Return of the Son of Deep Ecology

The Ethics of Permanent Crisis and the Permanent Crisis in Ethics

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Introduction

The letter above ["Deep Ecology as Strategic Knowledge," FE #331, Spring, 1989] was sent to the *Fifth Estate* last year in response to the essay I wrote, "How Deep Is Deep Ecology? A Challenge to Radical Environmentalism" (FE #327, Fall 1987). I had a brief correspondence with the author (who, interestingly, admitted to being an EF! man), and had planned to print his letter with several others from EF!ers (we eventually printed a selection of them in the Summer 1988 FE). The more I looked at "Miss Ann's" (rather, Mr. Ann's) letter, with its claims to an anti-technological, primitivist, even anarchist perspective, the more I realized its appropriateness as a starting point for my essay. However unkind one may judge me for using a relatively short letter as the focus for a long critical essay, I think the letter so representative of the entire range of problems with the deep ecology movement that I think the temptation is one worth following. If the form is strange, I can only hope that the ideas in the essay are important enough to overcome this problem. The form is in part a result of the shorthand manner in which deep ecologists tend to evade a genuinely critical dialogue. Deep ecology (DE) ideology appears to deflect criticism the way religious dogma does, by raising its voice over all others in defense of its intuitions and simply repeating its assertions (hallelujah and amen), as well as by conveniently misrepresenting the views of its critics.

With this in mind, it is significant that Mr. Ann assiduously avoids or simply dismisses the substantive political questions raised by my essay to focus on more oblique philosophical points, taking a couple of minor parenthetical asides far enough out of their context to paint me as a calculating "resourcist" willing to steam shovel what is left of wilderness for a world of wall-to-wall wheat. Let me assure him, deep ecologists in general, and the readers that I am not concealing a bulldozer in my backyard. Readers familiar with the direction of the Fifth Estate over the last decade will need no reassurances.

A common technique of debater trickery is to wrap oneself in the american flag (or the red flag). I think that Mr. A. and other deep ecologists have done this with the idea of wilderness. Can anyone who has read my essay really believe, for example, that I reduce this entire discussion to the allocation of resources, simply representing "earth as resource for human exploitation," thus perpetuating the ideologies that legitimate Power? Or that I "totalize nature" by valorizing "human life over its ecological context" and by identifying "human welfare with the separation from wilderness?" Isn't it clear in my critique of dualism that for me the notion of a human life or well-being outside of its ecological context is a meaningless construct? Isn't it obvious that the defense of wilderness and biodiversity are not in opposition to human well-being, but are, on the contrary, fundamental human values?

For the last decade I have participated in several projects that explicitly call for the deconstruction of technological civilization and for a reconciliation with the natural world. Accordingly, I have opposed all development of wilderness and even of undeveloped pastoral lands (even empty lots in the city for that matter!). I favor withdrawal of construction from the fringes of wild areas along with their proper restoration to original integrity. I

need neither simplistically anthropocentric nor biocentric motives; nearly all the motives for preservation make sense: moral and aesthetic reasoning, the desire for self-preservation, a reverence for life. If I do not agree with the idea that rainforests should be protected in order to maintain a genetic "bank" for future bioengineering, that has more to do with a critique of and opposition to mass technology and instrumental civilization, a fear of what it means for human beings as much as for everything else, than it does with species "egalitarianism." The desire to protect forests, deserts and even remote places that I will probably never see flows from deep human values and a desire to defend the personhood of the planet and the planethood in me. In this sense, I see no separation with nature.

Likewise, I was surprised and disappointed to find my essay described as rancorous. If there was anger, I will have to admit that it was in reaction to seeing a radical defense of the natural world used to rationalize starvation and death squads (even if indirectly)for the victims of imperial plunder. I despise moral cant and smug, unfeeling privilege. But I actually went to great lengths in my essay to point out the many positive aspects of EF! and deep ecology and my affinities with them. I wrote it not so much to convert people but to make connections with them and thus begin a dialogue that had been shut out of the *EF! Journal* by an editor who claimed to represent the views of the whole group. Many of those connections have been very rewarding. If I was in error on any organizational aspects of the group, I could only start based on what I could surmise as an outsider; but after hearing from numerous EF! supporters, critics and members how their letters and articles were suppressed and even changed to remove political views to which the editors objected, I don't think my assessment of organizational manipulation was that far off the mark.

Finally, my critic coyly dismisses polemics as "sideshows"; I disagree. The controversies going on aren't scholastic debating exercises, though they may appear academic to the uninitiated. They are crucial discussions that could have serious consequences for what seems to be a growing, and inevitable, environmental radicalism—indeed, for the growth of the whole radical movement in the next period. The kind of response that we at the FE have gotten from the several issues treating these questions is evidence enough that the people who are sitting in, creating community groups, canvassing, doing sabotage, publishing flyers, tree-sitting, and many other activities are reading and discussing the ideas, and developing ideas and voices of their own. It is to those people that I dedicate this essay.

A Deep Social Ecology?

The implications of a deep ecological vision as a broad, intuitive sensibility—a refusal of instrumental, commoditized relations with the Earth; the notion of kinship with the land and a land ethic; the understanding that the full realization of the personhood of the human subject and of the planet do not compete with one another but correspond; an affirmation of the primal, animist wisdom that places humanity within the web of life and not at the top of some hierarchy—the rediscovery of this constellation of insights is in my view a fundamental precondition for breaking out of the prison-house of urban-industrial civilization and creating a family of free cultures in harmony with one another and with the Earth.

The same goes for the idea of a social ecology, which implies an investigation into the social roots of our permanent crisis in culture and character, an articulation of the manifold forms of freedom and revolt expressed in and against history, and a radical refusal to be reduced to commodities, resources and machines ourselves. The adjectives accompanying the term ecology say enough to be suggestive of a new synthesis of primitive and modern, but they do not say enough to be exact. Turning them into platforms undermines their energies and broad promise.

Now every adherent claims a different spin on deep ecology, but as a philosophy and as a movement (which is how it presents itself) DE invites critiques by its very stance as the basis for a new metaphysics and "paradigm" for culture, as when Bill Devall and George Sessions state in their book, *Deep Ecology*, that it "goes beyond a limited piecemeal shallow approach to environmental problems and attempts to articulate a comprehensive religious and philosophical world view." DE's critics have not questioned its failure to be a "totalized" philosophy but rather its claim, through its unsubstantiated assertion of access to "deeper" truths by asking "deeper" questions, to be such a philosophy. DE's claims are quite ambitious. George Sessions characterizes it as one of "the two main post-modern

philosophies of the future" (along with, of all things, New Age!); and in his letter to the FE castigating us for not printing his 23-page diatribe against social ecologist Murray Bookchin, Bill Devall posits DE as the culmination of a history of progress, writing, "Fundamentally, deep ecology is about ontological questions. It is heir to the three great intellectual, perceptual revolutions in the West—Copernicus, Darwin, and ecological (Thoreau, Leopold)." [1]

Devall's formulation places him well within the Western ideology of scientific-technological progress and reveals how little DE offers as critique of ecological science to the degree that it participates in this ideology. One is reminded of the almost schoolbook discussion in Aldo Leopold's essay on the evolution of ethics, "The Land Ethic," in which he discusses what he sees as an expansion of ethics from classical times, defining modern politics and economics as "advanced symbioses in which the original free-for-all competition has been replaced, in part, by co-operative mechanisms with an ethical content."

As far as the history of history (and specifically of capital) goes, Leopold seems to have the chronology back ward.

Later, he writes that our attitudes towards the land "are still governed wholly by economic self-interest, just as social ethics were a century ago." While Leopold's criticism of economic motives is admirable, his description of progress is ingenuous. For what governs social ethics in modern America?

Leopold defines the environmental ethic as the result of progress in science, specifically in ecology: "We now know what was unknown to all the preceding caravans of generations," he writes, "that men [sic] are only fellow voyagers with other creatures in the odyssey of evolution. This new knowledge should have given us, by this time, a sense of kinship with fellow-creatures; a wish to live and let live; a sense of wonder over the magnitude and duration of the biotic enterprise." But of course this is not "new knowledge" at all; it is precisely what many former generations, among primal peoples, knew quite well. Progress is a lie; the idea of a mythic return (or revenge) corresponds more closely to the emerging animism and environmental ethic than the notion of scientific revolution. Scientific "progress" has played a central role in corroding the very connections that DE claims to affirm, which was a point of my original essay and which will be further explored here. So it is interesting to see a leading DE proponent resort to it. [2]

Deep ecologists claim to ask "why" more insistently and consistently than others, taking nothing for granted, as Arne Naess, the founder of this perspective, argues. It claims a neutral, privileged ground for itself beyond human concerns, analyzing humanity's relationship with nature and problems of society through ecological discourse. As one prominent Canadian deep ecologist, Alan R. Drengson, writes, it "applies ecological paradigms not only to plants and animals but also to human culture and its internal and external relationships." This discipline thinks primarily "in biotic rather than social terms," as Kirkpatrick Sale characterized the distinction between deep ecology and its critics. [3]

But in any human discourse regarding our relationship to nature, all terms are social, and the scientific paradigms to which Drengson refers are themselves layered with the ideologies of the civilization that generated them. While deep ecologists claim to take nothing for granted, the terms by which they define their process of inquiry go themselves unquestioned. Assuming rather than critically examining the premise that human activities can be explained according to the tenets of ecological science, deep ecologists apply ecological models to everything, from the yearly migrations of birds to the forced migrations of war refugees. Any reference to social causes is met by accusations of "shallowness," since at some level at least ecological relations do underlie human society. But the real question isn't whether ecological relations in some way underlie "human culture and its internal and external relationships," the real question is whether ecological analysis is sufficient to explain human culture's history and conflicts. And in answering this question at least, deep ecologists have proven to be far shallower than their critics. (This is why in most ecological discussions of El Salvador, for example, the social struggle there is simply and simplistically described as the function of population pressure and what might be more fundamental causes such as land tenure and class conflict are missed.)

Ecological reductionism is not the only problem with the DE paradigm; the tendency to graft unexamined and gratuitous political positions onto it is another. Yet once DE spokesmen utter them, they become part of the program. One can count as examples statements by Naess that cultural diversity "requires advanced technology" and that it is "inevitable to maintain some fairly strong political institutions." [4]

I treated several such positions in my original essay, but rather than repeat what I wrote in the essay, I'll provide another example of such "deep" thinking which is steeped in innumerable political assumptions. Fritjof-Capra, a prominent writer on such matters, writes in an article entitled "Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm," that the "new thinking" has as its goal "to further economic development." Capra portrays the economy (another word, as someone aptly put it recently, for capitalism) in completely benign terms, describing it as "a living system composed of human beings and social organizations..." As for the relationship of technology to society, he argues that "certain tasks should never be left to computers," like those requiring "wisdom, compassion, respect," etc. Hence, "Decisions and communications that require human qualities such as those of a judge or a general—will dehumanize our lives if they are made by computers. In particular, the use of computers in military technology should not be increased, but, on the contrary, should be radically reduced."

Quite a few assumptions here, I'd say, not the least of which is Capra's apparent faith that a new society guided by new thinking would include not only computers but even military technology, judges and generals! "It is tragic," Capra intones, "that our [sic] government and the business community [sic] have removed themselves very far from such considerations." [5] What is truly tragic is that so few biocentrists have any critique of or apparently even any visceral anger toward the very forces of domination and alienation that are reducing the planet to a petrochemical gulag. What is tragic is their failure to see that the "biotic terms" of ecology are patently inadequate even as those terms are indispensable. When Kirkpatrick Sale says in the article cited above, for example, that deep ecologists "regard the fundamental issue to be the destruction of nature and the suffering of the rapidly dying species and ecosystems as distinct from those who regard the basic issue as the absence of justice and the suffering of the human populations," he is imposing a contrived and gratuitous dualism on what is in reality a cluster of interlocking crises.

A Neutral Ground

Dualism runs rampant throughout DE, starting from its ambiguous contrast of nature and humanity. In this scenario humanity is seen as simply "one" with nature so that any discussion of humanity's specific problems is seen as "anthropocentric" and an affront to a biospheric egalitarianism that itself does not distinguish between history or differing levels of complexity. And yet at the same time, humanity is seen at least implicitly as a uniquely negative force and as in a polarity with nature. Starting from a legitimate revulsion against the destructiveness of civilization, DE takes for granted an economistic, "zero-sum" picture of the world and natural history, in which humanity can only thrive by making nature lose. This is essentially the world view of bourgeois civilization: "man" struggles against nature, carving progress out of rough, unyielding stone. In the DE view (at least at its extreme, among self-described misanthropes), the values of the poles are simply reversed, to the point that any modification of nature to serve human well-being is condemned. This attitude underlies the rejection of "humanism" (defined by them as the belief that human beings can do whatever they like with the natural world to aggrandize themselves). [6]

The same dualism is played out in several overlapping polarities: from this ambiguous contrast of biocentrism and anthropocentrism come the polarities of intrinsic or inherent value in nature vs. utilitarian or instrumental value (value for human beings), biospheric egalitarianism and noninterference ("let nature be") vs. "resourcism" or "stewardship" (which as they paint it, implies a totally administered nature cultivated for the good of some undifferentiated human species' "need"), and "humanism" vs. wilderness and its values.

Starting from the notion of a philosophically neutral ground that can stand far enough outside of nature and society to judge them both as separate categories, Mr. Ann accuses me of trivializing DE's rejection of anthropocentrism with my comment that any human discourse on these matters is by definition going to be to some degree anthropocentric, "imposing as it does," I wrote in the passage truncated by my critic, "a human, symbolic discourse on the nonhuman." This observation is dismissed as an "epistemological conundrum." Such a "tautology" is not relevant, he argues; only a "substantive" ethical formulation is.

