THESIS

RETHINKING DEEP ECOLOGY:
FROM CRITIQUE TO SYNTHESIS

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2013

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ABSTRACT

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Deep ecology represents a strain of radical ecopolitical theory that has, over the past forty years, engaged in various debates with other strains of radical ecopolitical thought. Though deep ecology has attempted to defend itself against many critiques from this field, my analysis aims to reassess deep ecology's responses (or its silences) related to some of these charges. My goal is to adequately respond to these critiques that have been made against deep ecology, particularly the critiques that have arose from social ecology and from perspectives concerned with the Global South. At the same time, I utilize these critiques and my own responses to them to rethink deep ecology's role in the transformation of contemporary societies toward greater ecological sustainability. I add to this debate amongst radical ecopolitical theories by outlining the most important critiques that have been made at deep ecology from the above fields, in addition to formulating more adequate responses from the perspective of deep ecology. Moreover, I explicitly concern my analysis with how this re-envisioned deep ecology can constitute a viable political theory and play a vital role in the radical transformation of political societies for the benefit of both nature and human beings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Contemporary political societies are increasingly faced with a wide variety of ecological crises, including climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, deforestation, and pollution. Given these increasingly serious environmental issues and the role that they play in both the destruction of nature and the suffering of human beings around the globe, it is not surprising that the field of radical ecopolitical thought has greatly expanded in the last forty years to encompass a wide variety of perspectives about how humans should relate to the environment and reach toward greater sustainability in addition to how humanity can combat social problems in ways that also account for nature in politics. These radical theories often come into conflict with one another, with each theory defending its own unique formulation of how humans and nature fundamentally relate and how political societies can incorporate nature into decision-making processes. Deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism, and socialist ecology are just a few examples of the broad spectrum of perspectives encapsulated under the name radical ecopolitical thought.

All of these strains of radical ecopolitical thought will become increasingly relevant in the field of political theory in coming years given the growing vulnerabilities of both nature and humanity in the face of global ecological crises. One particularly relevant strain of radical ecopolitical thought is deep ecology, a theory that promotes radical cultural changes in the way that humans and nature relate in order to bring about better practices and policies toward nature on a global scale. Deep ecology is particularly relevant in the face of global ecological problems for a variety of reasons. First of all, deep ecology goes further than any of the other radical ecopolitical theories in its conception of how nature should be incorporated into political life. For example, deep ecology explicitly incorporates the concept of intrinsic value into the process of political decision-making, arguing that all biological entities and ecosystems possess an equal right to fulfill their vital needs and flourish to their fullest potential regardless of the instrumental value that these other beings provide to humanity (See Naess, 1986, pp. 68-9). Secondly, deep ecology promotes radical cultural change as a pathway toward the establishment of ecocentric societies, arguing that humans should pursue a wider identification with nature in order to establish ecologically sustainable communities (See Fox, 1985, pp. 136-9; Eckersley, 1992, p. 59; Naess, 1973, pp. 80-1). Both of these ethical principles are unique to deep ecology, playing a vital role in the overall consideration that nature will be given in ecologically sustainable societies.

Furthermore, the focus on deep ecology in my analysis is both necessary and important for several reasons relating to its status as a strain of radical ecopolitical thought. First of all, the intentional prioritization in deep ecology on how political societies can recognize intrinsic value and ensure the flourishing of other living beings and ecosystems beyond human beings serves a vital purpose, namely to incorporate other life forms into political life and account for their needs in political decision-making. Not only does this stance towards other life help to ensure that the importance of nonhuman life to the overall flourishing of the planet is accounted for in political societies, but it also helps to ensure that nonhuman life is treated with respect far beyond its current status in contemporary societies. For example, deep ecology explicitly argues that the vital needs of nonhuman life should not override the non-vital needs of humans given that the flourishing of the planet (and humanity) particularly depends on the security of former (See Naess, 1988, pp. 68-9).

Secondly, by making an argument in favor of cultural change away from the anthropocentric ethic, deep ecology creates a unique avenue for studying what forces contribute to and reinforce this ethic which often results in widespread environmental harm. In this way, deep ecology plays a unique and vital role in its critique of contemporary society and the anthropocentric ethic in favor of cultural change. In this regard, deep ecology fills a gap regarding how ecocentrism—which rejects humans as the contemporary center of cultural and political life, arguing instead that all life is equally valuable and has an equal right to flourish—fits in the overall transformation toward ecologically sustainable societies. Moreover, deep ecology's arguments in favor of widespread cultural change allow for a variety of interesting tactics to play a role in this cultural shift, including education, the immersion of individuals and groups into natural settings, religious practices, and the invention of new customs and traditions that account for nature in different parts of the globe.

Importantly, by calling for cultural transformation toward an ecocentric ethic, deep ecology allows for diversity amongst the way that each individual conceptualizes her or his relationship with nature in addition to how each individual chooses to act in relation to her or his particular conception of how to identify with nature, and the way that this identification with nature constitutes part of an individual's identity. In essence, deep ecology (at least implicitly) allows individuals to form identities around different aspects of nature that shape who they are in different ways. For individuals who have never entertained the prospect of deeply identifying with nature, deep ecology also provides a starting point from which to develop this type of outlook.

My analysis concentrates on how deep ecology has thus far characterized humanity's relationship to nature and the ethical and political proposals it has made to justify its position and point in the direction of better practices toward nature. Fundamentally, my project seeks to take these positions that deep ecology has already espoused, clarify them, and utilize them in addition to my own ethical and political visions for deep ecology in order to respond to critiques that have thus far been inadequately responded to by deep ecology. In addition, some issues that deep ecology has failed to address altogether will also be analyzed. These various issues include the following: the value of anthropocentrism as a conceptual device, the vital role that biocentric egalitarianism plays in ecological sustainability, the importance of holism as it relates to the human-nature relationship, the tendency of deep ecology to fall prey to neocolonial tendencies, and the role that inclusion must play in the formation of ecological societies.

The inclusion of deep ecology as the focus of my analysis is both important and necessary for the field of radical ecopolitical theory because this inclusion fills a gap in deep ecology by responding to a variety of issues that have yet to be adequately addressed in the theory and by responding to these issues in new ways. The specific issues that arise from the social ecology critiques that I address in new ways include the issue of anthropocentrism as a major cultural cause of environmental degradation, and the importance of deep ecology's holistic ontology to the formation of radical ecopolitical societies. Moreover, I address critiques from the Global South that have largely been ignored by deep ecologists, arguing that the inclusion of these populations is vital to the overall viability of deep ecology as a globally applicable radical ecopolitical theory. These and other issues are addressed in ways that have yet to come out in deep ecology, and in ways that shift the focus of the theory to a broader discussion of how humanity can take care of itself while caring for and respecting nature in the process. In a way that lacks force in much of deep ecology, I acknowledge that even radical ecopolitical theories must focus at least part of their attention on human beings and how human beings play a role in bringing about ecocentric culture, ecocentric political societies, and how human agency determines the role of nature in politics.

Thus, overall, I look at how social ecology critiques the use of anthropocentrism in deep ecology, its emphasis on biocentric egalitarianism, and its position as a holistic theory of the way that humans relate to nature. The above critiques limit deep ecology's ability, moreover, to become a culturally significant way that humanity can broaden its deep identification of nature. Moreover, I examine the critiques regarding neocolonialism and inclusion that emerge from people concerned with the plight of the Global South and how this struggle relates to radical ecopolitical theory. These arguments specifically critique deep ecology by pointing out its tendency to unintentionally further the legacy of colonialism and its tendency to exclude and other specific populations of humans around the globe. Consequently, these two bodies of critique from social ecology and the Global South damage deep ecology in ways that potentially destroy its radical positions while also limiting its potential to play a role in the formation of ecological societies on a global scale.

I begin Chapter Two by discussing the major philosophical and political contributions that deep ecology has made to the field of radical ecopolitical thought, arguing that these contributions are valuable in addition to examining three important aspects of the theory. First, I discuss the major critiques that deep ecology makes of contemporary society, particularly its critique of anthropocentric culture and the role that this cultural tendency plays in ecological destruction and in the fight against industrialism. Secondly, I examine the ethical and philosophical tenets that deep ecology promotes in its theory including the following: the interconnectedness of all life, the importance of self-realization in the development of ecological consciousnesses, the role of deep ecology's holistic ontology, the concept of vital needs and intrinsic value, and finally, the concept of biocentric egalitarianism. All of these tenets, including deep ecology's ontology, work together to form a theory that promotes a deep concern for nature that in addition to influencing cultural changes will promote better relations between humans and the environment and better practices overall.

Finally, Chapter Two analyzes the major policy positions espoused by deep ecology, including the “Platform for Deep Ecology” as a political movement created by deep ecologist Arne Naess, the theory’s positions on participation and governance, particularly the focus on bioregionalism, and finally, the theory’s focus on wilderness preservation and population control. My analysis then moves to address two significant critiques from the field of social ecology and from the perspective of the Global South that have been levied at deep ecology, justifying the inclusion of these critiques in my analysis by arguing that deep ecology must address them in order to re-invigorate itself as a globally applicable radical ecopolitical theory relevant to issues of both justice and nature’s role in political life.

Thus, Chapter Three begins by justifying the inclusion of social ecology’s critiques of deep ecology into my overall analysis, contending that social ecology makes extensive critiques of deep ecology that question the blame that deep ecology places on anthropocentric culture in addition to the ontological position of the theory regarding nature—each of these being fundamental positions that characterize deep ecology as a whole. Subsequently, the chapter examines what social ecology says about these two aspects of deep ecology, including the charges of misanthropy and anti-humanism implicit in deep ecology’s focus on ecocentrism. I then respond to each of these critiques separately, arguing that the usage of the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide in deep ecology has a vital role to play as a conceptual tool for separating actions that account for nature in politics versus actions that do not. With regards to deep ecology’s ontology, I argue that the inclusion of interconnectedness, intrinsic value, and biocentric equality acts as an idealized way in which human culture can imagine its place within nature and account for nature’s vital needs in political decision-making. Finally, I discuss the similarities between social ecology and deep ecology, intending to bridge the divide between the two theories, extrapolate the unique roles that each can play in the formation of ecologically sustainable societies, and demonstrate that social ecology’s critiques of deep ecology do not necessarily damage deep ecology in irreparable ways.

Chapter Four examines the fundamental ways that deep ecology has (unintentionally, for the most part) projected a neocolonialist tendency in its theory toward the Global South, and how deep ecology has failed to become a theory of inclusivity that fundamentally accounts for both difference and agency in these regions of the world. First of all, my analysis begins by discussing the debate that has already occurred between deep ecology and theorists concerned with both nature and human suffering in the Global South, contending that although a handful of deep ecologists have responded to these critiques, their responses have not been sufficient to completely reject the neocolonial tendencies implicit in some of the claims of deep ecology. Secondly, I argue that another problem arises in deep ecology related to both the Global South and to indigenous populations worldwide. The problem of exclusion of both of these groups may be unintentional on the part of deep ecology; nevertheless, the exclusion of how these populations can both contribute to and participate in the formation of ecological societies globally and at local levels leaves deep ecology both open to critique and limits its prospects of serving as a globally applicable theory of radical ecocentrism. And lastly, I re-envision how deep ecology can deal with the problems of neocolonialism and exclusion in its theory, thereby contributing to both its global applicability as a radical ecopolitical theory and its radical vision for change in the way that humans fundamentally relate to nature.

In the conclusion, I review my responses and their significance as they relate to the various critiques made at deep ecology that I have examined. Subsequently, I point toward how deep ecology would look as a unified and inclusive radical ecopolitical theory of ecocentrism and how political societies can begin this transformation toward better relations between humans and nature. I conclude my analysis by outlining gaps that still exist between deep ecology and theories that criticize its fundamental assumptions and theoretical tenets, arguing that these gaps, too, must be filled in order to fully re-envision deep ecology and how it relates to other radical ecopolitical theories in addition to the specified roles that it has to play in the formation of ecologically sustainable societies on a global scale.

Chapter 2: The Main Tenets of Deep Ecology: From Critique to Politics

Introduction

Deep ecology[1] attempts to incorporate the environment into all aspects of political life, including the ethical and philosophical dimensions that undergird political societies. The theory does so in a way that not only centers political debates around the natural, but also in a way that refuses to accept that nature lies outside of the legitimate realm of topics for political discourse and decision-making. Although all radical ecopolitical theories incorporate nature into their discourses, deep ecology, particularly, envisions ecocentrism as a path for ecological sustainability. Uniquely, deep ecology blames anthropocentric culture for the ecological crisis and builds its theory around how ecocentric culture can replace this dominant contemporary human-centered ethic. Moreover, deep ecology proposes that humanity must rethink its overall identity for how it relates to nature and its place within the broader ecology by incorporating the vital needs of other species into politics. Both the uniqueness and radical potential of deep ecology lies in its call for deep cultural changes that fundamentally re-orient the human-nature relationship in ways that favor recognition of the intrinsic value of all life and the right to equal flourishing of other biological entities and ecosystems as a whole.

Indeed, deep ecology utilizes the above ethical, political, and cultural arguments to explicitly incorporate the environment into the daily lives, thoughts, and political and moral compasses of citizens, nation-states, governments, and communities alike. I will argue that such a distinctive incorporation of both the intrinsic value of nature and an insistence on the consideration of biocentric egalitarianism in political decision-making gives deep ecology a unique perspective, offering contributions regarding the human-nature relationship to radical ecopolitical thought that other theories in this field like social ecology and ecofeminism do not. The importance of the centrality of nature in deep ecology cannot be understated, for no other radical or reformist political theory attempts to incorporate an ecocentric ethic into political life in order to ensure the equal right to flourishing of nonhuman nature alongside human beings. While other theories may attempt to incorporate the intrinsic value of nature, they do not (like deep ecology) argue that nature is as deserving as human beings of moral consideration in political decision-making, including the equal right to flourishing of all life that deep ecology insists is necessary for the establishment of actual ecological sustainability.

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[1] Throughout this analysis, the term "deep ecology" will be used to designate any and all positions that have traditionally gone under that rubric, with the full realization that there are differences within (which will be dealt with within my thesis).

This unique incorporation of nature into political life in deep ecology makes the theory especially relevant in contemporary societies increasingly faced with devastating environmental issues like climate change, pollution, and scarcity. Moreover, deep ecology, I will argue, if sufficiently reformed, is necessary for the survival and flourishing of ecosystems and non-human creatures that inhabit planet Earth, irrespective of the needs of humans. Deep ecology makes explicit the significance of changing human cultures in the direction of ecocentrism, and, consequently, implies that cultural change will result in better practices toward nature. Though deep ecology requires both elaboration and clarification in many aspects of its theory, its overall ethical and political assumptions make it increasingly important as a strain of radical ecopolitical thought and ecological sustainability in general.

Yet, as any commentator on deep ecology knows, the overall position is diverse and sometimes unclear. With this in mind, it is essential to reconstruct what deep ecology entails as a theoretical position, particularly given the need to re-envision deep ecology in response to other viable positions and concerns. This chapter analyzes three main aspects of deep ecology which include its critique of contemporary society, the ethical and philosophical arguments that it espouses, and how it conceptualizes politics and political societies. Included in the discussion of politics are three key dimensions which include the political visions of deep ecology, how the theory conceptualizes participation and decision-making, and a variety of important policy prescriptions that certain theorists deem significant. Importantly, deep ecology does not represent a unified political theory; instead, it represents the amalgamation of attempts by a variety of theorists to define its purpose, political aspirations, critiques, goals, and strategies for the formation of ecocentric political societies on a global scale. The lack of both unity and clarity in deep ecology enables it ready for revision; at the same time, however, this same lack of clarity and more importantly, deep ecology’s silence on particular issues, prevents it from attaining a prominent place alongside other more unified and fully developed radical ecopolitical theories. My analysis begins with a discussion of the root problems that deep ecology contends exist within political societies today and how these root issues cause and perpetuate environmental harm.

Critique of Contemporary Society

Deep ecology advocates fundamental changes in the relationship between humans and nature and offers a number of critiques of the current state of this relationship, including the anthropocentric bias that characterizes most global economic, political, and social relations. Indeed, the theory argues that the formation of ecocentric societies is not only necessary for the flourishing of nature and human communities, but also describes what specifically about contemporary political society has given rise to current ecological crises. Given the central focus on intrinsically valuable nature and the right of nature to flourish to the best of its ability, it is not surprising that these theorists tend to classify political theories, political arrangements, economic systems, and policy prescriptions as either fundamentally anthropocentric or ecocentric.

Anthropocentrism represents a standpoint from which human beings fundamentally act only in their own interests without considering and respecting the vital interests of other beings and ecosystems, and is characterized by the perception that the nonhuman world exists for its instrumental value to humans (Eckersley, 1992, pp.26-9). Andrew McLaughlin (1993) provides a basis for rejecting the anthropocentric standpoint. He argues that anthropocentrism is characterized by the belief that human beings can attain perfect knowledge of nature and utilize this knowledge to make decisions about nature's instrumental value. Ecocentrism, by contrast, recognizes that human beings can never attain perfect knowledge of the consequences of their interactions with nature, thereby placing fundamental limitations on the ability of humans to act in ways that will cause unknowable environmental consequences (pp. 99-101). Additionally, Eric Katz (2000) goes on to argue that deep ecology rejects the anthropocentric notion of the instrumental value of nature, and attempts to replace this system of instrumental regard for nature with the concept of intrinsic value, a more egalitarian view where nature has value in and of itself regardless of the presence of human populations (p. 19). According to deep ecology, then, acting only in the interests of the human species, or anthropocentrically, fails to acknowledge the holistic way in which humans are constituted and affected by their relationship to the rest of the natural world. Furthermore, ecocentrism limits human action by incorporating the vital needs of other species, and anthropocentrism exists as the root cause of environmental harm and anti-ecological tendencies in the human species.

Even though some theorists have disputed the importance and usefulness of the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide, deep ecology has maintained that anthropocentrism acts a root cause of environmental degradation (Light, 2001, pp. 12-13). Moreover, deep ecology has maintained that the only true way to forge ahead toward an ecological political society is to reject anthropocentrism outright, and instead accept an ecocentric outlook that recognizes the interconnectedness and intrinsic value of other life forms in addition to human beings. Anthropocentric humanism, as William Grey (2006) refers to it, does often attempt to address environmental problems. This anthropocentric reform environmentalism, however, only results in ecologically sound action when it is absolutely necessary to avoid catastrophic results for the human species. In other words, anthropocentric environmentalism only treats the “symptoms” of environmental harm, rather than the root causes (p. 2). The root cause of environmental harm for deep ecologists is out of control anthropocentric political and cultural arrangements and political decisions. In these ways, then, anthropocentrism acts as both a cause of environmental degradation and an element of contrast by which deep ecologists make arguments in favor of ecocentric political arrangements.

Thus, deep ecology tends to promote the idea that most current political arrangements throughout the world are anthropocentric, as opposed to ecocentric. With this in mind, George Sessions (1991) calls the rise of anthropocentrism in modern Western cultures the “anthropocentric detour,” presuming that ecocentrism will eventually take hold as the dominant arrangement in political societies (pp. 156-168). Sessions characterizes environmentally concerned anthropocentrism (or reform environmentalism) as mainly concerned with the survival and flourishing of human beings in the face of environmental hazards such as pollution and other degrading activities (Sessions, 1991, p. 174). The environmental and social effects of out of control anthropocentrism, according to deep ecology, involve a number of general results including large scale human interference in ecosystems resulting in widespread destruction of habitats, increasing alienation between humans and nature, an increasingly mechanized worldview in humanity that places humans and nature in conflict, and other more concrete environmental problems such as pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss (See Naess, 1984, pp. 168-70; Rothenberg, 1995, p. 160).

For deep ecology, these results of anthropocentrism are unacceptable and prevent both the human species and other living beings from flourishing and reaching their fullest potential. Arne Naess (1984), for example, argues that anthropocentrism has resulted in the altering of ecosystems on a massive and unacceptable scale. Naess implies that there is nothing wrong with altering nature in certain contexts; in fact, humans will always alter and change nature just by virtue of the species' large intrinsic capacity for agency. Moreover, for Naess, an existence that leaves no trace of humanity's actions upon nature is both impossible for, and undesirable to, human beings. A difference exists, for example, between destroying a forest and interfering in a forest in a way that benefits both human beings and leaves the forest in a state that allows it to persevere and flourish (Naess, 1984, pp. 168-70). In this sense, deep ecology implies that anthropocentrism has taken the level of human interference in nature to a level that destroys ecosystems and halts the potential flourishing of a vast array of other living creatures. In his analysis, Naess implies that the level of interference that becomes acceptable in ecocentric societies will vary based on the needs of humans, the needs of other living things, and the potential consequences of interference, and that deciding acceptable levels of interference will be a contested process (Naess, 1984, p. 169-70).

More specific manifestations of the anthropocentric ethic have also been discussed in deep ecology. For example, David Rothenberg (1995) argues—following Naess' "Platform for Deep Ecology"—that anthropocentrism leads to alienation between humans and nature. In turn, this alienation from nature leads to a mechanized world in which humans are forced to confront economic and ecological problems by choosing between themselves and nature, relying on a dualistic assumption that humans and nature are fundamentally at odds (p. 160). Given that anthropocentrism perpetuates a world system characterized by increasing mechanization and alienation, the anthropocentric ethic results in more concrete problems such as pollution, biodiversity loss, loss of wild places, and climate change, essentially the most pressing environmental problems that characterize contemporary society.

Deep ecology also critiques a variety of other aspects of political societies around the world but usually attributes these other causes of environmental harm to anthropocentric tendencies. McLaughlin (1993), however, argues that industrialism is another root cause of ecological problems, especially in the industrialized world (pp. 13-16). Although industrialism is a form of anthropocentrism by definition, in that it constitutes an economic system that places human beings as the sole beneficiaries of political life, it does not emerge as the major target of blame for most deep ecologists who focus on the broader root cause of anthropocentrism and attribute industrialism as one result of this broader contemporary ethic. McLaughlin acknowledges that anthropocentrism, while a central fact of current social relations, does not necessarily directly result in the vast amount of immediate environmental degradation that is occurring today. Instead, he contends that economic relations determine the relations that humans have with the natural world (McLaughlin, 1993, pp. 12, 19). To summarize, then, economic arrangements, for McLaughlin, constitute a more immediate and tangible threat to nature than larger metanarratives and cultural systems such as anthropocentrism, despite the fact that industrialism accepts the premises of an anthropocentric outlook.

Furthermore, McLaughlin argues from a position that characterizes economics as an essential dimension in the discussion of environmental degradation (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 18). The economic arrangements, political arrangements, and metanarratives like anthropocentrism in contemporary society cannot be decoupled from one another and also rely on the same systems of power to perpetuate their prominence. McLaughlin characterizes economic arrangements like industrialism as valuable starting points for pinpointing the structures of power that perpetuate environmental degradation, focusing on the potential of human agency to both cause the destruction and perfect a solution to it. For this reason, McLaughlin understands that deep ecology cannot simply focus on broad causes like anthropocentrism to guide its arguments in favor of concrete solutions to environmental harm; instead, deep ecology must identify the current powerful interests that act against the environment in addition to the social basis for these underlying power structures (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 12).

Despite his focus on industrialism, McLaughlin still argues that anthropocentrism is an important factor in determining to what extent environmental degradation occurs in today's industrialized societies, arguing that addressing anthropocentrism as a cause of environmental harm is a necessary but not a sufficient solution to today's environmental issues (McLaughlin, 1993, pp. 18-19). McLaughlin's characterization of the causes of environmental degradation from the perspective of deep ecology raises important issues about the root sources of environmental harm. Most deep ecologists, with the exception of McLaughlin, depict anthropocentrism as the single most important root cause of degradation. Though deep ecology has made brief remarks about the importance of establishing a vastly different set of global economic relations that focus on ecology rather than profit, it does not necessarily hold industrialism or related forces of capitalism accountable for the emergence of systemic ecological degradation (See Naess, 1986, 68-70). In contrast, McLaughlin (1993) opens a space in deep ecology for the discussion of other root causes and at the same time does not invalidate or minimize the main arguments that deep ecology makes about the necessity of establishing ecocentric societies. He instead still advocates for a deep ecology perspective in relation to establishing more ethical relations between humans and nature (pp. 169-196). McLaughlin's divergence from deep ecology's traditional culprit of environmental harm opens the door for deep ecology to discuss a diverse range of causes for environmental harm, while retaining an important notion of anthropocentrism's role in this damage.

Philosophical Assumptions and Ethical Positions: Prerequisites for an Ecocentric Society

"Deep ecology"—as a term designating a unique perspective on the environment—was first proposed by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. Naess makes a number of normative claims about how humans relate to the natural world and how humans should proceed in their interactions with the environment, other species, and ecosystems. Moreover, other theorists (Warwick Fox, Bill Devall, and George Sessions, for example) have argued in favor of fundamental changes in the way that humans perceive their place within nature in an attempt to ensure the flourishing of both humans and nonhumans in the future. The main ethical and philosophical claims made by deep ecology are outlined below in depth.

