

**THE GREEN & THE RIGHT:**  
RIVAL VIEWS OF CONSUMPTION & THE ENVIRONMENT IN  
AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

Nadivah Greenberg

A DISSERTATION

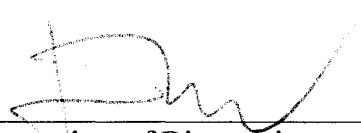
in

Political Science

Presented to the Faculties of the University  
of Pennsylvania


in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

2006



---

Supervisor of Dissertation



---

Graduate Group Chairperson

UMI Number: 3246164

Copyright 2006 by  
Greenberg, Nadivah

All rights reserved.

### INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

**UMI**<sup>®</sup>

---

UMI Microform 3246164

Copyright 2007 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

**COPYRIGHT**

Nadivah Greenberg

2006

## **DEDICATION**

In memory of my father, Arthur Jacob Feinstein and my brother, Seth H Feinstein.

## ABSTRACT

### **THE GREEN & THE RIGHT: RIVAL VIEWS OF CONSUMPTION & THE ENVIRONMENT IN AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT**

Author: Nadivah Greenberg

Dissertation Chair: Ellen Kennedy

Prevailing American conservative views regarding consumption and the environment have evolved in ways incongruous to a past intellectual legacy. As the world's most voracious consumer and greatest power, the United States possesses a vast global footprint; this historically unprecedented combination of appetite and might translates into both potential and peril. Given that the repercussions of dominant American perspectives are not just domestic, but global, it is timely and critical to reflect on the conservative ideology today. This manuscript begins with a chapter on consumption and its relevance as a lens for studying conservative views of environmentalism. It then describes a past conservative intellectual heritage, arguing that this tradition often extolled virtues such as conservation, frugality, prudence and stewardship of the land. It then examines an array of contemporary conservatisms by laying out a typology of views: *Classical*, *Theological*, *Free Market*, *National Security* and *Conservationist*. With the exception of the first and last type, the spectrum shows that the prevailing disposition today is eco-skeptic in both ideology and practice. Yet there also exists considerable ideological elasticity in motive. Of much interest are *green outliers* described within the typology. Finally, the future direction of conservative thought with respect to consumption and the environment is assessed. Recent events, both natural and political, suggest that conservative thought is in transition with respect to the green.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Mapping the Argument	1
Chapter I: Unpacking Consumption: Rival Views in Market Society	10
Chapter II: Classical Conservative Thought	61
Chapter III: Theological Conservatism	85
Chapter IV: Free Market Conservatism	140
Chapter V: National Security Conservatism	189
Chapter VI: Conservationist Conservatism	222
Chapter VII: Conclusion	252
Bibliography	273

## LIST OF TABLES

Figure I-I: A Typology of Consumptive Dynamics	23
Figure I-II: Transposing Hirschman's Ideology Table	25
Figure I-III: Rival Views Typology: The Politics of Consumption	32
Figure I-IV: Typology of Prevalent Conservative Views	58
Figure Conclusion-I: Typology of Conservative Outlying Views	260

## Introduction: Mapping the Argument

*... Burke, could he see our century, never would concede that a consumption-society, so near to suicide, is the end for which Providence has prepared man. If a conservative order is indeed to return, we ought to know the tradition which is attached to it, so that we may rebuild society; if it is not to be restored, still we ought to understand conservative ideas so that we may rake from the ashes what scorched fragments of civilization escape the conflagration of unchecked will and appetite.*

Russell Kirk, 1953

*Conservation may be a sign of personal virtue, but it is not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy.*

Vice President Richard Cheney, 2001

Annual Meeting of the Associated Press, Toronto, Canada, 4-30-2001

*We need an energy bill that encourages consumption.*

U. S. President George W. Bush, 2002

Army National Guard Aviation Support Facility, Trenton, New Jersey, 9-23-2002

Prevailing American conservative views have evolved in ways incongruous with a past intellectual legacy. One notable transformation is a post 9-11 zeal for “spreading freedom” as “the best way to root out the underlying causes of terrorism.”<sup>1</sup> As presidential adviser Karl Rove recently stated, conservatism was no longer to be “reactionary” but “forward thinking.”<sup>2</sup> This perspective is at odds with earlier conservative views about the role of the United States in the international arena. It is the liberal international relations tradition that enduringly touts the virtue of promoting democracy’s spread. Here is another shift, though not of ideology but action: a present-day federal budget deficit. With the exception of the staunch fiscal conservative, deficit

---

<sup>1</sup> David D. Kirkpatrick, describing Vice President Richard Cheney’s goals in “Bush Moved Conservatism Past Reactionary, Rove Says,” *The New York Times*, February 18, 2005, A20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* A20.



spending has not been labeled heretical; yet this too is a transgression of traditional conservatism.

This book examines yet another intriguing metamorphosis: contemporary conservative views regarding consumption. Social norms and practices encouraging consumption have a profound impact on the environment. And conservatives today overwhelmingly share a pro-consumptive disposition, which inevitably carries over to personal behavior and policymaking. Yet, curiously, this too presents notable philosophical revision, for historically, traditional conservatism often extolled virtues such as conservation, frugality, moderation, prudence and stewardship.

It raises the question: where is conservative thought today with respect to environmental issues, particularly modern market society's hyperconsumptive predilections and practices? Consumption is now an entrenched reality in democratic market society, but conservatives rarely bemoan its social and environmental consequences. What accounts for the omission of "conservation" and "frugality" as important, publicly acclaimed moral virtues?<sup>3</sup>

This question is made acute by its juxtaposition with today's conservative penchant for asserting "moral values" as an integral aspect of its political platform. Indeed, Rove asserted that "moral" values have been instrumental in the ongoing resurgence of the Republican Party today.<sup>4</sup> President Bush speaks frequently about "compassionate conservatism" which, he claims, is rooted in his strong Christian faith.

---

<sup>3</sup> It is telling that in the aftermath of Katrina, President Bush would call for Americans to "conserve" and be "prudent" in their fuel consumption. It is reasonable to presume this as an interim plea intended to buffer the impact of fuel shortages, escalating prices, and, of course, political fallout. This exception throws a past neglect of a conservation ethos in even harsher light.

<sup>4</sup> Adam Nagourney, "'Moral Values' Carried Bush, Rove Says," *New York Times*, November 10, 2004, p. A20.

This compassion, however, is rarely bestowed upon the Earth. In fact, dominant conservative views are indifferent or skeptical – if not polemically hostile – toward environmental concerns. Conservation is an abandoned virtue, whereas consumption is a presumptive right. It follows that materialism is the entitlement of success. And conservatives today resoundingly praise success. Thus it may be as Leon Wieseltier asserts: that “perhaps the most odious feature of contemporary conservatism is its equation of success with virtue.”<sup>5</sup>

It would be misleading to presume that conservative thought is alone in succumbing to the lure of material prosperity or in advocating liberal economic market principles. But this paradigm shift in conservatism is exceptional for two reasons: an oft-exhibited past aversion to industry and material gain, especially the conspicuous variety, and the now selective sanctimony and hand-wringing over society’s declining moral virtues sans conservation.

As the world’s most voracious consumer and greatest power, the United States possesses a vast global footprint. This historically unprecedented combination of appetite and might translates into both potential and peril on a truly global scale.<sup>6</sup> Given this, and the often dominance of American conservatism today, it is imperative to reflect on the ideology’s relevant strands. In recent decades, American conservatism has meant significant influence on environmental policy. In light of the November 2006 midterm elections, where Republicans lost their majorities in both House and Senate, their ideological convictions are still worthy of scrutiny, for, notwithstanding these recent

---

<sup>5</sup> Leon Wieseltier, “God’s Second Term: The Elect,” *New Republic*, November 22, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> For an example of this concern, see Richard P. Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

losses, their views will continue to influence conceptions of problems and their subsequent redress at the local, domestic, and global level. And for at least the next two years, President George W. Bush and the Executive branch will still have a considerable role to play in negotiating environmental policy with the Democratic majorities in the Legislature. In fact, the recent turn in the political prognoses of both parties, suggests that the possibility for ideological reassessment and change within the conservative movement is likely to be far more likely in the coming years than at anytime in the past three decades.

First, critical qualifications and parameters must be set. It would be misleading to imply that the Republican Party today is synonymous with classical conservatism, because historically the party was broader and more progressive in some respects – certainly not all – than today. For example, some influential Republican politicians of earlier times may not have identified themselves as “conservative” per se, but as “moderate” or “progressive.”<sup>7</sup> Conversely, the Southern Agrarians of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were undoubtedly staunch conservatives, but generally aligned with the Democratic Party. In addition, there is an overlapping problem in the exegesis of conservatism’s American roots as “the conservative idea in modern America developed from an unorganized and diverse collection of individuals.... No self-described conservative *movement* existed before World War II.”<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, as I argue in

---

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Theodore Roosevelt, the 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States (1901-1909) was a notable land conservationist, to be sure, but more progressive than conservative in overall ideological disposition. In a selective ode to the “hard green”, for example, staunch conservative Peter Huber harkens back to Roosevelt’s conservative legacy, but it is arguable to label him as such.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory L. Schneider, “The Old Right,” in Gregory L. Schneider, ed., *Conservatism in America Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), p. 5.

chapter II, there are common principles that reverberate within conservatism today, clearly evident in its past intellectual pedigree.

Second, this book presumes that the contributions of political theory do, in fact, inform ideological beliefs, personal behavior, and the consequent policymaking decisions of society at large. As the esteemed philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin wisely observed, “It is only a very vulgar historical materialism that denies the power of ideas....”<sup>9</sup> Indeed, ideas inform action, though not always as its creator intended. The *self-identifying* political conservative today may be politically rather than intellectually conservative (or, for that matter, not even considered conservative by antecedents), yet the *legacy* of intellectual conservatism informs, justifies, and sustains beliefs and actions. It follows that this dissertation is about ideas, views and values; it is not an in-depth examination of policymaking. There are many contributions that critically examine the conservative environmental record: recent books include *America’s Environmental Report Card*, *Strategic Ignorance*, and *The End of Oil*.<sup>10</sup> Yet there remains a lacuna in the questioning of today’s conservative principles.

Third, dispositions are primarily explored through conservative views regarding consumption. Why consumption? Consumption is a profoundly critical aspect of environmental depletion and degradation. Social norms and behavior regarding consumption are integrally linked to a smorgasbord of man-made environmental issues, including fossil fuel dependence, global warming, the disposal of production-process and household waste, and clean water and skies, to name but a few. To put this differently, consider the following: what *man-made* environmental changes are *not* the result of

---

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> Blatt 2005, Pope and Rauber 2004, Roberts 2005.

consumption? Furthermore, to focus instead on production introduces a “distancing” problem. As Thomas Princen writes: “...the greater the distance of agency the less responsibility for resource use decisions any actor in the production chain will want to have or is cognitively or ethically capable of having for the resource.”<sup>11</sup> This distancing makes the production side of the consumptive process problematic. The consumptive end of the production process is far more relevant to evaluating views. It also increases the likelihood of normative change among consumers. This, in turn, impacts the production process, for savvy producers will respond to the collective purchasing power of consumers. The logic of this approach is straightforward:

**Conservative Thought → Consumptive Behavior → Environmental Policy**

The lens of consumption resonates as a way to examine social norms and values because it is associated with personal virtue and is so palpably a part of individual life and collective behavior within market society.

Finally, the conservative tradition is a canopy with many shared tenets, but also many contradictions. Thus it would be egregious to assume that it is monolithic in ideology and agenda. There is considerable variety in motive and view. Given its complex diversity, a typology of conservatisms is then presented to pinpoint particular types that exist today regarding consumption and the environment. This is evident in the tradition’s divisions regarding the consequences of capitalism, industrial production, and material consumption. On the one hand, there is a perspective that favors free-market

---

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Princen, “Distancing: Consumption and the Severing of Feedback,” in *Confronting Consumption*, p. 125.

and private property rights, traceable from John Locke, Adam Smith and Alexander Hamilton to F.A. Hayek, Milton Friedman and assorted contemporary right-wing think tanks, such as the Competitive Enterprise and CATO Institutes. On the other hand, there also exists an enduring conservatism that is explicitly negative toward the modern emphasis on capital and consumption, traceable from complex ancient, theological, feudal and aristocratic roots. This line of thought can be followed from the Greek Stoics and the Hebrew and Christian Bibles to early American Puritanism or the Republican simplicity exemplified by John Adams: to later conservatives, including George Santayana, Irving Babbitt, Albert Jay Nock, T. S. Eliot, Russell Kirk, John Crowe Ransom, Michael Oakeshott, and Richard Weaver: to the present-day Wendell Berry and John Bliese.

Again, American conservatism is now ascendant, which invariably gives its political representatives significant sway in practical discourse and decision making. This ascent has substantively altered the environmental, cultural, and economic policies of the country. Notwithstanding, however, the typology offered here also includes a motley assortment of green conservative outliers. This is not intended to be all-encompassing, but schematically helpful in conceptualizing this tent's green differences. Just as the "liberal" tent is frequently one of fracture and dissent, housing both radicals and moderates, so too, does conservatism hold a spectrum of beliefs and priorities making broad generalizations difficult, if not misleading. This makes the examination of composite strands critical to show their variation. They help delineate the relevant divisions and tensions existing within the tradition. Most important, the conservative

outliers, some of them renegades, present intriguing possibilities regarding the future trajectory of American conservatism.

With the preceding in mind, this work proceeds as follows. In Chapter I the meaning of consumption is delineated and a general overview of consumption views and scholarly contributions are described to set the foundation. A typology of rival views is depicted to show the considerable diversity and division. It offers an overview of consumption and much of the literature examining its social and environmental impacts. Chapter I then situates the range of contemporary American conservative views within the typology. In Chapter II an analysis of specific, relevant earlier conservative thought is undertaken through a schematic exegesis of prominent classical conservative scholarship. These revered predecessors are often selectively touted by contemporary conservatives as influential in their own political thought and action. In Chapters III through VI, a spectrum of conservative views today are categorized and examined primarily through the lens of consumption and views of the environment. Each type is explored in these individual chapters.

The outliers within each chapter merit significant consideration. Within each type the contrarian conservative green outliers that do not easily fit prevailing conservative paradigms are described and analyzed. These diverse conservative voices capture the ideology's fault lines, its promise and peril. Taken as a whole, the array of contemporary American conservatisms indicates substantive ideological elasticity. Chapters Three through Six explore each type of germane American conservatism in detail including the outlying voices.

To aid in understanding its array, both dominant and outlying, five types of conservatism are delineated for more nuanced conceptualization and analysis of its relevant, present-day manifestations. These categories are *Classical*, *Theological*, *Free-market*, *National Security* and *Conservationist*. The last type self-identify as conservative, but are frequently marginalized in contemporary conservative spheres of political influence. Within each type there is disparity in ideology and action and some conservatives straddle more than one category or do not comfortably fit any of these them.<sup>12</sup> Finally, in the conclusion, the future prospects of green conservative thought are assessed, given the array of perspectives highlighted in the earlier chapters. The mapping informs this endeavor's major thesis: evaluating the potential these outliers may have in reviving a greener American conservatism.

Again, the conservative green outliers delineated in Chapters III through VI are important. Although their views derive from different motives, are disparate, remain nascent in their common cause, and thus do not present a unified voice, collectively, they suggest changing dynamics within the tradition. Further, despite these anomalous strands, prevailing views in American thought and practice reveal substantive dissonance from conservatism's roots. This book sketches a composite to illuminate its incongruities. Collectively, the outliers suggest future collaborative synergy, if not the promise of an authentic, green conservative reawakening.

---

<sup>12</sup> These categories also vary depending on the issue. For example, Paleo-conservative Pat Buchanan, the founder of The American Cause and frequent presidential contender, has more in common with Garrett Hardin with respect to immigration: that is, fervently against it. Meanwhile, other conservatives, polemically depict anti-immigration sentiment as a solely misanthropic form of deep ecology. Immigration, evolution, stem-cell research, right-to-die, etc., all reveal substantive division and contradiction within conservatism today. This typology thus is germane to conservative views regarding consumption and the environment and not intended for general extrapolation.



## Chapter I

### Unpacking Consumption: Rival Views in Market Society

*The great error of our nature is, not to know where to stop, not to be satisfied with any reasonable acquirement; not to compound with our condition; but to lose all we have gained by an insatiable pursuit after more.*

Edmund Burke, 1756.

The imprint of consumption is everywhere liberal states flourish. Yet consumption shapes everyday life and our planet in ways that often go unrecognized, or are still unknown, though surely no one doubts its central place in market society. Given its integral role in modern life, it is surprising how little attention is paid to its collective environmental and social consequences. While there is no shortage of viewpoints about the virtues and pathologies of consumption, divergent concerns are rarely prominent or sustained in public discourse. Its moral, social, financial, and environmental costs have spawned narrow academic debate, but far too little of it has taken place in a more public domain; nor have these ideas often been realistic and even-handed in assessing consumption's paradoxically positive *and* negative impacts. Though many views offer sharply honed, well-placed critiques of consumption or, conversely, of consumption's critics, their prescriptive value is often limited or too radical for implementation without necessitating the serious erosion of other liberal principles underpinning market society.

Meanwhile, worldwide consumption continues to grow without a pause, despite the critics' warnings. The desire, as well as the means, for material accumulation is spreading to less prosperous, less liberal regions of the world as globalization whets the appetites of an ever-growing population of humanity. While social critics and environmentalists lament consumption's ill effects, and the acutely disproportionate consumption taking place within market society, there is little likelihood that their cries to curb mankind's taste for material goods and services will be heeded.

Quite the contrary, because contemporary consumption practices are best characterized as *hyperconsumptive*. This term captures both its excess and stimulative effects. The rituals of consumption are entrenched and habitual, yet they are still too often left unexamined as a cultural phenomenon. Modern-day consumption has become compulsory and all-consuming. There is a boundless cornucopia of goods and services to beckon and entice: more, better, bigger, newer, faster, popular .... Or, paradoxically, the amphibious ingenuity of capitalism seduces consumers with the obverse: less, cheaper, smaller, older, slower, unique.... It is our Sisyphean quest to desire and acquire more – a quest ultimately never fully satisfied yet seemingly essential to the prosperity and well-being of liberal society.

While hyperconsumption oftentimes eludes sustained public discourse of its social, moral, and environmental repercussions, market society, meanwhile, has become adept, if not obsessive, at *economic* self-examination. It relies on indices such as Employment Rates, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and Gross National Production (GNP). These gauges also track consumer patterns, such as the United States Consumer Confidence Index, with its specific components like the Present Situation Index and the

Expectation Index. Economic barometers such as these provide detailed insight into market society's past, present, and future growth patterns. A not insignificant segment of market society earns its living tracing and interpreting such measures. Corporations calculate future projections, planning expenditures on research, employment, production estimates and more, based upon economic markers. Markets rise and fall on these indices. Elections are won and lost thanks to these economic prognoses. Consumers too, tighten their belts or splurge when these indices move up and down, thus often compounding swings in direction.

One timely illustration of the intermittent attention given to consumption was the post-Katrina escalation in fossil fuel prices. It was not until gasoline prices rapidly increased to the three dollar a gallon range that much public reflection on the American appetite for oil was given serious attention. It was only then that President Bush conceded the American "addiction to oil" – and not without considerable fallout from his steadfast supporters within the energy sector. But now that prices have begun to drop back to the two dollar range, it is likely that this critical attention will correspondingly decrease. Given that this "addiction to oil" fueled in part by the penchant for large, fuel-inefficient vehicles and an all-too-common indifference to energy conservation, the likelihood of sustained political action to prevent such vulnerabilities in the future, will fade as well – until the next crisis triggers renewed concern. That is not an effective way to mitigate such possibilities. What makes this exceptionally egregious, is the clear geopolitical consequences of dependence on nonrenewable resources from unstable, often hostile, antidemocratic global regions.

More generally, and notwithstanding the fluctuating public interest in consumption, its critics have been prolific as of late, as the following sample of book titles indicates: *Affluenza*, *Culture Jam*, *Everything for Sale*, *Fast Food Nation*, *The High Price of Materialism*, *Luxury Fever*, *The Paradox of Choice*. These titles bespeak collective angst about consumption's firm, seductive hold, pointing out its deleterious effects on both individual and society. But the question remains: How do we extricate market society from hyperconsumption without instituting draconian solution sets or relinquishing liberal values?

This question has been at the forefront of debate about humanity's long-term impact upon the environment. It is a particularly acute to ask given the dominance of American conservative thought and practice today. However, theoretical perspectives span an array of divergent ideologies and assumptions that are not just conservative. And despite the present day ascent of the conservative tradition there is, with unpacked examination, much elasticity, division and contradiction to be found underneath its canopy.

In recent years, debates regarding these issues have intensified in volume, intensity and action. Current global problems have raised the stakes; these include natural disasters, such as tsunamis and hurricanes, increasing scientific unanimity regarding man-made global warming and its planetary impact as well as unfolding geopolitical considerations, such as dependence on fossil fuels from unstable and often hostile foreign regions, increasing worldwide competition for shrinking and ever costlier energy resources and the repercussions of energy consumption, particularly consumption that generates greenhouse gases, have all emerged as urgent visible environmental and

security issues. Ideologically divisive perspectives and remedies are the predictable consequences of these global scale problems.

On the left-wing end of the ideological spectrum there are activists who believe that the rights of nature are preeminent, a small minority of whom have been complicit in acts of eco-terror. On the right-wing end of the spectrum are the critics of the green that contains an outspoken contingent of conservatives and neo-conservatives. These conservative actors tend to be quite disdainful of environmental arguments and the repercussions human activity has, and will continue to have, upon the planet earth. To paraphrase their thinking: “Malthus was just plain wrong. Neo-Malthusians will be proven wrong too.” The polar left and right divide is extensive, covering social, moral, economic, and policy issues. Invariably these ideological divisions play out within the more specific contexts of consumption and the environment.

The chapter begins by defining consumption. It then describes the dynamic of hyper-consumption within market society – a dynamic of historically unprecedented mass proportion. With the idea of consumption elaborated upon, it then utilizes Albert O. Hirschman’s classic essay delineating rival views in market society. This manuscript argues that contemporary views regarding consumption, from the staunch market-friendly to the radical green, have enduring intellectual lineages, which evolve in intriguing ways much as the rival “market society” views traced within his essay.<sup>1</sup> These antecedents, though rarely acknowledged, predate the dynamics of modern mass consumption yet offer invaluable insight into the origins of today’s ideological divisions. Hirschman’s work shows that many of these viewpoints have intellectual lineages, despite the

---

<sup>1</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *Rival Views of Market Society and Other Recent Essays* (New York: Viking, 1986), pp. 105-141.

seemingly new nature of the debate and mass consumption itself. These past markers offer clues into the character and assumptions of each viewpoint's insights. Yet the values and beliefs informing those views may also lead to intellectual intransigence, particularly at the ideological extreme.

A more general typology of consumption perspectives is then mapped out to depict the contemporary environmental activists, scholars and skeptics. The categories included *deep ecology*, *anthropocentric*, *techno-optimist*, *eco-skeptic*, *free market* and *consumer advocacy*. This section of the chapter situates and describes the relevant array of contemporary views about market societies, with particular attention subsequently given to views situated in conservative American thought as well as their nemesis, radical, antithetical views that agitate conservative reaction. The chapter ends positioning germane American conservative thought within the more general typology of views explored earlier.

Perspectives about consumption share common ground and goals with a spectrum of views about globalization more generally. On the one hand, free market advocates are likely to view consumption as part of a benign and edifying dynamic. Hirschman labels this sentiment *doux commerce*. Free trade, minimal government regulation, competitive markets, and continued growth are all essential to prosperity and liberal market society. Free markets reward merit. Not surprisingly too, many American conservatives are resolute in their skepticism of the environmental movement. Consumption is viewed as a good thing, except, invariably when, if they encroach on the moral sensibilities of conservative free market advocates. This concern over the moral depravity of some products and services rests upon traditional family values. Hedonistic consumptive

practices hold an allure that is perceived to threaten conservative values, yet attempts to squelch the dissemination of such goods and services remains curiously incongruous with a pro-consumption view more generally. As well, because private property rights and free trade are integral to this view, its proponents are committed to defending globalization, at least in its economic guise.

On the other hand, deep ecologists view the world in polar fashion. Here, economic globalization profoundly hurts the environment and humanity, particularly in the developing world. Nothing but the radical curtailment of productivity and consumption will suffice for remedy. Sometimes these views incorporate the apocalyptic. This too has familiar roots, though it may go unrecognized as such because of its infinite historical variety: the manifestation of messianic thought that predicting the coming end of the world and salvation through one leader or cause has been a common theme propounded in diverse religions and ideologies through time.

These abiding lineages suggest a dialectical, complex, often contradictory process of theory informing practice. Consumption views today resonate with Hirschman's past insights tracing the early Enlightenment arguments over capitalism.

### **Unpacking Consumption**

But what exactly is meant by "consumption?" This word and its cognates (consume, consumer, consumerism) imply much often without specific definition. Environmental literature, in particular, employs the word ubiquitously, usually as a

pejorative. Not much effort is put into a definition. One definition is too tautological for the purpose here: “the act or process of consuming,” “the state of being consumed” or “an amount consumed.” However another is definition is *economic*: “The using up of goods and services by consumer purchasing or in the production of other goods.” Finally, there is a medical definition for consumption that is an old-fashioned name for a “wasting disease”, tuberculosis, and of little relevance here – though it is tempting to view it as an apt metaphor for consumption’s pathologies.<sup>2</sup>

The economic definition is most germane to this endeavor. Once consumption is understood to encompass a definition of “goods and services,” the integral role of consumption in market society becomes clear. Broadening our understanding of the meaning of consumption is helpful in thinking about the myriad of views deploying the word in different contexts. Thus, consumption is not, nor can it be, solely defined as the depletion of natural resources, such as drilling for fossil fuels or deforesting of rainforest ecosystems. Nor, conversely, can it be used to indicate consumption for sustenance alone. This was the norm for most individuals through history when only the very privileged, prosperous and powerful were able to accumulate goods and employ services for “want” rather than just “need,” for consumption means far more than consummation for sufficiency, the minimal accoutrements and necessities making life possible: food, shelter, water and air.

---

<sup>2</sup> “consumption n.” *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford University Press, 1999. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. University of Pennsylvania. July 11 2006 at <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t21.e6735>> and *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), p. 405.



Consumption is integral to a myriad of production processes. It takes place along the entire chain of commerce. For example, steel is purchased and consumed by vehicle manufacturers in order to produce another material that is also consumed. This product (the vehicle itself) creates the need for other goods and services, causing, for example, consumption of gasoline, oil, brake and windshield wiper cleaning fluids, as well as auxiliary consumption necessitated by routine maintenance and regulation: spare parts, oil changes and car washes, licensing, automobile insurance and registration, parking permits, taxes and tolls. In addition, the cumulative impact of traffic brings about more road building and repair, law enforcement and development. These are obvious but necessary points to recall, for the impact of what less consumption would entail is often forgotten. Unpacking the meaning of consumption shows its critical role in sustaining market society.

Despite the relative broadness of consumption's meaning, and its confusing interplay with production itself, the following typology is useful in thinking about general ways that *individuals* consume as opposed to consumption when it occurs along the production line: such as that by farmers, corporations, governments, schools, and hospitals. The word is broadened and narrowed: broadened, to show consumption's integral role in market society as goods and services, and narrowed because consumer desires, expectations, and practices have social and environmental consequences that are not as discernible in a broader context. Thus, the intention here is to focus on individual consumption, though undoubtedly the collective consumption composite is environmentally critical to any holistic overview.

## **The Dynamics of Hyper-Consumption**

Goods and services can be of short or long term utility. Perishables, such as food or an experience, such as a trip to the theater, are of relatively short- term utility. But there are also goods and services of longer-term use and benefit. Traditionally, for example, purchase of a home, car, or lawyer's service in estate planning, was done on an infrequent basis and meant to have longevity in its specific function. What is most compelling is the ever-increasing *porosity* between short and long term utility. Increased porosity between these dynamics invariably promotes hyper-consumption.

In looking back at the history of consumption and its future ambitions, significant changes are afoot. Food, for example, has become of greater long-term utility as markets have created other products to aid in their preservation: refrigerators, freezers, techniques and ingredients that dehydrate or preserve. While it is true that salting, silos, and smokehouses preserve food too, they do not have the long-term efficiency of newer innovations. Thus consumption of these products is enhanced through the consumption of other products insuring longer shelf life – although blackouts serve as a sober reminder of our dependence on this intricate web of goods and services.

As well, some short-term utility products can be reused far longer than a manufacturer intends: disposable contact lenses and paper products come to mind. But there are distances still to travel. Short-term utilization of fuel could be extended by innovating technology, such as that from hybrid, hydrogen or recycled-energy, such as bio-diesel, which is often converted from restaurant grease. If more vehicles conserved energy, the short-term utility of the energy would be lengthened. Fuel would still be of short term utility of course, as food is, but its utility is then extended.

Much of the new marketing innovation taps into goods and services that historically were of long term utility and goods. Here, an ever-increasing dynamic in market society is worth capturing: the market has successfully created a milieu making these goods less likely to be of long term utility. Furniture and fashion styles change more rapidly. People become more accustomed to viewing their home, clothes, cars, and computers as, while surely of long-term durability in most cases, as something that can be traded in or traded up. People move more.<sup>3</sup> People change their attire more frequently, even from day to day, as the dictates of style become ever more varied and rapid to change. Clothes signify. They signify taste, occupation, class, hobbies, even the weather. Other material accoutrements signify too, like the adornments found in home and car or the abundance of accessories for dress and decor. Choice runs a seemingly endless gamut from our heads to our toes, from our bodies to our surrounding space, from cell phones to computers, mortgage rates to margaritas, style of shoe to hair, to choices of *vin* and vacation. Or, at least, that is what marketers want consumers to believe and desire. Thus there is a continuing evolution of long term into shorter-term utility. Again, this is not necessarily because the durability of these goods has decreased (though some have this suspicion) but that the desire for long term utility has dwindled as affluence and variety have increased.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Motoko Rich, "Longtime Homeowners a Relative Rarity in U.S., Census Shows" *The New York Times* (Friday, November 21, 2003), p. A20. According to Rich: "Homeowners stay in their homes an average of six years." And "only 9.7 percent of households had been in the same home for more than three decades."

<sup>4</sup> Michael J. Silverstein and Neil Fiske, *Trading Up: The New American Luxury* (New York: Portfolio, 2003). This provides an excellent, albeit, unwitting depiction of this dynamic, which indicates --in quite celebratory tone-- the increasingly fashionable shopping trend toward greater, more luxurious consumption. Also recommended: Sarah Robertson, "Out With the New," *The Wall Street Journal*, Friday, June 6, 2003, p. W1. This article richly (no pun intended) describes "serial renovators" in home remodeling, with one such consumer quoted as saying: "If you have the cash, nothing is all that permanent." Robertson writes: "It's all a stepped-up version of the 90s disposable décor, when retailers like Pottery Barn pushed

The hyper-dynamics of consumption are illustrated in the following typology of consumption. Four quadrants are depicted. (See Figure I-I). Goods and services are situated according to their short or long term utility. What is compelling about the placement is *not* their fixity to one quadrant or another, but the increasing *porosity* hyper-consumptive practices illustrate about our assumptions of short and long term utility. Reasonable disagreements regarding placement are likely in modern consumptive society. Examples of porosity abound. Cosmetic surgery illustrates the unfolding fusion well. A procedure done twenty years ago (nose, breasts, facelift) likely was viewed as a permanent alteration in appearance. Enhancement surgery, (though both a good and a service) is now commonplace. Today cosmetic surgery is a multi-billion dollar industry. In theory, it should be of long term utility but sometimes it is not, as in the ever-changing predilections and perils of breast-enhancement surgery.<sup>5</sup> As the dictates of fashion evolve, the array of procedures increase, the surgery may become less invasive, the competition increase, and the pricing reduced or borrowing incentives offered to pay for procedures overtime. Thus consumers are more likely to succumb to cosmetic surgery and sometimes multiple alterations. As *Beauty Junkies* describes it, there is a growing phenomenon of serial renovators of their bodies.

The dynamics of hyper-consumption are evident in the market of luxury goods too. Over time, the exceptional becomes just another “bland commodity” as MacGillivray

---

homeowners to think of furniture like fashion – but now it’s for stuff like windows, cabinets and doors.” And, quoting a Corian countertop spokesperson: “We want people to think of it like carpeting.”

<sup>5</sup> Breast surgery (alone) is perhaps too archaic an example. ABC’s new television show “Extreme Makeovers” illustrates the dynamic of hyper-consumption *extremely* well. See too, Alex Kuczynski’s book, *Beauty Junkies: Inside Our \$15 Billion Obsession With Cosmetic Surgery (City?:* Doubleday, 2006).

points out in *Globalization*.<sup>6</sup> While there has always been evidence of human desire, trade and possession of luxury items, what has changed in modernity is their ubiquity, the spread of previously rare goods and services. Take car windows that open and shut electronically or air conditioning. These past luxury accoutrements that used to be the sole provenance of the wealthy are now the norm in modern market society. Car windows that operate manually, black and white televisions, roof-top antennas are now the exception. Entry level cars have amenities today in the past were exclusive. In order to stay competitive, the luxury car industry demands state-of-the-art technology and amenities, such as advanced safety features, global positioning systems, electronic stability control, and seats that massage. Over time these features too will become standard fare for more consumers.

The service industry reflects change as well. Tax and estate laws have become more complicated. Laws and tax codes change, as does their complexity. Consumers come to rely on the services of legal and account professionals more frequently. In competitive markets, businesses in the service industry, such as restaurants, clothing retailers and grocery stores, reassess customer expectations in order to provide something extra, convenient or distinctive in order to gain customer loyalty and stronger profits.

Analyzing changes in marketing and design reveals an embedded, expansive dynamic at work. Hyper-consumption makes the distinctions between long and short term utility more complicated. The utility of goods and services are more ephemeral than we consciously realize. Yet an objective, rather than consumer driven, understanding of

---

<sup>6</sup> Alex MacGillivray, *Globalization* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2006), p. 94.

consumption's dynamics can make for savvier, more prudent and discerning expenditures by consumers.

**Figure I-I**

**A Typology of Consumptive Dynamics<sup>7</sup>**

<b>CONSUMPTION DYNAMICS</b>	<b>GOODS</b>	<b>SERVICES</b>
<b>SHORT TERM UTILITY</b>  Goods or services that are typically disposable, perishable and/or of interim value or experience	Food, Drink, Perishables Disposable products Packaging Medication Newspapers & Magazines Energy Consumption: Natural Gas, Electric, Oil ... Day Trading Commodities Real Estate Flipping Fresh Flowers	Travel: Transportation, Accommodation, Sight-seeing Movies, Theater, Nightclubs Shipping, Mailing Spa and Beauty Services Timely information: News, Sports & Weather Updates Restaurant Service
<b>LONG TERM UTILITY</b>  Goods or services regarded as holding long term value or use	Furniture Computers Vehicles Houses Tools Books Clothes Jewelry Tangible Assets: Gold, Coins, Long term equity holdings, Collectibles	Medical Services: Emergency, Preventative, Cosmetic Education Professional Expertise: Legal, Accounting, Financial, Therapy, Interior Design, Nutrition Repair Services: Car, Home, Appliance

<sup>7</sup> Most types of consumption incorporate both goods and service dynamics. For example, a pacemaker entails both a good (the device itself) and a service (the surgical procedure and care) or the services of a craftsman or artist that creates or refurbishes goods. Restaurant meals necessitate both. As well, goods require labor in their production, maintenance and disposal, but these dynamics are often distanced from the consumer. The quadrant lines are arguably situated and porous. The main emphasis of this typology is an emphasis on the hyper-consumptive dynamics that increasingly blur the distinction between short and long term utility.