Forgive me if I happen to disagree. DE's claim to establish a biocentric ethic as opposed to an anthropocentric one "decenters" humanity ethically by assuming precisely a "totalized" picture of the universe which can serve as a

vantage point for judgment. But if the problem of finding a neutral or privileged ground that can establish "non-anthropocentric" or intrinsic worth in nature and decenter humanity is an epistemological conundrum, it is one that plagues all of contemporary environmental philosophy. If we are to take seriously the statement by Devall and Sessions that "Nature is more complex than we now know and more complex than we possibly can know," we cannot take for granted or as neutral the discourse through which we apprehend nature. [7]

In his environmental history, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, William Cronon reveals the problems with the kind of dualism characteristic of DE. In social and ecological discourse, he points out, the question is not one of an untouched, "virgin" landscape contrasted with a human one, but between distinct "ways of belonging to an ecosystem." Such a perspective, he argues, would therefore "describe pre-colonial New England not as a virgin landscape of natural harmony but as a landscape whose essential characteristics were kept in equilibrium by the cultural practices of its human community." [8] Cronon quotes Thoreau, who writes in Walden that he would like to know "an entire heaven and an entire earth," "the entire poem" of nature. But this is not possible, Cronon argues. "Human and natural worlds are too entangled for us, and our historical landscape does not allow us to guess what the 'entire poem' of which he spoke might look like. To search for that poem would in fact be a mistake. Our project must be to locate a nature which is within rather than without history, for only by so doing can we find human communities which are inside rather than outside nature." Cronon is speaking to environmental historians, but his advice makes sense for those who would begin to discuss our relationship with the natural world and the present crisis in it. [9]

We must therefore show restraint and some humility in judgments about nature and society, especially where the prospect of mass death—someone else's, that is—comes in. Simply stated, it is one thing to argue that "nature knows best." It is quite another to assume that one philosophical current knows what is best for nature—right down to taking political positions calling for the closing of borders or letting people starve. Such reasoning constitutes a kind of teleology based on assumed omniscience. The resonant remark by Aldo Leopold, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community," then, provides no answers; it only poses a series of questions. [10]

Such a view, as Peter A. Fritzell writes in a very sensitive essay on the subject, "explains human actions as functions in and of evolving ecosystems only when those actions are consonant with the needs of other elements in such systems where consonant means conducive to the continued, healthy existence of all present species—as defined and determined by humans and human science." (my emphasis in the latter phrase) Commenting on Leopold's celebrated passage cited above, Fritzell observes, "Is man to determine when the biotic community is stable and beautiful? Or must man take counsel from other citizens of the community—not only pines, deer, and wolves but cheat grass, gypsy moths and rats? [Not to mention women!) Can man take anything other than human counsel with the other members of the land community? Can such counsel ever express more than the ecological interests of humans and the species they most closely identify with?"

Further on he remarks, "The paradoxes of wilderness preservation are less logical problems than they are communal concerns." And, I would add, concerns which are rooted in a matrix of social conflict and domination. Fritzell quotes Leopold, who sensed the same problem: "Does the pine stimulate my imagination and my hopes more deeply than the birch does? If so, is the difference in the trees, or in me?" [11]

The Problem of Intrinsic Value

The problem raised by Leopold concerning our relationship to the rest of nature underscores the problem of the intrinsic value of nature (a DE pillar) and the subsequent discussions of an environmental ethic now taking place among philosophers. Evolutionary and ecological science have revealed what primal peoples knew all along, that humanity is kin to the rest of creation, only a strand in the complex web of life, and dependent on the biotic stability and integrity of the whole. "The moral implications of this idea for human behavior were, to say the least, problematic," writes environmental historian Roderick Nash, "and philosophers after Leopold would devote hundreds of pages to the subject." [12]

Nash's estimate is conservative. The discussion of an environmental ethic and the problem of intrinsic value in nature has in fact become a veritable industry. It may be ironic, but it is certainly no accident, that much of the discussion around establishing a grounding for intrinsic value in nature and a non-anthropocentric ethics is to be found in books and journals outlining the catastrophic mass extinction of species and ecosystems being carried out by the day-to-day operations of the industrial megamachine. Athena's owl flies, it appears, only at dusk.

Thus, the legal debate around giving "rights" to wilderness and other species signals their disappearance. Similarly, the elaboration of highly articulated ethical systems has only accompanied a widening swath of violence and destruction and the armoring of the human personality—such systems are mere pieties as far as capital accumulation is concerned. One would think, reading the literature of deep ecology, animal liberation and environmental ethics, that the rights of human beings have been firmly established, and must now be widened to accommodate a deeper land ethic—this in the age of mass exterminations of people in gas chambers, carpet bombings of whole populations, chemical-biological warfare and the threat of nuclear incineration in increasingly volatile gambles to defend the markets and resources of rival empires.

This actually was a major element of my original critique of DE: not its poetic identification with the natural world, but its naivete about Power, a naivete it inherited from the liberal environmental and conservation movements from which it emerged. One can only shake one's head upon reading how encouraged Arne Naess was after writing numerous "experts" about his DE platform, including "top people in ministries of oil and energy," when "many answered positively in relation to most or all points." [13] According to Naess, we are to be encouraged that "there is a philosophy of the man/nature relationship widely accepted among established experts responsible for environmental decisions " which will bring about "substantial change of present politics" to protect the Earth from "shortsighted human interests." This simplistic contrast of nature and human interest, shortsighted or otherwise, leaves Naess blind to the actual organization of Power, and to the subsequent operationalism of what we have called in the FE, after E.P. Thompson's formulation of the nuclear arms race, an exterminist civilization.

This is in no way to say that there is nothing to be affirmed in an environmental ethic. It is only to point out the limitations of ecological thinking and the anthropocentrism/biocentrism contrast as a tool of radical critique or as an alternative, new paradigm for thinking. The scientific naturalism upon which it rests is extremely contradictory and problematic; it is a knife with no handle. The permanent revolution of the methodological categories and language of science is a reflection of the constant transformations in technological apparatus and the commodity system by which capital itself expands. Science's description of the world is a description of its world; as Goethe knew, "everything factual is already theory."

Regarding this statement by Goethe, Theodore Roszak quotes twentieth century physicist Werner Heisenberg's comment, "In natural science the object of investigation is not nature as such, but nature exposed to man's mode of enquiry." The violence that the empirical method implies cannot be discerned by Heisenberg's bland statement; one must look to its origins in the scientific revolution and the experimental method, as expressed by Francis Bacon, that "nature exhibits herself more clearly under the trials and vexations of art than when left to herself"—which was to say, when confined and tortured by mechanical devices. For Bacon it was necessary to "hound nature in her wanderings," without scruple "of entering and penetrating into these holes and corners, when the inquisition of truth is man's whole object."

As Carolyn Merchant, quoting from Bacon, explains, nature had to "be bound into 'service' and made a 'slave,' put 'in constraint' and 'molded' by the mechanical arts…The interrogation of witches as symbol for the interrogation of nature, the courtroom as model for its inquisition, and torture through mechanical devices as a tool for the subjugation of disorder were fundamental to the scientific method as power." Of course, the actual torture and murder of women as witches were contemporaneous with the rise of the scientific method, and both were in fact carried out by the same social class of men—indeed, by many of the very same men.

For these men, who not only "vexed nature" but slaughtered midwives and healers with their mechanical arts, "sexual politics helped to structure the nature of the empirical method that would produce a new form of knowledge and a new ideology of objectivity seemingly devoid of cultural and political assumptions," Merchant writes. Behind this new ideology of science lay the horrors of gynocide—a holocaust against hundreds of thousands, probably millions of women, from the 14th to the 18th century. The emerging mechanical and industrial technology developed by the rising scientific and economic elites to carry out their "vexations" of nature's body and the bodies of women

helped to rapidly extend and consolidate this ideology's power. As Mary Daly has written in her powerful description of the witch burnings, "The escalation of technology and of persecution goose-stepped together in the 'march of progress.'" [14] To return to Goethe's remark, the facts which generate this torturous theory were themselves derived from a theory of torturers.

The Problem of Scientific Naturalism

The emergence of a new recognition of kinship with nature also has its source in part in that scientific naturalism—in fact one of the traditions of humanism itself—which tore human beings from their traditional metaphysical milieu and redefined them as natural objects. [15] But this 'objective" decentering of humanity doesn't stop there; it tends to erode the essentially spiritual intuition of inherent value as soon as it starts to suggest it. Scientific naturalism provides no easy answers to the question raised by Leopold and plagues the contrast between what is anthropocentric and what is biocentric with the same epistemological problem that DE would like to forget: how to establish an ethical ground. Given the corrosiveness of scientific naturalism and the limitations of knowledge, on what ground could DE base its ethical (which is to say political) decisions?

This was at least in part what I was trying to say in my essay when I discussed *EF! Journal* editor Dave Foreman's remark that plant and animal domestication—even gardening—are "violence of the worst kind" because such activity "twists [species'] evolutionary potential." (In *Desert Solitaire*, a book that demonstrates poignantly, as the author might say, that there is a way of being right that is necessarily wrong, Foreman's mentor Edward Abbey even condemns potted plants for similar reasons.) By way of what he calls a "catastrophist" deep ecology (a euphemism for good old american survivalism), Foreman (like his epigone Mr. A.) argues that only a mass dieoff of human beings, and literal return to hunter-gatherer life by the small percentage that remains, will bring the world back into proper balance.

Disregarding for the moment that domestication, from the point of view of scientific naturalism, is as much an evolutionary potentiality as any other, I responded that such a scenario was not an option that even its adherents could seriously undertake. At any rate, such a mass die-off could prove to be even more catastrophic for the rest of nature, since no one rolls over and neatly expires in such numbers. As I have shown in my essay's discussion of the hunger question and a subsequent article on women's reproductive rights and the population question, such a Malthusian Final Solution only aggravates the problem of ecological collapse and social chaos—an argument being confirmed by what is currently happening in Africa. [16]

In my essay, I commented that Foreman's view reflected an "alienated dualism…that denies humans any place in nature, denies what we have evolved into; it's like decrying the mammals for eating dinosaur eggs" (since, presumably, the egg-stealers were at least contributing to undermining the biotic diversity of the late Cretaceous period when dinosaurs were threatened and going extinct). Such an argument posits deep ecologists as the neutral arbiters of nature's balance and imposes a contrived egalitarianism that demands that humans do nothing to modify the environment or other species. [17]

But from the point of view of the scientific naturalism on which ecology rests, there is no egalitarianism. As a well-known environmental philosopher, Holmes Rolston, writes, "Neither plants nor animals are moral agents." Not only that, "Bacteria and men do not recognize mutual obligations, nor do they have common interests." Organisms—be they viruses decimating seal populations in the North Sea, crown-of-thorns starfish scouring the Great Barrier Reef, the swallows that chase the bluebirds away from the house we erected for them, or mammals stealing dinosaurs eggs—do not recognize ethics, equality, or intrinsic worth. As Hegel put it, animals "do not stand stock still before things of sense as if these were things per se, with being in themselves: they despair of this reality altogether, and in complete assurance of the nothingness of things they fall-to without more ado and eat them up."

Exploring the problem of intrinsic value and scientific naturalism (or what he calls "holistic rationalism"), another environmental philosopher, J. Baird Callicott, argues that "if one defends one's intuition that biological impoverishment is objectively wrong by positing organic richness as objectively good, one might well be accused of temporal parochialism and a very subtle form of human arrogance."

He continues, "Considering our time as but an infinitesimal moment in the three and one-half billion year tenure of life on planet earth (let alone the possibility that earth may be but one of many planets to possess a biota), man's tendency to destroy other species might be viewed quite disinterestedly as a transitional stage in the earth's evolutionary odyssey. The Age of Reptiles came to a close in due course (for whatever reason) to be followed by the Age of Mammals. A holistic rationalist could not regret the massive die-off of the late Cretaceous because it made possible our yet richer mammal-populated world. The Age of Mammals may likewise end. But the 'laws' of organic evolution and of ecology (if any there be) will remain operative. Nonhuman life would go on even after nuclear holocaust. In time speciation would occur and species would radiate anew. Future 'intelligent' forms of life may even feel grateful, if not to us then to their God (or the Good), for making their world possible. The new Age (of Insects, perhaps) would eventually be just as diverse, orderly, harmonious, and stable and thus no less good than our current ecosystem with its present complement of species." Callicott's response to this troubling view is revealing: he has none. "With friends like the holistic rationalists," he concludes, "species preservation needs no enemies." [18] But at a minimum his observations suggest the tenuousness and inadequacy of ecological science as the sole basis for a social critique or ethical (that is, political) action, thus leaving open the question of those other sources from which such action might come. As Elliot Sober has argued (in an essay in part replying to Callicott), "to the degree that 'natural' means anything biologically, it means very little ethically. And conversely, to the degree that 'natural' is understood as a normative concept, it has very little to do with biology."

For example, not only is the definition of a species now in question, but the entire notion of a "natural state" for an organism or environment has been discarded by biologists, and the hypothesis that diversity causes stability "is now considered controversial (to say the least)." Sober observes that "environmentalists should not assume that they can rely on some previously articulated scientific conception of 'natural,'" since from the point of view of science, what is "natural" is ambiguous. Our intuition, he writes, tells us that there is a fundamental difference between a mountain and a highway system, "but once we realize that organisms construct their environments in nature, this contrast begins to cloud. Organisms do not passively reside in an environment whose properties are independently determined. Organisms transform their environments by physically interacting with them. An anthill is an artifact just as a highway is." [19]

By such an implacable logic, Sober infers the ultimate indifference to which scientific naturalism can lead. His essay also suggests the problems with an ostensibly omniscient biological egalitarianism that simultaneously sees humanity as "one with nature," "one more species among many," and yet also as a unique source of evil in the biosphere. Any species, after all—from humpback whales to the ecoli bacteria in human feces—is only "one among many," whatever that means. In the case mentioned, do we assign them equal value, meaning, grandeur? If so, why then do deep ecologists complain? As Callicott has suggested, nothing civilization does, not even nuclear war, will destroy life itself, only complex life; what remains would probably follow the tendency to diversify and evolve, as the biota did after other mass extinctions, such as the Permian, when over 90 percent of species disappeared—long before dinosaurs or mammals.

If we are entirely one with nature then we are no different from red tide or viruses or a destructive meteor from space, and nature is doing this strange dance with itself; or is chaos. Even the Earth is "one mere planet among many," a speck in the cosmos. Indeed, why not cosmocentrism, why stop with the biota, the Earth? [20] In the big picture, extinction is inevitable, since the Earth eventually will be destroyed as the sun expands to a supernova (again, according to the best available scientific theory). In 65 million years (long before that remote end), will we be much more than a layer in the sediment? It is impossible to tell, but I am as fascinated with and as repelled by scientific naturalism as anyone else. It does compel me to withhold final judgment on such matters and to begin, as Mr. A. seems to advise, where I am: a human being in a world layered with natural, historical, and social interrelationships, conflicts, affinities and obligations. I don't reject my humanity by identifying with the planet; I am responding to it.