In general, deep ecology attempts to re-envision the fundamental ways that humans relate to and interact with the natural world while also attempting to derive political positions from their analysis of this relationship. Deep ecology assumes an interrelatedness and interconnectedness between all life on the planet, including human beings, and has derived this concept of interconnectedness from ecological science. Furthermore, the theory proposes that all life is not only interconnected at the level of biology, but also at the level of human psychology

(Naess, 1986, pp. 65-8). Robyn Eckersley (1992), for example, argues that humans are embedded within ecological relationships. She broadens this discussion of interrelatedness by arguing that humans are constituted by their relationships with other humans, by the governing cultural and political institutions within a society, and by the broader existence of the ecological reality in which they live (p. 53). Moreover, Eckersley argues that the world is made up of these webs of interrelationships, and that given these interconnected parts of a whole, it is vital that humans recognize the interests of other species and other humans because these interests relate to one's own flourishing as well (Eckersley, 1992, p. 46-9).

The concepts of interconnectedness and interrelatedness tend to undergird and reinforce many other concepts in deep ecology. Self-realization through recognition of this interrelated web of ecological relations is one central aspect of deep ecological thought. Through this individualized process, deep ecology argues that a profound ecological consciousness will develop in the human psyche. Moreover, this ecological consciousness will provide an impetus in the individual to care for and protect the environment. Individuals who develop this type of relationship with the natural world, according to deep ecology, will cease to conceive of themselves and their fate as separate from the fate and the flourishing of the natural world (Dobson, 1995, p. 91). These ideas about the importance of developing an ecological consciousness first emerged in early works by Arne Naess.

The concept of "Ecosophy T" has become an important example of what deep ecology means when it discusses the development of an ecological consciousness. Naess developed this concept of "Ecosophy T," and discusses it at length in many of his works. He calls his personal process of self-realization and development of an ecological consciousness "Ecosophy T" because he realizes and acknowledges that no one person or community of persons will develop identical eco-philosophical stances about their own relationship to the natural world (Naess, 1973, pp. 79-82). In other words, people might develop a distinctive "Ecosophy A" or "Ecosophy Z" that diverges from Naess' "Ecosophy T" in ways that more thoroughly explain man's relationship to nature to the individual that developed that particular ecosophy. Importantly, Naess (1988) argues that the development of a personal ecological consciousness allows the individual to identify what are to become self-evident truths about the interdependence of oneself upon the natural world. In addition, these realizations allow the individual to develop more ethical ways of being in the world that foster ecocentric interactions with nature (pp. 86-93).

Additionally, Naess (1973) discusses this concept of "Ecosophy T" by acknowledging that the narrow and egoistic self would most likely disappear in service of the larger self that is the whole of the natural world and human communities (p. 80-1). Ultimately, self-realization occurs as a process of recognizing one's own place within the whole of nature and the biosphere, and recognizing that interdependence must play a role in decision-making both at an individual and a political level. Deep ecology therefore assumes that a change in consciousness will engender a change in political action regarding nature. An ecocentric outlook, in essence, leads to better practices toward the environment.

Other theorists sympathetic to deep ecology also discuss the importance of the development of an ecological consciousness in order to spur ecocentric political action. For example, Warwick Fox (1985) discusses three forms of identification with the natural world that can aid a person in developing a wider sense of self and ultimately, an ecocentric way of being in the world. Fox argues that these types of identification include the personal, the ontological, and the cosmological. First, identification through personal and direct experiences in the world constitutes a way for developing wider forms of identification through these real life experiences and observations with the senses on an individual basis. Second, Fox goes on to say that ontological identification involves identifying with the larger whole of everything around oneself and recognizing that nature and the world just "are." In this realization, one can potentially develop profound feelings of respect towards these elements in the world (Fox, 1985, pp. 136-9). Third, Fox's interpretation of the last form of identification—cosmological identification—argues that both interconnectedness and self-realization arise from a deep process of identification. He states that, "Cosmologically based identification refers to the experiences of commonality with all that is that are brought about through deep-seated realization of the fact that we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality" (Fox, 1985, p. 139). Realization of the holistic reality of the universe is an important step toward not only developing an ecocentric perspective, according to deep ecology, but this ontological vision also constitutes the fundamental way that deep ecology perceives reality and the potential pinnacle of human nature.

Deep ecology argues that it is at least as important to develop an ecological consciousness that confronts nature from the "right" mindset as it is to act to protect or preserve the natural world regardless of motivation or intention. In other words, deep ecology rejects anthropocentrism, assuming that an ecocentric society guided by humans with ecological consciousnesses who identify with nature will cultivate more ethical environmental policies and practices. In this same vein, deep ecology contends that a political society perpetuated and supported by individuals who accept ecocentric principles will, as a fact, lead to a society that engages ethically with nature.

These attempts by deep ecologists to emphasize self-realization and the development of an ecological consciousness are undergirded by an important ontological formulation: deep ecologists fundamentally believe that all living beings and ecosystems in the world are interrelated, interconnected, and ultimately fated by the actions of all other entities and by ecological processes. Katz (2000) refers to this as the “holistic ontology” of deep ecology (pp. 34). William Grey (2006) states that,

> A second worry [of deep ecologists] is that we tend to treat humans and human activity in isolation from, rather than as a part of nature. This is often characterized as an atomistic conception of humans as discrete and separate interacting units, in contrast to the holistic organic conception of organisms as nodes in complex biotic webs (p. 465).

Furthermore, Katz (2000) argues that the holistic outlook of deep ecology focuses mostly on the relations between and amongst living things, ecosystems, and nature overall (p. 20). Yet, and importantly, deep ecology does not necessarily argue for a holism that subsumes and dissolves the individual, especially given its focus on the importance of the development of an ecological consciousness in the individual. Holism, for deep ecology, also does not exist as a process that can constantly receive validation and credibility from the scientific community. Rather, holism perpetuates a way of viewing the interconnections between all living beings and as an outlook, fosters a more ethical and ecocentric way of being in the world for human individuals and communities alike.

Interestingly, however, deep ecology tends to focus on this connection between humans and nature as a way to justify the development of ecological consciousnesses and to encourage eco-political acts. Despite the holistic ontology of deep ecology, theorists still promote an individualistic process of self-realization for the purposes of developing an ecological consciousness. Moreover, the theory views the world as inherently interconnected and based upon relationships of interdependence, while at the same time promoting an individualistic view of agency that allows individuals to develop unique relationships with the natural world in pursuit of more ethical and ecocentric relations. While deep ecology emphasizes the importance of consciousness in determining the extent to which humans are able to truly act with regard for the natural world, identify with it, and respect it as one might respect his or her fellow man, it also perceives this process of self-realization as taking place prior to the development of more ecocentric spaces of political decision-making and political societies. Wider identification, then, is an essential but not a sufficient component of the formation of ecocentric societies operating on the basis of ecologically conscious citizens.

Importantly, wider identification and a deeper ecological awareness would heavily and directly influence the ways in which human communities and individuals conceive of their vital needs, given the interrelatedness of humans and that natural world. Vital needs, in essence, are contested visions of the good that human communities construct as necessary requirements for the flourishing of their society, and even future generations. Bill Devall and George Sessions (1985) argue that given the diversity of the human species, vital needs reach beyond just basic necessities such as shelter, food, water, and clothing. They assert that vital needs also include the fulfillment of meaningful relationships with other humans, the ability to expressively create, and play and acknowledge that despite these less tangible needs, the fulfillment of vital material needs requires vastly fewer resources than technological and industrial societies currently utilize (p. 68).

Moreover, deep ecology has formulated a strategy for accounting for the needs of both human beings and other species and ecosystems. For example, Naess (1986) has argued that only the fulfillment of the vital needs of human beings should supersede the vital needs of other species. Additionally, if the vital need of another species or an ecosystem outweighs a non-vital need of a human or the human species overall, the vital need of the other species, individual animal, or ecosystem takes precedence (pp. 68-9). At best, deep ecology acknowledges that the vital needs of human beings must be met prior to the fulfillment of the vital needs of other species. At worst, as we will see, deep ecology fails to acknowledge the diversity of needs of human populations worldwide.

The notion of vital necessity rests upon the normative assumption that all biological entities and ecosystems have value for their own sake, regardless of their use-values to the human species. All deep ecologists elaborate on the importance of the concept of intrinsic value (See Naess, 1995; Eckersley, 1992; Devall & Sessions, 1985; Zimmerman, 1994). Perhaps Eckersley (1992), though, clarifies this notion best when she says that ecocentric thought classifies all layers and parts of the biotic community as valuable for their own sake (p. 60). Moreover, Naess (1986) argues that intrinsic value implies that all beings have an equal right to flourish and that the diversity of life on Earth only serves to enhance the intrinsic value of all life (p. 68).

Interestingly, deep ecology’s formulation of intrinsic value does not distinguish between what constitutes the good qualities versus the bad qualities in living things and organisms. For example, Dean Curtin (2000) argues that the use of the concept of intrinsic value in deep ecology serves a mainly political purpose, working as foundational normative assertion that will eventually undergird and provide direction to all ecocentric political societies in some important way. In essence, Naess does not distinguish between the good versus the bad aspects of nature or the human species; on the contrary, he simply states the normative assumption that all beings have intrinsic value and the right to flourish to their fullest potential regardless of any flaws that may manifest throughout their life cycles (p. 264). For Curtin, Naess also recognizes the plurality of human cultures, and would understand that pluralistic formulations of the concept of intrinsic value or the value of nature would occur in different cultures around the world (Curtin, 2000, p. 265).

Another important ethical and philosophical position advocated by deep ecologists is the assumption of biocentric equality. The assumption of biocentric equality intimately relates to the concept of intrinsic value, and in turn, to deep ecology's discussion of the hierarchy of vital needs. The assumption of intrinsic value attempts to clarify that species have value for their own sake, but the assumption of biocentric equality takes intrinsic value one step further. In a society governed by biocentric egalitarianism, not only are species valued intrinsically, they are valued equally. In other words, the life of a human being is as valuable qualitatively as the life of a bear or a caterpillar or a songbird (Devall and Sessions, 1985, pp. 67-9).

Devall and Sessions (1985) argue that biocentric equality adopts the position that all living organisms in the biosphere have an equal right to flourish and unfold to their highest potential without unnecessary impediments placed in their way by the human species for the purposes of instrumentality and use-value (pp. 67-9). Yet, Michael E. Zimmerman (1994) argues that deep ecology only promotes biocentric equality in theory, recognizing that the vital interests of human beings will undeniably trump the vital interests of other species both in the long and short term; Naess has also reiterated this point many times throughout his work (Zimmerman, 1994, pp. 45; Naess, 1973, pp. 151-55). Indeed, biocentric egalitarianism under ecocentric political arrangements would allow individual humans and the human species as a whole to develop a profound respect for other species' and individual organisms' right to flourish to their fullest potential without unnecessary impediments by humans (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 45).

The concepts detailed above—interconnectedness, self-realization and wider identification, vital necessity, intrinsic value, and biocentric equality—are essential to understanding the ontological formulations of deep ecology, and as we will see, their aspirations toward specific types of political societies. For example, deep ecology emphasizes bioregional political arrangements that emphasize identification with one's surrounding environment and the importance of interdependence and interconnectedness. In addition it promotes policies such as wilderness preservation and population control that attempt to account for the intrinsic value and the vital needs of other species. These and other political and political theoretical formulations of deep ecology are emphasized in the next section, including its political visions, how it conceptualizes participation, and certain significant policy aspects.

Political Visions, Participation, and Policy

Deep ecology has long struggled with its own ability to develop a robust and unified political theory of human agency, power, institutional arrangements, and processes of decision-making and participation. Despite these shortcomings and the lack of unity in the theory overall, many deep ecologists have developed their own ideas and partial theories related to the political aspects and aspirations of deep ecology. Even though Naess—who has had an incredible influence on the philosophical and ethical dimensions of deep ecology—developed a list of the tenets of deep ecology that point toward political issues, one could argue that this list doesn't represent a fully developed political theory that takes into account issues of agency, power, and participation. Fully engaged and robust political theories not only incorporate a critique of contemporary society—which deep ecology does well—but they must also develop strategies for acting in the world and theories regarding how human agency perpetuates both the political will and the political acts that will ultimately come together to create ecocentric political societies.

Moreover, political theories must develop or at least point toward strategies for dealing with existing power relations, the inclusion and participation of citizens, and political institutions. The attempts made by deep ecology to develop these arenas are outlined below in depth. Many of these attempts have been left incomplete, but it is vital to understand how deep ecology conceptualizes certain political issues and develops its vision of an ecocentric political society in order to realize what has been left out of the theory and how the theory can adequately respond to critiques that have been made against it.

The aforementioned aspects of political theory such as agency, power, participation, and the structuring of economies and political institutions are essential for the development of a robust political theory for many reasons. For one, without identifying the "problems of agency" that serve to perpetuate social and economic relations, developing a theory of action that seeks to create ecocentric societies and dismantle the current political and economic systems proves difficult if not impossible. Political theories must also address how these structures of power remain in place for such long periods of time, despite perpetuating environmental degradation (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 12). Moreover, participation matters because who is included in political decision-making and who is excluded in part determines not only how decisions are made, but the priorities of a political society and the field of options that are available to decision-makers. Lastly, economics matters because power matters; economic and political institutions are intimately tied to one another and are often maintained by the same powerful interests in a political society.

Deep ecology, as mentioned, does not represent a unified area of political thought; however, Robyn Eckersley has attempted to flesh out deep ecology's philosophical assumptions into a political theory of ecocentrism. Moreover, Arne Naess has developed a platform intended to spur a political movement of deep ecology, and Andrew McLaughlin has further developed deep ecology in terms of how economic arrangements should be constructed under ecocentric political conditions. These and many other authors have made vital contributions to the field of deep ecology as political theory. This section will proceed by outlining the political visions of deep ecology, the contributions of the theory regarding participation and inclusion, and certain significant policy aspects that prove relevant to my overall analysis.

Interestingly, Robyn Eckersley develops her own unique political theory of ecocentrism that reflects and embodies many of the main aspects of deep ecology. In the first few chapters of her book *Ecocentrism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach* (1992), she develops what she refers to as an ecocentric emancipatory eco-politics, arguing that ecocentrism can act as a strategy that ensures the flourishing of nonhuman life in addition to concerning itself with human emancipation (Eckersley, 1992, p. 27). Though Eckersley does not label herself a "deep ecologist," her insights are clearly related to the main tenets of deep ecology, and my argument. For example, she discusses concepts in deep ecology such as intrinsic value and internal relatedness and favors the development of ecological consciousnesses in individuals, arguing in favor of a "reorientation of our [humanity's] place in the evolutionary drama" (Eckersley, 1992, p. 49, 59). Moreover, she clarifies ecocentric political thought by dividing it into three dimensions, including autopoietic intrinsic value theory, transpersonal ecology, and ecofeminism (Eckersley, 1992, pp. 60-3). Most importantly, however, she adds an explicitly political dimension to deep ecology that had previously been lacking in much of the literature.

For the purposes my argument in this section, Eckersley's designations of autopoietic intrinsic value theory and transpersonal ecology both embody a variety of perspectives within deep ecology. Autopoietic intrinsic value theory, according to Eckersley, contends that all ecosystemic processes, individual organisms, and species have value for their own sake. By arguing that both individuals and ecosystems have value for their own sake, autopoietic intrinsic value theory avoids favoring the whole over the individual, and therefore also avoids potentially sacrificing the latter in the name of the former (Eckersley, 1992, pp. 60-1). Additionally, transpersonal ecology is characterized by its attempts to cultivate a "wider sense of self" in individuals in order to develop their identification with all living things and promote the ability of these individuals to form more ethical relations with nature (Eckersley, 1992, pp. 61-2). These two types of ecocentrism undergird and reinforce the types of political visions that emerge in deep ecology, and Eckersley's contributions to this field will emerge throughout this analysis.

Deep ecology has often contended that it promotes a political movement, rather than a concrete set of political-philosophical positions (Naess, 1986, p. 67). This intention is evident when one examines Naess' so-called "Platform for Deep Ecology" (Naess, 1986, p. 68). First of all, the language of formulating a platform identifies deep ecology as a movement rather than a rigorous political theoretical vision that incorporates the typical aspects inherent in most political theories listed above. Despite the perception of deep ecology as a movement, it nevertheless proves essential to examine to what extent its political platforms rely upon normative philosophical assertions to identify acceptable political and political theoretical positions. Naess' platform contains eight points that he argues should be accepted across the board by deep ecologists. He notes that some points may be formulated differently by those within the movement, but the spirit and ultimate assertions of the points should remain closely aligned with the original points formulated by him (Naess, 1986, 68). Some of these points are philosophical, while others tend toward the political theoretical and politics more generally.

Point number one establishes the already discussed assumption of intrinsic value. Point two argues that diversity amongst life forms is also intrinsically valuable (Naess, 1986, p. 68). The third point, however, takes points one and two to establish a more ethical and active assertion: “Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs” (Naess, 1986, p. 68). Although the importance of the concept of vital needs in deep ecology has been discussed, it is important to acknowledge that Naess does not explicitly attempt to clarify or reduce this vague notion of needs to more specific formulations. This lack of specificity leaves room for differing needs across cultures and amongst differing populations of humans. Point four goes on to assert that flourishing of non-human life can only exist in relation to a significantly smaller human population. Similarly, point five argues that human activity and interference in the world currently exceeds sustainable levels for the flourishing of all life on the planet. Piggybacking on points four and five, point six explicitly states that the current state of political arrangements, ideological structures, and technological forces must change in profound ways in order for societies to attain true ecological sustainability. Moreover, point seven argues that the change in ideological structures will promote quality of life rather than accumulation of material goods. And finally, point eight argues that those who agree with the aforementioned points have an obligation to act to promote these points and change the current state of affairs (Naess, 1986, p. 68). All of the above points either directly imply political and normative positions or invoke a call to action. Other deep ecologists have largely reiterated and supported these eight points in their analyses of what needs to be done to create an ecologically sustainable world governed by ecocentric politics.

Indeed, deep ecologists would almost always favor promoting political arrangements that account for their holistic ontology. Despite a lack of unity between proposals for types of ecopolitical arrangements in the deep ecology literature, one can assume that holism and the importance of recognizing interconnectedness and interdependence would undergird all proposals for political arrangements, actions, and decision-making processes. The importance of arranging political societies to account for other life forms and account for externalities in decision-making should exist as the highest priority in deep ecology as political theory.

In this regard, Eckersley (1992) addresses the specific personal and political activities that would result from the aforementioned emphasis on intrinsic value and holistic relations in deep ecology. Given that human knowledge of the delicate balance of species and ecosystems is flawed, she argues that caution (or pre-caution perhaps) would be the most practical principle to guide human action that follows from this notion of intrinsic value. She also notes that the personal feeling that follows from notions of intrinsic value and interconnectedness is empathy (p. 28). On a personal level, then, empathy is vital for development of an ecocentric consciousness, while caution is required at the level of political action. Harold Glasser (2011) refers to this type of empathy as "expanding our sphere of concern through wide-identification to *all living beings* [author's italics]…" (pp. 61). Moreover, the practical application of precautionary political action would take into account both consequences for the natural world and consequences for human societies. Empathy, then, would become the defining impetus behind individual actions, while the principle of precaution would guide political decision-making at all levels of government—undergirded by feelings of empathy toward the natural world in these individuals that make up governments and communities of citizens.

Furthermore, governance according to bioregions is also an important political enunciation that deserves consideration in the formation of ecocentrically minded human communities. David Harvey (1996) notes that ecocentrists often formulate decentralized localities as the life-forces behind democratic political deliberation and as the beginning venues for deliberating ecological questions (pp. 170-1, 303). Moreover, Andrew McLaughlin (1993) argues that this decentralized form of democracy is necessary to achieve meaningful political mechanisms directly related to one's own surrounding ecosystem. He also notes, however, that bioregional democracy cannot be the only political mechanism because ecological problems often span bioregions and even the globe (pp. 205-10). Deep ecology favors bioregionalism as its main form of political organization in order to establish a direct linkage between citizens and the surrounding nature that they experience on a regular basis, presuming that these types of political arrangements will reinforce the concept of interconnectedness and emphasize the direct influence that citizens have on their surrounding ecosystems and vice versa. By contrast, however, some deep ecologists such as McLaughlin have also cautioned that bioregionalism may not account for all the political and ethical issues that arise between humans and nature (McLaughlin, 1993, pp. 205-10).

Relatedly, Eckersley (1992) does a very thorough job of realistically discussing the merits and downfalls of bioregional political arrangements. She begins by noting that bioregionalism is a distinctly North American phenomenon that has not yet developed into a globalized theory of societal organization but that it can have unique benefits for nature. For example, she argues that this form of social organization could potentially benefit land and water management by accounting for and protecting watersheds, wildlife populations, and land health within bioregional boundaries. In addition, bioregionalism can serve an educational role by promoting that individuals think in terms of how their actions affect their specific bioregion and how their actions directly relate to the flourishing or non-flourishing of other living beings

(Eckersley, 1992, pp. 168-9). The potential downfalls of living and organizing political societies by bioregion, however, according to Eckersley, cannot be discounted by deep ecology.

Thus she points out that bioregional space rarely conforms to homogenous groups of humans. Just as the boundaries of nation-states rarely conform perfectly to cultural, ethnic, and religious boundaries, so too will bioregions contain heterogeneous groups of people with different ideological points of view and different formulations of what it means to be a human and relate to nature (Eckersley, 1992, p. 169). Given this heterogeneity, Eckersley suggests that instead of concentrating on how bioregions can come together to promote ecological goals, those in favor of these bioregional political units should focus on what forms of political arrangements would most likely result in ecologically minded decision-making (Eckersley, 1992, p. 169). Moreover, she realizes that these heterogeneous groups within bioregions may not necessarily all possess "bioregional consciousnesses." Although bioregional decision-making may be promising for certain specified forms of decision-making regarding the local environment and even watersheds, Eckersley also ultimately concludes that bioregionalism cannot be the sole form of governance in ecologically-minded societies (Eckersley, 1992, p. 169-70).

In addition to how societies arrange themselves into political units, deep ecology also formulates at least some theories regarding political participation. According to Eckersley, theories of ecocentrism also aspire to achieve social justice in political society and in participatory mechanisms (Eckersley, 1992, p. 175). Although deep ecology does not usually discuss social justice as explicitly, it does acknowledge that the human species must also treat other humans with respect since these other humans are also caught in the holistic web of ecological interrelations (See Naess, 1986a, pp. 225-27). Yet, Eckersley (1992) perhaps provides the one of the most practical political institutional structures for a society governed by ecocentric principles that accounts for difference and acknowledges the dual need for ecological priorities and social justice. She argues that,

> An ecocentric perspective would seem to be more consonant with a political decision making framework that can represent, address, and resolve—or at least accommodate—social and cultural differences both within and across communities and regions. This would require a multitiered institutional framework that ensures the dispersal of political power *between* [author's italics] the center and the periphery…in order to provide checks and balances in both directions (pp. 175-6).

Eckersley clearly not only favors democratic mechanisms in the governance of ecocentric societies, but she also favors both horizontal and vertical distributions of power in order to account for difference and ensure minority participation in the democratic processes of government (Eckersley, 1992, pp. 175-6). Although deep ecology generally does not provide such explicit contentions about democracy and inclusion, Eckersley's comments represent an important exception to this rule.

As noted above, deep ecology emphasizes the importance of decentralization in government and political decision-making. McLaughlin (1993) argues that decentralized democracy is a necessity for meaningful political arrangements in ecological societies (p. 204). He notes that, "The scale of industrial states is such that their versions of political democracy…enable little effective rule by citizens" (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 204). Moreover, decentralization allows communities to control their own destinies, their own economic endeavors, and regulate powerful interests more easily than at the level of nation-states and international NGOs. Decentralized structures of governance also allow rationally ecological societies to develop given the nearness between nature and citizens in these types of organizational structures. Part of the reason that certain deep ecologists favor decentralized forms of political decision-making is because they see these forms of governance as allowing citizens to identify deeply with the place that they reside and commit themselves to the fate of their immediate surroundings (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 203-7). While decentralization might need to exist as part of a deep ecological political program, deep ecology tends to promote it as a one-size-fits-all solution to problems in environmental governance and issues regarding local stakeholders in ecological processes.

Bron Taylor (2000) criticizes deep ecology for failing to recognize that all political decisions and even bioregional boundaries will be "contested and negotiated" (p. 281-2). In addition, Taylor argues that those who advocate for bioregional political arrangements must recognize the importance of democratic mechanisms, the potential violence associated with the rearrangement of political units, and the importance of globalization in determining participation and networks of governance (Taylor, 2000, pp. 281-3). Although Eckersley (1992) does some of these things, overall, deep ecologists tend to disagree about precisely what types of political arrangements and mechanisms of participation would work best in ecocentric societies.

Importantly, deep ecology also makes a number of assertions about what policies would be most important to discuss in ecocentric societies. Addressing and reconciling the ecological issues associated with human population growth is one of these important policy issues in deep ecology. Orlando José Ferrer Montaño (2006) argues that reduction in worldwide population levels in order for humans to properly respect their own species and nonhuman nature as well is absolutely necessary (p. 183-6, 192). He subsequently notes that while population reduction policies in developing countries will be an essential facet of overall global population reduction, the reduction of population in developed countries is even more vital due to these nation-states' rates of overconsumption (Montaño, 2006, pp. 190-3). Montaño goes further in his analysis of how population reduction should occur than most deep ecologists. He notes that education is a key policy strategy for population reduction worldwide (Montaño, 2006, pp. 192-3). Naess

(1988) simply states that “World population at the present level threatens ecosystems but the population and behavior of industrial states more than that of any others. Human population is today excessive” (p. 87). Despite the acknowledgement by deep ecology that the industrialized world has at least as much of a role to play in reducing global populations as less developed countries, it does not necessarily propose specific and ethical ways to deal with these reductions.

