> *Id.*

<sup>60</sup> Murray Bookchin, *Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology: A Challenge for the Ecology Movement*, GREEN PERSPECTIVES: NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEN PROGRAM PROJECT, Summer 1987, available at [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/ANARCHIST\\_ARCHIVES/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/ANARCHIST_ARCHIVES/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html).

<sup>61</sup> *Id.*

<sup>62</sup> Murray Bookchin, *Reflections: An Overview of the Roots of Social Ecology*, 3:1 HARBINGER, A JOURNAL OF SOCIAL ECOLOGY 6, 10 (Spring 2003).

<sup>63</sup> *Id.*

<sup>64</sup> James O’Connor, *Socialism and Ecology*, reprinted in *ECOLOGY: KEY CONCEPTS IN CRITICAL THEORY*, *supra* note 10, at 163, 171.

<sup>65</sup> Ophuls’s Neo-Hobbesianism is certainly perceptive, despite its problems. His Malthusian concerns, although overblown, cannot be dismissed entirely, and his recognition of the need to limit the size of the “ecological footprint” is important.

<sup>66</sup> Hardin stated: “To couple the concept of freedom to breed with the belief that everyone born has an equal right to the commons is to lock the world into a tragic course of action. Unfortunately

Eco-Socialists see oppression and attacks on human classes as attacks on nature itself. Herbert Marcuse goes so far as to argue that “[t]he genocidal war against people is also ‘ecocide’ insofar as it attacks the sources and resources of life itself.”<sup>67</sup>

A human-centered approach with an emphasis on the needs of underprivileged people and their relationship with the environment can help breed real environmental progress. Ecocentrism and Deep Ecology, albeit well intentioned and with some philosophical value, are not the route to resolve, or even to understand, environmental conflicts. Rather, Eco-Socialism, of the kind represented by democratically led indigenous people’s movements, is persuasive because of its philosophical embrace of anthropocentrism. Deep Ecology is flawed in practice, because anthropocentrism inevitably renders it impossible to actually live as Deep Ecologists want us to live, since we tend to favor our own species.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, Deep Ecology and Ecocentrism’s lack of emphasis on the problem of inequalities such as first-world/third-world divides not only renders their supposed egalitarianism hollow but actually hurts the environmental movement: a lack of love for nature is less at fault than irresponsible governments and the misuse of the global capitalist system to exploit humans. In turn, exploited people often have no other recourse than to exploit the environment. As Ramachandra Guha puts it, “[t]he roots of global ecological problems lie in the disproportionate share of resources consumed by the industrialized countries as a whole *and* the urban elite within the Third World.”<sup>69</sup> These structural problems must be dealt with as much as attitudes toward nature, and Eco-Socialist insights are much more helpful in understanding these issues as they pertain to environmental degradation than anti-anthropocentric aspects of Environmental Ethics.

Hugh Stretton’s vision of what progressive ideology should be is of great relevance to environmental and social movements:<sup>70</sup>

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this is just the course of action that is being pursued by the United Nations . . . . If we love the truth we must openly deny the validity of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” Hardin, *supra* note 25, at 1246.

<sup>67</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Ecology and Revolution*, in 16 *LIBERATION* 10 (Sept. 1972), reprinted in *ECOLOGY: KEY CONCEPTS IN CRITICAL THEORY*, *supra* note 10, at 51, 51.

<sup>68</sup> The philosophical exception to this would be kinspeople of radicals in *Earth First!* who think that the destruction of habitat in Africa is *equally* tragic as the loss of human lives due to the same reasons that cause habitat degradation.

<sup>69</sup> Ramachandra Guha, *Radical Environmentalism: A Third World Critique*, reprinted in *ECOLOGY: KEY CONCEPTS IN CRITICAL THEORY*, *supra* note 10, at 281, 288 (emphasis in original).

<sup>70</sup> For Stretton’s unorthodox analysis of economic theories, see HUGH STRETTON, *ECONOMICS: A NEW INTRODUCTION* (Pluto Press 1999). For his environmental philosophy, see HUGH STRETTON, *CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT* (Cambridge Univ. Press 1976) [hereinafter *STRETTON, CAPITALISM*].

