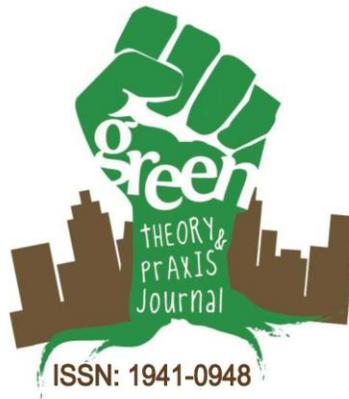


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***The Disaster of Coercive Institutional Socialization:
Alaska Natives and Environmental Emergency Planning***

by Nicholas B. Stransky

Abstract:

This work attempts to get at the cultural differences that plague the implementation of effective emergency planning in Alaska. The participant observation conducted for this case study illustrates how Native Americans perceive the natural world much differently than does the governing white cultural of the state. In many instances, environmental disasters are exacerbated because traditional ways have been pushed aside in favor of current practice. The miscommunications and lack of respect that arises from cultural misunderstanding adversely effects all aspects of disaster planning; mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. The paper concludes by asserting that Native communities in Alaska will likely turn back to cultural traditions to deal with environmental emergencies, abandoning institutional (white-dominated) practices because of their inherent inefficiencies to date.

Introduction:

The main uniform effect of calamities upon the political and social structure of society is an expansion of governmental regulation, regimentation, and control of social relationships and a decrease in the regulation and management of social relationships by individuals and private groups (Sorokin 1943: 122).

During the summer of the year 2000, I was employed as a supervisor/team coordinator for a team of interns working for the Alaska Division of Emergency Services headquartered at Fort Richardson, Alaska. During my tenure in that organization, I had many opportunities to observe the operation of all four facets of emergency planning (Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery). Though somewhat limited to office duties, I frequently entered into discussion with the permanent staff relating to institutional perceptions relative to the Alaskan Native population and issues of emergency planning. What I have observed in that work environment is consistent with the published literature which, incidentally, is scarce.

The information obtained for the purposes of this work is largely that procured from Internet searches, and is very limited, however, there is ample evidence in the literature to indicate directions for future research in the area of emergency planning as it relates to Alaskan Natives. Within this work, the reader will find references to issues of socialization, social control, social definitions of reality, and cultural differences. It is the purpose of this work to attempt an explanation of why Alaskan Natives are perceived as 'backward', dependent, and non-motivated to participate in the type of emergency planning strongly advocated by the institutions governing the Alaska Division of Emergency Services, and other institutions of the same or similar ilk. Various avenues of thought will be offered to explain the actions, or perceived inactions of the Alaskan Natives during periods of Riverine Floods primarily, but drawing from other institutionally defined 'disasters' to infer Native motivations.

Native Experiences with Institutionally Defined "Disasters"

Hurricane Katrina illustrates the institutional view of disasters. President Bush blamed nature for the widespread destruction of the city of New Orleans and Gulf Coast areas. But most of the problems were man-made, resulting from poor planning, professional incompetence, and cronyism at all levels of government, not nature.

Some authors (Jackson, 2005; deWaal, 2005; Cutter, 2005) have offered discourse regarding the political and social ramifications of Hurricane Katrina, and the perceived relationship between disaster response, social class, race, and political affiliation. These are also issues that drive a broader examination of disaster response in the Athabascan communities within Doyon Corporation in North-central Alaska. The Native view of such tragic events is likely to be much different than that of governing elites; however,

the perspective of disasters is framed by the historical decline of Athabascan culture, and at least part of the difficulty can be attributed to the 'redistribution' of land following Alaskan statehood.

Under the Alaska Native Claims settlement Act, the 12 main corporations of Alaska Natives were granted certain areas of land by the federal government. If one examines a map of native land holdings, it becomes clear that much of the land allocated to native use is located in what might be defined as “high risk,” much like the location of other marginalized groups (see comments above, re: Hurricane Katrina). Many of the communities are located by the Yukon River, which is subject to intensive flooding on a regular basis. Moreover, the absence of flexibility in terms of land use, and the cash-economic nature of western social philosophy has created an environment that is antithetical to native culture.

The Athabascans, in what is now Doyon Corporation, did not traditionally live on the banks of the river year-round, rather moving from the river to more sheltered areas after fish supplies had been replenished. Herein lies one of the major difficulties as regards the environmental disaster of native re-socialization and loss of culture. In addition, there is evidence that suggests that the decline of the traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle and the concentration of people in higher risk and flood prone areas was exacerbated by the location of necessary and mandated services (Berardi 2003).

Concerning our case study, Drabek (1986: 329) quotes Lamson (1983:482) as stating that “fisherman accept and/or adapt to environmental hazards as a natural, to-be-expected feature of their occupation.” Does this statement hold true for those fishermen who live on the shores and islands of Alaska? Or, is this observation based on

assumptions about the nature of the fishermen who have access to the social and institutional resources available to them through governmental organizations only? One must have an understanding of where Alaskan Natives are perceived to be located on the 'social scale.' Dynes (1975), offers three typologies with characteristic patterns of response to disaster:

Type I Societies- These societies have small populations and are organized in terms of family, kin, and clan or tribal relationships. The economic base of these societies is food gathering. These societies are quite fragile and lacking in resources for adapting to disastrous situations.

Type II Societies- These have larger populations than Type I societies. Their economy is based on some sort of farming that regularly generates economic surplus...Disasters produce moderate amounts of disruption and social change in Type II societies.

Type III Societies- Characterized by large populations and highly complex and integrated social structures, such as nation-states. They have considerable physical resources and surplus to replace what is lost through disaster...disasters produce little social change and disruption in Type III societies. (Miller, 1985: 10)

During the *Exxon Valdez* oil disaster in Prince William Sound, there was considerable turmoil generated, however, this was largely due to the perceptions of the various villages. Interestingly, the villages that experienced the best documented reactions to the spill were some of those farthest away from the actual spill area.

Ouzinkie, a community that experienced little oil contamination, reacted with great fear to the possibility of contamination of subsistence resources. Further, it was observed that

[F]ear of the oil, fear of contamination, and uncertainty about how far and to what extent oil would affect the food chain concerned many, and for a long time. The continuing uncertainty of the actual distribution and effects of the oil over time became one of single most disturbing factors during the first summer (Mitchell 1996: 2).

This phenomenon is not unknown. It has been established that the threat of disaster can be equally powerful in eliciting response as an actual disaster itself. It could be argued that the response of the people of Ouzinkie is not unexpected by virtue of their Type I society (see above, Dynes, 1975). The society is one of the tribally connected societies in Alaska, and its economy is based exclusively on fishing. However, the real threat to this community was perception based, not reality based. The question of whether the community would have survived, had the oil spill contaminated the fishing area, remains open to debate.

It has been proposed by Rodin, et al., (1992: 233) that “in practically all areas of impact, the native communities were rendered more impotent than the non-native communities.” Mitchell responds by stating, “I am not persuaded that this is true. Native communities may be more capable of managing impacts and initiating recovery than the towns” (Mitchell, 1996:4). These observations and arguments lead to an interesting set of points, that is, Native communities can be classified as Type I societies, that their economic system is based on food gathering in the form of fishing, that the threat of disastrous contamination elicits a response on an equal level as actual contamination, and that perceptions of the Native communities are influenced by White traditional dominant institutional thinking.

Mitchell also states that Native communities are very resilient, adaptive, and have a reliable network of extended family. “These traits, though wholesome for the traditional community health, are difficult for resource agencies committed to the planning processes and to eliciting local ideas in the peculiar format called ‘public hearings’ (1996: 6). A closer examination of Native American and specifically Alaskan Native cultures is warranted, in order to understand the disparity of perceptions between Whites and Natives in the area of disaster response and emergency planning.

Native American Cultural Systems and Observations

The search for information relating directly to the behavior of Alaskan Natives prior to, during, and after disasters revealed that there is little research literature available. This fact necessitated a change in approach to the problem of explaining the Natives’ response to hazards and emergency planning.

Selu, The Corn Mother of us all, and her contribution to the examination of Athabascan Culture:

In Cherokee oral tradition, Selu originated from the Creator as the mate for the hunter Kanati, who had been created to be the bringer of hunting and woodlore to the people. She emerged into the world singing, from the top of a cornstalk. As described in the oral tradition, Kanati had been hunting a great deal, having nothing else to do, and the animals grew weary of the constant hunt. They approached the Creator and spoke of the problem, which would soon result in the annihilation of all of the animals. The Creator pondered the problem and after a time, caused Selu to sprout beside the sleeping Kanati. She provided the balance needed in Kanati’s life, and ultimately in the world of humans.

“Woman and man represent cardinal balances in nature. Among these balances are “the balance of forces, the balance of food, the balance of relationships- taking and giving back with respect” (Awiakta, 1993: 24-26). Perhaps it is the third aspect of balance that is most germane to the work presented here. What other links can be found to support the concept of Selu in the northern tribes?

It is known that the Hopi of New Mexico are also familiar with a similar concept to Selu (Iktome in the Hopi language- Erdoes, et al., 1984), though she is a figure in Cherokee oral tradition. Moreover, closer examination of the oral traditions of other tribes reveals that she, or a closely related figure, with the same wisdom and virtues, exists in other southern tribes as well. What has this to do with the Athabascan population and emergency planning? Well one might ask at this point. The Athabascans of Alaska, who are the most profoundly affected by the annual Riverine Floods on the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Porcupine rivers, are directly related to the Navajo of the southern plains (Fairbanks Visitors Bureau 2000), whose most important dieties include Spider-Woman, who brings understanding and respect to the people.

While the direct link to the southern tribes resides in ancient history, the linkages to beliefs and cultural practices are still evident. In the most general sense, one can assume that respect, for all living creatures, and above all, for Mother Earth, is paramount in Native cultures. This is an issue that has been discussed time and again but with little seeming understanding of what this entails. The issue of respect is multifaceted for the Native Alaskans, and while the work presented here is primarily directed toward the Athabascan Natives in Alaska, there is little reason to doubt that the concept of respect varies greatly from one tribe to another. In Athabascan (Dene’) culture, which will be

used here to illustrate the overall culture, there are a number of principles that govern social groupings. Among these are the following:

Individual choice- Each person is free to choose their local band affiliation within certain bounds. This allows individuals to join a band as long as they have relatives in the band. By allowing for flexibility and movement in memberships, changes can be made as needed because of availability of game, personality conflicts or a person's own choice. (It would be disrespectful to question this).

Territorial Claims- Each band utilizes a well-defined territory, separate from those belonging to others. Families, household, and local groups have their own sections of the Band territory...This can even be seen today [as illustrated] by the fact that many Interior Athabascans return to specific river sites, their fish camp, which may have been in the family for many generations.

Customs, Beliefs- The belief that each thing; animal, men, trees, rocks, etc. [Rivers, Mountains] has a yega or spirit...These spirits could be vengeful if mistreated. For example, if a beaver was killed improperly, the spirit of the beaver could ensure that the man responsible caught no more beaver...under such circumstances, if an animal was not found where it should be found, the group believed that one of the members of the band had angered the spirit of the animal or broken a taboo...A ceremony would then be held to appease the spirit of the animal

(<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/ANEunit/intro.html>).

All of the above social values and beliefs lead to a common point: respect. Not only respect for each other, for which most, if not all Native cultures are known, but respect for the creations of the Earth. This includes not just the animate, visible creations of the Earth, but the spirits of the mountains, Rivers, Lakes, and Sky. This literary journey now brings us to a discussion of Alaskan Native respect for other peoples.

Alaskan Natives and the Concept of Respect:

1. Show Respect to Others - Each Person Has a Special Gift
2. Share what you have - Giving Makes You Richer
3. Know Who You Are - You Are a Reflection on Your Family
4. Accept What Life Brings - You Cannot Control Many Things
5. Have Patience - Some Things Cannot Be Rushed
6. Live Carefully - What You Do Will Come Back to You
7. Take Care of Others - You Cannot Live without Them
8. Honor Your Elders - They Show You the Way in Life
9. Pray for Guidance - Many Things Are Not Known
10. See Connections - All Things Are Related

(<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Values/index.html>).

From the list of Athabascan Cultural norms, it can be seen that respect is an overwhelming theme throughout the cultural norms of the Natives. It has even been stated that in the event of a disagreement, or a mistake on the part of an individual, the rest of the band will, neither as individuals nor a group, tell the mistaken individual that he or she is wrong to do what is being done. This happens because it would be a show of

disrespect to the gifts of the person, and this is a cultural norm (Awiakta, 1996; Erdoes, et al., 1984; <http://www.linkupalaska.com/aboriginal/education/>). A great cultural divide exists between how Natives and whites respect the environment and those who are different from themselves. This divide can manifest itself at the wrong times during a crisis.

The discussion to this point has centered on the development of an understanding of some characteristics of Athabascan societies. Much of the information has been derived from the writings of Native American authors (Awiakta, 1993; Erdoes, 1984). The derivations have required some work to find linkages between the Athabascans of the north, and their southern cousins. The findings, however, are not surprising in their content. It has been established that the cultural values of the Athabascans are completely consistent with the overarching themes found in other Native American cultures. Respect, above all else, is an all-pervasive theme in all of the writings and websites reviewed. This includes the concept of the spiritual nature of all things, animate or inanimate, as well as the respect for other humans.

White Institutional Perceptions of Alaskan Native Communities

This section of the work involves an examination of the white institutional perceptions of Alaska Natives and communities. The discussion will include illustrations of the differences between the two cultures, the Alaskan Natives, and the Euro-American Whites. A table has been reproduced for convenience, to be used as a reference in understanding the origins of White perceptions.

In their 1992 publication *Wisdom of the Elders*, Knudtson and Suzuki describe some of the differences between the indigenous Native world view and a Western world view, as follows:

Indigenous	Western
<p>Spirituality is embedded in all elements of the cosmos.</p> <p>Humans have responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationship with the natural world.</p> <p>Universe is made up of dynamic, ever changing natural forces.</p> <p>Time is circular with natural cycles that maintain all life.</p> <p>Nature is honored routinely through daily spiritual practice.</p> <p>Respect for elders is based on their compassion and reconciliation of outer- and inner-directed knowledge.</p>	<p>Spirituality is centered in a single, supreme being.</p> <p>Humans exercise dominion over nature to use it for personal and economic gain.</p> <p>Universe is made up of an array of static physical objects.</p> <p>Time is a linear chronology of “human progress.”</p> <p>Spiritual practices are intermittent and set apart from daily life.</p> <p>Respect for others is based on material achievement and chronological old age.</p>
<p>Sense of empathy and kinship with all forms of life.</p>	<p>Sense of separateness from, and superiority over, other forms of life.</p>

The following statement reveals some interesting perceptions about Athabaskan culture, emergency management, and White perceptions thereof:

A honey bucket is a five-gallon paint can, fitted on the inside with a garbage sack. Upon filling the bucket, with excrement and urine, a family member takes the garbage sack out of the honey bucket and proceeds to the community disposal area usually a community lagoon or a wooden pit in the back yard. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)(August 1995) found that residents of the Yukon-Kuskokwim region deposit raw

sewage in open pits and bunkers located within residential areas (p. 5). The EPA (1995) went on to suggest that every year snow melt produces seasonal flooding which in turn moves sewage-contaminated water and plastic bags full of human excrement and urine into the community and surrounding areas (p. 5). Not surprisingly, these unsanitary conditions create many health hazards (<http://www.ldb.org/vl/cp/hund.htm>).

This information was found on a public website, and provides some insight into White perceptions of the native cultures and communities. Why would anyone live under such conditions, one might reasonably ask? Upon closer examination, one finds the key words in the publication, which are the following: plastic bags, wooden pit (presumably with no lid, per the description) Environmental Protection Agency.

