I. World View of Western Society and Culture

A. World View or *Weltanschauung*

1. A comprehensive conception or theory of the world and the place of humanity within it.

2. It shapes culture

a. non-material: values, beliefs, norm, ideas,

b. material: technology, social arrangements, living, community etc

3. It determines our understanding of what it means to be human

B. Every society has a dominant world view and part of all world views is the conception of the environment

1. Societies/cultures understand and define the natural world in different ways.

2. Different understandings of the natural world lead to various cultures having different:

a. relationships to the natural world.

b. experiences with the natural world.

c. practices toward the natural world.

It might be easier to understand the meaning and its implications if we look at the world view of the Other

3. I want to critique Western society/cultures worldview as a way of answering the questions how we got here, ecocide, and how to a great degree it determines

how we can respond?

4. Western Society World View: a constellation of various conceptions of the

world and understanding of humanity

5. Constellation is composed of:

a. religion: Judeo-Christian tradition

b. scientific/technological: modern secular world view

c. capitalist/consumerism: neoliberal worldview

6. Great Transformation and Western society world view

a. emergence of modern world, and its revolutionary world

view: scientific revolution, industrial revolution, political revolutions,

capitalism

b. Enlightenment and its grand narratives

i. reason

ii. science and technology

iii. progress

c. two qualifications

i. not revolutionary when it comes to understanding nature

ii. religion is still a significant part of the constellation

d. Lords of the Earth

7. Comment: Women and non-Western "man"

II. Judeo-Christian tradition and nature

A.Sacred Texts - Creation story

1. God said, "Let us make man in our own image . . . let

them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of

heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts, and all the

reptiles that crawl upon the earth

2. Later, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and

conquer it . . . I give you all the seed=bearing plants

and all the trees with seed bearing fruit

3. Man also had the power of naming and "each was

to bear the name the man would give it."

4. Banishment: Wilderness

a. Adam and Eve banished from the Garden of Eden into a wilderness

b. "Accursed be the soil" "It shall yield you brambles,

and thistles, and you shall eat wild plants"

5. Promised Land: Moses and Israelites wander in wilderness before they find the Promised Land

6. New Testament

a. Jesus spends 40 days in wilderness where it is the place of the devil and temptation

b. Paul continually emphasizes the spiritualvs. the body (nature)

B. Catholic Church: dominant institution 5th to 15th century

1. Body as sin: monasteries, ascetism, castration

2. St. Augustine: animals are beyond the scheme of salvation

3. St Thomas Aquinas: world was God's creation, thought that everything was for man "Differences between Rational and Other Creatures"

a. creation is hierarchy (borrowed from Aristotle)

b. mankind qualitatively unique, reason and intellect in image of God.

c. "Therefore every other creature is naturally under slavery, the intellectual nature alone is free."

d. animals are like slaves, they can be used for the sake of the creatures with an intellect

e. Hereby is refuted the error of those who said it is sinful for a man to kill dumb animals . . . Hence it is not wrong for man to make use of them, either by killing or in any other way whatever."

4. Inquisitions

a. heresies

b. heresies of different world views: St. Francis and his followers

c. witches

C. Environmental Practices during Church dominated Europe

1. deforestation

a. England deforested by eleventh

b. Europe deforested by 16th

c. Spain overgrazed by 15th

2. polluted rivers and streams and siltation

3. overgrazing

4. poor agricultural practices

a. over grazing

b. loss of arable soil

c. polluted fresh water systems

5. overfishing

a. depeleted much of Med and Baltic

b. exterminated right whales by nineteenth

c. hunting for sport

6.animal torture sports thrived in church controlled

Europe

a. bearbaiting

b. cockfighting

c. bull fighting

d. organized slaughter hundreds/thousands of birds, deer

7. livevivisection

8. killed cats because they were the devil

9. Western society was a shit hole literally when Columbus/colonialism brought

all of this to the “new” world.

D. Summary: Judeo-Christian tradition in relation to the environment

1. Dichotomy between man and nature

2. Hierarchy and qualitative

3. man power over nature, and role is conqueror

4. wilderness: accursed, threat, temptation

5. women and nature

6. non-western humans

II. Great Transformation (beginnings)

A. Renaissance/Humanism

1. emerged as domination of church was weakening

2. man is god-like

3. power to create the world

4. natural world was material out of which “he” would shape his world

B. Protestant Reformation and the natural world

1. Protestant Reformation: Luther and Calvin

2. Weber: Protestant Ethic and the Spiritof Capitalism

a. salvation by faith

b. problem: God’s omnipotence and predestination

c how does one know material world exists only as a place of accumulation,

3. accumulation/success in world perhaps meant salvation

4. religiously sanction justification for expropriation of nature and transformation of natural world into economic products.