The distinguishing purpose of socialism should not be to reduce private and increase public ownership. It should be to tame institutional and increase domestic ownership: to attack inequality by giving to every household (as far as scarcity and environmental prudence allow) the fullest control of the most versatile resources it can use.<sup>71</sup>

Considering the common caricature of socialist thought as stifling private freedom, Stretton's analysis of the promise and purpose of socialism, embracing the principle of domestic control as fundamental, is an important perspective. Given the increasing privatization of nature and natural resources, a key question, as John Bellamy Foster puts it, is whether capitalism can be "reshaped to the demands of what the environmentalists call sustainable development."<sup>72</sup> Foster's analysis leads him to conclude that the first steps toward resolving ecological problems lie in "the direction of the 'socialization' of nature and production and the creation of a more democratic, egalitarian world order."<sup>73</sup>

Foster's skepticism about the promise of capitalism is certainly debatable. But he raises an important point: must we view the act and consequences of an individual "giving up rights" as favorably as the interest of the collective whole? The theory of social contract that underpins modern life assumes certain individual sacrifices with a corresponding gain in the collective wellbeing. As Rousseau puts it, "as each gives himself to all, he gives himself to no one . . . one gains the equivalent of everything one loses, and more force to preserve what one has."<sup>74</sup> In his chapter in *On the Social Contract* on "The Legislator," Rousseau also argues that "human nature" can (and, he thinks, should) be *constructed* by the state or other factors.<sup>75</sup> Constructing environmentally and socially aware individuals is an essential part of successful environmentalism, and Ecocentrism and Deep Ecology do indeed have a role to play in this, although given their unwillingness to embrace anthropocentrism it is necessarily an incomplete role.

<sup>71</sup> STRETTON, CAPITALISM, *supra* note 70, at 206.

<sup>72</sup> JOHN BELLAMY FOSTER, THE VULNERABLE PLANET: A SHORT ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE ENVIRONMENT 32 (Monthly Review Press 1994).

<sup>73</sup> *Id.* at 330.

<sup>74</sup> JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU, ON THE SOCIAL CONTRACT 53 (Roger D. Masters ed., Judith R. Masters trans., St. Martins Press 1978) (1762).

<sup>75</sup> I am aware that this is a simplification; I do not wish to delve into nature/nurture debates. For a prominent current perspective, see the work of evolutionary and cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker, who argues that human nature does indeed exist and can be coherently understood and described. STEVEN PINKER, THE BLANK SLATE: THE MODERN DENIAL OF HUMAN NATURE (Viking 2002). For a pithy summary of his argument see Steven Pinker, *Why Nature & Nurture Won't Go Away*, 133:4 DAEDALUS: J. AM. ACAD. ARTS & SCI. 5 (Fall 2004).

### III. ANTHROPOCENTRISM'S VIRTUE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF RED-GREEN COORDINATION

The claim that there are not serious global environmental problems (as defined by the decreasing percentage of forested land, global climate change, carrying capacity versus population, species reduction and extinction, and reduction in air quality) should not be persuasive to a reasonable 21<sup>st</sup> century person.<sup>76</sup> To give just one example, the global conservation organization WWF's Living Planet Index, a measure of the natural wealth of the Earth's forest, freshwater, and marine environments, fell by twenty-nine percent between 1970 and 2003.<sup>77</sup> WWF says "[t]his global trend suggests that we are degrading natural ecosystems at a rate unprecedented in human history."<sup>78</sup>

Given the global environmental crisis, a rigorous environmental ethic and strategy should be a necessary and inextricable part of any democratic movement today. I would posit that the decline of biodiversity, to the extent we can control it, is representative of the decline in *our* evolutionary process as humans — moral, physical, ethical, and spiritual. More concretely, we are interdependent with nature, and the interests of nature represent our self-interest in terms of survival, and other instrumental interests as well.<sup>79</sup> Robert Costanza persuasively illustrates components and definitions of "ecosystem health"

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<sup>76</sup> Regarding global warming in particular, the state of knowledge about the phenomenon is clouded by models of science that are incomplete and sometimes inappropriate, and by the inevitability that science does not operate in a value and interest-free world. After the Kyoto protocol, opposition to global warming theory developed in the U.S. on the basis that implementing steps to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would be detrimental to the U.S. economy. See, e.g., Angela Antonelli, *Global Warming and Hot Air*, HERITAGE FOUNDATION, Dec. 4, 2000, <http://author.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed120400.cfm>. Other objections question careless extrapolations and scientific specifics such as problems with satellite-measured temperatures. What is certainly clear is that atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide are increasing: "Human activity has been increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (mostly carbon dioxide from combustion of coal, oil, and gas; plus a few other trace gases). There is no scientific debate on this point." National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *Global Warming Frequently Asked Questions*, <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/ol/climate/globalwarming.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2007). However, the extent is not completely known. In this regard ecologist Sandra Brown says that, "The best predictions I've seen say it will be a warmer and drier climate . . . [however] I always worry when I see these papers making broad extrapolations across the entire world." James Glanz, *Droughts Linked to Warming Might Speed Climate Changes*, N. Y. TIMES, Jan. 11, 2001, at A24. Ecologist Bruce A. Hungate states: "[W]e don't completely understand all the dynamics that control atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration." *Id.*