These words become even more interesting in the light of other observations. This problem is not a new one, as evidence by a 1975 publication about rural sanitation among the Native villages of Alaska. In this work, Napoleon, Lind, and Darnell (1975:5) present their observations about Native communities. Sanitation and running water supplies are observed to be non-existent, and garbage dumps are constant hazards which manifest their potential every year during the spring riverine floods on the Yukon, Kukoskwim, and Porcupine rivers. The mental images that these descriptions elicit are horrendous in their repulsive qualities. Again, one must ask why anyone would want to live in that manner. The upshot of the two publications, published twenty years apart, is that essentially nothing has changed. In the more recent publication, then-Governor of Alaska, Tony Knowles is quoted on three separate occasions as promising sanitation systems and running water to the Native communities, and budgeting millions of dollars to do so. Yet, there is a pervasive undertone to the publication which places the blame on the victims themselves. The following quotation is very illustrative of the dilemma:

Since they have polluted or nearly polluted the water in the delta, with human waste, the Native people have to use other means to obtain drinkable water. The Native people travel to and across the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers and retrieve blocks of ice. These ice blocks are set outside and chopped into pieces, then placed into clean 50 gallon garbage cans. The villagers use the melted water in the garbage cans for everything such as cooking, cleaning, bathing, and drinking (Andrew 1997). Since, the water is centrally located in one area it easy to get contaminated by the entrance of one unclean hand or particles in the air (<http://www.ldb.org/vl/cp/hund.htm>).

This statement provides an adequate overview of the White institutional perceptions of Alaskan Natives and their ‘chosen’ lifestyle. Personal experience has suggested that this attitude pervades all levels of institutional emergency planning with the result that personnel within these types of organizations tend to minimize the effect of what is termed “human progress” insofar as the Natives are concerned. Their misery is the fault of their non-cooperation with the dictates of the White institutions. The year 2000 brought a perfect example of the disparity between Native and White perceptions of disaster. This year, the annual run of Pacific Salmon of all species was drastically decreased for reasons as yet not established. Many of the native villages depend on the yearly runs of these fish, not only to sustain the human population, but to feed essential sled dogs, whose primary food is Chum salmon (otherwise known as ‘Dog’ salmon.) The catches this year were less than 25% of previous years, though the phenomenon had occurred also in 1998.

The declaration of the “Fish Disaster” by Governor Knowles led to derogatory comments toward the Natives who were affected by some of the staff at Alaska Division of Emergency Services. This, they explained was due to the Natives’ demands for “handouts” from the State on a constant basis. This reaction intrigued me and I researched some of the hundreds of letters coming into the Governor’s office from the

outlying villages in the area of the Yukon, Kukoskwim, and Norton Sound watersheds.

The letters that I reviewed did not give the impression of asking for a “handout.” Rather, the overall tone of the letters was one that described the situation of the Natives and their communities without mention of State assistance.

Perhaps there is a sociologically significant aspect to all of this disparity in perceptions. Sabatelli and Shehan (1993: 391) discuss the various aspects of exchange theory, arriving at the issue of power, which they define as “the ability to extract compliance in an exchange relationship by controlling valued resources and rewards.”

Thus, it could be argued that there exists a unilateral power structure between the White establishment and the Native villages of Alaska, and further that the power wielded by the state resides in the ability to provide needed goods and services to the Natives. But, at what cost to the Natives? They are essentially forced to **ask** for the goods and services that they need. In examining social networks, it has been found that there is a marked difference between knowing that support is available (a positive aspect), and being placed in a situation where one is forced to ask for help from the network. It seems reasonable to argue that the Natives would, by definition, be reluctant to ask for needed help, perhaps because the respect that is a part of their culture would elicit help without the person or persons in need being forced to voice their need for help. Finally, in response to the derogatory comments made by Alaska state staff, the evidence does not match the accusations or perceptions. The letters do not reflect requests for state aid, but rather a statement or statements of the facts, as experienced by the Natives.

The final subsection of this argument is simply this: Reviewing the differences at the top of the section, one can readily see enormous disparities in the cultural systems of

Westerners and Indigenous peoples. The most easily discernible difference is also the most general. The Indigenous people view the environment as infinite and living, while the Westerners view the environment from a strictly utilitarian viewpoint, and finite. If we categorize the Alaska Division of Emergency Services as a gatekeeper of sorts, but definitely an agent of social control, we may be able to see the veracity of statement by Quarantelli, et al., (1974: 33) which states that “social control agencies see individual actions in disturbances as being relatively unorganized and unplanned.” While this statement is not directly related to the situation under discussion here, it does have application, in that the Native communities are perceived in this manner on a continual basis. One is compelled to question the source of the definitions of 'unorganized and unplanned' and how they are appropriate in this discussion. This perception only becomes exacerbated during actual events.

The perceptions of the White institutional agencies influence approaches to the area of emergency planning in many ways, however, the point seems clear that there exists a great deal of victim-blaming in the area of emergency planning. More recently, the same type of victim-blaming has been demonstrated in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (Dynes and Rodriguez, 2005). By equating the impoverished areas of New Orleans to Somalia, and portraying the stranded inhabitants of that city as looters, and prone to violence, the mass media created an image of a population that deserved their fate.

Application of Emergency Planning to Native Communities

How does one convince the Native population that the application of emergency planning measures will be beneficial to their communities? This is a difficult question to answer. Drabek has observed that “ethnic differences will impact hazard perceptions” (1986: 329).

One is forced to wonder about the applications of the four aspects of emergency planning in the Native villages. Is it possible that a re-interpretation of existing literature is warranted? Wenger (1978: 20) states that “...beliefs that concern the relationship between human behavior and natural forces would appear to be critically important in an understanding of community response to natural disasters.”

There is no question that this statement carries a great deal of import for the argument in this work. It implies that perceptions of natural hazards rest within the structure and culture of the community. If we re-examine the list of differences between the Westerners and the Indigenous peoples listed in the previous section, we can see that the differences between the two groups influence both groups, but in essentially opposite directions, based on their varying approaches to social philosophy and the environment.

Further in Wenger’s argument (1978: 22) is the statement that “...where resources are more widely dispersed throughout the system, greater equality in control or access to resources is evident; therefore power is less concentrated.” This seems to also be supported by the evidence presented herein, in that not only are the village resources widely dispersed, but the power distribution in the villages is extremely diluted, insofar as the accessibility of resources is concerned. This again, is illustrated by the respect concept pervasive in the Native oral tradition. It would be disrespectful to hoard resources in such a setting.

Having made these observations, Wenger's (1978: 20) argument is underscored by the previous discussion in this work. We have seen that there is large difference between the Native cultures and the dominant White culture in Alaska, insofar as the value systems operate. Wenger argues:

There are belief systems that can be classified as un-causal, passive, and deified. Within these cultures natural disasters may be viewed as 'acts of God'... Furthermore, humans are likely to be viewed as passive actors in relationship to nature; they are not to intervene, but adapt to natural forces...disaster response may be significantly influenced...On the other hand, complex, activist, naturalistic causal beliefs may prevail. In these cultures, one is mandated to attempt to control nature" (Wenger 1978: 20).

Taking the argument one step further, one is compelled to examine the Natives response to yearly riverine flooding in the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Porcupine rivers. The White institutional perception is that the Natives are too lazy or ignorant to use mitigation, preparedness, response, or recovery functions to protect themselves, because they know that the state will compensate them for flood damages and provide food, shelter, clothing, etc., if it is needed. That this is a misleading perception is clear. The lack of "appropriate" action on the part of the Native villages is not due to ignorance or laziness at all. It is a result of thousands of years of hazard recognition, and the acceptance of the variances in the behavior of natural forces. The Natives not only do not, but would find it inconceivable to attempt to, control any aspect of nature. Further, there is the possibility of offending the spirit of the river, thereby risking further flooding, or the denial of fish.

Thus, Wenger's argument is supported by what has been seen in the Alaskan Native villages, especially in the interior of Alaska. The same is true of the argument made about complex societies and their response to natural disasters. The primary

argument from the institutional agencies is described above, and is a condemnation of Native approaches due to the clear lack of effort to control nature. There is clearly a lack of understanding of Native cultural structure and beliefs.

Wenger outlines eight basic tenets of emergency planning, and it is exactly these eight tenets that the White institutions associated with emergency planning in Alaska have ignored. They are:

1. Normalization principle- plans should be adjusted to the normal behavior of the people, not the opposite.
2. Disaster planning is a process, not a product
3. Planning should be based on likely scenarios, not on 'worst case' scenarios. It should not be based on disaster myths (panic, looting, etc.)
4. Disaster planning should be integrated into the traditional planning process, not isolated. If it is integrated, it develops links to power, and through that, to issues of mitigation
5. Disaster planning is not disaster management
6. Disaster planning should not be based on Command and Control models, but on emergent resource mobilization (Wenger 2000).

While the eight principles outlined above have strong indications for validity in the dominant society, the problems associated with application to Native villages seems clear. The first principle, if followed through to the completion of disaster planning in a Native village, would immediately eliminate some of the others, simply by virtue of the Native approach to nature. Command and control approaches to disasters are not an issue, as Natives work together during the annual flooding of the Yukon and associated rivers.

One also has to question how the Natives would describe a 'worst case' scenario, other than to describe it as intervention by the institutional agencies during a flood or other disaster (disaster being defined not by the Natives, but by the institutions). The concept of disaster planning versus disaster management presents an interesting scenario. Disaster management is performed by the Natives to whatever degree is desired by them, while disaster planning promoted by the institution, by Native perceptions, is probably nothing more than a 'paper plan'(AufderHeide, 2000: Chapter 3;1).

The issue of the 'paper plan' syndrome is readily clear in the setting with which we are concerned in this paper. While the emergency planning done by the Alaska Division of Emergency Services is certainly applicable to the majority of the Alaskan population, it is not applicable to the Native villages. This seems clear from the discussions of the respective 'life perspectives' for Indigenous and Western peoples.

AufderHeide (2000, Chapter 3:2) cites Quarantelli (1982b: 15, 1985: 3, 19, 21) and Drabek (1985b:i,9), stating that disaster planning and response must be based on valid assumptions. The primary concern, as concerns this work, is the perception of maladaptive behavior, which is perceived by the White institution as being pervasive among the Natives.

Finally, the issue is becoming clear. The dictates of the White institutions in Alaska are centered on an Incident Command System, which is compatible with the paramilitary and military composition of its staff and department supervisors and directors. Such an organization would probably be likely to use a top-down, command and control approach to disaster planning and disaster management, ignoring the important principles outlined by Wenger (2000). AufderHeide (2000, Chapter 3:5) refers

to coercive measures used by totalitarian governments during wartime. It is the perception of this writer that Alaska Division of Emergency Services (ADES) tends to view emergencies and disasters through the tainted lens of military command, in other words, as war. This may help to explain why the Native communities respond poorly to the dictates of emergency planning as set forth by that institution.

Conclusions

Throughout this work, we have discussed the differences between Native and White cultures, examining the possible sources of conflict in the areas of emergency planning and disaster management. Several issues have emerged from the discussion. First and foremost, there is an issue of cultural norms. What is dictated by Western thought is not compatible with Native thought, as regards the concepts of nature and the world. Second is the denigration of the Alaskan Native population by ADES (Alaska Department of Emergency Services) because of the perception that Natives are always asking for “handouts.” This, from personal experience, has not been supported. Quite the opposite has been my experience.

The Alaska Natives take some things for granted because they are part of the cultural system. As an example, it would not be reasonable to expect a Native to ask for assistance, as that act would represent disrespect on two fronts. Firstly, disrespect would be implied by the asking of assistance, in that the inference would be that assistance is available, but is not given freely with respect. Secondly, it would be an indication of a lack of respect to ask for assistance, if it turned out that the person, or institution asked to provide assistance was not able to provide that assistance (loss of ‘face’). Thus, the argument by ADES does not seem to be valid.

Third in the list of germane issues is that of coercion. The institution (ADES and also FEMA under certain circumstances) use somewhat coercive measures to accomplish their goals. That is to have emergency planning measures in place in all potentially threatened communities. This mild coercion can be illustrated by the National Flood Insurance Program guidelines, which mandate the purchase of Flood Insurance by all homeowners in certain high risk flood zones (FEMA <http://www.fema.gov/nfip/complian.htm>). The penalty for not purchasing flood insurance is that the community does not receive any discount on the premiums paid for flood insurance unless there is compliance with the mandates.

The major issue overall, however, is one which has been pervasive in sociology since its inception. That issue is coercive socialization. It is something that is either overtly or latently practiced by society at the institutional level. For example, when a low-income person presents at the hospital emergency room with symptoms that may indicate a major illness, but has no health insurance, what happens? The person is likely to be turned away or transported to a county facility whose mandate is to care for any patient who may present themselves. What is the medical institution saying to such a patient?

Is it not valid to argue that this is a matter of socialization to norms. It is a norm in American White society to achieve, to be independent, etc., and along with achievement come certain perquisites, such as health insurance, which may be used as an indicator of the type of work one performs. Thus, the medical institution is, in effect, saying that people who do not have health insurance are not subscribing to the values and norms of the society, and until such time as they do so, will be relegated to lesser levels of health

care or no health care at all. This could be considered to be a type of coercive socialization.

Is the situation between ADES and the Alaska Native communities any different? In this area, the result of non-compliance is victim blaming, and labeling as ignorant and lazy. As to the question of who initially helped to create the problems faced by Alaskan Natives in the year 2000, one need only examine the description of the “honey pots,” and the follow-up discussion of how the Natives have fouled their water and other resources.

The question here virtually screams to be addressed. There are valid reasons that the Natives have not initiated programs for water treatment or sanitation in the communities. This is related to economics. Simply placing a water treatment plant in each community would not solve the problem because with the plant comes costs associated with maintenance, upgrades, and manpower to keep the plant operational. These costs cannot be absorbed by the Native communities. Furthermore, one must ask the question: Why on earth are the Natives using plastic garbage can liners in the “honey pots,” or better yet, why are they using “honey pots” at all? The answer may perhaps be found in the socialization to White norms. Do the Natives use these appliances because they have been taught over time that simply digging a hole in the ground and using that (or even a sheltered dug-out privy protected from the elements) for waste disposal, is inappropriate? It is fairly certain that the Natives did not develop plastic garbage bags for their “honey pots”. But it is reasonable to say that plastic garbage bags are one way of hiding human waste, which is repugnant to “civilized” humans. This observation is underscored by a statement by Torry (1978a:302, in Drabek, 1986:398), which while not directly addressing the issue of Alaskan Natives, has some application here:

Disaster welfare frequently acts, itself, as an agent of disaster by nurturing long-term risks through short-term remedies...I consider two factors behind risk increment. First, sizeable capital outlays and institutional reforms attendant with state intervention weaken local support structures. Second, as the autonomy of local adjustments shrinks, concomitant dependencies on remote, unpredictable and poorly devised bureaucratic solutions to disaster management prevail (1986: 398).

Is it possible that the garbage bags represent the short-term remedies, while ignoring the larger environmental issue so important to traditional Native cultures (that is, respect for Mother Earth)? The Natives used natural filtration for millennia by depositing their excreta either in the ground, or in pits dug for that purpose (they also utilized village lagoons for some of these purposes). The image of excreta-filled garbage bags floating down the Yukon river during the spring floods is a sobering reminder of the fallacy of ‘civilization’, and should act as a signal to the dominant culture (and I use the term cautiously!) that the norms of White culture are not universally applicable, nor necessarily desirable in all settings.

The larger issue at stake here is that of emergency planning. What of the planning done by ADES? Why is it not lauded by the Natives of Alaska? A possible explanation is that perceptions of emergencies and disasters vary by ethnicity (Drabek, 1986: 329). Thus, it is possible that the Native perceptions of earthquakes, flooding, and other natural “disasters” are entirely different from that of Whites.

Does the above discussion indicate that there is a disaster subculture in the Alaska Native communities? I would argue that there is not, at least not in the complete understanding of what this entails. Based on observations by Wenger (1972: 39, in Drabek, 1986: 125), “these subcultures tend to specialize in their disasters, and the subsequently developed subcultures tend to be keyed to a specific type of agent.” This

would seem to not be the case in the Alaska Native communities, because not only are there multiple hazard threats (flood, earthquake, decreased fish runs, and water pollution potentially leading to epidemics), the communities seem to simply accept that these things will occur, and make little, if any overt preparation for them. This may be a reflection of the Native cultural system.