The few deep ecologists that have promoted more specific policy solutions to the issue of population have often done so, critics argue, through language that belittles the Global South and tends to promote ethically questionable and largely impractical methods for population reduction (See Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997, all). These deep ecologists have focused on the industrialized world in order to curb population, but they rarely address how population reduction might occur ethically in the Global South. For example, activist, writer, and proclaimed deep ecologist Dave Foreman notes in his book, *Man Swarm and the Killing of Wildlife* (2011), that a growing human population is unquestionably bad for wildlife across the globe (p. 201). He continues on to propose that the carrying capacity of the Earth has been overshot by billions, and that a sustainable human population should be approximately two billion, and thus calls for action in the form of citizens encouraging their governments to put a cap on population in a given nation-state (Foreman, 2011, p. 207-23). Again, attempts such as Foreman’s to create specific policies for reducing population have largely been unsustainable at best, and at worst, ethically suspect.

If population control has been part of deep ecology’s arsenal of policy prescriptions based on its philosophical positions, wilderness preservation has also often been cited as a main political aspiration of the deep ecology movement. Indeed, Devall and Sessions (1985) argue that wilderness preservation (and the experience of wilderness) allows ecological consciousness to develop in the individual, noting that wilderness preservation should be a goal of both industrialized and non-industrialized nation-states (presumably, the Global South). They argue that without non-economically driven wilderness preservation policies, wildernesses across the globe will be decimated and that this will result in biodiversity losses unacceptable given principles of deep ecology like biocentric egalitarianism and intrinsic value (pp. 110-129). Eckersley (1992) further elaborates on this policy prescription by stating that the ecocentric emancipatory position is an advocate of the preservation of vast wilderness areas regardless of whether or not preservation directly benefits the human species (p. 46). Moreover, Naess (1995) argues that the tendency to preserve wilderness is appropriate on a global scale, and that many cultures around the globe are compatible with and can live in the context of wilderness preservation (pp. 280-3). Problems arise for Naess, however, when the populations of "third world" nations grow so large that traditional lifestyles are no longer compatible with the flourishing of wild places that happen to also be occupied by humans (Naess, 1995, pp. 280-4). Despite Naess' concern, deep ecology rarely formulates a position on how to deal with spaces that are no longer compatible with wilderness preservation in the traditional sense.

Despite the call for global wilderness preservation, deep ecology does not adequately address root causes of human suffering and ecological degradation beyond anthropocentrism, failing to acknowledge how economics plays a role in environmental degradation and the loss of wilderness. Likewise, deep ecology acknowledges that industrial growth and the growth paradigm of capitalism are unsuitable for the flourishing of life on the planet in the context of an ecocentric political society, but it does not directly couple this unsuitability of growth with a call for explicit and specific non-capitalist economic systems (Naess, 1986, pp. 68-73). McLaughlin (1993) perhaps is the most specific in this regard and rejects the notion outright that a capitalist economic system could exist alongside an ecologically sustainable society. The growth paradigm implicit in capitalism is one such reason why it is an incompatible economic system for ecologically sustainable societies (pp. 19-21; 44). Deep ecology needs to acknowledge that specific policy formulations regarding the need for ecocentric economic systems must be present in its analysis in order to provide a complete picture and potential route for the formation of ecocentric political societies.

Political and economic systems are intimately tied systems in global power relations. Not only are these two institutional forces intimately tied because they both contribute to and perpetuate environmental degradation, but also because they each rely on closely aligned systems of power. Additionally, political systems can either promote or prevent certain economic arrangements in a society by either condoning or forbidding certain economic activities through policymaking. Deep ecology must not only acknowledge these ties between economic and political systems, it must also acknowledge that the systems of power that perpetuate the dominant forms of each in political societies must be addressed in advance of the formation of ecocentric societies.

Deep ecology has made some valuable contributions to the field of environmental political theory. It has formulated a specific platform suitable for a political movement, and thus far focused on policy issues such as population control, wilderness preservation, and the halting of industrialism (as an important cause of environmental harm). It has also promoted forms of governance such as bioregionalism that have branched off from deep ecology and formed entirely separate areas of study in environmental political thought. Moreover, it has insisted that anthropocentrism acts as a root cause of ecological degradation and proposed that ecocentric political arrangements will mitigate and possibly end environmental harm while promoting more ethical relations between humans and nature. Despite these important contributions, deep ecology has yet to develop a robust and unified political theory that accounts for issues of inclusion, power, participation, and political and economic institutions. Given this absence and an inadequate propensity to defend the theory itself, deep ecology has been susceptible to a variety of critiques from both radical and reformist environmental thought, often distracting from its importance as a branch of radical ecopolitical theory.

Major Critiques and Barriers to Prominence

Given the lack of unity and presence of a comprehensive theory of politics in deep ecology, many theorists in other fields of ecopolitical thought (radical and reformist) have critiqued a variety of aspects of the theory. Critiques have been made by theorists from liberal reform environmentalism, eco-socialism, ecofeminism, social ecology or eco-anarchism, and from theorists directly concerned with environmental degradation in and inclusion of populations in the Global South. Due to these critiques and the lack of a unified political theory, deep ecology has not emerged from amongst these other theories as a pre-eminent force in the radical dimension of ecopolitical thought. The subsequent chapters utilize both critiques from social ecology and critiques concerned with the Global South in order to defend deep ecology and formulate new political theoretical solutions to these critiques, enhancing the value of deep ecology as a strain of radical ecopolitical thought. While other radical ecopolitical theories, such as ecofeminism, have also critiqued deep ecology, my research focuses on the former two for a variety of significant reasons. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to briefly examine how and why ecofeminism critiques deep ecology in order to justify its absence from my analysis.

Ecofeminism's radical critique of deep ecology stems from a different issue than do other radical critiques. On the one hand, ecofeminism has argued that deep ecology wrongly characterizes the root cause of environmental degradation as anthropocentrism, rather than androcentrism. Ecofeminism often sees this characterization by deep ecology as placing equal blame on women and men for environmental degradation, and would instead argue that men in particular are more to blame for this harm than humans in general (Fox, 1989, pp. 9-10). On the other hand, Jim Cheney (1987) has argued the ecofeminism has characterized deep ecology itself as being androcentric (pp. 118-19). Fox (1989) disagrees with Cheney's characterization of deep ecology, and acknowledges that fewer ecofeminists argue from this line of critique (pp. 9-11). In spite of Cheney's (1987) contention, the critiques emerging from ecofeminism have more readily accepted the potential of deep ecology to exist as a viable strain of ecopolitical thought that only adds to the potential field of solutions to environmental degradation. While these critiques are important and must, at some point, be addressed by deep ecology—they do not constitute a critique the completely restricts deep ecology at its core. Yes, ecofeminism critiques the major critique that deep ecology presents of contemporary society, but it has less to say about the ethical and philosophical assertions of the theory or the proposed policy solutions that some deep ecologists have put forth.

Murray Bookchin—the founder of social ecology—has made some of the most extensive and relevant (as well as, at times, overly abrasive) critiques of deep ecology from a social and institutional standpoint, arguing that the examination of social relations and institutional forces represents a more valid approach to discovering the root causes of environmental harm (Bookchin, 1980; 1987; 1989; 1990; 1991). Indeed, social ecology has critiqued deep ecology in a way that not only limits its potential as a radical ecopolitical theory, but also in a way that poses questions about all aspects of the theory itself, including its characterization of the human-nature relationship. Moreover, social ecology has questioned deep ecology's insistence on anthropocentrism as a root cause of environmental degradation, at the same time critiquing its visions for an ecocentric society absent the anthropocentric ethic.

Critiques from social ecology cause a variety of issues for deep ecology, including limiting its ability to make cultural arguments for change toward ecocentric societies and questioning the value of its formulation of the human-nature relationship for combatting environmental issues. Social ecology makes deep critiques of deep ecology, and ongoing debates between the two theories still emerge today. In these ongoing debates, moreover, deep ecology has yet to resolve some key issues that social ecology raises such as how blaming anthropocentrism as a root cause of environmental harm can play a role in bringing to light the merits of ecocentrism and how wider identification with nature can play a role in spurring ecocentric political action, damaging its own viability as a radical ecopolitical theory. For these reasons, it is essential that deep ecology is reconstructed based on two significant critiques that social ecology raises of the theory.

Specifically, two major critiques have emerged from social ecology at deep ecology. First, social ecology has accused deep ecology of being misanthropic, failing to acknowledge the unique contributions that human beings have made and can make in the formation of more ethical socio-political societies and more ethical environmental policies. Moreover, social ecology has contended that the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide promoted by deep ecology is all but useless in pinpointing the major causes of ecological degradation and, in turn, human suffering and only serves to further alienate humans from nature (Bookchin, 1987, p. 19). Secondly, social ecology promotes a very different version of the way that human beings relate to nature, critiquing deep ecology's emphasis on an ontological holism that promotes interconnectedness and wider identification (Bookchin, 1990, pp. 114-16). These two critiques serve to suppress the promise that deep ecology makes toward the formation of ecocentric societies based on a wider identification with nature and more ethical political arrangements and practices, proposing a vastly different set of critiques of contemporary society and a vastly different conception of how humans relate to nature. Consequently, the critiques from social ecology cannot remain under-appreciated or inadequately addressed by deep ecology.

Equally important is deep ecology's failure at becoming a theory of social inclusivity that promotes global participation in the development of ecocentric societies. Given this failure, it is equally essential that the largely absent Global South be addressed for the role that it can play in the formation of ecocentric societies and for the critiques that have emerged regarding the absence of this entire region of the globe from deep ecology. These critiques regarding the Global South are less numerous than those from social ecology, but they are just as important in that they too prevent deep ecology from becoming a leading theory of radical ecopolitical thought. Rethinking deep ecology involves not only addressing these critiques, but intentionally incorporating concerns from the Global South into the theory while at the same time avoiding colonial discourses that only serve to "other" these regions of the globe. Practically speaking, deep ecology cannot ignore the plight of such a large human population in the formulations of its ethical, philosophical, and political visions. Deep ecology, therefore, must address these critiques as well in pursuit of its rightful position in radical ecopolitical thought.

The critiques regarding the Global South emerge from a small body of literature, but the issues that are raised become immense given the significance of issues of inclusivity, participation, power, and agency in political theory. While social ecology tends to critique the existing status of deep ecology and the mistakes that it has made along the way, these critiques regarding the Global South tend to derail deep ecology for what it lacks, for the issues that it leaves out of its theory and the sparse attention given to how ecocentric societies can emerge as beacons of inclusivity that reject contemporary structures of power and domination. Furthermore, deep ecology is implicated for its participation both in appropriation and in certain political values relating to Western domination that tend to reinforce the values of neocolonialism, including its incorporation of wilderness preservation and population control into its policy positions (See Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997, all).

Two major critiques emerge from those concerned with the Global South. These charges include the following: 1. Deep ecology promotes neocolonialist and imperialist policies that reflect Western ideals such as wilderness preservation in addition to appropriating other cultures for the purposes of promoting its theory (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997, all; Guha, 1998, pp. 271-9). 2. Deep ecology fails to become a theory of inclusivity that accounts for differences across cultures and that explicitly promotes democratic arrangements along with dismantling current structures of power that conceptually exclude entire populations in the Global South from decision-making processes regarding the environment, especially at the local level.

My analysis focuses on critiques of deep ecology from theories and critics that seek radical change and a radical rethinking of humanity's relations with nature and with one another. Reformist critiques are not included in the analysis because the purpose of this research is to re-invigorate deep ecology to the level of other radical ecopolitical theories. Deep ecology, as mentioned in the introduction, can serve a necessary and important function in the formation of ecological societies because it explicitly and deliberately incorporates intrinsic value and nature's equal right to flourishing into politics, in addition to utilizing anthropocentric culture as the contemporary ethic that only furthers environmental harm. It formulates a (though not currently unified) theory of the human-nature relationship that accounts for nature and attempts to center nature on a morally equivalent plane to human beings, arguing that human beings are intimately interconnected with and interdependent on nature. For these and other reasons, deep ecology needs to address the above critiques from social ecology and from the Global South in order to be part of the debate surrounding the merits of radical political ecology, and to promote itself as a valid and necessary strain in this field. These two bodies of critique have been inadequately addressed or ignored altogether by deep ecology, and my analysis not only analyzes these critiques but also revises deep ecology in ways that more thoroughly account for its radical argument in favor of ecocentric cultural change and its unique formulation of the human-nature relationship. In addition, I revise deep ecology so that it no longer promotes discourses of colonialism and becomes more radically inclusive in its overall politics.

And finally, in its various revisions of deep ecology, my analysis also seeks to point out the unique and specific areas where deep ecology proves strongest in terms of spurring action and creating conditions of ecological sustainability. These particular areas, such as promoting cultural change in favor of ecocentrism, for example, are unique among radical ecopolitical theories and serve to further validate the unique role that deep ecology can play in the transformation of contemporary societies toward greater sustainability. Importantly, my analysis does not seek to weaken any other radical ecopolitical theories in the process of re-envisioning deep ecology. Rather, I promote the unique ways that deep ecology can contribute to the overall debate regarding how political societies can account for nature and promote greater flourishing for both nature and for humanity.

Chapter 3: Challenging Deep Ecology: Social Ecology, Human Hierarchy, and the Charge of Misanthropy

Introduction

Many consider Murray Bookchin to be the founder of social ecology, a radical strain of ecopolitical theory inspired primarily by anarchist political thought, which diverges significantly from deep ecology, and also conceptualizes nature in ontologically different ways. Moreover, social ecology has made many important contributions to radical ecopolitical thought from a social and institutional standpoint, blaming environmental harm and social ills on contemporary social relations of hierarchy and institutional arrangements that reinforce hierarchy and the domination of humans and nature. Unlike deep ecology, Bookchin does not contend that social ecology is ecocentric; by contrast, he argues that the ecocentric/anthropocentric divide is a false binary, and that social ecology is instead a form of dialectical naturalism—a concept that will be elaborated on shortly (Keulartz, 1998, p. 117). Importantly, social ecology differs from deep ecology not only in its conception of how humans relate to nature, but also in its conception of the root causes of environmental destruction and the solutions to this and other socio-natural problems.

This chapter addresses two main critiques that social ecology has made of deep ecology in addition to a few important minor critiques related to the main two. These critiques seemingly damage deep ecology by questioning some main aspects of the theory, including its attitude toward human beings related to its characterization of anthropocentrism as a root cause of environmental harm and its ontological conception of nature. Social ecology, therefore, contends that deep ecology promotes misanthropic values while at the same time placing blame on false causes of environmental degradation like anthropocentrism (Bookchin, 1987, pp. 231-2;

Keulartz, 1998, p. 117). Moreover, social ecology argues that deep ecology has the potential to become a theory that supports authoritarian political arrangements in addition to formulating an inadequate conceptualization of the human-nature relationship and the role that nature should play in the lives of humans (Bookchin, 1987, pp. 5-6). All of these critiques, moreover, accuse deep ecology of denying the uniqueness of human beings and the role that human agency can play in establishing non-hierarchical social institutions that account for nature, while at the same time accusing deep ecology of ignoring the role of social domination in environmental degradation.

Importantly, deep ecology contends that environmental problems must be solved culturally, given that environmental problems result from a problematic relationship between humans and nature; social ecology, however, contends that social problems must be solved through drastic changes to social institutions, and these changes must precede a focus on environmental problems. For social ecology, environmental problems will be solved by primarily addressing social problems, especially hierarchies and the institutions that uphold these hierarchies (Bookchin, 1987, pp. 18-22). Most importantly, if social ecology’s solutions to environmental degradation prove inadequate, deep ecology will provide an additional vital avenue driven by deep cultural change for resolving environmental issues in the name of both natural and human flourishing. Despite disagreement about the causes of and radical solutions to environmental problems, deep ecology can provide a culturally based and individualized path to creating better practices toward the environment while social ecology can focus on how institutions reinforce human domination that in turn contributes to environmental harm.

Despite the potential openings for action that exist in both deep ecology and social ecology, the feuds between these two schools of thought have assisted in hampering each from finding common ground in the field of radical political ecology. Brian Tokar (1988) characterizes this constant bickering between social ecology and deep ecology, saying that,

> The increasingly bitter debate between these approaches, with their very different theoretical assumptions and political styles, threatens to obscure the essential work of movement-building and the development of more lasting alliances among people dedicated to saving the earth and creating more ecologically sound ways to live upon it (p. 132).

Importantly, my analysis does not seek to undermine the value of social ecology, but instead seeks to address critiques from that school of thought that have been inadequately addressed by deep ecology in hopes that a more comprehensive understanding of how these two fields relate will enable what Tokar (1988) envisions, a shift amongst these schools of thought toward the building of alliances rather than the burning of bridges.

In addition to adequately addressing the above critiques, this chapter seeks to establish the similarities between deep ecology and social ecology in order to provide common ground between these competing strains of radical ecopolitical thought, outlining the unique role that each theory could play in the formation and maintenance of radical ecopolitical societies. In addition, the inclusion of these similarities in my analysis serves to point out that the critiques that social ecology makes of deep ecology are not ultimately as devastating to the latter as they may first appear. Moreover, this chapter does not contend that there has been a lack of dialogue between these two theories, but instead that deep ecology's responses to these critiques have been both inadequate and that it has failed to formulate a more comprehensive and unified theory of radical ecopolitical thought in the process of defending its theory. I acknowledge that these two theories have very divergent ontologies and that finding common ground amongst them is not an easy task, nor one that many theorists in these fields find palatable. My contention, however, is that an opening of dialogue (rather than divisive rhetoric and name-calling, which has been the norm thus far) between these two theories would create a merging of ideas that could pinpoint political openings in contemporary society that would allow for more fruitful and diversified forms of discussion regarding environmental problems and their solutions.

Despite the potential for the formation of a culture of alliance-building between deep ecology and social ecology, my overall goal is still to defend deep ecology's value against critiques from social ecology. If these issues are not addressed in the initial stages of a re-formulation of deep ecology toward a more unified political theory, the chances of developing political opportunities for constructive dialogue between the two theories greatly diminishes. Deep ecology has a great deal of value to add to the radical ecopolitical debate, including that they make an argument that focuses on cultural change and the assertion that specific ethical values (values largely absent from other radical theories) can play a significant role in these overall cultural changes. According to deep ecology, these cultural changes will ultimately lead to political and social-institutional changes—radical changes sought by both social ecology and deep ecology in the name of an ecologically sound contemporary society. My analysis begins with a brief outline of social ecology to illustrate its main arguments and theories regarding how human beings relate to nature followed by the main critiques of deep ecology and ways that deep ecology can respond to and reconcile these critiques. Lastly, I make a brief comparative analysis of the two theories, gauging what each has to add to radical ecopolitical debates and insisting that both are valuable for the formation of ecological societies for a variety of significant reasons.

The Basic Tenets of Social Ecology

Social ecology contends that all ecological problems have their roots in social problems and society in general (Bookchin, 1987, p. 3). As mentioned, social ecology is also rooted in the anarchist tradition, and in turn, blames hierarchy "in all its forms" for causing both social and environmental problems (Bookchin, 1987, p. 18). Moreover, Bookchin attempts to develop a comprehensive "ethics of complementarity" that attempts to re-place both human social and natural evolutionary unfolding on the same trajectory, where the actions of humans benefit both nature and their fellow humans (Best, 1998, p. 336). Given these facets, social ecology attempts to create a comprehensive theory that provides explanation for and rational, yet radical solutions for dealing with both social and ecological problems. Since these two types of problems are intimately linked, according to social ecology, the solutions to both lie in the dissolution of hierarchy and domination in social and political arrangements (Best, 1998, p 336-8).

Furthermore, social ecology also seeks to re-connect the rift it perceives between nature and society. For example, Bookchin (1982) argues that the theory of social ecology also advocates its positions from a holistic ontological standpoint (pp. 22-3). This holism of social ecology, however, proves different from that of deep ecology. Bookchin (1982) describes how holism relates to social ecology as follows:

> Wholeness comprises the variegated structures, the articulations, and the mediations that impart to the whole a rich variety of forms and thereby add unique qualitative properties to what a strictly analytic mind often reduces to 'innumerable' and 'random' details" (p. 23).

Importantly, social ecology's holistic vision develops an eco-philosophy that recognizes the twin evolutionary trajectories of man and nature, but also one that recognizes the uniqueness and differential structures, processes, and individuals that comprise and contribute to these two evolutionarily intertwined groups.

While deep ecology emphasizes the similarities between humans and nature, and how each of these groups can contribute to one another's overall flourishing, Bookchin (1982) emphasizes wholeness in terms of diversity. He argues that, "…ecological wholeness is not an immutable homogeneity but rather the very opposite—a dynamic *unity of diversity* [author's italics]. In nature, balance and harmony are achieved by ever-changing differentiation, by ever-expanding diversity" (p. 24). By emphasizing diversity and differentiation, social ecologists ground their argument regarding the unnecessary forms of hierarchy that dominate socio-cultural institutions and human societies. For human beings, cultural and social differentiation and diversity contributes to hierarchy, allowing it to become a force of domination and oppression. In nature, however, hierarchy is absent. Differentiation leads to hierarchy for human beings because it allows different groups of humans and different instrumentally valuable animals and ecosystems to be categorized and ranked based on those categories. Differentiation, importantly, is the source of hierarchy and the process by which both humans and nature are granted expanded prospects for freedom, the most important teleological goal which social ecology emphasizes (Bookchin, 1989, pp. 41-2; p. 110-126).

At bottom, environmental problems appear to not only be rooted in social problems broadly speaking, but in the specific anti-ecological forms of social arrangement that dominate global society. Not only do these dominant social paradigms breed environmental ills, but they also serve to further separate humans from their own evolutionary processes and their proper place in the broader ecology. Bookchin has argued that hierarchy causes social arrangements and institutions that directly and indirectly result in environmental degradation. For example, the human tendency to dominate other human beings through hierarchical structures has directly influenced the tendency for these same groups of humans to dominate and destroy the environment through mechanisms such as capitalism and colonialism (Best, 1998, p. 137).

Indeed, hierarchy is the quintessential social problem dealt with by social ecology, and the theory argues that all hierarchy is negative, and plays absolutely no positive organizing function in human societies. Moreover, Bookchin (1982) argues that hierarchy threatens the flourishing of humans as well as the flourishing of nature, and that nonhierarchical structures exist in nature, and should also exist as the norm in contemporary society. Hierarchical structures and institutions often succeed at homogenizing humans, resulting in domination, and in turn, hierarchy encourages these same humans to further distance themselves from their evolutionary relatedness to nature and to each other (p. 36-41). The way in which humans actually relate to nature, however, is often obscured by these hierarchies according to social ecology.

Consequently, social ecology makes important claims about how the way that knowledge is gained relates to humanity's relationship to the natural world. In the same way that humans can never fully know all the contributions to diversity that their species makes both culturally and socio-politically, humans can also never truly know the full spectrum of differentiation and diversity in the natural world (Bookchin, 1982, p. 39). Moreover, social ecology also emphasizes the dialectical pattern of ecologically evolutionary processes (Bookchin, 1980, p. 270). Bookchin argues that, "The natural world, left largely to itself, evolves by colonizing the planet with ever more diversified life forms and increasingly complex interrelationships between species in the form of food chains and food webs" (Bookchin, 1980, p. 271). Relatedly, the importance of ever-expanding differentiation and diversity in social ecology directly relates directly to a dialectically driven pursuit of ever-increasing human freedom (Light, 1998, pp. 356-7).

Furthermore, this dialectical pattern demonstrates that nature can be divided into two realms: first nature and second nature. For social ecology, first nature constitutes the natural world; second nature constitutes human beings, human communities, and all of the cultural and political institutions that emerge as part of human societies worldwide (Bookchin, 1989, pp. 201-3). First nature, according to Bookchin, also refers to all natural evolution that has contributed to the differentiation and complexity of the natural world apart from humans. Relatedly, however, second nature refers to human social evolution as it relates to the development of cultural differentiation and the development of diverse social and political institutions. Moreover, second nature derives from and is intimately related to first nature, but second nature also consists of human agency, and this agency allows for increasing social diversity, which for Bookchin, contributes to and enhances freedom—the ideal state of social relations (Light, 1998, pp. 356-7). For social ecology, then, human freedom is the ultimate pinnacle of human development, and this ability to reach toward this ideal in the human species derives directly from first nature, or natural evolutionary tendencies.

Importantly for Bookchin's (1990) conceptualization of nature, both first and second nature derive from the same evolutionary processes, and he argues in favor of a dialectical naturalism that accounts for these two intertwined evolutionary trajectories. For example, he argues that, "In a naturalistic dialectic, both past and future are of a cumulative, logical, and objective continuum that includes the present…Past, present, and future are a cumulatively graded process that thought can truly interpret and render meaningful" (p. 23). Indeed, Bookchin contends that humans can render nature knowable based on this dialectical process of evolutionary development. Moreover, he interprets both "natures" as consisting of processes that can be rationally analyzed and interpreted by humans in the pursuit of calculating the future trajectory of both first and second natures (Bookchin, 1990, p. 23).