## Utilizing Hirschman's Typology

Hirschman's transposed figure that follows illustrates the enduring resilience of ideas, their historical lineages, assumptions, and manifestations (See Figure I-II). His intent in tracing these different perspectives about capitalism is the dialectical conclusion that "It is conceivable that, even at one and the same point in space and time, a simple thesis holds only a portion of the truth and needs to be complemented by one or several of the others, however incompatible they may look at first sight."<sup>8</sup> Thus, he writes: "For capitalism to be both self-reinforcing and self-undermining is not any more 'contradictory' than for a business firm to have income and outgo at the same time!"<sup>9</sup>

The understanding of the dialectical qualities inherent to rival views connotes a nuanced and sophisticated understanding about the dynamics existing between ideological polarities. Rival views develop and sustain themselves as reactions to earlier paradigms. Their evolution suggests a counter-intuitive dynamic of synergy, based not on any compatibility, but, rather, a reactive quintessential incompatibility with preceding rival views. Rather than a straight trajectory, ultimately, there is circularity to their reactive development. The evolution of rival paradigms regarding consumption and the environment may unfold in similar fashion.

---

<sup>8</sup> Hirschman, p. 137.

<sup>9</sup> Hirschman, p. 139.

**Figure I-II**

**Transposing Hirschman's Ideology Table<sup>10</sup>**

<b>Rival Views of Market Society</b>	<b>Positive Effects</b>	<b>Negative Effects</b>
<b>Dominance of Market</b> (Transposed: consumption)	Doux-commerce Thesis (DC) →  Techno-optimists Social Justice Celebratory Marketing "how—to" Capitalist Advocates, Liberal IR, Libertarians, Conservatives	Self-destruction thesis (SD) →  Extreme: Deep-ecology Gentle: Simplification Movement Social Justice Critical: Lasch Transcendentalists
<b>Influential Persistence of Precapitalist Forms</b>	Feudal-blessing thesis (FB) ←  Future Conservatives?	Feudal-shackles thesis (FS) ←  Techno-Optimists Hollander

<sup>10</sup> Hirschman, *Tableau Ideologique*, p. 136.



The dialectic carries over to the issue of consumption. The preceding figure depicts an array of views evolving in opposition to earlier views. Depending upon the view's quadrant placement, the assumptions inevitably will be quite different. Mass consumption has exacerbated social pathologies, including envy, greed and debt; and the hand of man has irreparably changed the natural environment. Yet mass consumption has also benefited many in market society with its utility, anticipatory pleasure, cultural signification, and, perhaps, liberal side affects.<sup>11</sup> The romantic vision of a return to a more primordial life in connection with nature is not only out of the question, but also suspect as an historical reality. As well, self-interest alone will not allow it. Invasive government action to curtail consumption is implausible as a prescription. The failure of America's prohibition on alcohol in the 1920s comes to mind. The only likely outcome of stringent laws would be a lucrative black market in goods and services. Liberal society depends upon industrious individuals too. Self-motivation stems from the prospect of prestige and wealth, as well as altruism and morals. The history of attempts to imbue the populace with the virtues of prudence and frugality, whether by pulpit, example, or sumptuary law, is a bleak look into earlier attempts to recreate society, at least within liberal societies.<sup>12</sup> Or as Alan Wolfe argues, "The problem that ...faces (us) is that consumption has proved so powerful as to render pathetic – if not obsolete – the

---

<sup>11</sup> International Relations Theory divides over the relationship between free trade and liberalism.

<sup>12</sup> Again, Shi's book, *The Simple Life*, is illustrative in this respect. Also, for a more recent examination of consumption's expansion in American society, see Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) and Elizabeth Cohen: *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

alternatives ...our history offers.”<sup>13</sup> The more extreme views of consumption may hold a particular truth or insight, yet the remedies offered are of limited practical benefit.

### **Where are the Conservatives?**

So where are the conservatives situated? And how does the Hirschman typology lend itself to analyzing American conservative thought today? Hirschman’s insights adeptly capture in greater detail rival views in market society. It is worth situating contemporary conservatism in order to capture the evolution and paradoxes involved with the diverse consumption ideas and how views have evolved in ways that are incongruous with its roots.

Initially, Hirschman argues that commerce was regarded by Enlightenment thinkers as “*doux*.” That is, commerce creates a gentler, more civilized society. Its virtue was that it promoted “industriousness and assiduity (the opposite of indolence), frugality, punctuality, and ... probity.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, market society ennobles and gentrifies humanity. It is progressive and pacific. Hirschman invokes an array of eighteenth century European and American luminaries to capture this presumption: including Thomas Paine, Adam Smith, David Hume, Baron Montesquieu, William Robertson and Marquis de Condorcet. This early view he labels *doux commerce* and it is shown in the top left quadrant of his table. Some of these Enlightenment figures, notably Smith and, to some, Hume, are claimed as intellectual antecedents to contemporary conservatives.<sup>15</sup>

It follows that we should place Hirschman’s *doux commerce* quadrant here regarding contemporary views of consumption sharing a positive perspective. Thus,

---

<sup>13</sup> Wolfe, *The New Republic*, p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> Hirschman, p. 109.

<sup>15</sup> See Jerry Z. Muller ed., *Conservatism: An Anthology of Social and Political Thought from David Hume to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Techno-optimists and the more celebratory subset of Social Justice belong here. It would also include liberal international relations scholars and free enterprise advocates, including right-leaning free market conservatives and, of course, libertarians.

Yet Hirschman queries: “Whatever became of this brave eighteenth-century vision?” and then shows his readers its “obverse” thesis.<sup>16</sup> This viewpoint he calls the “self-destruction” thesis. And it is placed in the top right quadrant of his table. This thesis derives from both Marx *and* conservative thinkers. In this view, the market is a force which undermines moral values. Capitalism propels “anonymity”, “greater mobility” and “the weakening of traditional social values.”<sup>17</sup> Of significant relevance are Hirschman’s insights into conservative and Romantic criticism. Both perceived the industrial revolution as a threat to “ancient feelings of rank and ancestry.” Later, this thesis expands to include the idea that capitalism’s very success would lead to its own destruction. The conviction that capitalism would lead to avarice and opulence and subsequently destroy itself is in Hirschman’s eyes a “tale that has long been discredited.”<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, he does find a more sophisticated critique. Joseph Schumpeter, for example, is “persuasive” in observing that “the ideological currents unleashed by capitalism are corroding the moral foundations of capitalism *inadvertently*.”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the catalyst for much anti-capitalist thought, Hirschman believes, originates in the violence and uncertainty of the Industrial Revolution. Capitalism was perceived as “wild, blind, relentless, unbridled – anything but *doux*.”<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Hirschman, pp. 109 – 110.

<sup>17</sup> Hirschman, quoting Fred Hirsch, p. 110.

<sup>18</sup> Hirschman, p. 114.

<sup>19</sup> Hirschman, p. 115.

<sup>20</sup> Hirschman, p. 118

The similarities with today's anxiety over consumption, the environment and globalization bear thought.

But what happened to the earlier Enlightenment vision? Hirschman argues that, yet again, an obverse idea began to grow, which he labels the "feudal-shackles thesis." In this view, captured in his lower right quadrant:

Here the real grudge against capitalism and its standard-bearer, the bourgeoisie, is their weakness vis-à-vis traditional social forces, their unwillingness to stage a frontal attack, and often their submissiveness and "spineless" subservience toward the well-entrenched aristocrats of the ancien regime.<sup>21</sup>

Hirschman recognizes that this is not a unanimous position but there is a "common theme: a number of societies that have been penetrated by capitalism are criticized and considered to be in trouble because this penetration has been too partial, timid, and halfhearted, with substantial elements of the previous social order being left intact." Thus, the original *doux commerce* thesis would "have worked out famously, so the feudal-shackles thesis asserts implicitly, *if only* commerce, the market, capitalism had been able to unfold freely, if only they had not been reined in by precapitalist institutions and attitudes."<sup>22</sup>

These polar theses get replayed time and time again. The spectrum of consumption views today evolve from this past, roiling dialectic. Today, for example, not only do we have the critics of environmentalist activists, but the critics of the eco-skeptical critics.<sup>23</sup> But there is a puzzling quandary. If today's conservatives have largely removed commerce as a source of concern, having, in fact, largely embraced it,

---

<sup>21</sup> Hirschman, p. 124.

<sup>22</sup> Hirschman, p. 125.

<sup>23</sup> Timothy W. Luke, *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

then the tension between nostalgia for old traditional ways and free enterprise are clear. Past conservatives were quite candid in their distaste for commerce's ability to make society more egalitarian, more prone to relationships of commerce than clan.<sup>24</sup> The fear of their own cultural transformation was warranted no doubt. Yet today, the inverse dominates conservative thinking. Free enterprise is a good thing. Thus consumption now is a distant cousin in the conservative hierarchy of moral values.

In his final quadrant, Hirschman discusses a more recent thesis: the “feudal-blessings” thesis, which, once again, contradicts the assumptions of the quadrant preceding it. In this view, “a feudal background is a favorable factor for subsequent democratic-capitalist development.”<sup>25</sup> These separate intellectual views have evolved in relation and opposition to the views before them. The intellectual paths Hirschman traces have come full circle. This quadrant best represents the possibility of a future conservative position. Presently, this is a nascent phenomenon within conservatism. A conservative reconciliation of this incongruity is an alluring possibility. Much depends upon the revival and future coalescence of conservative outliers depicted in ensuing chapters.

### **Rival Views: The Politics of Consumption**

This section maps out general views of consumption and the environment in order to then situate conservative views within this wider range of perspectives. Not surprisingly, conservative views belong in a narrower portion of these other rival views. Broadening the scope provides a keener understanding of where and why conservative

---

<sup>24</sup> Again, America's Southern Agrarians come to mind.

<sup>25</sup> Hirschman, p. 136.

thought is situated relative to other ideological dispositions. Many of the views described here are antithetical, if not threatening, to conservative perspectives.

Views about consumption vary considerably and it is clarifying to categorize them according to commonly held assumptions and concerns. In Figure I-II, these views are depicted through six separate types: *Deep Ecology*, *Anthropocentric*, *Techno-optimistic*, *Eco-Skeptic*, *Free Market* and *Consumer Advocacy*.<sup>26</sup> There are qualifications, for categorization entails a degree of subjectivity; some of the actors given as examples of each type's dynamics, may be viewed as a similar type to other actors in that same category, yet have quite different underlying beliefs and motives. The Anthropocentric category, for example, has both "right" and "left" wing adherents, familiarly positioned much in the same way that globalization's critics share certain concerns, but are motivated by different beliefs about what where the detriments rest. Both wings may be ardently anti-global, but for the left, the motives predominantly are environmental and social disparity concerns. In contrast, for the right, domestic job protection and fear of cultural erosion are chief causes for their activism. As well, a significant subset can be categorized as "Social Justice" proponents as they principally critique the pathologies of consumption.

There may substantive ideological differences even within each category. In the Deep Ecology category, for example, an anti-technological fanatic like the Unabomber may share a particular belief (Luddite-ism) with radical green activists, but the former endorses violence and anarchy and the latter non-violent activism, such as public protest,

---

<sup>26</sup> Richard A. Matthew, Daniel H. Deudney and Richard A. Matthew, eds., "Typology of the New Environmental Politics" in "Introduction: Mapping Contested Grounds, *Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in the New Environmental Politics* (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), p. 7. My categories benefit and partially derive from Matthew's typology in order to fit the particular characteristics of consumption.

civil disobedience and political lobbying. Figure I-II is not intended to imply that the agency or the belief sets within each type are completely synonymous.

**Figure I-III**

### **Rival Views Typology: The Politics of Consumption<sup>27</sup>**

<b>Deep Ecology</b>	<b>Anthropocentric</b>	<b>Techno-optimism</b>
<p><b>Characteristics:</b>            Anti-materialist            Neo-Malthusian            Anti-technological            Misanthropic            Rights to Nature            Both Violent means &amp;            Non-violent means            espoused            Alternative civilization            needed</p> <p><b>Examples of Actors:</b>            Unabomber, Marcuse, Earth            First! ELF, Greenpeace,            Abbey, Nash, Naess</p>	<p><b>Characteristics:</b>            Economic Disparity            Ecological Shadow            Social Justice            Sundry concerns:            Environment, Debt,            Materialism, Imperialism  <b>Right:</b> Preserving traditional            and family values but little            with re: to consumption</p> <p><b>Examples of Actors:</b>            No-Logos, Adbusters,            Affluenza, Social Critics:            Schor, Lasch, Daly, Brown,            Schwartz</p>	<p><b>Characteristics:</b>            Green tech enthusiasts            Aesthetic enthusiasts            Post-industrial innovation            Recycling            Poverty, not capitalism as            the preeminent problem</p> <p><b>Examples of Actors:</b>            Hawken, Lovins,            Hollander, D'Souza,            Easterbrook, Postrel</p>

<b>Eco-Skeptic</b>	<b>Free Market</b>	<b>Consumer Advocacy</b>
<p><b>Characteristics:</b>            Consumption is good,            Individual rights are            paramount, romanticizes            older right wing view of            conservation, eco-skeptic of            scarcity and depletion            arguments, views            environmentalists as            misguided doomsayers,            may have libertarian views            of government</p> <p><b>Example of Actors:</b>            Simon, Lewis, Lomborg,            Huber, Crichton, Michaels</p>	<p><b>Characteristics:</b>            Marketing know-how to            establish "Emotional            Branding" or "How            Customers Think"            Not engaged in a critique of            consumption            Environmental issues rarely            examined            "Environment" typically            means retail environment</p> <p><b>Examples of Actors:</b>            Harvard Business School            Press, CEOs, Advertisers,</p>	<p><b>Characteristics:</b>            Study and Advocate for:            Safety            Price            Product quality &amp; durability            Energy Efficiency            Environmental Impact  <b>Means:</b>            Increasing Public            Awareness and Activism            via Media, Publications,            Internet, Lobbying</p> <p><b>Examples of Actors:</b>            Consumer Reports            Ralph Nader</p>

<sup>27</sup> This typology benefits from a "Typology of the New Environmental Politics" by Richard Matthew in *Contested Grounds*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), p. 7.

## *Deep Ecology*

Deep ecology spans an array of belief systems and activist levels, but there are a few significant, commonly shared characteristics. Matthews describes deep ecologists well:

Deep ecologists advocate a biocentric and holistic approach in which all forms of life are intrinsically valuable and interrelated. Technology, pride, and greed are among the forces that have encouraged *homo sapiens* to exploit, alter, and try to control the great web of life of which it is a part. In consequence, humans have become alienated from nature, isolated by layers of technology. Our activities have grown increasingly destructive, and we, along with many other species, are paying a price. We must try to reconnect with nature, rediscover its rhythms and patterns, and minimize our impact on it.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, deep ecologists tend to be acutely critical of consumption. It is viewed as one of the major causes of environmental destruction as well as spiritual and communal decay. Paul Wachtel's characterization of consumption as a "cancer or virus" is a sentiment shared by deep ecologists too.<sup>29</sup> He writes that consumer life is "deeply flawed" inflicting both environmental and psychological harm. What is required is "semi-irrevocable" actions by individuals to live differently. Wachtel concedes the perception of utopian remedy in his prescription, yet also insists "... that nothing is as naively utopian as continuing on our present course, using up nonrenewable resources, fouling our own air and water, stirring discontents we are increasingly unable to ease, and hoping for a deus ex machina by the name of "technology" to bail us out at the last minute."<sup>30</sup> Deep ecologists share an enduring skepticism about the palliative promise of technology.

---

<sup>28</sup> Matthew, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> David A. Crocker and Toby Linden, Eds. "Alternatives to the Consumer Society," *Ethics of Consumption* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998) p.198.

<sup>30</sup> Wachtel, p. 215.



Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* heralds the contemporary deep ecologist's distaste of technology and consumption. Writing in the 1960's, Marcuse viewed technology as a "repressive" and "mechanizing" force upon humanity: "totalitarian' is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests."<sup>31</sup> This vein of profound antipathy and suspicion toward technology runs quite deep. Inevitably, there are other extreme techno-phobes.<sup>32</sup>

A commonly shared thread within this type is the inability of technology to offer silver bullets for environmental problems. In its most extreme variant, technology is seen as an aberration, a dangerous progression sickening human society and pervasively influencing mankind's sense of what the good life constitutes. But deep ecology entails more than aversion to technology.

Another commonly held view is neo-Malthusian, that continuing rates of consumption will bring about scarcity and depletion. Environmental scientists are at the vanguard in warning about dwindling biodiversity and the natural eco-system being destroyed by excess consumption.<sup>33</sup> Their concerns are multi-fold, including air and water quality, the overuse of groundwater supplies, pesticide use, soil erosion and its future fertility, waste toxins, bio-engineering's repercussions, land degradation, dam

---

<sup>31</sup> Albert H. Teich, Ed., "The New Forms of Control," *Technology and Man's Future* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972) pp. 74 – 86. Ch. 1 reprinted from *One-Dimensional Man*, (Beacon Press: 1964).

<sup>32</sup> In addition to Marcuse, the anti-technology, primitivist views of John Zerzan, as his edited anthology's title and "publisher" reflect: *Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections* (Oregon: Uncivilized Books, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Lester R. Brown, *Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001) For an excellent summary of environmental concerns regarding the impact of economic activity on the natural world, this book by Brown, of the Earth Policy Institute and formerly of Worldwatch Institute, is recommended. Brown would fit within the Social Justice category for his prescriptions, not deep ecology.

construction, over-population, fossil fuel consumption, global warming, climate change, and deforestation.<sup>34</sup> In 1992, 1,500 scientists endorsed the “World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity” where it was asserted that “human beings and the natural world are on a collision course” and that over-consumption must be greatly reduced.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, these environmental scientists have a disdain for “middle-of-the-road” perspectives which subscribe to the view that technology will ameliorate these problems down the road.

Is it incongruous to place environmental scientists and adherents of earth religions in the same category? While they rarely share belief systems, they do share an apocalyptic belief in the future fate of civilization if it continues along its current trajectory as well as in the necessity for radical change in order to avoid this outcome. Hence, other actors placed in the deep ecology type include those adhering to earth religious beliefs.<sup>36</sup> Political scientist Daniel Deudney observes that their “political activism is relentlessly, deeply, and loudly radical” as it “seeks to overthrow rather than to perfect industrial modernism.”<sup>37</sup> Primacy is given to the natural where an “alternative civilization” is envisioned with no separation between church and state. Radical environmental groups such as Earth First! and a splinter group, Earth Liberation Front (ELF), represent this segment of deep ecology.

---

<sup>34</sup> Paul R. Ehrlich, Gretchen C. Daily, Scott C. Daily, Norman Myers, and James Salzman, “No Middle Way on the Environment,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, Dec., 1997, Vol. 280, No. 6, pp. 98 -104. *The Atlantic* online <http://theatlantic.com/issues/97dec/enviro.htm>

<sup>35</sup> Ehrlich, et.al., *The Atlantic*.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, the precursor writings of eco-philosopher, Arne Naess.

<sup>37</sup> Daniel Deudney, “In Search of Gaian Politics: Earth Religion’s Challenge to Modern Western Civilization,” *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (New York: SUNY Press, 1995), p. 282.

As this movement has coalesced, at times fusing with the anti-globalization movement, eco-terrorist acts have increased. People have not, as yet, been specifically targeted by eco-terrorists in the United States, (Luddite-terrorist, “Unabomber” Ted Kaczynski excepted), yet law enforcement officials warn that this will change as vandalism and arson alone fail to achieve the ends of eco-terrorists. In seemingly tolerant Holland, for example, the Dutch were shocked over the recent assassination of political candidate Pim Fortuyn, allegedly murdered by an environmental-animal rights extremist.

Despite the troubling increase in eco-terrorism, it would be unjust to characterize the majority of deep ecologists as advocates of violence to achieve ends. Many deep ecologists do feel that profound change is necessary, but are also adamantly devoted to an ethos of non-violence and non-violent means to achieve change. But the danger is that the movement sometimes attracts unstable or mentally ill individuals or, most alarmingly, “outsiders” with the certitude that they have no mainstream recourse for their concerns. Ted Kaczynski is *presumed* to be an extreme outlier. Undoubtedly, however, deep ecologists harbor empathy for his beliefs.

And in fact, the ELF has claimed responsibility for arsonist actions in suburbs around the United States, including California, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania. Eco-terrorists have moved beyond the older strategy of tree spiking and monkey wrenching to an additional strategy of burning luxury homes, ski lodges, SUVs, and, quite recently, a Wal-Mart construction site. Law enforcement agencies surmise that it is only a matter of time before human lives are lost as the terrorism levels of organizations such as ELF escalate. Because of the fluid and secretive nature of these groups, individual action is dislocated from the movement’s more public proponents. Their

manifestos, including detailed eco-terror “how-to” instructions, which are often posted on their websites, encourage a loose alliance of disciples into action. The difficulty of preempting or capturing eco-terrorists is acute.

What deep ecology actors share in common is an absolutist sense of the dire consequences of human modernity on the earth’s eco-system. They are quite effective at capturing and nurturing the malaises endemic to modern society. Environmentally conscientious youth, marginalized by and cynical of the commercial over-saturation of their upbringings, are especially susceptible to the warnings and remedies of deep ecologists. Inevitably, modern day materialism is viewed as a primary culprit. Humanity’s “progress” leads to social decay and environmental destruction. Deep ecology actors collectively are committed to radical change in order to achieve their ends. None place much faith in more mainstream remedies.

### *Anthropocentric*

The anthropocentric category is also eclectic in motive and belief, but its proponents do share a common humanistic view rather than the bio-centric sentiment of deep ecologists. While their varying concerns about consumption are rooted in a humanistic perspective, the array of perspectives run the gamut from the critical, studying the pathologies modern consumptive habits engender, to that which celebrates the positive consequences, observing how the disenfranchised, powerless and marginalized signify themselves through the act of consumption.

Anthropocentric critics of consumption often note the disparity in consumption levels in modern market society versus impoverished less developed countries (LDCs).

These critiques are premised on moral and/or environmental grounds. Environmentally framed perspectives, unlike the deep ecology type, utilize a humanistic lens. Other critics, such as economists Juliet Schor and Robert Frank, write about the consequences of increased consumption including rising levels of debt, overwork, the weakening of community ties, in addition to an oft repeated concern over the environmental repercussions.<sup>38</sup> One of Schor's points is that "competitive consumption creates a 'prisoner's dilemma.'"<sup>39</sup> Others question the philosophical, religious and moral ethics of consumption.

Within the critical consumption subset of the anthropocentric category, the consequences of *hyper-consumption* are also receiving academic examination. A book by Barry Schwartz examines the "paradox of choice."<sup>40</sup> Rather than viewing the plethora of choice as empowering or democratic, the author observes that the overwhelming selection of goods promotes dissatisfaction, heightening the unquenchable pursuit of the "novel", which leads to depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. These pathologies are endemic in modern market society.<sup>41</sup> In particular, affluent society's quest for the "perfect" body or "perfect" beauty, has led to modern pathologies rarely found in less material society, including eating disorders and body-misanthropy of self. While the increase in eating disorders has been studied for decades, the latter, the overlapping phenomenon of body misanthropy, has just begun to receive the attention it

---

<sup>38</sup> Juliet B. Schor, *The Overspent American: Why we want what we don't need* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998).

Robert H. Frank, *Luxury Fever: Money and Happiness in an Era of Excess* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>39</sup> Schor, p. 163.

<sup>40</sup> Barry Schwartz, *The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004).

<sup>41</sup> One cannot help but ponder the role of the pharmaceutical industry in promoting the redress of these modern ailments through the ever increasing variety and advertising of anti-depressant medications and other mood and physiological altering drugs.

deserves. Social critics have just begun to note the increasing number of individuals engaged in serial plastic surgery and/or steroid use. (Figure One captures how the long-term utility of these cosmetic consumptive practices is now less evident, continuing its porous ongoing path to the short-term.)

Schwartz also recounts what psychologists Philip Brickman and Donald Campbell call the “hedonic treadmill” and what Daniel Kahneman calls the “satisfaction treadmill.”<sup>42</sup> The metaphor of the treadmill accurately captures the endless and exhausting march of material culture. This literature captures the argument that the economist Tibor Scitovsky made in the 1970s, but with the added element of hyper-consumptive practice.<sup>43</sup> For however acute material consumption looked over twenty years ago, undoubtedly the sheer breadth and depth of choice present today makes even the consumption practices of the 1970s look nostalgically simple in comparison.

One subset within the anthropocentric literature explores the impact of consumption on youth. Juliet B. Schor, already well known for other consumer studies, specifically addresses this critical issue in her book *Born To Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*. The most vulnerable to the inducements of advertisements are children and teens. Schor explores the exploitative and insidious elements so pervasive in modern society: television, internet, malls, even the classroom is not exempt from consumerism. Both Susan Linn in *Consuming Kids: The Hostile*

---

<sup>42</sup> Schwartz, pp. 172-173. Also recommended in similar vein: Tim Kasser and Allen D. Kanner, eds., *Psychology and Consumer Culture: The Struggle for a Good Life in a Materialistic World* (Wash., DC: American Psychological Association, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> Tibor Scitovsky, *The Joyless Economy: An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976). In his preface, Scitovsky writes of the hostility his then “new” work elicited among his economist colleagues, whom primarily viewed Scitovsky’s project, especially the commingling of economic theory with psychology, as a fairly heretic endeavor. How things change: contemporary consumption studies include a fair number of contributions by well-regarded economists.

*Takeover of Childhood* and Alissa Quart in *Branded* study the repercussions of advertising and materialistic culture on children and teenagers. Barry Schwartz suspects that the “paradox of choice” is a factor in the “explosive growth” of depression. He writes, “... depression seems to attack its victims at a younger age now than in earlier eras. Current estimates are that as many as 7.5 percent of Americans have an episode of clinical depression before they are fourteen. This is twice the rate seen in young people only ten years ago.” More alarming, “the most extreme manifestation of depression – suicide – is also on the rise, and it, too, is happening younger.”<sup>44</sup> This subset of consumption studies collectively offers a gloomy assessment; the well-being of modern society’s youngest members is being irreparable harmed, in ways that often go unrecognized or are difficult to attribute, by hyper-materialist culture.

Many within the anthropocentric category nod their head to their most influential precursor: economist and social critic Thorstein Veblen and his 1899 work, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.<sup>45</sup> He is perhaps most well known for the still apt phrase, “conspicuous consumption.” Veblen offers a scathing portrait of affluence. Principally, he admonishes the affairs and affectations of the American affluent and the often pretentious impact their wealth wrought. Did he realize that the particular desires and pathologies of the elite would not just trickle, but flood down the middle and lower economic classes? This is a remarkable achievement given history’s account of the privilege of “want” being afforded by only a select elite.

One intriguing incongruity in social criticism is the evolution in thinking about the relationship between leisure and consumption. Veblen observed that membership

---

<sup>44</sup> Schwartz, p. 209.

<sup>45</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001).

within the “superior pecuniary class” requires “abstention from productive work.”<sup>46</sup> In Veblen’s eyes, what leisure “connotes is non-productive consumption of time.”<sup>47</sup> How things have changed. Today, social critics commonly share an inverse view, that many overwork in order to live well in consumer society and that *more* leisure time (though it is not called “leisure”, but the “simple life”) will lead to a less consumption obsessed society.<sup>48</sup>

Social critic Christopher Lasch, writing critically of consumer society in the 1970s, observes the increasing narcissism and materialism of modern culture.<sup>49</sup> His insights resonate even more today. *The Culture of Narcissism* makes the point well in a section aptly titled “The Propaganda of Commodities.” Lasch argues that the unsuspecting working class laborer “might be useful to the capitalist as a consumer; that he needed to be imbued with a taste for higher things; that an economy based on mass production required not only the capitalistic organization of production but the organization of consumption and leisure as well.”<sup>50</sup> In two shrewd observations, the first of which Schor argues more recently, Lasch writes:

The propaganda of commodities serves a double function. First, it upholds consumption as an alternative to protest or rebellion....The tired worker, instead of attempting to change the conditions of his work, seeks renewal; in brightening his immediate surroundings with new goods and services.

In the second place, the propaganda of consumption turns alienation itself into a commodity. It addresses itself to the spiritual desolation of modern life and proposes consumption as the cure. It not only promises to palliate all the old unhappiness to which flesh is heir; it creates or exacerbates new forms of unhappiness – personal insecurity, status anxiety,

---

<sup>46</sup> Veblen, p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Veblen, p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Schor, specifically, makes this point a central theme of her critical works on modern consumption.

<sup>49</sup> Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in An Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979).

<sup>50</sup> Lasch, p. 71.



anxiety in parents about their ability to satisfy the needs of the young....Advertising institutionalizes envy and its attendant anxieties.<sup>51</sup>

This view has similar features to Marcuse's view of technology as oppressive. Lasch does not see the culture of consumption as liberating, but stultifying, an opiate to pacify the masses. Furthermore, while woman and children may have become emancipated from patriarchal social orders, they are now subject to the "new paternalism of the advertising industry, the industrial corporation, and the state."<sup>52</sup>

Lasch implicitly criticizes another trend in academia: the more celebratory portrayal of consumption in a small niche of the literature. In this subset of the anthropocentric category, scholars note the empowering effects that consumer society has upon the disenfranchised. These scholars are not specifically addressing the environmental impact of consumption. Their interest is in the way consumers signal through their purchases and how culture influences purchasing, rather than a consideration of how producers manipulate consumer taste, as Lasch argues.

Another critical subset of anthropocentrism turns Veblen upside down. Consider, for example, the contributions of economic professor Tyler Cowen. *In Praise of Commercial Culture*, he extols market economy's ability to foster culture and art.<sup>53</sup> He takes issue with "cultural pessimists" on both the left and the right for harboring an aversion to modernity. Both multiculturalists and neo-conservatives, he argues, "implicitly idealize a static culture."<sup>54</sup> Capitalism enhances, not weakens, the arts and consumer taste. Collectively, this anthropocentric subset studies the signification of

---

<sup>51</sup> Lasch, p. 73.

<sup>52</sup> Lasch, p. 74.

<sup>53</sup> Tyler Cowen, *In Praise of Commercial Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> Tyler, p. 202.

consumption. It has grown from the social science and humanities disciplines (anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary theory, philosophy) and is not intended to address environmental arguments. Nor does Veblen necessarily determine its tone and direction. All are curious as to the cultural significance of modern consumption, going further than any “keep-up-with-the-Joneses” premise and analysis.<sup>55</sup>

Rather than oppression, affectation and market manipulation, there is empowerment, representation and choice in the act of consuming. Political theorist Ann Norton observes the empowering and signifying aspects of consumption:

Production is experienced as constraint, consumption as the exercise of freedom and choice. Consumers exercise choice not only in the acquisition of goods but in the representation of their sentiments and themselves, for consumption is a semiotic activity.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore:

...the practice of consumption reveals aspects of self-determination and representative authority that liberal theory and liberal institutions have been reluctant to acknowledge.<sup>57</sup>

Thus consumption may also be viewed as “an act of representation,” a “system of signs” an often empowering practice to those situated on the periphery of society.<sup>58</sup> Norton writes of the “peripheral consumer” and the ways that “Consumption thus became ... not merely a way but the principal, often the only, way in which they could represent themselves in the world or interject themselves into public discourse.”<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> See too, the works of Virginia Postrel: *The Future and Its Enemies* (New York: Touchstone, 1998) and *The Substance of Style* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).

<sup>56</sup> Norton, p. 50.

<sup>57</sup> Norton, p. 54.

<sup>58</sup> Anne Norton, *Republic of Signs: Liberal Theory and American Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), Chapter Two in particular, “Culture of Consumption,” pp. 47 – 86. Other works in this vein:

Robert Bocoock, *Consumption* (London: Routledge, 1993) and Daniel Miller, *A Theory of Shopping* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

<sup>59</sup> Norton, pp. 56 – 57.

As well as contributions that note the virtues of consumption within the anthropocentric category, of critical importance to this endeavor are the more negative critics whose consumption lens is driven less by social than environmental considerations. Some have underlying religious beliefs that provide moral grounding to their critiques of consumption. In this regard, Herman Daly, a former economist at the World Bank, remains a pre-eminent figure, writing prolifically and with ingenuity about humanity's taxation of the eco-system. He argues that economists need to place additional value upon finite natural resources and that the "total flow of resource consumption or throughput" must be sustainable over time.<sup>60</sup> Underlying his environmental convictions is a Judeo-Christian view of principles. His religious beliefs affirm his concerns and remedies.<sup>61</sup> This enduring reminder of religious expression within the human-centric type can be traced back in American culture to the Puritans and Quakers as well as the Republican virtues as articulated by such figures as Samuel Adams and his cousin John Adams.<sup>62</sup>

In more secular fashion, recent contributions to the anti-consumption perspective, include books by Naomi Klein's *No Logo*, Robert Kuttner's *Everything for Sale*, and Kalle Lasne's *Culture Jam*. The PBS documentary, *Affluenza*, as well as the book by the

---

<sup>60</sup> Herman E. Daly., David A. Crocker and Toby Linden, eds., "Consumption: Value Added, Physical Transformation, and Welfare," *Ethics of Consumption: The Good Life, Justice and Global Stewardship* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998.) pp. 19 – 52. It is fascinating to juxtapose Daly's argument about incorporating a value on finite natural resources with Adam Smith's "Paradox of Value," which tellingly explores why it is, for example, that water, which is so integral to life maintenance, has little monetary value (back in his day and locale) while diamonds (yet of no known utility) should command such a high price. Adam's answer was scarcity and that the "delicacy of taste gives occasion to 'many insignificant demands.'" Commerce, evidently, rarely finds it necessary to place a scarcer value on environmental resources as demand's needs are sufficiently satisfied in the present. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, Orig. pub., 1776, 1981), Vol. 1, p.45 ft. 31.

<sup>61</sup> Herman E. Daly, *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.) For his religious foundation, see Part VII of this book.

<sup>62</sup> Shi, Chapters 2 - 4.

same name, dramatize the “ailment” of consumer disease including its symptoms, causes and a prescriptive treatment.<sup>63</sup> The authors juxtapose photographs of the Skeen family in Texas and the Yadev family of India, with all their possessions brought out in front of their homes. Side by side, the photos send a powerful message of the disparity in accumulated “things” existing between advanced industrial society and the developing world. Many of these works promote voluntary simplicity movements, a new ethos of frugality, and socially conscientious buying.

Some groups have taken their concerns to a more visible level: Adbusters is out to alter society with a cutting edge magazine, web site and other slick accouterments including stickers and CDs, all designed, ironically enough, to take a lesson from the latest marketing in how to get a point or product noticed.<sup>64</sup> “Creative resistance” is their battle cry against consumption. To Marilyn Bordwell, Adbusters “is about clearing the mental environment, thinking for one’s self, reclaiming authentic acts, and generally resisting the numbing, draining grind of consumer culture.”<sup>65</sup> She views Adbusters increasing appeal as likely to change the movement into less of a radical organization, more mainstream in approach and message. Bordwell views their culture as “passionate but not puritanical.”<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> John De Graaf, David Wann, and Thomas H. Taylor, *Affluenza: The All-consuming Epidemic* (San Francisco: BK Publishers, Inc., 2001).