Beyond Intrinsic Value

One is forced by this discussion to agree, finally, with Callicott, who writes that "there can be no value apart from an evaluator…The value that is attributed to the ecosystem, therefore, is humanly dependent." [21] And that value, obviously, must be carefully examined within its own social and historical context. Environmental philosophers have been unable to reach a conclusive view of the problem of intrinsic worth. Some have argued that human-centered values should not be discarded and can provide a powerful set of motivations for preserving wilderness and protecting the natural world. Even if one avoids the more instrumental character of some arguments of this type (that rain forests contain a wealth of future medicines or food crops, for example), the defense of wilderness as an expression of our own innate biophilia or love of and identification with life, is extremely strong, as when naturalist Edward O. Wilson argues, "We are in the fullest sense a biological species and will find little ultimate meaning apart from the remainder of life." Again, to follow Theodore Roszak's insightful observation, the personhood of the human being is interrelated with and contingent upon the personhood of the planet. [22]

Sober argues that the value of nature and wilderness is ultimately aesthetic, which is not to say frivolous, and he compares the preservation of a majestic cliff to that of the ancient temple which stands on it, seeing them both as important. (For those who may not care for this example, let us substitute that of; say, a magnificent grotto and the paleolithic painting left on its walls.) Indeed, the comparison of natural objects to aesthetic masterpieces is a common motif in all environmental literature, from John Muir's comment during the campaign to save Hetch Hetchy from developers that "everybody needs beauty as well as bread," to Edward Abbey's comparison of the damming of Glen Canyon to the destruction of the Taj Mahal or the cathedral at Chartres, with the distinction that the natural object is alive "and can never be recovered."

Another writer argues that "our duties toward species arise not out of the interests of the species, but are rooted in the general obligation to preserve things of value." And even David Ehrenfeld, who attempts in his provocative if flawed book, The Arrogance of Humanism, to explode all the "humanist" shibboleths and along with them this anthropocentric aesthetic criterion, falls into the same reasoning. Ehrenfeld criticizes the humanism in even the land ethic and in related aesthetic criteria as a form of "condescension" that is "not in harmony with the humility-inspiring discoveries of ecology." Instead, he argues for a "Noah principle," stating that natural objects and species "should be conserved because they exist" (a very problematic and ambiguous formulation—everything exists), and because this existence "is itself but the present expression of a continuing historical process of immense antiquity and majesty." Yet concern for antiquity and majesty represents an obviously aesthetic, even classical humanist motivation. [23]

Holmes Rolston despairs of finding a distinct intrinsic value, noting that "apart from any human presence, organisms value other organisms and earth resources instrumentally," but they "value these resources instrumentally because they value something intrinsically: their selves, their form of life…thus both instrumental and intrinsic values are objectively present in ecosystems. The system is a web where loci of intrinsic value are meshed in a network of instrumental value."

But because neither term is satisfactory "at the level of the holistic ecosystem," he continues, "…we need a third term: systemic value." In this way ethics will not be complete "until extended to the land." Interestingly, before I had read any of this literature of environmental ethics, I wrote in my original essay that "there is no isolated 'intrinsic worth' but an interrelated dependency that includes us all." I hoped in such a way to move beyond dualism towards an animist mode of kinship, at the level of the gift which stands in utter opposition to an economic civilization that reduces the world—including human beings—to resources, to dead things.

Callicott attempts to resolve the question by arguing that while there may be no intrinsic value in natural objects, they "may nonetheless be valued for themselves" as well as for their use to human beings. He calls for the discovery of "metaphysical foundations for the intrinsic value of other species," asking, "What are the ethical systems, and more generally, the world views in which claims of the intrinsic value of non-human species are embedded?" [24]

Such agonized philosophical questioning of humanity's relation to nature—while the very fabric of life appears to be coming apart—seems another bitter irony. But it, too, suggests that the emerging ecological ethic may signal more a mythic return, the coming around of a cycle, than a model of advancing progress as one might find in

environmental ethics, in notions of "paradigm change" culled from the concept of scientific revolution, or in the social ecology dialectic.

The original inhabitants of this land knew what Hans Peter Duerr reports in his remarkable book Dreamtime: Concerning the Boundary Between Wilderness and Civilization: "To get to the point of origin, to be able, for instance, to 'speak' with plants, a person needs what the Indians call 'reverence.' Humans must become unimportant before the other beings of nature: 'When I was still a child, my parents and the old people taught me to treat everything with reverence, even the rocks, the stones and the small crawling insects, for they are all manitus,'" Duerr quotes a Native American, and he adds: "To 'become a part' of the manitu of all things means to 'speak the common language of all things.'" [25]

A sense of reverence—is this not fundamental to a reawakening of our proper relationship to the planet and to ourselves? And is it not clear that this implies neither a mechanistic imitation of primal society nor the grafting of its insights onto an instrumental science or dualistic model based on competing interests? Where does this reverence come from and how can it be expressed?

Indeed, the current discourse in which DE participates constrains meaning in a language that is already instrumentalized. It not only mechanistically isolates and fragments so-called inherent from instrumental value, but bases itself on a model of necessity and need that reflects the alienated discourse of bourgeois materialism and the capitalist market themselves. When Arne Naess writes that the "vital needs" of human beings must be met, he tries to evade the problems such a formulation suggests by leaving this notion "deliberately vague." But he thus resolves nothing and leaves the entire notion itself unexamined. The dualism of human "need" struggling against natural law—isn't this distorted construct, assuming as it does a polarity between an undifferentiated nature and an equally undifferentiated, simplified "human" need, only an image of this society? Ironically, deep ecologists drink from the same polluted source as the marxists and liberal humanists they vilify: starting from the ideology of natural and historical necessity, they all assume the inevitability of scarcity and its consequent generation of needs. For liberal and marxist alike, increasing needs are a factor of progress; for the deep ecologist, they are the result of increasing numbers—the progress of factors. In these complementary ways, views that are ostensibly opposed diametrically actually share in the mystique produced by the bourgeois civilization that spawned Malthusian scientism, a mechanico-materialist marxism and technocratic liberalism: the ideology of instrumentalism.

But is it possible in nature, as in primal societies, that there is no instrumental value at all, no need, just as there is no economy, no production? Writing about the fundamental differences between objects in western and indigenous contexts, Jamake Highwater observes, "The objects of Indians are expressive and not decorative because they are alive, living in our experience of them. When the Indian potter collects clay, she asks the consent of the river-bed and sings its praises for having made something as beautiful as clay. When she fires her pottery, to this day, she still offers songs to the fire so it will not discolor or burst her wares. And, finally, when she paints her pottery, she imprints it with the images that give it life and power—because for an Indian, pottery is something significant, not just a utility but a 'being' for which there is as much of a natural order as there is for persons or foxes or trees. So reverent is the Indian conception of the 'power' within things, and especially the objects created by traditional craftspeople, that among many Indians, the pottery interred with the dead has a small perforation, a 'kill-hole,' made in the center in order to release the orenda—'the spiritual power'—before it is buried." [26]

Again the idea of reverence is raised, and we can see that it is not even a question of refusing to allow what we consider alive by scientific standards to be turned into "dead things," but rather two opposed visions: an ecstatic vision in which everything is alive, and that of capital, within which everything becomes lifeless, dead matter. Intrinsic value has its place on the altar in such a scheme, but instrumental value is the iron hand that rules the world, the iron hand of necessity.

As Jean Baudrillard writes in *The Mirror of Production*, his devastating attack not only on marxism but on all of productivist civilization, necessity is "a Law that takes effect only with the objectification of Nature. The Law takes its definitive form in capitalist political economy; moreover, it is only the philosophical expression of Scarcity." But what is scarcity, this centerpiece of Malthusian ideology? "Scarcity, which itself arises in the market economy, is not a given dimension of the economy. Rather, it is what produces and reproduces economic exchange." Scarcity, produced by the emergence of economic exchange, becomes the alibi, if you will, for justifying the forces that gen-

erated it, and ends in a pre-capitalist mystique of the "tragedy of the commons" and a "life-boat ethic," "the survival of the fittest," "us against them."

Yet neither nature nor primal societies are determined by need, which arises out of this phantasm of scarcity that both fuels and results from capital accumulation; none of this exists, Baudrillard argues, "at the level of reciprocity and symbolic exchange [as in primal society], where the break with nature that leads to…the entire becoming of history (the operational violence of man against nature)…has not occurred." Hence need and social interest are the products of such an economic order, not natural phenomena—and with them, the cleft between intrinsic and instrumental value, between human well-being and the integrity of nature. "The idea of 'natural Necessity,'" writes Baudrillard, "is only a moral idea dictated by political economy." [27]

Anthropologist Dorothy Lee puts it another way. She does not claim "that there are no needs; rather, that if there are needs, they are derivative not basic. If, for example, physical survival was held as the ultimate goal in some society, it would probably be found to give rise to those needs which have been stated to be basic to human survival; but I know of no culture where human physical survival has been shown, rather than unquestioningly assumed by social scientists, to be the ultimate goal." To follow the model of deep ecologists, for example, one would assume that "humans" are devouring nature by following a basic species' "need" to maximize food. This ideological image teaches us nothing about the natural history of human beings and even less about the kind of society that maximizes the production of crops even by mining and destroying the very soil on which they depend.

"To the Hopi," on the other hand, writes Lee, "corn is not nutrition; it is a totality, a way of life. Something of this sort is exemplified in the story which Talayesva tells of the Mexican trader who offered to sell salt to the Hopi group who were starting out on a highly ceremonial Salt Expedition. Within its context this offer to relieve the group of the hardships and dangers of the religious journey sounds ridiculous. The Hopi were not just getting salt to season their dishes. To them, the journey was part of the process of growing corn and of maintaining harmonious interrelations with nature and what we call the divine. It was the Hopi Way, containing Hopi value. Yet even an ethnographer, dealing with Hopi culture in terms of basic needs, views the Salt Expedition as the trader did and classifies it under Secondary Economic Activities." [28] The Hopi Way and the mode of life of many primal cultures indicate very clearly to us what are the foundations for the kind of reverence that will bring us back into contact with the planet, but only if we have eyes to see, and enough vision to break through the categories that have been imposed by capital and its thorough instrumentalization and commodification of the world.

"All My Relations"

The sciences have confirmed the animist intuition that we are physically and psychologically continuous with the rest of nature. Geology, astronomy, biology, evolutionary science and genetics all demonstrate that our very bodies are made up of the same elements that existed during the formative period of the Earth and have made their way down to us through time and all the evolutionary changes that have occurred during the last several billion years. The salt of the oceans whence we emerged flows in our veins, and the slow development of our backbones and brains have laid the foundations for our very consciousness. Our first dances and songs moved with the rhythms of the Earth. We are also biological kin to other organisms. As E.O. Wilson has noted, "About 99 percent of our genes are identical to the corresponding set in chimpanzees, so that the remaining 1 percent accounts for all the differences between us." [29]

Wilson's comment reflects once again the ambiguous character of the ecological and biological sciences, why none of this scientific reasoning embedded in the ecological paradigm sufficiently guarantees that we will develop ethical concern or proper relation to the biosphere any more than the knowledge that other human beings are our biological kin will prevent us from annihilating them in a war. Wilson reveals the dangerous reductionism of his sociobiology when he says that the one percent of genetic variation accounts for all our differences with chimpanzees. Such a mystification suppresses the complex relationship between natural and cultural evolution that points to the problematic uniqueness of our troublesome species.

Wilson is a strange mixture of visionary and Frankenstein, and thus representative of many preservationist scientists. To him, "Organisms are physicochemical mechanisms rather than the vessels of a mystic life force." Thus

protecting nature leads undeniably to the necessity for genetic engineering—guided, of course, by the "conservation ethic." One is reminded of geneticist Francis Crick's remark, "Once one has become adjusted to the idea that we are here because we have evolved from simple chemical compounds by a process of natural selection, it is remarkable how many of the problems of the modern world take on a completely new light." Theodore Roszak comments, "Indeed they do. It is the funereal gleam by which we travel the wasteland, the light of dying stars." [30]

This is the dark side of biological science's shift from earlier, more mechanistic models of nature to a "total field" picture of the natural world as a "cybernetic system," a shift that flows directly into a more developed, more totalitarian system of domination and intervention in nature. Just as Einstein's theory had multiple implications, not the least of which turned out to be the nuclear technology that now may already be extinguishing all complex forms of life, so modern ecological theory and its systemic paradigm may usher in a bioengineering age that will culminate in the final conquest of nature as we know it (soon to be followed, obviously, by our extinction). Much of this could flow directly out of an ecological impulse to save the planet from an otherwise inevitable degradation of its biodiversity through the adoption of genetic banks and bioengineering. I am reminded of Marcuse's parallel comment on nuclearism. "Does not the threat of an atomic catastrophe which could wipe out the human race also serve to protect the very forces which perpetuate this danger?" he asked. "The efforts to prevent such a catastrophe overshadow the search for potential causes in contemporary industrial society." [31]

Yet to point to the ambiguities in the ecological vision is not to deny its aspects capable of affirming kinship with and respect and reverence for the land—those elements in evolutionary science capable of confirming the world view of animist native peoples that now stands in such stark contrast to and in condemnation of this instrumental civilization. An ethical element can be derived, in part at least, from evolutionary science. Callicott proposes a "bioempathy" similar to Wilson's notion of biophilia (or perhaps a social aspect of bioempathy standing on the shoulders of biological kinship), rooted in our mammalian evolutionary development. If nature is an "objective, axiologically neutral domain," he asks, "How is it possible to account for the existence of something like morality or ethics among human beings and their prehuman ancestors in a manner consistent with evolutionary theory?"

Drawing on Darwin, he points out that the prolonged parental nurturing of offspring, and the strong emotional bond that accompanies it, would explain such a phenomenon, even suggesting why such groups in which this trait was more pronounced would have had increased chances of survivability. Of course the thread that led Kropotkin to write Mutual Aid is recognizable here—a work that despite all its illusions about progress and technology and its romantic whimsy (this latter is actually part of its appeal), drew a portrait of evolution stressing cooperation that is now being vindicated by evolutionary theory's deepening understanding of symbiosis and mutualism in nature.

It's possible that there may be a bit too much sociobiology in this description as well, but it does suggest persuasively that an environmental ethic can be rooted in an explicitly human social context and need not (and probably cannot) be based on a perspective of neutrality or one-dimensional identification with the otherness of nature. When we anthropomorphize by calling the Earth our Mother, we are reiterating our biological link to the planet and also to our real mothers (and by extension, to our families and communities), just as when Native Americans refer to other species as "all my relations" they are not denying kinship with their human relatives but integrating kinship on both levels.

Such forms of kinship and community are interlocked but not entirely identical. As Rolston notes, "Cultures are a radically different mode" from the ecosystem and thus demand different criteria for judgment and action. "Relations between individual and community have to be analyzed separately in the two communities," he writes. "To know what a bee is in a beehive is to know what a good (functional) bee is in bee society, but…nothing follows about how citizens function in nation-states or how they ought to."

Accordingly, "It may be proper to let Montana deer starve during a rough winter, following a bonanza summer when the population has edged over carrying capacity. It would be monstrous to be so callous about African peoples caught in a drought. Even if their problems are ecologically aggravated there are cultural dimensions and duties in any solution that are not considerations in deer management." [32] Ethical considerations aside, the differences in the sources of the two events cannot be forgotten. No one has demonstrated that famine in Africa is any more than the result of social conflicts and capitalist looting. Those sources must be attended to before we can begin to judge the related environmental factors.