Overall, social ecology proposes solutions to ecological problems by proposing the abolishment of institutions that reinforce hierarchy and domination, arguing that these deep changes in the way that social institutions operate will ultimately lead to more meaningful relations between humans and nature while also promoting greater freedom for humanity. By contrast, deep ecology proposes changes in both individuals and cultures that reinforce the anthropocentric ethic that characterizes contemporary society, arguing that fundamental changes in the way humans place themselves in relation to the natural world will result in better environmental practices and political arrangements that intrinsically value nature. Moreover, deep ecology proposes that social institutions that cause environmental harm are undergirded by a larger anthropocentric ethic that needs dismantled first and foremost in order to promote the formation of ecological societies. These differences have often caused conflict, and competing interpretations of which theory best characterizes the realities of the human-nature relationship have also emerged from theorists on each side of the debate.

Social Ecology's Critiques of Deep Ecology

Although social ecology makes numerous critiques against deep ecology, this chapter focuses on the two critiques that present the most fundamental challenges to deep ecology. First of all, I discuss the problem of misanthropy and how it results in limiting human agency to solve environmental problems in deep ecology. Secondly, I address the critiques against the ontological foundations of deep ecology—its conception of humanity's relationship with nature and how this relationship relates to political action. It is necessary to address these two broad critiques for a variety of reasons in order to re-envision deep ecology. The critique of ecocentrism, including the charge of misanthropy serves to challenge two things in deep ecology. For one, this critique calls into question deep ecology's entire vision for the formation of an ecocentric society as the solution to environmental ills, questioning whether or not anthropocentrism exists as a necessary target of critique in deep ecology. Moreover, the charge of misanthropy implies that deep ecologists are willing to promote unethical and questionable tactics in order to form ecologically sustainable societies, including vast wilderness preservation at the expense of local populations and perhaps authoritarian or cruel methods of population control. And secondly, the critique of deep ecology's ontological formation of nature is vital to examine for one main reason. If this formulation is inaccurate, and has no value, then promoting cultural change like wider identification not only proves insufficient for forming ecologically sustainable societies but also limits deep ecology's goals and its potential to invoke radical change. I will address these two critiques, and address why deep ecology's responses to them have thus far proved insufficient, arguing that there is more that the theory can do to justify its valuable theoretical choices.

1. Misanthropy and the Problem with Ecocentrism

Social ecology discredits the foundation of deep ecology by arguing that ecocentrism is an inaccurate way of situating humans in the world and of arranging political societies, charging the theory with anti-humanism and a lack of concern for the plight of oppressed populations of humans. This section discusses these major critiques of deep ecology, including why social ecology believes deep ecology should reject ecocentrism and why both ecocentrism and biocentric egalitarianism breed misanthropy. Subsequently, this section discusses how deep ecology perceives these concepts in its theory, and how it can better justify the choices it has made in defense of its overall theory in favor of an ecocentric society. Importantly, if ecocentrism (as social ecology contends) proves an impractical and inaccurate way for conceptualizing environmental problems, then deep ecology becomes a theory with impossible goals and one that wrongly conceptualizes how environmental problems develop, in addition to alienating human beings from the crux of its overall theory in the process. This chapter, however, will contend the opposite—that deep ecology does not wrongly conceptualize the human-nature relationship or the role that ecocentrism can play in ecological societies, as social ecology contends—but instead that deep ecology can respond to these critiques and can in fact, re-envision itself as a radical ecopolitical theory that deals with important issues in radical eco-politics.

In one of the first major critiques that emerges from social ecology, Murray Bookchin (1987) discredits deep ecology's ability to appeal to humanity or perpetuate a movement for an ecocentric society. Social ecology accuses deep ecology of misanthropic and anti-humanist tendencies (p. 19). According to Bookchin,

> To degrade that [human] species in the name of antihumanism…to deny the species its uniqueness as thinking beings with an unprecedented gift for conceptual thought, is to deny the rich fecundity of natural evolution itself (Bookchin, 1987, p. 19).

Bookchin (1990) argues that the focus of deep ecology on ecocentrism demonstrates the theory's anti-humanist perspective. He argues that ecocentrism falsely relegates humanity to the status of just another component of nature, distancing humans from their real place as both part of and uniquely separated from nature. When humans are absorbed so wholly into nature that they lose their identity as a species, and their unique ability for conscious, thoughtful action in the world, they fail to fulfill their telos as a species, according to social ecology (pp. 114-5). For Bookchin, deep ecology fails to acknowledge the dynamic role that the human species plays in natural evolution and can play in the realm of nature. For social ecology, then, ecocentrism denies the dynamic relationship between humans and nature and instead subsumes each into the other. Tragically, social ecology argues, this leaves little room in society for developing an ethics based on this dynamic relationship that recognizes the uniqueness of both nature and the human species (Bookchin, 1990, p. 114-5). An acceptance of the ecocentric/anthropocentric binary formulation and an advocacy for ecocentrism, thus, directly results in misanthropic tendencies that only erase the human species' unique capabilities and subsume these as merely part of nature.

For Bookchin, ecocentrism (like the emphasis of deep ecology on biocentric egalitarianism—which will be discussed shortly) promotes political and social arrangements that fail to account for the role that humans play in constructing social arrangements and interfering with (not necessarily in the negative sense) the natural world. Moreover, in Bookchin's book detailing his debate with Dave Foreman (1991), he contends that deep ecology tends to glorify nature and promotes a mystical wonder regarding nature in a way that leads to anti-rational and misanthropic positions. Bookchin (1991) fears, for example, that deep ecology's "celebration of nature as an end-in-itself" degenerates into anti-humanism and a disdain for science, technology, and human progress in all forms (pp. 60-1). These anti-humanist tendencies, consequentially, deny the role that humans can play in remaking the world in social and ecologically sound ways, promoting an erasure of humanity's progress thus far in the name of recapturing more natural ways of being in the world that discount the agency of humans to care for themselves and nature. Unlike deep ecology, Bookchin argues in favor of an ecological humanism that acknowledges human agency and the role it can play in fashioning more ecologically sound ways of being in the world (Bookchin and Foreman, 1991, p. 61). Human agency, moreover, can play a role in dismantling hierarchies in contemporary society.

Social ecology promotes the idea that hierarchy exists as the root cause of both environmental harm and human suffering. This attribution of hierarchy as the root cause of environmental degradation has often led social ecologists such as Bookchin to critique the blame that deep ecology places on anthropocentrism (Keulartz, 1998, pp. 117). Importantly, Bookchin sees both ecocentrism and anthropocentrism as concepts that create new hierarchies that serve either to degrade the human species by denying its potential for evolutionary agency or that grant privileged groups of humans the right to dominate and exploit other, less able groups of humans.

For these reasons, Bookchin argues that the anthropocentric/biocentric construction in deep ecology is a false binary that serves no positive function in the establishment of ecologically sound societies (Bookchin, 1987, p. 19).

Interestingly, Bookchin (1990) also argues that ecocentrism not only serves to perpetuate hierarchy, but that it also perpetuates the idea that the human species exists as the most burdensome life form on Earth—a species that lacks the ability to coexist with other life forms without destroying them and their surroundings. He goes on to argue that human arrogance may be the main target of attempts by deep ecology to promote ecocentrism, but that ecocentrism ends up instead incriminating all humans equally in the destruction of the natural world by ignoring the differences in culpability in environmental degradation between poor and wealthy humans and between men and women (Bookchin, 1990, p. 116-17).

Though hierarchy proves a monumental challenge for achieving an ecological society according to social ecology, hierarchy also tends to produce other social arrangements, relationships, and “living sources” that contribute to ecological problems (Bookchin, 1987, p. 19). For these reasons, social ecology tends to argue that deep ecology’s focus on ecocentrism results in an unrealistic formulation of both the causes of environmental degradation and its solutions, promoting an ecocentric vision of the world in which human beings are just one other species among many that must fight for survival and deserve no special consideration in terms of their rights to resources for survival (Bookchin, 1991, p. 125). Moreover, Bookchin (1987) contends that deep ecology fails to focus on the real political and ideological structures such as capitalism and hierarchy that cause environmental degradation, instead choosing to focus on how ecocentrism can emerge from currently anthropocentric relations (pp. 18-20).

Likewise, Bookchin (1989) also explicitly critiques the notion of biocentric equality promoted by deep ecologists. He argues that accepting unquestionable equality amongst species implies that these individual animals (including humans) are interchangeable, living lives that are meaningless absent of the whole of ecology, absent of the web of interrelationships that make ecology meaningful in the first place (pp. 8-11). Moreover, he considers the focus in deep ecology on biocentric equality immoral because he contends that it is not concerned with the survival of the human species. He utilizes some of David Foreman's more extreme and unethical statements to make his point about biocentrism, including Foreman's statement that people in lesser developed countries should be subject to the laws of nature, implying that they should starve just as any other species starves when there is a lack of vital resources present in nature (Bookchin and Foreman, 1991, p. 124). Indeed, Bookchin (1991) (in his debate with Foreman) argues that biocentrism logically leads to anti-humanist extremism and a flawed view of how humans fit within the larger biosphere, implicating deep ecology for the role it plays in both of these tendencies related to biocentrism. He states that,

> …if the deep ecology principle of 'biocentrism' teaches that human beings are no different from lemmings in terms of their 'intrinsic worth' and the moral consideration we owe them, and if human beings are viewed as beings subject to 'natural laws' in just the same way as any other species, then these 'extreme' statements are really the *logical* [author's italics] conclusion of deep ecology philosophy (p. 125).

Given that the above critiques implicate the core tenets of deep ecology, including the focuses on the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide and the emphasis on biocentric egalitarianism, it is vital that deep ecology formulates a valid response to these critiques in order to legitimate its own claims regarding the above tenets. Moreover, the vital question that emerges out of Bookchin's critique of the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide does not revolve around whether or not deep ecology promotes anti-humanism; instead, Bookchin questions ecocentrism as a form of political arrangement and as an ethical value, begging the question of whether or not ecocentrism has value and for what reasons.

Although Bookchin presents these critiques against deep ecology, I argue that he does not correctly characterize or understand the main purpose of the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide that is implicit in deep ecology nor does he give deep ecology the benefit of the doubt by assuming that they have the best in mind for both humans and nature when it defends and promotes its theoretical arguments. Bookchin should, however, give more credit to deep ecology because many deep ecologists have acknowledged that human vital needs will take precedence over the needs of other living things and ecosystems in addition to acknowledging that biocentric egalitarianism is an “in principle” rather than an “in practice” assertion (See Glasser, 1995, p. 380). Glasser, for example, elaborates on this distinction by discussing Naess’ formulation of the sameness of rights to satisfy vital needs. The concept of vital needs can act as a policy tool, for Glasser, which can point out issues such as overconsumption and the impact that this practice has on the vital needs of other entities (Glasser, 1995, p. 380). Though the insights from theorists such as Naess and Glasser are extremely important, they do not adequately respond to the critiques from Bookchin. The next section will, therefore, focus on responding to these challenges and re-envisioning deep ecology in light of these assertions.

Indeed, the problem with Bookchin’s argument regarding the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide lies not in its attempt to seek out other sources of blame for ecological degradation and harm. For example, capitalism and hierarchy have clearly played significant roles in causing environmental harm both globally and at local levels, especially for populations subject to the neocolonial economic practices of industry. The problem with Bookchin’s argument does lie, however, in his complete denial of the culpability of anthropocentrism as another root cause of environmental problems. He is certainly correct when he points out that anthropocentrism has not prevented humans from dominating other humans throughout historical time, but he fails to see anthropocentrism as a paradigm or metanarrative which reinforces and fuels the separation of nature and society in the minds of the oppressors who devastate both human communities and natural landscapes.

Anthropocentrism, for example, acts as an undercurrent that reinforces all other forms of institutional and social domination of nature. In essence, anthropocentrism is an attitude that undergirds the dominant social, political, and cultural institutions that perpetuate and result in environmental degradation on a global scale, resulting in a dominant culture that treats species, ecosystems, and individual animals as instrumentally valuable. Furthermore, anthropocentrism undergirds a presumption that populations of humans without power can also be treated as instrumentally valuable, ultimately relegating these oppressed humans to the status of instrumentally useful animals. Populations of oppressed humans are treated instrumentally by extractive industries throughout the Global South, receiving inadequate wages for their work and often being exposed to environmental hazards. Moreover, local environments are often also degraded by these extractive and industrial processes, and this degradation damages the flourishing of the ecosystems, causes high pollution levels locally and globally, and restricts the ability of local populations to live sustainably off the land.

In this regard, deep ecology should conceptualize anthropocentrism not just as a paradigm that results in the domination of nature but also one that results in the domination of other humans that have been relegated to the status of animals. This treatment of less powerful populations of human beings not only reinforces the power structures that perpetuate environmentally harmful institutions, it also serves as a justification for keeping existing power structures in place. For example, if a specific population of human beings becomes instrumentally valuable for an industry that degrades the environment, their inhumane treatment and the resulting environmental degradation are only justified under conditions of anthropocentrism that relegate certain populations of humans to the status of animals.

Indeed, this logical continuation of anthropocentrism and the way that it reinforces both the domination of nature and of humans can even be taken a step further. In the same way that an oppressive culture of anthropocentrism treats certain humans as animals, it also situates animals as automatically only worthy of instrumental value—devaluing their status as living beings even further by using their status as only valuable to the needs of humans in order to justify the oppression of other humans. This statement is not meant to imply that humans are more valuable than other living creatures, but instead to point out that humans utilize their anthropocentric bias' to destroy members of their own species, a trait rarely seen in the animal world except for the purposes of survival. Deep ecology has not addressed the way that anthropocentrism reinforces both environmental and human domination, and instead has left the ways in which this occurs up to its critics, who have taken the silence of deep ecology regarding these issues to imply anti-humanist tendencies.

Certain deep ecologists have attempted to address the charges of misanthropy, while others have defended their own ethical formulations by instead critiquing Bookchin's characterization of human beings and their place in the broader ecology. For example, Robyn Eckersley (1989) takes the latter path, by contending that Bookchin's social ecology privileges humans (or second nature) over nature (first nature) (p. 99). Moreover, she argues that Bookchin displays "a certain arrogance in his claim that humans have now discerned the course of evolution, which they have an obligation to further" (Eckersley, 1989, p. 102). She maintains that Bookchin's argument demonstrates that he holds human qualities in higher esteem than the qualities of other life forms, arguing that only humans can re-orient themselves on the correct path of evolution (Eckersley, 1989, p. 102).

Futhermore, Bookchin maintains that humans are self-aware parts of nature that can engage in rational action that furthers first nature's evolutionary tendency toward increasing diversity and differentiation, which increases human freedom and freedom for nature. Freedom for nature, in Bookchin's mind, constitutes its ability to freely exercise its tendency toward increasing diversity and complexity. In response, Eckersley argues that Bookchin places too much faith in the ability of humans to increase their own freedom while at the same time re-orienting nature on the path toward greater freedom, especially since humans must first deal with the social problems that fundamentally perpetuate environmental problems, as Bookchin argues (Eckersley, 1989, pp. 110-13).

As mentioned, the question of whether or not the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide is a valid conceptualization of the differences between acting anti-ecologically versus ecologically can be answered by demonstrating how the this divide serves as a conceptual toolbox that allows the distribution of anthropocentric versus ecocentric actions, economic arrangements, relations, and political institutions into these categories. This binary opposition between categories, moreover, could potentially help political societies to determine which actions and political arrangements are acceptable versus unacceptable in ecocentric societies. Indeed, the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide represents a conceptual tool, in addition to representing two paths that societies can take in the form of political and social arrangements. Moreover, this conceptual toolbox can strengthen debate and foster contested political arrangements that take into account how humanity treats other beings and whether or not these treatments are justified interferences based on the conceptions of vital needs. These interferences, in essence, only become justified when they serve to satisfy some vital needs, and these vital needs will also be contested and divergent across cultures. Anthropocentrism, moreover, performs as an ethic that helps clarify and stir debate around the differences between the instrumental uses of other beings (including other humans) as opposed to the necessary instrumental uses of other beings for survival in the context of respect for the flourishing of other life forms. Overall, then the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide fosters discussion and debate regarding policies, needs, and interferences into nature that Bookchin's formulation of hierarchy as the root cause of environmental degradation does not.

As mentioned, Bookchin (1989) also argues that the concept of biological egalitarianism renders individuals meaningless absent the consideration of their place in the larger ecology (pp. 8-11). This assertion implicitly re-emphasizes that ecocentric perspectives have misanthropic tendencies, which by equating the value of the life of a frog with the life of a human, deep ecology fails to account for the unique contributions that the human species can make to the biosphere and to its own further development as a species. Regarding this assertion, deep ecology would perhaps turn Bookchin's argument about biocentric egalitarianism upside down. Instead of making individual lives less meaningful, biological egalitarianism re-envisions humanity's place within the biosphere and makes individual lives more meaningful and more valuable to the functioning of the overall system. In fact, the importance that each human life can contribute to the overall ecology increases when all entities in the biosphere are considered qualitatively equal. This ethical formulation promotes the idea that each entity has the same right to flourish (See Naess, qtd. in Clark, 2010, p. 24).

Following Bookchin's (1989) critiques, then, biocentric egalitarianism can serve to highlight the unique abilities, capabilities, and even vulnerabilities of a particular species and even particular populations within the same species by highlighting the roles that each species plays in sustaining and maintaining the flourishing of the broader ecology. In addition, each species has individual members that contribute to and maintain the viability of the species as a whole in unique and invaluable ways. All of the above arguments can also be applied to the human species as well in terms of diversity in culture, talents, and uniquely human ways of interacting with one another and nature. Furthermore, deep ecology also recognizes the unique role that the human species (and human individuals) can play in maintaining and fostering a flourishing biosphere and flourishing human communities.

Relatedly, human communities and individual humans clearly have unique vital needs that often stretch beyond the basic vital needs of other species. Deep ecology recognizes that these human needs sometimes surpass the more basic requirements of other species and include things like developing meaningful relationships with others, playing, and creation (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 68). Additionally, deep ecology has already acknowledged that biocentric equality is an "in principle" assertion. Deep ecologists have acknowledged, moreover, that the vital needs of humans will automatically take precedence over the vital needs of other species (Naess, 1988, pp. 68-9). Indeed, Naess later cautioned the assertion in his earlier works that biocentric egalitarianism is a concrete type of equality. Instead, Naess contends that all species have the same right "'to live and blossom'" (qtd. in Clark, 2010, p. 24). He goes on to argue the intrinsic value of all beings is equal because each entity possesses the same right to live and blossom, but cautions that equality may be the wrong terminology in describing this sameness in rights. In this regard, he acknowledges that "equality" has become a controversial term in deep ecology, and has been perceived as designating that all entities have these same rights in practice, not just in principle. In this regard, Naess argues that the focus should be on how we decide when it is justified for humanity to infringe upon this right that is common to all living things (Clark, 2010, p. 24).

The way that deep ecology discusses ecocentrism also directly relates to the way that it discusses how humans fundamentally relate to nature. Ecocentrism, for example, fundamentally places humans in nature by recognizing that all life forms in addition to humans are interconnected and interdependent, cautioning that an overemphasis of human specialness will result in human arrogance that contributes to environmental degradation. The placement of humans in relation to nature as another essential part of a flourishing biosphere results in ethical formulations that promote cautionary political decisions and environmental practices as well. Social ecology, however, does not recognize that deep ecology's ontological formulation of nature has value, and proceeds to critique this formulation on a variety of levels.

2. Deep Ecology's Ontological Formulation of Nature

For social ecology, the way in which deep ecology characterizes and discusses the human-nature relationship is also deeply problematic. Humphrey (2000) states that Bookchin sees two particularly problematic formulations of nature in deep ecology: nature as wilderness and nature as cosmological (Humphrey, 2000, p. 251-2). These two critiques from Bookchin provide the basis for this analysis of the critiques regarding the ontological formulation of nature in deep ecology.

Importantly, social ecology critiques the emphasis on wilderness preservation in deep ecology because social ecology sees the conceptualization of nature as wilderness as alienating toward the human species. Deep ecology often discusses wilderness as an ideal state, absent of human interference and almost perfect in its ability to regulate and maintain itself as a functioning ecological system. This characterization, according to social ecology, only serves to further separate humans from nature and idealize it beyond recognition, to a point at which it no longer serves a knowable purpose for human civilization or human consciousness (Humphrey, 2000, pp. 251-2). Rendering nature unknowable and mysterious, for social ecology, destroys the role that nature can play in the immediate lives of human beings, as a resource, as a source of intrigue and scientific endeavor, and as something that deserves protection for its own sake and for the sake of future generations of human beings.

The critique of the cosmological characterization of nature in deep ecology also necessitates examination. As mentioned above, deep ecology emphasizes the importance of its holistic ontology and the interconnectedness between all ecological entities, including humans. Bookchin, however, argues that this emphasis on holism in deep ecology serves to de-emphasize the individual human to a point at which individuals become completely lost in a meaningless world of interconnections. He argues that this de-emphasizing of the individual also serves to discourage political action in defense of environmental values (Humphrey, 2000, p. 253).

Moreover, Bookchin insists that deep ecology’s insistence on self-realization and wider identification with nature is both unnecessary and contributes to problematic assertions in deep ecology. Andrew Light (1998) characterizes Bookchin’s sentiment, saying that,

> Bookchin argues that failing to distinguish between humans and nonhumans ignores important, peculiarly human, social dimensions of environmental problems. To reduce humans merely to one species among many is to diminish the importance of human social distinctions, such as class distinctions that are not found in nonhuman species (p. 350).

Furthermore, Bookchin argues that these distinctions serve to place equal blame on all populations of human beings, when in fact, uniquely human social forces serve to make some humans more culpable for environmental harm than others. Problematically, for Bookchin, this erasure of distinction amongst humans allows deep ecology to gloss over and ignore pressing social problems like malnutrition and poverty (Light, 1998, p. 350).

Importantly, Light characterizes this rift between social ecology and deep ecology as a distinction between a materialist perspective and an ontological perspective (Light, 1998, p. 351). On the one hand, social ecology is characterized by an intense focus on social structures and social systems of power that serve to perpetuate the suffering of certain populations of humans and environmental degradation. One the other hand, deep ecology is characterized by the view that the relationship between humanity and nature is deeply flawed and that this contemporary narrative perpetuates environmental degradation by human populations on a global scale. By some measures, these two perspectives embody two different formulations of how environmental problems emerged in contemporary society, keeping in mind that both theories share a commitment to the environment and an urge to halt environmental destruction. Social ecology, like many other social theories, proposes that the root of environmental problems lies in flawed social institutions and hierarchies, while deep ecology proposes that these same issues lie in the flawed perception of the ontologically correct view of the human-nature relationship. In other words, one focuses on the destructive material manifestations that institutions and hierarchies produce, while the other focuses on the narratives and cultural belief systems that reinforce this same destruction.

The above critique regarding the cosmological characterization of nature in deep ecology also deserves attention for how it relates to political action. As noted above, Bookchin implies that the holistic ontology of deep ecology might fail at spurring political action in the way that deep ecology intends because it de-emphasizes the importance of the individual in relation to the whole. For Bookchin (1989), individual agency persists as one of the most important factors in determining humanity's ability to provoke deep-seated changes in contemporary systems of domination and hierarchy that perpetuate both social suffering and environmental degradation (p. 201-3). Though deep ecology also proposes that individual agency plays an important role in provoking change (i.e. changing culture), some deep ecologists have responded to Bookchin's critiques in necessary, but not sufficient ways.

For example, responding to such critiques by Bookchin, Eckersley (1989) attributes his hostility toward deep ecology's focus on interdependence and wider identification to his own ontological formulations about nature and its relationship to humanity. He focuses on diversity, and attempts to manipulate a dialectical structure that proposes linkages between the evolutionary pathways of entities in nature, human beings, and human societies and social institutions. He argues that all of these entities have evolved from the same developmental path and dialectical patterns. Eckersley critiques this perspective by arguing that there exists no discernible similarity between evolutionary biology of the physical and mental capacities of species (including humans) and the complex and diverse "open-ended" social and institutional structures and cultures that emerge from human consciousnesses (Eckersley, 1989, pp.106-7). In these assessments, however, Bookchin also attributes moral superiority to these processes of increasing differentiation and stays silent on the existence of things like competition and aggressive behavior by animals in nature. Moreover, Eckersley argues, that these same aggressive tendencies that he leaves absent from his discussion of first nature emerge in humans as the driving forces of ecological destruction and human suffering (Eckersley, 1989, p. 107-8).

In a sense, Bookchin's implied attribution of moral superiority to first nature also leads him to assume that both first and second nature (human society) embody a teleological essence that results in increasing differentiation, and, ultimately, perfect freedom for all beings

(Eckersley, 1989, p. 107-8). Moreover, his insistence on the significance of these complex elements of both human and nonhuman nature complicates his major argument about the importance of dissolving hierarchical structures in human society. For Eckersley, Bookchin's ethics are characterized by the insistence that humans can impart upon nature the development of an even more rich and diversified ecology. Indeed, Bookchin implies that humans can play a dynamic role in the evolutionary processes of both first and second nature, also implying that humans have a responsibility to do so. Eckersley argues that this assertion by Bookchin creates a dangerous impetus that does not qualify nor specify how much and to what extent humans have this duty to speed up the evolutionary process and interfere in nature (Eckersley, 1989, p. 111).