<sup>64</sup> Adbusters.org

<sup>65</sup> Marilyn Bordwell, Thomas Princen, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca, eds., “Jamming Culture: Adbusters’ Hip Media Campaign against Consumerism,” in *Confronting Consumption* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), p. 253.

<sup>66</sup> Bordwell, p. 252. I do not share Bordwell’s more benign characterization of Adbusters. In fact, some of their antics and rhetoric is reminiscent of the more virulent strands of discourse within the anti-global movement. There is an unfortunate predisposition by many activists to laterally link unrelated, but highly combustible issues. See for example, Adbusters founder Kalle Lasn’s “Why won’t anyone say they are Jewish?” [www.adbusters.org/magazine/52/articles/jewish.html](http://www.adbusters.org/magazine/52/articles/jewish.html)

Though they have gained modest ground, these movements and activists still have only limited or sporadic popularity. Anti-consumption activists have links to the much broader anti-globalization movement, which began to coalesce in Seattle in 1998. Activism directed at abusive sweatshop conditions in less developed, minimally regulated countries, and intersects with calls for market society consumers to be more proactive and discerning in their choice of goods. Nike, Starbucks, McDonalds, Disney, and other multi-national conglomerates with globally known name recognition, are increasingly scrutinized for practices that are too frequently distanced from the buyer.<sup>67</sup>

There are contradictory ideological dynamics involved in the anti-globalization movement. Its long term impact, upon third world working conditions, the environment, the ecological shadow, global commerce, and buyer's choice, is difficult to predict but its short term impact, undoubtedly, has some corporations and consumers changing practices previously left unexamined, despite the problem of distancing. For example, in the garment industry and food business (E.g. organic farming, coffee and ice cream) there is a trend to capitalize on the concerns articulated by anti-global activists. Goods are marketed and labeled as environmentally sound or acquired through fair working conditions and living wages. Some consumers willingly pay a premium for these goods. Consequently, other businesses, undoubtedly motivated by profit potential, are apt to follow suit.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> For a perceptive, but discouraging interpretation of the distancing problematic: Thomas Princen, "Distancing: Consumption and the Severing of Feedback" in *Confronting Consumption*, pp. 103 – 131. "Distance' is the separation between primary resource extraction decisions and ultimate consumption decisions occurring along four dimensions – geography, culture, bargaining power, and agency." P. 116.

<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that many environmental activists are skeptical of "green" capitalist enterprises questioning both the depth of corporate commitment and the likely benefits afforded. This argument is advanced, for example, in *Ecocritique* by Timothy Luke.

Political scientists too, increasingly study the phenomenon of consumption through an environmental political lens. While environmental scientists often disdain the efforts of social scientists to mediate between environmental catastrophe and the realities of the political world, this has not stopped scholars of the political from making their own cogent contributions to the field. Michael Maniates despairs of the individual's green efforts, finding them insufficient for the job at hand. He wishes to claim that "accelerating individualization of responsibility in the United States is narrowing, in dangerous ways, our 'environmental imagination' and undermining our capacity to react effectively to environmental threats to human well being."<sup>69</sup> There is a certain degree of "feel good" associated with behaving in environmentally conscientious ways, but the danger lies in the illusion that such actions, in place of collective institutional change, can have much effect upon the environment. *Confronting Consumption* collectively provides critiques of consumer culture in order to institute tangible, prescriptive change in consumer society. Specific consumption problems, such as distancing, the global economy, individualization, waste, the role of citizens versus consumers, and more are examined in this political anthology of consumption.

### *Techno-optimism*

A consumption view drawing out the antipathy of deep ecologists is the "Panglossian" view of Techno-optimists. In this category, environmentalists with capitalist predilections, conjoined with a confidence in the promise of future technology, argue that technological innovations can curtail, if not prevent, environmental

---

<sup>69</sup> Michael Maniates, "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" in *Confronting Consumption*. p. 46.

catastrophe. *Natural Capitalism* is an excellent example of this perspective.<sup>70</sup>

Fundamental to the book's argument is that pitting businesses against environmentalists is unnecessary and counter-productive. The authors, one of whom owns the well known supply store, Smith & Hawken, believe that capitalists too are genuinely concerned with environmental issues. Their approach is more nuanced, less absolute:

The point is not that one side is right and the other wrong but that the episodic nature of the news, and the compartmentalization of each successive issue, inhibit devising solutions. Environmentalists appear like Cassandra, business looks like Pandora, apologists sound like Dr. Pangloss, and the public feels paralyzed.<sup>71</sup>

The authors insist that "natural capitalism" is not about "fomenting social upheaval." They wish to "tip economic and social outcomes in positive directions."<sup>72</sup> Their belief is in a progressive, post-industrial revolution, which will entail better design, new technologies, controls, corporate culture, new processes, and saving materials.<sup>73</sup> Their ideas are innovative, visionary, and yet progressively practical. Techno-optimists do not see the environmental movement as polarizing but as a necessary force for positive change within market society, a society afforded the luxury of a long-term view.

This "long term view" while recognized, is not a luxury less developed countries can afford when short-term dire needs are unfulfilled. Techno-optimists argue that this disparity in wealth and technological expertise thus creates an obligation on the part of the developed world to provide the means and know-how for other countries to emulate more environmentally attuned policies. This obligation is certainly a moral one, but the

---

<sup>70</sup> Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1999).

<sup>71</sup> *Natural Capitalism*, p. 309.

<sup>72</sup> *Natural Capitalism*, p. 322.

<sup>73</sup> *Natural Capitalism*, p. 64.

concept is neither popular nor enduring in the United States.<sup>74</sup> Prosperity increasingly pushes “dirty” industries, thanks to cheap labor costs and loose regulation, overseas. The “ecological shadow” is a serious consequence of the greening of more affluent society. This term characterizes the dynamic of post-industrial society making its own surrounding habitat green, but at the environmental expense of the periphery. Ultimately, however, depleting resources and scarcity, pollutants and waste, know no boundaries. Jurisdiction by nation-state alone will not suffice. Invariably, the ecological shadow will spread if more prosperous countries do not play a proactive and generous role in helping other countries circumvent the industrial side effects that they themselves passed through. The healthy posterity of all is at stake.

An offshoot of the techno-optimist category argues that poverty, not affluence, is the primary variable degrading the environment. As Jack Hollander argues:

There is ... little basis for the fear that worldwide economic development will bring about massive environmental deterioration from the newly affluent becoming unrestrained consumers imitating the technology-oriented ways of the rich. In this century consumerism can increasingly mean replacing old and polluting technologies with new, resource-efficient and environmentally friendly technologies. Technological innovation and economic efficiency – the major keys to environmental quality – can be expected to take root increasingly in the developing nations as they make the transition to democracy and affluence.<sup>75</sup>

Perhaps Hollander too optimistically ignores the ecological shadow, but his faith in technological solutions is undeterred.

Other, more “right-wing” leaning scholars embrace the perspective of prosperity’s virtues too. American Enterprise scholar, Dinesh D’Souza, writes in similar vein, though he overestimates the current appeal to which the green has to modern day conservatives:

---

<sup>74</sup> Special thanks to historian Robert Van Meter for making this point.

<sup>75</sup> Jack M. Hollander, *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, is the Environment’s Number One Enemy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) p. 15.



...conservatism is fundamentally about conserving things, and what is more important for us human being to conserve than the beauty of our natural world..... Perhaps no less paradoxically, right-wingers are moving toward a proenvironmental stance. This does not mean that conservatives are signing up in droves to go tree hugging with the Sierra Club. But conservatives now contend that one of the great benefits of wealth and technology is that they give us the resources and the knowledge to preserve our forests, our rivers, and our wildlife.<sup>76</sup>

D'Souza overplays the green sentiment of right-wingers, although surely this presents a promising window of opportunity. Conservatism's heritage of *doux commerce* can find common ground with environmentalists, a compatibility which will not contradict its intellectual legacy. The Enlightenment contributions of Adam Smith, Baron Montesquieu, David Hume, and Edmund Burke, and the earlier contributions of John Locke and others, (all of whom, surely, even at their most prescient, could not have foreseen mass consumption as it exists today), merit reassessment given the particularities of contemporary market society.

### *Eco-Skeptics*

Moving further along the spectrum of views a myriad of political ideologies also exist within the eco-skeptic category. From the earlier works of economist Julian Simon, this type has evolved in different ways. There are voices that are partisan and polemical, just as with the deep ecology type, but there are other voices that are more tempered and profound in their critiques of deep-ecology. For instance, on the partisan side, we find the right-wing Peter Huber claiming ideological descent from Theodore Roosevelt because this former American President's penchant for hunting and land conservation is part of the conservative legacy. Because of this past conservative connection, Huber

---

<sup>76</sup> D'Souza, p. 47.

identifies himself as a “true” “hard green.” “Soft greens” are environmentalists whom he accuses of using bad science, alarmist tactics, and revolutionary remedies. He writes: “We are not pagan worshippers of Mother Earth. We accept the traditional Judeo-Christian teaching, that man and nature are not equal. Our interests in nature are aesthetic, not moral. Our moral imperative is to put people first whenever direct choices have to be made.”<sup>77</sup> And Huber’s view of scarcity is the opposite of the deep ecology view: “People simply don’t run out of things they can package as “property” and trade freely in unregulated markets. With markets in command, scarcity is always giving way to abundance.”<sup>78</sup> Huber’s perspective lauds free markets and consumption, while also attempting to resuscitate the lost conservatism of Republicans.

Yet another type of eco-skeptic examines eco-terrorist movements. For example, *Ecoterror*, a book published by the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, shares in Huber’s right-wing defense of private property rights and minimal government regulation, perceiving deep-ecologists as a fundamental threat to those interests.<sup>79</sup>

The heated academic controversy generated by political scientist and statistician Bjorn Lomborg’s book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist* illustrates the divisiveness of the array of views all too well.<sup>80</sup> This controversy was particularly intense because the book was put out by a reputable academic press, making the stakes much higher for those in disagreement over the quality of the book’s research and argument. It could not be dismissed as yet another polemical screed. Depending upon the point of view, Lomborg

---

<sup>77</sup> Peter Huber, *Hard Green: Saving the Environment from the Environmentalists, a Conservative Manifesto* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 204.

<sup>78</sup> Huber, p. 14.

<sup>79</sup> Ron Arnold, *Ecoterror: The Violent Agenda to Save Nature, the World of the Unabomber* (Bellevue, Washington: Free Enterprise Press, 1997).

<sup>80</sup> Bjorn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

was either unjustly smeared or scientifically dishonest. Lomborg claims that he is an environmentalist as well as former Greenpeace member, but in reading the earlier works of Julian Simon and in looking at the “numbers” regarding a myriad of concerns environmentalists have warned about for decades, he became gradually less inclined to be pessimistic about the Earth’s future well-being. His view of consumption is, not surprisingly, benign. That is, more people all over the globe are leading better lives at lower cost of living, especially with respect to food costs. And more generally, “we have experienced fantastic progress in all important areas of human activity.” But “are we living on “borrowed time” as environmentalists claim? Lomborg thinks not.<sup>81</sup> Things are getting demonstrably better, not worse.

*The Skeptical Environmentalist* elicited outrage and enthusiastic endorsement. Well known environmental scientists, writing in prominent journals such as *Scientific American* and *Nature*, gave scathing reviews. Meanwhile, the conservative media, like *The Economist* and *The Wall Street Journal*, reviewed the book to much hearty endorsement. Why bring this controversy up here? The point is not to weigh in on the relative merit of the book’s claims, but to highlight the reaction. It illustrates in practice just how contentious, and seemingly irreconcilable, the debate over the environment has become. Whatever the book’s merits, surely the attacks against Lomborg were vituperative in response. Surely it will give other academics, who might also question the environmental orthodoxy, due pause about the long term personal consequences of honest inquiry.

---

<sup>81</sup> Lomborg, See Part II, sections 5 -7 and Part III.

There are other eco-skeptic contributions that merit consideration as critiques of the potential excesses inherent in extreme environmentalism. This type includes works by William Tucker, Anna Bramwell, and Luc Ferry. Tucker points out the elitist elements that often underlie environmentalism and historic tendency of exaggeration and alarm.<sup>82</sup> Part of Bramwell's research traces the green movement's evolution from the right to the left of the political spectrum noting the synergy between earlier manifestations of environmentalism and the Third Reich in Germany. She also critiques the anarchic and primitive elements of the movement, writing:

What after all today's ecological movement is advocating is a return to isolation, and the abandonment of treasure and knowledge to tribes and nations in foreign lands who pose no threat to us. Consciously or otherwise, this is a death-wish.... For today's ecologists, their hope of regeneration presupposes a return to primitivism, and thus, whether they wish to enunciate it or not, concomitant anarchy, the burning before the replanting, the cutting down of the dead tree.<sup>83</sup>

In similar vein French philosophy professor Luc Ferry's book, *The New Ecological Order* represents a theoretical critique of radical environmentalism.<sup>84</sup> Ferry warns of the dangers of their remedies, arguing that deep ecology is fundamentally anti-democratic and misanthropic. Like Bramwell, Ferry describes and critiques the relationship between the German Nazis and radical environmentalism. Ferry belongs in the anthropocentric category for his interest in an environmental ethos, but one that recognizes the importance of sustaining and nurturing liberal, humanistic practices alongside the green, always mindful of the seductive danger of radical environmentalism.

---

<sup>82</sup> William Tucker, *Progress and Privilege: America in the age of Environmentalism*, (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982).

<sup>83</sup> Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 248.

<sup>84</sup> Luc Ferry, Trans. by Carol Volk, *The New Ecological Order*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Collectively, these three works are qualitative and philosophical, not quantitative and scientific like the Lomborg critique. They do not address the science behind the environmental debate, but the *ideas* underlying the deep ecology movement's more extreme voices. At times, their arguments overlap conservative critiques of environmentalism but they these works are substantive and not driven by right-wing principles.

#### *Free Market and Consumer Advocacy*

With the notable exception of two opposition groups (right wing free market and consumer-advocate think tanks), the last two categories are generally less academic and more practical in tone and point, less about particular ideas than practical considerations. They are part of this typology because these two types illuminate the functional aspects of consumption and consumer society in a way that the other categories do not. The Marketing type illuminates the secret world, the tools of the trade, of marketing professionals and their underlying assumptions about consumer desires, expectations, and purchases. It aims to teach its readers successful lessons in marketing. Contributors within this category rarely, if ever, address the environmental and social consequences of consumption. On the contrary, they are interested in making consumer society more consumptive, not less. Commonly found actors and agents within this category include business journals, marketing books and books by CEOs on how *they* made a product successful and how "You can too!" Evidently, this is a subset of the self-help literature. When the word "environment" is used, it usually means a retail environment, offering advice on how to create environments most conducive to stimulating consumer buying.

Sometimes, however, the environment is mentioned as a way to capitalize on an earth friendly image with the general public. But none within this category seriously question the idea of consumption itself.

The Consumer Advocacy type is very specific in its functions and may or may not include an environmental component. In this category, not-for-profit institutions advocate for consumers across an array of issues including safety, price, durability, quality and efficiency. Ralph Nader, for example, has a well-known legacy as tireless public crusader and consumer advocate in America. *Consumer Reports* is a good example of a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping consumers make prudent, well-researched purchases. Less well known to the public is that some consumer advocacy groups are funded by a particular commodity. The tobacco industry's support of "smoker's rights" comes to mind as an example. In other words, some "consumer" agencies are closely associated with a particular industry or commodity, not consumers per se. Nonetheless, overall this category is invaluable as a future resource in thinking about prescriptive ways to educate the consumer public about goods and services.

### **Returning to Conservative Views**

Now that a broad spectrum of views has been depicted, where do American conservatives rest within the general typology of views? Conservative views primarily rest in the anthropocentric, techno-optimist, eco-skeptic and marketing categories. Without doubt the conservative disposition *rarely* argues from a bio-centric perspective, but notwithstanding its firmly rooted human centric disposition, it is primarily social

humanism, not ecologically driven humanism.<sup>85</sup> This means that any ecological sensibility is motivated by what is in humanity's interest, not the environment in and of itself. As well, American conservatives today that publicly criticize excess consumption are few and far between. The placement of contemporary conservative thought and policy within this typology suggests a range of sentiments incongruent with earlier views. This shift is rarely examined or questioned.

The spectrum of views engaged in debate, (albeit, an often muted public debate, but, nonetheless, ideologically divided and frequently polemical), regarding consumption's social and environmental ramifications are diverse and indicate substantive ideological division. As well, the historical example of America's conflicted past of advocating for "the simple life" as an alternative to a materially driven society, support this chapter's argument that anti-consumptive visions and remedies have held intermittent appeal, yet ultimately have been widely deemed unrealistic and unable to endure. When simple living practitioners have been successful, such as in Puritan society in early colonial America, there are credible alternative, not especially altruistic, explanations for the motives underlying these philosophies of frugality.<sup>86</sup> Attempts to induce society toward the simple life or a Rousseau-like vision of the world, whether earnest or not, are likely to fall short in the future too. Worth remembering as well is the frequent tension between publicly advocated views and personal behavior, such as elite attempts to thwart the ambition of less privileged for those same material comforts and

---

<sup>85</sup> One anomaly to this general conservative disposition is Matthew Scully's book, *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals and the Call of Mercy*. (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002).

<sup>86</sup> David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985, 2001).

affectations.<sup>87</sup> The larger point is that regardless of any incongruity between private practice and public stance, the allure of consumption has proven irresistible.

Modern market society's hyper-consumptive practices have been embraced by an array of conservative types. The following figure offers a specific typology indicative of the tradition's prevalent perspectives that dominant today (See Figure I-IV). As the next few chapters will detail, with the notable exceptions of Classical and Sierra Club Republicans, dominant conservative views generally are eco-skeptic and hyper-consumptive, but the motivation for each particular type's perspective varies depending on what is viewed as paramount.

---

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Jefferson comes to mind as illustrative of the contradictions between public persona and private practice, as Shi duly notes: "He ... never let his own cosmopolitan tastes nor his own careless financial management deter him from continually rhapsodizing about the virtues of republican simplicity and self-sufficient husbandry for the nation as a whole." p. 78.



Figure I-IV

**Typology of Prevalent American Conservative Views**

<b>NAME OF TYPE</b>	<b>VALUES &amp; PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>GREEN AND/OR CONSUMPTION PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>TYPES OF ACTORS</b>	<b>TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS</b>
<b>Classical</b>	Stewardship Prudence Frugality Conservation Agrarian	Nascent or Explicit Environmentalism	Burke Oakeshott Santayana Kirk Berry	Not Applicable
<b>Theological</b>	Anthropocentric Monotheistic Dominion of Nature “Be fruitful and multiply” Apocalyptic	Eco-skeptic Consumption neglected or lauded	Robertson Sirico LaHaye Dobson Colson Lapin	-Acton Institute -Interfaith - Stewardship Alliance -Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN)
<b>Free-market</b>	Free markets Economic Growth Private Property Rights Libertarian streak	Eco-skeptic Consumption lauded	Tucker Bailey Huber Michaels Lomborg Simon	CEI AEI CATO Hoover Institute Heartland Institute
<b>National Security</b>	Security <i>Realpolitik</i> Balance of Power Nationalism	“Low Politics”  (Not Well-Addressed)	Waltz Cheney Rumsfeld Wolfowitz Kagan	New American Century  (Not Well Addressed)
<b>Sierra Club Republican</b>	Classic Conservatism	Explicit Proponents of an Environmental Ethos	Bliese Marks Whitman Train Dreher	Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP)

## Chapter Conclusion

Consumption is so pervasive, the pleasures of the “good life” so integral to modern desires and lifestyles that it does not have the critical resonance or oversight that other more specific social issues sustain, such as the epidemic in obesity and diabetes rates, recreational drug use, crime, or tobacco smoking. Since consumption is seemingly benign in the short term, it is less compelling as an issue that mandates public redress and remediation than more visibly destructive and immediate critical issues.

Despite the issue’s intermittent neglect, absolutist views appear to offer salvation for the specific malaises market society engenders. These ideas are often seductive, powerful, anxiety provoking.<sup>88</sup> But certitude also means unwillingness to bridge, or put aside, difference. They solve little, with the added prospect of contributing to further social malaise and radical activism or its obverse, the intransigent unwillingness to change. This is exemplified in the conservative over-reaction to, and embellishment of, the collective environmental disposition as one of radically extremism, biocentrism and misanthropy. The reality, however, is that an environmental disposition is not just found at the deep ecological fringe, but encompasses a much broader group of “regular” Americans that share little else in common.

By design or not, the intransigency of this divide remain problematic to more tempered, mainstream views that advocate humanistic, liberal and environmental values and remedy. As this book explores in the ensuing chapters, conservative views today,

---

<sup>88</sup> Alston Chase, *Harvard and the Unabomber: The Education of an American Terrorist* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003). Among other things, this book argues that Ted Kaczynski’s actions and manifesto cannot be comfortably categorized as an isolated incident. Chase warns of the Unabomber’s apparent progeny, much taken with his legacy. Individuals such as the Unabomber and his disciples are useful examples of radicalism within conservative discourse, not without warrant.

inevitably antithetical and reactive to radical critiques of consumption, are all too often based on hyperbole and rhetoric, thus problematic too. But *unlike* their green nemesis, the conservative tradition is now ascendant. Today's prevailing conservative eco-skepticism has contributed to America's inability to remediate the environmental consequences of hyper-consumption. But earlier manifestations of conservatism embraced conservation and an environmental ethos. Given their present-day strength and prior legacy, the exploration and analysis of conservatism's past and present perspectives merit serious consideration.

## Chapter II

### Classical Conservative Thought

*Thing, nevertheless, has run wild in our time, building town and fleet, bomb and satellite; and the man has been unkinged; and human dignity is at its lowest ebb, now, when man's power over nature is at its summit.*

Russell Kirk, 1956

*True, it is said of our Lady, she ageth.  
But see, if you peep shrewdly, she hath not stooped;  
Take no thought of her servitors that have drooped,  
For we are nothing; and if one talk of death—  
Why, the ribs of the earth subsist frail as a breath,  
If but God wearieth.*

John Crowe Ransom

*The absolute necessity of conservatism – as temperament, mood philosophy, and tradition – to the existence of civilization.*

Clinton Rossiter, 1955

American conservatism traditionally espoused core virtues including conservation, frugality, and stewardship. Political prudence in all endeavors was paramount. The esteemed British conservative Edmund Burke wrote that “Prudence is not only first in rank of the virtues, political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all.”<sup>1</sup> Yet today, this sentiment and practice are rarely sustained in conservative discourse or policy. The practical consequences are clear with the current administration, which, with few exceptions, has neglected or rewritten environmental laws to the benefit of industry and capital.

First, however, it should be conceded that Burke was not anti-capitalist; he much admired *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations* written by his friend Adam Smith. Despite this, Burke's writings illustrate tensions, for, like Adam Smith, he did not

---

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke, Isaac Kramnick, ed., *The Portable Edmund Burke*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1999). p. 476.

conceive the impact industrialism would have on these other cherished values. Writing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the American conservative Russell Kirk resuscitates this other important legacy from Burke, that he was a man that lauded prudence, restraint, the preservation of traditional values and institutions. Further, as another 20<sup>th</sup> century American conservative scholar, Robert Nisbet observed: "... Burke aside, criticism of capitalism, of the new economic order generally, is rife in nineteenth-century conservative writing."<sup>2</sup> Nisbet viewed the conservative tradition as affording "frequent criticisms of capitalism, together with its industrialism, commerce, and technology." Indeed, it arose "as much a response to the industrial as the democratic revolution at the end of the eighteenth-century."<sup>3</sup>

These past sentiments are now largely ignored. Curiously, they are not just abandoned, but contradicted, as evident in the new conservative promotion of hyper-consumptive practices and eco-skepticism. So what accounts for this shift?

Ideology is rarely static over time; conservative thought is no exception.<sup>4</sup> Action and progress invariably trigger reaction. Given the enduring appeal of tradition, conservative thought has been compelled to adapt to the changes and challenges of life in

---

<sup>2</sup> Robert Nisbet, *Conservatism: Dream and Reality*, (New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publishers, 2005), p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>4</sup> Labeling conservative thought an ideology is controversial. Russell Kirk insisted that conservatism was built on "general principles in politics" that "distinguished [it] from fanatic ideological dogmata." "The conservative mind and the ideological mind stand at opposite poles." Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot*, (Wash. D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2001, orig. pub. 1953). As well, Michael Oakeshott writes that conservatism is "not a creed or a doctrine, but a disposition." (Excerpted from "On Being Conservative" *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991), p. 407. Nonetheless, mainstay contemporary conservative thought is increasingly ideological in rhetoric and action, thus less of a "disposition." Perhaps Kirk would agree, recounting an "influential and seasoned conservative" he empathetically quotes this unnamed scholar: "The 'conservative movement' seems to have reared up a new generation of rigid ideologists. It distresses me to find them as numerous and in so many institutions. Of course, many are libertarians, not conservatives. Whatever they call themselves, they are bad for the country and our civilization." *The Politics of Prudence*, (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 1998, orig. pub. 1993), pp. 13-14).

a modern market society. The scholar Albert O. Hirschman describes the tension between progressives and conservatives as “this protracted and perilous see-sawing of action and reaction.”<sup>5</sup>

The rare exception to ideological change over time resides within insular communities. These communities are, metaphorically speaking, castles with moats intended to buffer and protect against the barrage of challenges modern market society presents.<sup>6</sup> But most conservatives are not insulated and underlying views evolve as old challenges become less relevant or tired and new challenges present themselves. Classic conservative thought is particularly vulnerable to the challenge of ideological adaptation because it is enduringly suspicious of progress.

Thus conservative thought and practice are not immune to change given their exposure to the turbulent whirl of ideas and temptations within liberal society. Yet there exists an enduring aversion to change, particularly dramatic change. Again, progress is suspect – free-market views aside, with notable exceptions described later. So, too, is any rationale for revolutionary change. Edmund Burke’s condemnation of the French Revolution remains the classic invocation. Burke was initially vindicated in his appraisal of the consequences of revolution.

Though conservatives may be distrustful of change, often admire tradition, and remain wary of what explosive change entails, they are principally reactive.<sup>7</sup> Given this

---

<sup>5</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991). p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> An excellent, informative historical examination of both insulated and pro-active American views regarding consumption and conservation is David E. Shi’s book *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*. (Atlanta: The University of Georgia Press, 1985).

<sup>7</sup> Thus making Karl Rove’s assertion regarding conservatism’s new “forward thinking” disposition stand out all the more as an unprecedented reversal.

reactive nature, conservatism is inclined to exert this disposition when it perceives a proposed remedy as a threat to its traditional mores.

Discourse and debate regarding American industrial growth and the desire for greater goods and services were expressed early by the American founding fathers. According to the historian Jerry Z. Muller, for example, James Madison was concerned that the *Shay's Rebellion* in 1786-87, though suppressed, foreshadowed future discord among the general populace. "Madison was at pains to put the revolutionary genie back in the bottle." Continuing, Muller writes that this

... revolt was a product of the economic and political processes of the previous decade. The Revolutionary War had increased demand for many products, and as ever more Americans became involved in market-oriented production, demand for money and for credit increased. Paper currencies were introduced, leading to greater inflation. When the market declined after the war, many of those who had borrowed to increase their production found themselves unable to repay their loans. As voters in the new republic, they turned for relief to their state legislatures, which enacted a spate of legislation on behalf of debtors. These measures alarmed the American gentry with which Madison and Hamilton identified, most of whom were creditors, and added to their sense that the pursuit of material self-interest within the state legislatures threatened the economic and political stability of the new nation.<sup>8</sup>

The *Federalist Papers*, in part, sought to limit the role of the general population within the states, given the authors' fears regarding the whims and desires of lower classes within the fledgling democracy. In rebuttal to Thomas Jefferson's more democratic ideas, Madison fretted in "Federalist No. 49" about "The danger of disturbing the public tranquility by interesting too strongly the public passions...."<sup>9</sup> In these critical respects, Madison's views stand out as dissonant with contemporary conservative views regarding material consumption and the debt incurred. So too, was his unease at the malleability of the public's passions in a democracy. Yet contemporary conservative political discourse

---

<sup>8</sup> Jerry Z. Muller ed., *Conservatism: An Anthology of Social and Political Thought from David Hume to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 148-149.

<sup>9</sup> James Madison, in Muller ed., p. 150.

is overwhelmingly designed to do just that. One only need watch “fair and balanced” Fox television news or political pundits such as Ann Coulter and Rush Limbaugh, for evidence of this *modus operandi* in the popular conservative media.

Despite what prevails today, earlier conservatives viewed polemical ideological rhetoric with suspicion. Clinton Rossiter, a liberal intellectual well-versed in conservative thought, describes the “primary virtues” of the tradition as “Wisdom, justice, temperance and courage; industry, frugality, piety, and honesty; contentment, obedience, compassion, and good manners.” The locus of this “constellation of virtues” defers to Burke and is, of course, “prudence.” Conversely, Rossiter argues, the conservative

...is alert to the identity and malignity of the vices he must shun: ignorance, injustice, intemperance, and cowardice; laziness, luxury, selfishness, and dishonesty; envy, disobedience, violence, and bad manners.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, the conservative retains “distaste for materialism” and “places moral above material values and ends.” It is “more necessary to advance intellectually and spiritually than materially and technologically.”<sup>11</sup> Rossiter’s depiction of conservative thought is incongruent with what passes for much of the American variety in practice today. Surely this divide indicates substantive cognitive dissonance among its present practitioners. Early revolutionary era conservatives that practiced and espoused these sentiments include the Puritans and prominent Americans, such as John and Abigail Adams that, to the historian David Shi, embodied the principles of “Republican simplicity.” As Shi details:

---

<sup>10</sup> Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962, pp. 25-26.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 46-47.



Even though most ‘classical’ republicans felt more comfortable with the rational humanism of the Enlightenment than either the predestinarian theology of Puritanism or the mystical piety of the Society of Friends, they shared with those religious groups a basic assumption that forging a successful society depended upon maintaining a necessarily tenuous balance among power, liberty, and virtue. The first two factors – power and liberty – would ideally counterbalance each other. But such an equilibrium between force and freedom fundamentally depended on developing and sustaining a virtuous citizenry. The virtues to be sought – industry, frugality, simplicity, enlightened thinking, and public spiritedness – were almost identical to those valued by the early Puritans and Quakers. Virtuous republicans, like virtuous Puritans and Quakers, were to be industrious without becoming avaricious. And they were expected always to subordinate private interests to the larger public good.<sup>12</sup>

The Quaker faith share similar principles of the “simple life” (with notable individual exceptions, such as former President Richard Nixon), but the religious faith as a whole is not viewed as conservative. What Shi delineates is strands of American religious and political movements of all stripes that lauded these values throughout its history.

Another renowned conservative name is Harvard philosophy professor George Santayana (1863-1952). In 1920 he describes the American character as unique to the new world: “They have all been uprooted from their several soils and ancestries and plunged together into one vortex, whirling irresistibly in a space otherwise quite empty.” As well, “He {Americans} finds it rather a sorry waste of time to think about the past at all.”<sup>13</sup> For Santayana, these American cultural characteristics do not bode well for the conservatively inclined:

The luckless American who is born a conservative, or who is drawn to poetic subtlety, pious retreats, or gay passions, nevertheless has the categorical excellence of work, growth, enterprise, reform, and prosperity dinned into his ears: every door is open in this direction and shut in the other; so that he either folds up his heart and withers in a corner – in remote places you sometimes find such a solitary gaunt idealist – or else he flies to Oxford or Florence or Montmartre to save his soul – or perhaps not to save it.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Shi, p. 52.

<sup>13</sup> George Santayana, “Materialism and Idealism” in Robert M. Crunden, ed. *The Superfluous Men: Conservative Critics of American Culture* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1999), p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Santayana, pp. 67-68.

While Santayana admired aspects of the American persona, its energy, ambition and optimism, he viewed the consequences in a less positive light, for “The circumstances of his life hitherto have necessarily driven the American into moral materialism....” One depiction still remains true: “To my mind the most striking expression of his materialism is his singular preoccupation with quantity.”<sup>15</sup>

In addition to Edmund Burke, Russell Kirk was much influenced by Santayana:

Santayana was consistently contemptuous of the innovation which despoils the world in the name of efficiency and uniformity, consistently quick to defend the conservation of social harmony and tradition.<sup>16</sup>

And Clinton Rossiter writes:

A definitive history of the post-Civil War Right would tell of George Santayana, who lingered for a time among us and warned of the inevitable excesses of democracy and capitalism.<sup>17</sup>

Santayana was an early critique of modernity, its excesses and emphasis on material goods and technology, viewing these dynamics as harmful to society.

In the 1930s too, Southern Agrarian conservatism reveals a disposition decidedly at odds with today’s dominant conservatism with respect to capitalism, industrial growth, consumption and nature. Indeed, as Eugene Genovese, eminent historian of the American South, details – not without admiration: “The Agrarians deserve belated tribute for having been, as it were, premature environmentalists.”<sup>18</sup>

The authors of *I’ll Take My Stand* unite in their “support of a Southern way of life” where the Agrarian is pitted against the Industrial. They disdain the “Cult of

---

<sup>15</sup> Santayana, p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind From Burke to Eliot*, (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2001), p. 446.

<sup>17</sup> Rossiter, p. 159.

<sup>18</sup> Genovese, Eugene D., *The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) p. 13.

Science.” Modernity “suffer[s] under the curse of a strictly-business or industrial civilization.” Consumption is “the grand end which justifies the evil of modern labor.... We have been deceived. We have more time to consume, and many more products to be consumed. But the tempo of our labors communicates itself to our satisfactions, and these also become brutal and hurried.... The modern man has lost his sense of vocation.” With respect to consumption for the authors, “It is an inevitable consequence of industrial progress that production greatly outruns the rate of natural consumption. To overcome the disparity, the producers, disguised as the pure idealists of progress, must coerce and wheedle the public into being loyal and steady consumers, in order to keep the machines running.”<sup>19</sup> Despite their Southern provenance, a doomed aspiration existed “to seek alliances with sympathetic communities everywhere” for a “national agrarian movement.”<sup>20</sup>

The anti-industrial theme is expanded in John Crowe Ransom’s essay where he expresses a sentiment not uncommon in the white South of an earlier era:

It seems wiser to be moderate in our expectations of nature, and respectful; and out of so simple a thing as respect for the physical earth and its teeming life comes a primary joy, which is an inexhaustible source of arts and religions and philosophies.<sup>21</sup>

Ransom condemns the “gospel of Progress” and industrialism as “malignant.” It “is an insidious spirit, full of false promises and generally fatal to establishments.”<sup>22</sup> The Southern Agrarians were proponents of agriculture and tradition and were not disposed to adopt the machinery and industry of the North. They feared that the farmer would be

---

<sup>19</sup> “Introduction: A Statement of Principles”, *I’ll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*, By *Twelve Southerners* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977, originally published, 1930), pp. xxxvii-xxlviii.

<sup>20</sup> p. xxxix.

<sup>21</sup> John Crowe Ransom, “Reconstructed but Unregenerate”, *I’ll Take My Stand* p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ransom, p. 15.

