1AC - Environment

The status quo attitude views the environment through a lens of economic rationality- using false claims of objectivity to claim dominion over all of the earth and only understand the earth in terms of its usefulness towards us-

Hancock 2003 (Dr. Jan Hancock is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science where he teaches courses on political sociology, US foreign policy, globalization and the United Nations.) “Environmental Human Rights: Power, Ethics and Law” p.22-24

The dominant paradigm espoused by technical experts subsequently influences the opinions of all individuals in a society since, as Drengson reminds us, we interpret the world through the lens of the paradigms that are in dominant use (Drengosn, 1980). Russel draws proper attention to the process of manufacturing social conformity by demonstrating that all other forms of power ultimately rest upon the power of opinion and in particular upon those forces that influence and construct public opinion (Russell, 1948). The promotion of alternative opinions and expressions of subjugated forms of knowledge that threaten dominant social interests are prevented by processes of discreditation and marginalization that have been documented by political theorists as diverse as Foucault, Habermas, Kuhn and Chomsky as outlined above. The two findings of this analysis establish (i) the contentious, diverse and disputed nature of the criteria for rationality and (ii) the legitimization or the subjugation of forms of rationality on the basis of the service thereby rendered to dominant social interests. These findings contest the claims made in defense of economic rationality that it is objective, value neutral or in any meaningful sense superior or more indicative of truth than any other form. Establishing the relative, subjective and contingent nature of economic rationality can thereby question the legitimacy of the hegemonic discourse. Economic Rationality and Environmental Human Rights Violations The paradigm of economic rationality assumes the Greco-Christian position that everything on earth is for the sole use of humankind and that that species is at liberty to modify the environment as it will (Tarlock, 1988). Claims to the intrinsic value of nature, to the existence of values derived from a non-human source, are dismissed by economic rationality as normative and non-quantifiable (Gowdy, 1999). Instead, the value of the environment is determined by economic rationality as a monetary price reflecting market forces of supply and demand. The environment is therefore essentially perceived as a commodity within this paradigm. Following from the separation of human society rom ecological systems, the environment is only valued within a framework of economic rationality to the extent that the market mechanism specifies prices for natural resrouces. Such an interpretation is circumscribed in the extreme. Bartlett and Opschoor draw attention to the fact that crucial elements in ecological systems cannot be expressed in monetary terms and are consequently disregarded in the formula promoted by economic rationality (Bartlett, 1986, Opschoor, 1994). In the case of energy policy for instance, market forces rationalize continuing dependence on fossil fuels with environmental consequences of increasing pollution, acid rain, climate change and degradation of the areas where mining occurs. Environmental degradation is determined, encouraged and legitimized by the subordination of eco-system requirements to the logic of capital and consumption (Saurin 1993). In contrast, the paradigm of deep ecology attributes intrinsic value to non-human life, independent of its economic of anthropocentric worth. This sentiment has been articulated through the claim that ‘everything has some value for itself, for others, and for the whole’ (Drengson, 1980). Sessions and Naess similarly contend that: The well being and flourhsing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the use of the non-human world for human purposes (Sessions and Naess, 1991, p.157). Recognition of the intrinsic value of all forms of life is reflected in the characteristic imperatives of ecological rationality to preserve biodiversity and habitats as the highest political priorities and to acknowledge the right of all living beings to unfold (Rolston, 1981 ; Chew 1997). Although Kant was in no sense an advocate of ecological rationality, in the Critique of Judgment he distinguished between an argument according to truth and an argument according to man. The first considers its object as it is in itself, the second what that object is for us (Lewis 1995). This Kantian observation is pertinent to considerations of ascribing value to non-human life since living beings, regardless of whether or not they are sentient, and regardless of whether they are plants or animals, have their own projects inherent to the phenomenon of life as experience by them, independent of any contact with humans. For humans to decide that such factors construe no value is to utilize instrumental rationality to establish what the life is for us and to value it accordingly. This violates the requirements identified by Kant that in order to establish an argument according to truth, we must instead consider the value of the thing, life, and nature in this case, as it it in itself. According to such reasoning it would be logically coercive to recognize a value in nature, independent of human concerns, derived from the phenomenon of the natural unfolding of non-human life. Rolston points out that life is only treated as devoid of intrinsic value by economists because nature is taken for granted since, he argues, the discovery of life elsewhere in the universe would be recognized by the scientific community as of tremendous value (Rolston 1981). It should also be noted that Western political philosophy has traditionally used claims to nature to validate notions of justice as exemplified in discussions over natural justice and natural rights. Such arguments necessarily presuppose some sort of value in nature, since without such value, claims to legitimacy derived from a natural status would be nonsensical. The the ecological field-worker, the equal right to live and blossom is an intuitively clear and obvious value axiom. Its restriction to humans is an anthropocentrism(Naess 1973). Demonstrating the intrinsic value of non-human life has been comprehensively achieved elsewhere (agar, 2001). It is not the purpose of this study to repeat the arguments for and against recognizing the intrinsic value of nature. Rather the purpose is to establish the link between the epistemological dominance of economic rationality in valuing nature solely as a resource for humans and the service thereby provided to the corporate sector to utilize natural resources as they see fit, regardless of the implications for non-human life. The brief juxtaposition of economic and ecological rationality on the subject of the value of nature demonstrates two incommensurate methods of conceptualizing value. Under the ecological model, the intrinsic value of all life axiomatic. In contrast, economic rationality interprets nature ad non-human life forms in instrumental terms of environmental resources to be utilized in the service of economic ends. Subsequently, forests and minerals are viewed by the dominant paradigm of economic rationality as exploitable resources to be utilized as market factors dictate and in such a manner as to minimize private costs. In terms of environmental human rights, the paradigm of economic rationality legitimizes iniquitous environmental resource ownership predicated upon ability to pay rather than considerations of either human or ecological needs. The right to an environment free from toxic pollution is similarly discredited through a methodological focus on efficiency that advocates an optimal level of toxic pollution determined by market forces. For example, one economics textbook explains that: The efficient quantity of pollution is not zero but rather the level at which the social marginal cost of cutting back pollution equals its social marginal benefit. The fact that pollution is not zero but rather the level at which the social marginal cost of cutting back pollution equals its social marginal benefit. The fact that pollution still exists is not sufficient to establish that policy has not been tough enough (beg et all, 1978). The political implications of accepting an efficient quantity of pollution are revealed by an internal memo written by Lawrence Summers, then chief economist of the World Bank. In this exposition of economic rationality he inquired, ‘shouldn’t the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the less developed countries?’. Due to ‘under pollution’ and lower income levels, developing states were calculated to have lower marginal costs of pollution. Since the economic costs of pollution are calculated through a methodology of income lost through premature death or illness, Summers correctly concluded that, ‘the economic logic behind dumping a lod of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable’ (rich 1994). It is precisely because of this logic that economic rationality is comptabile with the realization of the claimed environmental human right to an environment free from toxic pollution.

This lens justifies itself through faux science and easing the industrialized world’s guilt about environmental destruction- leading to an endless cycle degradation

Alf Hornborg 2001 (Alf Hornborg is an anthropologist and professor of human ecology at Lund University, Sweden.) “The Power of the Machine: Global Inequalities of Economy, Technology, and Environment” p.24-26

it might seem as if the choice between zero-sum game and cornucopia models should be a simple empirical question. What do the data say? It no longer seems feasible, however, to identify “simple empirical” questions in the social sciences. The global interconnections are too complex. The opposite camp generally seems to be able to turn each specific piece of information inside out by putting it in a different context and approaching it from a different perspective. In a book the subtitle of which is Measuring the Real State of the World, Danish statistician Björn Lomborg (2001) contradicts Worldwatch Institute, Greenpeace, and the World Wide Fund for Nature by suggesting that what have been perceived as global problems of inequality and environmental deterioration are mostly illusions. One by one, he dismisses all our worries about resource depletion, per capita food production, increasing gaps between rich and poor, deforestation, acidification, species extinction, chemical pollution, and global warming. The conclusion that not just some of but all these worries are illusory is indeed remarkable. It is obvious that both the compilation and the interpretation of statistics to a large extent boil down to whether we wish to see this or that pattern. This is not a simple question of manipulation, but of a fundamental human desire to see verified by data the patterns we imagine to exist in the world. But how do we choose these patterns or interpretations to begin with? To the extent that we do choose our models, it is evident that our consider-ations are not concerned solely with the criterion of credibility. We like to think that our most fundamental criterion for “truth” is whether a specific interpretation of causal connections can explain the most aspects of our global pre- dicament, but the widespread paradigm shift that has occurred since the 1970s instead suggests that a more crucial consideration is which interpretation we can live with. In the industrialized nations in the 1960s and early 1970s, there was an existential space, so to speak, for radical criticism. Especially among younger people, there was a widespread faith in the capacity of collective, social move- ments to transform fundamental structures in society. When faith in the future and collective change withered in the mid-1970s, a great many people in the North probably found the idea that their affluence was based on the impoverish- ment of the South and the global environment unbearable and thus impossible to accept. An important factor underlying this shift was the increasing mobility of globalized capital. Faced with the threat of unemployment, local populations everywhere grew more careful in their criticism of power (cf. Bauman 1998). To the extent that some of the indignation over environmental problems and global inequality persisted, it was generally transformed from revolutionary fervor to resignation. Globalization thus implied contradictory impulses that condemned both the embittered in the South and the conscience-stricken in the North to a predicament of perpetual, cognitive dissonance. Through media they came into ever-closer contact with global inequalities, while at the same time it seemed increasingly evident to them that there was virtually nothing they could do about them. This may explain some of the market for the new genre of “green-bashing,” counter-environmentalist books like Lomborg’s. Many readers probably felt comfortable with Lomborg’s wholesale denial of environmental concern. But there are more subtle ways of disarming indignation than simple denial. What ecological modernization has achieved is a neutralization of the formerly widespread intuition that industrial growth is at odds with global ecology. The environmental concern of young people is now being redirected into special educational establishments designed to promote the message that the adverse effects of economic growth can best be amended with more growth. The discursive shift since the 1970s has been geared to disengaging concerns about environment and development from the criticism of industrial capitalism as such. But the centralquestion about capitalism should be the same now as it was in the days of Marx: Is the growth of capital of benefit to everybody, or only to a few at the expense of others? However much contemporary debate tries to sweep this question under the carpet, it will continue to reappear, albeit in new forms. Since Marx’s time, it has been extended primarily in two directions. On one hand, questions of injustice and unequal exchange have transcended the local relation between worker and capitalist and been applied to the global exchange between industrial centers and their peripheries; on the other hand, there have been attempts to include global ecology in the same analysis.