In response to Bookchin, I argue that deep ecology is able paint a much more simplified and straightforward ontological argument about the fundamental relationship between humans and nature than social ecology. For example, deep ecology focuses on wider identification with nature in order to foster respect for it from a human perspective and recognize the twin fates of both human societies and the natural world, not to mention the intertwining effects that each have upon one another. The simplicity in what Bookchin calls the "cosmological characterization" lies in the fact that deep ecology asserts that humans and nature are intimately interconnected and interdependent, and that this fact alone should provide reason for respecting, caring about, and acting ethically toward nature; additionally, deep ecology promotes this vision of the human-nature relationship to promote better practices toward the environment, assuming that a recognition of these fundamental relations will spur action in this direction.

Bookchin's critiques regarding wilderness preservation as a policy prescription that characterizes the main political standpoint of deep ecology may prove valid in the sense that deep ecology often idealizes nature. They do so, however, in a different and less dangerous way than Bookchin. For deep ecology, wilderness exists as a pristine state that embodies the fundamental reasons that nature should be qualitatively equal to human beings. In essence, pristine wilderness—an increasingly rare and wonderful sight in contemporary society—provides a window into the past, and a concrete example of the awesome power that humanity has to alter, interfere in, and fundamentally damage the Earth. Moreover, wilderness preservation as a policy prescription provides an idealized goal for policymakers. Deep ecology, however, should know all too well that wilderness is no longer possible in many areas around the globe, and must more thoroughly acknowledge this fact in the theory, providing alternative ways to protect and preserve what is left in the context of large cities, suburban sprawl, and farmlands around the globe. In short, deep ecology idealizes nature in a way that provides a clear impetus toward protection.

Deep ecology may well be concerned with protection of the environment, and may indeed also be less concerned about the impact that protection (including policies relating to population control) will have on populations of humans, but realistically, even deep ecology has acknowledged that the capacity of humans to care for their own species will take precedence over the flourishing of other beings and the broader ecology (See Naess, 1988, pp. 86-96). Deep ecology has not made this evident and emphatic in its overall theory, however, leaving itself vulnerable to critique. For example, deep ecology activists like Dave Foreman and even Devall and Sessions, according to Bookchin, have proposed unethical and unsustainable projections for necessary population control that do not account for differences in demography, arguing that things like famine, disease, and disasters can assist in curbing world population back to sustainable levels (Bookchin, 1987, p. 17). These assertions that some deep ecologists have made are not only inappropriate but serve to distract readers from formulations that Naess (1988) and others make about vital needs and the importance of making sure that one’s own species—the human species—has the ability to survive and flourish, just as any other biological entities possess the right to do.

Bookchin (following the characterization by Eckersley, 1989), however, still provides a more dangerous formulation of the human-nature relationship overall, and his contention proves dangerous for a variety of reasons. As mentioned, he implies that humans can and should interfere in the world in order to promote a human evolutionary trajectory that reflects nature, and a more diversified first nature in the process. In this regard, Bookchin promotes an idealized version of both nature and even more dangerously, promotes an idealized version of human agency, implying that humans can and should interfere in nature to improve upon it and to re-place both human and natural evolution on the same path toward teleological freedom. Nevertheless, Bookchin may have a valid point in encouraging a more active human-nature relationship than deep ecology; these are the contentious political issues that will arise once an ecological society has developed, however.

In addition to promoting ethically sound relations with nature, deep ecology also promotes cultural change that can be fostered through a variety of mechanisms and avenues. These mechanisms include education, scientific endeavor, and also the immersion of individuals into situations that broaden their respect and wider identification with nature. Interestingly, deep ecology cam utilize these avenues to broaden the scope of overall flourishing in humans and in nature, similar to the way that social ecology attempts to widen the circle of human freedom. The problem that deep ecology projects, however, is that it fails to focus on and emphasize that the theory advocates the flourishing of human beings. In essence, the focus on nature in deep ecology is so significant that human beings are lost in the overall analysis and the assertions, despite the fact that most (but by no means all) deep ecologists have acknowledged many times that humanity is part of nature, and deserves the right to flourish to its fullest potential. Moreover, they also acknowledge that human vital needs often outnumber the vital needs of other species. These assertions by deep ecology must be emphasized so that the theory does not present an anti-humanist position in the process of projecting a deep concern for nature. And these assertions, too, must provide an acceptable impetus to action in the minds of other radical ecopolitical theorists, for deep ecology does have a necessary role to play in the formation of ecological societies—particularly if they do not discount all of the assertions of other radical ecopolitical theories in the process.

Similarities, Common Ground, and Avenues for Political Action

This section seeks to establish—given some important similarities between social ecology and deep ecology—that the critiques listed above may not be as devastating to deep ecology as they first appear. Moreover, these similarities can provide some common ground for critical engagement between these two theories, creating a space for debate about the importance of a variety of aspects in the establishment of ecologically sustainable societies. The differences between these two theories may not be surmountable, but the similarities can provide avenues for discussion and debate. The recognition that each theory has a vital role to play in the formation of radical ecopolitical societies makes the discussion of their similarities vital to the political debate surrounding the merits of radical ecopolitical thought. For example, while social ecology provides a critique of contemporary institutions and hierarchies that reinforce existing power structures that devastate humans and the environment, deep ecology provides a critique of anthropocentric culture, providing an impetus for changing the belief systems that undergird political and social institutions. Furthermore, while social ecology is able to focus on how the oppression of humans results in environmental degradation, deep ecology is able to ensure that nature plays an equal role in political debates about how to structure radical ecopolitical societies and is not lost in debates regarding social problems. Without deep ecology, nature has the potential to become lost in social ecology given its intense focus on the domination and oppression of human beings.

Given these important roles that each theory can play in the transformation of contemporary political societies, it is vital that they have common ground to stand on when engaging in debate and when attempting to insight action. Granted, disagreement will be a part of the process of transformation given that these two theories fundamentally disagree about the steps that need to be taken first for the formation of radical ecopolitical societies. Nevertheless, however, they each have important similarities that tend to reinvigorate deep ecology, and, in particular, give it an important role in instigating radical change.

To begin with, both social ecology and deep ecology emphasize the importance of self-realization and liberation (Keulartz, 1998, 119). Keulartz (1998) argues that both strains of thought are much more closely aligned on these points than most in either field might care to acknowledge (p. 119). For Bookchin (1989), individual agency constitutes a way for humans to change problematic social institutions in the pursuit of greater human freedom, social flourishing, and ecologically sound practices (p. 201-3). For deep ecology, by contrast, individual agency can engender an ontologically re-formulated vision of how one relates to nature, engendering better practices toward the environment in contemporary society (Dobson, 1995, p. 91). While social ecology places individual action at the locus of how individuals relate to sparking change in social institutions, deep ecology places individuals at the center of its discussion of agency for how they can change their individual relationships with nature, resulting in cultural changes throughout anthropocentric contemporary society. In social ecology, then, the impetus lies in individual's ability to change institutions and reject hierarchies, while in deep ecology this impetus lies in the individual human's ability to change his or her mindset about humanity's relationship to nature. This focus on the agency of individuals in both theories can create dialogue about how individuals play a role in the formation of ecological societies, albeit from starkly divergent viewpoints.

Furthermore, this focus on an individual human's capacity for change in deep ecology lessens some of the critiques that social ecology formulates about the theory, namely that deep ecology promotes anti-humanism. By arguing that a change in individual consciousness can engender societal change toward ecocentric societies, deep ecology recognizes the power that human beings possess for creating radical change. Where deep ecology differs from social ecology in its formation of individual agency lies in its insistence on the force of ideas. Deep ecology projects a much more Hegelian outlook on change, implying that changes in ideas can change culture, and subsequently, institutions. Social ecology, by contrast, contributes a more Marxist tone to the debate, implying that change in institutions and social relations will predate widespread changes in consciousness. (It must be noted, however, that social ecology also sees dialectics as an important component of human evolution—a particularly robust aspect of Hegelian thought—arguing that the dialectic structure of human evolution has led to increasing human freedom throughout history). Though this particular debate is age old, it demonstrates that there is room for both social ecology and deep ecology as part of the debate about radical ecology in general. Both theories contribute different ideas about how change occurs, and both theories can contribute to creating change. Deep ecology can focus on consciousness, ideas, and culture; social ecology can focus on institutions and hierarchies. Most importantly, however, the ability of humans to insight radical change in both theories contributes to each theory's disdain for more reformist tactics in promoting more environmentally sound practices.

Especially in their embodiment of social movements, both theories also reject a solely technocratic approach to managing environmental problems, especially in the form of top-down approaches (Tokar, 1988, p. 132). For example, McLaughlin (1993) argues that "decentralization is necessary to achieve meaningful political democracy," rejecting the professionalization of nation-states that has failed to adequately dismantle long-standing power structures that perpetuate the status quo (p. 205). Even Naess has argued that softer technologies should take precedence over advanced technology, and technology should promote cultural values that promote freely chosen paths in the form of decisions by local communities (Naess, 1986, p. 73). The rejection of these technocratic solutions to environmental problems also appears in social ecology literature. For example, Bookchin (1995) argues that,

> Indeed, capitalism is increasingly leveling and homogenizing society, culturally and economically, to a point that the same commodities, industrial techniques, social institutions, values even desires are being 'universalized' to an unprecedented degree in humanity's long career (p. 176).

Moreover, Bookchin (1989) also contends that,

> Our viability as a species depends on our future relationship with the natural world. This problem cannot be settled by the invention of new technologies that will supplant natural processes without making society more technocratic, more centralized, and ultimately completely totalitarian (p. 171).

This technocratic approach to managing economies has bled over and now constitutes a shallow (Naess, 1986, p. 73) approach to fixing environmental problems through economics and an ever-expanding push for economic growth that embodies a top-down approach to "helping" the environment. Both theories, then, concern themselves with rejecting reformist tactics that keep in place existing capitalist economic paradigms in addition to viewing technocratic solutions to environmental problems as both viable and practical.

Importantly, both social ecology and deep ecology reject the existing power structures that perpetuate these technocratic and culturally-blind technocratic solutions. (Indeed, deep ecology has much less to say about power than social ecology, which is an issue in the overall theory.) Nevertheless, these two theories can each reject these technocratic approaches in important ways; social ecology can reject capitalism, while deep ecology can help promote localized solutions. Social ecology can promote the dismantling of existing power structures that fail to acknowledge the devastation that these institutions cause to nature and society. By contrast, deep ecology, can promote local impetuses that dismantle these same power structures by promoting culturally significant ways of dealing with and relating to the environment that focus on soft technologies and local control. Each theory, in essence, can provide an important insight into rejecting technocratic, top-down solutions to environmental problems in the reformist frame.

Regarding both economies and societies, other theorists have also discussed the importance of acknowledging how social ecology and deep ecology relate. For example, Michael E. Zimmerman (1994) admits that, “Largely sharing social ecology’s critique of capitalism and state socialism, deep ecologists agree that critically analyzing, resisting, and providing alternatives to existing economic structures are crucial for protecting wilderness” (p. 153). This agreement demonstrates the potential for both theories to play roles in dismantling capitalism and creating movements in favor of ecological sustainable societies. Importantly, Zimmerman also argues that at least part of the disagreement between the two theories stems from how Bookchin conceptualizes first nature as a continuation of human evolution, while deep ecology sees this formulation as suggesting that humans have the ability to interfere with and pacify nature for the benefit of it and for the benefit of humanity (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 153).

Arguments between the two theories over the level of interference necessary to ensure the formation of ecological societies often obscures the fact that both deep ecology and social ecology fundamentally agree that evolution has resulted in the greater abilities of human beings to be self-aware and self-reflexive in action. Deep ecology often criticizes Bookchin for his argument in favor of allowing greater human intervention in nature in order to further evolution (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 232). This rift between social ecology and deep ecology stems from disagreement over what to preserve, what to restore, and what to actively interfere with in nature. These debates, especially when societies begin to point toward the formation of more ecologically sound ways of being in and relating to nature, will most likely result in tempered levels of interference in nature that account for the these differences between social ecology and deep ecology. It is unlikely, moreover, that the formation of ecological societies will result in extremist policies either from deep ecology or social ecology. For example, it is unlikely that deep ecology will win the battle of radical ecopolitical theories, resulting in unprecedented tracts of untrammeled wilderness preservation across the globe. In the same way, however, it is also unlikely that social ecology’s vision for a nature guided by humans and pacified into a functioning and fecund first nature will be carried to the extreme end of ever-increasing levels of interference in nature by humans and an intentionally guided evolutionary trajectory. The ability of humans to be self-aware of both themselves and their place in nature may account for the greatest potential for a positive relationship between social ecology and deep ecology.

In many ways deep ecology and social ecology also converge in their desire to create ecologically sustainable societies that radically diverge from the structure and focus contemporary political societies (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 310). Importantly, the major disagreements among deep ecology and social ecology regarding how the transformation of societies is to occur in pursuit of more ecological arrangements and the proper relations between humans and nature will largely play out in ways that accept positions on both sides of the debate. In other words, given the contentious nature of politics, no one theoretical position will dominate the ways in which society is transformed toward ecological sustainability. Ensuring participatory debate amongst all interests will also ensure that elements of both social ecology and deep ecology are present within and under consideration in political societies. The ontological proposals of the relationship between humans and nature in both theories is not necessarily incompatible; in fact, social ecology seeks to place humans and nature on the same evolutionary trajectories, focusing on the lack of hierarchy in nature and the importance of reaching toward great human freedom while deep ecology seeks to foster more ethical ways of being in the environment that reflect ways that individuals can develop ecocentric ways of recognizing nature. Both of these trajectories, moreover, can be pursued simultaneously by different political interests.

I argue that these two perspectives are not incompatible because, in reality, a variety of divergent viewpoints will contribute to the development of ecological societies. Moreover, Andrew McLaughlin (1999) contends that deep ecology and social ecology disagree most contentiously on issues that will be resolved after drastic changes in the ways that humans relate to nature have already taken place. For example, wilderness preservation, population control, and the level of interference with nature will all be topics for political discussion only in a society that already deeply values nature, unlike contemporary political societies (pp. 310-11). In turn, McLaughlin does acknowledge that social ecology and deep ecology disagree about the level of interference that is compatible with the maintenance of ecological societies, with social ecology contending that humans have a responsibility to create ever more differentiated and diverse natural conditions, and deep ecology contending that humans should only interfere in nature in ways that are required for the survival of the human species. The critical question for both parties, McLaughlin contends by quoting Bookchin is, "'whether an ecologically oriented society can be created out of the present anti-ecological one'" (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 311).

Conclusion

It is vital that deep ecology reassess the attention that it pays to concrete problems beyond wilderness preservation and population control, recognizing that these concrete issues contribute greatly to environmental degradation and acknowledging that political theories of action must be developed in order to develop strategies to deal with these concrete social issues that contribute to environmental problems, including how consciousness, identity, and ideas contribute to the power structures, institutions, and metanarratives like anthropocentrism that cause degradation. Importantly, however, deep ecology must also vigorously defend what valuable elements it brings to the theoretical and ethical debate surrounding humanity's relationship to nature. Deep ecology provides a vibrant theory for reinvigorating nature as valuable beyond its use to humans. It can be argued—and must be argued—that without an avenue for developing more ethical relations culturally and individually between humans and nature, social ecology and any other radical ecopolitical theories that provide avenues for solving environmental problems lack a fundamental piece of the overall puzzle.

Furthermore, deep ecology has yet to develop a comprehensive radical ecopolitical theory that incorporates the above concerns of social ecology, instead defending its ontological formation of nature and its insistence on the importance of the anthropocentric/ecocentric division. In this same vein, deep ecology has yet to formulate specific ways to deal with the social institutions in its theory that social ecology finds responsible for ecological degradation or how cultural changes might drastically impact the power and shape of these institutions and of hierarchy generally. Indeed, deep ecology must also defend its theory by arguing how it ultimately contributes to the development of ecological societies. Importantly, what does deep ecology do that other radical ecopolitical theories do not that provides avenues for the development of ecological societies that other theories fail to acknowledge or discuss? In short, it creates a cultural avenue for radical change that social ecology all but ignores, a perfectly valid argument as a method for creating radical change in favor of ecologically sound societies. In addition, deep ecology also incorporates intrinsic value and biocentric egalitarianism as central concepts in its theory, thereby ensuring that nature plays a profound role in political decision-making.

Moreover, deep ecology creates a conceptual toolbox in its characterization of the ecocentric/anthropocentric divide, promoting a vision for an ecocentric society that rejects anything that falls into the realm of anthropocentrism. Secondly, it promotes an ethic that recognizes the intrinsic value of other species, regardless of the value of these entities to human beings, promoting the recognition that all living things have a right to live and flourish to their fullest potential. Biocentric “equality” may or may not be the right terminology to designate this ethic, but I argue that the term equality can also be utilized as a conceptual device that reinforces the interdependence of all beings and reinforces the fact that all beings contribute to the flourishing of the biosphere and to humans. Moreover, equality in theory and equality in practice are two very different things, and equality in theory merely begs that humans recognize their place within the broader ecology.

Although addressing critiques from social ecology is a vital part of re-envisioning deep ecology, these steps are not sufficient. Another broad set of critiques has emerged that target deep ecology, and these critiques concern the way that deep ecology characterizes, misuses, and often outright ignores the plight of the Global South and the role these regions of the world can play in creating ecologically sustainable societies. While these critiques are less evident in the overall literature, it is valuable to examine what is present and construct critiques of deep ecology around these available sources. Moreover, deep ecology cannot persist if it fails to provide avenues for participation and inclusion of populations in the Global South. In this regard, the critiques from the Global South are twofold and include the following: 1. Deep ecology promotes a Western-centric vision for the formation of ecocentric societies that only serves to promote neocolonial and imperial discourses, problematically arguing for global wilderness preservation and appropriating other cultures in the process of defending its theory. Indeed, these problems in deep ecology not only serve to reinforce colonial discourses but also serve to “other” these populations in the Global South. 2. Deep ecology fails to account for the greater perils faced by both ecosystems and human populations in the Global South, resulting in a theory that excludes these populations in its overall conclusions, policy prescriptions, and calls for political action. My analysis will now proceed to these critiques in order to further illustrate that deep ecology, if sufficiently reformed, can become a viable political theory of radical eco-politics.

Chapter 4: Challenging Deep Ecology from the Global South: Neo-colonialism and the Problem of Exclusion

Introduction

Over half of the world's human population lives in regions of the world referred to as the "Global South." These regions of the world are often marked by a variety of negative socio-economic issues including poverty and rampant environmental problems, and these regions often lack both the resources and the historical contexts that would enable them to flourish as nation-states, communities, and ecological spaces that reject the neocolonial forces that often contribute to and perpetuate these devastating outcomes. A second important body of critiques directly related to these issues that causes problems for deep ecology emerges from individuals concerned with the Global South and the contributions that these regions of the world can make in pursuit of the formation of ecologically sustainable societies.

My concern about deep ecology and these critiques emerges from my assertion that these parts of the world do indeed have a significant knowledge base that can both play a role in creating ecological societies and in creating new softer technologies for the formation of ecocentric livelihoods. Moreover, by all but completely ignoring an entire section of the globe in its theory, deep ecology creates an overly contentious political space for discussion that fails to acknowledge the greater risk that is posed to both natural spaces and human populations in the Global South from the threats of climate change, pollution, and water scarcity, among other things. The Global South, then, provides insights into caring for and relating to the Earth that are both valuable and necessary for the formation of ecocentric societies in these regions of the globe. These insights may also provide avenues for the formation of ecocentric societies in parts of the North. For these reasons it is both vital and necessary to include the Global South in any analysis that focuses on radical ecopolitical thought and ecological sustainability.

Deep ecology draws negative attention from theorists concerned with the Global South for a variety of reasons. First of all, deep ecology engages in colonialist discourses when it discusses the global applicability of issues like wilderness preservation and population control, conceptually perpetuating neocolonialism and oppression as a result. Secondly, critiques emerge about deep ecology's insistence upon the anthropocentric/biocentric divide, drawing criticism that contends that this dualistic formulation places blame on the false cause of anthropocentrism, when in reality, environmental degradation is intimately related to other more concrete issues such as overconsumption and militarization. And thirdly, what little mention of the Global South that deep ecology does attempt to incorporate into its theory results in misuse of indigenous perspectives and appropriation of systems of knowledge solely for the purposes of perpetuating deep ecology in the West (See Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997, pp. 94-7). This appropriation of other cultures, practices, and religions in the Global South fails to acknowledge that Western philosophers and political theorists can never truly appreciate and correctly characterize the perspectives and customs of cultures other than their own. Indeed, some may see this third critique as a charge that only touches the surface of deep ecology and its goals as a radical ecopolitical theory. In fact, however, appropriation belittles and others the Global South by misusing information while conceptually excluding the humans that live in these regions from meaningful participation in the discussion about and construction of radical ecopolitical societies.

These missteps in deep ecology only serve to promote a specific and bounded version of ecocentric politics that deep ecology finds palatable. Most importantly, this othering of the

Global South and focus on specific policies in deep ecology results in the promotion of Western-centric policies that reflect the imperialistic and neocolonialist tendencies that have plagued Western political thought for centuries. The last critique that emerges regarding deep ecology does not appear frequently in the literature, however, but is a critique that I feel must be dealt with adequately in my analysis. I argue that deep ecology fails to include the Global South in most of its theory as a viable region of the globe that has a role to play in the formation of ecocentric societies. While these omissions may not always be intentional in deep ecology, this exclusionary outlook prevents deep ecology (and its adherents) from viewing those in the Global South as agents of change and as full participants in decision-making that will greatly affect their communities, their livelihoods, and their overall flourishing. I argue that these omissions are not necessarily meant to harm the Global South, but instead emerge because deep ecology primarily focuses on policies and philosophical tenets that might "work better" for the formation of ecocentric societies in the North. Nevertheless, this exclusion still proves problematic for deep ecology overall.

While deep ecology has attempted to incorporate some basic insights and issues related to the Global South in its theory, it does so in piecemeal ways that fail to formulate either a unified perspective or a specific position on how the Global South can both contribute to and fully participate in the formation of ecocentric political societies. Deep ecology, by failing to formulate a specific standpoint about humans and the broader ecology in the Global South, has not only opened itself up to the above critiques but has also missed an opportunity to place these often excluded populations at the level of equally relevant partners in changing the way humans relate to nature. Of course, I do not imply that the West should guide the Global South, but instead begin to open itself up as a theory of inclusivity that will be ready to support these regions of the world in uplifting themselves in pursuit of ecocentric political societies.

Overall, the first three critiques fundamentally relate to neocolonialism, and how neocolonialism reinforces oppressive contemporary structures of power, resulting in environmental degradation and suffering of populations in the Global South. These charges levied at deep ecology from perspectives concerned with the Global South also mirror charges often levied at dominant Western political, social, and economic institutions, including claims that implicate these powerful institutions for perpetuating destructive economic forces that promote moving extractive and environmentally harmful industries to areas in the Global South that have often have lower labor costs and fewer environmental regulations. In turn, these neocolonial practices of industry, reinforced by governments and international organizations in the North perpetuate colonialism by oppressing local populations by keeping them in poverty and at the same time destroying surrounding nature.

Moreover, there is a history of both exploitation and oppression of both humans and nonhuman nature in the Global South. For example, some deep ecologists have commented briefly on this neocolonialism in their arguments (although neocolonialist discourses are often still perpetuated in many of these same arguments). Taylor (2000) summarizes how neocolonialism relates to environmental degradation in the minds of many in the South by paraphrasing how these populations feel, saying,

> *The land has been stolen and abused by outsiders—either by multinational commercial interests, or more commonly, by national and commercial elites—who are interested in quick profits rather than ecologically sustainable land use* [author's italics] (p. 278).

Moreover, he argues that, "Grassroots activists often trace the beginning of this process to the arrival of colonial armies, the theft of their mineral resources, and the fast-following commercial enterprises, including cash-crop monocultures" (Taylor, 2000, p. 278). Both neocolonialism—now mostly perpetuated by industries rather than directly by nation-states—and imperialism—now perpetuated through the insistence by many nation-states in the West that outsiders adopt democratic and capitalist mechanisms in the name of progress—are devastating tactics that result in both environmental degradation and the suffering of human populations around the world in the Global South. These systems of power, moreover, serve to keep populations in the Global South from acting against these forces, preventing most people in these regions from becoming agents in their own nation-states' and communities' self-chosen paths toward flourishing and sustainability. Despite the fact that the North has consistently denied the South the ability and the agency to equally participate in the determination of its own fate, the fact remains that only the North (as the oppressors) can "allow" the Global South to uplift itself and regain its rightful role in world politics on the path toward ecocentrism.

Importantly, all of the above critiques will be addressed with the intention of directing deep ecology toward more varied perspectives on the formation of ecocentric societies and with the intention of making deep ecology a viable theory that does not promote Western-centric notions of ecological sustainability. All of these critiques in some way focus on the importance of inclusion or the acknowledgement of difference. As it currently stands, deep ecology either excludes the Global South from its theory altogether or includes only the Global South's "ecological wisdom" that promotes its overall philosophical tenets and political goals. Neither the exclusion of the Global South nor its selective inclusion promotes a radical change toward ecocentric political societies, especially given deep ecology's conviction that all beings on the planet have an equal right to live and flourish. Furthermore, while some deep ecologists (David M. Johns, Robyn Eckersley, and Arne Naess) have attempted to address these critiques regarding the Global South, their answers are insufficient and do not adequately acknowledge or address the presence of othering or exclusion in deep ecology.

