



Ecological Contradiction: the Green Theory Critiques of Ecocide and Ecological Future

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ABSTRACT

The ecological vision which has begun to emerge as a practical theory of modern life is one which acknowledges the diversity of embodied value in the world. The ecological contradiction is seen in the uniqueness, diversity and viability of existent natural and cultural form in dependence of people and non human nature and all participants in ecological processes. The possibility of ecological reconciliation is affirmed as an authentic mode of existence in phenomenon of ecological crisis or ecological future for viable way of life. The conflict over ecological issues has a peculiar significance in democratic capitalist societies relative to class based conflict over distributional issues. The green theories and radicalism have potential to transforming these contradictions between growth oriented industrialism and ecological interdependency, secular, materialism, social needs and the quest for mutuality contested by green movements in opposition of economic social forces. The ecological contradiction has the immediate consequences that human self interest cannot be divorced from what we pronounced as ecological perspective or consciousness of interacting elements within biosphere process and evolution.

KEYWORDS : Ecological contradiction, Ecocide, Ecological future

Introduction

This article reveals upon the intrinsic value of non anthropocentric world shift the onus of justification from person who wants to protect the non human world to the person who wants to interfere with it and that itself represents a fundamental shift in term of environmental debate and decision making. The distinguishing characteristic of an ecological perspective or consciousness is the recognition of the fundamental interdependence of interacting elements within biosphere processes and, indeed, within the whole process of biosphere evolution. Furthermore, it is recognized that humanity is inextricably bound to the whole biosphere process, and therefore the fate of humanity and the fate of the enclosing biosphere fabric cannot be separated in the history of the future. This perception has the immediate consequence that human self-interest cannot be divorced from what we might identify as a 'planetary interest' in biosphere integrity and survival.

This romantic vision is articulated in terms of an alternative 'ecological' paradigm, which represents a direct negation of the conceptual underpinnings of industrialism (Capra, F. and Spretnak, C. 1984).

The articulation of this paradigm and the development of corresponding social and political praxis has occurred in the absence of an explanatory 'scientific' theory comparable with Marxian political economy, essentially through an 'organic' or dialectical process of reflective practice. It is arguable, however, that unless a coherent understanding of the relationship between the cultural and political aspects of a thorough-going ecological perspective can be articulated, the challenge to industrialism will continue to be fragmentary and diffuse.

Elements of an Ecological Critique:

One significant source of challenge has been the romantic Movement, which has passionately opposed the destructiveness, materialism and philistine conformity wrought by industrialism. Romanticism is distinguished, in part, by its identification of the interdependence of being linking humanity and nonhuman nature. It calls for recognition of the subjective potentiality or purposefulness inherent in nature, contending that the full development of our humanity necessitates openness to an expressive unity or inter subjectivity between humanity and nature (Alford 1985; Berman 1981). The challenge of critical rationality has therefore been defined as the need to transcend the objectification of human simplicity in a totalizing instrumental rationality, and thus in the interpretation of practical reason in technical. Nevertheless, in their outer form at least they conform to a dominant instrumental or ecological mode of relationality at the existential. As a result they are characterized by emergent levels of ecological contradiction between their outer form of organization and underlying relations of interdependence. The relatives opposed to moral terms. Moral-practical reason is identified as the critical alternative to a romantic sensibility or mystical subjectivity (Habermas 1971; Lasch 1985). However, we need to consider whether there is a necessary incompat-

ibility between moral-practical reason and a holistic sensibility. This literature has drawn heavily upon relativistic physics and ecology to legitimate the intellectual foundations and outline the contours of such a paradigm-shift. The post-modern transcendence of mechanistic perspectives within physics has revealed the cosmos to be constituted by relationally structured fields of energy, in which the human observer cannot avoid being directly implicated. Similarly, ecological understanding has revealed life within the biosphere to be generated and sustained by interdependent systems of processes which include distinctive modes of ontological organization. All life exists within the overall formative context of cosmic, evolutionary and ecological processes (Birch and Cobb 1981). Indeed, it has been argued that the ecological perception of the interdependence of processes underlying life within the planetary biosphere provides a cognitive framework of universal relevance.