<sup>77</sup> WWF Living Planet Index, [http://www.panda.org/news\\_facts/publications/living\\_planet\\_report/living\\_planet\\_index/index.cfm](http://www.panda.org/news_facts/publications/living_planet_report/living_planet_index/index.cfm) (last visited Oct. 25, 2007).

<sup>78</sup> *Id.*

<sup>79</sup> An excellent illustration of this is in James A. Estes & John F. Palmisano, *Sea Otters: Their Role in Structuring Nearshore Communities*, 185 SCIENCE 1058, 1058-60 (1974). Through their illustration of human interference in the natural food chain, we see how humans have responsibility and power in ultimately determining "the integrity and stability of the ecosystem." *Id.* at 1060.

(necessary for human well-being) that include biodiversity as an integral part.<sup>80</sup> E.O. Wilson points out that we need invertebrates, even though they do not need us. Life on Earth would go on without us humans. But our life would not go on without invertebrates.<sup>81</sup> Aside from this is our overall dependence on nature's bounties: Nature provides us with food supplies, medicines, and materials of various kinds. Hence, even if concerned solely with human well-being, we cannot intelligibly avoid environmentalism. Without being irrationally influenced by the experience of Easter Island, let us recognize the ancient roots of our ecological crisis, and react thoughtfully and appropriately to past historical examples.<sup>82</sup> We might as well move forward, since it is unlikely that we will ever attain scientific consensus concerning exploited systems.<sup>83</sup>

Ramachandra Guha attacks Ecocentrism's and Deep Ecology's rejection of anthropocentrism, arguing that they miss key ecological problems due to a misplaced focus. Guha says the real problems are over-consumption and militarism, and "invoking the bogey of anthropocentrism is at best irrelevant and at worst a dangerous obfuscation."<sup>84</sup> As this argument goes, the emphasis of Ecocentrism on wilderness preservation is really an aesthetically motivated desire of an elite that does not consider the subsistence needs of those who depend on the wilderness in question. As a result of these aesthetic whims, other people suffer from deprivation of land resources in the name of conservation.<sup>85</sup> For example, consider game reserves, poachers, and indigenous peoples displaced for the sake of tourism: The needs of people dwelling on land but deprived of its use are unfulfilled.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Robert Costanza, *Toward an Operational Definition of Ecosystem Health*, in *ECOSYSTEM HEALTH: NEW GOALS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT* 239 (Robert Costanza et al. eds., 1992), reprinted in *ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE*, *supra* note 19, at 35, 38.

<sup>81</sup> Edward O. Wilson, *The Little Things That Run the World*, 1 *CONSERVATION BIOLOGY* 344 (1987), reprinted in *ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE*, *supra* note 19, at 32, 33.

<sup>82</sup> For a discussion of the historical influences on Western attitudes toward nature, see J. Donald Hughes, *The Ancient Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*, in *ECOLOGY IN ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS* (Univ. of New Mexico Press 1975), reprinted in *ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE*, *supra* note 19, at 157, 161.

<sup>83</sup> See Donald Ludwig, Ray Hilborn, & Carl Walters, *Uncertainty, Resource Exploitation, and Conservation: Lessons from History*, 260 *SCIENCE* 17, 36 (1993) ("Act before scientific consensus is achieved. We do not require any additional scientific studies before taking action to curb human activities that effect global warming, ozone depletion, pollution, and depletion of fossil fuels. Calls for additional research may be mere delaying tactics.")

<sup>84</sup> Ramachandra Guha, *Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique*, 11 *ENVTL. ETHICS* 71 (1989), reprinted in *ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE*, *supra* note 19, at 296, 298.

<sup>85</sup> *Id.* at 298-99.