This economic rationality about the environment is codified into federal law- the EPACT of 2005 is an example of this logic par excellence it requires that solar energy be “Economically feasible” in order to install on federal buildings

Green 6 [Erin H. Green, Green Power in Green Spaces: Policy Options to Promote Renewable Energy Use in U.S. National Parks, Masters in Public Policy Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts/Public Policy Program at Rochester Institute of Technology, March 2006, https://ritdml.rit.edu/bitstream/handle/1850/2669/EGreenThesis03-2006.pdf?sequence=1]

EPACT 2005 requires that a specified portion of the energy consumed by Federal agencies be renewable; renewable energy generated and consumed on federal lands receives double credit towards fulfilling the percentage requirements. EPACT requires the use of renewable energy to meet these requirements to the extent economically and technically feasible. As this study has demonstrated, though, the foremost barriers to acquisition of RETs are economic—funding and initial cost. These barriers are of more concern for initial acquisition of RETs than they are for the purchase of green energy from private energy providers. However, over time the cost of purchasing renewable energy from outside sources will end up being more expensive for the government in most cases The implications here are that in order to fulfill the EPACT goals of increased renewable energy use by the federal government in the most appropriate manner, perhaps economic exemptions from the requirements should not be allowed. To illustrate the potential failure of exemptions for mandates, the 1992 Energy Policy Act required that a specified percentage of vehicles purchased by federal agencies be alternative fuel vehicles. The act required only that federal fleets use alternative fuels in the vehicles to the “maximum extent practicable” (Section 304) rather than explicitly requiring their use (many alternative fueled vehicles are bi- or dual-fuel vehicles which can run on both conventional fuels and alternative fuels). As a result, the government owns countless alternative fuel vehicles, a small portion of which regularly use alternative fuels; Section 701 of the recent Energy Policy Act sought to address this issue by requiring that all dual- and bi-fuel vehicles actually use alternative fuel unless they qualify for a waiver (2005). Therefore, this study’s findings imply that the Federal government’s goal of increasing the market for RETs through mandates may not be achieved if exemptions are allowed if projects are economically unfeasible. Perhaps in order to initially stimulate the market through Federal acquisition of the technologies, the purchase of renewable energy and/or RETs should be required without exception, and funds should be allocated to cover the incremental costs of the technologies/electricity.

This logic has set us on a course leading to planetary catastrophe and eco-side-

Chris Hedges 7/19/10 (American Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and war correspondent specializing in American and Middle Eastern politics and societies. ) "Calling All Future Eaters." http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/calling\_all\_future-eaters\_20100719/

The human species during its brief time on Earth has exhibited a remarkable capacity to kill itself off. The Cro-Magnons dispatched the gentler Neanderthals. The conquistadors, with the help of smallpox, decimated the native populations in the Americas. Modern industrial warfare in the 20th century took at least 100 million lives, most of them civilians. And now we sit passive and dumb as corporations and the leaders of industrialized nations ensure that climate change will accelerate to levels that could mean the extinction of our species. Homo sapiens, as the biologist Tim Flannery points out, are the “future-eaters.” In the past when civilizations went belly up through greed, mismanagement and the exhaustion of natural resources, human beings migrated somewhere else to pillage anew. But this time the game is over. There is nowhere else to go. The industrialized nations spent the last century seizing half the planet and dominating most of the other half. We giddily exhausted our natural capital, especially fossil fuel, to engage in an orgy of consumption and waste that poisoned the Earth and attacked the ecosystem on which human life depends. It was quite a party if you were a member of the industrialized elite. But it was pretty stupid. Collapse this time around will be global. We will disintegrate together. And there is no way out. The 10,000-year experiment of settled life is about to come to a crashing halt. And humankind, which thought it was given dominion over the Earth and all living things, will be taught a painful lesson in the necessity of balance, restraint and humility. There is no human monument or city ruin that is more than 5,000 years old. Civilization, Ronald Wright notes in “A Short History of Progress,” “occupies a mere 0.2 percent of the two and a half million years since our first ancestor sharpened a stone.” Bye-bye, Paris. Bye-bye, New York. Bye-bye, Tokyo. Welcome to the new experience of human existence, in which rooting around for grubs on islands in northern latitudes is the prerequisite for survival. We view ourselves as rational creatures. But is it rational to wait like sheep in a pen as oil and natural gas companies, coal companies, chemical industries, plastics manufacturers, the automotive industry, arms manufacturers and the leaders of the industrial world, as they did in Copenhagen, take us to mass extinction? It is too late to prevent profound climate change. But why add fuel to the fire? Why allow our ruling elite, driven by the lust for profits, to accelerate the death spiral? Why continue to obey the laws and dictates of our executioners? The news is grim. The accelerating disintegration of Arctic Sea ice means that summer ice will probably disappear within the next decade. The open water will absorb more solar radiation, significantly increasing the rate of global warming. The Siberian permafrost will disappear, sending up plumes of methane gas from underground. The Greenland ice sheet and the Himalayan-Tibetan glaciers will melt. Jay Zwally, a NASA climate scientist, declared in December 2007: “The Arctic is often cited as the canary in the coal mine for climate warming. Now, as a sign of climate warming, the canary has died. It is time to start getting out of the coal mines.” But reality is rarely an impediment to human folly. The world’s greenhouse gases have continued to grow since Zwally’s statement. Global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) from burning fossil fuels since 2000 have increased by 3 per cent a year. At that rate annual emissions will double every 25 years. James Hansen, the head of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies and one of the world’s foremost climate experts, has warned that if we keep warming the planet it will be “a recipe for global disaster.” The safe level of CO2 in the atmosphere, Hansen estimates, is no more than 350 parts per million (ppm). The current level of CO2 is 385 ppm and climbing. This already guarantees terrible consequences even if we act immediately to cut carbon emissions. The natural carbon cycle for 3 million years has ensured that the atmosphere contained less than 300 ppm of CO2, which sustained the wide variety of life on the planet. The idea now championed by our corporate elite, at least those in contact with the reality of global warming, is that we will intentionally overshoot 350 ppm and then return to a safer climate through rapid and dramatic emission cuts. This, of course, is a theory designed to absolve the elite from doing anything now. But as Clive Hamilton in his book “Requiem for a Species: Why We Resist the Truth About Climate Change” writes, even “if carbon dioxide concentrations reach 550 ppm, after which emissions fell to zero, the global temperatures would continue to rise for at least another century.” Copenhagen was perhaps the last chance to save ourselves. Barack Obama and the other leaders of the industrialized nations blew it. Radical climate change is certain. It is only a question now of how bad it will become. The engines of climate change will, climate scientists have warned, soon create a domino effect that could thrust the Earth into a chaotic state for thousands of years before it regains equilibrium. “Whether human beings would still be a force on the planet, or even survive, is a moot point,” Hamilton writes. “One thing is certain: there will be far fewer of us.” We have fallen prey to the illusion that we can modify and control our environment, that human ingenuity ensures the inevitability of human progress and that our secular god of science will save us. The “intoxicating belief that we can conquer all has come up against a greater force, the Earth itself,” Hamilton writes. “The prospect of runaway climate change challenges our technological hubris**,** our Enlightenment faith in reason and the whole modernist project. The Earth may soon demonstrate that, ultimately, it cannot be tamed and that the human urge to master nature has only roused a slumbering beast.” We face a terrible political truth. Those who hold power will not act with the urgency required to protect human life and the ecosystem. Decision**s** about the fate of the planet and human civilization are in the hands of moral and intellectual trolls such as BP’s Tony Hayward. These political and corporate masters are driven by a craven desire to accumulate wealth at the expense of human life. They do this in the Gulf of Mexico. They do this in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, where the export-oriented industry is booming. China’s transformation into totalitarian capitalism, done so world markets can be flooded with cheap consumer goods, is contributing to a dramatic rise in carbon dioxide emissions, which in China are expected to more than double by 2030, from a little over 5 billion metric tons to just under 12 billion. This degradation of the planet by corporations is accompanied by a degradation of human beings. In the factories in Guangdong we see the face of our adversaries. The sociologist Ching Kwan Lee found “satanic mills” in China’s industrial southeastthat run “at such a nerve-racking pace that worker’s physical limits and bodily strength are put to the test on a daily basis.” Some employees put in workdays of 14 to 16 hours with no rest day during the month until payday. In these factories it is normal for an employee to work 400 hours or more a month, especially those in the garment industry. Most workers, Lee found, endure unpaid wages, illegal deductions and substandard wage rates. They are often physically abused at work and do not receive compensation if they are injured on the job. Every year a dozen or more workers die from overwork in the city of Shenzhen alone. In Lee’s words, the working conditions “go beyond the Marxist notions of exploitation and alienation.” A survey published in 2003 by the official China News Agency, cited in Lee’s book “Against the Law: Labor Protests in China’s Rustbelt and Sunbelt,” found that three in four migrant workers had trouble collecting their pay. Each year scores of workers threaten to commit suicide, Lee writes, by jumping off high-rises or setting themselves on fire over unpaid wages. “If getting paid for one’s labor is a fundamental feature of capitalist employment relations, strictly speaking many Chinese workers are not yet laborers,” Lee writes. The leaders of these corporations now determine our fate. They are not endowed with human decency or compassion. Yet their lobbyists make the laws. Their public relations firms craft the propaganda and trivia pumped out through systems of mass communication. Their money determines elections. Their greed turns workers into global serfs and our planet into a wasteland. As climate change advances, we will face a choice between obeying the rules put in place by corporations or rebellion. Those who work human beings to death in overcrowded factories in China and turn the Gulf of Mexico into a dead zone are the enemy. They serve systems of death. They cannot be reformed or trusted. The climate crisis is a political crisis. We will either defy the corporate elite, which will mean civil disobedience, a rejection of traditional politics for a new radicalism and the systematic breaking of laws, or see ourselves consumed. Time is not on our side. The longer we wait, the more assured our destruction becomes. The future, if we remain passive, will be wrested from us by events. Our moral obligation is not to structures of power, but life.