“swapping his culture for machine-made bric-a-brac”, that the “money economy” was “unreservedly gluttonous”.<sup>23</sup>

Clinton Rossiter describes the Southern Agrarian disposition in his classic study,

*Conservatism in America:*

He is a Conservative because, disliking the nature and pace of industrial “progress,” he is spiritually willing and intellectually able to frame his dislike in avowedly Conservative terms. His ideal seems to be the yeoman republic of Jefferson rather than the “Greek democracy” of Calhoun, and in support of this ideal he spins out a political and social theory in which ethical aristocracy, social harmony, community, property, religion, contentment, reverence, order, continuity, and tradition are warmly praised; and equalitarianism, progress, majority rule, rugged individualism, and materialism are either searchingly questions or roundly damned.<sup>24</sup>

These agrarians recognized the inevitable: the South’s capitulation to industry and material culture. Taken alone, they may be viewed as an outlying anomaly in conservative thought of their era, but the sentiments they expressed were to be found in the present day as well as other strands in earlier American conservatism.

Second generation Southern Agrarians include the conservative intellectuals Richard Weaver and M. E. Bradford. One contemporary figure also embodying this tradition is farmer, scholar, writer and conservationist, Wendell Berry. With these Agrarians too, the classic conservative dissent from hyper-consumptive practices, excessive waste and reliance on technology are combined with reverence for the land:

To argue for a balance between people and their tools, between life and machinery, between biological and machine-produced energy, is to argue for restraint upon the use of machines. The arguments that rise out of the machine metaphor – arguments for cheapness, efficiency, labor-saving, economic growth, etc. – all point to infinite industrial growth and infinite energy consumption. The moral argument points to restraint; it is a conclusion that may be in some sense tragic, but there is no escaping it. Much as we long for infinities of power and duration, we have no evidence that these lie within our reach, much less within our responsibility. It is more likely that we will have either to live within our limits, within the human definition, or not live at

---

<sup>23</sup> Andrew Nelson Lytle, *I’ll Take My Stand*, p. 243 and p. 245.

<sup>24</sup> Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), p. 230.

all. And certainly the knowledge of these limits and of how to live within them is the most comely and graceful knowledge that we have, the most healing and the most whole.<sup>25</sup>

More generally, Rossiter's study of American conservatism provides ample evidence of these characteristics in the tradition's past thought.

Consider too, earlier conservatives of similar view, as the following passage from David E. Shi's *The Simple Life* in his chapter on "Republican Simplicity" points out:

Virtuous republicans, like virtuous Puritans and Quakers, were to be industrious without becoming avaricious. And they were expected always to subordinate private interests to the larger public good.<sup>26</sup>

Such earlier American classical republicanism was often more progressive than conservative but, nonetheless, remains a part of the conservative movement's selective harkening. As well, Shi observes that spreading opulence and "pretentiousness on the part of the "lesser sort" still provoked considerable anxiety among the upper ranks, and the call for simple living remained for many as much an instrument of class discipline as it was a pristine ideal."<sup>27</sup> Views regarding consumption were also complicated by changes in distinctions of class, growing prosperity, and the spreading of desire and means for material gain. Much of the elite dismay over spreading consumption habits derived from the discomfort such encroachment afforded in its graying of commonly understood social boundaries between classes. Nothing quite grated the old moneyed more than the aspirations and affectations of the *nouveau-riche*. In this respect, the lauding and practice of frugality was a subtle signifier of old versus new money.

---

<sup>25</sup> Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1997, p. 94.

<sup>26</sup> Shi, p. 52.

<sup>27</sup> Shi, p. 51.

Later strands of conservatism began to deviate from this earlier landholding, aristocratic dismay at capitalism's ability to disrupt the social order, increasingly adapting views that promoted the entrepreneurial virtue of individual ingenuity and ambition. The British conservative W. H. Mallock, for example, writing in 1898 in response to the emerging ideological threat of socialist and Marxian thought, argued that material inequality was the inevitable, legitimate outcome of differences in talent and ambition.

Thus in Mallock's view

All that has been urged in this work is as follows: That whatever may be the new advantages which the majority of mankind attain, they will attain them not by any development in their own productive powers, but solely by the talents and activity of an exceptionally gifted minority, who will enable the ordinary man to earn more whilst labouring for fewer hours, because they will, by directing his labour to more and more advantage, secure from equal labour an ever-increasing product.<sup>28</sup>

This argument may have viewed social inequality as inevitable, but the activity of the few would benefit the less-talented many. Such shifts in traditional conservatism were expanded upon in the later contributions of Joseph A. Schumpeter (1927) as new ideological views arguing for economic redistribution and equality, necessitated a strong defense of capitalism from a conservative disposition.

Not all conservatives embraced the virtues of capitalism. Perhaps no scholar embodies classical American conservatism more than Russell Kirk. His aversion to the excesses of modernity is palpable. He condemns "... the destruction of standards of all sorts, the widespread reduction of civilized life to the gross satisfaction of petty material appetites."<sup>29</sup> Kirk shared the new conservatives' concern for the preservation (or regeneration) of society's moral and spiritual character. Indeed, to "conserve" means

---

<sup>28</sup> W. H. Mallock, "Aristocracy and Evolution: A Study of the Rights, the Origin, and Social Functions of the Wealthier Classes" (1898) in *Conservatism*, Jerry Z. Muller, ed., p. 221.

<sup>29</sup> Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot*, p. xvii. Taken out of this context, this quote from Kirk might well have been articulated by a left-wing anti-globalization activist.

conserving what is traditional, not just the conservation of nature. Kirk, like his predecessor Burke, lauds prudence, a virtue quite absent from today's conservative discourse. His fourth conservative principle is critical: "... conservatives are guided by their principle of prudence. Burke agrees with Plato that in the statesman, prudence is chief among virtues."<sup>30</sup> One outcome of this characteristic *is* familiar to today's conservative thinker:

Human society being complex, remedies cannot be simple if they are to be efficacious. The conservative declares that he acts only after sufficient reflection, having weighed the consequences. Sudden and slashing reforms are as perilous as sudden and slashing surgery.<sup>31</sup>

This disposition suggests why many contemporary conservatives are reluctant to prescribe remedy for environmental problems.

Yet it is easy to fall back on such views as justification for inaction. Political prudence is selectively applied: merited in resisting environmental remediation, abandoned today in foreign policy making. Historically, conservative foreign policy insisted that

... a soundly conservative foreign policy, in the age which is dawning, should be neither 'interventionist' nor 'isolationist': it should be prudent.... Our prospects in the world of the twenty-first century are bright – supposing we Americans do not swagger about the globe, proclaiming our omniscience and our omnipotence.<sup>32</sup>

There is also Samuel Huntington's seminal 1957 essay on "Conservatism as an Ideology."<sup>33</sup> Three theories of conservatism are defined: *aristocratic*, *autonomous* and *situational*. The aristocratic, Huntington argues, is a narrow conservatism defined by "feudalism, status, the ancient regime, landed interests, medievalism, and nobility." This

---

<sup>30</sup> Russell Kirk, *The Politics of Prudence*, (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1998), p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Kirk, *The Politics of Prudence*, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Kirk, *The Politics of Prudence*, p. 221.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Conservatism as an Ideology," *The American Political Science Review*, (Vol. 51, No. 2, June 1957), pp. 454-473.

type is “irreconcilably opposed to the middle class, labor, commercialism, industrialism, democracy, liberalism and individualism.” Yet Huntington shrewdly observes the incompleteness of this definition, particularly in America, which “lacks a feudal tradition.”<sup>34</sup> The autonomous view is “defined in terms of universal values such as justice, order, balance, moderation.” Unlike the first definition, here, conservatism is not solely associated with an elite class. Huntington views this as a “New Conservatives” disposition.<sup>35</sup> The third disposition, the one to which Huntington favors, is the situational. As the name connotes, this particular form of conservatism, is situational to particular historical challenges “in which a fundamental challenge is directed at established institutions and in which the supporters of those institutions employ the conservative ideology in their defense.” Thus, Huntington writes:

Conservatism in this sense is possible in the United States today only if there is a basic challenge to existing American institutions which impels their defenders to articulate conservative values.<sup>36</sup>

At this point, the devil’s advocate may be questioning the argument advanced here, perhaps thinking: “Yes, but given the variety of definitions also evident in earlier conservatism, why the emphasis here on present day incongruities within the tradition?” This is a fair question but one that is easily dismissed, for, Huntington goes on to argue that “all three approaches agree fundamentally as to the content of conservatism as an ideology: the substance of the values and ideas in which conservatives believe.” Notwithstanding their differences, all “unite in identifying Edmund Burke as the

---

<sup>34</sup> Huntington, p. 454.

<sup>35</sup> Huntington, p. 455.

<sup>36</sup> Huntington, p. 455.



conservative archetype and in assuming that the basic elements of his thought are the basic elements of conservatism.”<sup>37</sup>

The intellectual common ground is then advanced by Huntington in six “major components of the conservative creed – the essential elements of Burke’s theory.”<sup>38</sup> To condense, this includes: One, “man is basically a religious animal, and religion is the foundation of civil society.” Two, “Society is the natural, organic product of slow historical growth. Existing institutions embody the wisdom of previous generations.” Three, includes the following relevant assertion: “Prudence, prejudice, experience, and habit are better guides than reason, logic, abstraction, and metaphysics.” Truth exists not in universal propositions but in concrete experiences.” Huntington’s fourth component is most germane: “The community is superior to the individual. The rights of man derive from their duties. Evil is rooted in human nature, not in any particular social institutions.” Five includes the following realism: “Except in an ultimate moral sense, men are unequal.... Differentiation, hierarchy, and leadership are the inevitable characteristics of any civil society.” Huntington’s last assertion has critical resonance as well: “Man’s hopes are high, but his vision is short. Efforts to remedy existing evils usually result in even greater ones.” Collectively, the tradition “stresses the particular nature of truth and warns of the danger of overarching principles. Manifestly, the ideology has little appeal to any one discontented with the status quo.” “— all serve the overriding purpose of justifying the established order. The essence of conservatism is the

---

<sup>37</sup> Huntington, p. 456.

<sup>38</sup> Despite this common origin to Edmund Burke, Huntington points out that Richard Hooker “stands as a towering and eloquent statement of the conservative ideology. Here, two hundred years before Burke, was delineated every significant strand of Burkean thought. The substance of their conservatism is virtually identical.” P. 464. The French Revolution was the “second great manifestation of conservatism” the threat of English Puritan activism for the separation of Church and State, in the late 1500s being, though “dissimilar”, the first major historical manifestation of conservatism. p. 465

rationalization of existing institutions in terms of history, God, nature, and man.”

Furthermore, “conservatism differs from all other ideologies except radicalism: it lacks what might be termed a substantive ideal.”<sup>39</sup> Huntington’s depiction argues that the tradition is reactive, manifesting itself according to the particulars of varied historical crises perceived to threaten a standing social order, but nonetheless, core principles endure. Written well before today’s self-identifying American conservatisms existed, it throws present day incongruities into a harsh light.

These fundamental and germane core values of moderation and prudence are largely neglected in American conservatism today. Its contemporary emphasis on material success is conjoined in relevant economic context with withdrawal from communal responsibility in favor of commerce and property rights. As Anthony Quinton cogently points out:

Conservatives do not follow Locke in taking the right to property to be absolute and infeasible. Their ideal of property-ownership is agricultural, even feudal. Property is a trust rather than a matter of absolute right of use and disposal. Its possession carries with it responsibilities as well as rights. That is the theme of much past conservative criticism of industrialization and of unfettered free enterprise.<sup>40</sup>

Quinton argues that property and family rights in conservative thought were principally driven by the idea of preserving a “socially stabilizing institution” not “as a bare arena for the pursuit of immediate satisfaction.”<sup>41</sup> Concern over a “sense of community” was paramount, not the right of individual material pursuit.

The modern British conservative political theorist Michael Oakeshott, though less nostalgic of the past than Kirk, shared the view that conservatism was a disposition. The

---

<sup>39</sup> Huntington, pp. 456-457.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Quinton, “Conservatism,” *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995) p. 258.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p.259.

locus of this disposition is “to use and enjoy what is available rather than to wish for or to look for something else; to delight in what is present rather than what was or what may be.”<sup>42</sup> He also found pleasure in the banality of everyday life: “... what is humdrum need not be despicable.”<sup>43</sup> Oakeshott’s conservatism was secular in tone, but certain themes are familiar: “to live at the level of one’s own means.”<sup>44</sup>

To be conservative, then, is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss.<sup>45</sup>

Oakeshott was not against progress or change; and he understood their inevitability. But the conservative disposition prefers the familiar:

He is not in love with what is dangerous and difficult; he is unadventurous; he has no impulse to sail uncharted seas; for him there is no magic in being lost, bewildered or shipwrecked. .... What others plausibly identify as timidity, he recognizes in himself as rational prudence; what others interpret as inactivity, he recognizes as a disposition to enjoy rather than to exploit.<sup>46</sup>

Earlier conservatism lauded prudence and frugality; nature was to be respected. As well, it was loath to call itself an “ideology” regarding the zealotry of ideological conviction as a natural enemy. With few exceptions, these tenets no longer reverberate.

By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, conservatism largely embraced a free market disposition. Southern Agrarian and Kirkian sentiments were increasingly seen as anachronisms. Further, the extolled virtue of labor and toil of the land “as one of the happy functions of human life” were repugnant, discordant reminders of the South’s reliance on slavery. As the American aristocracy of the founding became decreasingly

---

<sup>42</sup> Michael Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative,” *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991), p. 498. This essay was a lecture given in 1956.

<sup>43</sup> Oakeshott, p. 436.

<sup>44</sup> Oakeshott, p. 409.

<sup>45</sup> Oakeshott, p. 408.

<sup>46</sup> Oakeshott, p. 412.

detached from the land, and turned more toward the profit of industry, conservatism's disdain for hyper-consumption and its promotion of moderation and prudence were increasingly intellectual shackles, better cut off and left behind.

American conservatism increasingly began to embrace the philosophy of Scottish Enlightenment scholar, Adam Smith, with particular emphasis given his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, first published in 1776. This great work gained additional currency with its emphasis on the benefits of free trade and Smith's argument, refined from earlier thinkers, that self-interest was a necessary and favorable social condition for all segments of society. The chapter on free market conservatism details the oftentimes selectively appropriated legacy of Smith by contemporary disciples. As historian Jerry Z. Muller observes:

Many conservatives have adopted Smith's belief in the unintended, socially positive outcomes of the market as their guiding maxim, along with the belief that the unintended consequences of government action tend to be negative.

Yet, conservatives,

... depart(s) from Smith's program of cultivating men of public spirit who would be moved to participate in government, aided by scientific knowledge, aware that the most effective means of promoting the common weal is often by market mechanisms yet cognizant that the market requires an extensive framework of public services in which to function.<sup>47</sup>

This misappropriation of Smith's views entail revision of his perspective regarding consumption, for his thoughts regarding its benefits were formed in an era where the less privileged were only just beginning to possess the means to purchase long deemed luxury goods and services previously attainable only to the privileged.

---

<sup>47</sup> Jerry Z. Muller, *Adam Smith in his Time and Ours* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 197.

From the 1930s onward, American conservatism changed in practice, becoming not just an intellectual disposition, but, increasingly, a partisan ideological movement. Its affiliation with the Republican fold gained ground, further emboldening conservatism into the quotidian machinations of politics in action. The New Deal and the Cold War, in different ways, became galvanizing forces to reckon with in the resurgence of this new conservatism. Even before the two-term ascendancy of President Ronald Reagan, the five-term Republican Senator from Arizona, Barry Goldwater seeded the ground for conservatism's future strength, despite his resounding presidential defeat in 1964 to Lyndon B. Johnson. Goldwater wrote a popular book in 1960, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, where these newer conservative paradigms were forcefully articulated: States' rights, concern over taxes and spending, the failure of the welfare state and, last, but not least, "the Soviet menace."<sup>48</sup> Although he lost the opportunity to become president, many credit him for conservatism's resurgence in the 1980s. Later events which galvanized conservatism included the Vietnam War, Civil Rights and Supreme Court activism that played out in such pivotal cases as *Griswold versus Connecticut* and *Roe versus Wade*. As Huntington notes in 1957, "situational" conservatism gained legitimacy, impetus, and voice in a rapidly changing world.

Two years after Huntington, A. F. A. Hayek shrewdly observes that: "Conservatism proper is a legitimate, probably necessary, and certainly widespread attitude of opposition to drastic change".<sup>49</sup> But for Hayek, (clearly self-identifying as

---

<sup>48</sup> Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative* (New York: Hillman Books, 1960).

<sup>49</sup> F. A. Hayek, "Why I Am Not a Conservative" in Gregory L. Schneider ed., *Conservatism in America Since 1930*, p. 180.

aligned with the liberal tradition – with unimpeachable caveats), the conservative disposition is problematic in contrast, for

The liberal is very much aware that we do not know all the answers and that he is not sure that the answers he has are certainly the right ones or even that we can find all the answers. He also does not disdain to seek assistance from whatever non-rational institutions or habits have proved their worth. The liberal differs from the conservative in his willingness to face this ignorance and to admit how little we know, without claiming the authority of supernatural sources of knowledge where his reason fails him.”<sup>50</sup>

Hayek’s critique is remarkably prescient: “...it can probably be said that the conservative does not object to coercion or arbitrary power so long as it is used for what he regards as the right purposes. Meanwhile, for the liberally disposed, “neither moral nor religious ideals are proper objects of coercion, while both conservatives and socialists recognize no such limits.”<sup>51</sup>

The contributions of Hayek are relevant to this endeavor. His perceptions are germane viewed through the lens of critical, divisive issues today, such as global warming or evolution, where science endeavors to grapple with a rising body of evidence, though the discipline often concedes that their findings inevitably entail scientific uncertainty. In Hayek’s eyes these, “new theories upset ... cherished beliefs.” He has “little patience with those who oppose, for instance, the theory of evolution or what are called ‘mechanistic’ explanations of the phenomena of life simply because of certain moral consequences which at first seem to follow from these theories, and still less with those who regard it as irreverent or impious to ask certain questions at all. By refusing to face the facts, the conservative only weakens his own position.”<sup>52</sup> These

---

<sup>50</sup> Hayek, p. 188.

<sup>51</sup> Hayek, p. 184.

<sup>52</sup> Hayek, p. 187.

flaws which Hayek notes within conservatism point to the difficulties inherent in having it respond to change in a “forward-thinking” fashion. The rare exception, (namely, conservatism’s present day foreign policy), paradoxically, suggests an exception to the rule: enduring intransigence to change, no matter the urgency. Despite this enduring aversion to change, conservatism does have a past legacy which is compatible with conservation and concern for the environment.

### *III.I Contemporary Classic Green Conservatives*

There are outlying exceptions that laud these earlier views so often neglected or scorned by their brethren. As British political philosopher John Gray concedes:

It is fair to say that, on the whole, conservative thought has been hostile to environmental concerns over the past decade or so in Britain, Europe and the United States. Especially in America, environmental concerns have been represented as anti-capitalist propaganda under another flag. In most Western countries, conservatives have accused environmentalists of misuse of science, of propagating an apocalyptic mentality, and of being enemies of the central institutions of modern civil society.<sup>53</sup>

Although Gray is a strong critic of radical environmentalism, he insists that “environmental despoliation on a vast scale is an inexorable result of industrial development in the absence of the core institutions of a market economy, private property, and the price mechanism.”<sup>54</sup> He argues for finding common ground between conservatism and the environment, for “there are many natural affinities between conservative philosophy and Green thought, from which both may profit.” Even more remarkable is the following statement:

Conservatives must learn from Green thought that the promise of open-ended global growth ... is delusive. ... The importance of Green thought for conservatives today is that it recalls them to

---

<sup>53</sup> John Gray. *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government and the Common Environment* (New York, Routledge, 1993). p.124.

<sup>54</sup> Gray, p. 126.

their historic task of giving shelter to communities and reproducing them across the generations – in a context of finite resources which dictates stability, not growth, as the pre-eminent conservative value.<sup>55</sup>

And further:

Conservatives must learn to be open to radical criticism of current institutions of market capitalism and of the health and education professions, in so far as they are predicated on spurious promises of indefinite growth or open-ended progress, and so depart both from Green thought and from genuine conservative philosophy. Conservatives need to explore, with Greens and others, as yet unthought-of dilemmas of life in societies which are no longer buoyed up by the prospect of incessant economic growth or by modernist pseudo-religions of endless world-improvement.<sup>56</sup>

In reminding conservatives of this earlier heritage, Gray resembles Kirk in lauding tradition and stability over growth and materialism. These values connote prudence, not material progress.

Strong environmental arguments have also been made by a conservative academic of communication studies, John R. E. Bliese. In a recent book, he explains why he was motivated to join the Sierra Club when his party, the Republicans, radically changed their environmental agenda during the Ronald Reagan presidency. At that point, he explains, a “huge discrepancy” began between Republican voters and politicians regarding environmental preferences. He condemns his party’s operatives:

Although they claimed to be conservatives, their attacks on the environment were, in fact, the very opposite of conservatism. They were violating some of the most important principles of conservative philosophy.<sup>57</sup>

Bliese continues:

---

<sup>55</sup> Gray, p. 172-173.

<sup>56</sup> Gray, p. 173.

<sup>57</sup> Bliese, by John R. E., *The Greening of Conservative America* (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2002), p. ix. Also recommended: Gordon K. Durnil, *The Making of a Conservative Environmentalist*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). This contribution is more policy oriented than philosophical, but represents another outlying, critical view of a self-identified conservative environmentalist within the Republican party.



The works of the great scholars and thinkers who developed the conservative political philosophy for our time include several fundamental principles that are relevant to environmental policy issues – and they all support environmental protection.<sup>58</sup>

There is too, the conservative Andrew Sullivan – an often provocative iconoclastic challenger to standard conservative mores advanced today. Sullivan is a popular political blogger, pundit, journalist and scholar prone to questioning this transformation within conservative thought.<sup>59</sup>

More specifically, conservative scholar Roger Scruton scrutinizes the psychology of consumption, “the fetishism of commodities” observing that “... the ascendancy of consumption belongs, not to the essence of property, but to its pathology.” and that “the expendable and the replaceable fills the soul with illusions, and short-circuits the pursuit of fulfillment.... Under the rule of commodities, people come to live in a world of means without meaning.” Further, “The English gentleman is known and respected precisely for his ability to make consumption as quiet and inconspicuous as good taste requires.”<sup>60</sup> Scruton recognizes what is too often left unexamined by his peers: the inherent tension, in principles that advocate property rights, yet often succumb into the pathology for endless consumption. In Quinton’s depiction of conservatism there are three primary tenets: *traditionalism*, *skepticism* and *organicism*.<sup>61</sup> Tertiary values that many confuse with conservatism, such as an emphasis on preserving institutionalized religious values or private property rights, as well as right-wing political impulses, such as authoritarian, fascist or elite predilections, often overlap but are not fundamental to a classical conservative disposition.

---

<sup>58</sup> Bliese, p. x.

<sup>59</sup> See Sullivan’s web site, available at <http://andrewsullivan.com/>

<sup>60</sup> Scruton, Roger. *The Meaning of Conservatism* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press, 2002). pp. 119-123.

<sup>61</sup> Quinton, pp. 244-268.

With respect to religion, for example, Quinton insists that “In general terms conservatives have seen the church as an indispensable support to the state in ensuring social order and stability. They have favored an established church in some shape or form...[But] for better or worse it is hard not to see this as an anachronism.”<sup>62</sup> Rather, it is the law and the constitution that is “the politically authorized part of custom and custom, as an historical accumulation, deserves our respect.”<sup>63</sup>

Eminent scholars and writers, including Berry, Quinton, Huntington, Gray, Kirk, Rossiter, Sullivan, and Oakeshott, collectively depict what traditional conservatism entails. Indeed, as Robert Nisbet argues, with the exception of Burke,

...criticism of capitalism, of the new economic order generally, is rife in nineteenth-century conservative writing. Coleridge made plain his distrust of ‘commerce’ and the impersonal identification of human beings by their property status.<sup>64</sup>

Notwithstanding the general tensions that existed between the old conservative order of landed gentry versus the new commerce of industry, Nisbet is mindful that

...we cannot close this section without emphasizing again that irrespective of variant conservative attitudes toward capitalism, or any other more or less concrete mode of economy, the philosophy of conservatism has been adamant on the sanctity of property.

Nisbet means this in a Kirkian sense that “property and freedom are inseparably connected.”<sup>65</sup> In other words, property is understood to be a right, connoting the likes of Berry, the Southern Agrarians, as well as Kirk.

Another contemporary conservative needing inclusion to this list is William F. Buckley. His book *God and Man at Yale* invokes similar themes, although its principle purpose aims to indict the undergraduate education at Yale University during his student

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. p. 258.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 259.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Nisbet, *Conservatism: Dream and Reality* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), p. 76.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. pp. 77-78.

years. So too, does Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*. This book offers evidence of similar sentiments, for underlying his attack on American higher education, rests criticism of capitalism, modernity, and the growing confluence found between religion, universities, and free markets. Past conservatives with strong libertarian propensities, like H. L. Mencken, are exceptions, not the rule.

The virtues of prudence, frugality, and stewardship are rooted in the conservative tradition. The prevailing American conservatism today either misappropriates or is discordant with past seminal, intellectual contributions. From Burke, Adams, Santayana, the Southern Agrarians, Kirk, Weaver and Berry, an enduring ethos of "true" conservatism has disappeared from the prevailing mindset.<sup>66</sup> These past and present British and American conservative voices depict or sustain the intellectual compatibility between conservation and conservatism. Their views are in the minority today, however, as the next three types, with notable exceptions, illustrate.

---

<sup>66</sup> Not all conservatives would agree with the proposition asserted here that there is a classical tradition of conservatism in America. For example, a recent, quite colorful and angry critique of conservatives today by John W. Dean, former legal counselor to President Nixon during the critical time of Watergate, argues that there is "No Classic Conservatism, Or Movement Moses", that "there is no conservatism that can be considered classic" although Dean does concede the significance of Edmund Burke as well as William F. Buckley for resuscitating the likes of Weaver, Meyer, Hayek, Kirk and Burnham. *Conservatives Without Conscience*, (New York: Viking, 2006), .pp. 6-16.

## Chapter III

### Theological Conservatism

*Luxurious and extravagant living, the gratification of sensual desires without limit, is on the one hand a form of self love. Sometimes its purpose is to display power and to enhance prestige. Sometimes it is not so much the servant of pride as the consequence of the freedom which power secures. Freed of the restraints, which poverty places upon all forms of expansive desires, the powerful individual indulges these desires without restraint.*

Reinhold Niebuhr, 1949

*Coveting asses is the whole basis of our prosperity.*

Louis Menand, *The New Yorker*

Judeo-Christian theological views regarding the human relationship to nature are contradictory and complex; it is a given that their sacred texts were and remain subject to divergent emphasis and interpretation. Situating theo-conservative views of consumption and the environment is no easy task given the elasticity of views and myriad of motives that exist today. Consumption and environmental problems are integrally related, but when separating and unpacking the two through a religious lens, clear differences become apparent.

This chapter argues that dominant theological conservative views are explicitly eco-skeptic. Yet specifically questioning the morality of consumption is far more one of neglect than debate within theological conservatism today. It then describes three influential theological faiths that collectively have much political influence today, their views of consumption and the environment, and then provides an analysis of reasons which underlie their perspectives. Finally, green theological conservative outliers will be described, its potential assessed, and the tensions that exist with the prevailing disposition

will be examined. Since the so-called Christian Right claims to hold thirty percent of Republican Party voters, this particular subset of conservatism has the most effective and collective ability to influence public policy on these issues. Given this, outliers within this type are, arguably, well-positioned to substantively change the prevailing theo-conservative mindset.

More generally too, however, there are other questions that complicate interpretation. Are their holy texts to be read as fundamental or metaphorical truth, as myth, or some amalgamation of all of these? A new development complicates this further, for ancient Christian scrolls recently discovered may radically challenge fundamental religious interpretations of the Scriptures. Recent academic scholarship such as the work of religion professor Elaine Pagels, provoke disconcerting questions about early Christianity's homogeneity.

The answer to any of this, of course, will vary dependent as it is upon the spiritual predilections and practices of the resource being questioned. Is the source devout or secular, fundamental or reform, Christian or Jewish, male or female, is the scholarship principally religious or academic? These dichotomies only touch the surface of the copious possibilities, for within different types of religious strands there is considerable interpretative elasticity. Even the hierarchical Roman Catholic Church, though its authority is centralized from the Vatican, has a diversity of views situated in its American religious leadership.

In two other respects, however, the Judeo-Christian faiths share uniform consistency: their enduring anthropocentrism and monotheism. The Islamic faith too, would later embrace and expand upon this foundation. These qualities substantively

differentiated them from other so-called pagan beliefs, such as Eastern or Native American religions. Those religions incorporated elements of animism, polytheism or idolatry and were thus oft to be regarded by these newer faiths as heretical, primitive and barbaric.

These distinguishing Judeo-Christian attributes are important factors in their conceptions of the intertwined relationships existing between the one God, man, and nature. As Roderick Frazier Nash describes it, both faiths were,

Rigidly monotheistic, the first commandment of these religious was to worship no other gods or idols or spirits except Yahweh/God/the Heavenly Father. Even Jesus was the son of this supreme deity, and thus hierarchy (that villain of contemporary environmental and social reformers) was thoroughgoing in Christianity. Natural objects might be created by God, but they were not gods, nor did they possess souls or spirits of any sort. Modern Christians contend that the fact of divine creation of nonhuman beings and inanimate objects should be sufficient reason for respect and reverence, but their ancient and medieval predecessors took the absence of animism as a license to exploit. Since they had objectified nature and were now dealing with something outside their religious and ethical community, the restraints previously provided by fear and morality were no longer operative.<sup>1</sup>

There are ancillary considerations, such as the “traditional Christian view of wilderness as a cursed land, the antipode of paradise” and, within certain strands of Christianity, a powerful emphasis on the hereafter over and above any here-now of our mortal existence. Nash describes this as a “pervasive otherworldliness” where “the earth was no mother but a kind of halfway house of trial and testing from which one was released at death.”<sup>2</sup>

There are other important explanatory concepts that provide insight too. In a well known, controversial 1967 *Science* article written a professor of medieval history, Lynn

---

<sup>1</sup> Roderick Frazier Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison, The University of Wisconsin, 1989), pp. 90-91. The most relevant chapter is Ch. 4 on “The Greening of Religion” pp. 87-120. It offers an excellent account of Christianity’s historical relationship to nature, past to present. Unfortunately, the book’s 1989 publication means that it does not depict more recent changes in American conservative religious views.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91

White argues a Christian tradition of distance from any ethos of environmental stewardship. In his view, anthropocentrism was founded upon the belief that God made man in his image, that the Genesis extols “dominion,” and that man should “be fruitful and multiply.” These beliefs connote a God intending man to master nature for his own benefit. It follows in White’s view that, with notable religious exceptions, Christianity did not foster a historically consistent ethos of good stewardship; thus, much rarer, was the articulation of nature possessing any *intrinsic value* un-tethered from human interest and benefit.

Influential Enlightenment philosophers often implicitly affirmed this Christian view of man’s relationship to nature as science, technology, and commerce gained credibility, credentials, and strength. Both Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and Descartes (1596-1650) viewed nature in mechanistic terms. Environmental political theorists often view the scientific revolution’s role in anti-environmental views of nature that have been sustained into contemporary paradigms as an important variable too.

In an eco-feminist narrative advanced by Carolyn Merchant, for example, the author examines this emerging sensibility:

Modern Europeans added two components to the Christian recovery project – mechanistic science and *laissez faire* capitalism – to create a grand master narrative of the enlightenment. Mechanistic science supplies the instrumental knowledge for reinventing the garden of earth. The Baconian-Cartesian-Newtonian project is premised on the power of technology to subdue and dominate nature, on the certainty of mathematical law, and on the unification of natural laws into a single framework of explanation. .... Francis Bacon saw science and technology as the way to control nature and hence recover the right to the garden given to the first parents. “Man by the Fall, fell at the same time from his state of innocency and from his dominion over creation. Both of these losses can in this life be in some part repaired; the former by religion and faith; the latter by arts and science,” Humans, he asserted, could “recover that right over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest,” and should endeavor to “establish and extend the power and dominion of the human race itself over the [entire] universe.”

The origin story of capitalism is a movement from desert back to garden through the transformation of undeveloped nature into a state of civility and order.<sup>3</sup>

In *The Rights of Nature* as well, the dualism of Cartesian thought and influence is explored. Nash argues that to Descartes:

Animals... were insensible and irrational machines. They moved, like clocks, but could not feel pain. Lacking minds, animals could not be harmed. They did not suffer. They were, in Descartes's sense of the term, unconscious. Humans, on the other hand, had souls and minds. Thinking, in fact, defined the human organism. 'I think, therefore I am' was Descartes's basic axiom. This dualism, the separateness of humans to nature, justified vivisection and indeed any human action toward the environment. Descartes left no doubt that people were the 'masters and possessors of nature.' The nonhuman world became a 'thing.'<sup>4</sup>

Inevitably such mechanistic views of nature spawned counter philosophical narratives from thinkers as varied in time and place as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, American Transcendentalists, such as Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, into contemporary views, such as the controversial writings of philosopher Peter Singer. Today, Singer's views provoke much conservative dissent largely due to its non-anthropocentric arguments (often labeled misanthropic and immoral by his critics). Views that argue for the expansion of man's rights to nature are objectionable, if not sacrilegious, to anthropocentric religious faiths.

There were past Christian luminaries whose views ran counter to prevailing conceptions, such as the Benedict of Nursia in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and Saint Francis of Assisi in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Both are revered by ecologically inclined Christians for their legacies of reverence to and respect of the natural world. Assisi, in particular, is invoked by Christians keen to promote a religious ethos that encourages stewardship and appreciation of nature. Nash acknowledges this contemporary effort to "point out that

---

<sup>3</sup> Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment*. (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 31-32.

<sup>4</sup> Nash, pp. 17-18.



stewardship had an old and respected place in Christian religion.” Yet he surmises that “the historical evidence for this characterization, however, is, at best, scanty.”<sup>5</sup> Despite this scantiness, Nash insists that the church’s role in contemporary environmental activism is integral to success, for it remains the “chief custodian of ethics.”<sup>6</sup>

Religion, even in modernity, for better and for worse, sustains a powerful moral presence in human society. Its potential to persuade cannot be underestimated. Although Nash primarily concurs with White’s assessment of Christianity’s environmental legacy, he supports an emerging Christian “ecothology,” as he labels the phenomenon, because it offers “a compelling world view.”<sup>7</sup>

There are other theological principles that seemingly hold promise. The Tenth Commandment is “Thou shalt not covet.”<sup>8</sup> Surely “coveting” is a variable in the dynamics of consumption. This commandment, however, is often neglected in contemporary theological discourse. Conservative religious leadership today has a mixed record preaching the virtue of frugality, conservation, and modest living. In fact, more prominent political, quasi-religious spokespeople on the right have been thunderously silent.