<sup>86</sup> Similar environmental conflicts exist in the developed world as well, although perhaps with lesser degrees of severity for affected individuals. In the United States, an example of the role of class in environmental conflicts can be found in the Pacific Northwest, where the spotted owl

A contemporary example illustrating the vital importance of anthropocentrism in understanding the environmental crisis is the issue of “shipbreaking.” As the U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration explains, shipbreaking — “the process of dismantling an obsolete vessel’s structure for scrapping or disposal” — “involves many safety, health and environmental issues.”<sup>87</sup> OSHA states that “[s]hipbreaking operations expose workers to a wide range of hazards or workplace activities or conditions likely to cause injury or illness.”<sup>88</sup> Environmental advocacy group Greenpeace accurately highlights the essence of the problem: “At the end of their sailing life, ships are sold for their valuable steel. However, old ships contain hazardous substances such as asbestos, lead paint and PCBs. During scrapping these poisons are released into the environment and the workers’ bodies.”<sup>89</sup> While in the 1970s shipbreaking was concentrated in Europe, in a highly mechanized industrial operation performed at docks, the costs of upholding environmental, health, and safety standards increased, and the industry moved to poorer countries like India (60% of the global business), Pakistan, and Bangladesh.<sup>90</sup> As an International Labour Organization discussion paper says, “[t]he race is to the bottom to find countries where occupational health and safety standards are not enforced.”<sup>91</sup> The paper adds that “[t]here can be no doubt that scrapping a ship qualifies as unsafe and dangerous work. There is a broad spectrum of problems facing workers involved with ship-breaking . . . ranging from poor conditions of employment and work, to a total absence of any collective bargaining or industrial relations procedures.”<sup>92</sup>

Alang, a shipbreaking yard in Gujarat, India, is one of the world’s largest — in 1998, the yard had 300 ships per year and 35,000 workers. Reporters for *The Baltimore Sun*, in a 1997 Pulitzer Prize winning investigative series, provided

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controversy was a heated issue for several years. As John Bellamy Foster illustrates, “the battle over the ancient forests is as much a class struggle as it an ecological one.” JOHN BELLAMY FOSTER, *THE LIMITS OF ENVIRONMENTALISM WITHOUT CLASS: LESSONS FROM THE ANCIENT FOREST STRUGGLE OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST* 4 (Monthly Review Press 1993). Foster argues that “if forest product workers find their jobs threatened, this has far less to do with the struggle of environmentalists to preserve the ancient forest and the owl than to the efforts of capital and the state to promote profits at the expense of both workers and the environment.” *Id.*

<sup>87</sup> U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration Shipbreaking Homepage, [http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/shipyard/ship\\_breaking/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/shipyard/ship_breaking/index.html) (last visited Oct. 28, 2007).

<sup>88</sup> U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration Shipbreaking Fact Sheet (2002), available at [http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_MaritimeFacts/shipbreaking-factsheet.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_MaritimeFacts/shipbreaking-factsheet.pdf).

<sup>89</sup> Greenpeace Shipbreaking Homepage, <http://www.greenpeaceweb.org/shipbreak> (last visited Oct. 25, 2007).

<sup>90</sup> Greenpeace What is Shipbreaking?, <http://www.greenpeaceweb.org/shipbreak/whatis.asp> (last visited Oct. 25, 2007).

<sup>91</sup> Paul J. Bailey, *Is There A Decent Way To Break Up Ships?*, Int’l Labour Org. Sectoral Activities Programme Discussion Paper 1.1 (2000), available at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/papers/shpbreak/index.htm>.

<sup>92</sup> *Id.* at 1.2.

the following description of Alang:

Thirty-five thousand men have come to this once-deserted stretch on the Arabian Sea to labor for the shipbreakers. They live in hovels built of scrap, with no showers, toilets or latrines. They have come from poor villages on the other side of India, lured by wages that start at \$1.50 a day, to work at dangerous jobs, protected only by their scarves and sandals.

They suffer broken ankles, severed fingers, smashed skulls, malarial fevers, cholera, dysentery and tuberculosis. Some are burned and some are drowned. Nobody keeps track of how many die here from accidents and disease. Some say a worker dies every day.

“There is a shadow of death on this place,” says Ram Lalit, a 22-year-old worker. “This place is haunted by death. But it is better to work and die than starve and die.”<sup>93</sup>

The *Baltimore Sun* article adds:

The beached ships tower over the hundreds of workers who strip them apart, men who know they are expendable.

“All burden to the laborers and none to the owners,” says Shive Cheren Bharti, 36, who has worked at Alang for 14 years. “There’s no risk to them. If 20 people were to die at once, the owners wouldn’t care.”