Callicott seems to concur with Rolston, arguing that "our recognition of the biotic community and our immersion in it does not imply that we do not also remain members of the human community…or that we are relieved of the attendant and correlative moral responsibilities of that membership, among them to respect universal human rights and uphold the principle of individual human worth and dignity. The biosocial development of morality does not grow in extent like an expanding balloon, leaving no trace of its previous boundaries, so much as like the circumference of a tree," with its concentric rings. A land ethic is not inhumane, and it need not compel people to morally reprehensible acts towards other human beings to protect nature, he argues, and he points to primal peoples and other traditional societies as providing "rich and detailed models" for interaction with nature. [33]

Biocentrism cannot therefore replace a social critique or social solidarity. Our recognition of our kinship and community with nature goes hand in paw with our understanding of the global "planetariat" that we have become since the original rupture in primitive society and the origins of the state megamachines. To turn away from the long, rich traditions of communal revolt and from solidarity with other human communities in their ongoing struggle for freedom would be as violent an error as to deny the biosocial roots of our connections to the land. (This is why the anarchists and marxists who reject the land connection and defend industrialism while blaming only the fragmentary "economic" factors of capitalism for the crisis are as much an obstacle to liberation as the most reactionary misanthrope. They want a petrochemical industrialism that is "worker-owned-and-operated"; they want the chain saw that is presently shredding the basic planetary life supports to be managed or "appropriated" by a workers' state, or perhaps workers' councils, or even more evanescently, by "desire" itself.)

I think of a drawing frequently printed in the *EF! Journal* showing a modern monkeywrencher in a sock hat and bandanna standing among a group of armed Indians to reflect one such connection with our communal past. Let me ask our misanthropic friends: were the tribal peoples resisting euro-american civilization for anthropocentric or biocentric reasons? Are the ones resisting in Brazil, Malaysia and elsewhere today doing so for anthropocentric or biocentric reasons? The meaninglessness of this question in the face of the organic reality of primal societies should make my point clear. Their motives must be ours: when we resist Leviathan we are responding to the planet within us. Despite Bookchin's marxism, rationalism and oblique defense of technology and progress, and despite the negative role he has played in the recent controversies, one cannot deny the good sense of his comment in the concluding section of his response to his critics in Earth First! that "If we cannot 're-enchant' humanity, we will never 're-enchant' nature." [34]

Compare this to Foreman's desire "to get beyond good and evil," which "only exist in relationship to human activities," and the implication that he would like to pretend that he is not human. Referring to Leopold's dictum on a thing being right when it preserves biotic integrity and "wrong when it tends to do otherwise," he concludes, "I think human beings are the only factor that does otherwise." The silliness of this remark in biological terms has been demonstrated adequately above, but a view that indiscriminately denounces human beings and rejects any obligations to the human community has questionable ethical implications. It brings to mind Hitler's comment that "Nature is cruel, therefore we too can be cruel." [35]

Of course, to defend humanity is not necessarily to argue that everything and anything is permissible to human beings as far as nature goes, that we can exploit and destroy nature as long as "poor anarchists" do it and not rich capitalists. A reverence for life that defends biodiversity and ecological integrity is vital. But we defend the planet both for ourselves and for the other. Our revolt against this civilization goes far beyond an imperative to "invent moral reasoning of a new and more powerful kind," as Wilson puts it, for moral reasoning is inadequate, as inadequate as it has been in stopping people from exterminating whole human populations. Our biophilia must be linked to the unfettering of our own wildness and to the breakdown of the repressive apparatus and character armoring, the external and internal modes of domination. It means nurturing those subjective forces and communities capable of withstanding capital and recreating a visionary, free society beyond the demands of Power.

Another comparison comes to mind that will shed light on the deep problems of the catastrophist vision of deep ecology represented by Mr. A. In the interview cited above, Foreman declares that he has decided that "it's not my job to try to devise a sustainable society…my job is to be a warrior, to protect natural diversity where I can, and to articulate the philosophical basis for that warrior approach. I hope other people such as the back-to-the-landers come up with good techniques on how to live. That approach is needed too. But it is not what I can do." We only need mention in passing the compartmentalized character of this view that some should go on being warriors

while others work on "how to live" and creating a sustainable society. We should also note his hint that creating a new way of life somehow hinges on "good techniques" rather than a deep social transformation of human relations not only with the rest of nature but with one another.

What is more important is the lack of criticality towards this warrior philosophy, as if saving wilderness were a weekend (or a weekday) job that occurs only out in the woods, while we continue to live in essentially the same way as always the rest of the time. This attitude seems to underlie as well the sense among many DE adherents that struggles against megatechnic projects in the cities or against nuclearism (let alone against militarism, racism and oppression) are "shallow ecology" or "anthropocentric" issues, while preservation and wilderness defense are deep, biocentric issues. Again, one can see the same mechanistic dichotomy at work.

We should compare this to some observations by David Ehrenfeld, certainly an "anti-humanist" of impeccable credentials, who writes in a very thoughtful essay on the current mass extinction spasm that wilderness protection "is a weak reed" and "active management and intervention" even weaker—though he has no intention of giving up either of those desperate, rearguard measures. Studying preserves today, Ehrenfeld points out, one can find all the signs of environmental degradations. "You can fence out people," he notes, "but you cannot fence out their effects…alien introduced pests, acid rain, ozone, insecticide residues, drifting herbicide, heavy metals, atmospheric particulates—these effects and creations of our society can be anywhere and everywhere on Earth." The fact that pesticides are blowing off Texas cotton fields and Russian wheat fields and ending up in the waters of Isle Royale National Park in Lake Superior illustrates Ehrenfeld's point emphatically. In a line very relevant to our discussion, he concludes that "the ultimate success of all conservation will depend on a revision of the way we use the world in our everyday living when we are not thinking about conservation." [36]

So how do we re-enchant the human world (even if our own vision extends far beyond it), since that world is the key to the problem and its resolution? I have no confidence in catastrophism or warriorism; if anything they may impede a social struggle capable of creating the conditions for proper rehabitation of the planet. (Advocating or celebrating mass human die-offs through pestilence and famine is certainly not going to convince people to create a radical opposition to ecological destruction.)

I am not objecting to anyone's choice to work in one area of what are multiple layers of the crisis—it depends on where you are and what is possible, and the defense of wilderness is critical. To lose wilderness is to lose everything, to cut our connections with the past, with the universe. I am more concerned in this critique with the "warrior philosophy" that does not recognize the connections between social struggles, ecological struggles and the war going on in daily life to resist being dehumanized by the planetary work pyramid. Such a philosophy turns wilderness into an ideological icon but does not necessarily do what is best for wilderness.

Ah, Wilderness

The idea of wilderness and its utilization in political discourse is a complex and problematic question; the contention that "only wilderness" can resolve the problem of power and thus guarantee freedom has to be looked at critically. If human welfare can be used by elites as an "alibi" to accumulate power, certainly wilderness can as well, and in fact it has been so employed in the process of nation- and empire-building in the U.S. from the beginning (though in varying ways as the circumstances required).

(In any case the scenario of a repressive civilization originating out of the "alibi" of human welfare is not particularly convincing, given that most of the subjects of this mutated social organism had to have been left materially and spiritually impoverished by it. The emergence of hierarchy and domination, of alienation from self and other, has obscure origins that we will probably never understand with absolute certainty, but it must have been represented as the achievement of the people's place within a "natural order" and a submission to "nature" itself. Civilization was built because the gods (having become the reification of nature) willed it, not because of the ideology of some ancient welfare state. Thus "wilderness" as a representation of the nonhuman other or of nature's deepest order—may have been an earlier justification for the emerging state, rather than any notion of human well-being.)

Clearly the idea of wilderness had to long precede the mutation of civilization. This recognition of the nonhuman other in nature is contemporaneous with human selfhood, self-awareness, and had to exist in a dialectical

tension with the social world of culture. A certain precariousness in human life would account for an ambivalence in the human personality towards wilderness, both internal and natural. An Innuit shaman told the explorer Knud Rasmussen, "We fear the cold and the things we do not understand. But most of all we fear the doings of the heedless ones among ourselves." Ambivalence had to exist in attitudes toward nature (as well as toward the social) long before civilization. So civilization—supposedly in the form of agriculture and herding—did not create wilderness, causing humans to see themselves "as distinct from nature" for the first time, as Roderick Nash and others, including writers appearing in the pages of the FE, have argued. [37]

Paleolithic hunters appear to have considered themselves as both a part of and distinct from the rest of nature, or they wouldn't have symbolized the correspondence between culture and nature on cave walls. Hopi cultivators, on the other hand, who engage in small scale agriculture (horticulture may be a preferable term here), consider themselves as much a part of the natural world as the Innuit or the late Pleistocene hunters. The violence of separation that emerges with civilization, turning the culture of nature and the nature of culture into enemies, is not so easily explained. The integrated symbiosis between culture and this nonhuman other represents two sides of human personhood, which sees itself as distinct from and yet integrated into the web of nature, and which finds means of reestablishing this balance and affirming both aspects of this personhood within and beyond the social context.

H.P. Duerr's book *Dreamtime* is the most sophisticated and the most stunning treatise on this relationship that I have seen. This brilliant inquiry reveals how "the fence or hedge, separating the domain of the wilderness from that of culture was not an insurmountable boundary to the archaic mind." Surveying primal traditions, Earth Mother cults, shamanism, witchcraft and other related perspectives, he shows how people found ways to know themselves by crossing over to that other. "As late as the Middle Ages," he writes as an example, "the witch was still the hagazussa, a being that sat on the Hag, the fence which passed behind the gardens and separated the village from the wilderness. She was a being who participated in both worlds." Christian civilization and later rationalist scientism chased this witch off the fence and fortified it against the irrational, against wilderness, chasing her "from the boundary of culture into the wilderness, from dusk into night." This of course brought its attendant revenge, the nightmares brought by the Dream of Reason and its denial of the other.

But for primal and archaic peoples, this boundary was not unsurpassable. "Those who wanted to live consciously within the fence, had to leave the enclosure at least once in their lives. They had to roam the forests as wolves, as 'savages.' To put it in more modern terms, they had to experience the wilderness, their animal nature, within themselves." This was not in order to surrender altogether to this wilderness but rather with the idea of a return to a human world, to culture. Seeing can only take place "if you smuggle yourself in between the worlds." Trying to permanently give up culture for that other is to make the mistake of the man of Yaqui legend who wanted so badly to fly that he exchanged his clothing for the plumage of a willing buzzard. Duerr relates, "As it turned out, the buzzard had a lot of difficulty with those clothes, and the Indian hopped helplessly from one branch to the next in search of a dead animal to eat. After both had suffered for six days and nights, each took back his own garments." Through such stories primal peoples recognized the different levels of experience that were their own animal and cultural natures.

To try to obliterate this difference with a desire for total "oneness" is to generate a simulation of otherness or an ideological image of a "return to nature." It is to push the hedge further back into the wilderness—a kind of colonization that undermines the delicate balance, and ends either in an ideology of sociobiologism or hierarchical religion. Rather, one must go into this wilderness, the culture of nature, in order to understand the nature of culture, in order to return, reborn to human society. Such an experience reaffirms, rather than nullifies, one's obligations and connections to the human world.

Following this path, we are told, the Siberian Tungus shaman "runs out into the wilderness, or his 'soul' travels down the kin river…to the spirits of the ancestors. His tambourine acts as his companion, assuming the shape of an eider goose or a pike, and he uses the drumstick as a rudder. Finally he reaches the 'shaman tree of his clan,'" where the animal mother swallows his soul and gives birth to it in animal shape. He has now come to know his animal side, his wildness. "For he cannot know his human side until he also becomes aware of what it is not." [38] This internal planethood is what the Mexican and Guatemalan Indians, all of them cultivators, by the way, call the nahual.

The Tungus shaman and Guatemalan Indians lived in undeveloped areas, in close proximity to nature, carrying wilderness within them. To those who arrived in the Americas from the east in their great ships, or who went in caravans into the Siberian "wastes" from the west, these native peoples were themselves a component of a wilderness now transformed into a negative image of the travelers' own repression. But most certainly these lands inhabited by wild peoples were anything but "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man [sic], where man himself is a visitor who does not remain," in the words of the preservationist-inspired U.S. Wilderness Act of 1964. [39] In this physico-geographical reduction, wilderness becomes an uninhabited land and nothing more, while civilization remains as it is, unquestioned. Yet this wilderness was always inhabited by people, who took their understanding of otherness to an entirely different level.

As Chief Luther Standing Bear observed, "We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills, and winding streams with tangled growth, as 'wild.' Only to the white man was nature a 'wilderness' and only to him was the land 'infested' with 'wild' animals and 'savage' people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful, and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery. Not until the hairy man from the east came and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the families we loved was it 'wild' for us. When the very animals of the forest began fleeing from his approach, then it was that for us the Wild West' began." [40]

It wasn't the existence of the physical wilderness in and of itself that guaranteed the kind of subjectivity and social relations allowing native peoples to live in relative harmony with the Earth, or the state would not have emerged in the first place anywhere. And while there may be some relationship in some cases between agriculture and herding and the emergence of repressive civilization, these elements alone are not enough to explain that emergence. Whatever the circumstances of origins, one can see a generalized expansion of the complex of civilization, the repression of nature externally and internally, with all the attendant destructive results.

When the european christian wanderers arrived on the shores of this Turtle Island, they were running away from a repressive civilization while carrying its bacillus with them. They went searching for lost paradise, but when they found it, they could see nothing but a threatening "howling desert," waiting to be reduced to ashes, to money. The invaders, whose own planethood had been violently stamped out of them, do not appear to have benefited much from the wilderness. They constructed a rapacious empire and slave-based civilization and despoiled the land faster than any previous civilization in history.

Wilderness and Colonial-Settler Ideology

This search for and terror of Eden underlies the deep ambivalence in american history and character, and illustrates why the discourse of wilderness in this country has always been problematic. In the beginning, of course, the motive was to beat back the natural world, that "hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men," in the words of the Puritan William Bradford (no relation), "for which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects…and the whole country, full of weeds and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue."

Mixed in strangely with this view was the constant theme of the abundant beauty and grandeur of the new world. The invaders described America as a "virgin land," but as Francis Jennings has shown so admirably in The Invasion of America, the land was more widowed by the arrival of the europeans than it was "virgin." Both images of the land as "teeming with savages" or empty were ideological justifications for conquest; in either case the reality of the people there was completely discounted. Richard Drinnon illustrates these alternating visions in his remarkable book *Facing West*, as when the explorer Thomas McKenney wrote during an expedition that they would soon be "beyond the limits of civilization…where we shall be alone among the mountains, and forests, and lakes." Drinnon comments, "An oneiric Crusoe, McKenney imagined himself on the brink of a plunge into a world without people." Another explorer declared the Great Plains unfit for human habitation "and then had discussed the Indian tribes living in this 'Great American Desert.'"