Secondly, it is not established in any of the existing literature that the Alaskan Natives even consider “disasters” to be nuisances, as described by Wenger (1972:39, in Drabek, 1986: 125). I would argue that perhaps there is a latent disaster subculture. I say this because there seem to be facilitating as well as debilitating aspects to the emergency response characteristics (Wenger, 1978: 41-43). Facilitating factors could be considered to be the knowledge of hazard potentials in the areas of the communities, while debilitating factors could be described as being the lack of preparedness (as defined by the White institutions), though many of the factors influencing potential hazards are related to dominant cultural effects on the Native cultures.

In addition, Native cultures may view disasters as having been precipitated by the mistreatment or abuse of the spirits involved (River, Land, animals). As discussed in a previous section, the Native beliefs include the belief that if something happens (loss of game, floods, etc.), it is because someone in the band has offended one of the spirits associated with the event. There is yet one more disparity between the western culture and indigenous cultures illustrated by this approach.

The equation of disaster and sexual sin had been simply one element in a larger scheme through which natural hazards were related to God’s governance of an erring world...The assumption had been that messages of divine ill-favor would be sent via the destructive forces of nature...Further, they were being eclipsed by social changes of a kind that lay completely outside the old interpretive apparatus...Disasters were not caused by God through nature, but by other human

beings...catastrophe seemed now much more related to the power of men to change the world for both good and evil (Drabek 1986: 342).

Looking back at the description of differences between indigenous and western humans, one can readily see the validity of the above statement. While western man has appropriated what had been, in the past, the power generally associated with God, indigenous man has not done so, recognizing that living in harmony with nature is far more desirable than trying to control nature, which is futile (at least in the long-term scheme of things).

It is doubtful that the Alaska Natives will ever adopt the emergency planning strategies advocated by ADES, simply because of the divergence of perceptions of natural hazards. It is however, possible that in the course of the next few years, many of the communities will perhaps return to more archaic ways of life, to maintain their environment. While this is only an assumption on the part of the writer, it seems plausible in light of the nature of the hazards which impinge more and more on the Native communities of Alaska.

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The Radical Environmental Movement:
Incorporating Empire and the Politics of Nature

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Abstract: This essay analyzes the radical environmental movement, particularly the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), critiquing the movement for a lack of a cohesive and articulate philosophical background. A basic background of the movement is first presented, followed by a discussion of the mislabeling of ELF as a 'terrorist' group utilizing Rawlsian 'just war' theory. The prospect of incorporating the insights provided by Bruno Latour's *Politics of Nature* and Hardt and Negri's *Empire* into the radical environmental movement are explicated, particularly regarding the ELF's conception of nature and prospects for an effective anti-capitalist resistance movement. Latour's concept of 'convoking the collective' provides a useful epistemological base for the ELF, while the 'counter-Empire' forces presented in *Empire* are praxis-oriented models for direct action groups.

The Radical Environmental Movement: Incorporating Empire and the Politics of Nature

I. Introduction

This essay investigates the underlying philosophy and motivations of the radical environmental movement. In particular, the ‘ecotage’ activities of Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the non-violent direct actions of Earth First! (EF!) environmental advocacy groups are examined in order to explicate their underlying ideological doctrines and substantive goals. These two related groups share similar histories and goals, yet employ dissimilar methodologies for achieving these goals. The goals of both groups are seen as ‘radical’ from the standpoint of the mainstream media and United States government. The radical environmental movement can be typified as antisystemic movements, as their aims are not to reform the current econo-political system as much as create a new system of governance and social relations.

Upon further analysis, it becomes apparent that the radical environmental movement, characterized by EF! and ELF, suffers from a dearth of well-articulated rationales and goals. This essay critiques the movement for its epistemological and ontological shortcomings.

Subsequently, the theories of Bruno Latour and Michael Hardt with Antonio Negri are presented as possible foundational works on which to form a theory of radical environmentalism. Bruno Latour’s *Politics of Nature* provides a postmodern critique of science and nature, offering a reconstructive epistemology of political ecology. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt’s *Empire* presents the concept of global capitalism as Empire and the multitude as resistance, offering a neo-Marxist standpoint on revolution and collective resistance movements. By situating the radical environmental movement within the context of these concepts, this essay illustrates that the radical environmental movement is not a ‘terrorist’ threat in the juridical or moral sense of the term. Instead, the EF! and ELF are resistance groups that are challenging the primacy of

global capitalism as advanced by the state and elite. The efficacy of such antisystemic movements rests not only in an ability to challenge the dominant political and economic paradigms, but also their ability to offer coherent and palpable alternatives. The utopian and idealistic tenets forwarded by EF! and ELF will not garner sufficient public support to affect systemic change. A well-articulated populist oriented position with firm epistemological and ontological underpinnings is an effective strategy to challenge the current econo-political system.

This essay begins with a historical introduction to Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front, along with an outline of the ideologies and actions of the groups. A cross-section of the academic literature relating to the groups is presented, with both sympathetic and critical viewpoints represented. Subsequently, the possible contributions of Latour's conception of political ecology are explained. A discussion of Hardt and Negri's *Empire* follows, with a focus on the biopolitical production process and the possibility for revolution. The conclusion presents an alternate epistemological and ontological paradigm for the radical environmental movement that avoids reliance on utopianism and emotional appeals.

II. Historical Background

The roots of current radical environmental movement reach back to the environmental movements of the 1970's. Groups such as the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth gained salience in the media and political arenas during this decade, becoming further imbedded in the political process. Earth First! was created in 1980 by a small group of activists "enraged at the sell out by mainstream enviros" as a direct-action oriented environmental advocacy group (Sierra Nevada EF!). The Earth First! Journal was founded the same year, providing a media

outlet sympathetic to the group's goals. There are numerous EF! affiliated organizations throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. EF! utilizes non-violent direct action campaigns to protest activities they perceive to be environmentally damaging. These direct actions occur in public, often in the presence of the media, in an effort to garner wider public support for their actions. EF! activists are individually responsible for their actions during protests and they are frequently arrested for their protest activities. The Earth First! group focuses on public non-violent direct actions and civil disobedience, with members claiming full responsibility for their actions (Plows et al. 2001); conversely, the Earth Liberation Front is a form of 'leaderless resistance' that operates in cells, performing acts of 'ecotage' on targets that are implicated of contributing to the destruction of the earth (Miller 135).

The Earth Liberation Front was formed in 1992 when a faction of EF! activists became "convinced that the original radical environmental movement was becoming too mainstream" (Vanderheiden 426). With the split, EF! embraced the 'mainstream' label and began publishing the Earth First! Journal, a monthly publication reporting on environmental activist issues and ELF activities (CDFE 2005; EF! Journal 2005); the ELF went underground, taking on a 'leaderless resistance' structure consisting of independent cells that report activities via anonymous communiqués. The ELF took up a new doctrine that espoused the use of "direct action in the form of economic sabotage to stop the exploitation and destruction of the natural environment" (ELF in Nocella and Walton 3). Whereas EF! direct actions are public and activists claim responsibility for their illegal actions, ELF actions are covert and do not result in the activists purposefully being arrested. The ELF occasionally coordinates actions with the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a similar underground group that focuses on the animal rights issues. Together, the groups have claimed responsibility for over 1,100 criminal acts between 1976 and

2004, resulting in a minimum total of \$110 million in damages (FBI 2004). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) considers the ELF a prominent domestic terrorist origination, along with the ALF. The most recent (2000/2001) *Terrorism in the United States* report warns that “environmental terrorists are adopting increasingly militant positions with respect to their ideology and chosen tactics” (FBI 2001). The ALF “is considered a serious domestic terrorist threat”, and the ELF and ALF are often categorized under the same heading of “Animal Rights and Environmental Extremism” in official reports (Nocella and Walton 2005; FBI).

Although ELF operates in independent cells, there are certain ideological doctrines that guide the actions of the group. All ELF members purportedly adhere to three ‘guidelines’:

1. “To inflict economic damage to those who profit from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment.”
2. “To reveal and educate the public on the atrocities committed against the environment and all the species that cohabitate in it.”
3. “To take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human, and non-human.”

(ALF 1998)

These three stipulations supposedly regulate all ELF actions. For the purpose of this essay, we will assume that all ELF actions follow these guidelines, particularly the third ‘no-harm’ stipulation. Additionally, this analysis will only consider the actions and stated guiding principles of EF! and ELF as relevant to the discussion of ideology and praxis. The former spokesmen of the ELF have been quoted retracting their endorsement of “non-violent” direct action (Pickering 2002). The public comments stated by former ELF spokesmen Craig Rosebraugh and Leslie James Pickering are not considered substantive to the current discussion, since they have

publicly disavowed any direct contact or activity in ELF activities to avoid prosecution. An excerpt from a 1997 communiqué from the ELF outlines the group's intentions:

E.L.F. works to speed up the collapse of industry, to scare the rich, and to undermine the foundations of the state. We embrace social and deep ecology as a practical resistance movement... We take our inspiration from Luddites, Levellers, Diggers, the Autonomie squatter movement, the A.L.F., the Zapatistas, and the little people – those mischievous elves of lore.

(Beltrane, 1997 quoted in Nocella and Walton, 2005)

While the intents and guidelines of the ELF are apparent in the numerous communiqués and website statements issued by the group, the existence of an overarching “philosophy of the ELF” is questionable. Nocella and Walton note that the idea “that radical environmentalists’ motivation derives from a well articulated philosophy of deep ecology, *this is usually far from the truth*” (5, emphasis added)¹. “It seems that actions are of primary importance, and a philosophical basis for these actions is only a secondary concern” (ibid). This essay critiques the lack of an articulated philosophy for ELF action as a weakness of the radical environmental movement, and attempts to constructively critique the lack of a philosophical basis for action.

III. Academic analyses

Numerous research studies and investigative reports have been conducted on radical environmental groups, many of which are critical assessments of ELF as a terrorist organization. In the 1997 book, *Ecoterror: The Violent Agenda to Save Nature*, America’s “leading voice of the wise use movement”, Ron Arnold, presents an interpretative history of EF! characterizing the

¹ Nocella and Walton describe the philosophy of ‘deep ecology’ in the following manner: “Deep ecologists are dedicated to the ideal of all living beings (plants, animals, even ecosystems as a whole) living together without being commodified as ‘resources’ or used, oppressed or destroyed for economic reasons. The theory also has strong critiques of capitalism, human over-population, materialism, and human over-consumption” (4-5).

group's founders as "buckaroos", inception of the ELF! movement occurring in the back seat of a VW bus in a "haze of marijuana smoke" (Arnold 1997). More recently, Stefan Leader and Peter Probst of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, present an analysis of ELF as an example of "home grown terrorists" (2005). Their "threat assessment" concluded that "it is clear that ELF poses a threat to research facilities involved in...biotech research", "university labs are most clearly at risk" since the ELF often attacks facilities with minimal security (Leader and Probst 9). A similar "empirical" threat assessment by Gary Ackerman of the Monterey Institute of International Studies concluded that while "initial analysis revealed the...ELF moving to more violent actions in the near future...there is only a moderate probability of a mass-casualty attack and even smaller chance of ELF using [chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear] agents" (Ackerman 162). Akerman states "it therefore seems something of a mischaracterization to label the ELF as one of the most serious domestic terrorists in the United States", recommending that "federal resources would probably be better utilized by concentrating them on more significant threats such as that posed by radical Islamist groups" (ibid.).

Considered together, the FBI's classification of ELF as a domestic terrorist organization and Akerman's conclusion of "mischaracterization" the threat posed by the group lead to questioning whether the label "terrorist" is a misnomer. Steve Vanderheiden, professor of political science and philosophy at the University of Minnesota Duluth, applies John Rawls' 'just war' theory to examine "the case for extending the conventional definition of terrorism" to include attacks against personal property (Vanderheiden 425). The adoption of the 2001 US PATRIOT Act has expanded the definition of "terrorism" to include attacks against inanimate objects, such as "arson within special maritime and territorial jurisdiction", the "destruction of communications lines, stations, or systems", and any action that "damages or destroys, or

attempts to . . . , by means of fire or an explosive” any piece of property used in interstate commerce (U.S. Code, sec. 844i, title 18 quoted in Vanderheiden 429). Vanderheiden analysis illustrates how the equating of attacks on humans to attacks on personal property leads to “absurd conclusions” in logic, leading to the “trivialization of what ought to be among the most serious moral transgressions by association with far less serious offenses” (430). In essence, acts of ‘ecotage’ are situated between terrorism and civil disobedience as acts of political resistance on the Rawlsian justice spectrum (439). The conventional definition of terrorism states that (1) violence is used or threatened towards a noncombatant, (2) acts have a primary target and a secondary target against which further violence is threatened, and (3) targets must be randomly selected and innocent (428). Vanderheiden concludes that acts of violence towards inanimate objects cannot justly be considered equivalent to violence against humans, and acts of ecotage target particular inanimate objects owned by people who “profit from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment” (ALF 1998). The argument that humans may be injured or killed as a result of an ecotage act does not justify the ‘terrorism’ label *a priori*. Thus, ecotage is shown to be a “categorically distinct act” from terrorism (Vanderheiden 432). In accordance to the above rationale, the term ‘ecotage’ will be used to signify ELF actions in this essay, in contrast to ‘eco-terrorism’ as presented by the FBI and various critics of the radical environmental movement.

IV. Latour

The radical environmental movement lacks a cohesive intellectual basis for existence and theoretical impetus for actions. In fact, sympathetic commentators decry the “pervading anti-

intellectualism” and “linkages with questionable readings and uses of the philosophy of anarchro-primitism” amongst environmental activists (Kahn 3). In accordance to Kahn’s appeal to “educate the educators (i.e., activists)”, this essay will introduce Bruno Latour’s concept of political ecology and show how his critique of modernity can “bolster and legitimate” the radical environmental movement (Kahn 4).

In *The Politics of Nature*, Bruno Latour challenges the epistemological foundations of modern science and nature by claiming that our common conception of nature is limited by our (in)ability to comprehend the full extent of the world (231). Latour claims that the nature we know, and that groups like ELF desperately attempt to preserve, “becomes knowable through the intermediary of science” (4); modern science purveys the knowledge of nature to society. In this way, the “learned community...acts as a third party in all relations” between nature and society and “the politicization of the sciences through epistemology...render[s] ordinary political life impotent through the threat of an incontestable nature” (10). Latour shows how politics are inherent in the process of forming scientific knowledge – the supposedly objective statement of truth via the scientific method. Modern science limits our knowledge of the world by creating a bipolar division of thought between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ houses (ibid.). The ‘inside’ is where the human dwells with only (inter)subjective forms of knowledge, as opposed to ‘outside’ where nature resides (14). In today’s society, scientists are the only humans capable of purveying and representing the ‘outside’ to those stuck ‘inside’; scientist are the only humans capable “mov[ing] back and forth between the houses” (ibid). In essence, modern science is in a position of power over nature and society due to its privileged task of presenting humanity with a ‘true’, ‘objective’ representation of nature. Latour finds the power/dominance of science problematic because humans (scientists) are perpetually involved in defining the limits of ‘nature’, an

inherently political process; the result is a “crisis of objectivity” in modern science and politics (17, 19). Hence, “the Western notion of nature is a historically situated social representation” that is “totalizing” (232, 231).