My analysis begins by examining the debate that has already occurred between deep ecology and perspectives concerned with the Global South, examining the three dominant critiques that have been made of deep ecology from these perspectives and the responses that deep ecology has made. I then move to construct my own critique of deep ecology regarding inclusion, analyzing how deep ecology has failed to become a theory of inclusivity and a globally applicable political theory in that regard. And finally, I respond to these four critiques by re-envisioning how deep ecology can reconcile them and become globally applicable, fundamentally accounting for difference and rejecting colonialism in its overall discourse.

The Critiques of Deep Ecology from Perspectives of the Global South

1. The Current Debate: Wilderness, Othering, and Neo-colonialism

Deep ecology has occasionally engaged in debate over issues related to the Global South and the critiques that have been made of it in relation to these regions of the globe. The major players in this debate have been Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, arguing out of concern for the Global South, and David M. Johns and Arne Naess, arguing on behalf of deep ecology. This debate has centered on a few important issues that serve to highlight the problem of neocolonialism in deep ecology, in addition to specific ethical and policy issues like the anthropocentric ethic and wilderness preservation.

The first major critique that arises from perspectives concerned with the Global South relates to deep ecology’s focus on wilderness preservation as a globally applicable policy standpoint. To varying degrees, deep ecology has heralded a commitment to the preservation of wild spaces on a global scale. It has emphasized the importance of this policy position in keeping with its promotion of the intrinsic value of all species and ecosystems and the concept of biocentric egalitarianism (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997, p. 94). These critiques are concerned with an inherently Western bias in deep ecology that puts the theory in danger of promoting neocolonial and imperial policies that negatively affect the Global South and do not account for difference in these regions of the globe.

Regarding this focus on wilderness preservation, Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) argue that deep ecology not only emphasizes wilderness preservation, but obsesses about the necessity of preserving pristine wild areas and restoring damaged areas to near-pristine condition (p. 95). Moreover, they contend that the focus on wilderness preservation in deep ecology upholds imperialist and reformist environmental practices that have occurred throughout the Global South for decades, such as setting aside lands for tiger reserves which has resulted in the taking of land from poverty stricken and peasant populations. Additionally, deep ecology's focus on wilderness preservation promotes a culture of professionalization where biologists become the number one source regarding which wild spaces need preservation, regardless of local needs and local input on these preservationist policies (Guha & Martinez-Alier, p. 95-6). This "West knows best" attitude that permeates from this emphasis on wilderness preservation in deep ecology fails to acknowledge the abilities and the capacity for action that local populations have for preserving ecological integrity in a particular region of the South as well as fails to acknowledge the diversity of needs and perspectives in these regions.

Factoring in local needs as they relate to nature and preservationist policies, human ecologist James D. Nations (1988) also argues against deep ecology, contending that it is impractical in its wish to push these types of policies toward adoption in the developing world without resorting to anthropocentric arguments (p. 78-9). He argues that deep ecology does not factor in the differences that exist between the North and developing or underdeveloped nation-states in the South. For example, many people depend on slash and burn agriculture in the developing world to sustain their vital needs and generally survive, but deep ecology would try to convince these farmers that preservation benefits their endeavors and preserves the biological diversity in the region. Farmers in many of these regions, Nations argues, must have a direct incentive that benefits themselves and their families to start conserving and preserving the lands around them upon which their lives depend (Nations, 1988, pp. 78-81). Ultimately, Nations points out that deep ecology fails to recognize the extent to which ecological sustainability is not currently possible in regions of the world still made destitute by problems such as poverty and a lack of vital resources to sustain human life.

Related to subsistence agricultural and the general survival of populations in the Global South, Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) also argue that deep ecology's focus on wilderness preservation takes attention away from much more pressing ecological problems in these regions. Moreover, the insistence on taking a mostly American inspired conservation movement and mirroring it in the Global South will result in social suffering and uprooting (p. 96). In this regard, the consequences that arise from what Guha (1998) refers to as "green imperialism" implicit in deep ecology are far more dangerous for populations in the Global South than either traditional economic or religious imperialism. For example, he argues that green imperialism will not simply encourage a culture of consumerism in the Global South (the insistence implicit in economic imperialism). Moreover, green imperialism will not simply convert populations to another religion that can be rejected at any time by its converts. Green imperialism (and wilderness preservation, specifically), instead, poses the threat of permanently displacing people in the name of preservation of wildlife and landscapes. This often permanent displacement under the guise of preservation, instead of promoting wilderness areas compatible with populations of humans that already live in these regions, asks these often poverty stricken populations to make sacrifices in the name of preserving wildlife (p. 276-7). In essence, Guha argues that these populations should not have to shoulder a burden in the name of preservation, when they have already suffered so much given the results of colonialism and economic imperialism.

More than the emphasis on wilderness preservation alone, Guha (1998, 1997), Martinez-Alier (1997), and Nations (1988) are criticizing the lack of nuance in deep ecology's policy angle regarding wilderness, arguing that deep ecology lacks a focus on differences that emerge given the contexts of environmental problems in the Global South and the differences amongst cultures generally. Importantly, some deep ecologists have acknowledged that wilderness preservation is neither practical nor desirable in all reaches of the globe, due to factors such as urbanization, subsistence lifestyles, and the importance of decentralization and bioregionalism in human management of local environments. These responses to those who critique the wilderness aspects of deep ecology have been important, but not sufficient for addressing all the concerns that revolve around this policy recommendation. In addition, other deep ecologists have also directly responded to Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997), contending that wilderness preservation is still a valuable and necessary globally applicable policy standpoint.

For example, Eckersley (1992) comments on wilderness preservation by acknowledging how it can benefit ecocentric political societies, rather than responding directly to charges of imperialism or neocolonialism. She has stated that wilderness preservation can provide a "litmus test" that distinguishes between anthropocentric and ecocentric viewpoints. In this regard, wilderness preservation can act as a way for determining whether or not theorists and policymakers are adequately and ecocentrically accounting for the vital interests of nonhuman entities in their decision-making processes (p. 130). Wilderness preservation, for Eckersley, marks a valuable way in which humans can gauge if they are truly reflecting ecocentric values by placing the vital needs of other species prior to their own non-vital needs in decision-making. Moreover, Eckersley briefly contends that wilderness preservation can also assist in preserving indigenous cultures (p. 158). Eckersley does not go more into depth on these topics, however, leaving a more critical engagement with the merits and downfalls of deep ecology's insistence on wilderness preservation absent from her analysis. Her insights, however, may prove valuable in the long run, when ecological sustainability becomes a truly global goal and is able to be practiced in regions currently stricken by immediate and devastating social concerns and more pressing environmental problems.

Moreover, deep ecology has not really emphasized that wilderness preservation is an idealized state of human protection of nature. Very few actual wilderness areas still exist, and many populations of humans around the world who wish to live off of the land will disrupt this idealized vision of nature. The vital needs of many of these populations will depend upon this "invasion" of particular areas of nature that are more unspoiled than others. As mentioned previously, Naess (1984) has contended that the levels of interference in nature will be contested concepts in ecocentric societies. Moreover, the variability of needs across cultures will determine acceptable levels of interference based on needs of both humans and animals in these regions (p. 169-170). Though Naess makes this admission about difference, he still vigorously defends the necessity of preservation in many of his works (See Naess, 1995; Naess, 1986).

Also defending the value of preservation, deep ecologist David M. Johns (1990) has directly responded to Guha's and others' critiques of deep ecology's focus on wilderness preservation, though his response still does not sufficiently address all the issues raised in this analysis. He argues that human civilization is really not compatible with sustainability and that almost all human actions in some way disrupt or destroy the functioning of ecosystems. In this sense wilderness preservation is absolutely necessary for the flourishing of nature on a global scale (p. 235). Moreover, he argues that the mere existence of human communities in many parts of the globe poses a threat to the flourishing of ecosystems because in many of these areas humans compete with animals for habitat (Johns, 1990, p. 238). Though Johns defends the insistence on wilderness preservation in deep ecology, he also acknowledges that preservation has often been implemented imperialistically in the Global South in contemporary society by Western interests, arguing that deep ecology must recognize and account for the fact that imperialism has been a problem in this policy arena. Additionally, deep ecology must argue that wilderness preservation will differ and might not constitute imperialism in a system based on ecocentrism rather than the current anthropocentric one (Johns, 1990, p. 238-9). Though Johns makes some important points, he too fails to acknowledge the diversity of needs that will play a role in determining how wilderness areas are constructed and if these areas can be occupied by humans that do not unduly degrade the environment, at the same time failing to acknowledge the intense destruction of wilderness that has made the transition to such preservationist models extremely difficult in contemporary society.

Importantly, Naess (1995) has also commented directly on the “wilderness question” in response to Guha and Martinez-Alier’s (1997) contention that preservation as promoted by deep ecology is not compatible with flourishing of populations in the Global South. For example, Naess argues that the issue of wilderness also becomes an issue of out of control human population, contending that the populations in the Global South are much too large for these people to live without causing environmental destruction to their natural surroundings (Naess, 1995, p. 282). For many deep ecologists, wilderness and population go hand and hand; wilderness cannot be established worldwide and in great expanses with seven billion or more people on the planet. For Naess, the solution to the problem with large numbers of people in the Global South being forced to destroy the land around them in the name of survival lies in a focus on urban areas. Indeed, urban areas must be compatible with ecocentric lifestyles and be able to accommodate and contribute to the flourishing of large numbers of people in order to allow wilderness areas to flourish in the context of non-destructive agricultural and simple lifestyles outside of urban centers (Naess, 1995, p. 281-3). This is one example provided by deep ecology about how humans can work within the contexts that they have already created—for instance, by contributing to the viability of urban spaces where humans can flourish and leaving other areas to the devices of the natural world. Nevertheless, most deep ecologists have not focused on these types of strategies, and even Naess (1995) fails to take this statement further to include other types of developed human areas devoid of wilderness.

Though neither Guha (1998) nor Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) directly discuss the issue of population control in their critiques of deep ecology, deep ecology fundamentally ties this issue to wilderness preservation. Population, however, has proven less divisive of an issue in critiques from the Global South than has wilderness preservation (although many other critics of deep ecology have condemned the theory for promoting Neo-Malthusianism, and some deep ecology activists, such as Dave Foreman, have done so in inexcusable ways). Most deep ecologists, however, have not made such problematic assertions regarding population (Zimmerman, 1999, p. 234-5). For example, Johns (1990) connects wilderness preservation to population by arguing that the number of humans is far too large to realistically combat ecological degradation with preservationist policies in contemporary societies. Therefore, he argues, population issues must also be taken into account (p. 237-8). Moreover, Zimmerman (1999) has characterized deep ecology's concerns about population as fundamentally qualified, recognizing that population control is a necessary but not an easy task to promote in any region of the globe. For example, regarding Naess' various discussions on population, he argues that

> By raising the population issue, Naess is promoting neither neo-Malthusianism, nor patriarchalism, nor ecofascism. Instead, he stresses that if biodiversity is worth protecting (and I agree that it is), special attention must be paid first, to understanding the decisive role played by large human populations in destroying such biodiversity, and second, to finding culturally and politically acceptable ways of decreasing the absolute numbers of humans (p. 234-5).

Importantly, deep ecology has done well to promote population as a problem that is related to issues primarily in the Global North, contending that while the South must also, at some point, address population issues on its own terms, the North must also halt destructive consumption practices in addition to reducing population (Zimmerman, 1999, p. 233-5). Wilderness, preservation, however, has proved much more problematic in the eyes of those who critique deep ecology from the Global South.

Problematically, Naess (1995) makes comments in his response to Guha's (1998) contention that deep ecology promotes imperialism, reinforcing the fact that deep ecology could promote this tendency without clarifying its position and rethinking its role in the establishment of ecocentric societies. For example, Naess argues that, "Close cooperation between supporters of the Deep Ecology movement and ecologically concerned people in the poor countries requires that the latter trust the former's concern for the economic progress of the poor" (Naess, 1995, p. 282). According to Cara Cilano and Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2007), this statement by Naess especially resonates with charges of neocolonialism because it begs the Global South to trust the wisdom and "right" intentions of the West. Moreover, they argue that despite the willingness of deep ecology to supposedly work with the Global South, statements like these reinforce existing power structures that ultimately bear responsibility for colonialism historically and for perpetuating neocolonial practices that cause environmental degradation and human suffering in the Global South (p. 72). Indeed, they argue that deep ecology seems less than inclined to overtly hand over power and trust the Global South to ecocentrically manage its own environments. History, rarely if ever, has seen instances of Western environmental groups (radical or reformist) trusting poverty stricken regions of the world to sustainably manage their own ecological resources (Cilano and DeLoughrey, 2007, p. 72).

Indeed, Naess (1995) has also somewhat contradicted his above statements that point toward a colonial discourse by arguing that deep ecology does not necessarily promote or intend to promote tactics that force wilderness preservation or population control on populations in the Global South, arguing instead that deep ecology recognizes that poverty stricken populations will most likely be concerned with their own overall well-being prior to concerning themselves with ecological problems (p. 284). Moreover, Naess argues that deep ecology does not seek to map solutions like wilderness preservation onto the Global South, thereby further diminishing the capacity for flourishing of humans in poverty in these regions. The problem with these arguments from Naess is that they do not propose solutions for how to directly deal with the conflicts that arise between preservation, population, and poverty in the Global South, instead arguing that preservation and population control are good ideas that eventually must take hold in these regions, albeit in ways that account for specific contexts (Naess, 1995, p. 282). Indeed, Naess doesn’t really provide evidence from deep ecology that promotes a radical rethinking of how both wilderness and population control can be dealt with solely by the inhabitants of these regions without guidance or neocolonial interference on the part of the Western interests. At best, Naess’ statements regarding wilderness seem contradictory, and at worst, they bring to mind colonial discourses that only serve to perpetuate existing contemporary Western domination of the Global South.

Related to the neocolonial and imperialist assumptions in deep ecology, Guha (1998) also contends that Naess and deep ecology in general promotes “green imperialist” tendencies throughout the theory (p. 276-7). For example, he quotes Naess (1989) saying, “the deep ecology movement is ‘from the point of view of many people all over the world, the most precious gift from the North American continent in our time’” (p. 276). Guha goes on to argue that deep ecology must recognize that wilderness preservation (presumably part of what Naess is referring to in this passage) is a particularly Western ideal of environmental sustainability and that humility in making claims about wilderness preservation is also necessary (p. 277). Beyond Guha’s critique, this passage from Naess (1989) implicitly shifts the burden of responsibility about ecological sustainability to those in the South by implying that “deep ecology will save the world” and that “the whole world will be thankful for this theory.” The burden of responsibility is now placed on the South to follow the path of deep ecology, right or wrong and in the process to unquestioningly accept policies such as wilderness preservation and population control for its own good. This attitude in deep ecology can be seen as both imperialistic and paternalistic because it attempts to map culturally-constructed solutions from the West onto the Global South, foregoing more nuanced arguments about the merits of deep ecology that focus on the importance of intrinsic value, biocentric equality, and radically contested cultural change toward ecocentrism, instead promoting essentialized versions of policy “truths” for consumption in the Global South.

Despite these problematic statements that cannot be excused, Naess (1989) also argues that deep ecology has focused on the Global North because it requires the most substantial economic and social changes to become ecocentric and because the North requires resources from the South and in turn, oppresses these regions while destroying nature (pp. 284-6). Before the South can become ecocentric, the North must change, argues deep ecology. Relatedly, Naess understands that due to overconsumption and industrialism in the Global North, the South has little say in and little opportunity to discuss and participate in solving ecological problems. These overzealous economic endeavors backed by anthropocentrism by the North, in turn, cause great harm to come to the environmental, economic, and social justice causes in the South (Naess, 1995, p. 289-91). The focus on solutions in the North in deep ecology, however, does not excuse the above neocolonialist statements from Naess that deep ecology is a "gift" to the Global South or that the South must "trust" the North to help it in its progress toward greater sustainability.

Related to the focus in deep ecology on the North, deep ecologist Chellis Glendinning (1995) argues that humans need to "recover" from Western civilization (p. 37). She argues that the West, particularly, has removed itself from its relationship with nature and from natural cycles, resulting in the loss of humanity's sense of place and environmental crises of epic proportions. This removal from nature resulted from an addiction to technological progress and technology in general and from mechanistic ways of viewing nature (Glendinning, 1995, p. 37-9). Relatedly, the solution to this loss of self and alienation from nature seems to lie, for some theorists of deep ecology, in what Glendinning refers to as recovery—which encompasses recovering from alienation, from "Techno-Addiction," and from mechanistic world-views (Glendinning, 1995, p. 39-40). The solution to recovering lies in the re-discovering and inventing new and old philosophies based upon both new knowledge and old "earth-based, ecological, and indigenous" cultures (Glendinning, 1995, p. 40). Recovery in the West, for deep ecology, involves a re-envisioning both of the self’s place in the broader ecology and a radical questioning of contemporary society’s view of nature and the results that derive from this ontology.

I will return to this idea of recovery later in my analysis, but for now, suffice it to say that deep ecology often justifies its potentially neocolonial attitudes toward the Global South by contending that deep ecology really focuses on the North, and eventually, must become globally applicable once the North has made the necessary changes for this to be possible. As I will argue, however, the focus on the North poses problems for deep ecology that go well beyond its intention to make radical changes in these regions of the globe first and foremost. More critiques beyond Western-centric policy formulations, however, have also emerged against deep ecology and its concern for the Global South.

A second important critique that emerges in literature concerned with the Global South involves the formation of the anthropocentric/biocentric divide in deep ecology. Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) argue that deep ecology, at least implicitly, argues that the needs of the biosphere are more important than the needs of humans. Moreover, they argue that anthropocentrism is a false cause of environmental degradation, instead blaming structures of power such as overconsumption and militarization in their analysis. Deep ecology’s insistence on both ecocentrism as a solution to environmental degradation and especially its insistence upon anthropocentrism as a root cause of degradation, according to critics, serves to distract the focus of ecological sustainability away from these other concrete problems. These more concrete problems also have direct environmental consequences in the Global South, unlike the shadow of anthropocentric culture (p. 94-5).

Though these critiques concerned with the anthropocentric/biocentric divide point out issues that also cause environmental harm and relate closer to Bookchin’s social ecology arguments concerning hierarchy and domination, I have already addressed the purpose and the value that anthropocentrism has in deep ecology, arguing that it can (at the very least) serve as a conceptual dividing line that helps in categorizing anthropocentric versus ecocentric actions. Moreover, I have argued that anthropocentric culture reinforces more concrete problems like those mentioned by Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997), serving to perpetuate these institutional causes through a metanarrative that fundamentally places humans both at odds with nature and in a position of moral superiority. While this critique is important because it points out causes that cannot be ignored by deep ecology in its overall analysis of environmental problems, deep ecology has acknowledged that problems beyond anthropocentrism must be addressed on the pathway toward greater ecological sustainability (See Johns, 1990, p. 251-2).

The third important critique concerning the Global South involves the appropriation of other cultures in deep ecology, especially religious and cultural traditions emerging from the Global South and indigenous perspectives. Deep ecology has utilized a variety of tactics in order to promote its ecocentric outlook and justify its positions regarding tenets such as intrinsic value and biocentric equality. It has attempted to globalize its perspective by discussing unrelated collections of religious, cultural, and political traditions that have historically emerged from the Global South and indigenous peoples worldwide. Given this usage of unrelated and random perspectives from different cultures to uphold the theory of deep ecology, it is not surprising that it has received criticism regarding this appropriation and misuse of other cultures in its theory. This critique is important for two reasons. First of all, deep ecology does not really need these “examples” of historically ecocentric societies and cultures in order to justify its ethical and political claims. If deep ecology did need these tactical appropriations, then it would fail to stand alone as a viable radical ecopolitical theory. Secondly, these tactics not only serve to limit deep ecology's global appeal but also fail to account for the contemporary systems of knowledge present in the Global South, instead characterizing certain regions based upon historical, socio-cultural, or religious institutions, leading to an idealized "othering" of people and cultures in the South.

For example, Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) argue that deep ecology uses appropriation to "construct an authentic lineage…and present deep ecology as a universalistic philosophy" (p. 97). Deep ecology relies on these historical narratives to justify its own position in favor of ecocentrism. By retelling these histories in a piecemeal way, deep ecology is able to pick and choose which historical and indigenous perspectives support ecocentrism and focus on these "exemplars" of humanity's real relationship to nature in its theory. Moreover, by utilizing examples from around the globe, deep ecology attempts to universalize its theory and construct a utopian vision of the past, one that paints an inaccurate and essentialized vision of human history and limits its overall argument in favor cultural change, which will vary significantly across the globe, even in the pursuit of ecocentric relations with nature. These idealized versions of the past serve to undermine deep ecology because they cast a shadow over deep ecology's real argument: ecocentric political societies based upon wider identification with nature will result in better environmental practices and clearer pathways toward the overall flourishing of all human and ecological entities on the planet. It is therefore unnecessary for deep ecology to back up its main arguments through the misuse of indigenous knowledge and cultural contributions to ecological sustainability from the Global South.

Importantly, deep ecology has incorrectly characterized the bases for past societies that seemingly had ecocentric relationships with the natural world. This characterization, according to Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997), demonstrates that deep ecology has idealized these contexts in which many Eastern and traditional societies operated and interacted with the natural world in order to justify its own positions regarding ecocentrism (p. 97-8). Indicative of Guha and Martinez-Alier's characterization of deep ecology, Sessions (1991) contends that,

> …the cultures of most primal (hunter/gathering) societies throughout the world were permeated with Nature-oriented religions that expressed the ecocentric perspective. These cosmologies, involving a sacred sense of the Earth and all its inhabitants, helped order their lives and determine their values (p. 158).

Sessions elaborates on this point by saying that most cultures gradually lost their ecocentric perspectives with the beginning of agricultural societies, implying that a return to more simple ways of living is needed to establish ecocentric political societies (Sessions, 1991, p. 158-0). Relatedly, however, I will argue that deep ecology does not necessarily require a priori a return to the past that embraces a more "primitive" state of humanity in order to establish ecocentric societies.

Related to these more general comments about historically ecocentric societies, other more specific characterizations emerge and serve to misuse information and pick and choose which cultures are focused upon in the deep ecology literature as exemplars of ecocentric societies both historical and contemporary. For example, Devall and Sessions (1985) argue that, "Eastern traditions express organic unity, address what we have called the minority tradition, and express acceptance of biocentric equality in some traditions. Furthermore, these sources relate to the process of becoming more mature, awakening from illusion and delusion" (p. 100). They go on to name a few activists, philosophers, and writers who embrace deep ecology and have drawn wisdom from these so-called "Eastern" traditions, including Emerson, Thoreau, and Gary Snyder. They also specifically mention the *Tao Te Ching* and the influence of Buddhism on these cultural transmissions from East to West (Devall and Sessions, 1985, pp. 100-1).

Even the simplicity that deep ecology projects onto these "Eastern" and ecocentric traditions is highly problematic. For example, Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) argue that these characterizations may well reinforce age old stereotypes that the West has often projected upon indigenous cultures and other lifestyles in the Global South (p. 97). They reflect comments made by Ronald Inden (1986) regarding orientalism saying that,

> This romantic and essentially positive view of the East is a mirror image of the scientific and essentially pejorative view normally held by Western scholars of the Orient. In either case, the East constitutes the Other, a body wholly separate and alien from the West; it is defined by a uniquely spiritual and non-rational 'essence,' even if this essence is valorized quite differently by the two different schools (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997, p. 97).

According to these statements, then, deep ecology not only essentializes these traditions, cultures, and religious practices but also "others" those who partake in these customs. By idealizing the Global South so much so that peoples in these regions become "others" that should be mimicked by the West, deep ecology alienates these regions and reinforces existing power structures that have historically exploited these parts of the planet and the populations that reside within them.

The concept of "othering" first appeared in the work of Edward Said[2] (1997), and has far-reaching negative consequences for these so-called "others." For example, Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) argue that othering in deep ecology characterizes and delegitimizes people in the "East" in certain important ways. First of all, by utilizing these Eastern traditions as exemplars, deep ecology is presenting the Global South as dependent upon nature. Although deep ecology argues that all humans are ultimately dependent upon nature, the ways that deep ecology talks about these traditions and cultures only serves to further their own dependency upon both nature and the will of Western observers. Secondly, these portrayals of the Global South deny that these populations have agency and also deny that they are capable of reasoning in ways that will ultimately lead to their own ecological sustainability. And lastly, this method of othering the Global South merely places the Global South at the will of the West in addition to denying that these regions are anything but a "vehicle" for the purposes of furthering ecocentrism in the West (Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1997, p. 97-8). Othering, importantly, as a consequence of appropriation in deep ecology, results in a return to a colonial discourse that has historically othered these populations in the Global South for the purposes of furthering some goal in the West, ultimately perpetuating oppression and the attitude that the West still dominates world politics and relations.