There is a dissonance between concern for the environment and action- objective analysis of the destruction of the environment fails to spur material change- only an ethics grounded in the intrinsic value of the earth can overcome the status quo

Kopnina 2012, Helen Ph.D. Cambridge University, anthropocentric Bias in Anthropology: Re-Examining Culture/Conservation Conflict

Based on a large number of opinion polls, it appears that concern for the environment is on the rise and may even be universal, rather than based on post- material values of post-industrial societies (Dunlap and York 2008). Yet, it is also clear that there is a large discrepancy between what people claim to care about and what they actually do (or don‘t do) in terms of actualizing their beliefs. As Booth postulates:

Most people in modern industrial societies agree there is a moral need to conserve nature. Many see it as a social priority. Yet burgeoning lists of threatened species and ongoing habitat destruction show that these so-called values are failing to motivate sufficient political and social pressure for conservation reform. U.S. society, with its excesses of consumption, global exploitation of nature, and massive greenhouse gas emissions, is probably the most nature-destructive in human history. Australians are similarly destructive and apathetic despite pro-conservation sentiments. The chasm between values rhetoric and lifestyle and political focus reeks of hypocrisy. (Booth 2009)

Booth further addresses this discrepancy by asking a number of questions and hypothetical explanations: ―Do people lie, or merely parrot what they consider socially acceptable beliefs? Are they self-deceived about their real values? Or do competing values undermine a conservation focus? Do people lack the capacity to conform with moral beliefs, having few resources or time to commit to conservation? Do they feel powerless, or lack knowledge about what they can do?‖ Booth answers these questions with the recognition that all of these questions are probably contributing factors. She concludes that in modern industrial societies, where many are affluent, well educated, sympathetic to conservation and have many ways to contribute, a primary diagnosis must be that people are insufficiently motivated by their beliefs and sympathies to act.

Aside from motivation, there are many theories to explain the widespread rhetoric- behaviors gap between what seems to be desired by general public (environmental protection) and what is actually happening (continuous destruction of natural habitat, increasing consumption, etc.). Some are based on the division between anthropocentric and ecocentric values and are encored in research on values, beliefs, attitudes, or motivation (Kortenkamp and Moore 2001). Yet, there is no consistent theory or consensus within the fields of environmental ethics, environmental psychology or environmental social science, partially due to the complexity of the issue. More significantly, little empirical evidence consistently links any of the above-mentioned factors, conditions and predispositions to significant environmental behavior. Environmental psychology and ethics theories do not explain why certain individuals, who, for example, grew up in the same village next to the forest and witnessed its destruction, will gladly agree to work for the logging company clearing the remaining trees, while others will embrace ―tree hugging.‖ An even more pressing question is: Why, despite the multidisciplinary academic efforts to discover the theory, explanation or mechanism of environmental behavior, do real- world events testify to the dominance of socio-economic (particularly corporate and government elite) anthropocentric interests over environmental protection?

The author proposes a simple and perhaps common-sense explanation: referring to the grand old theory of human nature, we may postulate that the majority of people is simply anthropocentric. Political representation of those with ecocentric orientation is limited to (proportionally) few convinced conservationists. Ecocentrics‘ political representation (with a few cases of the most prominent environmental on- governmental organizations, or ENGO‘s) is subordinate to the interests of the more powerful government and corporate elites whose orientation is largely anthropocentric. In the context of advanced industrial societies (whose materialistic appeal seems to be universal), while environmental concern may be shared by the general public, most of it is dictated by utilitarian or instrumental view of environment. Studies of anthropocentric and ecocentric attitudes have indicated that people with ecocentric orientation are much more likely to actually act upon their values, attitudes, and beliefs, in order to protect the environment than those with anthropocentric orientations (Gagnon Thompson and Barton 1994; Kortenkamp and Moore 2001).

The key concern is that because it appears that the values underlying anthropocentrics‘ support of the environment are basically utilitarian or instrumental, ―they will be less likely to act to protect the environment if other human-centered values such as material quality of life or the accumulation of wealth interfere‖ (Gagnon Thompson and Barton 1994: 150). It may be argued that based on the common-sense empirical evidence of the continuous destruction of environment, despite the calls of conservation organizations and individuals to protect it, the marginality of an ecocentric view, or its subordination to those expressing self- interest and/or anthropocentric altruist values, is obvious.

We should stop destruction of the Earth for the Earth’s sake-anything else would be arbitrary and replicate the destruction of the status quo

Derrick Jensen 2010 (American author and environmental activist. He was named one of Utne Reader’s “50 Visionaries Who Are Changing Your World” and won the Eric Hoffer Award in 2008.) “Toward a Global Consensus for Ethical Action” from the introduction of “Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril” p. 67-68

The failure to act on behalf of the Earth is, of course, a great imprudence—a cosmic cutting-off-the-limb-you're-sitting-on stupidity. But it is also a moral failure. That is because the Earth (this swirling blue sphere) is not only instrumentally valuable. That is, it's not just valuable because it is supportive of human life (which is valuable in itself). Rather, the Earth, like a human being, has value in and of itself. It has what philosophers call *intrinsic value.* We have responsibilities to honor and protect what is of value. So we have the responsibility to honor and protect the Earth as we find it, a rare green jewel in the solar system. That is the moral position of the essays in this section. Even if there were no humans to love it, to depend on it, to admire it—even if it were of no use to anything at all—would it be better that the Earth exist than not? If you think so, then you believe that the Earth has intrinsic value. Or try this: Say humans all decided to leave the Earth, for whatever reason. Once the last rocket departed, the Earth would have no human use at all. Would it be wrong for the last person leaving the Earth to light a fuse that would blow the planet to dust? If that would be an abomination in your eyes, then again, you acknowledge the intrinsic worth of the world. Given the intrinsic value of the Earth, we have an obligation—even beyond our own interests—to protect the Earth as something of inestimable and unique worth.It's possible that this argument is even more powerful. Some people argue that the Earth itself is a living, sensare being, much as humans are living, seusate beings. Then, for all the reasons that we accord respect and protection to humans, wc owe respect and protection to the Earth. The Gaia hypothesis, for example, suggests that the Earth itself is an autopoeic, self-correcting entity; that the Earth itself meets the criteria by which we judge other things as living entities, as alive and not dead. When scientists demonstrate that wc are causing harm to the living Earth's systems (atmospheric, hydrologic, meteorologic), they are speaking literally, not metaphorically. Thus our obligation to save lives extends beyond human beings, beyond species, to the very Earth itself.

1AC – Plan Text

Plan: The United States federal government should remove the economic feasibility clause from the Energy Policy act of 2005 for solar energy.

1AC – Solvency

You can’t separate the ethics of the 1ac from our plan text- environmental ethicists must combine ethical and epistemological challenges to the status quo as well as posit good institutional changes

JOEL J. KASSIOLA 2003 (Joel J. Kassiola is dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and professor apolitical science at San Francisco State University.) “Can Environmental Ethics ‘Solve’ Environmental Problems and Save the World? Yes, but First We Must Recognise the Essential Normative Nature of Environmental Problems” http://bss.sfsu.edu/kassiola/docs/environmentalvaluesarticle.pdf