Radical environmental movements such as EF! and ELF claim to be working towards the “collapse of industry” and the rise of a new order built on the tenets of “biocentrism”; yet, they fail to articulate how the post-revolutionary world will avoid succumbing to the same failures as today’s world, particularly pervasive ‘Orientalization’ and commodification (Nocella and Walton 2005; EF! 2005; Said 1978). The complete rejection of the Cartesian dualisms inherent in modern scientific thought is a possible choice for re-conceiving the world in terms beyond subject/object dualities. Latour’s “objectivity crisis” is evident in the radical environmental movement, as ‘the environment’ is characterized in opposition to the human-built world. By rallying activists to dissuade people and corporations from destroying the Earth, EF! is creating a dualism between ‘the Earth’ and ‘people and corporations’. An inclusive approach is required that creates a co-constitutive episteme, rather than oppositional dualisms. The objectivity crisis must be solved in order to find a constructive way of knowing that avoids the antithetical subject-object conflict.

Latour offers an alternative to the objectivity crisis: “convoking the collective” (Latour 82). The collective escapes from the dualism of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ by replacing subjects and objects with “propositions” that have equal epistemological positioning (83). This concept is a radical departure from the subject/object dualities that permeate Western modes of thought. Postmodern critics frequently comment on the limiting powers of dualisms by ‘deconstructing’ modern modes of knowing (Derrida in Zehfuss 2002; Lyotard 1979). Yet, Latour is unique in offering a reconstructive solution to the objectivity crisis. Essentially, the division between

nature and society is eroded, with a collective of propositions taking its place (Latour 82). The articulation of propositions gives speech capabilities to both humans and non-humans, as opposed to the modern subject/object duality that silences the objects of scientific study. Whereas science once *spoke for* nonhumans, “*well articulated actors*, associations of humans and nonhumans, well-formed propositions” comprise the collective (86, emphasis in original). Latour presents an epistemological approach that is no longer anthropocentric; all actors in the world, human and nonhuman, are present in the decision making process of the collective (108).

A new Republicanism is created in which all actors in the world comprise “the Parliament of things” in the constant process of “collective experimenting” with forms of organization and order (227, 200). The state and the sciences are re-conceptualized by “relinquishing all mastery” over actors, instead gaining the “power to follow up” on decisions made by the collective (200, 206). Thus, the sciences and the state play a role in forming the “learning compact” that manages the process of “collective experimentation”, an endless series of trials and retrials in configurations of the common existence (207, 196). Behind his occasionally confounding matrix of terminology and (re)definitions, Latour outlines a new epistemology of political ecology that is democratic in both the knowledge creation and knowledge application processes. The distinction between knowledge of nature and knowledge of self are broken down until “a collective whose dynamics have just been redefined no longer finds itself facing the alternative between *a single* nature and *multiple* cultures” in the process of “*exploring the common worlds*” (234-5).

Biocentrism, the belief that all life of the Earth is equal in importance, is a central tenet of the radical environmental movement (Nocella and Walton 2005). Latourian political ecology extends beyond biocentrism by allocating all life forms a role in the knowledge formation

process of the collective. Rather than adhering to a doctrine of biological relativism as presented by biocentrism, collective political ecology establishes a discursive economy of life. Human and non-humans form the collective, equally articulate and able to form propositions. Science no longer purveys knowledge of nature to humans, represented as objective facts. The propositions of non-humans are articulated by and to humans without the dominance hierarchy of subject/object. In Latourian epistemology, knowledge of the Earth and nature does not exist because those pursuing such knowledge also constitute it. In this way, the fight to preserve nature and the environment will be common to all humanity (and non-humanity), as all humans are part of nature and the environment. The entire Earth becomes nature, signaling the “end of nature” (25).

The organizational tendencies toward “anarchy” of the ELF are compatible with Latour’s collective epistemology (Pressman 2003; Ackerman 2003). There is not central organizing power in collective political ecology; rather, numerous collectives operate simultaneously, both co-constituting and opposing one another. An individual may participate in multiple collectives, actively or without knowing. There is never a single leader or master state that orders and dominates the production of knowledge. Instead, the state and the sciences act with and for the collectives. Latour’s collective political ecology is the epistemological embodiment of “leaderless resistance”, simultaneously Republican and anarchic (Pressman 2003)

IV. Hardt and Negri

A discussion of the implications of Hardt and Negri’s concept of Empire is useful in situating the revolutionary aspirations of the radical environmental movement within a larger,

global context. The environmental movement has adopted the slogan “Think Global, Act Local” to spur people into considering the wide-ranging impacts of their everyday behavior. Hardt and Negri’s work *Empire* illustrates how the actions of individuals can create systemic effects; thus, “Act Local” becomes “Act Global”. It is possible to characterize certain aspects of the radical environmental movement as a unique form of antisystemic movement, opposing the imperial tendencies of the new form of sovereignty that pervades the world: *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 60).

Hardt and Negri argue that “in step with the process of globalization, the sovereignty of nation-states, while still effective, has progressively declined”, yet this “does not mean that sovereignty as such has declined” (i). *Empire* is now sovereign, with “no territorial center of power” and no reliance on “fixed boundaries or barriers” (ii). With the fulfillment of the world market, this new stage of capitalist production relies less on traditional labor production and more on “biopolitical production” – “the production of social life itself, in which the economic, the political, and the cultural increasingly overlap and invest in one another” (xiii); “in the biopolitical sphere, life is made to work for production and production is made to work for life” (32). This is characterized by the “increasingly immaterial” nature of productive labor; intellectual, immaterial, and communicative labor power have replaced the standard forms of physical productive labor as described by Marx (29). Biopower is “expressed as a control that extends throughout the depths of the consciousnesses and bodies of the population – and at the same time across the entirety of social relations (24). Thus, *Empire*’s power extends in networks that “[operate] on all registers of the social order”, “not only manag[ing] a territory and a population but also creat[ing] the very world it inhabits” (xv). *Empire* is not merely the tenets of neoliberal economics, the capitalist production system, or “those who profit from the destruction

and exploitation of the natural environment” (ALF 1998); Empire encompasses all aspects of the current global order.

Hardt and Negri present an opposing force to Empire: the multitude. As the productive force that drives Empire, the multitude is both the creative energy behind Empire and the exploited masses possessing revolutionary power (42). The biopolitical production of the multitude creates Empire as an alternative to previous forms of imperialism and colonialism (9). The direct state control and outright physical domination of the previous European and American imperialism is over; “no nation-state can today, form the center of an imperialist project” (14, xiv). Today, the multitude is subjected to the exploitation of the biopolitical production process, as described above. Empire depends upon the labor of the multitude to survive, but this relation is one of exploitation, dominance, and imperialism. Hardt and Negri acknowledge the revolutionary potentials of such inequitable relationships throughout history:

“The most significant instances of revolt and revolution...were those that posed the struggle against exploitation together with the struggle against nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism. In these events humanity appeared for a magical moment to be united by a common desire for liberation,...a future when the modern mechanisms of domination would once and for all be destroyed” (42).

The susceptibility of Empire to attack is the focal point of Hardy and Negri’s analysis. Due to the “globalization of economic and cultural relationships...the virtual center of Empire can be attacked from any point” (58). The multitude does not exist outside of Empire, it constitutes Empire. Therefore, Empire is vulnerable to antisystemic assaults at any point. The coordination of assaults on Empire can result in “sudden accelerations, often cumulative, that can become virtually simultaneous, explosions that reveal a properly ontological power and unforeseeable attack on the most central equilibria of Empire” (61). In essence, the exploitation of the

multitude's biopolitical productivity both creates Empire and makes it vulnerable to attack from below and within – a vulnerability that can be exploited by EF! and ELF.

ELF activists attempt to “inflict economic damage” on forces that threaten and destroy ecosystems and, consequently, humanity. The type of attacks frequently executed by ELF are exactly the type of “minor and internal conflicts” that Hardt and Negri characterize the new era of Empire (201). Since there is no ‘outside’ in the globalized world of Empire, the resistance comes from the multitude within Empire. The ‘Other’ is no longer the enemy, as the ‘Other’ constitutes the multitude, which in turn comprises Empire (Said 1979). Thus, revolutionary movements originate from within Empire, just as the activists of EF! and ELF have ‘normal’ productive jobs within American society. The covert acts of ecotage are attacks from within Empire, conducted by members of the multitude. The nonviolent direct actions and ecotage performed by EF! and ELF, respectively, can be viewed as responses to the imperial domination of the biopolitical production process. The domination of the multitude in this case extends to the domination of the environment. Those who constitute the most dominated and exploited social strata generally depend on the environment more than those benefiting from Empire. Consequently, the exploitation of the environment is analogous to the exploitation of the multitude. The two entities – the multitude and nature – can be co-constitutive, as Latour illustrates.

The acts of ecotage that inflict “economic damage” on environmental culprits may not ultimately bring about a change in Empire, as predicted by ELF. The corporations and universities that are typically targeted by ELF are usually heavily insured against an array of circumstances, including arson and vandalism. The burning of ski resorts and condominiums results in greater economic activity for insurance companies, builders, and other capitalist

endeavors.² Thus, the ecotage activities of ELF are feeding Empire rather than crippling it. An ultimately successful attack on the ‘pocketbook’ of Empire would be the outright halt of the biopolitical production process; Empire cannot function without the productive power of the multitude. Hardt and Negri characterize this revolution of the multitude as “nomadism, desertion, and exodus” (210). The revolution of “the new nomad horde” is based on the concept of a counter-Empire (213).

Constructing a counter-Empire requires not only the destruction of the old regime, but also the designation of “a new regime of *production*” (205, emphasis in original). An integral factor of a resistance to global Empire is the necessity “to pose any alternative at an equally global level” (206). Resistance movements must “accept the challenge and learn to think globally and act globally” (207). A global action of resistance by the multitude is required to resist a power that is as dominant and pervasive as Empire. Thus, “workers of all trades should come together to in ‘One Big Union’” that creates counter-Empire movements throughout the entirety of Empire, a revolution occurring in the ‘non-places’ that pervade Empire (208). The concept of ‘non-place’ is distinct from a call to ‘de-link’ from Empire, as moving back to previous social forms of “limited, local autonomy” are impossible and impractical forms of resistance (206). De-linking as a strategy, embraced by the anti-globalization movement, is both ineffective in uniting the multitude against the common oppressor – Empire – and inadequate in proposing an alternative – counter-Empire (ibid.). The radical environmental movement must shed its tendencies to sympathize with the anti-globalization movement and embrace the unifying power of a globalized struggle against Empire; “globalization must be met with counter-globalization, Empire with a counter-Empire (207).

² The targeted company rarely will have to pay directly for the repairs. The insurance company will pay to rebuild the structure, thus further stimulating the construction economy. Additionally, aggregate insurance premiums may increase, leading to higher rates of profit in long-run for insurance companies as they recoup losses.

VI. Conclusion

The current actions and ideology of EF! and ELF reflect the movement's "inability to identify the enemy" in many ways (Hardt and Negri 211). Attacks on environmentally damaging construction projects and SUV dealerships are highly visible and may halt the destruction of ecosystems for a limited amount of time, but the underlying causes of such activities remain – Empire persists. An attack perpetrated "to inflict economic damage to those who profit from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment" may affect a single target for a limited amount of time, but the attack does not address the systemic causes of environmental degradation and resource depletion (ALF 1998). The radical environmental movement needs to form an ideological basis for action that situates the struggle for environmental preservation within a larger antisystemic movement.

A reconstructive epistemology and ontology of the radical environmental movement embraces the revolutionary possibilities counter-Empire while constructing a collective form of knowledge. Bruno Latour offers an alternative to the modern knowledge formation process common in Empire. Latour's political ecology embraces the possibility of an epistemological revolution in which nature and man are united. The collective is the dissolution of borders, the realization that "there are no fixed and necessary boundaries between the human and the animal, the human and the machine, the male and the female, and so forth" (Hardt and Negri 215). Donna Haraway writes about such a blurring of boundaries in "A Manifesto For Cyborgs", just as Latour writes of the dissolution of the "two houses" (Haraway 2004; Latour 2004). The radical environmental movement should embrace the possibility of a globalized environmental,

social, and labor movement, rather than rely on disparate acts of ecotage that lack a cohesive ultimate goal.

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“Doctrine of Demons”: Attacks on Animal Advocacy

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Warnings from the Right

Western civilization faces a terrible new menace, one even more dangerous than Islamist terror or gay marriage. The nature of this threat? People who want to protect animals.

Apparently alarmed by the idea of better treatment for animals, various rightwing journals and websites depict animal advocates as the ultimate danger, a movement so powerful and violent that it is poised to destroy the very foundations of Western culture and depose “Man” from the center of the universe. The discourse they construct is part of a countermovement to animal protection, designed to protect the financial interests of those who profit from exploitation of animals. As Munro (1999) notes, this countermovement is a well-organized, multi-million-dollar propaganda campaign by agribusiness, bio-medical industries and recreational killers (“sportsmen”) to control moral capital and present their vested interests as representative of “normal people” threatened by “animal rights extremists.” However, the anthropocentric prejudice underlying this discourse is not exclusively limited to corporate interests and rightwing groups: these prejudices are mirrored on the left.

One particularly striking example of how this prejudice is mobilized against animal advocates is found in the rightwing Christian journal *U Turn* (whose editor, Ken Ewert, feels himself so directly tuned-in to the supernatural that he is able to claim that a “free market economy” is ... God’s economic design”). Contributor Dave Matheson depicts the animal rights movement as “Man’s rebellion against God” and warns:

The animal "rights" movement is part of what Michael Novak believes is "a turning away from the biblical emphasis on the distinction between man and nature," which causes man to be "attracted by Eastern mysticism, which views man as a part of nature." Herbert Schlossberg elaborates on this theme, saying "this error plunges man into complete irrationality ... everything that distinguishes man from nature disappears in this outlook, and that can only mean that man himself disappears. That is why C. S. Lewis was right to call the triumph of such a conception 'the abolition of man'." I think Paul summed it up best; the animal rights movement is the "the doctrine of demons"!

Matherson's assertion that human beings ("Man") are distinctly separated from the rest of nature conforms to the anthropocentric prejudices of the journal's religious ideology but it is in complete contradiction to any scientific understanding of the world. His argument is anachronistic (it is unlikely that early Christian activists had "the animal rights movement" in mind when discussing any "doctrine of demons"), chauvinistic (other beliefs are dismissed as mere mysticism) and selective (while embracing conservative elements of C.S. Lewis's thought, Matherson overlooks his affection for animals and efforts to consider their interests within the context of his religious beliefs; LeBar [1983] and Connolly [2003] see Lewis as an animal welfarist while Ingrid Newkirk suggests that, if he were alive today, Lewis's opposition to vivisection would lead him to join PETA [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals n.d.]).

One finds the same attempt to control the social construction of moral meaning by mobilizing religious ideology to discredit animal advocacy in Australia's *Sydney*

Morning Herald (December 2, 2004) where rightwing Catholic journalist Miranda Devine warns that the “obsession with animal rights is not a sign of a more compassionate society but of one which has lost respect for humanity. It has lost its belief in the soul and free will, which used to distinguish people from animals and gave existence meaning.” Understanding that animal advocates have gained public support for their campaigns by appealing to the compassion that many people naturally do feel for animals, Devine works to deny those compassionate feelings and transform them into something sinister, an “obsession” which somehow has decreased “respect for humanity.” She then links this in a vague way with a decline in religious beliefs, arguing that, without these superstitions, existence must be meaningless. There is no logic in this but the intended effect is the same: to create a sense that concern for animals will have immense and disastrous effects for human beings.

Similar warnings come from another neoconservative-Christian journal, *First Things*, which promotes the views of rightwing Catholic priest Richard J. Neuhaus. For example, Thomas Derr (1992), Professor of Religion at Smith College, detects “a persistent strain of anti-humanism in their movement” while David R. Carlin, Professor of Philosophy and Sociology at the Community College of Rhode Island and chairman of the Democratic Party in Newport, Rhode Island, writes that “the animal rights movement seems to be aiming at the elevation of animals. In fact, however, it is but the latest episode in a long history of attempts to degrade humans.” Carlin’s argument is even weaker than those cited above but is equally alarmist:

At present I cannot *prove* that the idea of animal rights is extraordinarily dangerous and inhumane; to get proof of this, we’ll have to wait until the

disastrous consequences of the idea reveal themselves over the next century or so. But I strongly suspect that it's a dangerous idea, and accordingly I suspect that the promoters of this idea, whatever their intentions, are enemies of the human race.