Consider William Bennett’s best-selling *The Book of Virtues*, which offers an anthology of fables, morals and myths to foster moral education in the young.<sup>9</sup> Ten chapters promote ten separate moral virtues, including friendship, perseverance, courage

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>8</sup> From the *Tanakh - The Holy Scriptures, the New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*: Ex. 20:14. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house: you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female slave, or his ox or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

<sup>9</sup> William J. Bennett, *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1993).

and faith. Frugality is not among them.<sup>10</sup> Given the size of his tome, inevitably there are selections that promote moderation, such as Aesop's "The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs," where the moral is "Much wants more and loses all." Yet frugality's lack of prominence is revealing. Perhaps such a virtue requires too basic a contradiction with adherence to *laissez-faire* politics. James A. Nash describes frugality as a "subversive virtue" because of "it is a revolt against an economic system that depends upon intensive production and consumption to keep the system going and growing. Frugality is an encounter with an economic ethos that cannot afford frugality if that ethos is to thrive, and it resists, even undermines, the central assumptions of that ethos."<sup>11</sup> There is considerable tension in American history between the "norm of frugality" and its existence "alongside a countermyth of progressive prosperity."<sup>12</sup> In Nash's view, "Frugality offers the only potentially realistic means of resolving the economics-ecology dilemma."<sup>13</sup>

It is the religious left, so often cast as morally permissive, and accordingly cast as hostile when it comes to "traditional" cultural values, that more commonly questions the morality of hyper-consumption. Although Christianity may have an ambiguous legacy with respect to nature, as Lynn White argues, it does have a past ethos that promoted the virtue of frugality.<sup>14</sup> As James A. Nash writes, that tradition "has certainly not been fully forgotten, but it has been significantly demoted – probably reflecting an

---

<sup>10</sup> This point is made by James A. Nash in "On the Subversive Virtue: Frugality," in *Ethics of Consumption: The Good Life, Justice and Global Stewardship* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), pp. 417. He characterizes its omission as "one sign of Bennett's political distortions of traditional morality."

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. pp. 417-418.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 416

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 432.

<sup>14</sup> For example, the New Testament sayings of Jesus are replete with this message. See too, the Christian depiction of Mammon as a false god of avarice and material gain.

accommodation to cultural values.” Nash notes that frugality is not “in most modern manuals in Christian economic ethics or in various church statements on economic policy. Frugality remains an undercurrent in contemporary Christian ethical and ecclesiastical thought...”<sup>15</sup> Its resuscitation holds promise for religious leadership keen to promote a greener Christianity.

Yet the majority of theological conservatives are not inclined toward an environmental ethos and collectively they hold substantial political power today. This means that they have an impressive ability to influence the views and votes of their followers, thus influence the public policy making of the government.

The Moral Majority Coalition, lead by Dr. Jerry Falwell, is an illustrative example of their influence. The organization first tasted success through the mobilization of its followers during the Reagan presidency. More recently, the coalition, in collaboration with other Evangelical groups, initiated an impressive effort to get out the Christian Right vote in the past two presidential election cycles. In Falwell’s words:

On election night, I actually shed tears of joy as I saw the fruit of a quarter century of hard work. Nearly 116 million Americans voted. More than 30 million were evangelical Christians who, according to the pollsters, voted their moral convictions. I proudly say... they voted values!!

Christian giants like Dr. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, provided energetic and courageous leadership. Dr. Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association, Dr. D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries, Dr. John Hagee of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, the many national leaders of the Arlington Group, the upstart alternative Internet news sites and more than 225,000 evangelical pastors helped turn out the largest electorate ever. And, I repeat, they all voted Christian!!

We must now diligently work to multiply our turnout for the 2006 and 2008 elections.

As national chairman of TMMC, I am committed to lending my influence to help send out at least 40 million evangelical voters in 2008. The thought of a Hillary Clinton or John Edwards presidency is simply unacceptable (and quite frightening).<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Nash, p. 417.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.moralmajority.us/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=27](http://www.moralmajority.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=27), accessed on May 12, 2006.

The locus of their platform is predicated on moral values and extends over a broad range of issues that motivate theo-conservatives; prayer in school, gay rights and marriage, birth control, right-to-die, and stem cell research are well known issues that galvanize theo-conservatives toward political activism given their strong convictions. These beliefs extend to their views of consumption and the environment. Here too, they exert impressive influence over government policy making.

Of course, there are many American faiths that can be classified as conservative, but not all strive to influence political policy. Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, are instructed *not* to vote in political elections. But other religious groups have become far more involved in secular politics, hoping to spread their values throughout American culture. Their efforts to influence public policy extend from local school boards to the White House. The Moral Majority Coalition, Christian Coalition of America, Traditional Values Coalition, Toward Tradition, Family.org, Tim LaHaye Ministries, and Thomas More Law Center all represent well-endowed theo-conservative organizations dedicated to political action that advance their beliefs. The Moral Majority Coalition states an agenda common to all of these organizations:

The group's central premise is to utilize the momentum of the November 2 elections to maintain an evangelical revolution of voters who will continue to go to the polls to "vote values."<sup>17</sup>

Their first political success helped Ronald Reagan win the presidency in 1980 and they played a substantive role in the presidential elections of George W. Bush. Their ability to mobilize religious conservatives is impressive and extensive and often

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

underestimated by more secular or left-wing religious Americans. Yet even seemingly maverick or more moderate Republican politicians – Senator McCain comes to mind – recognize that in order to win elections this constituency within the Republican Party must be wooed.<sup>18</sup>

The next section examines three theo-conservative faiths that actively exert political influence. Although their beliefs vary considerably, they not only galvanize their followers, but also reach out to one another when common ground exists. The Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (ICES) and the Acton Institute are notable examples of their synergy. Its membership includes prominent Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and other theo-conservative leaders. All are eco-skeptic. *If* specific environmental problems are conceded, they place their faith in local solutions, free markets and private property rights. Thus prosperity is lauded, while the morality of hyper-consumption is neglected.

### *Evangelical Conservatives*

Evangelicals are not necessarily conservative and the intersection of consumer culture and religion is problematic across the entire spectrum of faiths.<sup>19</sup> Yet the majority of Evangelical Protestant, Fundamentalist, Southern Baptist and Pentecostal churches are far more likely to value, influence, and promote the Republican Party's

---

<sup>18</sup> For an illuminating summary of prominent "Evangelicals of America" today, see the following from *Time Magazine* at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101050207/index.html>, accessed on May 12, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Evangelical Christian Jim Wallis, for example, is an exception to the theo-conservative norm. See *God's Politics*, particularly Part IV "Spiritual Values and Economic Justice: When Did Jesus Become Pro-Rich?" For a thorough and historical account of these different religious entities and consumption, see R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Also, Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2005).

right-wing conservative platform today.<sup>20</sup> There is compatibility across a wide range of issues.

The influence of the Christian Right in American politics today is substantial and this ability to dictate more extreme policy in the Republican Party is often overlooked. Only in recent years have more moderate Republicans – Christine Whitman and Kevin Phillips come to mind – begun to publicly express their dismay at this trend.

Theo-conservatives have been aware of their might and its future potential for a much longer time. In a post-election press release, the Christian Coalition boasted that “Evangelicals made the major difference in the 2004 presidential election.” Most interesting, is their claim that “moral values played at least as large a role as the war on terrorism in the president’s election.” The release boasts that “The sleeping giant has been awakened and will refuse to be intimidated by secular fundamentalists” noting as well that the Christian Coalition of America has “more than 2 million supporters.”<sup>21</sup>

There is a notable void in endorsing frugality or an environmental ethos in conservative Evangelicalism that will be explored later in this chapter. Well-known influential eco-skeptic religious leaders include Charles Colson, John Hagee, Tim LaHaye, Pat Robertson, and James Dobson. Dr. Dobson, the Founder and Chairman of Focus on the Family, is particularly influential in political corridors of power today. Important organizations that collectively represent the Christian Right include the Council for National Policy whose members include Evangelicals, Mormons, Catholics,

---

<sup>20</sup> For an informative overview, see “Defining Evangelicalism,” *The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals* at Wheaton College: [www.wheaton.edu/isae/defining\\_evangelicalism.html](http://www.wheaton.edu/isae/defining_evangelicalism.html), accessed on November 11, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.cc.org/content.cfm?id=173>, accessed on May 7, 2006.

and others similarly minded theo-conservatives, while the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) is a coalition specifically representative of Evangelical leadership.

### *Roman Catholicism*

Within the Catholic Church hierarchy today, too, the right prevails, though not all American adherents of Catholicism are similarly inclined. Conservative Catholicism shares much moral ground with Evangelism, though this faith today has been far more outspoken in its critique of hyper-consumption.<sup>22</sup> Pope John Paul II, for example, publicly condemned the morality of modern day consumption as well as its detrimental impact on the earth's resources. Consider his words in 1990:

It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few  
Should continue to accumulate excess goods,  
Squandering available resources, while masses  
Of people are living in conditions of misery at  
The very lowest level of subsistence. Today, the  
Dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is  
teaching us the extent to which greed and  
selfishness – both individual and collective –  
are contrary to the order of creation, an  
order which is characterized by mutual inter-  
dependence.<sup>23</sup>

Pope John Paul II articulated a spirituality which was not opposed to development or to the desire to have a materially better life, but to the disparity between the poor and the wealthy, viewing the juxtaposition as “unacceptable.” To be placid about underdevelopment while there is “superdevelopment, which consist[s] in an excessive availability of every kind of material goods for the benefit of certain social groups...”

---

<sup>22</sup> For an account of consumption within Roman Catholicism, see Charles K. Wilbur, “The Ethics of Consumption: A Roman Catholic View” in the *Ethics of Consumption* anthology, pp. 403-415.

<sup>23</sup> Pope John Paul II, “The Ecological Crisis,” 1990, *In My Own Words*, New York: Gramercy Books, 1998, p. 83.

was morally wrong. And the Pope did not just condemn disparity, but the moral and spiritual repercussions of living in a hyper-consumptive society. He warned against the “blind submission to pure consumerism” for these bring

... in the first place a crass materialism, and at the same time a radical dissatisfaction, because one quickly learns – unless one is shielded from the flood of publicity and the ceaseless and tempting offers of products – that the more one possesses the more one wants, while deeper aspirations remain unsatisfied and perhaps even stifled.<sup>24</sup>

He also was outspoken about man’s relationship to nature. The Christian assumption of “dominion” over nature must not be misappropriated or abused:

The dominion granted to man by the Creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to “use and misuse,” or to dispose of things as one pleases. The limitation imposed from the beginning by the Creator himself and expressed symbolically by the prohibition not to “eat of the fruit of the tree” shows clearly enough that, when it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity.<sup>25</sup>

The Catholic faith under the spiritual leadership of Pope John Paul II consistently emphasized that environmental degradation of impoverished regions, due in no small part to materially driven production demanded by market society, is morally objectionable and incompatible with Christian values. The Pope spoke that “*men and women of the twenty-first century will be called to a more developed sense of responsibility.*”

Furthermore he said there must be

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, p. 87.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, p. 91.



... an equal sense of responsibility toward others: an attitude of concern for the poor, participation in structures of mutual assistance in the workplace and in the social sphere, respect for nature and the environment.... We must renounce idols such as prosperity at any price, material wealth as the only value, science as the sole explanation of reality.<sup>26</sup>

The Pope's interpretation of Catholicism is distinctive from prevailing American Evangelical views of stewardship, the environment, and consumption. While both stress care and concern for the poor, the Pope addressed not just poverty, but the relationship of poverty, prosperity, and the natural world. Material progress cannot be at the expense of the poor. Distrust and competition between American Protestant Evangelicalism and Catholicism have a long history, but differences with respect to some social issues have narrowed in certain areas. All articulate a commitment to helping the poor and oppressed. When it comes to ecological concern, however, their different emphasizes are much greater.

Although this Pope's message is quite clear it is not shared by all in the American Roman Catholic hierarchy. For example, the Father Robert A. Sirico is a co-founder and President of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty. The institute's mission is rooted in a religiously based free market ethos. They wish to "promote a free and virtuous society characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles."<sup>27</sup> Some of the Acton Institute's goals appear to be incompatible with the past Pope's views, despite Father Sirico's insistence of "kinship" with "Pope John Paul II's so-called 'phenomenological' approach to philosophy." An AEI magazine article on religious conservatives questions Sirico's view of libertarian and Catholic compatibility:

---

<sup>26</sup> Pope John Paul II, "A Sense of Responsibility," Address to the Diplomatic Corps, Vatican City, January 10, 2000 in *A Year with John Paul II: Daily Meditations from His Writings and Prayers* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), p. 13, emphasis in the original.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.acton.org/about/>, accessed on May 4, 2006.

Reminded that many youths read libertarian economists like Hayek and Ludwig von Mises and go on to reject religion, Sirico replies, “they haven’t read them carefully enough. Embedded in the Austrian school of economics is an intellectual link with medieval scholastic thinkers, a strong kinship with the moral theologians of Salamanca and elsewhere. In a way, economics is a subcategory of moral theology.”

According to the article he was

Frustrated by the hostility to markets and “abysmal ignorance of free society” he found in seminary, Sirico eventually founded in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty.... Asked why he thinks so many clergy are anti-business, Sirico speaks of the clergy’s lack of practical experience with business. “They think the way to get money is the way everybody gets money, namely by collecting it. But in fact the money we collect in church had to be produced somewhere before we collect it.”<sup>28</sup>

Given that theo-conservative/libertarian views share much common ground with more secular free-market conservative think tanks, the stance of the Acton Institute and its President are, not surprisingly, eco-skeptical too.

The Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (ICES) is a related institution specifically attending to environmental issues. Father Sirico heads up not only the Acton Institute but the ICES too. The two organizations collaborated on the book *Environmental Stewardship in the Judeo-Christian Tradition*. It provides substantial insight into their joint mission. Both organizations endorse the Cornwall Declaration and advance arguments that are skeptical of global warming, population control and species extinction. They proclaim a religiously based free-market ethos. Their book states:

God commanded them [humans] and their descendants to multiply, to spread out beyond the boundaries of the Garden of Eden, and to fill, subdue, and rule the whole earth and everything in it (Gen 1:26,28). Both by endowing them with his image and by placing them in authority over the earth, God gave men and women superiority and priority over all other earthly creatures.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> This interesting AEI summation of Sirico’s libertarian/theological disposition is at [http://www.taemag.com/issues/articleID.16461/article\\_detail.asp](http://www.taemag.com/issues/articleID.16461/article_detail.asp), accessed on June 4, 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Michael B. Barkey, ed., *Environmental Stewardship in the Judeo-Christian Tradition*, Acton Institute and ICES, 2000, p. 66.

As well, they harbor suspicions of the intentions of environmentalists, depicting them as bio-centric misanthropes, pagans and anti-capitalist. If environmentalists are heeded, then the poor of the world will suffer the most, because affluence and private property rights afford better stewardship of nature. The ICES website claims that

... for some time, a growing chorus of voices has been attempting to redefine traditional Judeo-Christian teachings on stewardship, and ultimately, our duties as responsible human beings. These advocates are passionate about the environment. Unfortunately, their passions is often based on a romantic view of nature, a misguided distrust of science and technology, and an intense focus on problems that are highly speculative and largely irrelevant to meeting our obligations to the world's poor.<sup>30</sup>

Former Republican strategist Kevin Phillips views the synergy between conservative religions and big business unfavorably. In his best-selling book *American Theocracy*, Phillips details the increasing collaboration of these influential actors connecting dots between these conservatives, religion, oil, and debt. He writes:

Organizations such as the ICES and the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty have enlisted a fair amount of conservative religious and corporate support for preparing what amounts a pro-business, pro-development explanation of Christian stewardship. The Acton Institute, aided over several years by ExxonMobil, for some time published the Environmental Stewardship Review, given to emphasizing market mechanisms and private property rights. Besides endorsing corporate and development-oriented positions, Acton condemned supposed environmental extremists theologically. The Institute's director, Roman Catholic Father Robert A. Sirico, contends that left-tilting environmentalism is idolatrous in its substitution of nature for God, giving the Christian environmental movement a 'perhaps unconscious pagan nature.'<sup>31</sup>

Phillips views the Christian right as disposed toward "business, economics, and wealth" for it is "tipping its hat to the upper-income and corporate portions of the Republican coalition." He posits further that "Christian Reconstructionists go even further, abandoning most economic regulation in order to prepare the moral framework for God's

---

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.stewards.net/About.htm>, accessed on May 4, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (New York: Viking, 2006), p. 238.

return.”<sup>32</sup> Phillips warns that conservative religious think tanks, such as Acton and ICES, have a “cloak[ed]” agenda that is, “more sophisticated than the brusque Christian Reconstructions demands for the abolition of the EPA and true-believer statements about Genesis 1:28 empowering developers to bring forth the earth’s mineral fruits.”<sup>33</sup> Collectively this shows that within Roman Catholicism there exist theological interpretative ambiguities. Surely Father Sirico and Pope John Paul II espouse different worldviews about humanity’s relationship to nature. Although there is common ground regarding population – both firmly against its control – their views regarding hyper-consumption within market society and humanity’s relationship to nature points to sizeable theological incompatibilities.

#### *Jewish Conservatism*

Despite the often zealous mission of many Evangelicals to persuade Jews into accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and convert to Christianity, in recent years, Jewish conservatives have developed warm, strong, mutually compatible relations with many Evangelical churches. The most obvious reason for their alliance is shared support for the State of Israel. Most Evangelicals support Zionism. For Jewish people, often justified in their belief that the world community as a whole remains hostile to their nation, if not existence, have found a steadfast ally in Evangelical Christians, for they literally believe that the birth of Israel and the Jewish return was foretold in the bible and is a critical factor in God’s design. In prophecy, the importance of this development is particularly important as it is one important step toward the Second Coming. What both

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 238.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 238

denominations tend to ignore – for to dwell on this would surely erode their unity – is the importance of the future acceptance of Christ by Jews that underlie Evangelical deterministic belief.

Notwithstanding the intent of conversion, conservative Jews have found that Evangelical support for a Jewish homeland strengthens their position with American conservatives in politics. The Reverend Tim LaHaye is representative of this staunch Evangelical support for Israel:

Israel's several Muslim neighbors are backed and armed by oil-rich countries who share their faith and their hatred of Israel. The Arabs will not rest until Israel is driven from the land – and Israel will not be driven from the land.

America lies in the middle. Sixty-five percent of our nation's oil comes from the Israel-hating nations of the Middle East. You have doubtless noted a sea change in the political attitude of federal officials who want Israel to surrender its land in the name of "negotiations." That is madness – hostilities are doomed to erupt sooner or later.

The point is that Israel and her Arab neighbors, who comprise only one one-thousandth of the world's population, are at the center of the world's state – just as the Bible said they would be in the end times.<sup>34</sup>

One notable omission from LaHaye's reasoning is puzzling. There is no call for conservation, given America's dependence on fossil fuels from these foreign enemies of Israel. But prophecy offers some explanation for why the next logical step is not called for in many Evangelical Churches. The end of times is coming, and future calamity is an inevitable part of God's plan for the Second Coming.

The miraculous return of the Jews to their homeland after seventeen hundred years in exile may well be the most significant of the end-times signs, even the "super-sign." Significantly, this return happened in our generation – more weighty evidence that we are indeed living in the end times.<sup>35</sup>

In LaHaye's view, the re-birth and survival of the modern Jewish state are fundamental imperatives; its existence might just be the Lord's "super-sign." Other earthly

---

<sup>34</sup> Tim LaHaye, p. 63.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 62.

considerations are not cause for concern, for they remain in the hands of God. It follows that calling on his followers to practice energy conservation is not part of the plan. But insuring Israel's survival, as the Bible decrees, is critical to the coming rapture.

Pro-Israel Evangelicals and Jews monitor possible American policy making to assess its favorability or not to Israel, yet these days, their position is mostly in sync with the current administration. President George W. Bush, for example, is viewed as a "true friend" of Israel. Undoubtedly, the strong support of Evangelicals has been one important variable in sustaining American support for Israel despite the quandary it presents given America's "addiction to oil."

Although critics of Israel, including the invariable quota of explicitly anti-Semitic purveyors, view this alliance in predictably conspiratorial fashion, the importance of Israel alone does not suffice, by any means, as explanation for what motivates the common ground found between Jewish and Evangelicals. Jewish conservatives share similar opinions about the dangers of a secular America landscape where traditional moral values are threatened and eroded. Consider Michael Medved, a Jewish conservative that once held liberal views. In an interview with the American Enterprise Institute, Medved describes his turn toward the right, which bears similarity to an Evangelical view. He explains that:

One of the things that most irreligious or nonreligious Americans don't recognize sufficiently is that a huge theme of American religiosity, both Christian and Jewish, is that the individual goes through a rebirth, a recommitment, a return. That kind of transforming experience is usually associated with a more conservative political outlook.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Michael Medved, "'Live' with TAE" in *Realism on Energy and the Environment*, AEI, p. 14.

Like many conservative Christians, Medved's views reveal his perception of religious hostility by secular liberals and their agenda to erode traditional American cultural, religious and political mores:

This is not a gloomy or failing country. Yet the Left believes we need to radically remake everything from our family structure to our economic system, because we're in the midst of a national epidemic of greed, and evil, and all-around badness. This whining has never been less appropriate for any people in the history of the planet than it is for Americans of the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup>

Medved is critical of secular Jews and their hostility of conservative politicians. He believes that the main reason

...people are so fearful of President Bush, who after all is a nice guy who clearly loves his country and is trying to do the right thing, is because of religion.

The real energy among Bush haters has to do with the idea that Bush is some kind of "religious fanatic." The hatred for religion is quite visible in the Jewish community. There are a lot of Jewish people who just hate the Orthodox. I think a part of it comes from a deep-seated fear that the religious folks might be right. For me, having staked my life on religious faith, if I'm wrong and it turns out I'm just a bunch of decomposing chemicals, big deal, I haven't lost anything. I still have a good life, probably a much better one because of my faith. But if someone on the secular left is wrong, then that's a very big problem.<sup>38</sup>

Medved insists that

Modern Christianity is philo-semitic, it's nourishing of our faith....

And the biggest reason a more Christian America is good for the Jews is because a more Christian American is good for America. It makes America both better and stronger. And a healthy America is good for the Jews who have thrived here as nowhere else.<sup>39</sup>

What is notably absent? In this interview, Medved does not address the underlying question of Jewish conversion to Evangelical Christianity. In Tim LaHaye's view, the first of the "top seven sins of the Tribulation" is the Rebellion against God ("they did not

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

repent’).”<sup>40</sup> That this aspect of Evangelical belief does not concern Jewish conservatives is remarkable.

Meanwhile, conservative Christian and Jewish views regarding consumption and environment problems also share common ground. The ICES website lists seven “notable” Jewish academics and theologians that signed the Cornwall Declaration.<sup>41</sup> Rabbi Daniel Lapin, the founder and current president of Toward Tradition, is on the organization’s advisory committee and contributes with four other Jewish theologians, a chapter called “A Comprehensive Torah-Based Approach to the Environment” in the jointly put out book by the Acton Institute and ICES. There, Jewish conservative perspectives of these environmental issues are illuminated.

Not surprisingly, much is similar to the one advanced by conservative Christians but with added consideration given to Jewish texts, such as the Mishneh Torah, Talmud, and the local court of Jewish law, called the Beth Din. One similarity is the use of Genesis:

We see, therefore, that Judaism views development as people following their Creator’s mandate to be fruitful, to multiply, and to conquer the earth. Instead of maintaining a sentimental and false image of nature, we religious Jews understand that nature is harsh and unforgiving.... Our task is, in essence, to subdue nature and redirect it for holy purposes.<sup>42</sup>

Another similarity is its anthropocentrism and the reverse depiction of environmentalists as misanthropes. The five Jewish theologians that contributed to this piece liken environmental fears of catastrophic problems to a young child with scary nightmares at night. The adults know that the child’s fears are unfounded, but the child, in his fear, is a

---

<sup>40</sup> Tim LaHaye, p. 327.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.stewards.net/Signers.htm>, accessed on May 11, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> *Environmental Stewardship in the Judeo-Christian Tradition*. p. 16.



true believer in the reality of the nightmare. “Thus, the real environmental problem may well be the very belief that there exists a problem rather than any problem itself.”<sup>43</sup>

Other similarities to Christian conservatives include dismissing over-population concerns and global warming as dubious views while extolling the virtues of private property and minimal government intervention. For example, private property “is a religious manifestation of a people’s relationship with their God and the moral law” and with respect to the government intervention: “There is...little Torah justification for exploiting human fears about the future to expand the role of government.”<sup>44</sup> There is as well the insistence on *locally* managed solution sets when there are obvious environmental challenges:

One enormous benefit derived from retaining a strong local flavor to law is that there is far less likelihood of cases arising in which an individual is charged with harming all of nature, all of the world, or all of the air and water. Cases brought before the Beth Din must be brought by the individual being harmed

Most revealing is this view’s localism. Complex environmental problems of global dimension are frequently deemed scientifically uncertain, thus not necessarily a legitimate environmental problem, thus the depiction of environmentalists as children having nightmares in the dark. Yet, remarkably, even if these environmental concerns are not, in fact, a nightmare, but a reality, then

Certain problems are simply too large for mere mortals to solve and are regarded as being God’s problems; we turn to him in perfect faith to solve them. It would be considered an act of spiritual arrogance to usurp responsibility for problems of cosmic scale.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. pp. 18-19.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

The preceding is striking in its similarity to Evangelical prophetic belief, for it suggests a resignation to problems perceived as being too large for human redress, thus better left to the hand of God, for

There is no certain way to answer the question of what will be the end of the human story. However, the question clearly has only two possible answers: either oblivion or deliverance. Perhaps we are all ultimately doomed by carbon monoxide, global warming, a rising tide of disposable diapers, melting polar ice caps, ultra-violet radiation penetrating a hole in the ozone layer, a rogue meteorite, nuclear winter, some combination of all of the above, or some entirely new and unknown threat. *The details are not important, but the conclusion is. One way or another, humanity is doomed. The only alternative is that through some grand program of divine redemption, all of humanity will be delivered into a new and better tomorrow.*<sup>46</sup>

This leads to a religious shrug:

Thus, large-scale fears such as the threat of world annihilation are best responded to by the Jew with faith that God will solve them.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, David Klinghoffer, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, writing in the *Forward*, a New York Jewish newspaper, attacks the fear of global warming, Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth" and the environmental movement more generally.

It's clear that climate-change activists have a moral message. But it's a completely different one from any you'll find in the Bible. Basically it has to do with shedding the encumbering complexities associated with modern industry and technology....

It is not surprising that traditionally religious people would turn away from an environmental issue like global warming, especially when the science behind the theory remains ambiguous at best, and distrust a political party committed to panicking unreservedly about it.<sup>48</sup>

Klinghoffer, like many other eco-skeptics, also relies on the well known novelist and eco-skeptic Michael Crichton: environmentalism is a "powerful religion in the Western world" and "the religion of choice of urban atheists." Attitudes and depictions such as

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-18, emphasis added.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>48</sup> David Klinghoffer, "The Disputation: Of Al Gore, Global Warming and God" *Forward* Newspaper, viewed at <http://forward.com/main/printer-friendly.php?ref=klinghoffer200607191154>, accessed on July 23, 2006.

these shares more in common with Tim LaHaye and other proponents of Evangelical prophesy those of many American Jews.

By juxtaposing these eco-skeptic arguments to those advanced by other Jewish scholars, the elastic interpretative variation of Judaism is shown. Rabbi Eliezer Diamond, a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, views the religion as possessing an explicit environmental ethos. For example, the rabbinic interpretation of *bal tashhit*, which means “you shall not destroy,” means that Jewish law is not just opposed to the destruction of nature but inefficient resource use too. Diamond also considers a variable neglected by the conservative Jewish writers: the issue of human consumption in Jewish theology. He writes:

Jewish tradition has much to say concerning the reasons for, and modes of, limiting consumption. Because most halakhic<sup>49</sup> literature is written in Hebrew and, even once translated, its language and thought patterns seem arcane to many, its potential contributions to the discussion of consumption and other environmental issues has not been fully appreciated.... we might use its wisdom in thinking through the problems that confront us as individuals, as communities, as nations, and as members of the human race.<sup>50</sup>

Although most Jewish interpretations concur “we may not wantonly destroy anything at all”, their different emphases suggest they draw their lines in the sand quite differently.<sup>51</sup>

Despite a mostly eco-skeptic sensibility, Jewish conservative critics do claim a tradition of Jewish appreciation for nature. But it is not without notable caveats, such as the following:

The religious Jew has much appreciation for the beauty of nature....  
But factories and skyscrapers also reflect Jewish values....

---

<sup>49</sup> Eliezer Diamond, “The Earth Is the Lord’s and the Fullness Thereof”: Jewish Perspectives on Consumption,” *Ethics of Consumption* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), According to Diamond *halakhah* means “the set of directives that governs one’s religious behavior.” p. 391.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 401.

<sup>51</sup> ICES, p. 11.

While forests and swamps are certainly recognized to be part of God's creation, merely leaving them in their original and pristine condition is ignoring God's directive to harness the forces of nature for the benefit of the human race. We are to leave our imprint upon the world in a way that improves what we found.<sup>52</sup>

What about Jewish conservative views of consumption, particularly energy consumption?

Not surprisingly, Rabbi Lapin, for example, is dismissive of conservation on both practical and moral grounds. First, he argues we only "imagine an energy shortage."

There will always be energy sources of one variety or another.

As human beings capable of infinite creativity and invention, we need not contemplate energy shortage. It is our limitless human ingenuity that carried us from firewood to coal, and from whale oil to petroleum; and it is our stewardship of God's resources that has allowed us to continually find new ways of bettering the human condition.

Second, Lapin implicitly argues that conservation is not morally important while consumption is praised in the following:

Soon, perhaps, the well-intentioned and well-heeled will no longer seek spurious moral redemption by conserving energy. They will be able to find more authentic moral purpose while they purchase energy just as they do clothing and coffee today – by consulting their budgets, not populist emotivism.<sup>53</sup>

Taken as a whole, the eco-skeptic Jewish conservative view shows no proclivity to espouse a Judaic-based ethos of genuine environmental stewardship nor is serious reflection given to the moral, social or environmental effects of hyper-consumption.

### *Collective Analysis*

Conservative Evangelical, Roman Catholic, and Jewish views show that much of their religious discourse is not invested in a spiritual ethos favorable to ecological

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. pp. 13-14.

<sup>53</sup> Rabbi Daniel Lapin, "The Religious Rapture of Shortage" May 30, 2001, view at <http://www.acton.org/ppolicy/comment/article.php?id=37>, accessed on May 14, 2006.

considerations. On the contrary, environmentalism is often viewed as an ideological foe. Even the beliefs and concerns of Pope John Paul II do not resonate with all conservative American Roman Catholics.

Why do theo-conservatives neglect or oppose an environmental ethos? Why is hyper-consumption rarely addressed by the religious leadership? This section unpacks variables that explain why theological conservative thought is not just disinclined, but often overtly eco-skeptic. One overt explanation mirrors the free market conservative position. Consider, for example, the prominent and provocative role William F. Buckley has played in the American conservative movement since the 1950s. In *God and Man at Yale*, Buckley indicts Yale for its failure to sustain its Christian perspective. He launches more formidable slings and arrows with his argument that Yale faculty (principally in the Economics Department) taught Keynesian indoctrination and neglected Adam Smith. In his view, the secular and the welfare state were increasingly “subvert[ing] religion and individualism at Yale. Buckley arrived at Yale with two convictions: “a firm belief in Christianity and a profound respect for American institutions and traditions.” The former lead him to “an active faith in God and a rigid adherence to Christian principles, while the latter meant “that free enterprise and limited government had served this country well and would probably continue to do so in the future.”<sup>54</sup> Although he managed to enrage many critics by claiming that “the duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world” and took pleasure in their umbrage, his chapter on “Individualism at Yale” exemplifies not just faith, but a corresponding faith in free market principles. The Free Market Conservative chapter analyzes the reasons for

---

<sup>54</sup> William F. Buckley Jr. *God & Man at Yale*. (Washington C\DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, 2002) p.p. lxiii-lxiv..

this type's eco-skepticism. Given the primacy they give to private property rights, minimal government intervention and taxation, their hostility to environmentalism is fairly straightforward and self-explanatory.

But other explanations for theo-conservative eco-skepticism are not so straightforward. Breaking down the underlying explanations affords better insight into why these issues present considerable tensions. Collectively it illuminates why environmentalists express concern over theo-conservative views of nature. In a nutshell, conservative religious perceptions of science, prophesy, marketing, population, environmentalism as pagan belief systems are unpacked and analyzed to help understand the "whys" underlying their eco-skepticism.

First, the seemingly irreconcilable differences between science and religion play out not just in the current ideological struggle over "intelligent design" but, inevitably, the environment too. If the theory of evolution is suspect, why would the science behind environmental concern be cast in more favorable light? The ongoing debate about stem-cell research and the hysteria generated over Terri Schiavo's death are further indications of deep and divisive ideological divisions. Undoubtedly, the more absolutist the interpretation of Scripture, the more likely there will be considerable conflict between science and theology. It follows from general suspicions of science that conservative religions often question the motives, objectivity and scientific accuracy of environmental experts. The range of ideologically incompatibilities that exist between secular science and fundamentalist theology makes even the specific possibility of green common ground difficult given the implicit accommodation religion must then afford science, thus making

even limited compatibility a threatening prospect. Deference to science opens the door to wider deference.<sup>55</sup>

The second variable germane to some theo-conservatives is the belief in prophesy. Depending upon the church and interpretative variation, this also may be called *dispensationalism, rapture, reconstructionism, end-times, or millennialism*. These theological dispositions hold that environmental issues are unimportant given that the Earth will be destroyed in the Second Coming.<sup>56</sup>

The Tim LaHaye Ministries exemplifies this particular theological disposition. Their purpose “is to help awaken a new interest in the hearts of Christians for the imminent return of our Lord and to counteract the increase in false teaching which our Lord warned would occur as we approach the Last Days (Matthew 24).”<sup>57</sup> They are a “‘think tank’ committed to the study, proclamation, teaching and defending of the Pretribulational Rapture (pre-70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel) and related end-time prophecy.”<sup>58</sup> Their Doctrinal Statement asserts “that the sixty-six, canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, alone and in their entirety, comprise the God-inspired Scriptures which, therefore, are inerrant in their autographs.”<sup>59</sup> In one of the ministries newsletters,

---

<sup>55</sup> Recommended readings: Chris Mooney, *The Republican War on Science*, (New York: Basic Books, 2005) and Paul Kurtz, ed., *Science and Religion: Are They Compatible?* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2003).

<sup>56</sup> Evangelical Tim LaHaye is a proponent of this belief. For an environmental critique of dispensationalism, see Glenn Scherer, “The Godly Must Be Crazy,” *Grist Magazine*, <http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2004/10/27/scherer-christian/>

<sup>57</sup> See this statement at [http://www.timlahaye.com/about\\_ministry/index.php3?p=newsletter&section=Pre-Trib%20Newsletter](http://www.timlahaye.com/about_ministry/index.php3?p=newsletter&section=Pre-Trib%20Newsletter), accessed on March 10, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Their mission statement is at [http://www.timlahaye.com/about\\_ministry/index.php3?p=mission&section=Mission%20Statement](http://www.timlahaye.com/about_ministry/index.php3?p=mission&section=Mission%20Statement), accessed on March 10, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

Reverend LaHaye implores his followers to be active and engaged in partisan politics, that God will punish Christian apathy, warning of dangers such as the following excerpts:

... the global government (or “One World Government” obsession enthusiasts of the UN-controlled world) is working tirelessly to usher in the next World Empire. That is not surprising to Christians, for we who read the prophetic Scriptures know... that there is going to be one world empire in the last days and it will be headed by the Antichrist. Any thinking person can see it could happen within a short time.

The liberal mindset of the media could continue to attack Christian values and beliefs ...

... liberal secular humanists (who are socialists at heart) [could] be elected to increase the size and scope of government until “big brother” dominates the religious, economic, and personal lives of our children.

This man [Al Gore] has admitted in his book [presumably he means Gore’s book on the environment, *Earth in the Balance*] that he worships Gia, the mother earth goddess, and loves big government and high taxes. But he can be elected easily if Christians don’t get involved.