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[2] Said (1977) coined the phrase "Orientalism," detailing how indigenous and Eastern cultures (the "Orient," traditionally) have been othered by the Western imagination for much of historical Western memory, especially since the onset of colonial history (pp. 169-171).

Overall, these Western-centric policy outlooks coupled with appropriation and neocolonial discourses in deep ecology only serve to limit deep ecology's overall goals in pursuit of global ecological sustainability. Later, I argue how deep ecology can reconcile these critiques, but for now, my analysis moves to construct another important critique of deep ecology. This next critique specifically deals with how deep ecology excludes the Global South from much of its analysis, and therefore, conceptually denies these populations both agency and participation in the formation of ecocentric societies. Moreover, the concept of exclusion also intimately relates to the concept of othering in that othering is a form of exclusion. Both othering and exclusion, importantly, only serve to conceptually deny both the agency and the valuable contributions that contemporary societies in the Global South have to offer to the overall goal of global ecological sustainability.

2. The Problem of Exclusion

Inclusivity is a vital component of any political theory because it serves to make political theories more applicable beyond the contexts in which they are formulated. Moreover, inclusion results in recognition of both the agency and rights to participation that exist within humanity's capacity for action. By only mentioning the Global South in passing, deep ecology not only does a disservice to the multiple roles that people and communities in these regions can play in the formation of ecocentric societies, but it also dismisses the abilities and the capacity for agency that these populations possess due solely to their status as humans occupying the planet. In this regard, deep ecology's lack of attention to how ecocentrism can flourish in the Global South has left its theory devoid of strategies regarding how humans in these regions can participate fully in decision-making that affects the planet and become agents in their communities who promote ecocentric ways of being. Moreover, exclusion on the part of deep ecology denies the intrinsic value of people and ecosystems in these regions of the world and, in turn, perpetuates existing power structures that have historically dominated both nature and certain populations of human beings in these regions. Exclusion in deep ecology, briefly, acts in two important ways: First, it denies the unique role that the Global South can play in the formation of ecocentric societies along with the unique risk that both humans and animals in these regions bear in relation to ecological degradation. Second, it stifles agency and participation in these regions of the world by the lack of attention paid to the Global South in its overall theory.

Fundamentally, deep ecology has proclaimed that it is a globally applicable theory of how nature and humans relate, and these claims of global applicability make inclusivity a vital element in deep ecology overall. Deep ecology alludes to its global perspective in a variety of ways. For example, Naess argues that global movements in deep ecology have yet to have much of an impact on the Global South partially because the goals of the movement in the Global South will differ vastly from policies that need to be implemented in the North for many reasons, including the fact that cultures around the world differ and that the strategies of already industrialized nation-states must deal with differing problems than people in the Global South regarding nature (Naess, 1995, p. 285-6). In terms of the global reach of deep ecology, Naess proclaims that, “Ecological sustainability…will be achieved only when policies on a global scale protect the full richness and diversity of life forms on the planet” (Naess, 1995, p. 286). Given that deep ecology perceives itself both as a global theory of environmental sustainability and a global movement toward the formation of ecocentric societies, the inclusion of the Global South in any analysis of deep ecology must be a priority, especially given the unique vulnerabilities of these regions.

Since the Global South is faced with inherently higher risks in the face of ecological problems like climate change, pollution, water scarcity, and biodiversity loss, the importance of guarding these regions against increasing vulnerabilities is paramount. Importantly, issues such as poverty, lack of food, and lack of clean water relate directly to climate change, which is predicted in certain areas to create even higher levels of starvation, drought, and in some areas, devastating flooding, affecting the ability of humans and animals to survive in these regions. With the capacity for flourishing threatened at such high levels, deep ecology needs to prioritize the inclusion of the Global South in its theory. This prioritization of the most vulnerable ecological areas, however, has not proven significant enough to spur action under current anthropocentric economic, social, and political arrangements, and deep ecology has argued that the anthropocentric paradigm must first be changed to ensure the greatest amount of flourishing for both humans and ecological entities (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 14-5).

Although deep ecology cannot, by itself, invoke global cultural change away from the anthropocentric ethic, it can, at the very least, engender change by promoting its theory as one of inclusivity and concern for both the flourishing of nature and the poorest, most destitute populations around the globe. Although deep ecology has mostly failed in its task at the latter, it has argued that this exclusion is justified for a variety of reasons. For one, some deep ecologists have appropriated Eastern traditions in order that these traditions serve as a contrast to Western civilizations which are fundamentally alienated from nature and entrenched in the anthropocentric ethic. Although these characterizations, as mentioned, only serve to portray the Global South inaccurately and to other these populations, the disdain that deep ecology has for the West and all its environmentally degrading practices emerges in much of the literature in relation to these characterizations of the Global South. The result of these statements by deep ecology is a profound distrust in Western traditions in addition to problematic exclusions of the Global South in the theory overall.

Examples in deep ecology abound of this type of “East is good, West is bad” characterization. For example, Taylor (2000) argues that deep ecology views “Western” religions as inherently anthropocentric and opposed to the moral consideration of other living creatures besides humans. Moreover, deep ecology finds non-Western religions more capable of emphasizing identification with nature, instilling a proper view of how man relates to the natural world (p. 270-1). Deep ecology claims that Western cultures are mostly to blame for the contemporary environmental crisis, and should therefore be rejected on these grounds. In regards to this bias against Western culture, deep ecology both implicitly and explicitly promotes a return of Western culture to these more “primal” or “primitive” cultures and religious institutions that supposedly promote more ethical relations between humans and nature (Taylor, 2000, p.

271). This perception by deep ecology explains why they continually refer to non-Western traditions and religions as inherently more ethical than the counterparts in the West.

Taylor's assertion about the culpability of Western civilization in general also seems to have merit when examining the writings of George Sessions (1995). Sessions (1995) argues that, "…While Taoism and certain other Eastern traditions retained elements of the ancient shamanistic Nature religions, the Western religious tradition radically distanced itself from wild nature, and in the process, became increasingly anthropocentric" (p. 159). Although deep ecology has mostly focused in on problems caused by the West and also solutions that best fit Western contemporary political societies, this lack of focus on the Global South is an unnecessary omission that only limits deep ecology and prevents it from becoming a global theory of inclusivity in addition to creating an overly contentious politics. The primary goal of deep ecology—making deep changes in the current state of humanity's relationship with nature—falls short of its ideal if it does not prove globally applicable and open to a variety of ways by which this relationship can develop, perpetuate, and sustain in a variety of different cultures and socio-political contexts.

Some deep ecologists have also noted that changes must take place in the North prior to the wider expectation that the South should pursue equally radical changes, but have also emphasized, problematically, that the South also currently has an obligation to endure hardships in pursuit of ecocentric relations. These hardships could include starvation and disease and lack of resources due to the incompatibility of the existence of flourishing ecosystems alongside currently large human populations (Foreman, 2011, p. 44-6). Characterizations like these that place burdens on the Global South are inaccurate at best, and, at worst, dangerous in that they promote a sharing of responsibility that should, at least initially, fall on the North because it retains responsibility for most of the environmental degradation that has occurred on a global scale in human history.

Moreover, by focusing mostly (aside from the above example from Foreman) on the changes that must occur in the West, particularly the structures of power that reinforce anthropocentrism, deep ecology lacks a plan of action for ensuring that the most vulnerable regions of the world are both able to support themselves and their environments once the North has made the necessary changes toward the formation of ecocentric societies. In addition, deep ecology lacks an explicit focus on the ways in which the South can reject current anthropocentric practices and make changes now toward the formation of ecocentric societies through a wider identification with nature. Just because the changes that must take place prior to the envisioning of global ecocentric arrangements must be sought by the North and developed in opposition to current anthropocentric mindsets does not imply that it is not equally important to focus on how ecocentric ways of being can arise organically and ethically in the Global South.

This unintentional exclusion of the Global South in deep ecology, moreover, results in a variety of negative effects on how the Global South is viewed in the theory overall. These exclusionary moments have appeared in deep ecology, and serve to further limit deep ecology as a global perspective. Exclusion occurs in a variety of ways in deep ecology, often through simplistic statements made by deep ecologists that characterize “what needs to happen” in the Global South for the formation of ecocentric societies. For example, Naess (1991) argues that,

> But it is now clear that, in areas of the world where pollution and other environmental problems are still minimal, the influential and powerful people in these areas tend to favor the kinds of development that people in more polluted areas increasingly resist. In order to save what can still be saved of areas contributing only moderately to the ecological crisis, political institutions in larger areas must pressure the smaller, less polluted and damaged areas to adopt restrictions on ecological damaging practices (p. 144).

Naess goes on to argue that some of these particular regions of the world may require justified coercion to sway them away from the path of development. Moreover, "forced limitation on their self-determination" would also be justified under these specific conditions of below average levels of unsustainability (Naess, 1991, p. 144-5). These classifications of certain regions of the world are not only vague but result in their potential exclusion from consideration as decision-makers in political processes and place conceptual limits on agency and participation.

Importantly, Naess directly argues that it is vital to limit these regions of the world in order to prevent them from ever reaching catastrophic levels of unsustainability, such as many areas in the North have already reached (Naess, 1991, p. 145). While Naess does not specifically discuss the Global South in this particular characterization, it can be assumed that many regions in the South would be included in these areas that have not yet reached extremely high levels of unsustainability. These statements by Naess typify how deep ecology often characterizes how governance would work in the transition to ecocentric societies. Naess' arguments, however, are neither valid nor necessary in pursuit of ecological sustainability.

Indeed, deep ecology possesses very little trust in the abilities of the Global South to sustainably re-develop humanity's relationships to nature in these regions. At the same time, deep ecology fails to acknowledge or contend that the peoples in these regions have the ability to change their own path dependencies that have been set in place by the neocolonialist policies of industries in the West, conceptually denying their potential for revolutionary agency and, in turn, potentially excluding them from active participation both in the fate of their own bioregions, communities, and nation-states but also in the fate of the global path toward ecological sustainability. Not only is the Global South theoretically barred from attaining agency in some parts of deep ecology, but in many parts of the theory, these regions of the globe are absent altogether.

Moreover, deep ecology tends to overcompensate for its own emphasis on nature, resulting in a lack of emphasis on ensuring that both humanity and nonhuman nature in the Global South have the best chance to pursue ecocentric livelihoods in the context of culturally relevant traditions and customs. For example, in order to ensure that the environment gets top priority in economic and political decision-making, deep ecologist George Sessions has called for the establishment of a United Nations Environment Council (similar to the Security Council) that prioritizes population issues, economic issues in the Global South, and protection of wildlife. He goes on to note that many nation-states in the Global South have begun to follow unsustainable economic practices mimicking capitalist practices that have been long established in the North (Zimmerman, 1994, pp. 28-9). The willingness with which Sessions suggests using an international body that participates at least partially in the practices of neocolonialism in order to promote environmental sustainability suggests that Sessions is not necessarily concerned with promoting the flourishing of humans in the Global South or promoting the inclusion of these populations in decision-making at the international level. Indeed, in this argument, Sessions seems more concerned with promoting the environmental goals of deep ecology than worrying about how to ethically bring about these goals in relation to the Global South, failing to radically rethink how anthropocentrism favors certain populations of humans over others in addition to favoring humans over nature.

Although deep ecology has proven exclusionary in its characterizations of the Global South, the solutions to these issues lie in recognition of these missteps and intentional incorporation of these regions of the globe throughout deep ecology. The results of this inclusion will allow deep ecology to promote itself as a global political theory of radical change in pursuit of ecological sustainability, social justice, and the flourishing of all life.

3. Reconciling Critiques: Re-envisioning Deep Ecology as a Globally Relevant Political Theory

Deep ecology makes a number of mistakes in both the lack of attention that it pays to the Global South and the ways that it selectively includes these populations in its theory. Moreover, deep ecology has failed to formulate specific arguments that relate to how the Global South can be included in its theory based upon its own potential for agency and the formation of culturally relevant ecocentric societies in particular regions.

The major mistake that deep ecology makes with regards to its insistence on wilderness preservation derives from its argument that humans must be absent from these regions. Human interference does not always destroy ecosystems, but instead can even enhance wilderness areas when the vital needs of both humans and ecosystems are taken into account in decision-making. Moreover, deep ecology advocates wilderness on a global scale, failing to acknowledge that especially initially in ecocentric societies, most areas of the world will not constitute wilderness areas including farmlands, urban areas, suburban areas, and toxic waste sites. The task of deep ecology should, therefore, be to develop strategies that take into account these types of areas and discover ways that humans can assist in the flourishing of nature alongside many already developed areas of the globe. (This does not mean that reclamation and wilderness preservation will not eventually become the major strategies for ensuring the flourishing of wild things and humans, but instead that deep ecology must acknowledge the necessity of interim strategies between anthropocentrism and its ecocentric ideal.) These absences from deep ecology leave critics to believe that deep ecology promotes a neocolonial outlook when it comes to wilderness preservation and interference in the Global South.

Science, according to some deep ecologists, can also play a role in determining which areas of the globe need what resources to sustain the flourishing of both human and natural entities. For example, Eckersley contends that wilderness preservation encapsulates a method for accounting for the inaccuracy of scientific human endeavors while at the same time utilizing science as a flawed yet often valuable method for determining what and where to best utilize preservationist methods (Eckersley, 1992, p. 157). Though she does not elaborate in depth on this point, it is important to realize that deep ecology utilizes wilderness preservation as such an important method of recognizing the intrinsic value of other beings because political decision-makers, scientists, and political theorists have not yet devised a “better” method for ensuring the security and flourishing of large parts of the planet without resorting to preservationist methods that (aside from some indigenous and locally sustainable populations) at least partially guarantee these goals of deep ecology.

By determining other methods by which humans and nature can flourish beyond wilderness preservation, scientific endeavor can broaden this focus on wilderness preservation to include other means. Importantly, however, science alone cannot solve these global environmental problems. Instead, the incorporation of local knowledge systems coupled with soft technologies in the Global South will often trump Western scientific methods that might be perceived as forcing solutions onto these particular regions of the globe. Deep ecology, therefore, must acknowledge that a multiplicity of self-conceived strategies in the Global South will be coupled with softer technologies and scientific endeavors that are often dominated by Western interests. The number of strategies that can aid in the development of ecocentric societies, moreover, is limitless if deep ecology emphasizes the necessity of ensuring that the Global South can develop these unique strategies of its own accord.

The fact remains that wilderness preservation in the South will not become a goal until all people in those regions of the world attain some consistent level of sustenance and flourishing. Even deep ecology knows that humans will take care of their own vital needs prior to ensuring that the vital needs of other species and the broader ecology are met (See Naess, 1988, pp. 68-9). Some critics might argue that the above formulation about vital needs and the necessity of attaining some level of flourishing in the Global South returns deep ecology to a fundamental argument in social ecology, namely that social problems must be solved before and will result in the resolution of ecological problems. On the contrary, however, this is not my main argument. Instead, I argue that deep ecology must account for and emphasize that while human populations around the world are starving, dying of curable diseases in great numbers, and don't have access to the basic necessities of life, that putting nature above human needs is unlikely in particular regions. Given these conditions, however, deep ecology can emphasize that ecocentrism is a path to overall flourishing even when conditions of hardship typify the realities of much of the Global South.

The role of the North to dramatically change its current development path is well established in deep ecology, but in order to avoid the charges of neocolonialism, deep ecology cannot argue that wilderness preservation in the American or Canadian sense can be or needs to be globally applicable. Instead, deep ecology needs to contend that ecocentric ways of relating to nature that put the vital needs of other species in the context of the non-vital needs of humans are contentious issues that vary cross-culturally and globally based on a variety of factors such as climate, vegetation, and other ecological factors as well as human vital needs in relation to these climatic and ecological factors in addition to cultural factors. Wilderness preservation, therefore, must take a back seat in deep ecology (at least in its discussion of the Global South) in favor of an emphasis on the above aspects of deep ecology that are more easily contested based on the variance of vital needs. Moreover, deep ecology cannot promote types of policies that it deems will “best fit” particular regions in the Global South because these assertions will be based upon incomplete knowledge of cultures in these regions and will also imply an imperialist outlook.

With regards to the appropriation of other cultures in deep ecology, the characterizations from deep ecologists like Sessions of the West and the Global North are accurate and serve to ensure deep ecology’s place as a radical ecopolitical theory. The problem, however, lies in deep ecology’s discussion of solutions to these problems of Western hegemony. Though both Sessions (1991) and Glendinning (1995) speak about the degradation of the West and the promises that Eastern traditions, earth-based cultures, and indigenous knowledge can provide, they do not recognize an important element of “recovery” from Western alienation—the fact that humans in the West and those that have been corrupted by the West cannot “go back to nature” and go back to these past ways of being in the world (some of which are still currently practiced) that perhaps relate to nature in more ethically sound and deeper ways. Deep ecology utilizes so-called Eastern traditions and tactics of appropriation in order to justify their arguments that these other ways of relating to nature are both more ethical and reminiscent of past cultures and societies that deep ecology perceives were much less harmful to nature in general.

Instead of going back, however, deep ecology must recognize that going forward is the only possible solution to the present ecological crisis. Recovering humanity’s deep identification with nature will not be a process (particularly for the majority of the population in the West) that relies on old indigenous knowledge systems or so-called “Eastern” religions and traditions (though these may be utilized by peoples who identify deeply with some of these elements). By and large, however, the West must renounce the degradation that has been caused by neocolonialism around the world and forge a new way of envisioning deeper, identification based relationships with nature that recognize intrinsic value. Despite the use of these non-Western elements throughout much of deep ecology, however, it still promotes a Western-biased format for both change and the formation of ecological societies on a global scale that fails to account for differences across cultures, different climates, and differences in the practices of those who live in certain regions of the world.

Furthermore, does deep ecology really need to construct a lineage and prove that it is the historically accurate way of being in the world that humans have embraced for centuries prior to industrialization and the global hegemony of the Western world? Or does deep ecology merely need to address its claim that it is a better way that humans can relate to the environment because of the consequences that follow from this ecocentric relationship? I argue that the latter is the case; deep ecology does not necessarily require historical justification for its theory, just as most other political theories do not need this type of evidence to adequately defend their political theoretical tenets. Instead, deep ecology can acknowledge that while certain cultures may have shown characteristics of ecocentric societies, the goal of deep ecology is not to re-invent these past civilizations or promote existing indigenous relations to nature in the Global South. Instead, deep ecology must promote a new way that humans can relate to nature in the context of disappearing wildernesses, vast urban jungles, major suburban housing developments, and farmlands, while at the same time leaving how the Global South deals with these issues to be decided only by the populations that dwell in these regions.

Despite this need to develop new ways that humans can relate to nature given developments like industrialization, urbanization, and the loss of wild spaces and species, there is still a more nuanced way that deep ecology can incorporate and acknowledge the importance of these past civilizations and indigenous cultures without appropriating them, idealizing them, or othering them. Indeed, looking to these past traditions is not alone a cause for concern in deep ecology, but rather utilizing them for the furthering of its own theory does cause problems for deep ecology, especially when it does not consult with the people that practice these traditions in its characterizations of them. Incorporation of these traditions can be done without othering or exclusion through active and critical engagement with practitioners of these cultures and with local historians in the South, and with an acknowledgement that difference and diversity can only enhance the path of human civilization toward ecocentric societies. Moreover, determining the important role that education can play in these processes of transformation will be an essential task for deep ecology as a political movement of diversity and inclusion. Education and critical engagement with those populations that deep ecology has tended to characterize as idealized others will not only serve to make deep ecology more inclusive, but will also provide new insights into the role that specific policies such as wilderness preservation and population control can play in the transition to ecocentric societies around the world. Despite the necessity of critical engagement with the Global South, deep ecology also faces another issue that directly relates to how it often others these regions of the globe.

In relation to the concept of othering, ecofeminist Val Plumwood (2000) argues that deep ecology has an issue with the way it conceptualizes identity in relation to its emphasis on deep identification of the self with nature. For Plumwood, the problem lies in deep ecology’s insistence on identifying with nature rather than a focus on solidarity—a political concept of unity that does not require the loss of difference in the process of identification (p. 66). Moreover, the emphasis on unity in deep ecology further promotes the othering of people in the Global South by denying difference and reflecting colonialist tendencies. By insisting upon unity in the process of identification with nature, deep ecology implicitly promotes the colonial destruction of cultural diversity in oppressed populations across the globe (Plumwood, 2000, p. 66-7). In this regard, Plumwood argues that deep ecology fails to acknowledge that its emphasis on unity makes the theory particularly susceptible to hegemonic and authoritarian interpretations that deny difference, insist upon universality in the theory, and promote othering of populations (even if this othering and projection of the merits of "Eastern traditions" often appears to be interpreted in a positive light in deep ecology) (Plumwood, 2000, p. 67-8).

Identification, moreover, does not consist in one identity that fundamentally defines an individual and guides action (Plumwood, 2000, p. 60-6). Deep ecology should therefore emphasize that identification with nature will only be one among many identities that define and shape individuals within the context of ecocentric communities in addition to placing a greater emphasis on solidarity. Yet, irrespective of this critique, I argue that the way deep ecology discusses identity is valuable in that it promotes the formation of new constitutive identities in individuals that will spur action. Nevertheless, the goal of deep ecology is to reinvigorate what it perceives as an identity that has largely faded from the human condition in contemporary society, contending that this re-invigoration of an essential identity will result in better overall flourishing for human and nonhuman nature. By recognizing the multiplicity of identities that make up individual humans, deep ecology can also promote itself alongside other radical ecopolitical theories that deal with issues like patriarchy, hierarchy, and other systems of power that fundamentally damage the identities of individuals and alienate people from nonhuman nature.

By emphasizing unity and singular identification, moreover, deep ecology fails to acknowledge differences between humans and nature and between humans in general.

Plumwood (2000) argues that this failure to distinguish results in the other becoming a subordinate object that exists solely for the purposes of reinforcing the role that individuals play in relation to the whole of ecology/human culture (p. 60-7). Deep ecologist Johns (1990), however, argues that, “Any system of values that does not transcend nature-as-other cannot limit destruction of the biosphere as effectively as one that embraces nonhuman life as intrinsically valuable” (p. 250). How does deep ecology reconcile these two very different viewpoints? On the one hand, critics argue that deep ecology fails to recognize difference, and in turn, this failure results in the theory utilizing other cultures for instrumental purposes. On the other hand, however, deep ecology emphasizes the notion that unity and self-realization of one’s place in the broader ecology in addition to the recognition of the intrinsic value of all life forms is a necessary and vital step for the purposes of sustainability.

I argue that these two different perspectives highlight how deep ecology has failed to develop a nuanced sense of what it means to be human in the context of nature. Recognizing difference is not necessarily incompatible with an emphasis on unity (or solidarity, as Plumwood refers to the sense of the self’s role in the broader ecology). Importantly, deep ecology has failed to acknowledge that a human can both deeply identify with nature and at the same time celebrate the diversity of cultures, social institutions, and religions that inhabit the globe. Unity in deep ecology does not necessarily constitute an embracing of similarity or an erasure of difference; instead, it constitutes a way that humans can better envision how diversity and difference plays a vital role in the maintenance of a functioning biosphere and of flourishing human populations. Without diversity, the ability of humans to construct new ways of relating to nature and ecocentric ways of acting would be severely limited. Deep ecology has yet to develop a robust theory that acknowledges these results of its theoretical assumptions, but must, especially given the vital importance that the recognition of intrinsic value will play in the overall radical transition of contemporary society to a world marked by ecocentrism and an absence of all forms of oppression and domination.

While some deep ecologists acknowledge aspects of the role that deep ecology can play in the Global South; other theorists ignore these regions altogether for specific reasons. For example, McLaughlin (1993) all but ignores the Global South in his analysis of the problem of industrialism. He does this, however, for a very important reason that directly relates to the plight of the Global South. He states, for example, that “Industrial peoples cannot responsibly preach to less industrialized societies while continuing to consume the lion’s share of global resources. Such a posture is morally dubious and likely to be of little effect” (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 15). Moreover, the Global South has already felt the consequences of rapid industrialization on the environment and on human populations, and most of this devastation has been caused directly or indirectly by the North (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 15). (Industrialism indirectly causes harm in the Global South by contributing to global warming and by enticing investors and leaders of those countries to pursue, against the greater interests of the people, this road to industrialization.) For McLaughlin, the key is to spur change in the North and in turn, demonstrate to those in the South that industrialism is the wrong path for the formation of ecologically sustainable societies and the overall flourishing of life (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 15).

Despite the importance of recognizing intrinsic value in deep ecology and the reasoning behind exclusion in general, the theory still limits the value of populations in the Global South by excluding them or only selectively including them in the overall theory. Although this exclusion is partially intended to focus deep ecology on issues in the North, deep ecology does not adequately emphasize that this is its overall intention. Indeed, the most important way that deep ecology can place emphasis on the necessity of ecocentrism as a guarantor of overall flourishing is to contend that the Global North must alter its current trajectory as the main contributor to ecological harm and act as an exemplar of ecological sustainability while at the same time halting the practices that cause degradation and suffering in the Global South, leaving these regions to create and pursue more sustainable livelihoods on their own terms. In addition, the North must provide resources to the South—not because the South is less capable of attaining ecological sustainability, but because the North has consistently stripped the land and the human populations in these regions of both their dignity and their capabilities through processes of neocolonialism, exclusion, and instrumental use.