Moreover, Dickson’s proposition about the need for environmental ethicists ‘to be consistent with the circumstances that obtain in modern society’ itself demands normative – environmental ethical, specifically – critique. Why must environmental ethicists accept and conform to modern social values and social structure? This unexamined conservative value judgment and prescription by Dickson begs a fundamental issue within environmental ethics: the acceptability of the values of the modern social order. Arguably, these are the very values that have produced the global environmental crisis. Dickson’s admonition to conform to modern social conditions is impossible for environmental ethicists who locate the main component of the environmental crisis within these very ‘modern circumstances’, especially modern values like consumerism that Dickson urges consistency with. Therefore, environmental ethicists, who constitute a consensus within their field, view modern society, its values, social structure and institutions, as an inappropriate standard for environmental ethics. The conflict here is dramatic. Environmental ethicists like Callicott typically advocate radical change in the very realm – modern society – that Dickson prescribes adherence to without providing evidence for his sweeping and controversial recommendation. Furthermore, the environmental ethical argument and prescribed action for ethical and social change in such societies will be thwarted by the same modern social ‘circumstances’ with which Dickson demands that environmental ethicists be consistent. Gunn’s conclusion is telling on this important point: ‘… a crude [empirical] analysis of the direct costs and benefits [of individual actions affecting the environment] will not suffice to evaluate the desirability of a change [in action]’ (1994: 213). It is to the latter normatively crucial question that environmental ethics is specifically dedicated, and that fundamentally, I believe, creates our environmental problems. The irony is heavy here: Dickson criticises environmental ethics for its ‘wide’ and ‘loose’ propositions, as well as it failure to consider the social context for its practitioners’ claims, yet he takes a controversial conservative stance, ignoring the great unequal social power and wealth that prevails within the modern social context for environmental ethics in modern societies and globally. Dickson’s criticism of environmental ethics boomerangs and can be levelled against his own argument. Where is Dickson’s reasoned defence of the existing socio-economic context of modern societies? Why should environmental ethicists support this socio-economic structure and make their work – environmental ethical assessments, prescriptions, and their reasoned defenses – consistent with it? Dickson never examines, nor defends, these crucial challenges to his position. Therefore, Dickson’s discussion seems to defend modernity and its social values, whereby his empirical reductionism of environmental ethics and resulting critique serve as an unstated argument to perpetuate current hegemonic social values and practices. Moreover, by denormatising environmental ethics and claiming that it must conform to modern social conditions and concluding that this philosophical subfield does not have a contribution to make in solving environmental problems, Dickson denies environmental ethics its essential and significant role in social criticism and social change. Dickson’s analysis of the existing social pressures on citizens of modern societies exhorts us against adopting new environmental ethical values. He writes: Since the environmentally sound option will typically cost more than the nonenvironmental option, the pressure will frequently translate into pressure to choose the non-environmental option … choosing the cheaper, non-environmental option, is likely to do more to secure her job and to increase her chances of advancement … Consistently, choosing the more expensive environmental option is likely to have the opposite consequences, threatening her job, her income and her self-esteem (2000: 144). Here, and elsewhere, Dickson tells his readers what is commonplace in our economistic and materialistic society: environmentally consistent values and actions will probably ‘cost more’ – economically (importantly this realm of human values was unstated but assumed by Dickson). He does not examine the trade-off with environmental benefits, and, importantly, whether environmental values should override economic goals when they conflict. The possibility that ‘environmentally sound options’, values and actions, could produce an enhancement of our environment or prevent harm to the environment is ignored or devalued by Dickson, and, thereby, exemplifies his conservative economic reductionism. Such ‘environmentally sound options’ may indeed hurt corporate profits in the short run, but where will corporate profits be after a global environmental catastrophe? Will there be more jobs for citizens and opportunities for corporate profits in the economy after a disaster such as flooding of coastal cities as a result of global climate change? In addition, Dickson overlooks environmentally sound options which can generate new corporate opportunities for profits, such as catalytic converters or fuel cells for cars; or how being Green can be profitable as some corporations are discovering (see the increase in organic food production and consumption). It should be evident that Dickson is arguing here that advocating environmentally consistent public policy will create public opposition to supporting and acting in a manner consistent with environmental limits (but this conflict assumes that our same materialistic modern values remain in place, and thereby avoids the crucial environmental ethical question of whether they should or not). He concludes his brief discussion for the status quo with the economic truism: ‘Expensive environmental measures will eat into a firm’s profitability’ (2000: 146). Regarding the possibility of changing the regulations faced by such economic organisations, he adds, ‘The non-environmental option will have to become illegal, or too expensive, or undesirable in some other way’ (2000: 146). The critical reader may well ask of Dickson: ‘Just what is a “non-environmental” option?’ How long can a society act in the twenty-first century in such a manner as to deny its environmental needs and make policy with no environmental consequences? Dickson’s use of the term ‘non-environmental’ instead of terms like ‘environmentally harmful’, ‘environmentally costly’, ‘environmentally narrow’, or ‘environmentally one-dimensional’, reflects how the environment and its constraints on the dominant, modern worldview is masked by the prevailing economistic modern worldview. The conceptual framework and value structure of modernity inappropriately subordinates, or even suppresses, non-economic issues like environmental values. This constitutes the fallacy of economism, or the favouritism of economic values to the undue harm of other types of human value; one recent student of modern society calls it ‘the colonisation of ethics by economism’ (Gagnier, 2000: 8). I recognise that all of the empirical conclusions drawn by Dickson about the existing socio-economic structure and popular beliefs about economics and the environment by today’s populations in advanced modern societies are probably true on the whole (although they omit the growing, if not yet dominant, Green movement). Therefore, socially critical environmental ethics must challenge these conclusions, and not assume them as given in the modern social order, with its current values and socio-economic structure. Members of the philosophical field of environmental ethics must do what Dickson advises: ‘pay more attention to the social context’. This goal cannot be achieved by accepting the status quo uncritically as Dickson does, but by analysing and assessing which aspects of the current modern social structure are worthy of continuation from an environmental ethical perspective, and which must be replaced with superior alternatives. Such assessments and prescriptions, the heart of normative discourse, may be, pace Dickson, inconsistent with modern economic circumstances and values such as limitless economic growth. The philosophic nub here is why the implicit supremacy of economic values (economism) over environmental ones should rule, as opposed to a social order where environmental values trump economic ones. Dickson, reflecting our modern worldview, never makes this crucial issue explicit nor does he provide a reasoned argument in his taken-for-granted defence of the status quo materialistic market society. It is precisely our dominant social practices and values – such as corporate profitability and economism – that make value and social changes necessary, according to the environmental ethicists like Callicott, who claim that the foundation of the environmental crisis consists of mistaken modern values and the social structure built upon them. Change is necessary precisely because the current hegemonic social values and institutions obstruct solutions to environmental problems as a result. Environmental ethicists ‘ … need to consider both the systematic pressure against environmental solutions and the underlying dynamics of the socio-economic systems [of modernity] that give rise to that pressure’ as Dickson says (2000: 148). I agree with this important prescription, but would quickly add, in contrast to Dickson, that such empirical considerations constitute merely a portion of the work of environmental ethicists. They form the application or implementation phase of the necessarily prior normative thinking and assessment, reasoned debate and ethical and political decision-making. This point demonstrates the essential relevance of environmental ethics to the normative nature of environmental problems presented by the ‘modern circumstances’, and their solution: ethical assessment and social change. The real limitations of environmental ethics do not lie in what Dickson claims are its ‘empirical’ deficiencies or its failure to conform to its social context. Rather, environmental ethics is constrained by its normative criticism of the dominant social paradigm and social order of modernity. By attacking such modern social values as: competitive materialism, consumerism, economism, ageism, (and favouring the present generation to the detriment of future generations – this anti-future value lacks a handy label but might be called something like ‘presentism’ or ‘timeism’) and so on, along with the longstanding Western discriminatory values of anthropocentrism, racism and sexism, and the social institutions that have been created to support them, this ethical discourse puts itself in direct and unavoidable conflict with the prevailing values, behaviour and institutions of advanced modern society – and now, with globalisation, the aspirations of virtually the entire human population. As a statement of fact, normative discourse lacks the social power to override hegemonic modern beliefs and practices, especially when they are enforced by the most powerful means of thought and social control in human history: mass media. Alas, this is not only the weakness of environmental ethics, but it is the vexing weakness of all normative discourse: ‘How do we get there from here?’ where ‘there’ is the prescribed ideal that unfortunately confronts the unprecedentedly powerful resistance of the status quo, advanced modern society, and, ‘here’ is a social order that has never experienced successful revolution nor even widespread radical normative change. Therefore, the discussion of how, specifically, to achieve this needed but historically unique social change should be a top priority for all students of the environment, but first and foremost, environmental ethicists. If Dickson’s ultimate purpose in his essay is to advocate that environmental ethicists must work harder to address the practical implementation of their prescriptions for modern society and, therefore, combine their ethical analysis, including social activism (as Callicott argues), with empirical public policy and political economy analyses, I would agree with this recommendation wholeheartedly. More social-scientific analyses and more successful activism in creating an effective environment movement for social change are desirable goals. If environmental ethics is to have any impact in the real world, we must educate modern citizens to be factually informed about the state of the environment, and must persuasively articulate and defend its assessments and prescriptions to the public, including its calls for value and institutional changes. Normative claims must be translated into specific, practical public policies (three recent examples of such works are Brown, 2001; Gottlieb, 2001; and Milani, 2000). And, most importantly, an environmental ethics that is relevant to the solution of environmental problems must mobilise the citizens to demand implementation of these prescribed public policy changes. Dickson’s discouraging conclusion about the irrelevance of environmental ethics to the solution of environmental problems would prevent these goals from being achieved; therefore it should not go unchallenged.

The economic feasibility clause is arbitrary and bad

Casten 10 [Sean Casten is president & CEO of Recycled Energy Development, LLC, a company devoted to profitably reducing greenhouse emissions, Policy fixes to unleash clean energy, part 8, Grist, 2/25/10, http://grist.org/article/policy-fixes-to-unleash-clean-energy-8/]

To be sure, the federal government does have some limited guidelines for electricity purchases, most notably those associated with the 2005 EPACT. But this law leaves a lot to be desired. First, because it places paths ahead of goals (e.g., it stipulates that the government must buy power from certain technologies, rather than from any technology that meets certain standards of cleanliness.) Second, because it includes those dangerous weasel words: “to the extent economically feasible and technically practicable.” In other words, we’d like to buy clean energy, but not if it’s too expensive. (And even then, this requirement is only imposed on a tiny percent of total government electricity purchases.) This sounds reasonable – except that we don’t tolerate it with respect to other government purchases. Should the government buy 3 percent of their office supplies from companies that don’t discriminate, but only if “economically practicable”? Worse, “economically practicable” is in the eye of the beholder. Getting rid of child labor is economically impractical if you ignore the economics of the kid. So should the government define “economically practicable” without including all the externalities and cross-subsidies innate to dirty energy? The law doesn’t say. Fortunately, laws can be changed. First, instead of mandating the purchase of power from specific technologies “if economically feasible,” mandate that the federal government preferentially buy from any source that meets a goal-driven standard of cleanliness under a Clean Energy Standard Offer. For these purposes, define “clean” as anything that is at least twice as efficient as the U.S. power grid on a fossil energy in/delivered electricity out basis. Renewables count, but so does high-efficiency CHP. Second, eliminate questions of economic practicality entirely by setting a pricing heuristic such that the all-in, delivered costs of electricity (inclusive of all externalities) sets a bogey, and the Clean Energy Standard Offer price is set to 80 percent of that bogey. The price could be set by an independent panel each year and – with this formulation – is politically unassailable, since any power purchased under this program is saving the country money. Obama has said that he wants to eliminate fossil energy subsidies because they distort the market – this simply accelerates that elimination for federal purchases, turning brown energy’s weakness into green energy’s strength. Finally, rather than only applying this requirement to a tiny percent of purchases, stipulate that the government buys up to the limits of their needs or the limits of supply at that price.

Having a policy action is the only way to combat the economic elitism of the squo

DANIELW. BROMLEY, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Reconsidering Environmental Policy: Prescriptive Consequentialism and Volitional Pragmatism, *Environmental and Resource Economics* 28: 73–99, 2004.