The schizophrenia in the character of U.S. culture can be explained at least in part by this manipulation of the wilderness theme and the deep ambivalence toward the land. In colonial-settler ideology, the land went from being a hostile presence to be cleared to a source of strength of character in the attempt by euroamericans to carve

out an authentic cultural independence from Europe. It became a common theme to contrast an exhausted, over-civilized Europe with a vibrant, wild America; Charles Fenne Hoffman's comment on a trip west in 1833 that he revered a "hoary oak" more than a "mouldering column" was typical. What were all the Roman temples and feudal castles, with their associations of despotism and superstition, he mused, "to the deep forests which the eye of God has alone perfected, and where Nature, in her unviolated sanctuary, has for ages laid her fruits and flowers on His altar!" "Employing wilderness," Roderick Nash comments on this passage, "Hoffman invested America with a history." This, of course, is a history written by the conquerors. In light of our present discussion, one could say that employing wilderness, DE tends to deny and conceal history from the point of view of the conquered. [41]

With the closing of the frontier, the early stirrings of U.S. imperial adventure beyond its own shores, and the final conquest and military subjugation of the native peoples, the attitude of colonial-settler culture toward the land began to change significantly. Wilderness went from being an adversary to becoming the foundation for a new nationalist mystique. This demanded first of all the suppression of the native american in discourse now that the people themselves were crushed' by force of arms; indeed, their invisibility has tended to remain a factor in the preservationist movement and its literature. [42] When President Grant signed the act designating over two million acres of Wyoming to be Yellowstone National Park, his army was waging a genocidal war against the Apaches in the southwest, the Modocs in California, and various tribes on the Plains. In 1890, the year that John Muir's articles calling for a national park at Yosemite appeared in national magazines, the U.S. Cavalry massacred the Ghost Dancers at Wounded Knee.

Despite the undeniably visionary character of Muir's writings on wilderness, this new attitude toward the land quickly became a centerpiece of U.S. nationalism. Theodore Roosevelt, who spent every available moment of his free time slaughtering wild animals (during a year-long visit to Africa, for example, he killed and shipped back to the U.S. over 3,000 "specimens" of wildlife), was to write that the frontier experience was central to the formation of the national character, which in turn was in danger of being "over-civilized" and thus of losing its original strength. Civilization could not survive in his estimation without wilderness values. "As our civilization grows older and more complex," he explained, "we need greater and not less development of the fundamental frontier values." [43]

This became a major theme of preservation in the U.S., that strength of character and freedom depended on preserving wilderness. Only government control could guarantee such preservation in Muir's view, and in this tradition conservationists and preservationists alike have rarely if ever challenged fundamentally the existence of this civilization but rather have tried to carve out a place for wilderness within it. Thus the idea of wilderness as a protective buttress for civilization is an integral part of the preservationist tradition.

This point of view is reflected in environmental writer Mark Sagoff's claim that the duty to preserve nature is an obligation "to our cultural tradition…to our national values, to our history…" And Wallace Stegner, describing the wilderness as "a part of the geography of hope," would declare it "the thing that helped to make an American different from, and, until we forget it in the roar of our industrial cities, more fortunate than other men." Commenting on these statements from two prominent and representative environmental writers, Nash emphasizes the relationship of wilderness to freedom, noting that the Puritans and Mormons were examples of a breaking away that "found freedom in wilderness." [44] Compare this colonial-settler conception of carving out freedom from the physical landscape—in the cases cited, civilization and its attendant plagues were simply transferred to a new setting and the visions of the native american Luther Standing Bear or of the Siberian Tungus shaman. More, much more, ends up concealed by such a perspective than is discovered about either wilderness or the empire that is presently completing wilderness' destruction on every level.

"A simple scarcity theory of value," notes Nash in a revealing passage, "coupled with the shrinking size of the American wilderness relative to American civilization, underlies modern wilderness philosophy." [45] One can perceive the same ambiguous tradition in Dave Foreman's refusal to support the essentially anti-imperial, antiwar Sanctuary movement today on the grounds that the refugees will put pressure on "the resources that we [sic] have here in the USA," or Edward Abbey's call to use the U.S. Army to seal off borders. One can also see that despite the positive qualities of an affirmation of wilderness and a reverence for the natural world, no understanding of the social context or of the real relations of power in society necessarily flows from such attitudes.

This is why, without a critique of imperial history and capital, the preservationist movement either accepts the coexistence of industrial capitalism and wilderness, or slides into survivalism and "catastrophist" misanthropy.

This is in spite of a significant undercurrent of anti-capitalist refusal in Transcendentalism and preservationism, for example, Thoreau's condemnation of "the commercial spirit" as an infecting virus, or Muir's attack on "selfish seekers of immediate Mammon," or Lyman Abbot's comment, "The national habit is to waste the beauty of Nature and save the dollars of business." One can also point to Aldo Leopold's call for "revolt against the tedium of the merely economic attitude toward land," Earth First!'s anti-business rhetoric, and Arne Naess' remark that private land ownership would disappear in a deep ecological society.

Yet such rhetoric does not go far enough in exposing the institutional realities of the power complex or the interconnections between the assault against wilderness and the daily operations of capital. So preservationists argued during their campaign in 1966 to prevent the Grand Canyon from being dammed, that coal-fired power plants and nuclear power plants could supply power "at less cost" than a hydropower project in the Grand Canyon. In a similar vein, many wilderness defenders appear to have no social critique of mass technics, as when Gary Snyder expresses his ideal as "computer technicians who run the plant part of the year and walk along with the elk in their migrations during the rest," or when Wallace Stegner argues that wilderness preservation can prevent "a headlong drive into our technological termite life," failing to mention how the "termite" civilization itself must be dismantled. Others, like Paul Shepard, appear to advocate a termite-life in dense metropoles with a kind of periodic vision quest to the wilderness as a way to preserve both wilderness and human sanity, as if this scheme would ultimately do anything to enhance the kind of subjectivity and community that would learn to live with and revere nature and nature within. It is a physico-geographical and technological solution to what is ultimately a human problem. [46] And DE, allegedly the "radical" wing of preservationism, mixes apocalypse with Capra's computers, Abbey's Chinese Wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, and Foreman's "concerned" life-boat triage of the hungry to conserve resources.

Of course, the survivalism of the DE catastrophists is only a fringe of DE, itself only a fringe of the preservationist movement. But if DE activists are more radical in their attempts to move beyond the conciliatory reformism of the mainstream, liberal environmental movement, their catastrophist spokesmen slide into escapism in their view that no human intervention, no human modification of the land, and apparently no cultivation or technics are acceptable. Such a vision not only leads to misanthropy, but ultimately to paralysis. Nature (and human beings) will have a better chance with a vision that defends wilderness within a context of human values, with social transformation as its end. Even if we believe that wilderness protection is the foremost value, our fight would still be in what is left of our habitat where we are, in the cities and the countryside, and in the terrain of the social. If we all follow Muir's advice to find our instruction in the wilderness, none of it will survive.

Furthermore, our responsibility to the land goes beyond the defense of wilderness to all the land. "In country," said Aldo Leopold, "as in people, a plain exterior often conceals hidden riches, to perceive which requires much living in and with." For most people, such country is what will move them to deeper identification with the planet. This idea should not be disparaged by an ideologized concept of wilderness. Most of us now live in cities, but there is every possibility that we can dismantle them and allow nature to renew herself in our midst and within us. The proverbial burst of wildflowers in an abandoned lot, the rows of ailanthus (the "Trees of Heaven" we call ghetto palms) breaking through the concrete and deserted buildings, are signs of hope and transformation. We cannot save ourselves unless we preserve the wild, wide world; we cannot save the world unless we save ourselves. The question is a serious one: are we interested only in making the dramatic gestures of beautiful losers, or do we want to succeed in transforming the world? If the latter is to be possible, the defense of wilderness must be linked to social revolution, and not to an elitist and (defeatist) lifeboat ethics.

Saving Ourselves

To save ourselves: to restore the land, to restore ourselves to the land. None of us is absolutely certain how to bring this vision about. And so a sense of humility, in the face of the urgent constellation of challenges that lie before us, is called for. An ethic of respect for the land is emerging as the shadows lengthen over civilization. As Theodore Roszak writes in Person/Planet, "We are finally coming to recognize that the natural environment is the exploited proletariat, the downtrodden nigger of everybody's industrial system." But we are the land and must renew our connection to it. "For the Earth is not merely a factor of production; she is a living thing that makes an

ethical claim upon our loyalty. Our identity is organically woven into her history; she has generated us out of herself, nurtured, shaped, and sustained us…And she will be heard." [47] Every scar on the Earth's body, every broken thread in its tapestry, diminishes us, undermines our own evolutionary destiny. To save ourselves we must save the Earth. To save the Earth, we must find a way to create a humane, egalitarian and ecologically sustainable society. If we cannot, we will continue around this vortex created by urban-industrial capitalism down to extinction and poison this planet beyond recognition. It may even be already too late, but there is still life in us, so we keep on.

The DE catastrophist argues that feeding the starving and saving the wilderness are mutually impossible. Claiming the moral high ground by proposing to represent all the species that will allegedly be destroyed by the continued existence of our present population, he suggests that any intervention into nature, any agriculture, is the product of a "humanist" resourcism that automatically turns a living world into an assortment of inanimate, disconnected materials or resources. Secondly, he repeats the Neo-Malthusian view that "any way you look at it," present population numbers necessitate the continuance and expansion of industrialism and industrialized agriculture. Human well-being and wilderness must inevitably collide: either humanity completely levels what is left of wilderness, or it must rapidly reduce its numbers by ninety percent or more. Any other vision is "humanism," an alibi for repressive civilization.

In response to the first objection, it should be noted that deep ecologists eschew resourcism ritualistically, perhaps for consumption by the gullible. But even biocentrism does not escape the resource idea, as when George Sessions characterizes DE as "resources for all species." Naess' view that the "vital needs" of people must be met shares in this essentially alternative resourcist formulation (even if for many of his followers, the "vital needs" of some, as in Animal Farm, are more important than the "vital needs" of others). Many deep ecologists have no qualms about manipulating resourcism as a political tactic, either, for example when Devall and Sessions note that "it is sometimes tactically wise to use themes of national or energy security to win political campaigns." [48]

Along the same lines, DE self-righteously derides each and every notion of stewardship of nature, regardless of its source or intent. All such ideas—from the most technocratic and instrumental to the recognition of a tragic responsibility based on inordinate human power over the rest of creation—are lumped together as "human chauvinism," with "non-interference" posited as the deep ecological alternative.

Yet Naess writes, "The slogan of 'non-interference' does not imply that humans should not modify some ecosystems as do other species. Humans have modified the earth and will probably continue to do so. At issue is the nature and extent of such interference." Elsewhere he writes of the "basic intuition in deep ecology that we have no right to destroy other living beings without sufficient reason" (emphasis mine). And in another essay he explains that the equality of all species is one of "principle," but that "any realistic praxis necessitates some killing, exploitation, and suppression." There is not much one can do with a principle that collapses before any "realistic praxis," but how to decide where to draw the line ethically on what is appropriate killing, appropriate exploitation, appropriate suppression?

Sessions elaborates that "Naess explains his intuition of ecological equality by saying 'the right to live is one and the same for all organisms, but vital interests of our nearest have priority of defense." [49] This loophole allows for all kinds of rationalizations—presumably even those of the catastrophist deep ecologists who argue for the preservation of North America (and its people) from the onslaught of foreigners Abbey has described as "culturally-morally-genetically impoverished." [50] The same loophole allows deep ecologists to ostensibly reject stewardship while actually only proposing an alternative brand—lobbying politicians, "righteous management" practices (Devall and Sessions), restocking native species, and elaborate wilderness proposals. (One such proposal for a California wilderness published in the *EF! Journal* allowed for the continued existence of a U.S. military missile range along the border of the wilderness! What happened to "no compromise in the defense of Mother Earth" in that case?) "Noninterference" is obviously a piety: the dilemma of stewardship of some kind may be an unfortunate fact of life that we have to confront and define at least for the time being, reflecting as it does the unavoidable power that human society has to affect nature for better or worse. Doing or non-doing, protecting, leaving be or intervening, putting up fences or not, are all decisions that bring social and ecological consequences.

The second objection is even more groundless. Are people starving and is the land being contaminated because human population has "overshot" carrying capacity, as DE, both "official" and unofficial, has argued? This was precisely the ideology that my first essay critiqued thoroughly, and the very argument that deep ecologists have

so miserably failed to answer. It has simply been reaffirmed as a matter of faith that "five billion large mammals of the species homo sapiens" cannot exist without industrialism and the subsequent poisoning of the planet and demise of biodiversity. There has been no substantive response (and in fact there has been almost no response whatsoever) to my discussion of the question of world hunger or of the Malthusian "overshoot" argument—itself the absolute epitome of a resourcist ideology that reduces complex social and historical conflicts to a question of numbers-crunching and units of energy.

In his book *Where the Wasteland Ends* (a book the deep ecologists recommend without, apparently, having read it very carefully), the anti-industrial anarchist Theodore Roszak addresses this very question of population and this modern civilization's addiction to urban-industrialism. "I know there are those who fear that any effort to scale down urban-industrialism will leave us with a world of starving millions," he writes. "The population explosion has become for many the iron imperative for all-out industrial expansion." Roszak's words are aimed at those who defend mass technology and technocratic control, but it is interesting to note that the catastrophist argument is but the flip side of the technocratic justification. Like the crassest bureaucratic planner, the DE catastrophist accepts at face value industrialism's commercial for itself, that only it can keep the people of the world alive, that we cannot exist without the factory system, just as others have argued that we cannot exist without compulsion, the state and the police. Otherwise, the argument goes, ninety percent of the world's population would (or in the catastrophist variant, should) die.

But it is not the expansion of industrialism that feeds the hungry, Roszak observes. "The urban-industrial dominance is the disease, not the medicine." Industrialism guarantees that the Earth will be starved and poisoned before its pseudo-promise is achieved. Roszak does not dismiss the serious concern of population growth, and perhaps it is worth repeating that I never did either. In words very similar to those I wrote before I had seen his book, Roszak continues, "There is of course an absolute limit to how many people the earth can support. And if we reach it, not even super-industrialism will prevent disaster." But it is industrialism that must be opposed; "the simple, fearful truth is: our overdevelopment has far more to do with the world's miseries, past, present, and future, than the supposed overpopulation of the poor…Any discussion of world poverty that does not come round to demanding a radical change in our habits of consumption and waste, our tastes, our profligate standard of living, our values generally, is a hypocrisy. There are no technical answers to ethical questions."