I am convinced that the church is the only body in America that will determine if we will go into a socialist dominated government before or after the Rapture. We know it will be after the Rapture. Whether we become just another socialist state before the Rapture depends on our nation’s pastor-shepherds.<sup>60</sup>

As Bill Moyers bluntly explains: “You can understand why people in the grip of such fantasies cannot be expected to worry about the environment.”<sup>61</sup> In the aftermath of an abundant year of catastrophic global disasters, including hurricanes, earthquakes and tsunamis, such beliefs have resurged. As an in-depth article explains, “While these beliefs have been around for thousands of years, the fixation on the so-called end times may be greater than ever on the American religious landscape.” While “Today, only about a third of evangelicals are truly dispensationalists.... [They] remain the most vocal segment.”<sup>62</sup> Proclamations of looming catastrophe are strategically effective at convincing their followers to follow, vote, and be active in their leadership’s political preferences.

---

<sup>60</sup> “The Role of the U.S.A. in End Times Prophecy” is illustrative of Tim LaHaye’s newsletters. It is at [http://www.timlahaye.com/about\\_ministry/pdf/aug.tim.pdf](http://www.timlahaye.com/about_ministry/pdf/aug.tim.pdf), accessed on March 10, 2006.

<sup>61</sup> Bill Moyers, “Welcome to Doomsday,” *The New York Review*, March 24, 2005, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Luo, “Doomsday: The Latest Word if Not The Last” *The New York Times Week in Review*, October 16, 2005, Section 4, p. 1.



Beliefs that argue the inevitability of apocalypse and redemption for “true believers” alone are disturbing to those not so inclined, because these beliefs connote indifference: “Why bother? It is God’s will.” Even more alarming to non-believers is the prospect that such conviction might entail an inclination to *hasten* the Second Coming. Finding common ground with beliefs emphasizing only a hereafter is difficult, to say the least.

The prolific, provocative gadfly, Baltimore journalist H. L. Mencken, undoubtedly no friend, but sustained foe of fundamentalists and evangelicals, was exceptionally prescient about their prospects in American politics. Although Mencken could be labeled “conservative” in both a libertarian and isolationist context, (conservative scholar Robert Nisbet characterizes him as “an unabashed conservative in all important respects”), he was proud to be loathed by the Christian Right and Socialist Left, as well as Democratic Progressives.<sup>63</sup> With unrestrained vigor, he maligned Roosevelt and the New Deal in the 1930s just as readily as he had relished attacking the “booboisie”, meaning those “who opted for faith over science” in other writings.<sup>64</sup> In a 1925 article, published soon after the histrionics and hoopla of the Scopes trial in Tennessee, that, in Mencken’s blunt words, “made a whole State forever ridiculous” he scathingly observed the following about religious absolutists:

Their public effects are constantly underestimated until it is too late....The cities laugh at the yokels, but meanwhile the politicians take careful notice; such mountebanks as Peay of Tennessee and Blease of South Carolina have already issued their preliminary whoops. As the tide rolls up the pastors will attain to greater and greater consequence. Already, indeed, they swell visibly, in power and pretension....

---

<sup>63</sup> Robert Nisbet, *Conservatism: Dream and Reality* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), p. 105.

<sup>64</sup> Terry Teachout, *The Skeptic: A Life of H. L. Mencken* (New York: Perennial, 2003), p. 15. This bibliography of Mencken is fascinating, even-keeled and well-written.

The curious and amusing thing is that the ant-like activity of these holy men so far got little if any attention from our established publicists....

I suggest looking more carefully into the notions that such divine ignoramuses spout.<sup>65</sup>

Although Mencken was not decisively correct in perpetuity, for their influence did ebb and flow over the coming decades, Evangelical activism resurged with considerable political vitality in the 1980s, helping Reagan to the White House, garnering credibility and access during his tenure. There were setbacks after the Reagan presidency (I.e. the Carter, Clinton presidencies), yet, once again, the religious right achieved impressive access and clout with the two-term presidency of George W. Bush. While Reagan principally disappointed theo-conservative supporters, gaining support but not necessarily carrying through on their agenda, the G. W. Bush administration has capitalized on their support with more sincerity and savvy, remaining amenable to a “moral values” platform, and all this entails politically, than his conservative predecessor. One clear example of this is the Bush administration’s renewed attempt to pass the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) through Congress, despite the incongruities such federal machinations present, given conservative interest in protecting the individual rights of states.

One commercial illustration of the movement’s popular resurgence is the success of the bestselling *Left Behind* series of novels by Tim LaHaye. Writing at Salon.com, journalist Michelle Goldberg notes that “these books and their massive success deserve attention if only for what they tell us about the core beliefs of a great many people in this country, people whose views shape the way America behaves in the world.” Indeed, she warns “for some of the most powerful people in the world, this stuff isn’t melodrama.

---

<sup>65</sup> H. L. Mencken, *On Religion* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002), pp. 126-128.

It's prophecy.”<sup>66</sup> *American Theocracy* by Kevin Phillips dwells on the considerable power of these religionists too. It is largely true that liberals have not fully come to terms with the extent and consequences of the theo-conservative influence exerted today. The observations of Mencken remain timely.

Although this emerging “New Right” is sometimes at odds with more secular oriented economic conservatism these differences are submerged. As E. J. Dionne Jr. details, the Religious Right “... had always seen values as more important than markets, religious faith as more important than economic growth, tradition more important than progress.”<sup>67</sup> “It turned out that traditionalism had a genuine base among those who looked to the Bible rather than Edmund Burke for authority.”<sup>68</sup> Theological conservatism did not endorse “libertarian anti-government themes” but was re-galvanized as a political force due to “domestic social *resentments*” including “environmental extremism.”<sup>69</sup> Dionne’s overall assessment, but the possibility of future difficulties underlying free-market and theo-conservative dispositions is not readily apparent given the considerable synergy existing between these two groups today. Many of the most vocal eco-skeptic religious figures are also situated on free-market conservative think tanks and vice-versa.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, for different reasons, both harbor considerable suspicion of environmental practices deemed “socialist.” The threat of communism in particular is an enduring nemesis in both dispositions. Free-market proponents, of course, have

---

<sup>66</sup> Michelle Goldberg, “Fundamentally Unsound” at Salon.com.

[http://dir.salon.com/story/books/feature/2002/07/29/left\\_behind/index.html](http://dir.salon.com/story/books/feature/2002/07/29/left_behind/index.html), accessed on May 7, 2006.

<sup>67</sup> Dionne, E. J. Jr. *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2004), p. 241.

<sup>68</sup> Dionne, p. 232.

<sup>69</sup> Dionne, p. 230, emphasis in original.

<sup>70</sup> Father Sirico and Michael Novak are excellent examples of this collaborative compatibility. Sirico is President of the Acton Institute while AEI eco-skeptic Michael Novak is on their Board of Advisors. Sirico also has ties to the Heritage Foundation, AEI and CATO.

considerable justification for this view. Theo-conservative thought incorporates their concerns as well as outrage over the lack of religious freedom and, furthermore, for dispensationalists such as Tim LaHaye, prophesy that incorporates a tale of communism's satanic role in the second coming.

Third, religious marketing compounds frugality's neglect. For consumption presents religion with a quandary: how does a house of worship thrive without the adaptation of market techniques?<sup>71</sup> The Christian Evangelical resurgence, for example, is in no small part due to market savvy. Evangelicals often laud not just the Weberian notion of productivity, but the end reward of consumption. Churches sell books, show films, provide coffee and gift shops, and offer child care, all of which increases membership and enriches church coffers.

Another manifestation is the successful use of the mediums such as radio, television and internet. Savvier religious leaders are adept at utilizing marketing and entertainment for profit and prospective followers. The bestselling *Left Behind* series of novels by LaHaye is a useful example of the successful merging of religion with marketplace. This strategy, remarkably, has gone well beyond the mediums of radio, television, websites and books. Evangelicals are entering the lucrative business, designing, promoting and selling Christian-themed video games. For example, a game might allow players to battle the forces of the Antichrist as the world approaches doomsday. The computer games utilize high-tech weaponry including guns, tanks and helicopters. The computer characters express religious sentiments like "Praise the Lord"

---

<sup>71</sup> For more on the intersection between capitalism and Christianity, see: Miller, Moore, Beaudoin, and McDannell.

when they kill enemies of Christ.<sup>72</sup> Given the popularity of explicitly violent video games, religiously themed games that incorporate violence and weapons are expected to also entice video game enthusiasts that are not necessarily Evangelical. Capitalizing on the appeal of violence has generated strong criticism, even from within the Evangelical movement, but evidently the expectation of large profit provides enough incentive to ignore religious rebuke.

Prosperity and material enrichment are often characterized as blessings from God, making the Christian virtue of frugality an awkward reminder. In *Branded Nation*, James B. Twitchell calls this growing phenomenon “the consumerist church.” The incentive to capitalize on market strategies now exists in domains that traditionally were not associated with commercialism. He visits “mega-church” Willow Creek in Illinois, observing that it

...is not just competing with other denominations; it’s competing with all other forms of entertainment, especially television.... Beliefs, like purchases, are made to be witnesses, as well as consumed.... The consumerist church, intensely focused on the felt needs of its audience, by using narrative, sophistication, and electronic transmission, can make the process of doing church incredibly compelling. It can gather a huge audience.<sup>73</sup>

Twitchell argues that “Brand affiliation is as much a part of belief communities as secular ones; in fact, perhaps even more pronounced. That’s because religion is a *collectively produced commodity* and, as such, depends on continually iterating the

---

<sup>72</sup> Dawn C. Chmielewski, *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 2006 view at <http://www.latimes.com/features/religion/la-fi-godgames10may10.1.2229666.story?page=1&ctrack=1&cset=true&coll=la-news-religion>, accessed on June 2, 2006.

<sup>73</sup> James B. Twitchell, *Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch, College Inc., and Museumworld* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), Of note: Chapter 2, pp. 47-108. Also recommended, R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) and a more recent book by Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2005).

reward of joining as well as the price of de-affiliating.”<sup>74</sup> The success of the evangelical mega-church while numbers dwindle in more liberal churches speaks in part, to the power of religious marketing. With success owed to market savvy, why laud the virtue of frugality or condemn the vice of gluttony?

Further, this phenomenon has been emulated by a host of overtly proclaimed religious enterprises, including traditionally secular businesses, such as banks, driving schools, auto-repair stores, and restaurants.<sup>75</sup> The confluence of theology and business suggests escalation in the merging of public and private spheres of society.

It follows that in recent years conservative theological leadership is apt to favor *increased* consumption. One compelling example is the George W. Bush administration’s keenly repeated call for a moral, religious culture. These sentiments are reinforced in his public speeches, through the promotion of programs such as his Faith Based Initiative, and through the selection of like-minded individuals in his cabinet. Yet, revealingly, as Alan Wolfe points out

Whether responding to world events or proposing domestic policy initiatives, the Bush administration seems to be guided by one simple imperative: buy. The way to demonstrate our resolve against jihad, the president asserted with considerable conviction after September 11, was to shop; and not even the administration’s plan to go to war in Iraq has provoked the president to consider the possibility that in the name of national security Americans ought to consume less energy. At home, the Bush administration’s response to what is increasingly perceived as its own recession is, similarly, to put as much money into the hands of consumers as possible.<sup>76</sup>

It is not only conservative politicians that encourage consumption. Policy-makers are aided by evangelical ministries that also neglect the Christian virtue of frugality. Often, it is explicit: material success is due to God’s benefice. Exceptions do, of course, occur.

---

<sup>74</sup> Twitchell, p. 53; emphasis in original.

<sup>75</sup> For an account of this trend see Lynn Harris, “Verily, I Sell Unto You,” 4 August 2005: [http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2005/08/04/christian\\_businesses/index.html](http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2005/08/04/christian_businesses/index.html)

<sup>76</sup> Alan Wolfe, “Buying Alone,” *The New Republic* (March 17, 2003), pp. 28 – 33.

One common exception is assuaging two-income families from obligation to that practice – women are encouraged to stay home for the sake of the children and to foster stronger family values. These values take precedence over any materially driven need for the wife to work outside the home.

Notwithstanding narrowly conceived caveats, any wider discourse regarding materialism is commonly absent. When Christian organizations advance views skeptical of global warming or against population control, for example, they often support their theocratic arguments with references to conservative free-market think tanks, such as the American Enterprise Institute or the Competitive Enterprise Institute. Today there is considerable synergy between free-market and theo-conservative views.

Fourth, one critical tertiary concern is the theological conservative long-sustained opposition to population control. Since many environmentalists counsel that explosive growth in human population is an integral variable in the earth's inability to sustain its resources for human consumption, the "be fruitful and multiply" perspective is understandably driven to counter such claims.<sup>77</sup> When pro-population theologically motivated arguments are advanced, well known eco-skeptics are utilized as references. Thus, for example, the works of economist Julian Simon are invoked as evidence that population explosion fears are unfounded. Meanwhile, neo-Malthusian views, such as Paul Ehrlich, who wrote an influential much discussed book in 1968 called *The*

---

<sup>77</sup>See, for example, Michael Fumento "The Myth of Too Many" at family.org: <http://www.family.org/cforum/citizenmag/features/a0023755.cfm>, accessed on March 11, 2006. One argument advanced by Fumento is ingeniously creative as well as appalling. He concedes that, yes, "parts of the world tend to be pretty crowded" but, for example, "People in India were crammed together not because there were too many for the land to hold, but because like people the world over, they prefer urban centers to rural areas."

*Population Bomb*, (which, true to Malthus' legacy, also contained erroneous predictions), are depicted as fear-mongering, "just plain wrong", works of fiction.

They also like to remind us that populations in many regions are falling, rather than increasing, which portends far greater dangers in their view than growing populations. This is a legitimate problem in certain regions. But much of these trends occur in modern market societies or in regions that are rapidly modernizing. These arguments fail to seriously address the eco-marginalization inflicted upon impoverished people in overpopulated lands of chronic scarcity. In many poor, densely populated countries natural resources, so abundant in market society it is thus often taken for granted, are acutely limited. Poverty and population in lands not well-endowed in natural resources, such as water and fertile land, compound the human suffering and environmental exploitation. Poor populations are the most vulnerable in natural disasters. Even slight temperature changes in regions of scarce natural resources can have catastrophic consequences.

Many theologically conservative Christian ministries are committed to helping the poor aided by an extensive and committed network of missionaries. Much of their work is quite laudable in effort and action helping to sustain and educate destitute, neglected populations in remote regions of the world. It is fair to point out too, that these missionaries often are equally motivated to "save" indigenous populations through conversion. Their efforts do not, of course, include encouraging the promotion and practice of birth control. Given the inherent tensions existing between these conflicting goals, it is not well addressed in theological rejoinders.



A more effective theological conservative strategy depicts population control advocates as alarmists using unscientific methodology to sustain a hidden agenda: encouraging sexual promiscuity instead of abstinence by advocating for greater access to birth control and abortion. Sometimes, this portrayal is aided by auxiliary accusations of eco-socialist or neo-Marxist intent on the part of population control advocates. In this critical area of social division, theological conservatives embrace and then expand upon free-market arguments.<sup>78</sup> Human ingenuity and industry will sustain whatever human population God intends the earth to hold.

As well, the simple matter of competition merits consideration. If environmentalism is characterized as a religion, then it is a spiritual competitor, able to seduce the heretical or naïve away from their religions. Environmentalists are often depicted as harboring a radical “new-age” religious agenda. They may be labeled pagan or polytheistic, which is untenable to Judeo-Christianity. Since Judeo-Christian beliefs are fundamentally anthropocentric; any ideology perceived as bio-centric will be deemed a considerable threat to this enduring value. The tensions are similar to those existing between theo-conservative distrust of radical secular ideologies, such as communism. Further, if environmentalists are not articulating a radical religion, then they are likely eco-socialists agitating to dismantle private property rights. Although some environmentalists do fuse new age religion with the green, harbor anti-capitalist views, or romanticize a primordial return to nature, it is not representative of most, certainly not to the extent depicted by its conservative religious critics.

---

<sup>78</sup> One example of the synergy between secular free-market think tank figures that dismiss population concerns and theo-conservative arguments the Acton Institute use of the population research and arguments of AEI member Ben Wattenberg. Wattenberg has written extensively on demographic trends for decades. His views largely dismiss over-population concerns, the antithesis of arguments advanced by Paul Ehrlich.

The ICES is at the forefront in articulating a rejoinder to environmentalism. Stewardship is extolled and “the wanton destruction or misuse of the world that God sculpted out of nothingness” is condemned.<sup>79</sup> The notion of dominion is interpreted and then defended on theological grounds:

The idea of dominion encapsulates the notion that human beings exercise a unique place in God’s created order. They alone are charged with authority over the material world, and the responsibility of exercising it in ways that allow God’s original Creative Act to be further unfolded. In this sense, human beings are co-creators.

Furthermore:

Dominion does not, however, mean as Peter Singer claims, that God does not care how we use the material world. From the very beginning, God insists that humans are not “little gods” with limitless authority. Yes, Genesis describes the creation of man as “very good,” but the creation of non-human creation is also describes as “good.” In other words, the material world has its own value. Though not equal to humans, nature may not be abused by man.<sup>80</sup>

More nuanced arguments appear to be designed with the specific intent of engaging, not alienating, followers that may be susceptible to an environmental ethos. Thus radical environmentalism may hold seductive appeal to green theological conservatives.

Theological conservative leadership regards environmentalism as an alternative, and competing, religious denomination, thus a threat to their missives. Paradoxically, environmentalists are sometimes also characterized as secular or agnostic people, thus hostile to the values and traditions of Judeo-Christianity.

At first glance, not all of what these theological conservatives espouse can be construed as overtly anti-environmental. Savvier arguments exist that seem to laud good stewardship. The Cornwall Declaration of Environmental Stewardship, endorsed by the

---

<sup>79</sup> Samuel Gregg, “Dominion and Stewardship: Believers and the Environment” at <http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pages/article.php?id=143>, accessed on March 9, 2006.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Acton Institute and the ICES is a clever example. It was signed by many prominent theological conservatives of different denominations, designed to allay the perception of anti-environmentalism with its call for stewardship and not to do harm to the earth and its other creatures.<sup>81</sup> But a careful read of the document implicitly suggests that their primary motive is to belie environmental arguments and activism. “While some environmental concerns are well founded and serious, others are without foundation or greatly exaggerated.” The document specifically questions “some unfounded concerns” such as “global warming, overpopulation, and rampant species loss.” What are their aspirations? Here are three of the Cornwall Declaration’s stated principles:

We aspire to a world in which right reason (including sound theology and the careful use of scientific methods) guides the stewardship of human and ecological relationships.

We aspire to a world in which liberty as a condition of moral action is preferred over government initiated management of the environment as a means to common goals.

We aspire to a world in which the relationships between stewardship and private property are fully appreciated, allowing people’s natural incentive to care for their own property to reduce the need for collective ownership and control of resources and enterprises, and in which collective action, when deemed necessary, takes place at the most localized level possible.

The free-market emphasis is paramount. Another illuminating “aspiration” is the call to make environmental remediation “at the most local level possible.” What becomes clear is a hybrid confluence of theology, free-markets, and nation-centric belief.

Like many other conservatives, theo-conservatives distrust ceding national sovereignty to any supranational level of authority. In this respect, there is considerable respect afforded free trade and free markets, but not hand in hand with government intervention. Even when an international organization has narrowly conceived functions

---

<sup>81</sup>The Cornwall Declaration of Environmental Stewardship can be viewed at <http://www.stewards.net/CornwallDeclaration.htm>, accessed on May 7, 2006. Jewish, Catholic, Protestant and “Other” religious leadership that signed the declaration can be viewed at <http://www.stewards.net/Signers.htm>, accessed on May 7, 2006.

that are necessary for regulatory cooperation, jurisdiction and uniform practices between nation-states, there is suspicion of agenda. Juridical international institutions and tribunals such as those that deal with universal human rights or global environmental regulation are not immune from suspicion as potential paths to world government. Evangelicals, such as Tim LaHaye, warn that world government is being engineered by satanic forces to impede the Second Coming. Consider the following exchange as well between Pat Robertson and United States Senator James Inhofe in a television interview broadcast on Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), a Christian media enterprise associated with the 700 Club. The interview is illuminating in many respects, but in one particular exchange, Inhofe likens the Kyoto Treaty to a “first step toward international governance.”<sup>82</sup> Environmentalists underestimate the significance of this factor in evangelical thought.

One tertiary consideration of importance is theo-conservative nationalism. That is, America is viewed as exceptional. Patriotic rhetoric is tightly woven with religion. The American flag is often prominently displayed on their websites, churches and jacket lapels. Again, this is relevant to the fear of world government. Prophetic belief, in particular, often associates the notion of world governance with satanic enemy nations bent on global rule. Given this, international tribunals and organizations, even institutions with narrow, functional goals, such as ones that seek to protect international human rights or ameliorate global warming, are viewed with suspicion. Large international, quasi-government organizations, such as the United Nations, are viewed

---

<sup>82</sup> “The Growing Threat of Far-Left Environmentalism” at [cbn.com](http://www.cbn.com). View at <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/commentary/050429a.asp>, accessed on May 24, 2006.

with even great suspicion. Nationalism is an important underlying variable for their eco-skepticism or, when a problem is conceded, the insistence on local remedy.

Despite careful and laudatory declarations like the Cornwall Declaration, it is clear that an older religious conservative dictum of moderation, prudence and thrift, which used to be invoked for the sake of good citizenship and moral standing, has been replaced by its polar dictum: spend, and please spend generously, for the sake of one's own wants, for the future prosperity of the country and for "true believers," for the Second Coming – never mind the debt and environmental consequences.

### *Green and Right Theological Outliers*

The prevailing disposition carries significant weight in conservative circles and policy-making, yet a remarkable theological transformation may be in the making. While remaining leery of collaboration with "left wing" environmentalists, some prominent theologically conservative religious leaders are becoming publicly outspoken in their criticism of current environmental policy in the United States. Two issues are of particular concern to these outliers: energy conservation and global warming, though they remain leery of collaboration with "left-wing" environmentalists.

Notwithstanding the reluctance of evangelical outliers to fully collaborate with environmentalists, a provocative illustration of growing tension within the evangelical movement is found in the recent "What Would Jesus Drive?" (WWJDrive) initiative was launched in 2002 by the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) and *Creation Care Magazine*. In explanation of their actions, the coalition asserts that:

We believe the Risen Lord Jesus cares about what we drive. Pollution from vehicles has a major impact on human health and the rest of God's creation. It contributes significantly to the

threat of global warming. Our reliance on imported oil from unstable regions threatens peace and security. Obeying Jesus in our transportation choices is one of the great Christian obligations and opportunities of the twenty-first century.<sup>83</sup>

The coalition argues that what “Christians and others” drive are “moral choices that for Christians fall under the Lordship of Christ.” The WWJDrive “represents the first time significant numbers of prominent evangelical Christian leaders have spoken out on the morality of our transportation choices” and includes not just evangelical leadership but individuals from other denominations (Baptists, Presbyterians, Assemblies of God) and faiths (Judaism). Individuals call from different occupations too, including “pastors, ethics professors, engineers, energy analysts, writers, lawyers, and scientists.”<sup>84</sup>

The Reverend Jim Ball, Executive Director of the EEN is also active in WWJDrive. He kept an online journal of his “On the Road with What Would Jesus Drive: Answers Across America” Tour in 2003. His journal entries describe different steps taken to persuade Christians to practice energy conservation. One interesting action he describes is going “off to the Creation Festival in Pennsylvania for the largest annual Christian rock festival in the world, with over 50,000 in attendance.” He plans to set up a “WWJDrive booth where will have folks take the WWJDrive Pledge, give out bumper stickers, and talk to anyone who wants to talk.” The attempt to engage younger Christians to this cause presumably has much potential.

Another example illustrates impressive access to government officials. He describes meeting with Department of Energy officials, members of Congress and the Executive branch in Washington DC as this entry details:

---

<sup>83</sup> The initiative explanation is at <http://www.whatwouldjesusdrive.org/intro.php>, accessed on March 6, 2006.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

A significant fuel economy increase for all vehicles, hybrid fleet purchases by governments, tax incentives for hybrids, and hydrogen fuel cell and hydrogen infrastructure R&D -- how do such policies relate to Jesus' teaching to love your neighbor? That's what we helped Administration officials and Congressional offices understand in meetings held between mid-July and mid-August as our conclusion to the WWJDrive Tour. We let them know that everywhere we went on the Tour people were in favor of such efforts to reduce the air and global warming pollution coming out of our tailpipes, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil from unstable regions. We also gave them a packet of 21 newspaper stories from the Tour.

When I was setting up one of the meetings, an official asked, "What does faith have to do with fuel economy?" "That's exactly why we want to have a meeting, to explain how faith relates to increasing fuel economy and pollution reduction."

One of the senior Department of Energy officials himself had a hybrid electric Toyota Prius (the same car that Kara and I have and drove on the Tour). He said he loved the car, and we swapped stories.

Our major focus was on the Administration/Executive Branch. We ended up meeting with major players and important staff of three of the four key Administration/Executive Branch offices responsible for fuel economy: the Department of Energy; the Office of Management and Budget (approves all regulations); and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (responsible for promulgating regulations concerning fuel economy increases.) (I have not been successful yet in arranging a meeting with the Council on Environmental Quality or CEQ, but will keep trying.) We also met with staff for Majority Leader Frist, and Senators McCain and Pryor.

In every meeting I used our materials to help officials and staff understand how Jesus' teaching to love your neighbor included improving our gas mileage and reducing our pollution, because these are related to health impacts, global warming's threat to the poor, and our oil dependence. We encouraged them to be bold in addressing these problems.

Many of the meetings went on longer than scheduled - always a good sign. While our message was new to most, once they heard it they quickly grasped its relevance and power.

That all of these DC meetings have gone so well, and that the Tour itself went well and has been so successful -- I attribute this to the Lord's help and your prayers.<sup>85</sup>

What was the reaction to this initiative by eco-skeptic conservatives? Not surprisingly, disdain and sarcasm. A Wall Street Journal opinion piece by Brendan Miniter begins with a dry opening: "It seems environmentalists have found God." He writes further on that "Their goal is to make Americans feel guilty for driving big, gas

---

<sup>85</sup>Reverend Jim Ball's online journal can be read at <http://www.whatwouldjesusdrive.org/journal>, accessed on May 13, 2006.

guzzling vehicles. This isn't the first time green parsons have weighed in on environmental issues." Familiar eco-skeptic arguments about prosperity leading to better stewardship are also made. "The dirty secret about SUVs is that they are good for the economy and therefore the environment." Minitier believes that "Choice, not compulsion, is the key to prosperity – and thus ultimately to a better environment." The piece ends with the following:

The greens and their religious supporters will have none of this, of course. They don't see virtue in prosperity. Instead, they take it as a matter of faith that no one should have the kind of power a V-8 offers, that Americans just shouldn't be able to turn onto the highway, accelerate to a good cruising speed and enjoy it. It's all somehow immoral.<sup>86</sup>

The word "prosperity" is used in the piece, but surely consumption is an important variable in the equation. What is most remarkable about this perspective is its failure to consider that conservation does not necessarily lead to a lack of prosperity, but to further innovation in the market place.

The Reverend Sirico also has much to criticize about this initiative. He insists that it is a "debatable contention that SUVs contribute substantially to environmental degradation." In his view,

The SUV and its minivan cousin are mainly used by families. Is it right that religious leaders should urge all families to stuff themselves into tiny, fuel-conserving cars that are uncomfortable, limit family size and endanger the lives of children in the case of collision?<sup>87</sup>

As well, there is an implied condemnation of green evangelicals through association:

"this kind of politicking leads people to believe religious bodies have nothing better to do

---

<sup>86</sup> Brendan Minitier, "What Would Jesus Drive? What kind of silly question is that?" November 25, 2002, *WSJ.com OpinionJournal*, view at <http://www.opinionjournal.com/columnists/bminiter/?id=110002680>, accessed on May 14, 2006.

<sup>87</sup>Rev. Robert A. Sirico, "Should Religious Leaders Condemn Gas Guzzlers?" December 18, 2002, view at <http://www.acton.org/ppolicy/comment/article.php?id=117>, accessed on May 14, 2006.



than join the chorus of conventional left-liberal political fashion.<sup>88</sup> Like Minter, Sirico neglects conservation, the ecological shadow of this consumption, such as global warming and energy dependence in his depiction of prosperity.

In a recent *New York Times Magazine* column, Deborah Solomon interviews Richard Cizik, a prominent American evangelical and leader in the National Association of Evangelicals.<sup>89</sup> Though reluctant to call it “environmentalism”, preferring the term “creation care”, Cizik’s comments and actions are decidedly green. What motivates Cizik?

The Scriptures themselves, right in Genesis 2:15, say watch over creation and care for it. The air, the water, the resources – all have been given to us by God to protect.<sup>90</sup>

Cizik’s beliefs compel stewardship of the Earth. And he is not alone. He is joined by other prominent evangelicals including the Reverends Ted Haggard and Jim Ball of the Evangelical Environmental Network.<sup>91</sup> The good news for environmentalists: they do not concur with dispensationalism. The bad news: environmentalists remain suspect, thus collaboration remains problematic. According to Cizik

Environmentalists have a bad reputation among evangelical Christians for four reasons. One, they rely on big-government solutions. Two, their alliance with population-control movements. Three, they keep kooky religious company. [Four]... There’s a certain gloom and doom about environmentalists. They tend to prophecies of doom that don’t happen.<sup>92</sup>

Clearly finding common ground presents unique challenges. “Earthy” Evangelicals need to be dissuaded from their perception of environmentalism as a “kooky” religion –

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Deborah Solomon, “Questions for Richard Cizik: Earthy Evangelist,” *The New York Times Magazine*, April 3, 2005. p. 17.

<sup>90</sup> Cizik Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> On the Evangelical Environmental Network, see the organization’s web site at <http://www.creationcare.org/>

<sup>92</sup> Solomon, p. 17.

particularly since this characterization may strike the less invested observer as apropos to absolute views on both sides of this divide.

Are theological greens likely to transform conservative views and policies? The prospect has potential given their influence in the Republican Party today. Cizik claims “about 40 percent of the Republican Party is represented by evangelicals” but concedes that “creation care” is likely to butt heads with big business free market Republicans. In the meantime, these theological greens are pounding the political pavement. Concern over global warming is a promising illustration of this growing countertrend within the evangelical movement.<sup>93</sup>

In fact, recent developments suggest an exceptional shift is occurring in evangelicalism. On February 8, 2006, eighty-six evangelical leaders signed a statement declaring that “many of us have required considerable convincing before becoming persuaded that climate change is a real problem and that it ought to matter to us as Christians. But now we have seen and heard enough.”<sup>94</sup> Considerable money has been spent on advertising The Evangelical Climate Initiative.<sup>95</sup> Notable too, is the growing willingness of these outlying evangelicals to collaborate with other religious organizations outside of the evangelical movement that are also concerned about global warming. Interfaith synergy is likely to become more influential and effective.

One well known famous Evangelical signer is Rick Warren. He is the best-selling author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, which has sold over 20 million copies, and the pastor

---

<sup>93</sup> Laurie Goodstein, “Evangelical Leaders Swing Influence: Behind Effort to Combat Global Warming,” *The New York Times*, March 10, 2005, A16.

<sup>94</sup> Laurie Goodstein, “86 Evangelical Leaders Join to Fight Global Warming,” *The New York Times*, 8 February 2006, A12. The statement can be viewed at <http://www.christiansandclimate.org/statement/> accessed on 9 February 2006.

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, the full page advertisement placed in *The New York Times*, 9 February 2006, A17.

of Saddleback, a mega-church in Lake Forest, California with over 22,000 followers and an extensive network of connections with churches worldwide. Although the book reveals little regarding his views of environmental issues, Warren views of money and materialism are asserted, but present ambiguities. On the one hand, he warns that

Living for ministry and living for money are mutually exclusive goals. Which one will you choose? If you're a servant of God, you can't moonlight for yourself. All your time belongs to God. He insists on exclusive allegiance, not part-time faithfulness.

Money has the greatest potential to replace God in your life. More people are sidetracked from serving by materialism than by anything else.<sup>96</sup>

There is an explicit critique of materialism in the preceding words. On the other hand, Warren differentiates between what he calls “Kingdom Builders and Wealth Builders” and this is where tensions exist. Wealth accumulation itself, apparently, is not the problem, so long as it is (conveniently) *allocated* to the service of God.

At Saddleback Church, we have a group of CEOs and business owners who are trying to make as much as they can so they can give as much as they can to further the kingdom of God. I encourage you to talk with your pastor and begin a Kingdom Builders' group in your church. For help see appendix 2.<sup>97</sup>

Warren explains what distinguishes Kingdom Building from mere Wealth Building, mandating four specifics for those with “the ability to make a lot of money.”

First, realize your ability came from God and give him the credit. Second, use your business to serve a need of others and to share your faith with unbelievers. Third, return at least a tithe (10 percent) of the profit to God as an act of worship. Finally, make your goal to be a *Kingdom Builder* rather than just a *Wealth Builder*.<sup>98</sup>

Collectively, the message seems to be wealth is fine and implicitly, even materialism too, if these four steps are taken as dispensation. It is another reminder as well, that churches are dependent upon the largesse of their wealthiest believers. Because of this and the use

---

<sup>96</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What On Earth Am I Here For?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002, p. 267.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p. 268.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* p. 243.

of religious marketing, the focus on materialism, even among Evangelical outliers disposed toward the green, suggests spiritual unease at drawing too much attention to the problem of materialism and its impact on the environment in modern society. It just is not in the *material* best interest of the church.

Not surprisingly, the steps to fight global warming by some evangelical leaders has not come without vocal, public dissent from other prominent evangelicals skeptical of global warming, including Charles W. Colson, James C. Dobson and Richard Land. In January they responded that “Global warming is not a consensus issue.”

And in an earlier tussle over the National Association of Evangelicals official policy position on global warming, James Dobson’s Focus on Family organization issued a statement that illuminates the fault lines:

Our friends at the National Association of Evangelicals, with whom we agree on... so many issues, have now staked out a position in the very controversial area of global warming. This is despite the fact that significant disagreement exists within the scientific community regarding the validity of this theory.

Our concern with global warming’s more radical proponents is the way in which they have attempted to manipulate this issue to stifle advances in numerous fields – advances that would benefit the lives of people the world over, including many of its poorest citizens. Any issue that seems to put plants and animals above humans is one that we cannot support.<sup>99</sup>

Further indication of how threatened eco-skeptic evangelical groups are by this emerging evangelical effort is a recent response by another influential evangelical organization, the

Traditional Values Coalition. Their response:

The group is headed by Rev. Jim Ball and is described in media accounts as a “centrist” organization of evangelical leaders. The group, however, is being funded by an assortment of foundations that also provide significant funds for one-world, pro-abortion, and pro-homosexual activist groups.

One wonders why an evangelical group would accept money from such foundations or why these foundations would be willing to fund the activities of a Christian organization – unless

---

<sup>99</sup> Family.org’s web site is at <http://www.family.org/welcome/press/a0035827.cfm>, accessed on March 10, 2006.

the foundation grant givers believe the ENN will help them achieve their own globalist objectives.<sup>100</sup>

Revealingly, the reference to the science behind global warming is seemingly an afterthought, only made at the conclusion when it mentions the “questionable science behind claims that global warming is the result of human activity...” further substantiating the report’s intent to engage in inflammatory accusations of association with other social issues that galvanize evangelicals.