Pragmatism insists that public policy in general – and environmental policy in particular – cannot legitimately be held hostage to the truth claims imposed on it by economists (or those from any other discipline). Pragmatism employs abduction to work out the reasons for particular policy choices. When we find reasons for choices we will be on our way to the development of a theory of environmental policy. That theory will require explicit recognition of the concepts of impressions, expressions, and created imaginings. That theory will require recognition that joint action in the policy arena entails the working out of contending expressions and contending created imaginings. It will require recognition that human agents cannot possibly articulate coherent and salient wants in isolation from the specific context of choice in which they learn about those wants as they learn about what they can have. Outside of this context, expressions of wants are mere “cheap talk”. Environmental policy – like all public policy – seeks to modify individual domains of choice by restraining, liberating, and expanding the capacities of each of us to engage in particular activities. Policy is concerned with modifying fields of individual (and group) action. Policy is not some alien “intervention” into the otherwise wondrous “free market” of such appeal to some writers. Indeed what some are pleased to call “the market” is simply the constructed artifact of prior collective action. Policy is nothing but a word we apply to a continual process of redefining – reconstructing – new fields of individual and group action. Public policy has been unnecessarily mystified by virtue of its having been embedded in the fictional logic of rational choice. If we could but see policy as a word that describes the incessant quest for contending with surprise in the human condition, we would see that policy is not at all mysterious. Policy is simply choice and action in which groups of individuals work out what seems better (what seems reasonable), at the moment, to do. The citizenry does not need, nor does it appear to want, environmental economists telling it which of those plausible futures is socially preferred. They will figure that out for themselves as they go about figuring out how to reconcile their contending expressions and imaginings. Pragmatism helps us by offering reassurance that it is perfectly acceptable to be unsure about what seems better to want and to do. Doubt and surprise are the starting points of working out what seems better, at the moment, to do. Pragmatism helps us to get in touch with the emerging work in complexity. My colleague Buz Brock, very much involved with ecologists and other natural scientists in studies of complex lake ecosystem, has written that: *. . .* the complexity vision takes away the reference point for theory’s defense of the market. In the complexity vision there is no proof that the market solves problems. There is no unambiguous way of stating what is and what is not an externality, and there is no guarantee that the market leads to the most desirable equilibrium. Thus deductive theory cannot provide a basis for the defense of laissez faire. (Brock and Colander 2000, p. 82) We see that complexity in human affairs denies to economists the essential tractability and predictability we need in order to advance our tendentious prescriptions about what is optimal to do in the realm of collective action. Complexity in economics is clear acknowledgment that we cannot possibly know, a priori, what we want. Doubt and surprise put us in the frame of mind to think about what we want. And as Shackle insists, choice is nothing but choosing among thoughts. And true thoughts are those that, having been worked out, seem right and good and useful and valuable and instrumental. Truth is the compliment we pay to our settled deliberations

Academic spaces have agency- contesting the squo free market ideology that tries to delegitimize the environmental movement is key