Where DE has criticized industrial forms of life, I have no quarrel with it. I share this view. But DE's lack of critique of capitalism and its Malthusian mystifications undermine its critique of industrialism. "Those who anguish over a starving mankind on the easy assumption that there just is not enough land and resources to feed the hungry might do well to pay a special kind of visit to their local supermarket," writes Roszak. There they would see the vast array of luxury foods stolen from the poor nations of the world, the industrial junk foods and the wasteful packaging. "Then on the way home, ponder the land areas we have used up for streets, freeways, and parking spaces—all of it capable of producing food, but now sacrificed to the needs of traffic. Consider how much more of it is covered over by stores, factories, warehouses, shopping centers and dumping grounds which exist only to process, store and merchandise consumer goods that are of less true social value than the land they take out of cultivation. Consider too the amount of arable soil we give up to the wasteful urban pattern of one-family private yards, patios, and swimming pools…" Roszak ponders "how much of this could be reclaimed" along with good agricultural land that is presently subsidized to not produce, and how much land has been given over to militarism, the space program, and a host of other industrial activities that don't keep starving millions alive but rather undermine sustenance in order to keep a completely parasitic machine in operation?" [51]

Neither the more liberal nor the catastrophist wing of DE provides much at all in the way of a social critique of this exterminist machine, which is why they tend to take for granted the pretense that it serves some homogeneous human "need," capital's biggest Big Lie. The "humanism" that DE decries is only a window dressing on this civilization's bloody history of plunder, massacre and devastation. No development schemes, no poisoning of waters, no squandering of the soil, no leveling of forests and no mass exodus of human populations occurs as a response to human "need" but rather to continue the accumulation of capital. As the adage goes, money talks, bullshit walks. To confuse the operations and propaganda of the megamachine with those liberatory, ecological societies we are capable of becoming is not only to mystify the sources of the crisis we are experiencing but to divert us from discovering the actual means by which we might create such societies. It reduces people at best to carrying out heroic

but isolated rearguard actions and at worst to a kind of despair that cheers on the latest epidemic while stoically awaiting extinction. (See "Cheerleaders for the Plague" in this issue, FE #331, Spring, 1989.)

Such a perspective is as much an evasion of our ecological responsibilities as it is of our social responsibilities, since protecting the tree of evolution includes protecting the pattern of human cultures that has emerged from human consciousness, itself a miraculous and profound development stemming from that tree. The basis for our responsibilities to the rest of nature is itself embedded in our social responsibilities. Denying them is to deny one's humanity. That, however, is not a viable basis for action, but a dangerous pose. How can we turn this society around? Little or nothing that we value in ourselves or in the natural world will sustain the precipitous collapse that looms before us all, a collapse which the DE catastrophist like those feckless individuals who wander out onto the barren seabed left empty by the receding waters just before a tidal wave—has come to advocate.

A "Strategic Knowledge"

Mr. Ann argues that DE seeks a kind of "strategic knowledge" that is "based on our existence here and now in this society" as a response to the ecological crisis. His is "an ethic of resistance, a 'negative ethics' which flows out of the threat of the environment crisis." But it is worth asking from where he derives his picture of the "here and now" of this society, his terms, his judgment as he wrote in the *EF! Journal*, that "What matters is not ethical rectitude, but wilderness." In the same article he dismisses those who criticize his view that AIDS is a blessing as "academics" who only defend wilderness "because they feel this commitment increases their ethical stature." His reasoning is different: "Radical, biocentric environmentalism goes beyond ethics to an identification with non-human entities which motivates wilderness protection even when this means going against traditional ethical standards..." [52] In other words, everything is permissible to the biocentric warriors—even lining up with the oppressors against the oppressed, with the polluters against the polluted, if the protection of even one preserve can be negotiated. Here can be seen the implications of a "strategic knowledge," and the fact that DE, despite its claims to the contrary, says nothing about what kind of society would be appropriate for living on this Earth. Such moral indifference spells a dead-end for environmentalism.

"Today, as in the past," writes Langdon Winner in his recent book The Whale and the Reactor, "ideas about things natural must be examined and criticized not only for ways they help us understand the material world, but for the quality of their social and political counsel. Nature will justify anything. Its text contains opportunities for myriad interpretations. The patterns noticed in natural phenomena and the meanings given them are all matters of choice. We must learn to read contemporary interpretations of the environment and ecology as we read Hobbes, Locke, or Rousseau on 'the state of nature,' to see exactly what notion of society is being chosen. When that is done, natural and social forms can be evaluated separately, a practice that an awareness of many past mistakes strongly recommends. It is comforting to assume that nature has somehow been enlisted on our side. But we are not entitled to that assumption." [53]

The collapse of the global ecosystem as we know it is not a far-fetched prospect. The Earth's vital signs are showing increased, profound stress, and we have no idea at what point what thresholds will be crossed. We will only inherit the consequences. The catastrophists may well have their catastrophe, which is to say their triumph, but it will be pyrrhic indeed. The possibility that human societies can be transformed in time also seems remote, not because we are too many, but because of the social chaos, the entropy that goes in capital's wake. The fact that "five billion mammals of the species homo sapiens" is a matter of serious concern, but five billion linked to the work machine and a large number of them unable to see beyond it to an ecological vision and to genuine health and freedom is far more significant and ominous. It is not so much population numbers but rather the social entropy created by capitalism that is the greatest threat to our survival.

Hence one can understand the misanthropy evinced by EF!ers; I have often shared in that same sense of frustration, rage, despair and disgust. "Man, that exterminator," writes E.M. Cioran, "has designs on everything that lives, everything that moves: soon we shall be talking about the last louse." But at least Cioran's is not a selective misanthropy that celebrates doom on the one hand and makes recommendations to border guards in the next breath. Elsewhere he writes in a mode deeper and more despairing than the smug misanthropy of the catastrophist,

"Serenity being conceivable only with the eclipse of our race, let us meanwhile leave off martyring each other for trifles…" [54] Cioran's advice merits consideration. Misanthropy at its most searing depths proves the misanthropy of deep ecologists to be little more than a vestige of the humanism (as they define it) that they claim to despise. By renouncing freedom and dignity in a program of "salvation" they would reduce us all to the position of survivalists murdering our rivals around the doorways to our bunkers.

On the other hand, there is a possibility that we can bring about a revolutionary social-ecological transformation, that our grandchildren or great-great-grandchildren may inherit an Earth which is slowly mending itself, renewing itself. We have a chance, but we must find a way to articulate a dramatic appeal to the people who presently languish under the spiked wheels of the megamachine, who make it go and yet have no stake in it, who have nothing to lose and a world to gain: the oppressed, landless, contaminated, irradiated, and alienated planetariat, the people who will recover the planet and rediscover their own planethood. And if we cannot, the catastrophe will already have occurred, and nature will surely do the rest.

George Bradford
January 1989

Endnotes

1. Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Peregrine Smith Books, 1985), page 65; George Sessions, "Deep Ecology and the New Age," *EF! Journal*, Mabon edition 1987; Bill Devall, personal correspondence to FE, 12/7/87, unpublished.

2. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (Ballantine Books, 1966), pages 238, 117.

3. "Interview with Arne Naess" (George Sessions), in Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, pages 74–77; Alan R. Drengson, "Developing Concepts of Environmental Relationships," in *Philosophical Inquiry*, Vol. VIII, No. 1–2 (Winter-Spring 1986), page 54; Kirkpatrick Sale, "Deep Ecology and Its Critics" *The Nation*, May 14, 1988.

4. See Naess and Sessions, "Basic Principles of Deep Ecology," in Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, page 73; Naess, "Notes on the Politics of the Deep Ecology Movement," 1985, quoted by Richard Sylvan, "A Critique of Deep Ecology," *Discussion Papers in Environmental Philosophy*, Philosophy Department, Australian National University.

5. Fritjof Capra, "Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm," *Earth Island Journal*, Fall 1987.

6. Of course this does not keep even the misanthropists from arguing, as does Mr. A in his letter, that protection of the natural world actually serves genuine human values. A core element of DE is its claim to be a philosophy of ethical and spiritual "self-realization" for human beings (an anthropocentric goal if there ever was one). In fact DE originator Arne Naess has written that "with a more lofty image of maturity of humans, the appeal to serve deep, specifically human interests is in full harmony with the norms of deep ecology" (from "Eco-philosophy VI", quoted by Sylvan). DE's followers may have done it more harm than its critics, but Naess and others did little to distance their politics from the statements of Foreman and others.

7. Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, page 145. This is in line with Leopold's comment in "The Land Ethic" that "the biotic mechanism is so complex that its workings may never be fully understood" (page 241). In Space, Time and Gravitation, Arthur Eddington also raises the epistemological problem: "It is one thing for the human mind to extract from the phenomena of nature the laws which it has itself put into them; it may be a far harder thing to extract laws over which it has no control. It is even possible that laws which have not their origin in the mind may be irrational, and we can never succeed in formulating them."

8. This is not to say that the landscape "needed" human intervention to maintain some kind of equilibrium. Nature, being what it is, becomes what it will become. In a much larger sense, there is no equilibrium, but only relative periods of equilibrium punctuated by change.

9. William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (Hill and Wang, 1983) pages 12–15. In an article which just recently came to my attention and which has not been published as of this writing, Jim Cheney discusses precisely the error of trying to find "the entire poem" of nature. Comparing DE holism with the late classical stoic veneration of the cosmos, Cheney shows how both claim loyalties to an abstract totality by ultimately suppressing solidarity and community with particulars. But such positions mystify the important

differences in human society and maintain these philosophical positions within the alienated realm from which they seek release. For the ancient stoics, only the "grammar of the cosmos" was real; by embedding themselves in this cosmic abstraction they escaped direct relations with the society around them, "the world of difference." One can see a parallel attitude in the common DE refrain that wilderness is the only "real world." Such ontological absolutism, in Cheney's words, "has left the realm of discourse altogether. The kind of understanding that is claimed (union of the mind with the whole of Nature or God) is quite ahistorical and quite Stoic in temperament. The understanding claimed is positioned with respect to neither the personal nor the social nor the historical contingencies within which that understanding arises." DE tends to surpass even ecological science, thus "bootstrapping" itself "into eternity."

Interestingly, for Cheney, this reveals a lack of radicalism in DE, and is ultimately, in his view, a "position of retreat." The stoics yearned for a home "in the breakup of the polis" while refusing to give up the privileges of that polis. "Read 'modernism' for the polis," he writes, and the problem of DE can be seen. Actually, the breakup of the polis can also be paralleled to the decline of the U.S. global power, and along with it the relative social peace and the facade of environmental protection that it afforded the imperial metropole. DE is in this sense a post-imperial current, which is why it exhibits both radical revolutionary and reactionary manifestations. In contrast to DE holism, Cheney argues, what is needed "is an environmental version of a 'politics of difference,'" which "would begin with an acknowledgment of otherness, of difference" rather than submerging it in a totalizing vision that puts the entire Earth first before any of the particularities are sorted out. Thus DE falls short of its intent to achieve authentic connectedness.

I do not do justice to Cheney's insights. When his article, "The Neo-Stoicism of Radical Environmentalism," is published, we will notify FE readers as to how they can obtain it.

10. Leopold, "The Land Ethic," in *A Sand County Almanac,* page 262.

11. Peter A. Fritzell, "The Conflicts of Ecological Conscience," in *Companion to A Sand County Almanac,* J. Baird Callicott, editor (University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pages 141–151. Arne Naess answers Leopold's question, "The beauty of a tree is as much in the tree as it is inside us." ("The Basics of Deep Ecology," in *Resurgence* No. 126, January-February 1988.) Sorry, but trees, and all of nature, have no need of beauty. They are what they are. They are beautiful to us because we are, and are not, what we are.

For having made an observation along the lines of Fritzell, Mr. Ann accuses me of making "threadbare" and tautological arguments "after Skolimowski, et al." I had never even heard of Henryk Skolimowski at the time, but upon reading that line, I immediately liked him. Eventually I ran across his name in late 1988 and sent him my essay. Skolimowski, the author of *Eco-Philosophy: Designing New Tactics for Living* (1981) and several other essays and monographs on environmental philosophy, quickly wrote back, sending me his book and other writings and a friendly letter, calling my critique of DE essentially "correct" and "on the right track." I have not had time to review the materials he sent except for an article he particularly recommended, "The Dogma of Anti-Anthropocentrism and Eco-philosophy" (*Environmental Ethics,* Vol. 6, 1984, pages 283–288). The essay is a commentary on a review of his book by George Sessions; interestingly, Skolimowski objects to what he considers a selective and self-serving distortion of his views as "heedlessly anthropocentric" to the point of "giving a carte blanche for the exploitation of other beings for the benefit of man." It is worth quoting from Skolimowski's response: "I am told that Western thinking is hopelessly anthropocentric and because of that we are shortchanging other species and other forms of life," he writes. "Agreed. I am told that we must think like a mountain, which Aldo Leopold has recommended. I am quite in sympathy with what he wanted to say, but not with what he actually did say. Unfortunately, we cannot think like a mountain; nor can we even assume that the mountain would like to think, like a mountain or otherwise…

"A more important point is this: all those claims which we make on behalf of others—the trees, the brooks, the mountains, the fields, the foxes, the whales, and the last, but not least, the dying cultures being decimated in the Amazonian forests—by whom are they made? With what kind of mandate, and from whom? If a mountain were to speak on behalf of all others, she might just as well shrug her shoulders and say: let it be as is; all things come and go; emerge and perish; all is natural; let natural forces prevail. It is also likely that the mountain would not want to talk on behalf of others. It is our peculiar propensity to do so. It is our peculiar moral burden to have to do so. We care for others because we feel we must…let me state it very clearly: all claims made on behalf of the biotic community are made by human beings; they are filtered by human sensitivities and by human compassion;

they are based on our human sense of justice, on our human recognition of how things are and how they ought to be; they are pervaded with human values—all these claims are therefore deeply and profoundly embedded in our anthropocentrism, whether we can recognize this or not."

I tend to disagree with Skolimowski on Leopold's phrase; the idea of "thinking like a mountain" is a powerful image that can at least lay the basis for the series of questions that an ethic of environmental concern addresses. And if I am to think like a mountain, let it be like Mount St. Helens! (But my heart belongs to Pele at Kilauea.) Skolimowski's criticism of DE is nevertheless compelling. He says, "While it is right and noble to fight against the limitations and dangers of anthropocentric myopias, it may not be so right and noble to elevate the dogma of anti-anthropocentrism to the level of a new deity. I am reluctant to say it, but it has to be said clearly: there is a great deal of self-righteous and concealed arrogance among deep ecology proponents who want to tell everybody that they know better and that they are the only possessors of Truth." And he warns, "When one speaks on behalf of all creation (on behalf of all evolution in my parlance)—thus touching the subject which is so intricate, subtle and difficult—one must speak with caution." Of course it is precisely this caution which DE proponents seem to lack the most.