One of the most fascinating lenses into theologically driven eco-skepticism is found in Robertson’s interview of Senator Inhofe, the chair of the Environment and Public Works committee in the United States Senate, on the Christian Broadcasting Network. Robertson asks the Senator: “Tell me, what do the environmentalists believe? Do they worship the God of the bible or something else?” A part of the Senator’s response is most illuminating:

I deal with these people every day. I’ll tell you, Pat as I told you when you were here in Washington, when I read the Washington Post about two months ago, that the National Association of Evangelicals was embracing some of these fare-Left environmentalists, I called up Reverend Haggard [a signer], and I called up the guy who’s responsible for it. I think it’s a stroke of genius for the environmentalists to come in and try to capture the Christians or the fundamental Christians....

You can’t have a litmus test on gay marriage, you can’t have a litmus test on abortion on demand, you can’t have a litmus test on the Pledge of Allegiance, and all of these things that have actually propelled conservatives into the leadership and have won elections. You know, I was so excited that we were winning all of these things, and now we have this far-Left group coming in trying to capture the evangelical Christians. We can’t let it happen, Pat.<sup>101</sup>

The preceding indicates just how large a divide is in the making over this evangelical breach of standard operating procedure when it comes to its enemies. For

---

<sup>100</sup>The Traditional Values statement is at <http://www.traditionalvalues.org/modules.php?sid=2624>, accessed on March 9, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/commentary/050429a.asp>

instance, the Reverend Ball is a “centrist” in quotation marks, thus not really a mainstream evangelical figure, but the implications of his organization’s collaboration with longstanding nemeses are characterized as threats to other values held dear within the evangelical movement. A similar “guilt by association” is found in Pat Robertson’s interview with Senator Inhofe. Connecting dots between global warming activism and the vices of world government, abortion and homosexuality are evidence of a strategy to insinuate further encroachments on their faith based on loose and large associations. It does not address the issue, but the ties. The Traditional Values Coalition finds that the Hewlett Foundation, for example, not only finances EEN’s initiative, but Planned Parenthood Federation and the Center for Reproductive Rights too. The eco-skeptic evangelical strategy is to extrapolate broader implications rather than specifically rebutting the credibility of global warming science. In fact, one of the only specific rebuttals provided by the Senator is to recommend (“except for the dirty words”) the “great” novel *State of Fear* by Michael Crichton. In Inhofe’s view, global warming is an “agenda,” the “poster child of the far Left” but, he insists,, he cannot be duped, for “in fact, we know better – we preach against it.” This is from a United States Senator holding a powerful and relevant chair in the senate.

Prominent evangelicals including as James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Richard Roberts, the President of Oral Roberts University, have exerted pressure on the theological green evangelicals. But despite their efforts, many evangelicals continue to encourage evangelicals toward greater public activism. There is a growing consensus among these outliers that addressing global warming is a religious and moral imperative. There is as well, much that suggests a grass roots effort that is “ahead of their national

leadership on climate change.” Critical leadership within the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), which has a formidable membership estimated at 30 million, did express public concern over global warming, notably through the efforts of NAE leaders Ted Haggard and Richard Cizik. However, both did not sign the recent Evangelical Climate Initiative. One journalist explains that this was “despite the fact that both men personally agree with the ECI’s tenets and goals... for fear that the NAE would be seen as endorsing it.”<sup>102</sup> Clearly such a powerful institutional endorsement, given the dissension, would have been provocative as it would publicly contradict the eco-skeptical views of other prominent leadership within the NAE.

It follows that this rift portends growing conflict within the movement, not just over environmental issues, but more holistic divisions as evangelical outliers become increasingly willing to cooperate with actors that evangelical eco-skeptics still cast as liberals, socialists, or, in more venomous depiction, disciples of the Antichrist.

One enduring voice worth mentioning is the writings of Wendell Berry, a devout Christian and agrarian dismayed by his religion’s environmental apathy. Much of his writing is a call to revive an environmental ethos. Berry refutes the presumptions of Lynn White and others regarding the role of Christianity, though he concedes that:

I do not mean to imply that I see no involvement between that tradition and the abuse of nature. I know very well that Christians have not only been often indifferent to such abuse, but have often condoned it and often perpetuated it. That is not the issue. The issue is whether or not the Bible explicitly or implicitly defines a *proper* human use of Creation or the natural world.<sup>103</sup>

One of his principle aims:

---

<sup>102</sup> For an account of this ensuing evangelical divide, see Katherine Mieszkowski, “Christians’ Burning Issue” at <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2006/02/09/evangelicals/index.html>, accessed on February 9, 2006.

<sup>103</sup> Wendell Berry, *The Gift of Good Land*, (New York: North Point Press, 1982), p. 269.

I wish to deal directly at last with my own long held belief that Christianity, as usually presented by its organizations, is not earthly enough – that a valid spiritual life, in this world, must have a practice and a practicality – it must have a material result.<sup>104</sup>

The writings of Wendell Berry are reminiscent of the Southern Agrarians, but encapsulate much that was either not germane or discordant with those earlier American voices. His pacifism, for example, is indicative of possible incompatibilities.<sup>105</sup> In his extolling of the agrarian ways, however, Berry is very much a descendant of such earlier conservatism. His message beseeches fellow Christian followers:

To live, we must daily break the body and shed the blood of Creation. When we do this knowingly, lovingly, skillfully, reverently, it is a sacrament. When we do it ignorantly, greedily, clumsily, destructively, it is a desecration. In such desecration we condemn ourselves to spiritual and moral loneliness, and others to want.<sup>106</sup>

Berry resuscitates the promise of green reformation within traditional Christianity.

The high esteem many grassroots theo-conservatives have for the contributions of Wendell Berry explains the Christian Right's awkwardness in their rejoinders. For example, a critical essay on Berry by Michael R. Stevens at the Acton Institute is anchored with caveats and equivocations. He is not easily demonized as a radical environmentalist; thus though Stevens seemingly lauds Berry, it is the backhand variety of praise. The author visits Berry. He is "struck by the difference between my own heroic construct and the reality before me." Though he "sense[s] anew the profound theme that permeates all of Berry's work" he is skeptical of his position, for

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. p. 167.

<sup>105</sup> See, for example, Wendell Berry, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Christ's Teachings of Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness*, (Place?: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p. 281.



This can and does lead to awkward and hasty judgments of economic systems... certainly free-market economists who read his work will find much with which to quarrel. As an apologist for a particular way of life, he can and does miss some other helpful possibilities.<sup>107</sup>

What those “possibilities” include is not clarified. In many respects, Wendell Berry is a more problematic challenge to conservative theology than any so-called pagan, new-age environmentalism, because he writes from a decidedly Christian and classical conservative interpretation of man’s relationship to nature. This creates tensions, for, of course, the prevailing theological conservative view is more compatible to the following words written by the Reverend Gerald Zandstra:

Economic growth is the engine that has and will drive environmentally friendly goods and services. We don’t need less trade and business. We need more.<sup>108</sup>

The rooted conservative agrarian disposition and Christian-rooted anti-materialism of Wendell Berry are problematic for Christian theological views that wholeheartedly embrace libertarian free-market principles. But Wendell Berry is not the only threat. The increasing environmental advocacy of outlier evangelicals is disconcerting to theo-conservatives. They fear the possibility of further collaboration with “the more radical branch of the environmental tree.” Consequently, it is no surprise that the activism of these green conservative religious outliers has triggered a theo-conservative backlash aiming to stop its momentum.

In conclusion, the recent internal turmoil and tension over environmentalism foretell future schisms of wider range and further depth. Although the Christian Right continues to boast of its substantial political influence, the growing list of dissenters from the prevailing eco-skeptic mindset undoubtedly will result in diminished environmental

---

<sup>107</sup> Michael R. Stevens, “Health within Limits: A Reading of Wendell Berry” <http://www.acton.org/publicat/ranl/article.php?id=541>, accessed on May 4, 2006.

<sup>108</sup> Rev. Gerald Zandstra, [http://www.acton.org/press/pdf/2005-03-19\\_Zandstra.pdf](http://www.acton.org/press/pdf/2005-03-19_Zandstra.pdf), accessed on May 4, 2006.

policy-making influence for theo-conservatives as a whole. These tensions are now explicitly evident. Prominent dissident Evangelicals, such as Richard Cizik and Randy Brinson, are speaking out publicly and the internecine struggles recounted in the media.<sup>109</sup> Some of the controversies have an ugly quality. Brinson, for example, is a prominent, devout Baptist, Republican and doctor from Alabama but willing to collaborate with Democrats over certain issues when there is common ground. Because of this, he claims that “his wife is receiving threats from anonymous conservative activists warning her husband to stay away from politics.”<sup>110</sup> Given all of this, what is a conservative politician to do when a powerful constituency – previously clear and unanimous in cause and concern – begins to disagree and divide?

---

<sup>109</sup> For example, see Stephen Bates, “Wing and a prayer: religious right got Bush elected – now they are fighting each other” *Guardian Unlimited*, May 31, 2006 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1786227,00.html>. Also, see Amy Sullivan “When Would Jesus Bolt? Meet Randy Brinson, the advance guard of evangelicals leaving the GOP” *Washington Monthly*, April 2006, at <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2006/0604.sullivan.html> and Kevin Drum “Crackup on the Religious Right?” *Washington Monthly*, May 31, 2006, at [http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2006\\_05/008918.php](http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2006_05/008918.php), all three articles accessed on June 1, 2006.

<sup>110</sup> Bates, *Ibid.*

## Chapter IV

### Free Market Conservatism

*The free marketers wish no one ill, but their happy dream of a well ordered international economy of morally indifferent affluence for many and misery for those who cannot compete – a dream that constitutes my own private nightmare – is becoming a reality. We may indeed be on the threshold of a brave new world of affluent depravity for a good many people, perhaps even the majority of Americans. If so, I am glad to be too old to have to live with the worst of what is coming.*

Eugene D. Genovese

*The Southern Tradition: the Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism*, 1994

American conservatives today are likely to view consumption as a benign and edifying dynamic. Hirschman labels the sentiment *doux commerce*.<sup>1</sup> These views originate from the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment and political theorists such as Montesquieu. Free trade, minimal government regulation, competitive markets, and continued growth are all essential to prosperity and the well-being of liberal market society.

Originally these views were considered liberal. But today classic liberalism is often associated with contemporary free-market conservatism as well as strands of liberalism. Yet economist Milton Friedman, an influential contributor to conservative thought, is not comfortable with the label “conservative.” He prefers “Liberalism in its original sense” but argues the “corruption of the term liberalism” today for it no longer means what it originally meant. Yet the label conservative “is not a satisfactory alternative.” It suffers from “the growth of hyphenated designations.”<sup>2</sup> Conservative’s meaning is so broad it is misleading.

---

<sup>1</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *Rival Views of Market Society and Other Recent Essays* (New York: Viking, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2002) p. 6.

Semantics aside, Friedman insists that the government must be constrained by two imperative principles: limits on its power and dispersal in its execution. Free-market conservatives traditionally believe that competitive capitalism and free trade are integral to political freedom, though economic freedom alone does not necessarily beget political freedom. The market provides checks on political power and it “does this impersonally and without centralized authority.” Yet Friedman is also aware that “the existence of a free market does not of course eliminate the need for government.” Friedman recognizes that the government plays a critical role in establishing the “rules of the game.” “It is an umpire to interpret and enforce the rules decided on,” but he is consistently leery of the government’s propensity to centralize its power even when well-intentioned.<sup>3</sup> Friedman objects to government initiatives such as social security, public works projects, welfare and urban redevelopment programs. These are examples of good intentions with suboptimal consequences. Without defining exactly where Friedman would draw a line in the sand, he does find that there are “some exceptions” to government initiatives. For example, “The expressways crisscrossing the country, magnificent dams spanning great rivers, orbiting satellites are all tributes to the capacity of government to command great resources.” Friedman concedes that even the public school system, “with all its defects and problems” has nonetheless “widened the opportunities available to American youth and contributed to the extension of freedom.”<sup>4</sup> Overall, Friedman views government ventures as best left to the market or handled at the local level, but his recognition of the need for a government “to command great resources” suggests that environmental issues of magnitude are expedited by political processes as well as the free-market.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 199.

There is another consideration of theoretical importance: the narrow appropriation of an earlier intellectual legacy. That is, there is the understandable inclination to reductively situate past views to accommodate present day contingencies, preferences and problems. Quite conceivably, these earlier voices might object to the selective appropriation of their arguments and positions. Environmental degradation, depletion and discourse, of course, were not concerns of Enlightenment luminaries. It was not until 1798, when Malthus wrote “An Essay on the Principle of Population,” that a doomsday projection – albeit, an erroneous projection – was even made regarding scarcity, human population and social conflict.<sup>5</sup> Tempering the natural impulse to extrapolate from past contributions to contemporary predicaments is judicious. But this is not to argue the opposite, that is, the wholesale disregard of these past contributions to the West’s intellectual history and political development. That too, would be erroneous and imprudent in other ways. Cognizant recognition of this tension leads to more prudent application. This may be academically clear, but contemporary political punditry rarely recognizes or displays nuance in appropriation.

Predictably, contemporary free market conservatives are enduringly skeptical of the environmental movement. The selective appropriation of earlier views affirms their convictions. Environmental regulation is consistently perceived as an encroachment of personal liberty and property. Meanwhile, consumption is viewed as a good thing, except, that is, when it encroaches on the moral sensibilities of some conservative free

---

<sup>5</sup> To this day, his larger point regarding the relationship between scarcity, population and conflict has largely been overlooked because of his notorious miscalculations. According to Robert Kaplan, “Malthus was humiliated by the literary elite of the day...” Kaplan defends his work for he was “the first philosopher to focus on the political effects of poor soils, famine, disease, and the quality of life among the poor [an] irritant because he has defined the most important debate of the first half of the twenty-first century.... The word Malthusian will be heard with increasing frequency in the years to come.” *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*, (New York: Random House, 2002) pp. 92-94.

market advocates. Hedonistic consumption holds an allure that threatens conservative moral values, yet attempts to squelch its dissemination and practice remain curiously incongruous with a pro-consumption view more generally. Aside from this “moral” exception, the conservative view of consumption, and future consumption, is overwhelmingly positive in perspective. Environmental considerations are thus viewed as impingements upon free-markets and the rights of the propertied. In this view, environmental regulation places unreasonable burdens on free enterprise. It is thus no surprise that free market conservatives would view environmentalism as a threat to commercial enterprise.

Such skepticism has led to an all out staunch free market anti-environmental offensive. A slew of right-wing actors are dedicated to the principles of free markets, private property rights, and less regulatory oversight of industry. They are committed to battling the perceived threat environmental action brings upon these values, characterizing environmentalism as everything from a questionable science to a heretical, seductive religion. Special interest groups, right-wing think tanks, big business, and their conservative proponents within the media, have helped rollback many environmental policies from earlier administrations. Their political influence today is substantial. This chapter begins by describing and analyzing some of the individuals and entities overtly engaged in anti-environmental free-market conservatism. The logic behind these views is straightforward given their staunch commitment to free market principles and private property rights. Several variables are worth considering. The first is its selective appropriation of earlier intellectual contributions. The second is expanding consumption as a critical dynamic in sustaining liberal market society. Finally, the anti-environmental

views that ensue from this mindset and rhetoric translate into an unwillingness to consider green market mechanisms. This, in turn, means rejecting greener business principles and practices that savvier free-market outliers are now committed to achieving. Take, for example, The American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a think tank “dedicated to preserving and strengthening the foundations of freedom – limited government, private enterprise, vital cultural and political institutions, and a strong foreign policy and national defense....”<sup>6</sup> The AEI magazine recently published an edition on “Realism On Energy and the Environment” which had several contributions by conservatively inclined individuals.<sup>7</sup> Michael Novak’s piece is representative. In his article “Environmentalism Should Not Be a Religion” Novak accuses environmentalism, in short order, of three vices: it is a “new religion,” *and* manages to be “eco-socialism” *and* prone to doomsday scenarios. This caricature of environmentalists is, of course, a foil. The doomsday portrayal, in particular, is rich in its unintended projection, given that the inevitability of apocalypse is acutely germane to many of their theologically inclined colleagues.<sup>8</sup> In Novak’s view, environmentalists are their own worst enemy thanks to their “the sky is falling” approach. “The pessimistic, apocalyptic litany of the Green requiem is recited almost daily in the media.” Their doom-and-gloom alarmism “has begun to undercut their credibility.” In Novak’s view “the language of pessimism, apocalypse, and self-reform colors discussion of the environment. Dissenters are treated as sinners.”<sup>9</sup> Rather than offering substantive, scientific evidence which refutes environmentalist arguments,

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.aei.org/about/filter.all/default.asp>

<sup>7</sup> Michael Novak, “Realism on Energy and the Environment,” *The American Enterprise: Politics, Business, and Culture*. January/February 2005.

<sup>8</sup> See too, James Schlesinger, “The Theology of Global Warming,” *The Wall Street Journal*, August 8, 2005, p. A10.

<sup>9</sup> Novak, p. 40.

Novak sees a hidden agenda of eco-socialism and religious doomsday fervor. The rhetorical appeal of such depictions is substantial to free-market disposed conservatives.

Like many other free-market, eco-skeptics, Novak makes the following commonly shared argument as well:

Poverty impedes environmental reform. Thus, regimes that reduce growth, income, and property injure the environment. The best way to enhance the ecology of this small blue-green planet, therefore, is to liberate economic systems until they include every woman and man on Earth within the circle of Plenty.<sup>10</sup>

In this view, poverty not prosperity is the quintessential impediment to environmental reform. What Novak insists is needed are three new environmental principles: “Realism. Liberty. And recognition of the link between poverty and environmental problems.”<sup>11</sup>

What is neglected in this line of argument is the ecological shadow cast far away from its demand. Little consideration is given to the likelihood that dirtier industries, increasingly, are being off-shored to lands distant from where the prosperous consume them. Industries, such as mining, oil drilling and steel manufacturing, in a global economy, are extracted or produced in less prosperous regions of the world. The consequence of hyper-consumption in market society means that natural resources of other regions of the world are increasingly demanded and degraded. Global warming presents an acute example of the ecological shadow. Greenhouse gases emitted from the hyper-consumptive practices of Americans have irreparably damaged lands far too distant to merit the concern of free-market conservatives. Global warming, in this view, is a naturally occurring phenomenon. It is no wonder then that human-induced climate change is one of the most threatening “myths” that this type actively battles.

---

<sup>10</sup> Novak, p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> Novak, p. 41.



In a related AEI article, Karina Rollins addresses this specific issue. Shoring up her argument, she avails herself of Lomborg's views. Combating global warming will not effectively utilize limited financial resources. Given that there are limited resources for a wide range of challenging global issues, then climate change should not be a priority. "Methodical reason, not emotion" and "tough trade-offs" are needed.<sup>12</sup> In this argument, global warming has not yet killed millions of people. Nor is it likely too. Meanwhile, lack of clean water and sanitation, illiteracy, and diseases, are killing humans in the here and now. Thus, money would be better spent on combating poverty and disease. This is a particularly ingenious way to neglect all of these issues. What would be their solution set for combating poverty and disease? The answer, of course, is more free-markets as well as opportunities for development, prosperity and liberty.

The Competitive Enterprise Institute has also gone on the offensive. They recently launched a major advertising offensive that questions the science of global warming. In one television ad, carbon dioxide is characterized as a "natural" occurring phenomenon: humans breathe it out, trees breathe it in. "CO<sub>2</sub>, we call it life." *Time Magazine* is criticized for its alarming front cover: "Be Worried. Be Very Worried." The CEI accuses Time of presuming a looming global crisis and does not balance this view with any eco-skeptic perspectives.<sup>13</sup>

Another eco-skeptic, well-endowed think tank is the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. Its membership includes Peter Huber, Max Schultz and Benjamin

---

<sup>12</sup> Karina Rollins, "How to Save the Planet (Really)" AEI, pp. 38-39.

<sup>13</sup> Their advertisements and arguments can be viewed at the CEI website at <http://streams.cei.org/>, accessed on May 21, 2006.

Zycher.<sup>14</sup> Huber and Schultz are Senior Fellows at the institute's Center for Energy. They advocate "pro-growth, supply-side energy policy [that] can be harmonized with a concern for the environment" according to the Center's website.<sup>15</sup> The Center for Energy "challenges conventional wisdom about energy supplies, production, and consumption, and examines the intersection of energy, the environment, and economic and national security. Huber is the author of *Hard Green* and *The Bottomless Well*. The former book aims to "save the environment from the environmentalists" while the latter, co-authored with Mark Mills, lauds "the virtue of waste, and why we will never run out of energy." Benjamin Zycher, also a Senior Fellow at Manhattan Institute formerly has worked in the Reagan Administration, and has been a senior staff economist at the President's Council for Economic Advisors and an economist at the RAND Corporation. In a letter to *The Wall Street Journal*, he responds to an earlier article in the paper on a controversial wind turbine proposed off Nantucket Sound. Eco-skeptics have relished this dispute because opponents to the project include environmentalists from the Hyannis Port Kennedy family. Both windmill proponents and conservatives view these objections as hypocritical, as evidence of a NIMBY disposition. Zycher writes:

For years the environmental lobby has joined hands with Northeast liberals to force myriad "environmental" requirements and projects upon the rest of the country, with actual environmental benefits either nonexistent or negative. And now we find Sen. Ted Kennedy and many of the other "environmentalists" in opposition to just such a monstrosity in their back yard. Is it because of the famous Cape Cod concern with benefit/cost analysis? Or is it far more likely that yet again we are observing the hypocrisy of the leftist elite? Whatever the numbers, this project should be forced upon them as a matter of justice.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.manhattan-institute.org/>, accessed on May 27, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ce.htm>, accessed on May 27, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Zycher, "Windmills Just Latest In Environmental Jihad" *The Wall Street Journal*, May 26, 2006, p. A11.

Collectively, individuals working at the Manhattan Institute, the CEI, the AEI, and other free-market think tanks, including the Heartland Institute, Cooler Heads Coalition, and National Consumer Coalition, dismiss environmental concern, global warming, conservation, particularly energy conservation, government regulation, incentives and subsidies.

Free market ideologues often depict the environmentalists as naïve and dangerous radicals unquestioning in their devotion to the cause. This includes the sweeping accusation of misanthropic belief, thus always disposed to favor obscure species over humanity. While there are environmentalists with decidedly radical views that promote eco-terror, bio-centrism, or doomsday scenarios of biblical proportion, they do not represent the movement as a whole. These depictions are political tools that manage to both polarize and galvanize.

It is not just environmentalists that are suspect. Even scientists are targeted. Books like *Meltdown: The Predictable Distortion of Global Warming by Scientists, Politicians, and the Media*, by Patrick J. Michaels and published by the Cato Institute in 2004 and *Global Warming and Other Eco-Myths: How the Environmental Movement Uses False Science to Scare Us to Death* edited by Ronald Bailey and published by the Competitive Enterprise Institute, are indicative of this well-endowed effort to fight a growing global body of scientific evidence that more objective eyes realize is increasingly difficult to refute.<sup>17</sup> In fact, a NASA climate scientist recently accused the

---

<sup>17</sup> Patrick J. Michaels, *Meltdown: The Predictable Distortion of Global Warming by Scientists, Politicians, and the Media*, (Washington DC: Cato Institute, 2004).  
Ronald Bailey, ed., Competitive Enterprise Institute, *Global Warming and Other Eco-Myths: How the Environmental Movement Uses False Science to Scare Us to Death*, (Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing).

government of trying to silence his ability to discuss global warming publicly.<sup>18</sup> This is not the first claim of government pressure to restrain the free expression of their scientists and bespeaks to an alarming tendency in the current administration to suppress scientific information that does not lend itself to their *a priori* positions.<sup>19</sup> The rhetoric over environmental issues, especially global warming, is indicative of a general conservative hostility toward science more generally. If intelligent design merits equal opportunity with the theory of evolution in the American classroom, then it is not unreasonable to conclude that conservatives view scientific inquiry and discovery as a formidable threat to some of their core, fundamental beliefs, often favoring faith or free markets over reason in the public sphere.

Another prominent think tank influential in conservative circles is the Cato Institute in Washington, D.C. Their mission

...seeks to broaden the parameters of public policy debate to allow consideration of the traditional American principles of limited government, individual liberty, free markets and peace. Toward that goal, the Institute strives to achieve greater involvement of the intelligent, concerned lay public in questions of policy and the proper role of government.<sup>20</sup>

According to their web site, Cato is a “non-profit, tax-exempt educational foundation” with 2004 revenues around \$15 million. They have “approximately 95 full time employees, 70 adjunct scholars, and 20 fellows, plus interns.” They are committed to the principles of the American Revolution: “individual liberty, limited government, the free market, and the rule of law.” While most observers would categorize the foundation as conservative, they are uncomfortable being labeled as such because

---

<sup>18</sup> Andrew C. Revkin, “Climate Expert Says NASA Tried to Silence Him”, *The New York Times*, January 29, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> The scientific community’s concern over the politicizing of science is articulated in the following article by Cornelia Dean, “At a Scientific Gathering, U.S. Policies are Lamented” in *The New York Times*, National Sunday, February 19, 2006, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Cato’s mission can be viewed at <http://cato.org/about/about.html>, accessed on March 4, 2006.

‘Conservative’ politics smacks of an unwillingness to change, of a desire to preserve the status quo. Only in America do people seem to refer to free-market capitalism – the most progressive, dynamic, and ever-changing system the world has ever known – as conservative. Additionally, many contemporary American conservatives favor state intervention in some areas, most notably in trade and into our private lives.<sup>21</sup>

Their institutional reluctance to self-identify the Cato Institute as “conservative” per se is likely a deliberate qualification designed to differentiate their political views from more theologically or protectionist conservative views. Indeed, though their web site claims that “‘Classical liberal’ is a bit closer to the mark ...the word ‘classical’ connotes a backward-looking philosophy” making that label also problematic. The foundation is thus more disposed to identify the Cato Institute with “libertarianism” or “market liberalism.”

Despite an apparent discomfort with the semantics of self-identification, the reality is that the Cato Institute is primarily a foundation driven by free-market conservative principles. Leadership and membership are overwhelmingly Republican in party affiliation, viewing the Democratic Party as far too disposed to big government, meaning, that is, that Democrats are predisposed to so-called “welfare state” initiatives and expenditures. Given this, these conservatives remain in principal, as well as increasingly publicly, disappointed with the Bush administration’s indifference to, and rapid enlargement of, the federal deficit, as well as its touting of “moral values” and “national security” as justification for encroachment on personal privacy. The administration’s “moral” agenda, of course, is primarily intended to accommodate theological conservatives. It does not resonate with free-market views harboring a libertarian distrust of government. Notwithstanding these not insignificant differences

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

with the current administration, they remain influential in the discourse and practice of conservative politics today.

Insight into the free-market view is well shown in the 2005 *Cato Handbook on Policy*, at seven hundred pages, it contains specific sections on a broad range of issues that its members are concerned with, including taxes and spending, threats to civil liberties, regulation, and foreign and defense policies.<sup>22</sup> There is a germane section detailing Cato policy positions on “Energy and Environment” issues including electricity, pollution, public land, global warming and climate change.

One of the contributors to the environmental section is none other than Patrick J. Michaels, author of the eco-skeptical Cato publication, *Meltdown*. Michaels is not without credentials: earning a Ph.D. in ecological climatology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison; he is a “Senior Fellow in Environmental Studies” at the foundation. He is the Cato Institute’s primary expert on all things related to climate change: the science, politics and public policy.

His views regarding global warming are worthy of summary. For example, he writes that hurricanes “are the most destructive storms on earth” but his figures “show that there is no overall trend in their frequency.”<sup>23</sup> As well, he argues that heat-related mortality is declining in cities:

We found that, in almost all North American cities, population-adjusted heat-related mortality is declining significantly because the ‘threshold’ temperature at which people begin to die is rising. In other words, people are adapting and increasingly prospering in slowly warming cities, contrary to the way the United Nations [presumably based on data from the IPCC] believes they would behave.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> *Cato Handbook on Policy* (Washington, D.C: Cato Institute, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 484.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 485.

In other words, since people are resilient and capable of adaptation to weather change, it is unnecessary to worry about so-called “slowly warming cities.” Left unsaid, are the roles air conditioning and better emergency response play in any present-day decline in mortality rates during heat waves. Furthermore, Michaels insists that though the planet may continue to warm, “the number is reassuringly small” and “yet another example of the inaccuracy of IPCC climate science.”<sup>25</sup> Michaels concludes that

Several lines of evidence all point to the likelihood that warming in the next century is likely to be modest, and all evidence demonstrates that Kyoto will have no measurable effect on that warming..... The Kyoto Protocol, or other similar instruments, is precisely the wrong thing to do about global climate change.<sup>26</sup>

In this perspective, global warming may be occurring but it is likely a natural occurring phenomenon, all too readily blamed on human activity by environmentalists. It also may benefit certain global regions. The Cato Institute is blithely optimistic: People will adapt. Human induced global warming, *if* it is even a reality, for this remains in doubt, may be quite beneficial. Money spent on studying and attempting to ameliorate its effects is, thus, egregiously wasted. It follows that even scientists are suspect, for they are not objective analysts of global climate change, prone as they are to predicting alarming scenarios given the hefty institutional and governmental subsidy of their research.

The Cato Institute’s skeptical policy positions regarding international government cooperation and investment into research and remediation of global warming make perfect sense given their staunch free market disposition. Government meddling in complex, scientific uncertainties, all too often driven by hysterical, “the sky is falling,”

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 485-486. IPCC is the acronym for the International Panel on Climate Control established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 488.

environment and science “experts” invariably leads governments to contemplate costly, anti-free-enterprise protocols and policies that also manage to squander taxpayer money.

The “myth” of global warming is far from the only danger environmentalism presents. Government calls for energy conservation are also suspect, for the Cato Institute finds that “government-directed conservation is rather poor” and that “government attempts to force conservation where it has been otherwise resisted by consumers are counterproductive, costly, and injurious to consumer welfare.”<sup>27</sup> In fact, the Cato Institute goes so far as to advocate that “oil in the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve should be sold in the marketplace and the program shut down” and, further posits that “embargoes are phantasmic events not worth worrying about.”<sup>28</sup>

The Cato Institute is also remains unconvinced of the necessity of achieving American independence from foreign fossil fuel sources, stating that such efforts “wouldn’t make much difference unless we were to abandon oil use altogether or, alternatively, ban all petroleum imports and exports.”<sup>29</sup> One government action worthy of their approval is “increasing industry access to reserves currently off-limits on federal lands.”<sup>30</sup> It follows that the Cato Institute is also against government subsidy of renewable energy sources, such as ethanol subsidies, because they distort the efficiency of the free market.

Another free-market conservative think-tank worthy of examination is the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI).<sup>31</sup> Their mission is similar to the Cato Institute’s

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 452-453.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 454.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 446.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 447.

<sup>31</sup> The CEI web site can be viewed at <http://www.cei.org/>, accessed on March 5, 2006.



policy ambitions, but with a more prominent emphasis on environmental issues as they relate to economic freedom. The CEI 's primary goal is “Advancing Liberty – from the Economy to Ecology.” Their web site proclaims that “We believe that individuals are best helped not by government intervention, but by making their own choices in a free marketplace.” The CEI claims that they “are nationally recognized as a leading voice on a broad range of regulatory issues from free market approaches to environmental policy, to antitrust and technology policy, to risk regulation.” Their Board of Directors indicates substantive ties to other conservative think tanks including The American Enterprise Institute and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

The Founder and President of CEI, Fred L. Smith, Jr., is a prominent public speaker with frequent television and radio appearances. In a speech posted on the CEI web site Smith argues that “current environmental policy suffers from many faults – a bureaucratized approach to issues, a sensationalist response to scare stories, and an obliviousness to the human and monetary costs of overregulation.” He argues that “Property rights ought to obey the three Ds: be definable, divisible, and divestible.”

Furthermore he asks:

How can we restart the process of integrating human concerns about the environment with human concerns about jobs and health and wealth? The decentralization of environmental decision-making and the expansion of property rights are necessary first steps. Second, laws are needed to allow contracting out as an option among disputing parties.....Third, the law should create rules under which common property resources might be privatized.<sup>32</sup>

The CEI not only worries about environmental regulation of private property, but also aims for public property, with all its untapped resources, to be privatized. Thus, the nation's natural resources, including water, coal, timber, oil, fish and animals, are

---

<sup>32</sup> Fred L. Smith Jr. speech can be viewed at [http://www.cei.org/gencon/023\\_05168.cfm](http://www.cei.org/gencon/023_05168.cfm), accessed on March 5, 2006.

untapped commodities, not resources to be held and preserved through public stewardship. It is no wonder then that there is little common ground between environmentalists and free-market conservatives.

A controversial member of CEI is Myron Ebell, its director of energy and global warming policy. His biography includes the following information:

Among numerous recognitions, Greenpeace featured Mr. Ebell and three of his CEI colleagues in “A Field Guide to Climate Criminals” distributed at the UN climate meeting in December 2005. Rolling Stone magazine in its November 17, 2005 issue named Mr. Ebell one of six “Misleaders” on global warming in a special feature, along with President Bush, Senator James Inhofe, and Michael Crichton. In November 2004 as a result of a BBC Radio interview, seven members of the British House of Commons from all three major parties introduced a motion to censure Mr. Ebell “in the strongest possible terms.” In its May 22, 2004 special Issues and Answers issue, National Journal profiled Mr. Ebell as one of ten people who would lead the global warming debate during the next presidential administration. The Clean Air Trust in March 2001 named Mr. Ebell its “Villain of the Month” for his role in convincing the Bush Administration not to regulate carbon dioxide emissions.<sup>33</sup>

Evidently, Ebell takes pride in his infamy. Most intriguing is his dismay at President Bush’s State of the Union Address in February 2005. His response is illuminating: the President committed unpardonable heresy, betraying core CEI principles:

“America is addicted to oil.” With these five words in his State of the Union speech, President George W. Bush confounded steadfast allies on energy policy and emboldened his bitterest enemies.<sup>34</sup>

Ebell goes on to accuse the President of “irresponsible rhetoric” and “damaging consequences.” His new energy goals and policies are “meaningless” and “ridiculous.” Ebell resents that the President’s speech is “making us feel guilty about using energy” and for “de-legitimizing (and even demonizing) the oil industry” one of “our most vital industries.” It is not just free-market tanks disappointed. As well, consider a recent *New*

---

<sup>33</sup> Myron Ebell’s biography can be viewed at [http://www.cei.org/dyn/view\\_Expert.cfm?Expert=125](http://www.cei.org/dyn/view_Expert.cfm?Expert=125), accessed on March 5, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Myron Ebell, “‘Oil Addiction’ Talk Boosts Enviro Leftists” can be viewed at <http://www.cei.org/gencon/019,05130.cfm>, accessed on March 5, 2006.

*York Times* article on Exxon Mobil where the new chairman was asked what he thought of President Bush's remark. Mr. Tillerson's response: it was "An unfortunate choice of words."<sup>35</sup> Clearly the President's State of the Union generated a backlash among his staunchest free-market supporters. They fear a looming betrayal of their constituency in the presidential admission of American "addiction to oil."

Given these staunch free-market views, the onslaught of anti-environment eco-skeptic literature that is funded and published by conservative think-tanks is inevitable. While environmentalists are suspect, their motives questionable, the reverse proposition, that their own motives may be suspect, is, well, unthinkable. The polemical bifurcated nature of these wars is discouraging; extremes on both sides tend to distort motives and beliefs, making reasonable discourse, collaboration and compromise difficult.