Overall, deep ecology must refrain from idealized arguments in favor of wilderness, reject appropriation, and fully include the Global South in its ecopolitical theory in order to exist as a globally applicable theory that promotes a radical rethinking of the human-nature relationship. Furthermore, deep ecology must acknowledge how neocolonialism has served to oppress these populations for centuries and how to reconcile these injustices in pursuit of ecological sustainability in addition to social justice.

Conclusions

My analysis adds to the overall discussion about deep ecology and the Global South by pointing out the specific ways that deep ecology has failed to become a theory of global inclusivity that accounts for difference in its discussion of the universality of its theory and the policies that it espouses. Moreover, my analysis points out the specific points in the literature that cause the most problems for deep ecology in addition to analyzing how these aspects of the theory implicitly discourage participation and agency on the part of the Global South. I also attempt to reconcile these critiques by pointing out the specific moments in deep ecology that need revision and the ways that these parts can be revised in pursuit of both greater inclusivity and more nuanced ways of discussing things like wilderness preservation.

Deep ecology—as particularly seen in the above passage regarding how the South should fundamentally "trust" the North from Naess (1991)—directly calls into question the capacity for agency in the Global South. Furthermore, the call for coercive action directly denies participation on the part of local populations in these areas, implying that these populations are incapable or unwilling to participate in and succeed at establishing ecocentric societies. Instead of conceptually excluding these regions of the world from participation, deep ecology must instead acknowledge that neither Western academics nor activists can spur political action in these regions without first exciting change in industrialized nation-states and fundamentally altering the path dependencies that push these nation-states toward greater unsustainability, unyielding economic growth, and increasing levels of consumption and industrial development.

Though the roles of oppressors and oppressed have sometimes switched throughout human history, the capacity of the North to dominate and create a desirable trajectory for economies, nonhuman nature, and structures of power in the South has not diminished in contemporary political society. Unfortunately, therefore, it will be necessary for the North to back off and halt its oppressive practices (in addition to helping in whatever ways the South deems fit and necessary) on the path to global ecological sustainability. The North, moreover, should directly assist the South only in ways that the South insists are necessary and vital to its overall flourishing. Anything more in terms of interference in the South on the part of the North invokes neocolonial tendencies.

Importantly, deep ecology has utilized a variety of tactics in defending its commitment to ecocentrism, namely exclusion, appropriation, and insistence upon Western-centric modes of political action on a global scale. Many of these mistakes are reconcilable with more specific and nuanced forms of theoretical justification for the choices that deep ecology has made. Acknowledging the importance of inclusion, agency, and participation in the Global South to the overall vision of global ecological sustainability is vital for any radical ecopolitical theory, especially deep ecology since it has traditionally focused heavily on nature and not human social problems. Moreover, appropriation that results in the othering and the belittling of the Global South is unnecessary and unjust throughout much of deep ecology. Critical engagement with people in the Global South is necessary in order that these regions of the globe are ensured participation, recognition, and assistance in meeting their vital needs on the path to ecocentrism. No longer can deep ecology claim that its policies are globally applicable in ways that conceptually exclude or other the Global South. Instead, the theory needs to acknowledge that difference in both needs and cultures around the world will play a vital role in determining the structure of ecocentric societies and policies.

Lastly and in relation to the Global South, deep ecology should ask deeper questions rather than promoting a universalistic conception of identity as the main path toward the formation of ecocentric societies. These questions should recognize differences among cultures and attempt to be as inclusive as possible, recognizing that actual political actions that point toward the formation of ecocentric societies will differ at least in the initial phases of transition if not beyond. Questions that ask what kind of societies humans want to be a part of are essential. For example, does the Global South want to continue down the road of development, degrading its environment and causing suffering to its human populations? If not, then how can the North provide technologies, critical resources, and act as an example in promoting more ecocentric ways of being without excluding populations from participation and without guiding these populations in paternalistic and neocolonialist ways? The North must recognize that the ecocentric ways of being that develop in the Global South will and must be self-determined, but at the same time, the acknowledgement that these regions may need help due to hundreds of years of oppression and domination must also be present within deep ecology. These essential changes in deep ecology are both necessary and ethically sound ways of fostering a broader radical ecopolitical theory of both ecocentric inclusivity (including nonhuman nature) and ecological justice on a global scale.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Future Research

Main Arguments

My overall analysis has sought to re-envision deep ecology in ways that make it a more viable radical ecopolitical theory, defending both its philosophical and political tenets in addition to reconciling specific critiques concerned with its characterization (or lack thereof) of the Global South. My emphasis on deep ecology is valuable because I argue that radical ecopolitical theory is becoming increasingly relevant for imagining how societies can begin to combat increasingly serious environmental crises and create pathways toward greater ecological sustainability for the benefit of human and nonhuman nature. I began this analysis by both justifying deep ecology's value as a radical ecopolitical theory and outlining some of the major philosophical and political components that make deep ecology both valuable and sometimes controversial to those who seek different avenues for radical change.

Deep ecology represents an important arm of radical ecopolitical theory for a few reasons. First of all, deep ecology makes unique contributions to the field that project important goals related to humanity's need for increasing ecological sustainability and the flourishing of all life. Indeed, deep ecology incorporates the intrinsic value of a life into its theory in addition to arguing that all biological entities possess an equal right to flourish, a unique contribution in the field of radical ecopolitical thought that attempts to, at least in theory, convey the value of other life forms for their own sake (See Naess, 1986, pp. 68-9). Secondly, deep ecology makes a cultural argument for radical change, contending that ecocentrism should exist as the dominant cultural formulation of the human-nature relationship as opposed to anthropocentrism (See Fox, 1985, pp. 136-9; Eckersley, 1992, p. 59; Naess, 1973, pp. 80-1). And lastly, the emphasis on the ability of individuals to develop ecological consciousnesses through processes of self-realization is unique to deep ecology. The fact that deep ecology is fundamentally concerned with centering politics around the vital needs of nature rather than merely incorporating it (as other radical ecopolitical theories do) makes deep ecology unique for its desire to ensure the flourishing of nature as much as it desires to ensure the flourishing of human beings and for its willingness to sacrifice non-vital human needs in the process. Indeed, the emphasis on nature coupled with the emphasis on both individual and cultural transformation toward more ecocentric relations with nature allows deep ecology to develop strategies that spur individual agency and also contribute to the development of ecocentric political policies that reject the anthropocentric ethic.

For the purposes of my analysis, the most important concepts that emerge from deep ecology both for their value to the theory itself and for the controversy that they have caused include the critique that deep ecology makes of anthropocentric culture, and its more nuanced critique of industrialism, especially as it manifests as an environmentally destructive component of anthropocentrism. Furthermore, deep ecology’s ethical and philosophical visions convey the theory’s fundamental assumptions about the human-nature relationship, including how this relationship relates to the radical transformation of societies toward ecological sustainability. These ethical and philosophical components include the following: the relationship between humans and nature as fundamentally marked by interconnectedness and interdependence, the importance of individual self-realization in spurring cultural change toward ecocentrism, the notion that vital needs are an important consideration in determining best practices toward nature and in policies related to human flourishing as well, and finally, the assumption of biocentric equality that promotes the equal rights to flourishing of all life. Thirdly, I discuss the political visions that deep ecology has contributed to radical ecopolitical thought, emphasizing the importance of the Naess’ (1986) “Platform for Deep Ecology” in building a movement in favor of radical ecocentric politics in addition to the importance of bioregionalism as a form of political organization in deep ecology. I then turn to a discussion of deep ecology’s most prominent policy standpoints, namely, the importance of population reduction and wilderness preservation. In the final section of Chapter Two, I move to discuss two major bodies of critique that have been levied at deep ecology including critiques from social ecology and from people concerned with issues in deep ecology related to its characterizations of the Global South.

Turning to my analysis of the critiques of deep ecology, I argue that addressing critiques from social ecology proves relevant for a few important reasons. First, social ecology has made substantial critiques of many aspects of deep ecology and not all of these critiques have been adequately responded to by deep ecology. The critiques from social ecology fundamentally question deep ecology’s main premise about the culpability of anthropocentrism and the importance of developing ecocentric politics to fundamentally alter the human-nature relationship and the ways that nature is accounted for in politics. Moreover, this body of critique limits deep ecology’s ability to become a viable radical ecopolitical theory by questioning the blame that it places on anthropocentrism, fundamentally challenging whether or not ecocentrism is a valid way of conceptualizing the human-nature relationship. In this first critique, social ecology also contends that deep ecology promotes misanthropy, fundamentally misunderstanding the unique abilities that human beings possess in their relation to nature (See Bookchin, 1987, p. 19). Second, social ecology questions deep ecology’s emphasis on both the holistic relations between humans and nature, contending that deep ecology’s emphasis on interconnectedness and wider identification fails to acknowledge the twin evolutionary trajectories of both first nature (nonhuman nature) and second nature (human society and culture) (See Bookchin, 1990, pp. 114-16).

With regards to these critiques from social ecology, I make a number of important arguments in defense of deep ecology. I begin by examining the main tenets of social ecology, including its arguments regarding first and second nature and the twin evolutionary trajectories of humans and nature, its main formulation of how humans relate to the natural world. Secondly, I examine social ecology's contention that hierarchy is the most pressing social problem, and that the dissolution of hierarchies and domination will result in better social relations, which will, in turn, result in better environmental practices (See Bookchin, 1987, p. 18). I then examine the critiques listed above in depth, arguing that deep ecology is not misanthropic in its emphases on biocentric egalitarianism and anthropocentrism as a root cause of environmental harm.

First of all, I argue that deep ecology does not promote misanthropy; instead, deep ecology acknowledges that humans will take care of their own vital needs prior to ensuring that the vital needs of other species are met (Glasser, 1995, p. 380). Secondly, I argue that Bookchin's contention that anthropocentrism cannot be the root cause of environmental harm because it does not prevent humans from dominating other humans is fundamentally inaccurate. Instead, the anthropocentric ethic acts as an metanarrative or cultural undercurrent that not only promotes the instrumental use of nature by humanity but also the instrumental use of other human beings for whatever purposes those in power see fit. Importantly, anthropocentrism in deep ecology does not necessarily imply that humans will not dominate or exploit other humans. By contrast, the anthropocentric ethic undergirds and perpetuates the powerful institutional and socio-cultural structures that permit both human domination and the exploitation of nature, centering politics on a small group of powerful nation-states that utilize the lives and well-being of other species and other humans for their own economic and political gains. Moreover, I argue that anthropocentrism plays another role in organizing politics and culture. Namely, anthropocentrism can act as a conceptual category that can be utilized in political decision-making, where decision-makers can debate whether or not political decisions account for the vital needs of other species, ecocentrically, or do not account for these needs, making the policy at hand anthropocentric and therefore, fundamentally at odds with ecological sustainability. Indeed, the anthropocentric/ecocentric divide works as a conceptual tool by fostering political debate regarding vital needs of humans and other species, how much interference should be allowed in nature, and how humans should play a role in determining these two agendas.

Indeed, I further argue that Bookchin's critique of deep ecology's emphasis on biocentric egalitarianism is also unnecessary in that it misunderstands the role that this ethic can play in the lives of human beings. Instead of denying the unique abilities of humans, biocentric egalitarianism promotes the idea that all living beings have a vital role to play in the functioning of the biosphere and have an equal right to flourish given these vital and unique roles, including human beings. This ethic, if applied with an understanding of the unique abilities of different species (including humans), can serve to highlight these unique capabilities (See Naess, qtd. in Clark, 2010, p. 24). By highlighting the unique and important qualities that individual species, animals, and human beings bring to the maintenance of the biosphere, biocentric egalitarianism can help to ensure that not only is the capacity to flourishing of a life ensured in these populations, but also that these unique capabilities are fostered and highlighted for how they contribute to the overall flourishing of nature and of human societies.

Bookchin's second major critique of deep ecology, as mentioned, charges deep ecology with wrongly conceptualizing the human-nature relationship by both idealizing wilderness as the ideal state of nature and arguing in favor of wider identification with nature in the human psyche (Humphrey, 2000, p. 250-3). Moreover, Bookchin argues that the formation of identification in deep ecology, particularly, fails to account for the ways that social problems directly influence and cause environmental problems (Light, 1998, p. 350). I argue, in response, that deep ecology's insistence on the importance of wider identification simplifies the human-nature relationship, while Bookchin's arguments add complexity to it. For example, deep ecology simply points out the value of and advocates for wider identification to foster both respect for nature and a deep connection with it in order to spur political action, thereby limiting Bookchin's argument that identification with nature may result in less political action in order to protect nature (See Humphrey, 2000, p. 253). And finally, Bookchin's argument that deep ecology tends to idealize nature via its promotion of wilderness preservation fails to acknowledge that wilderness, as an idealized state of nature, can provide an impetus for political action, highlighting both the awesome destructive power that humanity has to alter nature and to assist in its preservation.

And finally, regarding the critiques from social ecology, I attempt to flesh out the similarities between deep ecology and social ecology, arguing that these similarities not only provide common ground upon which the two theories can create critical dialogue and debate, but also that these similarities lessen the severity of Bookchin's conclusions regarding deep ecology. I begin by outlining the vital role that each theory can play in the formation of ecologically sustainable societies, arguing that deep ecology's critique of anthropocentric culture is at least as valuable as social ecology's critique of social and institutional structures, being that together, these two critiques favor change in the major forces (namely, culture and institutions) that organize human societies. Moreover, both theories argue that individual agency plays an important role in provoking radical change, contending that individual humans have the unique ability to alter culture, institutions, and hierarchies (Keulartz, 1998, 119). Both theories also reject technocratic solutions to environmental problems, agreeing that capitalism, technology, and many other existing social and political institutions are responsible for environmental degradation (Tokar, 1988, p. 132). Given these similarities, I hope to promote openings in which both theories can come together (in spite of disagreements) to promote radical change in favor of ecological sustainability.

After discussing social ecology's role in critiquing deep ecology, I then move to the second body of critiques at deep ecology. I examine critiques that emerge from people concerned with the plight of the Global South—regions of the world that have been damaged both environmentally and at the level of human flourishing by a variety of imperialist and neocolonial influences from the West in addition to often possessing colonial histories. People concerned with these regions of the world critique deep ecology for three important reasons. First, they criticize deep ecology's focus on wilderness preservation, arguing that wilderness preservation is an attempt by deep ecology to map Western-centric solutions onto the Global South and impose "green imperialist" tactics on these regions. Additionally, concerns arise regarding preservation based upon the fact that other "more pressing" environmental problems need to be addressed first in the Global South, and that poverty stricken populations may be displaced and lose their livelihoods if preservationist policies prevail (See Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1997, all; Guha, 1998, pp. 271-9). These critiques also argue against the blame that deep ecology places on ecocentrism, arguing instead that deep ecology should focus on more concrete causes of environmental harm such as militarization and overconsumption. Moreover, critics attempting to account for the Global South argue that deep ecology reinforces its neocolonial tendencies by appropriating so-called "Eastern traditions," indigenous cultures, and other cultural elements in the Global South in order to legitimize its arguments in favor of ecocentrism (See Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1997, all).

In addition to the critiques that have been made by people concerned with the Global South, I also structure an additional critique of deep ecology based on its failure to become a theory of inclusivity that accounts for difference in the Global South, arguing that deep ecology makes a number of statements and omissions that leave it open to this particular critique. Indeed, by either excluding or selectively including populations in the Global South in its theory, deep ecology conceptually denies both agency and participation to these groups and individuals in the South, further falling prey to neocolonial tendencies that fail to acknowledge the contributions that historically oppressed populations can contribute to the formation of ecocentric societies.

With regard to wilderness preservation, I argue that deep ecology has sometimes failed to account for and often failed to emphasize that wilderness preservation is both an idealized state of nature and a state that is unattainable in many areas of the world given contemporary forces that keep many populations of humans in the Global South in poverty. Also, deep ecology fails to account for interim strategies that will be necessary in the process of transforming areas toward lower levels of human interference, ignoring the presence of farmlands, suburban housing, vast urban areas, and toxic waste areas or areas with high pollution levels that are present globally in its theory. In addition, deep ecology does not adequately focus on other environmental problems that must be solved prior to establishing vast wilderness areas, such as pollution and climate change. Indeed, the Global South must forge its own pathways toward preservation, accounting for its own vital needs and the vital needs of other species in the process based on significant cultural, climatic, and social factors in a given region. The North cannot coerce the South, therefore, to adopt preservationist policies, given that this would be an imperialist and, ultimately, a reformist strategy for the attainment of ecological sustainability

Moreover, the failure to address how the Global South can participate fully in decision-making processes regarding how to form ecocentric societies precludes deep ecology from fully developing a major point in its theory, namely, that the flourishing of the Global South currently depends on the ability of the North to dramatically decrease levels of consumption and degrading environmental practices immediately (See Naess, 1995, p. 289-91). Though deep ecology makes this point in its theory, this focus does not excuse the absence of inclusion of the Global South in most of its theory. Likewise, this point by deep ecology also does not justify the selective inclusion of "Eastern traditions," indigenous perspectives, or anything else from the Global South in order to provide evidence for how the North should pursue the ecocentric ethic. I argue that the appropriation allowed by deep ecology is neither justified nor necessary for the purposes of furthering this ecocentric ethic. Indeed, deep ecology cannot "go back" to past societies and cultures (or contemporary ones in the Global South) to justify its theory. Given the context of contemporary environmental issues, deep ecology needs to develop new ways of fostering wider identification with nature, particularly in already developed nation-states.

Furthermore, I argue that both the appropriation of other cultures and the focus on wilderness preservation in deep ecology promotes "othering" of populations in the Global South; I contend that by othering these populations, deep ecology has fueled colonial discourses and failed to radically account for the potential agency of these populations for the formation of ecocentric societies. Moreover this othering of other cultures is a failed attempt to universalize a vision for ecocentric societies that deep ecology finds desirable, promoting an essentialized and Western-centric characterization of these cultures in the process. Indeed these formulations about how humans fundamentally relate to nature have not been developed by deep ecology in ways that account for the multiplicity of different identities that define an individual (Plumwood, 2000, p. 67-8).

Lastly, I argue that exclusion in deep ecology is never justified even if the theory does attempt to focus on changes that must take place in the Global North prior to any radical changes taking hold in the South. I argue that this exclusion has limited deep ecology in the value of its ethical arguments by conceptually denying the intrinsic value of excluded populations. Consequently, this denial has greatly limited deep ecology in its ability to serve as a globally applicable theory of radical ecocentrism promoting cultural change away from the anthropocentric ethic. In order to be globally applicable, deep ecology must not only acknowledge the Global South but account for and analyze the differences that exist between these poverty-stricken regions and much of the North, contending that both cultural and historical differences will ensure that ecological sustainability develops in very different ways in these regions, especially in the initial phases of radical change. And finally, deep ecology must emphasize that it is the task of the North not only to radically change, but to provide any assistance that is vitally necessary to the Global South for flourishing of both human and nonhuman nature, at least until these regions no longer ask for assistance in these areas.

Rethinking Deep Ecology as Political Theory

Political theories must do a number of things to be considered valuable contributions to the field of political science, including developing a critique of existing society, making ethical and philosophical assumptions about some aspect of human life or organization, and offering political solutions to the problem that is trying to be solved. Deep ecology does the first two tasks well; it makes a critique of anthropocentric culture and offers assumptions about individual agency and the human-nature relationship. Its formulations of political solutions, however, have been lacking in three things: nuance, unity, and inclusivity. In order to become a viable radical ecopolitical theory, however, deep ecology still needs to clarify some of its ethical and philosophical visions about humans as well, and in particular, form arguments about how the theory fundamentally sees human beings, including their unique abilities to radically transform society, culture, and institutions. These clarifications are particularly important because deep ecology has often been charged with promoting misanthropy or, at the very least, focusing more on nature than on how humans play a role in accounting for and ensuring nature's continued flourishing.

Re-envisioning deep ecology, for the most part, however, will involve a rethinking of its political theoretical visions, including its policy prescriptions, and arguments surrounding governance, participation, and inclusivity. By failing to adequately develop these particular aspects of its theory, deep ecology has left itself open to be characterized, often times, for its particular focus on wilderness preservation, and at times, population control. While these two issues are extremely important, deep ecology must go beyond these policy formations to address issues like overconsumption, pollution, climate change, and other global issues that will require cooperation beyond bioregionalism and local control. Moreover, although deep ecology emphasizes decentralization and bioregionalism throughout its analysis on how governance might work in ecocentric societies, it also fails to point toward the importance of maintaining these types of governance structures when it comes to regions in the Global South while at the same time acknowledging that governance must go beyond the local in order to combat global environmental issues.

Moreover, deep ecology's political theoretical arguments must explicitly emphasize the importance of inclusion to the maintenance of just ecocentric political relations, rejecting both authoritarianism and neocolonialism in the process. Without emphasizing inclusion, deep ecology contradicts its own ethical argument in favor of respecting and accounting for the intrinsic value of all life in both politics and one's day to day activities in the world. Moreover, by emphasizing inclusion, deep ecology will be able to open itself to a variety of conversations, debates, and insights that might otherwise not concern themselves with the theory in the first place if it were to continue to promote Western-centric, essentialized versions of ecocentrism and of other cultures in the Global South.

And finally, a political theory of deep ecology, in addition to doing all of the above things, must actively engage in two things: meaningful debate with other radical ecopolitical theories and grassroots action. The debates have already occurred to some extent between radical ecopolitical theories, but must be taken further in order to deal with issues such as inclusion, participation, and, importantly, grassroots action itself. By forming meaningful relationships with other radical ecopolitical theories like social ecology and ecofeminism, deep ecology only becomes stronger as a unique political theory of ecocentrism. By fostering discussion, and forming grassroots alliances, deep ecology will be able to promote its radical vision for change in addition to being able to promote ecocentrism wherever and whenever political openings and educational opportunities are found.

Future Research

Future research on deep ecology needs to focus on a number of gaps that still exist in the literature, in addition to responding to other important critiques from radical ecopolitical thought that were beyond the scope of my analysis. Deep ecology, first and foremost, needs to become a more unified theory of inclusivity that ultimately rejects certain discourses that have proven problematic, such as those discourses that reinforce neocolonialism or imperialism and discourses that invoke reformist methods for change in pursuit of ecocentric political and social arrangements. For example, invoking current international political arrangements is unacceptable in deep ecology, such as George Sessions has done in favor of the formation of a United Nations Environment Council (See Zimmerman, 1994, pp. 28-9). These structures of power only reinforce neocolonial economic and political arrangements, and often lean toward reform rather than a radical restructuring of policies and attitudes. In this regard, then, deep ecology must develop interim strategies for radical change that focus on things like education, grassroots action, and the rejection of anthropocentric cultural, economic, and political institutions that cause direct harm to or interfere too much in nature. Future research should focus on developing these interim strategies in addition to pinpointing areas in the political landscape that are currently conducive to change.

Moreover, future research needs to address critiques at deep ecology from ecofeminism that are concerned about patriarchal culture, and how this cultural narrative relates to environmental degradation. It is vital that deep ecology, rather than rejecting the blame that other radical ecopolitical theories place on different contemporary cultural and institutional structures, acknowledges the vital roles that all radical ecopolitical theories can play in attaining greater ecological sustainability through a radical rethinking of the human-nature relationship and dominant political and social institutions. Moreover, future research should consider how deep ecology can best contribute to the formation of radical ecopolitical societies by determining the role that cultural change will play in these transformations. Indeed, anthropocentrism plays a vital role in deep ecology's overall arguments in favor of ecocentrism. Importantly, anthropocentrism acts a conceptual tool that allows ecocentric versus anthropocentric actions to be categorized and analyzed for how well these particular actions account for the vital needs of other species. Anthropocentrism versus ecocentrism will also act as vital tool for political decision-makers in that it provides conceptual boundaries that can be debated in political space, serving to guide argumentation that asks questions about how humanity should account for the vital needs of other species in addition to levels of interference in nature that do not cross the line into anthropocentric territory.

Importantly, deep ecology needs to become more unified in its ethical and philosophical visions and its policy prescriptions. In order to project its radical vision for ecocentrism, deep ecology must learn to project its vision in more nuanced ways that account for the important role of human beings in invoking radical change. Despite the fact that deep ecology's arguments for biocentric egalitarianism and intrinsic value make it particularly unique and relevant for incorporating nature into politics, it is vital that future research convey for nuanced arguments about how humanity plays a role, even in ecocentrism. Up until now, deep ecology has focused too much on nature, forgetting to develop theories of social change regarding how humanity can radically alter its culture in pursuit of ecocentric political and social relations.

Furthermore, deep ecology has developed a theory of radical ecopolitics that provides a window into how humanity can pursue both better practices toward nature and better relations with all life and with one another. Without acknowledging existing relations of oppression, however, in addition to focusing on anthropocentric culture, deep ecology will fail to form bonds with other radical ecopolitical theories that acknowledge these structures of power in addition to making unique arguments about how humanity needs to change in order to attain greater ecological sustainability. It is the task of deep ecologists and future researchers, therefore, to create dialogue amongst all radical ecopolitical theories because as any political theorist knows, no one political theory can dominate the political dialogue in the midst of radical change and deep transformation, especially in a world marked by difference, conflict, and politics. Deep ecology has a role to play, and it is now the task of deep ecologists to find that role, create dialogue, interim strategies for radical change, and ultimate goals regarding ecocentric politics and the flourishing of humanity in the context of resilient, thriving nature.

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