I detect significant differences between my ideas and focus and those of Skolimowski, judging from a quick glance at his book, but I will save comment for later. For his part, Skolimowski wrote that he felt that while my essay was "powerful," it was "not radical enough," partly because it did not articulate its own philosophy "in positive terms. Post-industrialism and anarchy are tired concepts. We need new concepts, visions and ideas that are fresh and charge us with new energies." When I review Henryk Skolimowski's work in the future, I will try to make this concern the focus of my discussion.

12. Roderick Nash, "Aldo Leopold's Intellectual Heritage," in Callicott, *Companion*, page 82.

13. Arne Naess, "The Deep Ecology Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects," in *Philosophical Inquiry*, Vol. VIII No. 1–2 (Winter-Spring 1986), page 29.

14. Goethe and Heisenberg quoted and discussed in Theodore Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends: Politics and Transcendence in Postindustrial Society* (Anchor Books, 1973), pages 303–304; Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (Harper and Row, 1980), pages 168–172; Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Beacon Press, 1978), page 190.

15. See Nicola Abbagnano's essay on humanism in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 4, Paul Edwards, editor-in-chief (MacMillian Publishing Company and The Free Press, 1967).

16. See my original essay, "How Deep is Deep Ecology" (Fall 1987 FE), also my review of Betsy Hartmann's book *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs* (Harper and Row, 1987), "Women's Freedom: Key to the Population Question," [FE #328, Spring, 1988] and my exchange with William Catton, Jr., author of the *Neo-Malthusian Overshoot,* and Bill McCormick, in the Spring 1988 FE. None of the substantive discussions of the population question that have been raised in these articles have ever received even a mention in the *EF! Journal*. Apparently, DE proponents prefer to tar their critics as supporters of unlimited population expansion, as if one might not even agree that population stabilization and reduction is a long-term, positive goal, while looking for radical forms of social transformation to bring it about. Rather, the deep ecologist takes for granted the "zero-sum" model: human beings acting to defend their freedom, health and long-term well-being can only do so by devouring and destroying nature. The mainstream deep ecologist accepts the phallo-technocratic position of population control with little recognition of the complex of social issues that underlie runaway population growth. Such a position led George Sessions sanctimoniously to ask an audience of feminists at a conference on ecology and feminism just exactly what "they" were planning to do about overpopulation, as if feminism and women's freedom weren't exactly the answer to the question he was posing in the most bureaucratic, scientistic and phallocratic terms.

The catastrophist position, aiming at a totalized, ostensibly more "radical" critique, makes the same kind of error. Thus we see none other than Mr. A, writing under his cute female pseudonym in an article entitled "Technology and Mortality" (*EF! Journal*, Samhain 1986), showing the same environmentalist blindness to the question of women's freedom. Discussing the failure of technocratic, statist population control programs, he writes, "Family planning and education are linked to the technocratic control responsible for the ecological crisis in the first place, and deep ecologists should research ways to dissociate them from it." Here he shows his willful ignorance and sexism when he recommends that deep ecologists study what has already been thoroughly explored by numerous

radical feminist critics. But his hypocrisy is also stunning; while admitting that he'd "use any method, technological or otherwise, to protect my child," he still goes on to advocate higher infant mortality and disease as a solution, since "the only just way to control population is to let natural processes do it." His ideological image of "natural processes" presupposes a nature which is utterly inert and static, in which human decision-making has no effect—a view which does not correspond to any sophisticated understanding of nature today. It is, rather, a thoroughly religious vision. Not surprisingly, linked to this view of nature as object is what is presupposed about woman's nature. Women play no role; either they are the passive matter of the (male-dominated) technocratic "family planning" (read: population control) institutions, or the passive and inert matter of nature's "natural course" (male-generated compulsory pregnancy) with its attendant disease, high birth and infant mortality rates, etc.). Here the "radical" wing of DE reverts to the actual politics of the very Parson Malthus himself, who opposed birth control because it would interfere with the "natural processes" at work in the famines and plagues sweeping away the underclasses. This elitist position posits the disease itself as a cure, thus assuring the continuation and deepening of the crisis it purports to address. In such a view, woman is never the subject of her own inquiry or her own practice. This from a "DE philosopher" referred to by *EF! Journal* publisher Foreman as one of the "avant-garde" (read: vanguard) of the avant garde of radical environmentalism (see "The Question of Growth in Earth First!," *EF! Journal*, Litha 1988). Two very valuable responses to such mystifications are to be found in Sandra Harding's *The Science Question in Feminism* (Cornell University Press, 1986) and Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (Harper and Row, 1978). When women make a revolution to take back stolen land and the health of their families from international capital, the "population problem" will find a low tech, ecologically sound, social resolution.

Foreman's comment is in an interview, "The Foreman of Radical Environmentalism," in the December 1987 *The Animals' Agenda.* For Abbey's remark, see *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (Ballantine, 1968), page 27.

17. Interestingly, the idea that dinosaurs were extinguished by voracious egg-stealing mammals has been completely rejected. See Michael J. Benton, "Dinosaur's Lucky Break," in *The Natural History Reader in Evolution,* Niles Eldredge, editor (Columbia University Press, 1987). And weirdly, the only actual response to my original essay in the pages of the *EF! Journal* was an obscure aside about this hypothetical "egg-stealing" line of mine in an article, "A Critical Mythology of Civilization," by yet another "philosopher in the vanguard of deep ecology thought" according to Foreman's introductory notes, Christoph Manes. In this article, the hapless philosopher Manes identifies critics of DE as "apologists for civilization" and uses my line—which is a reference to DE's implicit claim to an omniscient, neutral perspective vis-a-vis nature and evolution in its absolutist condemnation of even horticultural civilization—as evidence of my defense of progress! I allegedly argued that if the egg-stealing by mammals is natural, then "so too it is natural for humans to destroy habitat as part of their evolution to agricultural societies…" I can only surmise that these "vanguard" thinkers have absolutely no response to my political and social critique and are reduced to distorting my arguments in order to evade my refutation of their Malthusianism. The "mythic discourse" in which I supposedly engage "flies in the face of the fact that there is nothing necessary about agricultural society," Manes writes, as if in evolutionary terms anything could be judged "necessary." Agriculture, he argues, "is the original system used to accumulate power" and is in no way related to human evolution, "which involves the selection and survival of genes, not habits." Here Manes only participates in a mechanistic mystification of inventing causalities out of coexistent phenomena (like the familiar historian's fallacy, post hoc ergo propter hoc, or "after this, therefore because of this") in regards to cultivation—an error he shares, interestingly, with John Zerzan, whose agricultural thesis I discuss elsewhere in this issue. But he also reverts to a reductionist biologism that disregards the intricate relationships between natural and cultural evolution and thus, in the manner of DE ideology that I have all along critiqued, concocts the very kind of mythology and its naturalization of history that he claims to demythologize.

18. Holmes Rolston III, "Duties to Ecosystems," in *A Companion,* pages 247248; G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Harper Torchbooks, 1967), page 159; J. Baird Callicott, "On the Intrinsic Value of Nonhuman Species," in *The Preservation of Species: The Value of Biological Diversity,* Bryan G. Norton, editor (Princeton University Press, 1986), page 151.

19. Elliot Sober, "Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism," in *The Preservation of Species,* pages 180–188. One example illustrating the problems in conservation biology mentioned by Sober is discussed in Lily-Marlene Russow's essay, "Why Do Species Matter?" (reprinted from the Summer 1981 *Environmental Ethics*) in *People,*

Penguins, and Plastic Trees: Basic Issues in Environmental Ethics, Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce, editors (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1986). The Baltimore oriole and the Bullock's oriole were once recognized as separate species, she notes, but due to interbreeding where their ranges overlap, "both ex-species are now northern orioles." The very definition of a species is now in question; as Russow observes, "what counts as a species is a matter of current fashions in taxonomy" (page 121). In his essay on the current extinction spasm, "Why the Ark Is Sinking" (in *The Last Extinction,* Les Kaufman and Kenneth Mallory, editors, MIT Press, 1986), Les Kaufman demonstrates how different communities of rock hopper penguins, ostensibly members of the same species, cause great problems for taxonomists. There are anywhere from eleven to eighteen different species depending on which taxonomist is judging; hence, "our notion of what a species is, or isn't, is largely an artifact of human bias" (page 9). One can only imagine how such problems are magnified when biology, as current scientific discourse may posit it, invades political discourse, which is why one feminist critic of science, Sandra Harding, suggests that rather than imposing biology on politics, "much of biology should already be conceptualized as social science."

In fact, she observes, "paradigmatic theories in particular areas of inquiry eventually wear out as fruitful guides to research," as Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions suggests. "Shouldn't this also be true for science as a whole?" (*The Science Question in Feminism,* pages 43–44.) It is an ironic revenge that Linnaeus, the originator of modern taxonomy, went insane at the end of his life.

20. According to a Reuters report (August 16, 1987) Soviet scientists have reported that an asteroid discovered some five years ago and known as "1983 TV" will collide with the Earth in the year 2115. "If studies confirm the reality that the two celestial bodies will collide, then our successors will have two choices in order to save themselves—either to make the asteroid alter its course, or to blow it up in space," writes Alexander Voytsekhovsky in the newspaper Socialisticheskaya Industriya. Conveniently for his discipline, Voytsekhovsky reports that "vast sums of money would be needed to find and destroy the asteroid."

A cosmocentric view might defend the "right" of the asteroid to its orbit, to let nature take its course. The Earth is, after all, a troublesome planet, its organisms colonizing space with their junk and their microbes. Just as from the point of view of a virus, all humans are an undifferentiated mass, from the cosmocentric perspective, perhaps everything on Earth is as undifferentiated, perhaps, and has no more claim to its orbit or survival than an asteroid.

If such a catastrophe is going to occur (and in fact much of the theory of extinction suggests it as a possibility), all of our ethical discussions (and even our arguments about technology) will prove inadequate to confront the event in a way meaningful to us as a species. Mass extinction and mass technics both undermine the possibility for coherent ethical discourse, it seems. The catastrophe is one of meaning as well. E.M. Cioran, one of the most mordant and fascinating misanthropes writing today, states, "What place do we occupy in the 'universe?' A point, if that! Why reproach ourselves when we are evidently so insignificant? Once we make this observation, we grow calm at once: henceforth, no more bother, no more frenzy, metaphysical or otherwise. And then that point dilates, swells, substitutes itself for space and everything begins all over again." (*The New Gods,* Quadrangle, 1974, page 113.) Somehow, I suspect that I may see another brief "response" to this entire essay that quotes only a fragment of this footnote to "prove" that I support a space program and thus the whole megamachine itself, to save humans from asteroids. For an interesting discussion of cosmic events and mass extinction of species, see Stephen Jay Gould's "Continuity" and "The Cosmic Dance of Siva," in *The Flamingo's Smile* (Norton, 1985); in the former essay, Gould's remarks are very pertinent to the DE-inspired misanthropy that one is wont to read in the *EF! Journal.* From the larger (or perhaps "holistic rationalist") view, that is, "from a geological perspective measured in millions of years," Gould writes, "extinction is inevitable, even necessary for maintaining a vigorous tree of life. We may also argue, both in the abstract and for life's actual history, that an occasional catastrophic episode of mass extinction opens new evolutionary possibilities by freeing ecological space in a crowded world."

Yet to those misanthropes and holists, deep ecological or otherwise, who might welcome the demise of this troublesome and tricksterish species that is humanity, and who do not see any reason to favor such a complicated mammal over any other species, be it a cabbage or the smallpox virus, Gould answers: "The potentially beneficial effect of a mass extinction on life's unpredictable rebound 10 million years down the road cannot speak to the significance of our own twig on life's tree…If we extirpate this twig directly by nuclear winter, or lose so many other twigs that our own eventually withers away, then we have canceled forever the most peculiar and different, unplanned experiment ever generated among the millions of branches—the origin, via consciousness, of a twig

that could discover its own history and appreciate its continuity." The misanthrope may not take such consciousness very seriously, but that would be to forget the deep ecological concern with diversity and the uniqueness of a species. Consciousness, writes Gould, "is a quirky evolutionary accident, a product of one peculiar lineage that developed most components of intelligence for other evolutionary purposes…If we lost its twig by human extinction, consciousness may not evolve again in any other lineage during the 5 billion years or so left to our earth before the sun explodes" (pages 430–431).

21. J. Baird Callicott, "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," (reprinted from the Winter 1980 *Environmental Ethics*) in *People, Penguins, and Plastic Trees…*, page 191.

22. Edward O. Wilson, Biophilia (Harvard University Press, 1984),page 81; Theodore Roszak, Person/Planet: The Creative Disintegration of Industrial Society (Anchor Books, 1975). Roszak writes of his certainty that "within the next generation, there will emerge a well-developed body of ecological theory that illuminates this subtle relationship [of] the planetary dimension to the spreading personalist sensibility which links the search for an authentic identity to the well-being of the global environment." DE would like to consider itself the "heir" or legatee of this growing awareness and its theory, but it falls short. Nevertheless, these discussions and the growing awareness itself are confirmations of Roszak's prediction.

23. See Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (Yale University Press, 1982), page 165; Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*, page 174; Lily-Marlene Russow, "Why Do Species Matter?" in *People, Penguins, and Plastic Trees…*, page 120; David Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (Oxford University Press, 1981), pages 207–208. In this same passage Ehrenfeld attacks the humanism in even those attempts to find aesthetic, non-utilitarian motives for preservation. These are "purely selfish reasons," he argues, that reflect "condescension and superiority," an "attitude…not in harmony with the humility-inspiring discoveries of ecology…" Yet not only do we survive at least partially for "purely selfish reasons" (an observation he himself makes a few pages later), the sense of awe before the immense beauty of nature is precisely what inspires preservationist thinking and an ecological ethic, precisely the result of sensitive identification with nature that refuses, out of a partially "humanist" sensibility, to be reduced to a utilitarian science of energy bits and caloric counts. A review of Ehrenfeld's book will appear in a future issue of the FE.

24. Holmes Rolston III, "Duties…," pages 268–70; Callicott, "Animal Liberation…," page 191, and "Intrinsic Value…," page 145.

25. Hans Peter Duerr, *Dreamtime: Concerning the Boundary Between Wilderness and Civilization* (Basil Blackwell, 1985), pages 110–111.

26. Jamake Highwater, *The Primal Mind: Vision and Reality in Indian America* (Meridian, 1981), pages 77–78.

27. Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production* (Telos Press, 1975), pages 58–61.