Then, his face inexplicably lighting up in a big grin, he says, “We’re the hopeless people of India.”<sup>94</sup>

Since 1998, aided by heightened environmental scrutiny, there has been a lull in shipbreaking activity, and business in Alang was down to 100 ships as of September 2006.<sup>95</sup> For example, in February 2006 the decommissioned French aircraft carrier, *Clemenceau*, was headed to Alang for dismantling, but after a lengthy campaign by Greenpeace and other environmental groups, the French government recalled the ship en route.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Will Englund and Gary Cohn, *A Third World dump for America's ships?*, *BALT. SUN*, Dec. 9, 1997, at 1A. For a recent discussion of the hazards and expense of shipbreaking in the U.S., see Thomas Peele, *Suisun Bay fleet hardly shipshape*, *CONTRA COSTA TIMES*, May 14, 2006, available at [http://www.contracostatimes.com/ci\\_6171166?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.contracostatimes.com/ci_6171166?nclick_check=1) (“One environmentalist called the fleet a “ticking time bomb” [t]he ships are “an immediate environmental threat,” U.S. Department of Transportation investigators found nearly six years ago. Since then, the ships have decayed further, environmentalists and ship engineers said.”).

<sup>94</sup> Englund and Cohn, *A Third World dump for America's ships?*, *supra* note 93, at 1A.

<sup>95</sup> Sonu Jain, *It's Official: Asbestos is Crippling Alang Workers*, *INDIAN EXPRESS*, Sept. 5, 2006, available at <http://www.indianexpress.com/story/12101.html>.

<sup>96</sup> *'Toxic Ship' Reaches Indian State*, *BBC NEWS*, Aug. 15, 2006,

The Alang yard currently provides indirect employment to about 100,000 people. Recently, for the first time, an official committee in India acknowledged that asbestos is taking its toll on Alang's ship-breakers.<sup>97</sup> The committee recognized the need for detailed guidelines for dismantling ships and handling the waste, and sweeping reforms in working conditions.<sup>98</sup> Their report says that almost one in six workers could be suffering from an early stage of asbestosis, an irreversible lung condition that can lead to lung cancer. Until now, the Indian Government had denied any such link.<sup>99</sup> The report also highlights how the fatal accident rate at Alang is almost six times the mining industry's rate, which was previously considered India's most unsafe industry.<sup>100</sup>

Greenpeace touted the recall of the *Clemenceau* from its journey to Alang as a success for the environmental movement, arguing that the ship should not be allowed to reach its destination because it would endanger the health of workers at the yard.<sup>101</sup> But lost in this "victory" is the question of providing for the workers at Alang. These workers face an extremely difficult situation economically when deprived of employment, while of course facing grave health and safety risks if they do break the ships. Many workers support the industry, seeing it as their only opportunity to make a living. Workers at Alang unfurled a banner saying "Greenpeace Go Back" during a visit to the shipyard by France's ambassador to India in February 2006.<sup>102</sup> Meanwhile, unsurprisingly and unconvincingly, staff at Alang say that India's shipbreaking industry is equipped to handle hazardous material. The chairperson of a company responsible for clean up at Alang said, "We have to do regular checks of our staff every six months and we have found no lung or any other health problem for 10 or 15 years."<sup>103</sup>

Even if the turning back of the *Clemenceau* is seen as a victory, it is merely a temporary one. Since then, an asbestos-lined ocean liner, the *SS Blue Lady* (formerly *SS France*), has docked in Alang to be scrapped. The Indian Supreme Court cleared its entry contingent on approval from court-sanctioned experts, which was granted.<sup>104</sup> Greenpeace said the court experts were under intense pressure to clear the vessel.<sup>105</sup>

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[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/4796221.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4796221.stm).

<sup>97</sup> Jain, *supra* note 95.

<sup>98</sup> *Id.*

<sup>99</sup> *Id.*

<sup>100</sup> *Id.*

<sup>101</sup> France 'Will Take Back Asbestos', BBC NEWS, Feb. 8, 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/4692420.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4692420.stm).

<sup>102</sup> France Says It Will Take Back Asbestos From Warship, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, Feb. 8, 2006, <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?F=1521136&C=navwar>.

<sup>103</sup> *Id.*

<sup>104</sup> 'Toxic Ship' Reaches Indian State, *supra* note 96.