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This article examines yet another intriguing metamorphosis: contemporary conservative views regarding consumption. Social norms and practices encouraging consumption have a profound impact upon the environment. Conservatives today overwhelmingly share a pro-consumptive disposition, which inevitably carries over to personal behavior and policy-making. Yet curiously, this too presents philosophical revision, for historically, traditional conservatism often extolled virtues such as conservation, frugality, prudence and stewardship. It raises the question: where is conservative thought today with respect to environmental issues, particularly modern market society's hyper-consumptive predilections and practices? Consumption is now an entrenched reality in democratic market society, but conservatives rarely bemoan its social and environmental consequences. What accounts for the omission of "conservation" and "frugality" as important, publicly acclaimed moral virtues? This question is made acute by its juxtaposition with today's conservative penchant for asserting "moral values" as an integral aspect of their political platform. Indeed, Rove asserted that this strategy was instrumental in the resurgence of the Republican Party.[3](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT3) President Bush speaks frequently about "compassionate conservatism" which, he claims, is rooted in his strong Christian faith. This compassion, however, is rarely bestowed upon the Earth. In fact, dominant conservative views are indifferent or skeptical—if not polemically hostile—toward environmental concerns. Conservation is an abandoned virtue while consumption is a presumptive right. It follows that materialism is the entitlement of success. And conservatives today resoundingly praise success. Thus, it may be that, as Leon Wieseltier asserts, "perhaps the most odious feature of contemporary conservatism is its equation of success with virtue."[4](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT4) It would be misleading to presume that conservative thought is alone in succumbing to the lure of material prosperity or in advocating liberal economic principles. But this paradigm shift in conservatism is exceptional for two reasons: a past aversion to industry and material gain, especially the conspicuous variety, and the now selective sanctimony and hand-wringing over society's declining moral virtues sans conservation. This article proceeds as follows. First, relevant earlier values are explored through a schematic exegesis of prominent classical conservative thought. Contemporary conservatives often selectively tout these revered conservatives as being influential to their own political thought and action. Second, a spectrum of conservative views today are categorized and examined through the lens of consumption. As well, within each type, contrarian conservative green outliers that **[End Page 86]** do not easily fit prevailing conservative paradigms are scrutinized. These diverse conservative voices capture substantive ideological contradictions. Yet taken as a whole, the array of contemporary American conservatisms also indicates considerable ideological elasticity. Today's dominant American conservative ideological dispositions have a significant impact on environmental policy. Given the current dominance of American conservatives in the political sphere, their ideological convictions are worthy of scrutiny. Majority views invariably dominate conceptions of environmental problems and their subsequent redress at the local, domestic, and global level. As the world's most voracious consumer and greatest power, the United States possesses a vast global footprint; this historically unprecedented combination of appetite and might translates into both potential and peril on a truly global scale. Given this, and the dominance of American conservatism today, it is imperative to reflect on the ideology's relevant strands. To begin, critical qualifications and parameters are set. First, it would be misleading to imply that the Republican Party today is synonymous with classical conservatism; historically, the party was broader and more progressive in some respects—certainly not all—than today. For example, some influential Republican politicians of earlier times may not have identified themselves as "conservative" per se, but as "moderate" or "progressive." For instance, Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th President of the United States (1901–1909), was a notable land conservationist, but more progressive than conservative in overall ideological disposition. In a selective ode to the "hard green," staunch conservative Peter Huber harkens back to Roosevelt's conservative legacy, but it is arguable to label him as such. Conversely, the Southern Agrarians of the early-20th century were undoubtedly staunch conservatives, but generally aligned with the Democratic Party. Second, this article presumes that the contributions of political theory do, in fact, inform ideological beliefs, personal behavior, and the consequent policy-making decisions of society at large. Thought informs action, though not always as its creator intended. The *self-identifying* political conservative may not be intellectually conservative, (or considered conservative by antecedent), yet the *legacy* of intellectual conservatism informs, justifies, and sustains beliefs and actions. It follows that this paper is about ideas, views and values; it is not an examination of policy-making. There are many contributions that critically examine the conservative environmental record; recent books include *America's Environmental Report Card, Strategic Ignorance,* and *The End of Oil.*[5](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT5) Yet there remains a dearth in the questioning of today's conservative principles. Third, dispositions are primarily explored through conservative views regarding consumption. Why consumption? Consumption is a profoundly critical aspect of environmental depletion and degradation. Social norms and behavior **[End Page 87]** regarding consumption are integrally linked to a smorgasbord of man-made environmental issues including fossil fuel dependence, global warming, the disposal of production-process and household waste, and clean water and skies, to name but a few. To put this differently, consider the following: what *man-made* environmental changes are *not* due to consumption? Further, to focus on production instead suffers from a "distancing" problematic. Thomas Princen writes: "The greater the distance of agency the less responsibility for resource use decisions any actor in the production chain will want to have or is cognitively or ethically capable of having for the resource."[6](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT6) Given this, the lens of consumption resonates as a way to examine social norms and values because it is associated with personal virtue and is so palpably a part of individual life and collective behavior within market society. Finally, it would be egregious to assume that the conservative movement today is monolithic in ideology and agenda. There is considerable elasticity in motive and policy. Given this caveat, a typology of conservatisms is presented to pinpoint particular types that exist today regarding consumption and the environment. Dominant views hold significant sway in political discourse and decision-making, but this typology also includes a motley assortment of green conservative outliers. This is intended to be not all-encompassing but, rather, schematically helpful in conceptualizing this tent's green differences. Just as the so-called liberal tent is frequently one of fracture and dissent, housing both radicals and moderates, so too does conservatism hold a spectrum of beliefs and priorities, making broad generalizations difficult if not misleading. This makes the examination of composite strands critical in order to show their variation. Meanwhile, conservative renegade outliers present intriguing possibilities. ¶ With the preceding qualifications in mind, five types of conservatism are delineated to aid in better understanding and questioning relevant current manifestations. These categories are labeled Classical, Theological, Free-market, National Security and Sierra Club Republican. The last type self-identify as conservative, but are frequently marginalized in contemporary conservative spheres of political influence. Within each type there is disparity in ideology and action and some conservatives straddle more than one category or do not comfortably fit any of these categories.[7](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT7) ¶ Of much interest are conservative green outliers. Their views derive from different motives, are disparate, remain nascent in their common cause, and thus do not present a unified voice. To the contrary, while they all identify themselves [End Page 88] as conservative and green, it is for widely variable reasons. This article sketches a composite, which collectively suggests the possibility of an emerging, authentic environmental conservative compatibility, if not the promise of future synergy. ¶ 1. Classical Conservatism ¶ American conservatism traditionally espoused core virtues including conservation, frugality, and stewardship. Political prudence in all endeavors was paramount. The esteemed British conservative Edmund Burke wrote that "prudence is not only first in rank of the virtues, political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all."[8](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT8) Yet today, this sentiment and practice are rarely sustained in conservative discourse or policy. The practical consequences are clear with the current administration, which, with few exceptions, has neglected or rewritten environmental laws to the benefit of industry and capital. ¶ A past ethos of constraint is now largely ignored. Curiously, it is not just neglected but actively abandoned, as evident in the new conservative promotion of hyper-consumptive practices. So what accounts for this shift? ¶ Ideology is rarely static over time; conservative thought is no exception.[9](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT9) Action and progress invariably trigger reaction. Given the enduring appeal of tradition, conservative thought has been compelled to adapt to the changes and challenges of life in a modern market society. The scholar Albert O. Hirschman describes the tension between progressives and conservatives as "this protracted and perilous see-sawing of action and reaction."[10](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT10) ¶ The rare exception to ideological change over time resides within insular communities. These communities are, metaphorically speaking, castles with moats intended to buffer and protect against the barrage of challenges modern market society presents. But most conservatives are not insulated and underlying views evolve as old challenges become less relevant or tired and new challenges present themselves. Classic conservative thought is particularly vulnerable to the challenge of ideological adaptation because it is enduringly suspicious of progress. ¶ Thus, conservative thought and practice are not immune to change given [End Page 89] their exposure to the turbulent whirl of ideas and temptations within liberal society. Yet there exists an enduring aversion to change, particularly dramatic change. Again, progress is suspect—free-market views aside. So, too, is any rationale for revolutionary change. Edmund Burke's condemnation of the French Revolution remains the classic invocation. Burke was initially vindicated in his appraisal of the consequences of revolution. ¶ Though conservatives may be distrustful of change, often admire tradition, and remain wary of what explosive change entails, they are principally reactive.[11](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT11) Given this reactive nature, conservatism is inclined to exert this disposition when it perceives a proposed remedy as a threat to its traditional mores. ¶ The Southern Agrarian conservative illustrates this well, a disposition decidedly at odds with today's dominant conservatism. Consider John Crowe Ransom's essay in I'll Take My Stand expressing a sentiment not uncommon in the white South of an earlier era: ¶ It seems wiser to be moderate in our expectations of nature, and respectful; and out of so simple a thing as respect for the physical earth and its teeming life comes a primary joy, which is an inexhaustible source of arts and religions and philosophies.[12](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT12) ¶ Ransom condemns the "gospel of Progress" and industrialism as "malignant." It "is an insidious spirit, full of false promises and generally fatal to establishments."[13](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT13) The Southern Agrarians were proponents of agriculture and tradition and were not disposed to adopt the machinery and industry of the North. They feared that the farmer would be "swapping his culture for machine-made bric-a-brac," that the "money economy" was "unreservedly gluttonous."[14](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT14) ¶ The authors of I'll Take My Stand recognized the inevitable: the South's capitulation to industry and material culture. Taken alone, the Southern Agrarians may be viewed as an outlying anomaly in conservative thought, but the sentiments they expressed were more common in earlier American conservatism. ¶ Consider, too, the following passage from David E. Shi's The Simple Life in his chapter on "Republican Simplicity": ¶ Virtuous republicans, like virtuous Puritans and Quakers, were to be industrious without becoming avaricious. And they were expected always to subordinate private interests to the larger public good.[15](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT15) ¶ Such earlier American classical republicanism was often more progressive than conservative but, nonetheless, remains a part of the conservative movement's [End Page 90] selective harkening. As well, Shi observes that spreading opulence and "pretentiousness on the part of the 'lesser sort' still provoked considerable anxiety among the upper ranks, and the call for simple living remained for many as much an instrument of class discipline as it was a pristine ideal."[16](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT16) Views regarding consumption were complicated by distinctions of class, a growing economy, and the "trickle down" desire and means for material gain. ¶ Perhaps no scholar embodies classical American conservatism more than Russell Kirk. His aversion to the excesses of modernity is palpable. He condemns "the destruction of standards of all sorts, the widespread reduction of civilized life to the gross satisfaction of petty material appetites."[17](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT17) Kirk shared the new conservatives' concern for the preservation (or regeneration) of society's moral and spiritual character. Indeed, to "conserve" means conserving what is traditional, not just the conservation of nature. Kirk, like his predecessor Burke, lauded prudence, a virtue quite absent from today's conservative discourse. His fourth conservative principle is critical: "Conservatives are guided by their principle of prudence. Burke agrees with Plato that in the statesman, prudence is chief among virtues."[18](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html#FOOT18) One outcome of this characteristic is familiar to today's conservative thinker: ¶ Human society being complex, remedies cannot be simple if they are to be efficacious. The conservative declares that he acts only after sufficient reflection, having weighed the consequences. Sudden and slashing reforms are as perilous as sudden and slashing surgery.[19](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT19) ¶ This disposition suggests why many contemporary conservatives are reluctant to prescribe remedy for environmental problems. ¶ Yet it is easy to fall back on such views as justification for inaction. Political prudence is selectively applied political prudence: merited in resisting environmental remediation, ignored in foreign policy. Historically, conservative foreign policy insisted that ¶ A soundly conservative foreign policy, in the age which is dawning, should be neither 'interventionist' nor 'isolationist': it should be prudent. . . . Our prospects in the world of the twenty-first century are bright—supposing we Americans do not swagger about the globe, proclaiming our omniscience and our omnipotence.[20](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT20) ¶ The modern British conservative political theorist Michael Oakeshott, though less nostalgic, shared with Kirk the view that conservatism was a disposition. The locus of this disposition is "to use and enjoy what is available rather than to wish for or to look for something else; to delight in what is present [End Page 91] rather than what was or what may be."[21](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT21) He also found pleasure in the banality of everyday life: "What is humdrum need not be despicable."[22](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT22) Oakeshott's conservatism was more secular in tone, but certain themes are familiar: "to live at the level of one's own means."[23](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT23) ¶ To be conservative, then, is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss.[24](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT24) ¶ Oakeshott was not against progress or change; and he understood their inevitability. But the conservative disposition prefers the familiar: ¶ He is not in love with what is dangerous and difficult; he is unadventurous; he has no impulse to sail uncharted seas; for him there is no magic in being lost, bewildered or shipwrecked. . . . What others plausibly identify as timidity, he recognizes in himself as rational prudence; what others interpret as inactivity, he recognizes as a disposition to enjoy rather than to exploit.[25](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT25) ¶ Earlier conservatism lauded prudence and frugality; nature was to be respected. As well, it was loath to call itself an "ideology" regarding the zealotry of ideological conviction as a natural enemy. With few exceptions, these tenets no longer reverberate. ¶ 1.1 Contemporary Classic Green Conservatives ¶ Yet there are outlying exceptions that laud these earlier views so often neglected or scorned by their brethren. As British political philosopher John Gray concedes: ¶ It is fair to say that, on the whole, conservative thought has been hostile to environmental concerns over the past decade or so in Britain, Europe and the United States. Especially in America, environmental concerns have been represented as anti-capitalist propaganda under another flag. In most Western countries, conservatives have accused environmentalists of misuse of science, of propagating an apocalyptic mentality, and of being enemies of the central institutions of modern civil society.[26](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT26) ¶ Without doubt, Gray is a strong critic of radical environmentalism. He insists "environmental despoliation on a vast scale is an inexorable result of industrial development in the absence of the core institutions of a market economy, private property, and the price mechanism."[27](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT27) Notwithstanding, he argues for [End Page 92] finding common ground between conservatism and the environment, for "there are many natural affinities between conservative philosophy and Green thought, from which both may profit." Even more remarkable is the following statement: ¶ Conservatives must learn from Green thought that the promise of open-ended global growth . . . is delusive. . . . The importance of Green thought for conservatives today is that it recalls them to their historic task of giving shelter to communities and reproducing them across the generations—in a context of finite resources which dictates stability, not growth, as the pre-eminent conservative value.