28. Dorothy Lee, *Freedom and Culture* (Spectrum, 1959), page 73. I recognize that it may be impossible to get entirely beyond this tension between need and necessity and the universe described by Baudrillard and suggested by Lee, Marshall Sahlins (Stone Age Economics), and others. On some level, "need" may be said to exist if people go hungry, and people went hungry during certain periods of the seasonal cycle in primal society. For the way in which such periods were integrated into the mythic and gift cycles by one group of native peoples, see the beautiful tales collected and translated by Howard Norman, Where the Chill Came. From: Cree Windigo Tales and Journeys (North Point Press, 1982). Windigos, usually shown in the form of "a wandering giant with a heart of ice," are the cause of chaos and starvation during lean times. The Windigo is often thought of as the spirit of all those who have ever starved to death. Yet it is also a reflection of a disruption of the gift cycle in the community rather than a simple biological fact. Scarcity a "law" imposed by bourgeois economic modes of thinking does not determine the activities of the Cree, though it may certainly be argued that scarcity, and hence need, determine human action where the economic reigns. Thus it may be impossible to entirely escape the notion of defending our "interests" or acting to satisfy "need" even as we recognize the problematic, imposed character of these categories.

Cronon's book *Changes in the Land* contains an extremely interesting discussion of scarcity that may be helpful here. Reporting that the northern New England natives "accepted as a matter of course that the months of February and March, when the animals they hunted were lean and relatively scarce, would be times of little food," he writes that the europeans "had trouble comprehending this Indian willingness to go hungry in the late winter months" and their "apparent refusal to store more than a small amount of the summer's plenty for winter use." The colonists

could not understand such an attitude when it would have been patently easy for the natives to gather and store more. The natives were nonplused, replying, "It is all the same to us, we shall stand it well enough; we spend seven and eight days, even ten sometimes, without eating anything, yet we do not die." What was more ironic, Cronon observes, was that native people "died from starvation much less frequently than did early colonists..." Here we see the refusal of surplus, which is another way of saying the refusal of scarcity. (pages 40–41)

29. E.O. Wilson, *Biophilia*, page 130. For an interesting discussion of modern, ecological intuitions of connectedness, see J. Baird Callicott, "The Search for an Environmental Ethic," in *Matters of Life and Death: New Introductory Essays in Moral Philosophy*, editor Tom Regan, Second edition (Random House, 1986).

30. Wilson, *Biophilia*, pages 48, 135–50; Crick quoted and commented on in Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, page 173.

31. Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Beacon Press, 1966), page ix. Also see Tomas McSheoin's "In the Image of Capital: The Rise of Biotechnology" (FE #320, Spring 1985), in which he says: "Each new step technology takes brings us a step closer to the end of life on earth. Biotech represents a deepening of capital's project of world domination, a move to a qualitatively new level, a restructuring of the living world, in capital's image, for capital's profit...Through building a whole new production cycle on this technology, capital hopes to avoid the crash that will result from its continued outrageous pillage of the world's natural resources...Biotech presents not only a whole new wave of products, but also a basic new production process, thus giving capital another possible escape route from its present global crisis: a new source of energy and raw materials is what the genetic alchemists promise capital..." Also see Jeremy Rifkin's impassioned, if somewhat flawed, plea against genetic engineering in *Algeny* (Penguin, 1984).

In his excellent critique of modern scientism, *The Reenchantment of the World* (Bantam, 1984), Morris Berman acknowledges the ambiguity in the systems theory associated with much of the new physics and new environmental philosophy today. The cybernetic model, he writes, "can easily be used to validate the alternative model of industrial totalitarianism...The cybernetic model could well describe a mass society managed by social engineers through a series of 'holistic,' bureaucratic parameters, and indeed, precisely this scenario is envisioned by Robert Lilienfeld in his book *The Rise of Systems Theory.* Far from leading to a planetary culture, says Lilienfeld, the emphasis on communication suggests a world knit closely together by a system of computerized mass media and information exchange." Even ecology—be it "deep" or "social"—uncritical as it has been of holistic "eco-technology" and computerization could end up rationalizing a further level of domination and a further conquest of nature. Berman quotes Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a founder of system science, who writes of his field that centered as it is "in computer technology, cybernetics, automation and systems engineering," it "appears to make the systems idea another—and indeed the ultimate—technique to shape man [sic] and society even more into the megamachine." (pages 288–289)

32. Callicott, "Intrinsic Value," pages 156–158; Rolston, "Duties," pages 264–265. Here the political terminology, even more than the natural resources terminology, reveals once more the limitations so far of environmental philosophy as radical critique.

33. Callicott, "The Conceptual Foundations," pages 207208. Naess' DE is more in line with such views than it is with catastrophist misanthropy. In "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects," he writes that terms such as "anthropocentrism," "human chauvinism," and "egalitarianism," "usually function as slogans which are open to misinterpretation" because they "are sometimes interpreted as denying that humans have any 'extraordinary' traits, or that in situations involving vital interests humans have no overriding obligations toward their own kind. They have!" As an example of "shallow ecological" thinking, in fact, he lists the attitude that seeks "to defend one's borders against 'illegal aliens," and contrasts this view with the idea of "a long range, humane reduction" of population—something with which few radical feminists would probably have any quarrel.

As for Ethiopians and Central Americans—the focus of much of the controversy around EF! spokesmen's statements—one could point to Naess' statement, "Cultural diversity is an analogue on the human level to the biological richness and diversity of life forms" (in Philosophical Inquiry, Winter-Spring 1986, pages 19–22). One would assume that DE values the cultural diversity of the little ethnic groups being swept away by famine and inter-imperialist war and works to defend them as it would other life forms. Compare the intent of Naess' statements to the moral idiocy of another article by Mr. Ann Thropy, in which he dismisses ethical discourse as

"merely the rattling of our ancestors' bones," since "modern ethical discourse is bound up with industrial values." Ethics should be disregarded, along with justice and freedom, in the population debate. "Justice and freedom and all higher values are at home only in a decentralized, anarchistic setting, which presupposes Earth as a wilderness." Otherwise such concerns only "propagate [technology's] power relations." Defending the "courage" of the Neo-Malthusian anti-immigration proponents, he concludes that ethical discourse (and with it obligations to human community) is only meaningful if it is "directed against [technological] culture in its totality" ("Overpopulation and Industrialism," *EF! Journal*, March 1987). So much for a "philosopher" who denies his is a "totalizing" position. Mr. A's logic is Orwellian: to achieve freedom, we must sacrifice freedom, to achieve well-being, we must sacrifice well-being; ethics make sense only in a hypothetical world in which they would never have any reason to be tested. The distant moral good, the ends, justify all and any means.

In the Canadian DE journal *The Trumpeter,* Naess writes that Foreman "emphatically denies" that he advocated "letting Ethiopian children starve to death." One can only assume that Foreman has "emphatically denied" this to Naess in private because while he has not gone out of his way to repeat it, he has never denied it publicly.

34. Murray Bookchin, "Yes!—Wither Earth First?" in the September 1988 *Green Perspectives* (P.O. Box 111, Burlington, VT 05402). Bookchin, like other writers discussed here, combines brilliant insight and absurdities. His Post-Scarcity Anarchism, for example, is a weird mixture of utopian vision and spirit leavened with the most naive and technocratic praise of modern technology, particularly cybernetics, but even of enormous hydropower projects and nuclearism. Could it be an enormous and perhaps fragile ego that kept Bookchin from publicly and unambiguously distancing himself from such views in later works, for example, the murky but provocative Ecology of Freedom? So he has some of the flak coming that he has received.

One predictable but nevertheless deserved thrashing comes from Bill McCormick in the Fall 1988 issue of *Kick It Over* (P.O. Box 5811, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1P2 Canada). Of course McCormick's piece is inaccurate in many ways, since it leaves out Bookchin at his best, in later work, and even accuses Bookchin of views that he has specifically rejected. But Bookchin has himself to blame since his polemics against DE have tended to collapse into the very traditional leftism that he bridles at being accused of defending. For example, see his article, "When the Earth Comes First, People and Nature Suffer," in the August 3, 1988 *Guardian*. "Technology in itself does not produce the distortions between the anti-ecological society and nature," he writes, apparently ignorant of or willfully ignoring the profound work that has been done over the last few decades on the nature of mass technics and its development into a global system, a total environment. "To speak of a 'technological society,' or an 'industrial society' as Devall and Sessions and Earth First! persistently do, is to throw cosmic stardust over the economic expansion which Marx so brilliantly developed in his economic writings and replace economic factors by zoological metaphors. Herein lies the utterly regressive character of 'deep ecology'..." he argues for his leftist audience. To portray the critique of technology as a dogma of deep ecology, which actually is light-years from a radical critique of technology (as my first essay, which Bookchin has read and praised, off the record, demonstrates), must either be a conscious mystification or the worst kind of sloppiness. But if anything is "utterly regressive," it is his dismissal of the concept and critique of the technological system by reverting to marxist "economic factors." This is only the other side of the false coin in DE circles that vaguely criticizes technology while ignoring capital as if capital and mass technics were not interlocking aspects of the same system. (For an excellent discussion of the limitations of marxism in critiquing technology, see Langdon Winner's Autonomous Technology, Ellul's The Technological Society and The Technological System, and Lewis Mumford's *The Myth of the Machine.* Many of the pamphlets of Jacques Camatte, particularly *The Wandering of Humanity* and *Against Domestication,* are also very useful. See also the back issues of the FE on the technology question.)

Likewise, Bookchin's blanket condemnation of primitivism, right at the time when the animist wisdom of primal people is being vindicated by the crisis in civilization, is grotesque. But I plan to discuss this at greater length in a future review of a number of Bookchin's books.

35. Foreman, interview in *The Animals' Agenda;* Hitler quoted in *Unmasking the Powers,* by Walter Wink (Fortress Press, 1985).

36. David Ehrenfeld, "Life in the Next Millennium: Who Will Be Left in Earth's Community?" in *The Last Extinction,* pages 174–176.

37. See Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* page xiii; John Zerzan, "Agriculture: Essence of Civilization," in FE #329, Summer 1988. For an excellent critique of Zerzan as well as Zerzan's response, see Bob Brubaker, "Remarks on Zerzan," FE #330, Winter 88–89. See "The Question of Agriculture," in this issue, [FE #331, Spring, 1989] for my discussion of the agriculture thesis of Zerzan.

38. Duerr, *Dreamtime,* pages 46, 64–65, 105.

39. Quoted by David Brower, "Foreword," in *Voices for the Wilderness,* edited by William Schwartz (Sierra Club/Ballantine Books, 1969), page xii.

40. Luther Standing Bear, quoted in *Touch the Earth,* edited by T.C. McLuhan (Touchstone, 1971), page 45.

41. Bradford quoted in Frederick Turner, *Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness* (Viking, 1980), page 208; Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (New American Library, 1980), pages 166, 202; Frances Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Norton, 1976); Nash, pages 73–74.

42. Nash's book is valuable, but it is significant that the voices of native peoples are essentially left out. This is a book about the attitudes of the conquerors, not the conquered. Two revealing examples will indicate the problem. "Initially, Indians were regarded with pity and instructed in the Gospel, but after the first massacres most of the compassion changed to contempt." (page 28) This passage is incredibly obtuse; one can only wonder at the glib reference to the original "pity" felt towards the native people, who had in the beginning kept the hapless invaders from perishing (see Jennings). And the ambiguous reference to massacres is complicit with the bloodbath which is the whole panorama of American history. Who, after all, perpetrated the first massacres? So much for the "classic study of America's changing attitudes toward wilderness." Likewise Nash's remark, "In the struggle for survival many existed at a level close to savagery, and not a few joined Indian tribes." Horror of horrors! But, Roderick, you must know that they never had it so good! As valuable as this book is, it should only be read with Turner, Drinnon, Jennings, and Fredy Perlman's impassioned anti-history Against Leviathan close by as antidotes to its own "cant of conquest."

43. Quoted in Nash, page 150.

44. Quoted in Nash, page 262.

45. Nash, page 249.

46. Thoreau, Muir and Abbot quoted in Nash, pages 87, 158, 166; Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac,* page 203; Naess quoted in R. Sylvan. For the Grand Canyon reference, see Nash, page 231; Stegner quoted in Nash, page 247; Paul Shepard, *The Tender Carnivore and the Sacred Game* (Scribners, 1974).

47. Roszak, Person/Planet, pages 32, 273.

48. Sessions, "DE and the New Age"; Sessions and Naess, "Basic Principles of DE," in *Deep Ecology,* pages 70–72; Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology,* page 5. Thus DE becomes a vanguardist movement with a secret "maximum program" while accepting the expediency of manipulative, right-wing "minimum program" campaigns for consumption by the "masses." So "anarchists" like Mr. A can argue that even anarchy must depend on the opportunistic orchestration of racist, authoritarian, statist hysteria.

This is pure Orwellian doublethink.

49. Sessions and Naess, "Basic Principles," in *Deep Ecology,* page 72; Naess, "Interview with Arne Naess," in *Deep Ecology,* page 75; Naess quoted in Sylvan, page 14; Sessions, "DE and the New Age."

50. Edward Abbey, "Immigration and Liberal Taboos," in *One Life at a Time, Please* (Holt, 1988). For a discussion of Abbey's unsavory role in all this see E.B. Maple, "Ideology as Material Force: Earth First! and the Problem of Language" (FE #328, Spring, 1988), and "Edward Abbey: We Rest Our Case" (Summer 1988 FE). When a correspondent wrote to the *EF! Journal* questioning the sale of Abbey's book containing this racist, even fascist line, Dale Turner, the assistant editor, thanks the letter-writer for bringing up "an important and unfortunate misconception that has brought EF! a lot of shit. In a variety of forums, Abbey has clearly stated that he's the victim of a typo. His manuscript described the current flood of immigrants from south of the border as generically impoverished people, a dispassionate but accurate term that suits the majority of U.S. immigrants from any part of the world." Even if one were to believe this cock-and-bull line, it would make Abbey's quote "culturally-morally-generically" (rather than genetically) impoverished. So the editor and the novelist believe that Latin Americans (in fact, the majority of all immigrants) are culturally and morally impoverished. With whom do they compare the Hispanicized Indians

fleeing the death squads—the morally and culturally enriched citizens of Gringolandia? Turner writes, "Of course, some people will never believe anything Abbey says…" Then again, Dale, some choose to believe anything he says, won't they? (*EF! Journal*, Samhain 1988.)

51. Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, pages 404–407.

52. See "Miss Ann Thropy Responds to 'Alien-Nation," in the Yule 1987 *EF! Journal*.

53. Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), page 137.

54. E. M. Cioran *The New Gods* (Quadrangle, 1974), page 106 and *The Fall Into Time* (Quadrangle, 1970), page 120.

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