Carlin acknowledges that he is unable to offer any evidence for the strange linkages he creates (i.e. that concern for animals degrades humans) and the suspicions he draws from them. Nevertheless, he is quite content to assert strong conclusions and warn that concern for animals is being promoted by "enemies of the human race."

If these hysterical fears surfaced only in obscure publications of religious fringe groups they might be dismissed as insignificant. However, these same arguments are repeated across a much wider range of rightwing publications. For example, although Alex Epstein, from the pro-capitalist Ayn Rand Institute, does not appear to believe animal advocates are actually agents of Satan, he does perceive a threat of similar magnitude. Writing about an animal advocacy conference, he detects "the true goal of their doctrine: human extermination" and states: "Animal rights advocates place the lives of animals over the lives of human beings. This is a formula for human suffering and death." The claim that animal advocates "place the lives of animals over the lives of human beings" refers to vivisection and medical experiments, all of which, in Epstein's world, apparently are conducted for the highest ethical objectives of saving humans from fatal diseases. The fact that not all animal advocates share a single point of view on such questions does not even enter the discussion, nor does the fact that not all these experiments are undertaken for such noble purposes.

On his personal website, devoted to “defense of business and America,” Epstein expands on these themes, condemning actions taken against Huntingdon Life Sciences, Europe’s largest contract research agency notorious for its vivisection activities. In 1989 HLS was infiltrated by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, which reported on terrified dogs being force-fed chemicals, cleaning products, insecticides and fungicides and harnessed for painful subcutaneous and skin toxicity tests; another expose in 1996 revealed inadequate care and deliberate abuse in addition to that which was commercially-motivated. In 2000 the *Daily Express* exposed cruelty in xenotransplantation procedures at HLS for Novartis, which obtained a court injunction against further publicity on the experiments. In 2003, after fighting the injunction, *The Observer* published secret documents exposing horrendous cruelty in pig-to-primate heart transplant experiments done for Novartis. In 2004 the group Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty exposed tests done on beagles at HLS for Daikin industries of Osaka and the Japan Refrigeration of Air Conditioning Association of Tokyo, using banned gases. While animal advocacy groups have supplied extensive evidence of hideous abuse of animals at HLS, Epstein simply ignores this in order to make unsubstantiated claims intended to vilify and arouse hatred for those group: “The goal of the animal-rights movement is not to stop sadistic animal torturers; it is *to sacrifice and subjugate man to animals*. This goal is inherent in the very notion of "animal rights."

Andrew Bernstein, “senior writer” for the Ayn Rand Institute, identifies the same “man-hating psychology” among animal advocates. He suggests that they argue “Since rattlesnakes and rats are held to possess an inviolate inherent worth, it is deemed not only morally wrong to harm them, but also obligatory to sacrifice man for their sake.” That such an “obligatory...sacrifice” is mandated nowhere in the writings of animal advocates

is irrelevant to Bernstein's main aim of presenting them as fanatics. Another luminary of the Ayn Rand Institute, Edwin Locke, writing for the Institute's on-line *Capitalism* magazine, engages in similar distortions and warns of similar dangers:

The animal "rights" terrorists are like the Unabomber and Oklahoma City bombers. They are not idealists seeking justice, but nihilists seeking destruction for the sake of destruction. They do not want to uplift mankind, to help him progress from the swamp to the stars. They want mankind's destruction; they want him not just to stay in the swamp but to disappear into its muck.

Not surprisingly, these defenders of capitalism are eager to link this army of demonic anti-humanists with the political left wing. For example, Matherson thinks animal advocacy has become the last refuge of the Evil Empire:

Did you ever wonder what became of the left wing "intelligentsia" following the humiliating collapse of the Soviet Union and its Communist puppet states? Well, they are alive and well, and they are continuing to promote the Communist ideals of state control over resources. The only things that have changed are the terminology they use, and the names of the organizations they belong to. Roll over Marx and Lenin! Today's trendy and leftist causes are animal rights and radical environmentalism.

Other observers also detect leftwing conspiracies behind animal advocacy. For example, reporting to the South African Gunowners' Association on an Animal Rights Conference in Washington D.C., Jim Beers (federal programs coordinator for the National Trappers Association and contributor to "free-market" websites such as Alliance for America and the Heartland Institute) identifies the same "communist" menace, likening the event to

a communist training program back in the 50's or 60's for a cadre of insurgents to be sent into a country to be subverted. Some are trained to control the media, others to influence politicians and control bureaucracies, still others to control religion and schools, demonstrators were to disrupt things, and others to do the "other things" that ultimately underpin all the rest. Frightening is too weak a word to describe what it is like to watch this take place in a luxury hotel in a free country.

J.P. Zmirak (2002) also spot a nefarious leftwing plot to impose an animal rights agenda. Joining the strident chorus that shouts from David Horowitz's on-line *FrontPage* magazine about the dangers of liberalism, Zmirak adds his claim that "every known philosophy of the far-Left contains the seeds of murder including the animal rights movement." Terror, murder, demonic doctrines and the end of "Man" – all these are depicted as the tactics and goals of a surging tide of self-loathing animal rights fanatics engaged in a cosmic scheme of ontological mutiny. No evidence is presented for any of these claims and their authors readily overlook the long historical association between movements for better treatment of animals and other movements for social justice and improvements in what we now generally regard as basic human rights, such as anti-slavery campaigns, emancipation of women and abolition of child labour. In attempting to portray a concern for animals as a perverted hatred for human beings, the authors also ignore various studies which demonstrate that those people who show

compassion and empathy for animals are more likely to have similar attitudes for other human beings. Furthermore, they also overlook the large body of research that demonstrates that violence towards animals frequently is linked with violence towards human beings.

Dismissals from the Left

While rightwing commentators fret that Satan and his socialist hordes are using subversion and murder to promote their animal rights agenda, in reality, many of those considered to be on the left seem to have very little interest in animal protection and to share many of the same instrumentalist attitudes towards animals. The World Socialist Movement, for example, dismisses the issue of animal rights as a reformist one and claims to have no position on this. However, other leftist groups do adopt positions that are virtually identical to those of rightwing supporters of animal exploitation industries. For example, the World Socialist Web Site of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), a miniscule Trotskyist faction, denounces animal rights as an “extremist” movement which rejects the benefits of modern science and places the interests of other animals above those of human beings. In a statement that could have originated from the desk of a pharmaceutical corporation or its hired public relations consultants, Julie Hyland expresses firm confidence in the state’s regulation of vivisection and the benign intent and good corporate citizenship of the pharmaceutical industry:

Research involving animals is closely regulated in Britain, with the Home Office reporting that 2.73 million animal experiments were conducted in the UK in 2002, of which 84 percent were on rodents. Of such

procedures—most of which were for research and drug development purposes—non-toxic testing accounted for 82 percent of all experiments. Animal testing for cosmetics is banned, and despite often highly emotive campaigns by animal rights activists, dogs, cats, horses and primates account for less than 1 percent of animal experiments.

The faith of these Trotskyist revolutionaries in the humanitarian intentions of the pharmaceutical corporations and the diligence of the British state in overseeing these industries for the good of the masses is rather surprising. In contrast to the kindly motives of these benevolent institutions, Hyland identifies a “misanthropic outlook at the heart of animal rights extremism, with its denunciations of humans as no better, and in many instances much worse, than animals.” As do her rightwing counterparts, Hyland neglects to provide any actual evidence of this “misanthropic outlook” but merely asserts its existence as the only possible motivating force for animal advocates. Many Marxists share with their capitalist foes an anthropocentric, instrumentalist view of nature in which the interests of animals always must be subordinated to those of human beings.

Responding to a reader’s criticisms of Hyland’s claims, ICFI representative Chris Talbot defends her statements, denounces animal advocates as “extremists” and expresses the organization’s support for vivisection:

Our view, and we believe it is one that most of our readers share, is that experiments on animals are of importance to medical researchers. We have no reason to believe that cruelty or neglect of laboratory animals is widespread, and we do not accept the argument of animal rights protesters

that the cases of malpractice they focus on justify stopping all animal experiments.

Astonishingly, Hyland and Talbot simply accept the vivisection industry's claims that animal testing is vital to develop new drugs to save human lives. Overlooking a veritable mountain of evidence, including industry documents, undercover video footage and eyewitness accounts, that shows terrible abuse of animals, often conducted for purposes that are trivial or redundant, these Trotskyite revolutionaries readily accept that vivisection is "of importance to medical researchers" and show no interest in or awareness of studies that suggest that much of this research is actually misleading and harmful. They share their position with industry lobbyists such as Richard Berman. For example, in advertisements in the *New Yorker* magazine (February 14 and 25, 2005) Berman's Center for Consumer Freedom, a public relations firm funded by tobacco, meat, alcohol and junk-food industries, campaigned against what it called PETA's "violent opposition to medical research" claiming that it funded criminal organizations to block research into an AIDS cure because PETA values animals more than human beings.

Despite vivisectionists' claims to be focused on vital medical research, much testing is still done on frivolous products such as household cleaners or cosmetics (in 1998 the British government announced it would not issue licenses for animal testing of cosmetic products or ingredients but this took the form of a voluntary agreement with corporations, which can still test their products outside the country). Most testing is done in secret, defended on grounds of intellectual property or academic freedom, but

according to statistics released by the industry-friendly Canadian Council on Animal Care that supposedly monitors testing in this country, government-mandated toxicity tests accounted for eighty-two per cent of the procedures. The group Animal Alliance (2003) noted that the Canadian government spent none of its budget on developing alternatives and stated that most testing was curiosity-driven and less than twenty-seven per cent of testing was done for medical purposes. Also, the military tortures vast numbers of animals in order to develop new methods of harming human beings with biological, chemical, microwave or radiation weapons. Even in cases where animals are used for medical research, leading medical journals note that few important new drugs have been found in recent years; most are variations of existing drugs, sold under different names. Much animal testing is cruel, redundant and wasteful, devoted to reproducing existing studies or introducing slight variations. Vivisectors often conduct pointless experiments in order to compete for grants and to further their careers. Findings are often irrelevant to human needs and the validity of using one species as a model for another is itself questionable.

Even when research is directed to serious human problems, the utility of animal testing is questioned within the scientific community itself. For example, in an article entitled "Laboratory Routines Cause Animal Stress," published in the Autumn 2004 issue of *Contemporary Topics in Laboratory Animal Science*, ethologist Jonathan Balcombe of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, reviewed eighty published studies and found that even relatively innocuous handling caused physiological reactions such as spiked blood pressure, hormone elevations and impairment to immune responses significant enough to invalidate data obtained from experiments

(<http://www.pcrm.org/newsletter/nov04/stress.html>). Balcombe noted: "Research on tumor development, immune function, endocrine and cardiovascular disorders, neoplasms, developmental defects, and psychological phenomena are particularly vulnerable to data being contaminated by animals' stress effects"

(http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2004-12/pcfr-aem122804.php). Balcombe's findings followed a paper in the *British Medical Journal*, titled "Where Is the Evidence that Animal Research Benefits Humans?" in which the authors concluded that much animal experimentation was wasteful, methodologically unsound, and poorly conducted while noting that, frequently, human trials were conducted concurrently with animal research and that clinical trials sometimes continued despite evidence of harm from animal experiments.

Arguments from the left and the right converge in the dismissal of animals from moral consideration. Defending animal exploitation, the ICFI's Chris Talbot rejects arguments of philosopher Peter Singer who emphasizes ability to feel pain as an important moral consideration. Talbot's arguments mirror those of Edwin Locke in the Ayn Rand Institute's *Capitalism* magazine: only humans have rights because humans have special abilities and are moral agents. Talbot writes:

Our position, on the contrary, is that human society is a unique phenomenon amongst all the animal species. Humans can labour with their hands and brains, can plan and develop productive techniques, and have amassed centuries of culture and knowledge that have enabled them to control and hold dominion over the rest of nature. Moreover, we hold that humans have the ability to change and develop not only the natural

world in a conscious and planned way, but also human society itself—that, after all, is the central tenet of socialism. In our view, therefore, humans have infinitely more to them than the ability to experience pleasure and pain on a biological level. We disagree with the underlying conception of Singer, Tom Regan and others that the essential nature of humans can be found in their individual and biological characteristics. In other words, we oppose the view of human society that sees it as nothing more than a collection of individuals with their own “human nature” and interests.

In fact, neither Regan nor Singer argue that human beings are “nothing more” than individuals; Talbot misrepresents their views while asserting a sharp dualism between humans and other animals. Although a belief in this dualism does constitute a dominant view of our relationship with other animals, it has been challenged consistently throughout much of human history and has been disproved by modern science, which has supported Darwin’s observations that differences between humans and other animals are ones of degree, not of kind. New ethological observations have led to the discovery that other animals do have complex cognition, with abilities and emotions that are comparable in many ways to those of human beings. Talbot’s idea that human beings “hold dominion over the rest of nature” is striking for its echo of Christian ideology and its suggestion that the relationship of human beings to the environment should be one of power rather than harmony. Even the British Liberal Party’s policy statement on animal welfare makes more progressive claims, even if these are not carried out in actual practice and legislation to protect animals and the environment: “Liberals recognize that the world’s creatures have rights too and that the human race should act as trustees of the natural

world rather than its master” (<http://www.liberal.org.uk/policy/animal.htm>) while the Green Party states: “Greens oppose factory farming and advocate banning cruel live exports. We want an end to animal experimentation and real investment in non-animal chemical testing” (<http://www.greenparty.org.uk/issues/1>). In Canada, the Green Party’s 2004 Platform states: “Every plant and animal has the right to exist, independent of human needs” (<http://www.greenparty.ca/platform2004/en/keyvalues.php?p=185>). The Green Party did not respond to an enquiry asking for a clarification of the actual meaning of this statement.

The ICFI’s position on environmental issues suggests that the only dilemma is capitalism and that once Marxists control production all problems will be solved. They promote technology and industrialization and see no problems with population growth (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/jan2001/corr-j10.shtml>). The ICFI’s views are narrowly-focused on human interests but are not unusual on the left. For example, Peter Staudenmaier, of the Institute of Social Ecology, reproduces the same arguments in his article “Ambiguities of Animal Rights”, calling it a “moral mistake and a symptom of political confusion...anti-humanist and anti-ecological...at odds with the project of creating a free world”. Championing a human-centred view, Staudenmaier rejects analogies between animal advocacy and movements for human emancipation because animals cannot speak for themselves. (Again, this echoes statements from industry lobbyists and capitalist ideologues. For example, Alan Herscovici (n.d.), propagandist for the Fur Council of Canada, makes similar arguments; Edward J. Feulner, President of the Heritage Foundation, issues, but nowhere proves, the standard denunciation that analogies about exploitation of humans and other animals reflect “a twisted moral

universe [and] callousness toward human suffering.”) The proposal that individuals do not have rights (or the ability to experience pain or even consciousness) because they cannot speak is an argument that some philosophers use to deny consideration for animals but this also raises problems about the status of marginal cases among human beings. Furthermore, while other animals cannot speak in human languages, they can often articulate their wishes in ways that are immediately understandable to human beings and it is clear they do not want to be killed in slaughterhouses or tortured in laboratories. Reproducing the claims made by the intellectuals of the Ayn Rand Institute and the ICFI about the uniqueness of human beings as moral agents, Staudenmaier argues that animal advocacy “degrades, rather than develops, the humanist impulse embodied in liberatory social movements”. Oddly, he even denies the very existence of anthropocentric institutions, arguing that only elitist ones exist and that any concern about anthropocentrism only masks differences between human beings. This is obviously false, as exemplified by the presence of factory farms, slaughterhouses and vivisection laboratories. The fact that people have different relationships with these institutions – profiting from them or being exploited within them – does not alter the basic relationships of domination over and victimization of animals. The existence of class distinctions between human beings in no way invalidates the fact that anthropocentric beliefs operate within all classes and have negative consequences for other animals.