These scientific perspectives have put paid to the mechanistic, materialist myths of the autonomy of being and the contingency of causality. Our conceptualisation of reality should be shaped in terms of the ecological metaphor of the interdependence of life (or being). The structure of being is characterized by interdependence and continuous transformation rather than autonomy and static constitution.

All discrete aspects of reality are expressions of relational existence, that is, they exist within relations of interdependence underlain by differentiated field-structures of generative processes. The emerging process-oriented perspectives within the natural sciences, which have revealed the relational and systemic character of natural structures, are closely paralleled by similar perspectives within the social sciences, humanities and various religious traditions. The crucial point of convergence is the transcendence of the dualistic premise of subject-object dichotomy. The knowing and acting subject is seen to be immersed within the overall structure of becoming and therefore is deemed a truly autonomous and objective role (Spradlin and Porterfield 1984). Since humans do not exist apart from nature, it follows that knowledge cannot transcend human experience within nature (although it does not follow that human experience is limited to the assimilation of sense data nature impresses its subjectivity upon human nature. Science is a particularistic expression of the interaction of human subjectivity and the encompassing domain of nature. The basic thesis is these social forms of human life characterized by the primacy of instrumental rationalization exist in a pathologically contradictory relationship to synergetic forms of ecological interdependence between people and the non-human environment. Put more simply, a contradiction may be seen to exist between the instrumental rationalization and the ecological interdependency of life, where 'life' includes both human and non-human forms. While all forms of social life are implicated in synergetic relationships of ecological interdependence, firstly between people, and secondly between people and the non-human environment, the cultural dominance of an orientation towards instrumental rationalization obscures and suppress-

es the active expression of this synergetic interdependence.

Political conflict over 'ecological' issues has a peculiar significance in democratic-capitalist societies, relative to class-based political conflict over distributional issues. It has this status because class conflict over distributional relations is essentially rooted within a broadly consensual domain of cultural aspirations and organizational structures, whereas 'green' radicalism challenges dominant world-views, social values, institutional processes and social structures (Blake 1991; Cotgrove 1982). Potentially system-transforming crisis tendencies arising from the coupling of contradictions between growth-oriented industrialism and ecological interdependency, capital accumulation and social need, capitalist economic control and political democracy, social domination and cooperative autonomy, secular materialism and the quest for mutuality therefore become contested by the 'green' movement in opposition to economistic social forces (Blake 1991). If an ecological mode of rationality is actually emergent within the 'green' segment of the environmental movement, as well as in related social movements. Diffusion of this intrinsically radical rationality has already begun to undermine legitimation of the instrumental forms of rationality guiding established structures of state management in democratic capitalist societies, and also to catalyse a broader process of change. Indeed, a basic divergence of world-view -encompassing the metaphysical, epistemological and moral foundations of discourse can be seen to be stimulating a broadly-based process of political and cultural change, involving, *inter alia*, increasing rejection of the pluralist premise of the political neutrality of judicial and bureaucratic state structures and demands for increased accountability of and access to institutional decision-making. This political and cultural change is manifested in the increased awareness and politicization of concerns marginalised by the dominant political economy.

Conclusion

The ecological vision which has begun to emerge as a practical theory of (post) modern life is one which acknowledges the diversity of embodied value in the world, breaking out of the objectifying of system, technique and utility. Value is seen in the uniqueness, diversity and viability of existent natural and cultural forms, in the mutual dependence of people, people and non-human nature, and all participants in ecological processes. The possibility of ecological reconciliation is affirmed as an authentic mode of existence, turning away from structures of life predicated upon the unremitting and unrepentant instrumental domination of that alienated as 'Other'. Political ecology represents a vital response to existential and structural expressions of eco-social domination, affirming the possibility of an ecologically viable way of life.

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