<sup>105</sup> *Id.*

There are too many economic interests at stake, including the legitimate needs of shipbreaking laborers themselves, to merit an easy solution (merely transferring the ships to other destinations or returning them to their home countries) that does not account for these interests. Here, the Eco-Socialist argument that dealing with the ecological crisis effectively will require a transformation of production relationships and global economic divides is critical.<sup>106</sup> The shipbreaking industry presents a scenario in which an ecologically sound and socially just solution cannot occur without taking into account the employment needs of the workers. Ideally, private industry or government and legal intervention should provide safer employment opportunities. Alternatively, pressuring governments and companies in wealthy countries which send ships for breaking, while strengthening and enforcing domestic and international environmental, labor, health, and safety laws, can make shipbreaking safer. Shipbreaking in South Asia is only the tip of the global environmental-social injustice iceberg. Toxic waste dumping and cleanup in poor countries echoes what coal mining in the Western world was a generation ago: fraught with danger but providing vital employment.<sup>107</sup>

The notion of Environmental Justice has received increasing prominence in the United States. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officially articulates it as a goal:

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EPA has this goal for all communities and persons across this Nation. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.<sup>108</sup>

What is striking about this definition is the emphasis on equality of protection and access for individuals, and the stipulation that this goal is for “all communities and persons across this Nation.” While an admirable statement in stressing nondiscrimination based on race, color, income, and national origin, it renders the practice of Environmental Justice hollow in explicitly limiting official government goals to the United States. The problem with this limitation is not that the U.S. should take charge of environmental justice for the world,

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<sup>106</sup> See O'Connor, *supra* note 64, at 163. O'Connor argues that an *a priori* of red-green politics is that the solution to both the global economic and environmental crises presupposes an ecological socialism. *Id.*

<sup>107</sup> For a powerful illustration of coal-mining in pre-World War II England, see GEORGE ORWELL, *THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER* (Harvest Books 1972) (1937).

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Environmental Justice Homepage, <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/> (last visited Feb. 11, 2007).

but that having this goal coupled with stringent domestic regulations is conducive to unsavory practices such as toxic dumping in poor countries where people need jobs and environmental regulations lack teeth. Given the global scope of environmental problems and the necessity for transnational solutions, this cannot really be considered Environmental Justice.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, even within the United States, the implementation and effectiveness of this movement is not without controversy.<sup>110</sup>

From another perspective, Deep Ecologist George Sessions raises an important question about the effects of the environmental justice movement:

As the “social justice” movement (with its anthropocentric lineage) attempts to join forces with the ecocentric ecological movement, what will be the outcome? Will the very real need to secure human livelihood and equality, a toxin-free human environment, and “jobs” in the short-run in a seriously overcrowded world overshadow the necessity to protect and restore the long-range ecological integrity of the planet?<sup>111</sup>

Sessions is perceptive in recognizing possible negative effects in deemphasizing conservation goals in favor of anthropocentric goals. However, his focus on human attitudes rather than needs is unpersuasive in terms of understanding the root causes of environmental degradation, such as when he muses: “Have most humans now become so thoroughly domesticated in their

<sup>109</sup> Although vague and overbroad as a policy document, the 17 principles of Environmental Justice that emerged from the “First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit” (October 24-27 1991, Washington DC) explicitly embrace the global dimension to environmental progress, more so than the EPA’s version. Among these 17, an example of a helpful principle: “Environmental Justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.” An example of an overbroad principle: “Environmental Justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.” The full list of principles can be found at Principles of Environmental Justice, <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2007).

<sup>110</sup> For an example of the controversies of the U.S. environmental justice movement, see Henry Payne’s argument in a 1997 article that the Claiborne Nuclear Enrichment Center in Louisiana would revitalize the local economy and improve the local African American population’s employment prospects, but that environmental and racial issues were raised by groups lobbying to impede construction of the facility, including the NAACP and Sierra Club. Payne’s assessment: “The plant showcases one solution to the nagging ‘90s questions of how to build environmentally sound industries, keep American industrial jobs, and return those jobs to blue-collar communities. But since the project was announced, the plant’s licensing has been fought every step of the way by the Clinton administration and its allies in the environmental and civil rights movements. In Claiborne Parish, the soaring rhetoric of environmentalism and civil rights has come to earth in the form of federal regulation — and fallen on the very ideals it promised to lift up.” Henry Payne, *Environmental Injustice: How green ideology denies poor blacks good jobs*, REASON, Aug./Sept. 1997, at 53.