[28](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT28) ¶ And further: ¶ Conservatives must learn to be open to radical criticism of current institutions of market capitalism and of the health and education professions, in so far as they are predicated on spurious promises of indefinite growth or open-ended progress, and so depart both from Green though and from genuine conservative philosophy. Conservatives need to explore, with Greens and others, as yet unthought-of dilemmas of life in societies which are no longer buoyed up by the prospect of incessant economic growth or by modernist pseudo-religions of endless world-improvement.[29](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT29) ¶ Gray argues for a departure from some of conservative thought, but sustains the call for one "pre-eminent conservative value." This value is compatible with Kirk's virtue of prudence. ¶ John R. E. Bliese has also made conservative environmental arguments. Bliese was motivated to join the Sierra Club when his party, the Republicans, radically changed their environmental agenda during the Ronald Reagan presidency. At that point, he claims, a "huge discrepancy" began between Republican voters and politicians regarding environmental preferences. He condemns his party's operatives: ¶ Although they claimed to be conservatives, their attacks on the environment were, in fact, the very opposite of conservatism. They were violating some of the most important principles of conservative philosophy.[30](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT30) ¶ Bliese continues: ¶ The works of the great scholars and thinkers who developed the conservative political philosophy for our time include several fundamental principles that are relevant to environmental policy issues—and they all support environmental protection.[31](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT31) [End Page 93] ¶ There is, too, the conservative Andrew Sullivan—an often provocative, iconoclastic challenger to standard conservative mores advanced today. Sullivan is a popular political blogger, pundit, journalist and scholar prone to questioning this transformation within conservative thought.[32](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT32) ¶ More specifically, conservative scholar Roger Scruton scrutinizes the psychology of consumption, "the fetishism of commodities," observing that "the ascendancy of consumption belongs, not to the essence of property, but to its pathology" and that "the expendable and the replaceable fills the soul with illusions, and short-circuits the pursuit of fulfillment. . . . Under the rule of commodities, people come to live in a world of means without meaning." Further, "The English gentleman is known and respected precisely for his ability to make consumption as quiet and inconspicuous as good taste requires."[33](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT33) Scruton recognizes what is too often left unexamined by his peers: the inherent tension in principles that advocate property rights, yet often succumb into the pathology for endless consumption. ¶ Collectively, these British and American views reclaim an intellectual compatibility between conservation and conservatism. Their views are in the minority today, however, as the next three types, with notable exceptions, illustrate. ¶ 2. Theological Conservatism ¶ The Tenth Commandment is "thou shalt not covet."[34](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT34) Surely "coveting" is a variable in the dynamics of consumption. While conservative religious figures have a mixed record preaching the virtue of frugality, conservation, and modest living, more prominent political, quasi-religious spokespeople on the right are thunderously silent. ¶ William Bennett's best-selling The Book of Virtues offers an anthology of fables, morals and myths to foster moral education in the young.[35](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT35) Ten chapters promote ten separate virtues, including friendship, perseverance, courage and faith. Frugality is not among them.[36](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT36) Given the size of his tome, inevitably some selections promote moderation, such as Aesop's "The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs," where the moral is "much wants more and loses all." Yet frugality's lack of prominence is revealing. Perhaps such a virtue requires too basic a contradiction with adherence to laissez-faire politics. ¶ It is the religious left, so often cast as morally permissive, and accordingly cast as hostile when it comes to "traditional" cultural values, that more commonly questions the morality of consumption. Yet Christianity has a history of [End Page 94] promoting the virtue of frugality.[37](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT37) As James A. Nash writes, that tradition "has certainly not been fully forgotten, but it has been significantly demoted—probably reflecting an accommodation to cultural values." Nash notes that frugality is not "in most modern manuals in Christian economic ethics or in various church statements on economic policy. Frugality remains an undercurrent in contemporary Christian ethical and ecclesiastical thought."[38](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT38) ¶ A notable void in endorsing an environmental ethos is found in American Evangelicalism. Evangelicals are not necessarily conservative,[39](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT39) and the intersection of consumer culture and religion is problematic across the entire spectrum of faiths. Yet the majority of Evangelical, Fundamentalist, Southern Baptist and Pentecostal churches are far more likely to value, influence, and promote the Republican Party's right-wing conservative platform today. There is compatibility across a wide range of issues. ¶ Within the Catholic Church hierarchy today, too, the right prevails, though not all American adherents of Catholicism are similarly inclined. Conservative Catholicism shares much moral ground with Evangelism, though the Vatican remains more outspoken in its critique of the West's hyper-consumptive practices. ¶ There are other issues that concern environmentalists. First, the seemingly irreconcilable differences between science and religion play out not just in the current ideological struggle over "intelligent design" but, inevitably, the environment, too. If the theory of evolution is suspect, why would the science behind environmental concern be cast in a more favorable light?[40](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT40) ¶ The second issue is dispensationalism, often called rapture or reconstructionism. These theological dispositions hold that environmental issues are unimportant given that the Earth will be destroyed in the Second Coming.[41](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT41) As Bill Moyers explains, "You can understand why people in the grip of such fantasies cannot be expected to worry about the environment."[42](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT42) Finding common ground with beliefs emphasizing only a hereafter is difficult, to say the least. ¶ Third, Evangelical political influence has increased significantly since the Reagan presidency and is now quite influential in the Republican Party. Predictably, this emerging "New Right" is often at odds with more secular economic conservatism. For now such differences appear submerged. As E.J. Dionne, Jr. details, the Religious Right "had always seen values as more important than [End Page 95] markets, religious faith as more important than economic growth, tradition more important than progress."[43](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT43) "It turned out that traditionalism had a genuine base among those who looked to the Bible rather than Edmund Burke for authority."[44](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT44) Theological conservatism did not endorse "libertarian anti-government themes" but was re-galvanized as a political force due to "domestic social resentments" including "environmental extremism."[45](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT45) ¶ Fourth, religious marketing compounds frugality's neglect. For consumption presents religion with a quandary: how does a house of worship thrive without the adaptation of market techniques? The Christian Evangelical resurgence is in no small part due to market savvy. Evangelicals often laud not just the Weberian notion of productivity but also the reward of consumption. Churches sell books, show films, provide coffee and gift shops, and offer child care, all of which increases membership and enriches church coffers. Another manifestation is the successful use of the medium of television. Savvier religious leaders have been adept at utilizing marketing and entertainment techniques to grow. Prosperity and material enrichment are often characterized as blessings from God, making the Christian virtue of frugality an awkward reminder. ¶ In Branded Nation, James B. Twitchell calls this growing phenomenon "the consumerist church." The incentive to capitalize on market strategies now exists in domains that traditionally were not associated with commercialism. He visits "mega-church" Willow Creek in Illinois, observing that it ¶ is not just competing with other denominations; it's competing with all other forms of entertainment, especially television. . . . Beliefs, like purchases, are made to be witnesses, as well as consumed. . . . The consumerist church, intensely focused on the felt needs of its audience, by using narrative, sophistication, and electronic transmission, can make the process of doing church incredibly compelling. It can gather a huge audience.[46](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT46) ¶ Twitchell argues that "brand affiliation is as much a part of belief communities as secular ones; in fact, perhaps even more pronounced. That's because religion is a collectively produced commodity and, as such, depends on continually iterating the reward of joining as well as the price of de-affiliating."[47](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT47) The success of the evangelical mega-church while numbers dwindle in more liberal churches speaks in part to the power of religious marketing. With success owed to market savvy, why laud the virtue of frugality or condemn the vice of gluttony? ¶ Further, this phenomenon has been emulated by a host of overtly proclaimed religious enterprises, including traditionally secular businesses, such as [End Page 96] banks, driving schools, auto-repair stores, and restaurants.[48](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT48) The confluence of theology and business suggests escalation in the merging of public and private spheres of society. ¶ It follows that in recent years conservative theological leadership is apt to favor increased consumption. One compelling example is the George W. Bush administration's keenly repeated call for a moral, religious culture. These sentiments are reinforced in his public speeches, through the promotion of programs such as his Faith-based Initiative, and through the selection of like-minded individuals in his cabinet. Yet, revealingly, as Alan Wolfe points out, ¶ Whether responding to world events or proposing domestic policy initiatives, the Bush administration seems to be guided by one simple imperative: buy. The way to demonstrate our resolve against jihad, the president asserted with considerable conviction after September 11, was to shop; and not even the administration's plan to go to war in Iraq has provoked the president to consider the possibility that in the name of national security Americans ought to consume less energy. At home, the Bush administration's response to what is increasingly perceived as its own recession is, similarly, to put as much money into the hands of consumers as possible.[49](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT49) ¶ An older religious conservative dictum of moderation, prudence and thrift, which used to be invoked for the sake of good citizenship and moral standing, has been replaced by a polar dictum: spend, and please spend generously, for the sake of one's own wants, for the future prosperity of the country, and, for "true believers," for the Second Coming—never mind the debt and environmental consequences. ¶ 2.1 Green and Right Theological Outliers ¶ These trends notwithstanding, a notable transformation may be in the making. Although they remain leery of collaboration with "left wing" environmentalists, some prominent theologically conservative religious leaders are becoming publicly outspoken in their criticism of the Bush administration's environmental policies. Two issues are of particular concern to these outliers: energy conservation and global warming. ¶ A recent New York Times Magazine column by Deborah Solomon interviews Richard Cizik, a prominent American evangelical and leader in the National Association of Evangelicals.[50](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT50) Though reluctant to call it "environmentalism," preferring the term "creation care," Cizik's comments and actions are decidedly green. What motivates Cizik? [End Page 97] ¶ The Scriptures themselves, right in Genesis 2:15, say watch over creation and care for it. The air, the water, the resources—all have been given to us by God to protect.[51](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT51) ¶ Cizik's beliefs compel stewardship of the Earth. And he is not alone. Cizik is joined by other prominent evangelicals including the Reverends Ted Haggard and Jim Ball of the Evangelical Environmental Network.[52](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT52) The good news for environmentalists: they do not place a strong emphasis on dispensationalism. The bad news: environmentalists remain suspect, thus collaboration remains problematic. According to Cizik, ¶ Environmentalists have a bad reputation among evangelical Christians for four reasons. One, they rely on big-government solutions. Two, their alliance with population-control movements. Three, they keep kooky religious company. . . . [Four], there's a certain gloom and doom about environmentalists. They tend to prophecies of doom that don't happen.[53](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT53) ¶ Clearly, finding common ground presents unique challenges. "Earthy" Evangelicals need to be dissuaded from their perception of environmentalism as a "kooky" religion—particularly since this characterization may strike the less invested observer as apropos to absolute views on both sides. ¶ Are theological greens likely to transform conservative views and policies? The prospect has potential given their influence in the Republican Party today. Cizik claims that "about 40 percent of the Republican Party is represented by evangelicals" but concedes that "creation care" is likely to butt heads with big-business, free-market Republicans. In the meantime, these theological greens are pounding the political pavement. Concern over global warming is a promising illustration of this growing countertrend within the evangelical movement.[54](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT54) 3. Free-market ConservativesFree-market conservatives staunchly advocate liberal market principles and mercantile practices. But these anointed values are cherished without much reflection on the incongruities such new and narrow conservatism entails. The paradox is the neglect of the ameliorative promise of green market mechanisms. Global environmental redress is compatible, not contestable, with traditional conservative thought incorporating an environmental ethos with advocacy of capitalist markets. Green conservatism need not be an oxymoron. **[End Page 98]** American conservatives today are likely to view consumption as a benign and edifying dynamic. Hirschman labels this sentiment *doux commerce.*[55](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT55) These views originate from the 18th century Enlightenment and seminal thinkers of the era such as Baron Montesquieu and Adam Smith. Free trade, minimal government regulation, competitive markets, and continued growth are all essential to prosperity and the well-being of liberal market society, benefiting all ranks of social class. However, these liberties were understood to entail self-control as well as self-interest. As Jerry Z. Muller argues, "We have adopted the assumption that the most 'authentic' self is the self that is least inhibited by external standards, and so many have come to identify liberty with the absence of legal constraint, social constraint, and even self-restraint—with unbounded will and unconstrained desire."[56](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT56) Adam Smith's views, for example, have become "caricatured conceptions that find their way into political debate."[57](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT57) Predictably, this nuanced but often-misconstrued legacy leads free-market conservatives to be resolute in their skepticism of the environmental movement. Consumption is viewed as a good thing, except when it encroaches on the moral sensibilities of conservative free-market advocates. Hedonistic consumption holds an allure that threatens conservative values, yet attempts to squelch its dissemination and practice remain curiously incongruous with a pro-consumption view more generally. In contemporary revisionism, government environmental oversight and regulation afford unnecessary infringement on commerce and private property rights. *Laissez-faire* has evolved into a modern-day truism rarely afforded by Enlightenment precedent.[58](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT58) This recent skepticism has enabled an all-out free-market anti-environmental offensive. A slew of right-wing actors are dedicated to the principles of free markets, private property rights, and less regulatory oversight of industry. They are committed to battling the perceived threat environmental action brings upon these values, characterizing environmentalism as everything from a questionable science to a heretical, seductive religion. Special interest groups, right-wing think tanks, big business, and their conservative proponents within the media have helped roll back many environmental policies from earlier administrations. Their political influence today is substantial. Take, for example, The American Enterprise Institute, a think tank "dedicated to preserving and strengthening the foundations of freedom—limited government, private enterprise, vital cultural and political institutions, and a strong foreign policy and national defense."[59](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT59) The AEI magazine recently published an edition on "Realism On Energy and the Environment" which had several **[End Page 99]** contributions by conservatively inclined individuals.[60](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/global_environmental_politics/v006/6.2greenberg.html" \l "FOOT60) Michael Novak's piece is representative. In his article "Environmentalism Should Not Be a Religion" Novak accuses environmentalism, in short order, of three vices: it is a "new religion," *and* manages to be "eco-socialism" *and* prone to doomsday scenarios. This caricature of environmentalists is, of course, a foil. The doomsday portrayal, in particular, is rich in its unintended projection, given that the inevitability of apocalypse is acutely germane to many of their theologically inclined colleagues. Free-market ideologues also depict the environmental movement as naïve and dangerous radicals unquestioning in their devotion to the cause. This includes the sweeping accusation of misanthropic belief, thus always disposed to save obscure species over humanity. While there are environmentalists with decidedly radical views who promote eco-terror, bio-centrism, or doomsday scenarios of biblical proportion, they do not represent the movement as a whole. These depictions are political tools that manage to both polarize and galvanize.