Recognizing a perception that animal advocacy is linked to progressive social and political thought, Staudenmaier attacks this view, arguing that animal advocacy is elitist, racist and linked with extreme rightwing groups, including fascists and Nazis. As proof, Staudenmaier even includes the claim that Hitler was a vegetarian, an irrelevant argument

but one which is rejected in Rynn Berry's book *Hitler: Neither Vegetarian Nor Animal Lover*. While the Nazis may have introduced some progressive legislation concerning animals, this hardly invalidates a concern for animals on the part of others, such as those who may be fundamentally opposed to Nazi ideology. Some leftwing writers such as Alexander Cockburn (2005) and Gary Francione (1996) have noted logical flaws in this analogy as a means of discrediting animal advocacy. Yet, clearly, a ferocious hostility towards animal advocacy inspires writers on both the left and the right to employ such distortions and dishonesties in order to defend the supremacy of "Man."

Others on the left repeat the idea that the interests of human beings are not only more important than but separate from those of other animals and the natural world. For example, Michael Albert (2002), a co-founder of *Z* magazine and ZNet, stated in *Satya* magazine:

...when I talk about social movements to make the world better, animal rights does not come into my mind. I honestly don't see animal rights movements in anything like the way in which I see women's movements, Latino movements, youth movements, the anti-corporate globalization movement, labor movements, and so on.... it just honestly doesn't strike me as being remotely as urgent as preventing war in Iraq or winning a 30-hour work week, or overthrowing capitalism...

Apart from the unwarranted assumption that one must be concerned about animal rights "or" war in Iraq "or" a reduced work week "or" overthrowing capitalism, Albert's anthropocentrism prevents him from seeing how capitalism thrives on the exploitation of

all animals, not only humans, and he fails to acknowledge important connections between various forms of oppression. Concern for 'one's own kind' is just as limited, whether this is based on ideas of race or of species. As Peter Singer (2004:153) points out in his book on the ethics of globalization, *One World*, such sentiments of partiality formed an essential part of the Nazi world-view. Like Albert, many on the left dismiss animal advocacy as a trivial, single-issue movement and see veganism as a personal or even a 'lifestyle' choice. In fact, due to the pervasive use of animals, it is very difficult to truly live as a vegan in our society but the effort to do so is a powerful symbolic statement and involvement with animal protectionism is a means of opening doors to other issues and to understanding connections between various forms of oppression. Those on the left who dismiss veganism and concern for animals not only trivialize compassion but overlook the radical potential of these concerns for creating consciousness about other issues. The left has been criticized in the past for its dogmatic views on issues of racism and sexism, dismissing these as secondary issues and thus alienating many who might have been potential allies. Repeating these mistakes today, much of the left insists on the overwhelming importance of human issues, taking "Man" as the measure of all things and dismisses the plight of other living beings. However, any political theory is inadequate if it focuses on the human species alone, ignoring other living beings and the environment in which all of them exist or regarding these only as resources to be exploited.

Just as individual human activities must be seen within a historical, social and political context, so too they must be considered in a broader ecological context. A meat-based diet is not simply a personal choice but a political one, with far-reaching

consequences. The production of meat is linked to major forms of environmental destruction. Hundreds of thousands of square kilometers of rainforest have been destroyed to provide pasture for cattle. According to reports from the World Rainforest Movement, forty percent of the forests of Central America have been destroyed, largely for ranching. Because ranching is totally unsuited to the environment, new areas of forest are soon needed. As a result, thousands of plant and animal species are being driven into extinction, indigenous people are driven off their land, often violently and always with the loss of their unique cultural traditions, and a major source of oxygen-production for the planet is being eradicated. In Africa, commercial cattle ranching for export was directly linked to the Sahel famine of 1968-1974 in which 100,000 people died.

Commercial fishing, shrimp farming and pollution are destroying coral reefs and mangrove swamps, with a similar loss of irreplaceable biodiversity and damage to extensive and vital ecosystems. In North America, half the agricultural land is devoted to ranching or producing grain for animals and some estimate that half the world's grain goes to feeding animals who are then killed for human consumption. This is an extremely impractical system; for example, it is estimated that production of approximately half a kilogram of beef requires forty times as much fossil fuel as would be required to produce a similar quantity of soybeans and even greater amounts of water are diverted into this inefficient system. The huge numbers of animals crammed into factory farms produce vast amounts of waste that pollutes adjacent land and water systems. As the global consumption of meat has grown and corporate factory farming has spread throughout the world, poverty has increased as small farmers have been driven out of business and forced into urban slums, while the environment has suffered. Even if one is unmoved by

the ghastly suffering of billions of animals who are raised and then killed in factory farms and slaughterhouses, it is not hard to see that, like other capitalist enterprises, the meatpacking industry exploits workers, preying on the poorest and weakest and exposing them to dangerous conditions for low wages (Human Rights Watch 2005). Factory farming also has implications for human health. Animals are imprisoned in crowded, filthy, poorly-ventilated structures creating an ideal breeding-ground for disease. Numerous reports document the filthy conditions in slaughterhouses and the distribution, sale and consumption of animal flesh tainted with various chemicals, diseases and fecal matter. Heavy use of antibiotics in factory farming has polluted the environment as animal waste saturates waterways, promoted drug-resistant bacteria and further threatened human health. While millions of people in advanced capitalist societies suffer from obesity, diseases of overconsumption and illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes that are directly related to meat consumption, a billion poor people suffer malnutrition and starvation. The “cost-effective” strategy of feeding animal parts to other animals led to the outbreak of BSE and it is only a matter of time before other diseases spread from other animals to humans. Fear of an avian influenza pandemic led to the mass slaughter of birds in Canada in 2004 and throughout Asia in 2005. So the global meat system, a multi-billion-dollar industry, has serious consequences for the entire planet and the poor, increases real dangers to human health and is no trifling matter to be overlooked or dismissed even by those who are concerned only with the welfare of human beings and care nothing for other animals.

Despite the myopic anthropocentrism of many prominent leftists today, this hostility to expressing concerns for other animals was not always the case. While there is

a much longer intellectual history of concern for other animals and the ethical duties owed to them, as a political movement, animal advocacy is linked with the anti-slavery movement, feminism and various educational and social reforms, such as alleviating child poverty. In Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain, a circle of socialists, Fabians, social reformers, suffragettes, pacifists and artists, including figures such as Bertrand Russell, George Bernard Shaw, Anna Kingsford and Annie Besant, combined concern for humanitarian improvements with vegetarianism, and opposition to vivisection and hunting. The socialist Henry Salt, founder of the Humanitarian League, influenced Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophies of nonviolent resistance through his works such as *A Plea for Vegetarianism* (1886) and *Animal Rights* (1892). In the USA, socialist writers such as Jack London and Upton Sinclair also advocated for the better treatment of animals. Henry Spira, a prominent animal rights activist in the USA, developed his radical analysis as a member of the Socialist Workers Party in the 1950s and through his involvement with the civil right movement and support for Cuba against US imperialism. As Peter Singer (1999) remarked in a reflection on Spira's life: "He had read an article of mine about animal liberation, and realised that it was the logical extension of what he had been doing all his life: helping the downtrodden, the powerless, and the exploited."

Other prominent activists and intellectuals on the left have acknowledged how various forms of oppression are interwoven and have identified animal protection as a serious concern. For example, Noam Chomsky (2001) argues that most forms of hierarchy and domination serve only those at the top of the heap, are morally unjustified and must be questioned; Chomsky extends this to human relationships with other animals, citing the torture of animals in research laboratories as one example of such

illegitimate exploitation. Although he acknowledges vegetarianism and animal protection as serious issues and reasonable goals for those who seek to create a more progressive society, Chomsky admits that he is not a vegetarian himself and he has not addressed these issues in any depth in his own work. David Nibert's book *Animal Rights Human Rights* draws the connections between various forms of oppression and places animal rights within the context of a socialist approach. Anna E. Charlton, Sue Coe and Gary Francione (1993) have argued that the left should endorse animal rights. The Center for Animal Liberation Affairs (<http://www.cala-online.org/index.html>) explicitly places its concern for animals in the context of other social justice struggles. Materialist ecofeminists (as opposed to those focused mainly on spiritual aspects) see the exploitation of animals as one consequence of patriarchal capitalism. Groups such as Food Not Bombs, founded in the 1980s by anti-nuclear activists, now provide vegetarian food for the homeless and at various protests, while working with anarchists, environmentalists, anti-racist groups, animal rights activists and others opposed to capitalist globalization.

Certainly, not all animal advocates are on the left and not make connections between exploitation of animals and other forms of social injustice. Even within the field of animal protection itself, some have welfarist concerns only for particular animals and accept exploitation of other animals for food or other purposes. Even some who do recognize connections between various forms of oppression do not see this in leftist context. Some animal advocates such as Marjorie Spiegel (2001) recognize similarities between enslavement of Africans and enslavement of non-human animals but do not see a particular link between these forms of exploitation and capitalism, with Spiegel arguing

that animals have not fared any better under socialism. While Marxists have been too quick to dismiss animal advocacy, to overlook its progressive history, to ignore its capacity for radicalization of consciousness and to sneer at the compassionate sentiments that often motivate those who work on behalf of animals, it is true that some animal activists do not always see their own actions in a broader framework. For example, animal advocates argue that world hunger could be solved by adopting a vegan diet. In fact, this strategy would represent a far more efficient and sustainable use of resources. Certainly, it would be a healthier choice for those who do adopt such a diet but doing so alone will not directly benefit the poor who do not have enough to eat. The problem is not simply a shortage in the amount of food but a matter of how food is distributed and since the world is organized on the basis of capitalist relations, this means food goes to those who can afford to buy it.

However, when leftists dismiss concerns of animal advocates as mere sentimentalism and personal 'lifestyle' choices, they overlook a powerful potential for radicalizing consciousness. Those who are motivated to help animals will inevitably be forced to confront the absolute ruthlessness of corporate interests, the distortions of the corporate media and the power of the state that acts to protect these capitalist interests. Those who see their own positive efforts misrepresented by the media as extremism, who confront the venality and deception of corporations and experience the repression of the police are more likely to begin to see the world differently and to start to think about alternative forms of social organization (Redfearn and Benton 1996).

Nevertheless, sentiment itself should not be disparaged. Most people who support animal rights are motivated by feelings of compassion and justice. If the left wants to

mobilize people, there is a need to appeal to them on more than theoretical discussions of class. However, it is not merely a matter of leftist groups adopting a more sympathetic outlook in order to win new recruits. Rather, a re-examination of anthropocentrism presents opportunities for a richer politics of liberation and a willingness to address serious environmental and ecological issues.

Anthropocentrism has limited acceptance of the animal advocacy position. Many, on the right and on the left, believe they are proving the irrelevance of animal advocacy by asking seemingly-ridiculous questions such as “Do bacteria have rights?” or “Do bacteria have rights?” In fact, animal advocates may not have gone far enough in challenging anthropocentric views. The concept of extending rights to sentient animals who are subjects-of-a-life, as Tom Regan (2004) suggests, is a positive approach in helping some animals but it overlooks other organisms with less resemblance to human beings. In fact, Peter Staudenmaier raises this point but he only uses it to attack animal rights views rather than arguing for them to be extended further. Yet these questions do, in fact, raise serious concerns about plants and bacteria. For example, Lord Robert May, president of the UK’s Royal Society notes that while most conservation work focuses on birds and mammals “arguably it's the little things that run the world, things like soil microbes" and such little-known species perform essential functions for maintaining human life on the planet, purifying water, fixing nitrogen, absorbing green house gases and producing oxygen through photosynthesis (Kirby 2004). Human activities may be destroying many of these seemingly-insignificant species as a massive wave of extinctions now sweeps the planet. These extinctions are occurring in a context of unprecedented ecological disaster. In 2005, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment,

based on work of approximately 1,400 experts from 95 countries, surveying ecological effects of human activities, found sixty per cent of the global ecosystem degraded by human activities, including animal exploitation industries. Along with atmospheric pollution from greenhouse gases, deforestation and loss of freshwater aquifers, overfishing, polluting the oceans and introducing alien species to new regions have destroyed twenty per cent of the world's coral reefs, damaged forty per cent of the river systems and seriously disrupted global climate. Effects have been especially harsh for the poor, many of whom rely directly on these ecosystems for survival. To avert disaster, resource consumption must be reduced to levels the planet can sustain.

A society that commodifies animals and permits massive abuse and cruelty to persist is unlikely to develop compassionate policies regarding human beings. Under capitalism, these abuses are justified in terms of profit and property relationships. The fact that animal protectionists have mounted compassionate appeals that threaten these relationships has created a rightwing countermovement discourse of vilification intended to arouse hatred for these advocates. Many on the left have overlooked the long connection between concern for better treatment of animals and better treatment of human beings and, unfortunately, seem willing to allow the same exploitation of animals to continue, justifying this on the basis of an anthropocentrism which is not only callous, limited and ugly but completely unrealistic in the face of urgent global problems and, ultimately, suicidal. Rather than accepting the anthropocentric and instrumentalist views of the animal exploitation industries, progressive thought on the left should embrace a more compassionate view towards animals and strive for a more inclusive version of social justice that includes nonhuman animals as well as humans.

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Deep Ecology, Animal Rights and Animal-Human Continuity:
contrasts and contradictions.

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Introduction

The moral coherence of the two pro-nature theories-cum-movements: deep ecology (DE) and animal rights (AR), is of great concern. The plight of animals and other nature depends, among other things, on the logics DE and AR and their respective followers bring to bear on public practice and discourse. Right now the movements tend to operate in relative isolation from each other and on a number of issues they and their respective theorists seem even diametrically opposed. One of these issues is the question of animal-human continuity and its ethical implications.

This article explores the question why this is so and what is at stake. It analyzes and highlights the relevant, but often underlying, assumptions, contrasts and inner contradictions present in both DE and AR. Which images of animals exist in each of the two circles, as apparent from the actions and concepts of those associating or associated with them?

One caveat: the article's account of both positions is of necessity a generalisation. The following of the two movements tends to be diverse. Some people self-identify with one of the two positions. In other cases people, institutions, or literature are being identified as such by DE or AR types. Some institutions may loosely associate themselves with one particular position (as in the case of National Park rangers making statements in DE jargon, for example). Some literature has been typecast and/or embraced - often *avant la lettre* – as source of inspiration for advocates of a particular position. And there are, of course, those who would call themselves advocate of both movements.

In sum: I am using the terms Deep Ecology and Animal Rights somewhat as Weberian idealtypes. Rather than arguing who belongs to what, the focus of the article is on differences and inner contradictions. It is also on who and what in nature is being overlooked or excluded as a result.

In the course of the article several contrasts between DE and AR will be pointed out. Thus, both positions tend to boil down to a form of reductionism, albeit not the same form. In the case of DE, with its almost exclusive focus on the ecosystem, it could be called *ecosystemic reductionism*; in the case of AR with its all-important focus on the sentient individual it is an *individualistic reductionism*.

Moreover, the respective ways by which DE and AR deal with the issue of animal-human continuity turn out to be radically different. For AR advocates, this continuity is an important conceptual and political tool, but they themselves hardly 'live out' this continuity anymore. Their empathy with the animal is real, but disembodied: its material basis largely forgotten. There is a *disembodied empathy*. Conversely, for DE, living an embodied life as part of and in compliance with nature tends to be more important, but this doesn't seem to entail solidarity with animals that have become de-animalised, denatured and alienated as a result of human destructive activities. DE's attitude towards this part of the animal world, though embodied, is a hostile one: denoting *embodied antipathy*.