<sup>111</sup> George Sessions, *Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour*, 13 REVISION 109 (1991), reprinted in *ECOLOGY: KEY CONCEPTS IN CRITICAL THEORY*, *supra* note 10, at 140, 148.

urban environments that they are unable to perceive the need for a wild planet, wild species and eco-systems, and the wild in themselves?"<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, he unfairly criticizes "Murray Bookchin and the 'social ecologists'," who he says "have, for the most part, demonstrated an unwillingness or inability to transcend a narrow anthropocentric perspective and consider the necessity for human population stabilization and reduction, and the high priority of protection and restoration of wild species and ecosystems."<sup>113</sup> To the contrary, environmental movements worldwide are inextricably linked with anthropocentric concerns.<sup>114</sup> As Howard Parsons says,

Economy is a matter of ecology: it has to do with the production and distribution of goods and services in the context of human society and nature. The bread-and-butter issues are tied into a planetary system in which the peoples of the planet live and make their living by collective labors in and on and with nature.<sup>115</sup>

Together, Red and Green can indeed be a strong joint force for change. Such force is evident in the developing world in environmental initiatives such as India's *Chipko*<sup>116</sup> and anti-*Narmada* dam<sup>117</sup> movements, which succeeded to the degree they did due to grassroots involvement and an anthropocentric focus.

<sup>112</sup> *Id.*

<sup>113</sup> *Id.*

<sup>114</sup> David Pepper's analysis is relevant here. His book attempts a synthesis of Marxism, anarchism, and deep ecology, with anthropocentric remedies prescribed keeping in mind socialist as well as green concerns. He points out that many features of a green economy (e.g., the basic income scheme) cannot be administered without some state machinery. He argues that the state is necessarily the medium whereby communality is translated into the planned collective action needed to undo the environmental destruction caused by an unplanned and unregulated market economy. DAVID PEPPER, *ECO-SOCIALISM: FROM DEEP ECOLOGY TO SOCIAL JUSTICE* 146 (Routledge 1993).

<sup>115</sup> Parsons, *supra* note 37, at xii.

<sup>116</sup> On the Chipko movement, see THOMAS WEBER, *HUGGING THE TREES: THE STORY OF THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT* (Viking 1988). From humble origins in the 1970s as a spontaneous protest against logging abuses in Uttar Pradesh in the Himalayas, thousands of supporters of the Chipko movement, mainly village women, won bans on clear felling in a number of regions and influenced natural resource policy in India.

<sup>117</sup> India's Narmada dam was recently completed after two decades of protest and controversy. For an overview see advocacy coalition Friends of River Narmada, *A Brief Introduction to the Narmada Issue*, <http://www.narmada.org/introduction.html> (last visited Oct. 25, 2007). "The construction of large dams on the River Narmada in central India and its impact on millions of people living in the river valley has become one of the most important social issues in contemporary India." *Id.* "In brief, the Government's plan is to build 30 large, 135 medium and 3000 small dams to harness the waters of the Narmada and its tributaries. The proponents of the dam claim that this plan would provide large amounts of water and electricity which are desperately required for the purposes of development . . . Opponents of the dam question the basic assumptions of the Narmada Valley Development Plan and believe that its planning is unjust . . . It is well established that the plans rest on untrue and unfounded assumptions of hydrology and seismicity of the area and the construction is causing large scale abuse of human rights and displacement of many poor and underprivileged communities." *Id.*

Admittedly, associating with Marxian ideologies is politically unpopular in many parts of the world. Nevertheless, Eco-Socialist insights regarding resolving environmental problems (such as the importance of a fundamentally anthropocentric approach) can be welcomed even by the most ardent “free market” anti-Marxists, who too have to grapple with the socio-economic aspects of dealing with environmental problems, which environmental science and the market alone cannot resolve.

Garrett Hardin indeed wrote eloquently that:

Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit — in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.<sup>118</sup>

However, this observation fails to take into account that a majority of the world are not in any position to even be herdsman in the commons. The tragedy is that much of the world lacks the freedom to really participate in the commons, not that they have too much freedom.

#### CONCLUSION: A REASON FOR OPTIMISM BEYOND RED AND GREEN

In 1976, Hugh Stretton observed that:

There are equal and unequal ways of conserving resources. There are also equal and unequal ways of squandering them. So there is no inevitable general relationship between the Left and the environmental movement. Instead there is a tangle of common, overlapping and conflicting interests, and plenty of opportunity for negotiation.<sup>119</sup>

Thirty years later, while this assessment remains insightful, the scale for potential shared interests, negotiation, and cooperation has broadened beyond Red-Green alliances, to include common ground between environmental progress and corporate interests.