C. Early Colonialism: western world view and “new” worlds

1. Colonialism

a. goals: natural resources, labor, markets

b. means: military conquest, political/economic control

c. culture: religion

d. sources

2. Puritans saw a "hideous and desolate wilderness"

a. wild, immoral, the devil's own "servants of Satan", 'demons from hell",

b. religious practices 'confusion among the damned"

c. hellish fiends and brutish men

3. Saw themselves as the new "chosen people" and that

they were being tested by God

4. As the new chosen people they believe their task was to transform this

wilderness into the Garden of Eden –a create a new Jerusalem

5. reclaim the "wild" for God, John Winthrop in 1629

Why remain in England and "suffer a whole Continent

. . . to lie in waste without improvement”

6. Constraints: no limits

i. greatest deforestation in human history

half a million acres

ii. extermination of those whose environmental

practices had created this "paradise"

iii. extermination of most fur bearing herbivores

by 1640, deer and moose

iv. extermination of most game birds

v. filled in marshes and wetlands

"All in all, the presence of just a few hundred thousand of the European branch of the human species, within just a century after its landing did more to alter the environment of NA than many millions of the American branch had done in fifteen centuries or more."

F. Manifest destiny, settler colonialism, and war against the environment

1. from NY Times to Washington to Teddy Roosevelt

" only natural . . . all other races . . . must bow and fade before the great work of subjugation and conquest of the Anglo-Saxon race.

" felling trees and Indians and rounding out their natural boundaries"

Hugo Grotius: "most just war is against **savage beasts**, the next against **men who are like beasts."**

Washington: "the gradual extension of our settlements will as certainly cause the savage, as the wolf, to retire; **both being beasts of prey, tho' they differ in shape."**

Teddy Roosevelt: "the most ultimately righteous of all wars is a war with savages" "establishing the rule of the dominant races." He referred to the Sand Creek Massacre " as a righteous and beneficial deed as ever took place." Colorado 1864 (scary)

2. defined as war against nature in diaries, letters, "enemy,” “conquered", “vanquished", "subdued," by the "pioneer army"

3. 1830 same attitude, natural world, needs to be cultivated, it's God's will - Senator Lewis Cass

4. 1830 Gov of Mich, wilderness is waste, proper relationship to it is exploitation, quoted Genesis

5. Kill everything in sight: Place

a. multiple species of whales in bays and lagoons and staggering assortment of sport fish and

marine mammals - sea otters

b. beavers in creeks and streams

c. antelope, deer, badgers, bighorn sheep

d. spotted and red lynx, mountain lions, and jaguar

e. gray wolves and "the best grizzly bear range on earth"

f. golden and bald eagles, condor, flocks of migrating birds (83 separate species) that blacken the sky

g. "one of the greatest natural habitats for wildlife and game birds in the world

h. 22 million acres of finest virgin grassland left in

the world

6. The comprehensive looting and destruction of this extraordinary biological endowment was the basis for the development

a. 1803-1813 killed 50,000 sea otters for fur

b. same period trapped most beaver, mink, and

river otter to extinction

c. cattle destroyed the grasslands

i. quintiple erosion rates

ii. scarred the land with arroyos

d. 1812 killed 30,000 wild horses

e. antelope and wolf pushed out of environment

f. grizzly bear hunts

i. grizzly meat a delicacy

ii. one posse alone killed 22 bears

g. between 1865 and 1890 50%- 90% of

i. one million ducks

ii. quail, doves, rabbits, deer

h. native bird: "lassoed and dragged and

strangled when full of food and clumsy, or

shot just for sport

i. big game hunters spent up to $3500 in 1920s to shoot mountain lions, imported tigers, leopards, and jaguars from zoos that were chained to poles

k. war on cougars Oct 1907 $20 bounty

l. one decade

i. 674 cougars, 3,000 coyotes, 120 bobcats

ii. consequences, deer population 3,000 to

100,000 between 1906 and 1924

iii. Nov 1926 one hundred million mice overran

the town of Taft, reason killed all the predators coyotes, skunks, red tail hawks

13. Other world views illegal; Religious Crimes Codes

In 1882 Interior Secretary Henry M. Teller ordered an end to all "heathenish dances" and ceremonies due to their "great hindrance to civilization" - males ordered to cut braids and outlawed the Sun Dance, rite of passage and celebration to the Sun

Pueblo religion was outlawed because it involved overtly sexual practices and public nudity

II. The Great Transformation

A. Revolution and the transformation of Western Society: Modernity

1. Scientific Revolution

2. Industrial Revolution

3. Political Revolutions

4. Capitalism

B. Enlightenment and the Grand Narratives of New world views

1. Reason

2. Science/Technology

3. Progress: material and moral

C. Nature in these "revolutionary" world views

1. 1950s and advocates of giant damn on Colorado

River "conquering wilderness" and "subduing the earth"

2. as late as 1965 article in Saturday Evening Post

talked of civilization being defined in terms of war

with dark forces of nature

3. 1914-15 federalized extermination of wolves,

coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, raptors

a. predators were cruel, they murdered

innocent deer and songbirds, wanton killers

b. "large predatory mammals destructive to

livestock and game no longer have a place

in our advancing civilization"

4. most large carnivores wolves, bears, mountain lions

had bounties put on them and were nearly extinct in

lower 48 states

5. 2022 Europe “garden” global south “jungle”