Ecosystemic reductionism

Animals for people in the deep green/deep ecology movement are first and foremost wild animals, i.e. fauna living in the wild. Central concepts here are nature, naturalness, species and

biodiversity (Baird Callicott 1989, Low 2001). DE celebrates the wild and the pristine, and tends to come down hard on anything that is no longer considered 'environment', and no longer positively contributes to the ecosystem. Only animals of species that are still part of 'the environment' count for this movement. The word *environment* literally means 'that which surrounds us'. By definition it is not 'us ourselves'. In DE discourse the term serves a peculiar purpose: it inadvertently drives a wedge between us humans and all other nature. (Noske 2004)

Animals, in DE discourse, are being approached as species rather than as individuals. They are almost *equated* with their species or with the ecosystem of which they are part. The animal as individual is often downplayed.

Animals that belong to feral and domesticated species are unpopular in DE circles. Feral animals especially seem to be getting the worst of both worlds: they are considered neither an interesting species, nor as individuals worthy of somebody's moral concern (Rolls 1969, Soulé/Lease 1995, Reads 2003). If anything, they are seen as vermin. It goes without saying that as species they do pose a threat to natural ecosystems. Rats, cats, rabbits, dogs, foxes, horses, donkeys, pigs, goats, water buffaloes, - animals intentionally or unintentionally brought into the Australian or North American continent (by humans) - are threatening local biodiversity. These feral animals can and do destroy the balance in naturally evolved communities. The predators among them sometimes totally wipe out indigenous species whose members have no natural defence against these 'foreigners'. Herbivorous feral animals can totally devastate habitats that native animals are dependent upon (Reads 2003). Unfortunately such ecological hazards are sometimes belittled or downplayed by animal rights people. (pers. comm. animal liberationists in Australia).

Deep green-leaning people perceive such feral animals as unwanted and advocate their destruction, often by very inhumane means. Until recently the National Parks and Wildlife Service in Australia was in the habit of shooting brumbies (feral horses) from the air, thereby indiscriminately massacring herds and disrupting whole horse societies and families. In the north of the continent water buffaloes are being run down by 4WDs equipped with huge 'roo bars'. Rabbits are purposely being targeted with introduced deadly diseases, often by means of specially infected fleas which are then released into their burrows (Reads 2003). Foxes and feral cats and dogs are being killed by means of poison baits. All this happens in the name of responsible environmental management, with the active consent of deep green activists, rangers and scientists.

From the literature on human poisoning (Bell 2001) and from recent cases of food poisoning in China (newspaper reports September 2002) we know what horrendous individual suffering is involved in death by poisoning. It can't be all that different for animals.

Only where poison is being used against native animals – such as in the island state of Tasmania where the logging industry lays out similar poison baits to clear the land of native wildlife – do wilderness protectors protest against such inhumane methods (cf. pamphlets put out by The Wilderness Society). In DE circles individual suffering does sometimes count but it largely depends on who it is that suffers.

Deep ecologists seem indifferent to the suffering of feral and farm animals. Sentience in the DE discourse is often treated as some sort of byproduct of animal life. So is individuality. The natural capacity of sentience is never included in any notion of environment, ecology or nature.

Some deep ecologists *avant la lettre* such as Aldo Leopold, and also someone like Paul Shepard, (Leopold 1949, Shepard 1996) endorse(d) modern recreational hunting as a way to be at one with nature. Not many deep ecologists are taking a critical position on hunting except when it involves endangered species. The issue tends to revolve around numbers rather than the preciousness of individual lives. Neither do deep ecologists tend to take a critical stance on animal experimentation. After all professional ecologists and conservation biologists often conduct experiments themselves. Mostly though, experimenters are using individuals of numerically strong species or species especially bred for the purpose such as white mice and rats. In the eyes of deep ecologists these are no longer 'nature' and so their well-being tends to be low on the priority list.

Deep ecologists and other greenies have been known to argue that hunting is part of human nature when it was still in tune with other nature. They usually point toward hunter/gatherer societies. Hunting is natural, they say.¹ The hunting of animals is felt to be more natural than having animals for companions, which is often seen as degenerate. However, the roots of the phenomenon of companion animals go as far back as hunting. All societies from Paleolithic times onwards have been known to keep animals as pets or companions. It occurs in all societies, in all periods of history and in all economic classes (Serpell 1986). It may not exactly be 'human nature' but apparently many people have felt the need for a face-to-face or touch-to-touch relationship with individuals of another species (Lévi-Strauss 1973, Tuan 1984). So much for the 'unnatural-ness' of companion animals.

Because deep ecologists do not have much time for domesticated animals they tend to be rather uninformed and unconcerned about what happens to animals in factory farms and laboratories.

On ecotours in the Australian outback it strikes me time and again how no effort whatsoever is made to avoid serving factory-farmed meat to the participants of such a tour. When queried on the issue, the ecologically astute tour guides, - often self-identified greenies - tend to demonstrate an entirely value-free and neutral attitude to where the tour food was coming from.

Deep ecologists might disapprove of factory farming because of its unsustainability and its polluting effect on the nature outside, but not because of the things done to natural beings inside. Production and companion animals simply do not figure as 'green' (Noske 1994).

In sum: DE tends to equate animals with their species. Equating animals with their species or with their ecosystem amounts to a form of reductionism: *ecosystemic reductionism*.

Individualistic reductionism

In contrast to DE, AR focuses mainly on animal individuals as sentient beings and on our ethics vis-à-vis these beings. The domain for animal defenders is that nature which has evolved individual and sentient, that nature which can feel pain, pleasure and fear (Singer 1990).

Because many animal advocates themselves live in urban areas, are city dwellers (Francione 1996, Montgomery 2000), the animals they encounter tend to be those that are no longer wild.

The focus is on those animals which humans have incorporated into their work and

living places such as production animals in factory farms, companion animals, and animals that are used as organic instruments in laboratories. That is: animals that are either domesticated or been made to live (and die) in human-manufactured habitats (Sabloff 2001).

Having said this, animal advocates do also focus on hunted animals and this concerns wild rather than domesticated animals. Recreational hunting has a long history, especially in North America (Cartmill 1993, Flynn 2002).

This focus on sentience stems from the understanding that there is continuity between the human and animal condition. Human sentience has ethical significance. It is at the root of the condemnation of oppression, torture, genocide. Human-animal continuity implies the acknowledgement that many animals have bodies and nervous systems that resemble ours. If well-being is important to humans, it cannot but be important to animals also. Not only do many animals have bodies like ours, their subjectivity - their mind and their emotional life-bears resemblance to us. Like us, animals are in Tom Regan's terms "subject-of-a-life" (Regan 1983). Human-animal continuity in body and mind calls for parallel continuity in ethics, such that ethical obligations vis-à-vis animals cannot be radically different from those vis á vis humans.

However, many people in the animal rights movement tend to be almost indifferent to all nature other than animal nature. Supposedly non-sentient living nature, such as plants and trees, is generally not taken into consideration. Neither are non-living, inorganic natural entities such as rocks, rivers, and mountains. In themselves these parts of nature are not sentient and individually they cannot suffer so the animal movement often overlooks or dismisses them (Hay 2002).

The animal movement is highly critical of the traditional cartesian notion of ‘animal-machine’ and constitutes the most important group worldwide to condemn factory farming. But it seems to have no objection against similar things done to plants (cf. Dunayer 2001). A concept such as “plant-machine” and the intensive vegetable and plant farming that is currently taking place do not raise the same eyebrows. The movement’s critique of objectification and exploitation seems to rest solely on the aforementioned notion of sentience. The objectification - including things like genetic engineering - of the rest of nature goes largely unnoticed or is dismissed.

By concentrating on sentient beings, AR advocates abstract from the environmental context of animal existence. Many animal activists have no conception of how animals, even as individuals, are integrated into other nature. One sometimes encounters a certain uneasiness among members of this movement about nature’s meat-eaters - as though the eating of animals by other animals were something that ideally should not exist. Some animal rightists and liberationists tell me that, were it possible, they would like to ‘phase out’ predator-prey relationships or at least liberate (save) the prey animal from the equation (pers. comm. in several countries).

Another example of refusing to accept animal meat-eating as a zoological necessity is the tendency among vegetarian/vegan animal advocates to turn their carnivorous companion animals into vegetarians as well by feeding them plant-derived food often accompanied by special dietary supplements. Admittedly in the US and Canada standard pet food is hardly ever fresh and tends to come out of a packet or tin, unlike Europe where one can get fresh and increasingly organic free-range meat for one’s companion animals at the local butcher. While many of these people

do acknowledge that their animal's body may not 'be built' for vegetarian or vegan food, it is apparently no problem for them that the necessary daily intake of supplements will make that animal totally dependent on the health industry. Inadvertently these people are turning animals into duplicates of themselves: modern consumers of the manufactured products of an industrial age. The animals' lives are humanized and *colonized*— their alienation taken to another extreme.

Incidentally, much plant-based and processed food happens to be the end-product of unsustainable monocultures - to which many animal habitats have had to give way - and has been put on the market by the same globalized and diversified agro-industrial complex which also produces standard pet foods. (Noske 1997).

Many AR advocates thus seem to have trouble accepting nature as an interdependent system where everything has its place, function and appropriate physical organisation. Organic beings took a long time evolving in relation to each other and to non-living inorganic nature. Nature is a community where every living thing lives off everything else - food, even vegan food, is living nature in a killed state - and in the zoological realm this means that both plant-eating and meat-eating have their respective *raison d'être*. Predation is neither a negligible anomaly nor an ethical deficiency in the ecosystem. (Plumwood 1999)

There seems to be a lack of environmental awareness and environmental critique among many AR advocates. Urbanization, technological optimism, the modern urbanocentric mind-set (Lemaire 2002) are generally taken for granted.

I have met animal rightists, themselves living in high rise blocks in a Canadian city, who feel they should persuade Inuit people in the continent's north to move down south. The argument offered is that by abandoning the frozen lands their ancestors lived on for so many

generations these Inuit could take up a more moral lifestyle vis á vis animals and become vegetarians (which at present they cannot be for the simple reason that where they are living hardly anything grows.)

I also have come across animal shelters whose managers on principle do not give companion animals to people with a garden, for fear that by going outdoors such animals could escape and come to harm. Accidental death in traffic was seen as infinitely more horrific than a lifelong existence indoors.

Many members of the AR movement seem to move surrounded by machines in an entirely humanized, electronic techno-world and tend to treat this circumstance simply as a given. Admittedly, technology critique can sometimes be heard in AR circles, such as the recent one inspired by the revelations of gorilla expert Ian Redmond. He reports that the metal *coltan*, the material used in high-tech gadgets such as laptops and cell phones, is being mined in the middle of gorilla habitat in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The gorillas themselves end up as staple food -- bush meat-- for the miners. (Redmond 2001) Of course, the animal rights movement is critical of such things i.e. this particular circumstance surrounding the production of high tech products. But on the whole AR's technology critique does not exceed this ad hoc level. Its critique of technology remains contingent at best: there is nothing fundamental about it.

The hegemony of the car in modern society also seems no cause for concern to AR. Needless to say, even apart from everything else that the car represents, this type of private transport does result in numerous animal deaths. According to Wildcare, a wildlife rehabilitation center in Toronto, most injured and orphaned animals brought in are victims of auto transport and to a lesser extent cat attacks. (pers. comm. Canadian wildlife rehabilitator Csilla Darvasi, for

the US see Braunstein 1998 and Hogwood/Trogmé 2003). While cars are causing direct death or injury, habitat destruction connected with automobility and road building cause extensive indirect death and even extinction. Members of the AR movement often show no awareness of the violence involved in bulldozing an acre of land or building a road. One doesn't see much blood but it causes whole communities of animals and plants to perish (Livingston 1994).

In sum: AR tends to portray animals as though they were isolated, city-dwelling consumer-citizens, living entirely outside of any ecological context. Such a view amounts to another form of reductionism: *individualistic reductionism*.

Embodied antipathy versus disembodied empathy

People of both movements are potentially united in their struggle against anthropocentrism: the idea of humanity as the measure of all things. But apart from this there seem to be few platforms where the two actually meet: only during some international campaigns such as the ones against seal-hunting and whaling. The first time a group like Greenpeace showed any concern for individual animal welfare was when many years ago in Canada three whales got stuck in the ice. The International Fund for Animal Welfare, though essentially an animal welfare organisation, does from time to time put forward arguments to do with habitat destruction and extinction of endangered species.

DE appreciates the wonders of nature, is conscious of animal-human continuity, and denounces various technologies (including the car) as alienating from and harmful to nature. But there exists a strange contradiction here. Though in DE circles it is acknowledged that modern human practices have been extremely exploitative of nature and the wild, this does not seem to

have induced much sympathy for the exploited animals. Animal victims, be they domesticated or feral, tend to be blamed for their own predicament and for posing an active threat to what is perceived as 'real nature'. (Noske 2004)

So, although the deep ecologists, in contrast to their city-based counterparts in the AR movement, are much more likely to opt for a natural lifestyle and to be more mindful of a shared animal-human past, this doesn't translate into sympathy with animals that have fallen by the wayside. This attitude could be characterised as *embodied antipathy*. Human-animal continuity is lived and 'realised', but instead of empathy is often accompanied by a disdain for those beings that no longer can lead natural lives in the appropriate ecosystem.

However, denatured though such beings may be, they nevertheless are still close enough to nature to possess the *natural* capacity for suffering whether it be pain, boredom, listlessness, social and ecological deprivation or agonizing death.

Another contradiction is apparent in DE as well. In countries like Australia and New Zealand the green focus is strong and as mentioned before is often expressed by advocating harsh measures against the exotic and the feral (Aslin/Bennett 2000, Reads 2003). One wonders what self-image underlies such attitudes. Is this a curious case of human foreigners (in the ecological sense) condemning animal foreigners? Would such people advocate the eradication of themselves, members of a group of exotic white invaders whose adverse impact on the local ecosystem has been well-documented? Would they be in favour of curbing all - non-aboriginal - human lives and births, not to mention more drastic measures? If the answer is negative, how can such measures be justified with regard to animals? Downplaying animal sentience and animal

cruelty issues while at the same time upholding human sentience arguments endorses ethical *discontinuity* between humans and animals, albeit perhaps unintentionally.

Strangely enough - because one would expect it the other way round - it is AR rather than DE which invokes animal-human continuity to strengthen its philosophical position. However, many AR advocates are themselves almost the embodiment of human-animal discontinuity. As mentioned before, in this movement there hardly exists any critique of present-day technology, a technology which is alienating humans from their 'animalness'. This issue is tackled by DE rather than by the animal lobby.

Again consider the car issue. For all other species bodily movement is first and foremost organic movement: it involves muscle power, fatigue or sweat. But for modern humans bodily movement is more and more being replaced by mechanization and computerizing. They let machines do the moving for them and as a result they are becoming more and more unanimal-like. Hardly anybody in AR looks upon this as something problematic which could stand in the way of the natural human condition, i.e. our physical animalness. In AR circles, however, human-animal continuity remains largely an abstract moral principle which is hardly 'lived' in reality. This attitude is characterised by *disembodied empathy*: the empathy is real but its material basis forgotten.

The recent developments in animal biotechnology are going to be a test case for both AR and DE. Some animal welfarists have claimed that genetic engineering may enable us to design animal species that are fully adapted to factory farming conditions (Rollin, 1995). Others, among them veterinarians, are toying with possibilities of cloning and engineering 'more suitable' and

‘made-to-measure’ transgenic companion animals (Quain, 2002). For DE the issue of genetic engineering highlights pressing dilemmas with regard to species integrity (Birke/Michael 1998).

How will AR react? And will DE tackle the issue at all? Admittedly DE concerns itself with species, but only with species in the wild. Deep ecologists may be worried about what will happen if transgenic populations come into contact with naturally evolved wild ones. How will that affect the community of species? Most genetic engineering is done to already domesticated species, the ones DE isn’t interested in. But recently there have been calls by green-leaning scientists to bring back extinct wild species such as the Tasmanian tiger (thylacine) by way of genetic engineering.

A place in the world

How are we to navigate between ecosystemic reductionism and individualised ethics?

Deep ecology is about compliance with and obedience to nature’s measure, nature’s rhythm, nature’s limitations (Livingston 1994). It is about accepting a nature that includes things like mortality, predator-prey relationships, the ‘previousness’ of species, imperfect bodies, our own finiteness. Deep ecology asks how animals are part of that nature.