Several major corporations and environmental groups recently announced an “unprecedented alliance” to push for quicker action against global warming — urging lawmakers to pass mandatory curbs on carbon emissions. Called the U.S. Climate Action Partnership, the group includes Alcoa, BP America, Caterpillar, DuPont, General Electric, Lehman Brothers and four utilities. The environmental partners are Environmental Defense, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, and the World

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<sup>118</sup> Hardin, *supra* note 25, at 1244.

<sup>119</sup> STRETTON, CAPITALISM, *supra* note 70, at 10.

Resources Institute.<sup>120</sup> Politicians have also been more boldly voicing environmental concerns: Al Gore, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Tony Blair's (among others) calls for action over global warming suggest that even establishment politicians concede that environmental progress requires decisive action and cooperation.<sup>121</sup> In 2001, President Bush withdrew the U.S. from the Kyoto Protocol, arguing that it was an "economic straitjacket" and that it failed to set standards for developing nations.<sup>122</sup> In 2007, "[t]he Bush administration, which until recently avoided directly accepting that humans were warming the planet in potentially harmful ways," accepted the sobering findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.<sup>123</sup> The Panel concluded that global warming is "unequivocal" and that human activity is the main driver, "very likely" causing most of the rise in temperatures since 1950.<sup>124</sup> Representatives from the U.S. and 112 other countries have approved this report — a definite step in the right direction. Bush has personally stated that he takes global warming seriously and that the U.S. will do its part to combat it, although he has declined to accept binding targets.<sup>125</sup>

The Panel on Climate Change has found that poor countries, which contribute significantly less to global warming, will suffer the worst consequences from its effects.<sup>126</sup> As Murray Bookchin has argued, there must be "a resolute attempt to fully anchor ecological dislocation in social dislocations."<sup>127</sup> However,

<sup>120</sup> *Industry signals Bush to do more on warming*, MSNBC, Jan. 19, 2007, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16708004>.

<sup>121</sup> See Juliet Eilperin, *Blair Urges Action Against Global Warming*, WASH. POST, Jan. 27, 2005, at A8 ("The world's most powerful nations must act now to curb global warming, British Prime Minister Tony Blair told world leaders at the World Economic Forum . . ."). I do not, of course, mean to suggest that Blair, Gore, and Schwarzenegger are Eco-Socialists, but merely that the economic dimension in tackling environmental problems has not dissuaded them from publicly voicing the need for action. Schwarzenegger, for example, recently signed a sweeping law to cut greenhouse gas emissions in California. See *Arnold Jabs Bush on Global Warming*, CBS/AP, Oct. 25, 2006, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/10/25/politics/main2123253.shtml>.

<sup>122</sup> Thomas H. Maugh II, *No Stopping Climate Shift*, *U.N. Study Says*, L.A. TIMES, Feb. 2, 2007, at A1.

<sup>123</sup> Elisabeth Rosenthal & Andrew C. Revkin, *Science Panel Calls Global Warming 'Unequivocal'*, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 3, 2007, at A1.

<sup>124</sup> *Id.*

<sup>125</sup> Caren Bohan, *Bush struggles to stay relevant in climate debate*, REUTERS U.K., Sept. 30, 2007, available at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUKN3023796820070930>.

<sup>126</sup> Andrew C. Revkin, *Poorest Nations Will Bear Brunt as World Warms*, N.Y. TIMES, April 1, 2007, at A1. "Two-thirds of the atmospheric buildup of carbon dioxide, a heat-trapping greenhouse gas that can persist in the air for centuries, has come in nearly equal proportions from the United States and Western European countries. . . . In contrast, Africa accounts for less than 3 percent of the global emissions of carbon dioxide from fuel burning since 1900, yet its 840 million people face some of the biggest risks from drought and disrupted water supplies, according to new scientific assessments. As the oceans swell with water from melting ice sheets, it is the crowded river deltas in southern Asia and Egypt, along with small island nations, that are most at risk." *Id.*

<sup>127</sup> Bookchin, *supra* note 60.

Bookchin's strategy, "to challenge the vested corporate and political interests known as capitalist society,"<sup>128</sup> is less likely to be successful for long-term environmental progress than finding ways to include these interests at the table.

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<sup>128</sup> *Id.*