Every attempt to create a predictive model of international relations has failed. An inherently dynamic international sphere is impossible to causally define into the future. There is so much conflicting data it is impossible to distinguish between link and link turn without creating a tapestry of lies.

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A deep irony is embedded in the history of the scientific study of international relations. Recent generations of scholars separated policy from theory to gain an intellectual distance from decision-making, in the belief that this would enhance the 'scientific' quality of their work. But five decades of well-funded efforts to develop theories of international relations have produced precious little in the way of useful, high confidence results. Theories abound, but few meet the most relaxed 'scientific' tests of validity. Even the most robust generalizations or laws we can state — war is more likely between neighboring states, weaker states are less likely to attack stronger states **— are close to trivial, have important exceptions, and for the** most part stand outside any consistent body of theory.A generation ago, we might have excused our performance on the grounds that we were a young science still in the process of defining problems, developing analytical tools and collecting data. This excuse is neither credible nor sufficient; there is no reason to suppose that another 50 years of well-funded research would result in anything resembling a valid theory in the Popperian sense. We suggest that the nature, goals and criteria for judging social science theory should be rethought, if theory is to be more helpful in understanding the real world. We begin by justifying our pessimism, both conceptually and empirically, and argue that the quest for *predictive* theory rests on a mistaken analogy between physical and social phenomena. Evolutionary biology is a more productive analogy for social science. We explore the value of this analogy in its 'hard' and 'soft' versions, and examine the implications of both for theory and research in international relations.' We develop the case for forward `tracking' of international relations on the basis of local and general knowledge as an alternative to backward-looking attempts to build deductive, nomothetic theory. We then apply this strategy to some emerging trends in international relations. This article is not a nihilistic diatribe against 'modern' conceptions of social science. **Rather,** it is a plea for constructive humility in the current context of attraction to deductive logic, falsifiable hypothesis and large- ***n*** statistical 'tests' of narrow propositions. We propose a practical alternative for social scientists to pursue in addition, and in a complementary fashion, to `scientific' theory-testing. Physical and chemical laws make two kinds of predictions. Some phenomena — the trajectories of individual planets — can be predicted with a reasonable degree of certainty. Only a few variables need to be taken into account and they can be measured with precision. Other mechanical problems, like the break of balls on a pool table, while subject to deterministic laws, are inherently unpredictable because of their complexity. Small differences in the lay of the table, the nap of the felt, the curvature of each ball and where they make contact, amplify the variance of each collision and lead to what appears as a near random distribution of balls. Most predictions in science are probabilistic, like the freezing point of liquids, the expansion rate of gases and all chemical reactions. Point predictions appear possible only because of the large numbers of units involved in interactions. In the case of nuclear decay or the expansion of gases, we are talking about *trillions* of atoms and molecules. In international relations, even more than in other domains of social science, it is often impossible to assign metrics to what we think are relevant variables (Coleman, 1964: especially Chapter 2). The concepts of polarity, relative power and the balance of power are among the most widely used independent variables, but there are no commonly accepted definitions or measures for them. Yet without consensus on definition and measurement, almost every statement or hypothesis will have too much wiggle room to be `tested' decisively against evidence. What we take to be dependent variables fare little better. Unresolved controversies rage over the definition and evaluation of deterrence outcomes, and about the criteria for democratic governance and their application to specific countries at different points in their history. Differences in coding for even a few cases have significant implications for tests of theories of deterrence or of the democratic peace (Lebow and Stein, 1990; Chan, 1997). The lack of consensus about terms and their measurement is not merely the result of intellectual anarchy or sloppiness — although the latter cannot entirely be dismissed. Fundamentally, it has more to do with the arbitrary nature of the concepts themselves. Key terms in physics, like mass, temperature and velocity, refer to aspects of the physical universe that we cannot directly observe. However, they are embedded in theories with deductive implications that have been verified through empirical research. Propositions containing these terms are legitimate assertions about reality because their truth-value can be assessed. Social science theories are for the most part built on 'idealizations', that is, on concepts that cannot be anchored to observable phenomena through rules of correspondence. Most of these terms (e.g. rational actor, balance of power) are not descriptions of reality but implicit 'theories' about actors and contexts that do not exist (Hempel, 1952; Rudner, 1966; Gunnell, 1975; Moe, 1979; Searle, 1995: 68-72). The inevitable differences in interpretation of these concepts lead to different predictions in some contexts, and these outcomes may eventually produce widely varying futures (Taylor, 1985: 55). If problems of definition, measurement and coding could be resolved, we would still find it difficult, if not impossible, to construct large enough samples of comparable cases to permit statistical analysis. It is now almost generally accepted that in the analysis of the causes of wars, the variation across time and the complexity of the interaction among putative causes make the likelihood of a general theory extraordinarily low. Multivariate theories run into the problem of negative degrees of freedom, yet international relations rarely generates data sets in the high double digits. Where larger samples do exist, they often group together cases that differ from one another in theoretically important ways.' Complexity in the form of multiple causation and equifinality can also make simple statistical comparisons misleading. But it is hard to elaborate more sophisticated statistical tests until one has a deeper baseline understanding of the nature of the phenomenon under investigation, as well as the categories and variables that make up candidate causes (Geddes, 1990: 131-50; Lustick, 1996: 505-18; Jervis, 1997). Wars — to continue with the same example — are similar to chemical and nuclear reactions in that they have underlying and immediate causes. Even when all the underlying conditions are present, these processes generally require a catalyst to begin. Chain reactions are triggered by the decay of atomic nuclei. Some of the neutrons they emit strike other nuclei prompting them to fission and emit more neutrons, which strike still more nuclei. Physicists can calculate how many kilograms of Uranium 235 or Plutonium at given pressures are necessary to produce a chain reaction. They can take it for granted that if a 'critical mass' is achieved, a chain reaction will follow. This is because trillions of atoms are present, and at any given moment enough of them will decay to provide the neutrons needed to start the reaction. In a large enough sample, catalysts will be present in a statistical sense. Wars involve relatively few actors. Unlike the weak force responsible for nuclear decay, their catalysts are probably not inherent properties of the units. Catalysts may or may not be present, and their potentially random distribution relative to underlying causes makes it difficult to predict when or if an appropriate catalyst will occur. If in the course of time underlying conditions change, reducing basic incentives for one or more parties to use force, catalysts that would have triggered war will no longer do so. This uncertain and evolving relationship between underlying and immediate causes makes point prediction extraordinarily difficult. It also makes more general statements about the causation of war problematic, since **we have no** way of knowing what wars would have occurred in the presence of appropriate catalysts. It is probably impossible to define the universe of would-be wars or to construct a representative sample of them. Statistical inference requires knowledge about the state of independence of cases, but in a practical sense that knowledge is often impossible to obtain in the analysis of international relations. Molecules do not learn from experience. People do, or think they do. Relationships among cases exist in the minds of decision-makers, which makes it very hard to access that information reliably and for more than just a very small number of cases. We know that expectations and behavior are influenced by experience, one's own and others. The deterrence strategies pursued by the United States throughout much of the Cold War were one kind of response to the failure of appeasement to prevent World War II. Appeasement was at least in part a reaction to the belief of British leaders that the deterrent policies pursued by the continental powers earlier in the century had helped to provoke World War I. Neither appeasement nor deterrence can be explained without understanding the context in which they were formulated; that context is ultimately a set of mental constructs. We have descriptive terms like 'chain reaction' or 'contagion effect' to describe these patterns, and hazard analysis among other techniques in statistics to measure their strength. But neither explains how and why these patterns emerge and persist. The broader point is that the relationship between human beings and their environment is not nearly so reactive as with inanimate objects. Social relations are not clock-like because the values and behavioral repertories of actors are not fixed; people have memories, learn from experience and undergo shifts in the vocabulary they use to construct reality. Law-like relationships — even if they existed — could not explain the most interesting social outcomes, since these are precisely the outcomes about which actors have the most incentive to learn and adapt their behavior**. *Any*** regularities would be `soft'; they would be the outcome of processes that are embedded in history and have a short half-life. They would decay quickly because of the memories, creative searching and learning by political leaders. Ironically, the `findings' of social science contribute to this decay (Weber, 1969; Almond and Genco, 1977: 496-522; Gunnell, 1982: Ch. 2; Ball, 1987: Ch. 4; Kratochwil, 1989; Rorty, 1989; Hollis, 1994: Ch. 9). Beyond these conceptual and empirical difficulties lies a familiar but fundamental difference of purpose. Boyle's Law, half-lives, or any other scientific principle based on probability, says nothing about the behavior of single units such as molecules. For many theoretical and practical purposes this is adequate. But social science ultimately aspires — or should aspire —to provide insight into practical world problems that are generally part of a small or very small n. In international relations, the dynamics and outcomes of single cases are often much more important than any statistical regularities. The conception of causality on which deductive-nomological models are based, in classical physics as well as social science, requires empirical invariance under specified boundary conditions. The standard form of such a statement is this — given A, B and C, if X then (not) Y.4 This kind of bounded invariance can be found in closed systems. Open systems can be influenced by external stimuli, and their structure and causal mechanisms evolve as a result. Rules that describe the functioning of an open system at time T do not necessarily do so at T + 1 or T + 2. The boundary conditions may have changed, rendering the statement irrelevant. Another axiomatic condition may have been added, and the outcome subject to multiple conjunctural causation. There is no way to know this *a priori* from the causal statement itself. Nor will complete knowledge (if it were possible) about the system at time T necessarily allow us to project its future course of development. In a practical sense, all social systems (and many physical and biological systems) are open. Empirical invariance does not exist in such systems, and seemingly probabilistic invariances may be causally unrelated (Harre and Secord, 1973; Bhaskar, 1979; Collier, 1994; Patomaki, 1996; Jervis, 1997). As physicists readily admit, prediction in open systems, especially non-linear ones, is difficult, and often impossible. The risk in saying that social scientists can 'predict' the value of variables in past history is that the value of these variables is already known to us, and thus we are not really making predictions. Rather, we are trying to convince each other of the logic that connects a statement of theory to an expectation about the value of a variable that derives from that theory. As long as we can establish the parameters within which the theoretical statement is valid, which is a prerequisite of generating expectations in any case, this 'theory-testing' or 'evaluating' activity is not different in a logical sense when done in past or future time.5