Instead of asking how animals are part of nature, as deep ecology is doing, the animal rights movement asks how animals are part of our ethics: animal rights is about extending compassionate society to include everything sentient. Animal rights theory bestows on the sentient in nature a status of individual humanness: it asks how animals are part of human society and ethics.

The two viewpoints – compliance with nature and societal ethics – at times have seemed incompatible. It is a difficult dilemma. Mary Midgley (1983) and J. Baird Callicott (in Hargrove 1992) tried to solve it by arguing that wild animals deserve our protection as part of the ecosystem and that domesticated animals are entitled to our care, because they are part of a mixed human-animal community and we have ethical obligations to all the individuals of such a community. The problem is: this arrangement would not cover all animals. Feral animals and exotics belong neither to the first group (the original ecosystem) nor to the second (the mixed domestic community). The reason commonly given for persecuting and eradicating these animals is precisely that they do not seem to belong to any community. ‘Pests’ are neither interesting as species nor as individuals, it is felt, and this turns them into outlaws.

AR could perhaps bridge the gap which separates it from deep ecology by overcoming its exclusive focus on sentience and the sentient individual. It could extend its compassionate ethics so as to include the non-sentient and even the inorganic. Animal rightists need to realize the importance of wildness, the relative ‘otherness’ of non-humans, and to respect what Livingston has called, the “previousness” of species. It should guard against an ethical colonization and humanization of nature.

Deep ecology’s notion of ecology and nature should encompass the – natural - capacity of sentience. DE will need to pay more heed to matters of cruelty and suffering in the way it conceives of and treats individual animal beings, including those that objectively do damage to other nature. Many feral species did not choose to live where they are now living. Humanity took them there.

There will inevitably be clashes of interest now and then: between animals and animals, animals and plants, individuals and species, even between the organic and inorganic.

To really do justice to animal-human continuity we must ask ourselves not only what it is we (should) do with nature but also how we ourselves are 'of nature'. All of us, animals as well as humans, somehow exist in nature and also in society (or at least in a human-defined nation-state). Each and everyone of us is a sentient individual, a species-member as well as a 'place' in the world. In this world nature and society intersect. It is all there is, nobody and nothing exists outside either.

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ⁱ Hunting would indeed be natural if human hunters would kill their prey with their teeth or nails but they happen to use artefacts such as high tech hunting or fishing equipment which makes hunting 'cultural' rather than natural.

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Book Review: Kunstler, James Howard. The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century. New York: Atlantic Monthly, 2005.

In 2003, I wrote a book review of Richard Heinberg's The Party's Over, which argued that the main development in the future was going to be the end of the Era of Cheap Oil, and that the book-reading public ought to be thinking about what to do when that era finally came to an end.

Kunstler's The Long Emergency is another such book. Its main thesis is that civilization is in for a period of "contraction," and Kunstler places himself between the ranks of the cornucopians and the neoMalthusians in offering this thesis. His real beliefs are in fact neoMalthusian, with all the contradiction that that entails. Most of what I said about Heinberg goes as well for Kunstler, as follows: the main flaw is that the models of civilization given in neoMalthusian analysis are ignorant of the roles played by ideology and social conflict in the structure of societies. Also, neoMalthusian appeals to "heed the danger" are always slanted to appeal to a privileged middle class that is (contradictorily) a product of the society the neoMalthusians most disdain. Beyond that, I tend to agree with much of what is said in neoMalthusian warnings, while myself arguing that only an anticapitalist abolition of the profits system will prevent global ecological disaster. This is because capitalism tends to grow without concern for natural limits until it reaches a state of ecological crisis. What's more, its "price signals" do not allow capitalist actors to respond to ecological crises in a timely fashion, as Meadows et al. demonstrated in their classic study Beyond The Limits.

Kunstler, for his part, seems largely motivated by the idea that he can get the American public to "wake up from its sleepwalk and act to defend the project of civilization" (2) if he issues a stern enough warning about future dangers. Curiously enough, Kunstler also offers a harsh criticism of the American Way of Life. We are asked to believe that "the American way of life -- which is now virtually synonymous with suburbia," is largely unreformable and will experience "rapid and cruel devaluation." (18) So why suburban residents are peculiarly poised to defend civilization is beyond me.

Kunstler's disliking of suburbia has been nourished over the writing of three prior books, The Geography of Nowhere, Home From Nowhere, and The City In Mind; Notes on the Urban Condition, in which he depicts and historicizes the various architectural types. In these books, suburbia is shown to be a product of the American obsession with privacy, and the availability of cheap automobiles and gasoline. Given his previous work, it's no wonder Kunstler views the upcoming declines in oil production as a sign of doom for the architectural form he has long disliked.

Much of the documentation of The Long Emergency is of the Hubbert Peak, accompanied by a long, simplistic discussion of the geopolitics of the Middle East. The vivid picture of the decline in oil supplies and of the potential relocation of human affairs is sorely needed in neoMalthusian literature, but the geopolitics imposed upon this vision is vague and fuzzy. Kunstler argues, for instance, that "the clear lessons of Iraq are that countries may be easy to roll over but not so easy to pacify afterward," (83) never mind that it took twelve years of embargo to soften Iraq up, or the neoliberal project being

currently performed upon Iraq that is the cause of most of its public's hatred of US domination.

Kunstler also believes that other aspects of global environmental destruction deserve our attention. He argues, for instance, that because of the expansion of an unsustainable model of civilization, "the world is now overdue for a new outbreak of supervirus on the order of the 1918 flu." (172) Kunstler recites a laundry list of other possible disasters, assuming the worst in each case.

Like many Americans, Kunstler has been indoctrinated into anticommunism, and so in his disparagement of capitalist globalization, he argues that "globalization pretended to promise the same nirvana as communism had failed to deliver in its time, and came into full flower just as communism lost its legitimacy. Globalism also had the same tendency to impoverish and enslave huge populations while enriching the elite who managed its operations." (186) Never mind that there are important moments both in capitalist and Stalinist history that contradict those depictions. Don't expect deep economics here; go directly to Robert Brenner's The Boom and the Bubble for that.

Kunstler's misreading of politics and economics leads, in this reviewer's opinion, to a misreading of freedom. At the beginning of the book, he suggests that "capitalism is not strictly speaking an 'ism,' in the sense that it is not so much a set of beliefs as a set of laws describing the behavior of money as it relates to accumulated real wealth or resources" (16). Economic law, however, does not pre-empt human free will for Kunstler: it is "not a matter of whether people believe in capitalism... but of the choices they make as individuals, and in

the aggregate as communities and nations, that determines their destiny." (16)

So he thinks we are free: but he also assumes that "concepts such as interest, credit, revenue, profit, and default don't require a belief in capitalism in order to operate." Yet the above are not merely concepts or beliefs but concrete social relationships between individuals under capitalism. And the above relationships are all corollaries of a single concrete relationship, exploitation, by which an owning class appropriates the surplus produced by a working class. Thus Kunstler's concept of freedom is a chimera; choices may indeed determine our destinies in certain ways, as we might choose to pursue a career in real estate or a career in teaching; but if we are destined to live under the relationships defined by capitalism, with all its ecological destructiveness, then his foreseen future is inevitable for us, and we have no choice but to enact it. Conversely, I would argue, we must really be free to choose something other than capitalism in the future if we are to be free in any sense beyond the trivial. Such a freedom would be a total social freedom, and it would allow us to avoid the "long emergency" described in such detailed and disastrous terms in Kunstler's book.

At the end, our pessimistic author advocates a replacement of the suburban "hallucinated economy" with, of all things, small-town America and a return to the local. This recommendation has all the flavor of doom, however. He does, for instance, admit that "as these new social arrangements sort themselves out, the Long Emergency is going to produce large numbers of economic losers." (274) and that "human life may... be

a lot cheaper than it is now." (286) So much for freedom. At least Kunstler goes further to reveal his belief in the expendability of the masses than many neoMalthusians.

Seeing Nature Through Gender, Virginia J. Scharff, Edt., Lawrence: U. Press of Kansas, 2003.

Ecofeminism perhaps best describes the subject-matter of Seeing Nature Through Gender, but history is the theme that connects this unusual batch of essays. Writers such as Amy Green and Douglas Sackman discuss the historic place of Gene-Stratton-Porter, an early writer and nature photographer, and the importance of cooking and serving food in gender roles and in reaffirming our relationship with nature. From the sculpting of Mount Rushmore to the image of the Civilian Conservation Corps, from lesbian land communities to the evolution of “firemen,” Seeing Nature Through Gender offers interesting and thought-provoking historic visions of our relationship with the natural environment.

Did you ever wonder where the turn “bunny slope” came from? Annie Gilbert Coleman, in “From Snow Bunnies to Shred Betties: Gender, Consumption, and the Skiing Landscape,” skis readers through the history of women on the slopes. While women have always been comfortable gliding across the snow, and have long used skis as a form of transportation, one would never know this from the images conjured up by American ski industries. From the early thirties to the sixties, skiing was held out as a manly endeavor; women were only encouraged to the slopes in order to sell more ski fashions—and to provide men at ski resorts with evening romance and entertainment. Early last century, the male-dominated world of skiers viewed the slopes as feminine—to be mastered. In this landscape, women skiers were easily viewed as subversive. Women had to walk a fine line—not too competitive or competent in the eyes of those around them—if they were to maintain their femininity. Special slopes were created for women, “bunny slopes” that required less skill and daring, less strength and endurance. “Dedicated to fashion, men, and socializing, Snow Bunnies flaunted their femininity. They decorated the slopes and ski lodges, drawing attention to their bodies as objects of beauty rather than instruments of mobility” (195).

Even in the days of male-dominated slopes, many women admitted that they traveled to the slopes not for romance and fashion, but as an act of independence and freedom. By the time the 70s rolled around, women had become strong competitive skiers, but the media, and some skiers, continued to apologize for females who exhibited such manly traits. Only in the eighties did women shed all pretense of feminine fainting, overtly skiing to their full capacity. They hit the slopes because they loved skiing, because they were fast, agile, and had terrific balance. Even the most difficult slopes were eventually opened to women. Bunny slopes became the domain of beginners—all beginners.

The story of the slopes does not end here. Coleman shifts to the shifty: young male snowboarders of the 70s. These young men formed a counterculture movement that “set skiers’ teeth on edge” (207). As snowboarding became more popular, the ski industry, which initially banned snowboards, could see the clear imprint of coins disappearing into soft snow, and they capitulated. Snowboards, once banned from nearly every slope, were courted. The ski industry that had developed “sensuous” trails for the manly men who came to ride, break, and conquer the wilderness now began to play counterculture music across snowy slopes and build urban elements into mountainsides, imitating railings and swimming pools, in order to attract snowboarders. As with skiing,

women eventually joined in the fun; some began their own lines of boards and clothing, capitalizing on snowboarding fame. The women of the 30s, portrayed as a side dish for male skiers, prizing their stereotypical femininity above all else, were nowhere to be found in the rough-and-tumble androgynous-looking women snowboarding in the 90s. This new brand of snow-lover is clear about the change, and how they feel about their new-found freedom: “We want to have fun, not the quilting circle style of fun, but the real kick-ass, exhilarating meet-your-maker kind of fun, we want to ride hard, we want to play damn it and stop cheerleading” (209).

“From Snow Bunnies to Shred Betties” explicates how gender, and cultural views of gender, have affected and continue to affect ski slopes, from simulated urban props to bunny hills. In “Naturalizing Power: Land and Sexual Violence along William Byrd’s Dividing Line,” Paige Raibmon exposes exploitation and subjugation of both women and land in the colonial South. This despicable character “evaluated the land and its inhabitants in terms of their susceptibility to colonial improvement and increased productivity” (21). Indians, women, and poor (uncivilized) men were as much a part of a landscape that needed to be tamed, as trees and swamps. “Byrd described women in particular as akin to nature, not unlike soil or trees or animals, even describing them in similar terms” (21). All were evaluated from the standpoint of possible profit.

Byrd was an upper-class male who wielded power like a thrusting iron, forcing those weaker to accommodate and serve him and his party, including sexual needs. He recorded a surveying expedition into the borderlands between North Carolina and Virginia in two books, one explaining historic facts for the masses, and one that revealed private details of the party’s ribald, licentious extracurricular activities. In this more private book, Byrd “chronicled a series of repeated sexual assaults on local women,” in order to share these “entertaining” stories with other upper class men and women, on return (21). His (and his cohort’s) mistreatment of women was as commonplace as the exploitation of nature—the world and its people lay waiting in the hinterlands for men like Byrd. His “assaults on women were closely associated with Byrd’s other colonial goals, not aberrations from them” (21). Raibmon quotes from Byrd’s secret writings:

The victims of these incidents varied from a “DarkAngel” who “struggled just enough to make her Admirer more eager,” to a “Tallow-faced Wench... disabled from making any resistance by the Lameness of her Hand,” to a farmer’s “tal straight Daughter of a Yielding Sandy Complexion,” to a kitchen maid who “wou’d certainly have been ravish’t, if her timely consent had not prevented the Violence” (21).

Byrd had no respect for women, the poor, or people of different races. Nor had he any interest in the land beyond its potential to line his coffers. For Byrd, and many other upper class people in the early 18th century, the world was a capitalist’s delight, waiting for his personal exploitation.

Raibmon laments that, while his history writings have been used extensively as a historic text, his secret writings have been relegated to the category of literature, as if they had nothing factual to teach us about our roots, and our relations both with one another and with the environment. But Byrd tells us a great deal about early America, about white power and the white man’s relations with women, nature, and minorities. Through Raibmon’s writing we meet an historic upper-class American of note: a bigot, a thief, and a rapist.

What do firemen have to do with ecofeminism? Fire is a natural phenomenon; fire pits man against nature. Firemen have long been glamorized as heroes who risk their lives fighting fearsome elements of nature to save helpless women and children. Marc Tebeau reveals how the necessity for firemen emerged from the growing urban American landscape, and how the rhetoric of firefighting elevated the status of white males as model humans, as virile, and as the epitome of manhood. In the 1870s and 80s, the media popularized and glorify the fireman as the quintessential white man. Tebeau includes reproductions of illustrations of firemen rescuing helpless little girls in frilly dresses and hapless women who could not save themselves from the deadly jaws of nature. Firemen continue to be honored as brave men who risk their lives for the better of humanity, rather than as people putting in a day's work for pay, much like other laborers who exchange physical energy for a paycheck.

In "New Men in Body and Soul": The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Transformation of Male Bodies and the Body Politic," Bryant Simon explains how nature has been viewed as a place where men can go to become "real men." When urban life blossomed in the early 20th century, and rugged frontiersmen settled down to life in towns, powerful men like Franklin D. Roosevelt were gripped by fear that manhood would be lost on the easy streets of urban America. The CCC was viewed as a way to bring men in contact with nature, to give them cots under the stars and tools with which to transform the natural world, and thereby transform young, pasty, semi-subversive men (who might otherwise tend toward homosexuality) into solid citizens. The images Simon includes highlight the idealized vision of CCC workers as young, white, confident, and physically strong. Women were not allowed into the CCC, and people of different races were rarely accepted. The CCC was about whiteness, youth, nature, and "real" manhood. Many leaders and citizens believed that the very strength of the nation rested on fostering such young, rugged, outdoorsy men. Male bodies thus became public property, honed for the warfare in particular. Simon notes that this trend continues, but is now used more for commercial consumption by labels such as Calvin Klein and by Hollywood in productions such as Beverly Hills 90210.

Seeing Nature Through Gender is an eclectic assortment of essays connected by an historical approach to ecofeminist analysis. Editor Virginia J. Scharff's stated intent is to "examine ways in which gender conditions historical relations between humans and nature" (xv). While some of the essays would benefit from tighter editing, most are well written and offer both an informative and fascinating look into nature, women, and Western history. Scharff's work constitutes a unique contribution to ecofeminist literature.