Of course, there are also contributions which, while more even-handed and reflective – certainly less shrill – contribute to the idea that all is well and good. Substantive reflection is given to what affluent society can and does do to improve the environment. The danger is the complacency such arguments foster regarding consumption and its environmental consequences. Book titles such as *The Virtue of Prosperity* and *The Progress Paradox: How Life Gets Better While People Feel Worse* tell all.<sup>36</sup> When these free market conservatives do concede environmental concern, their faith in the market's ability to rectify is unwavering. These free market advocates are not so much green advocates as perennial optimists. They are proponents of growth: things are getting better, not worse. Affluence affords better environmental stewardship. They

---

<sup>35</sup> Jad Mouawad, "The New Face of an Oil Giant: Exxon Mobil Style Shifts a Bit" *The New York Times* Business Day, March 30, 2006, p. C1.

<sup>36</sup> D'Souza 2000; and Easterbrook 2003.

like to remind us that it is an elite group which tends to be the most proactive conservationists. They also like to remind us that past and present communist countries have the most dismal environmental record; this argument, however, has gotten old and tired. It does not necessarily mean democratic market societies are thus virtuous, only *relative* to these other countries does this comparison convince. It does not provide dispensation. And predictably, left unsaid, is the ecological shadow such affluence casts over less developed nations.

A logical position would incorporate both positive and negative consequences of economic development. Jeffrey Sachs, the Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, recognizes and combines both views:

With that increase in economic output have come some phenomenal benefits, such as rising life expectancy and improved overall public health, and some planet-threatening adverse effects, such as massive tropical deforestation, ocean fisheries depletion, man-made climate change, violent competition over limited hydrocarbon resources, and newly emerging diseases such as SARS and avian flue (H5N1). Until now, the favorable outcomes have outweighed the bad. Yet because many of the environmental consequences are hidden from view and from our national income accounts, we sit atop ticking ecological time bombs.<sup>37</sup>

A frustrating consequence of half-full/half-empty divide is the failure to recognize that both propositions are realities, but their reality does not negate the reality of the other. Both positions are legitimate. These views are typically situated as opponents, bifurcated and divided, as is common in ideological dispute and thus divided, they lack ameliorative ability. Combination connotes coherence and possibility.

This divide is apparent in the general media as well. When Bjorn Lomborg's book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist* was published in 1998 at a reputable academic house; it was quickly lauded in free market media sources as a credible critique of the

---

<sup>37</sup> Jeffrey Sachs, "The New Geopolitics" *Scientific American*, June 2006, p. 30.

environmental movement, receiving favorably reviews in venues such as *Barron's*, *The Economist*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, the book generated a fiery exchange between scientists and Lomborg in the pages of *American Scientific*. This controversy indicates how divisive environmental discourse has become and just how high the stakes are.

The fault lines are not just limited to an engaged cognoscente. If popular culture is a barometer of ideological divide, then it is well shown by two recent works of fiction: the Fox movie production *The Day After Tomorrow* and the novel, *State of Fear*.<sup>39</sup> The film ignited a debate in the scientific community devoted to studying and rectifying global climate change, for some saw the portrayal as a positive catalyst for public advocacy, others, as unscientific fear mongering. It also managed to inflame conservatives for depicting global climate change as having a sudden tipping point where dramatic weather changes of catastrophic magnitude occur rapidly.

Meanwhile, best selling novel, *State of Fear*, by Michael Crichton, offers a provocative conservative portrayal of the environmental movement.<sup>40</sup> Though he professes that “this is a work of fiction”, it comes with “references to real people,

---

<sup>38</sup> Bjorn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>39</sup> Michael Crichton, *State of Fear* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004). It is worth noting, not without irony, that both Harper Collins Publishers and Fox Movies are subsidiaries of News Corporation.

<sup>40</sup> There is an illuminating addendum to the book's possible policy-making influence. According to a recent book, *Rebel in Chief* by Fred Barnes, as quoted in *The New York Times*, Michael Crichton was a recent visitor to the White House to meet with President Bush. According to the article, “Barnes, who describes Bush as ‘a dissenter on the theory of global warming,’ writes that the President ‘avidly read’ the novel and talked with the author after Karl Rove, Bush’s chief political advisor, arranged their meeting. He says Bush and his guest ‘talked for an hour and were in near-total agreement. The visit was not made public for fear of outraging environmentalists all the more.’ And so it has, fueling a common perception among environmental groups that Crichton’s dismissal of global warming, coupled with his popularity as a novelist and screenwriter, has undermined efforts to pass legislation intended to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, a gas that leading scientists say causes climate change.” Michael Janofsky, *The New York Times*, February 19, 2006.

institutions, and organizations” that are “accurate” and “real.”<sup>41</sup> For example, Lomborg’s book is praised highly. So too, is the work of right wing conservative Peter Huber, *Hard Green*. The novel depicts environmentalists as religious-like zealots engineering to artificially create conditions of dramatic climate change. Environmentalists aim to “convert” the world to their cause through the malevolent orchestration of a seemingly natural catastrophe. Juxtaposed, these two works of fiction illustrates the deep cultural divide separating liberal and conservative views with respect to the environment just as the Lomborg book did in academic circles.

Despite burgeoning academic and popular concern and debate over global warming, the role of consumption remains relatively unaddressed as a significant variable in the equation. In fact, American conservatives willing to publicly criticize excess consumption are few and far between. Although Dinesh D’Souza asserts that

Many conservatives feel they are living in a society where economic capital is rising and moral capital is being depleted, where “wealth accumulates, and men decay.’.... Some right-wingers charge that capitalism produces affluence and affluence produces moral degeneracy, especially in the children of the affluent.<sup>42</sup>

D’Souza may share these sentiments, but this is not the prevailing conservative view, nor are such concerns ecologically driven. While he is optimistic about a right-wing change in direction, or rather, its call back to a conservative ethos of industriousness and frugality, its sometime articulation is motivated by moral concern. Few conservatives find common ground with left-leaning environmentalists. Except for free market outliers, soon described, the prevailing view remains preponderantly skeptical and suspicious of all things environmental. When materialism is condemned, social mores underlie motive,

---

<sup>41</sup> Crichton., Preface.

<sup>42</sup> Dinesh D’Souza, *The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno-affluence* (New York: Free Press, 2000), pp. 47 – 48.

not ecology. Thus consumption is critiqued not holistically but selectively, stressing the types of consumption that appear to threaten traditional family values. Thus, for example, sexually explicit material leads to “moral degeneracy”, but driving a gas guzzling SUV is not only justifiable, but is characterized as a *right*, an implicit American right, as intensely defended as, say, the right to keep and bear arms.<sup>43</sup> Most revealing, is the angry free-market conservative response to the President of the United States’ assertion that Americans are “addicted to oil.”

Free-market conservatives staunchly advocate liberal market principles and mercantile practices. Given this, the motives for their anti-environmentalism are straightforward. Their worst fears are that environmental oversight, regulation and protection are incongruous with free market enterprise and private property rights. Of all the conservatisms depicted, the logic underlying their green skepticism, at first glance, makes perfect sense. Consumption is particularly well regarded, given its integral role in sustaining market society. Hyper-consumption, continuing demand for supply, not only must be sustained, but encouraged to grow further. But these anointed values are cherished without much reflection on the incongruities such new and narrow conservatism entails. The paradox is the neglect of the ameliorative promise of green market mechanisms. Global environmental redress is compatible, not contestable, with

---

<sup>43</sup> Lest this be construed as hyperbole, evidence of an assumption of fuel consumption as an American “right” is found in free market businesses clearly torn between articulating a conservation ethos while self-interestedly assuring Americans of this entitlement. Witness, for example, an ExxonMobil advertisement “Driving for Efficiency” published in *The New York Times*, March 16, 2006, p. A26. After touting ExxonMobil’s collaboration with the transportation industry to achieve greater fuel efficiency, the advertisement ends with the assurance that although “partnerships with leading vehicle manufacturers ... could dramatically improve efficiency and reduce emissions”, not to worry, it will be done “without restricting America’s ‘right to drive.’”

traditional conservative thought incorporating an environmental ethos with advocacy of capitalist markets. Green conservatism need not be an oxymoron.

### *Free Market Outliers*

Notwithstanding the irreconcilable, obstinate eco-skeptic mindset of free-market conservatives, there is, in short order, a green commerce revolution in the making. Given the success of earlier adapters to green business practices other companies are attempting to follow in their footsteps.<sup>44</sup> This group is growing rapidly and holds much promise for green, practical business innovation and practice. Outliers in this type principally overlap liberalism in their devotion to free markets and private property rights. Thus, this group of actors embracing green capital endeavors is not necessarily passionately aligned to free-market conservative organizations and principles as earlier described. Their motives are diverse and their green ambitions situated anywhere between sheer ecological altruism to sheer pursuit of profit.

Before describing the ensuing green revolution, it is important to keep in mind that knowledgeable scholars of conservatism argue that the tradition is not compatible with staunch advocacy of private property rights to the exclusion of communal obligation. In other words, these entrepreneurial, green endeavors do not contradict classical conservatism. For example, Peter Viereck concurs that there is “conservative... pride” in private property, but this concession is made with strong qualifications:

---

<sup>44</sup> One path breaking example is Toyota’s enormous success with the launch of their second generation hybrid Prius. Their innovative technology is now being sought by other car manufactures as they attempt to catch up with keen consumer interest in fuel efficient vehicles. As a successful early adapter, Toyota continues to dominate and out-profit their competition.



[Conservatives] argue that private property is a bulwark protecting not merely one class but all classes from chaos. Anyone who gains hugely from property may, when criticized, invoke conservative arguments out of sheer self-interest. Here lies the source of the bad name often given to the word “conservative.” A mere conservatism of the pocketbook deserves that bad name; far from being a bulwark against revolution, its irresponsibility often provokes revolution. More responsible conservatives, like Disraeli or John Adams, defend property, their material base, only when linked with a moral base: service to the community. They distinguish sharply between a traditional, rooted property of service and a grasping, rootless property, not yet mellowed by time. It is only the loose journalistic use of “conservative,” not the use by serious philosophical conservatives like Burke, . . . , that identifies conservatism with economic commercialism or with the particular position held by America’s Old Guard Republicans.<sup>45</sup>

Thus much of what self-identifies as free-market conservatism today is not compatible with the tradition’s origins. This same point is unequivocally made by Anthony Quinton:

Conservative parties certainly represent the interests of substantial property owners. But, unlike right-wing liberals, individualists and libertarians, conservatives do not follow Locke in taking the right to property to be absolute and indefeasible. Their ideal of property-ownership is agricultural, even feudal. Property is a trust rather than a matter of absolute right of use and disposal. Its possession carries with it responsibilities as well as rights. That is the theme of much past conservative criticism of industrialization and of unfettered free enterprise....

Both property and the family are continuing arrangements which develop in their owners and members a sense of the community as something historically extended and persisting, not a bare arena for the pursuit of immediate satisfaction.<sup>46</sup>

It becomes increasingly clear that the contributions of earlier thinkers appropriated by modern American conservatism, such as Burke, Smith and Hamilton, were never disposed to argue the primary right of commerce and property. Rather, commerce was viewed as an important variable in sustaining other principles and benefits in a civil society. There is value in recalling what even David Hume was disposed to foreshadow:

The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent soever they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men. This maxim is true in general; though I cannot forbear

---

<sup>45</sup> Peter Viereck, *From John Adams to Winston Churchill: Conservative Thinkers* (New Brunswick, (U.S.A.): Transaction Publishers, 2006, originally published, 1956), p. 14.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony Quinton, “Conservatism” in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995). Eds. by Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit, pp. 258-259.

thinking that it may possibly admit exceptions, and that we often establish it with too little reserve and limitation. There may be some circumstances, where the commerce, and riches, and luxury of individuals, instead of adding strength to the public, will serve only to thin its armies, and diminish opinions, principles, and rules of conduct. What may be true, will be found false, when he has embraced an opposite set of manners and opinions.<sup>47</sup>

Hume is mindful that the prospect of an alternative proposition, that commerce of unbridled wealth and commerce unwittingly creates just those conditions he knew would weakened sovereignties restricting commerce and private enterprise, is worthy of our modern contemplation.

With these incongruities in mind, it is clear that *ideologically-driven* outliers in this category are few and far between. They exist but tend to straddle other types of conservatism too, so that free markets are a valued tenet, but subordinate to other values. What this type includes is *practically-driven* businesses, some of them quite large, that have taken on the green as an entrepreneurial challenge to make greener products, promote sustainable growth, recycling, fair labor laws, and strict environmental standards that often exceed regulatory requirements. This approach is well conceived in the book *Natural Capitalism* and it has made the case strong enough to influence environmentally inclined free market types.<sup>48</sup> These ideas have had practical consequences. There are, for example, marketing consultants that provide specialized services in sustainable, environmentally sound goods and services. J. Ottman Consulting provides green marketing ideas to their clients. Its website states:

We believe that addressing the issues of sustainable development can lead to innovation, differentiation and profit. Working closely with your team, we can help you integrate sustainability into your products and marketing. Leveraging our sixteen years of experience in

---

<sup>47</sup> David Hume, Esq., "Of Commerce" *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (Edinburgh, 1817 edition), Vol. I, p. 251.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1999).

this field, we will help you avoid the guesswork, lessen the risks, and maximize the opportunity for profitable results.<sup>49</sup>

In a recent article in the journal *Environment*, the company founder, Jacquelyn Ottman and two other authors, explain some of the complexities involved in green marketing, its failure and success stories. They argue that the “green,” in and of itself, is rarely a successful marketing strategy unless it captures broader consumer interest by emphasizing, for example, that the product is also more efficient, less costly, better quality or has more status than its less green competition. “Many environmental products have become so common and widely distributed that many consumers may no longer recognize them as green because they buy them for non-green reasons.” The article goes on to note that

The diversity and availability of green products indicate that consumers are not indifferent to the value offered by environmental benefits. Consumers are buying green – but not necessarily for environmental reasons. The market growth of organic foods and energy-efficient appliances is because consumers desire their perceived safety and money savings, respectively.<sup>50</sup>

The article points to the remarkable success of the Toyota Prius as a green innovation that, in their view, captured consumer interest for reasons other than solely green motive. What both the consultancy and article convey is a sense of fusion, of mass-appeal, as green consumption attracts not just the staunch green consumer but consumers more generally. The normative implications of increasing green consumption, its integration into a more general milieu, has significant implications from marketing and environmental perspectives.

---

<sup>49</sup> Their website can be viewed at <http://www.greenmarketing.com/index.html>, accessed on July 23, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> Jacquelyn Ottman, Edwin R. Stafford and Cathy L. Hartman, “Avoiding Green Marketing Myopia”, *Environment* (Washington: June 2006, Vol. 48, Iss. 5; pg. 22, 16pgs).

Another incentive for businesses to “go green” is found in the concrete examples of success some earlier green businesses provide, thus motivating other companies to follow suit. Even companies in the energy sector, British Petroleum comes to mind, have endeavored to become greener, spending significantly more money on research and development for alternative renewable energy resources. General Electric recently launched and publicized an ambitious new green initiative.<sup>51</sup> General Electric CEO Jeffrey R. Immelt writes on the company “ecoimagination” web site:

We will establish partnerships with our customers to tackle their most pressing environmental challenges and double our research spending to develop the products and services they need. And we will use these technologies to improve our own energy efficiency and environmental performance. Increasing for business, “green” is green.

Not left behind is another major corporation. DuPont has a new initiative to use biologically based materials as energy alternatives to fossil fuels.<sup>52</sup> Charles O. Holliday Jr., the Chief Executive Officer, has embarked DuPont on an ambitious new venture aiming to capitalize on their expertise in biotechnology. “Unlike most chemical companies” DuPont “has allocated nearly 10 percent of its \$1.3 billion research budget to extracting ingredients from carbohydrates – things that grow and can be infinitely replaced – rather than from hydrocarbons, which are mined or drilled and readily depleted.”<sup>53</sup> Already, “10 percent of its products [are] from nonpetrochemical substances” a figure that DuPont’s CEO aims to reach “25 percent by 2010.” DuPont recognizes that their ambitions are not without considerable fiduciary investment and the possibility of failure. The road “is long, arduous and risky” and agricultural markets, that

---

<sup>51</sup> GE’s “ecoimagination” can be viewed at [http://ge.ecoimagination.com/@v=03062006\\_1150@/index.html](http://ge.ecoimagination.com/@v=03062006_1150@/index.html), accessed on March 8, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Claudia H. Deutsch, “DuPont Looking to Displace Fossil Fuels as Building Blocks of Chemicals” *The New York Times*, February 28, 2006, p. C1.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p.C1.

is, corn crops in DuPont's case, are "inherently volatile."<sup>54</sup> Other chemical companies remain on the sideline, unwilling to harbor the risk, retaining their skepticism given the expenses involved and the uncertainty of future profitability. But Holliday has plausible reasons for investing considerable amounts of DuPont's profits into this endeavor.

The way Mr. Holliday sees it, so-called industrial biotechnology can solve myriad problems. It can insulate DuPont from the relentless rise in gas and oil prices. It can win kudos from environmentalists and shareholders who worry about the harmful effect of extracting and burning oil. It can play well in Washington, particularly since a quest for alternate energy sources was a crucial point in President Bush's State of the Union message.... But...Mr. Holliday stressed his real motive in pushing for bio-based materials: his belief that they yield better products.<sup>55</sup>

Another interesting aspect of DuPont's initiative is its ongoing collaboration with the United States Energy Department. They are working together to turn corn plants into fuel. Clearly these bold and costly steps are dependent upon executive leadership willing to take risks, invariably risks that include the prospect of alienating a powerful constituency of free-market conservative supporters.

Of course, one huge "elephant in the closet" is that both General Electric and DuPont have past legacies of catastrophic environmental damage. The repercussions of some of their missteps and negligence still reverberate in multiple ways: the human and natural harms, as well as the still hefty residual burden of protracted, costly litigation. Their past environmental records point to an odd irony: some of the boldest green initiatives are being launched by notorious past perpetrators.

There are, inevitably, tertiary advantages associated with enhancing a company's poor public image. But despite the clear benefits in countering public perception of poor environmental stewardship, it is unlikely that businesses as large and profitable as

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p.C15.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. C1.

DuPont would invest so ambitiously in these new greener prospects without the potential for considerable future profit. Undoubtedly, the approval of mainstream environmental organizations, the government, consumers and the general public, are welcome. But a publicly held company's paramount obligation remains its fiduciary responsibility to shareholders and insuring future profitability. It is unlikely these initiatives would be made without clear-sighted, long-term commitment to strong returns.

A veritable number of prominent companies, including Whole Foods, Ford Motor Company, Wal-Mart, and Texas Instruments, have launched new green initiatives for their facilities and products. Indicative of this growing trend, Goldman Sachs, for example, recently made the decision to "join a growing list of large companies that have adopted environment-protection policies, with guidelines on how its 'people, capital and ideas' can be used to effect change, such as by refusing to finance companies involved in illegal logging."<sup>56</sup> Goldman Sachs invested \$30 million dollars (Canadian) into Logen Corp., an Ottawa business that converts agricultural materials such as straw, corn stalks, and switchgrass into cellulosic ethanol. According to the *International Herald Tribune*, they "have now risked more than \$1 billion on renewable-energy projects."<sup>57</sup> More specifically, the chief executive officer of the firm, Henry M. Paulson Jr. deserves credit for the company's environmental initiatives. In early 2006, he gave a \$100 million dollar gift of his own company stock to a foundation "dedicated to conservation and environmental education." As *The New York Times* reports:

The donation was further proof of Mr. Paulson's unflagging devotion to a cause that generally does not rank high among Wall Street chief executives. Mr. Paulson, who shuns golf

---

<sup>56</sup> "Green Means" *The Wall Street Journal*, November 26-27, 2005, p. B3.

<sup>57</sup> Op-ed, "Let them go green," *International Herald Tribune*, June 24, 2006, p. 6.

for bird-watching walks in Central Park, is the chairman of the Nature Conservancy and the chairman emeritus of the Peregrine Fund.

And he has not shied away from mixing the business of Goldman with his environmental activism. Goldman Sachs is one of the few Wall Street firms that has a detailed environmental policy. Last year, the firm, at Mr. Paulson's request, donated 680,000 acres in Chile to the Wildlife Conservation Society. The move elicited a shareholder resolution from an activist group that broadly accused Mr. Paulson of putting his own personal environmental passions ahead of shareholder interests. The resolution was voted down.<sup>58</sup>

Speculation at Goldman Sachs, in Washington, and the media that Paulson may replace John W. Snow as President George Bush's Treasury secretary turned into a reality upon President Bush's nomination and Paulson's acceptance. Such a move from private business to the public sphere, like his predecessor at the firm, Jon Corzine, now Governor of New Jersey, suggests even further ability to influence environmental policy-making within the Republican Party. While his green activism may be a rare phenomenon on Wall Street, the business world is not without other individuals of similar means and commitment. Of course, Paulson was not selected to head up the EPA or Department of the Interior this appointment may prove environmentally provident in less direct ways.

Other philanthropic, affluent free-marketers, who may or may not have a conservative disposition but nonetheless are representative of this green trend, have also been giving substantial gifts to environmental organizations. For example, Robert W. Wilson, a wealthy hedge fund manager, recently gave three 100 million dollar challenge grants to the Environmental Defense, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Nature Conservancy. Not be omitted as exemplars extraordinaire of the philanthropic impulse are the Bill Gates family and Warren Buffet. Although primarily dedicated to global

---

<sup>58</sup> Landon Thomas Jr., "Is Paulson Going Public? Wall Street Wonders if the Goldman Sachs Chief Will Go to Washington". *The New York Times*, Business Day, April 7, 2006, p. C1.

health and education, the Gates Foundation is so exceptionally well-endowed that it has, and will continue to have, a formidable role in achieving its goals.<sup>59</sup>

According to Bloomberg News, prominent individuals and corporations interested in green investment, include Morgan Stanley, Bill Gates (whose passions are clearly wide in scope), MetLife, Chevron, and venture capitalist Vinod Khosla. They are all investing or seriously considering investment in the ethanol business.<sup>60</sup> Meanwhile, General Motors Corp. aims to double production of vehicles capable of running on 85 percent ethanol. Some of this interest is due to the Energy Policy Act that President Bush recently signed, for it will subsidize these ventures until 2012. Many states too, offer subsidies and incentives or mandate that government vehicles run partially on ethanol fuel. Of course, if oil and natural gas prices were lower and these government incentives did not exist, then investment would wither. In the 1970s there was an ethanol investment boom that turned bust when oil prices plummeted. Nonetheless, many of these investors do not think history will repeat itself. Ethanol investors are confident that oil prices will remain historically high as supply cannot keep up with surging global demand and government ethanol subsidies now exist.

A smorgasbord of recent media headlines indicate green business momentum: “Ford unveils mini-fleet of hybrid NY taxis”, “Wal-Mart To Seek Savings in Energy”, “GM turns to smaller vehicles”, and “Wal-Mart Donates \$35 Million for Conservation.” The personal commitment of top leadership within these diverse companies should not be

---

<sup>59</sup> For information on the scope and largesse of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, see its website at <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/default>, accessed on July 22, 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Joe Carroll, “Goldman, Gates Bet Ethanol Boom Won’t Repeat ‘80s-Style Bust” from Bloomberg News, May 25, 2006. Subscriber access – article on file in Free Market folder.



underestimated as a substantive variable in transforming the current anti-environmentalism of America's political leadership.

There is another unfolding dynamic indicative of a burgeoning green business sensibility; the insurance industry merits attention. The greening of insurance companies likely has more to do with profit than pollution. It is clear that their future economic self-interest will be linked to environmental problems and their amelioration. Here, insurance company executives are becoming increasingly aware of the likelihood of larger compensation payouts from clients with loss and damage claims attributable to volatile weather patterns. The uncertainties surrounding predicting future weather patterns impacts the insurance industry's assessments of risk in underwriting natural disaster policies. As it is, certain types of coverage are difficult to acquire or quite expensive. Flood insurance in low lying coastal areas, for example, is indicative of the industry's reluctance to harbor the risk of coverage. Their own statisticians' actuarial tables increasingly guide them toward cautious and costly coverage assessments. Newer data may indicate higher risk than past modeling foretold. Thus, this industry as a whole has considerable economic incentive to lobby against global warming. If science continues to affirm their in-house predictions that climate change will increase the volatility and frequency of natural disasters, then the insurance industry's concerns will be pro-actively galvanized to even greater degree. Their collective political influence should not be underestimated not only because of their formidable ability to lobby, but also because more expensive policies will affect the insured's ability to pay for adequate coverage. The insured include individuals, small and large businesses. Their collective dismay at rising insurance premiums, in turn, will likely increase the pressure for political

remedy. In fact, faced with the likelihood of significant government expenditures to ameliorate the prospect of a growing problem in affording reasonable coverage – Katrina comes to mind – eventually may influence public policy making too.

The reality is that it is increasingly difficult *not* to find evidence of business green ventures both large and small. Other promising green examples include greener innovations in architecture, furniture design, eco-cities, eco-tourism and investment opportunities. The daily local, national and international papers provide frequent evidence of these trends. A local paper may have an article on green appliances. More cosmopolitan venues, such as *The New York Times*, contain nearly daily articles describing green-minded businesses, in the building of homes, offices, as well as an expanding plethora of products, services and accouterments. And the May 2006 *Vanity Fair* was primarily devoted to “special green issue” with sundry articles and a front cover featuring George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Al Gore, and Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

One intriguingly bizarre manifestation is the efforts of commercial real estate developer Robert Congel, “an avid Bush supporter”, to embark on an even more Quixotic quest: to green the quintessential symbol of American consumption, the shopping mall. As he explains it, “Today our kids are dying in a war for oil. Petroleum addiction is destroying our country, our economy, our environment.”<sup>61</sup> His ambition is to build “an outsize and extremely unusual mega-mall” in upstate New York that is “environmentally friendly.” This project, called “Destiny U.S.A.,” aspires to be built and then maintained solely through the use of renewable energy. Even the bulldozers will use bio-diesel, not foreign fossil fuels, in the mall’s construction. The scale of the mall is so enormous that

---

<sup>61</sup> Amanda Griscom Little, “The Mall That Would Save America”, *The New York Times Magazine*, July 3, 2005, p. 19.

it is estimated to cost over \$20 billion dollars and “All by itself ... boost America’s solar-electric power capacity by nearly 10 percent.” Congel’s determination to use only renewable energy in this project, needless to say, depends as much upon government support and the participation of major companies, such as Intel, Sony and Microsoft, as his personal zeal, to succeed. As the article notes, however:

Of course, Destiny’s success could be bittersweet to some: if Congel has his way, the road to eco-paradise will not only be paved; it will be glassed-in, climate-controlled and lined with shops.<sup>62</sup>

Congel envisions not only to helping an economically troubled area, Syracuse, but building “the mall that could save America by establishing a new model for green commercial development.”<sup>63</sup> It will be years before it becomes known whether this green mega-mall will ultimately be both green and profitable, but the drive to create it suggests future business and environmental synergy of enormous scale and scope.

Academic institutions have also begun to adopt more eco-friendly fuel efficient practices. Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York, for example, is building new dormitories that utilize geo-thermal heat from the earth deep below the buildings while the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia has committed itself to purchasing approximately 30 percent of its energy needs from wind power despite the fact that this now entails higher costs. The Environmental Protection Agency has recognized their green initiative by naming it “the top university consumer of renewable energy in the United States.”<sup>64</sup> The Peddie School, in Hightstown, New Jersey, recently completed

---

<sup>62</sup> *The New York Times Magazine*, p. 20.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20.

<sup>64</sup> Laura Mandel, “Penn again increases wind-power purchase” *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, April 19, 2006. [http://www.daily-pennsylvanian.com/vnews/display.v/ART/4445d200adc22?in\\_archive=1](http://www.daily-pennsylvanian.com/vnews/display.v/ART/4445d200adc22?in_archive=1), accessed on April 24, 2006.

construction of a new state-of-the-art science center designed to partially heat the facility with solar panels. This was an expensive endeavor primarily owed to the generosity of the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Foundation. As well, The Willow School in Gladstone, New Jersey recently won an award as New Jersey's "greenest" building. The elementary school was built with "recycled barn wood and pickle barrels, leftover bluestone from the 'Big Dig' highway project in Boston and stone benches made from old bridge stanchions."<sup>65</sup> Even the school's plumbing is state of the art: rain water and storm drain off are collected to flush the toilets. An initiative in Chicago, the Windy City is also underway. The city plans to place wind turbines on the roof of the Richard J. Daley courthouse, the city's tallest public building. The wind will be converted to electricity and, if successful, the city would expand the project to other public properties. The goal is to generate at least 20 percent of the city government's electric consumption from renewable resources by 2010. They have also purchased solar panels for some city buildings. One of their main concerns is not the efficacy of these projects, but safety considerations. The wind turbines need to be well-secured given the likelihood of seasonal high wind gusts and designed to deter ice buildup. Because of rising fuel costs and greater public awareness, initiatives such as these are no longer exceptional. They are likely indicative of early adaptation to an unfolding phenomenon.

These initiatives depict an unfolding revolutionary new mind-set within the business world. If successful, companies such as DuPont are likely to be admired for their foresight as visionary early adaptors to global environmental realities of scarcity and rising costs. Their willingness to address the side effects of modernity's industry,

---

<sup>65</sup> Antoinette Martin, "Developers Start to Think 'Green'" *The New York Times*, January 23, 2005, NJ, p. 14.

environmental depletion and degradation, place these companies on the cusp of a new, post-industrial ethos incorporating the green.

Of course, there is much more to this story that illustrates the potential synergy existing between the private sector and government policy-making. One exceptional example is the Brazilian government's long-standing effort to wean their country off of foreign fossil fuels. As *The Wall Street Journal* recently described, the government takes much credit for their success in discouraging fossil fuels imports in order to utilize the country's abundant domestic resource, ethanol, which derives from agricultural resources, such as sugar (in Brazil's case) and corn.<sup>66</sup> Revealingly, the paper's byline is "Government's Central Role May Prove Unpalatable to U.S." The government's efforts were years in the making and "took determination that at times seemed foolhardy." Yet today, Brazil's foresight is viewed with global envy and emulative speculation. This critical example exemplifies the potential benefits of synergy between government and private sector.

Inevitably, government endeavors such as these do not sit well with CATO-like conservatives because of their enduring distaste for the interference of government in the private sector, particularly when subsidies or tax incentives are part of the equation. In fact, the *Cato Handbook on Policy*, in a section on "Ethanol Subsidies" is most revealing.

The handbook finds it unlikely that:

...ethanol reduces America's dependence on foreign oil. Yet oil dependence has increased even as ethanol subsidies have done the same. The reason is that ethanol requires nearly as much or even more oil to produce than is saved at the point of combustion in a vehicle's engine. Accordingly, ethanol is a way of processing oil into fuel; it is not a substitute for oil.

---

<sup>66</sup> David Luhnow, "How Brazil Broke Its Oil Habit" *The Wall Street Journal*, February 6, 2006, p. A9.

In sum, ethanol subsidies cannot be defended from an economic or an environmental perspective. Their political appeal is the only rationale for federal support.<sup>67</sup>

The most intriguing aspect of the Cato Institute's position is the thunderous omission of Brazil. The section on ethanol never addresses Brazilian efforts. Why might that be? Could the Cato Institute credibly address their now apparent success? Even *The Wall Street Journal* lauds Brazil for its stalwart foresight. A tertiary problem is that ethanol subsidies favor domestic corn producers because the subsidies are negated by tariffs on foreign ethanol. The Bush administration has attempted to have the legislative branch remove the tariff in order to increase the supply of ethanol to Americans, but, so far, these efforts have been blocked by legislators with strong farm state support. At first glance, subsidies for ethanol production may seem merited, given the country's energy dependence on fossil fuels, but not when it compromises the tenets of global free trade. It is the American consumer that ultimately pays the price in higher ethanol prices and less supply of a promising alternative resource when foreign producers cannot compete thanks to tariffs.

But what might an American business executive think of the prospect of utilizing ethanol more in American vehicles? Revealingly, for example, a public-policy manager at the Ford Motor Company concedes that in order to emulate the Brazilian model, "We need government policy to do its part."<sup>68</sup> Although there are complex environment and distribution challenges that make it unlikely that this model is easily replicable in the United States, even with its own abundance of corn crops, the Brazilian example stands

---

<sup>67</sup> "Ethanol Subsidies" *Cato Handbook on Policy*, 2005, pp. 450-452.

<sup>68</sup> *The Wall Street Journal*, February 6, 2006, p. A9.

as a clarifying rebuttal to free market conservative views that flatly reject government collaboration.

President Bush's recent State of the Union may portend an emerging possibility of greater collaboration and incentives between the federal government and big business. Nonetheless, critics of the current administration's environmental policies remain dubious that these belated presidential calls for conservation and pursuit of alternative energy sources will be followed through upon by the federal government with substantive determination and investment. Conversely, the President's staunchest supporters are increasingly agitated by the prospect of change in his policy positions regarding energy consumption and resources.

Another notable change is seen in the public commentary of prominent business executives that are often critical of the Bush administration's position on global warming. Just as many outlying evangelicals recently illustrate, these free-market voices have deviated from the majority view. When concerns are made publicly by energy executives, it may appear as oddly incongruous as tobacco companies launching initiatives to quit smoking or fast food companies imploring caloric restriction and warning of the medical consequences of obesity.

But there is method to their seeming madness. Lord Browne, the Group Chief Executive of British Petroleum, for example, wrote an essay in *Foreign Affairs* in 2004 called "Beyond Kyoto." Browne writes that "clear-eyed realism is essential."<sup>69</sup> He is optimistic about reaching international agreement for "great causes acquire lives of their own" and argues that the private sector has a critical role in combating global warming:

---

<sup>69</sup> Lord John Browne of Madingley, "Beyond Kyoto" *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2004, Vol. 83, #4, p. 20.

Business, in particular, is accustomed to making decisions in conditions of considerable uncertainty, applying its experience and skills to areas of activity where much is unknown. That is why it will have a vital role in meeting the challenge of climate change – and why the contribution it is already making is so encouraging.<sup>70</sup>

In Lord Browne’s view, the Kyoto Protocol was “simply the starting point” in a long ambitious journey. His willingness to argue that global warming is a real problem and that businesses share responsibility in its remediation is commendably frank. And it is not just a philosophical change of heart, this has entailed changes in the company’s business practices, as BP is developing ambitious new alternative projects designed to curtail the prodigious amount of emissions expelled in their industry. Three additional factors warrant this change in policy besides green altruism. First, some of these endeavors are viewed as business opportunities that while costly in the long run will lead to “green” profits too. Second, many countries, and states, notably California, have begun mandating ceilings on carbon emissions. The final factor is more normative than practical but it is not insignificant; that is the anticipation of good public relations with consumers.

Other multinational energy companies are following suit, reassessing their perspective and practice. Royal Dutch Shell, for practical example, has embarked on an innovative experiment to take carbon dioxide emissions, previously released in the atmosphere and pipe them directly into Dutch greenhouses growing flowers.<sup>71</sup> It is a modest enterprise so far, but, if successful, a brilliantly conceived attempt to recycle one factor in global warming into a more environmentally aware and profitable manner. Shell also sponsors the Shell Eco-Marathon, an annual event where state-of-the-art

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>71</sup> Jad Mouawad, “A Refinery Clears the Air To Grow Roses: Oil Industry Moves to Curb Carbon Emissions” *The New York Times*, June 30, 2006, p. C1.



vehicles, often hydrogen and/or electric powered, compete for the greatest fuel efficiency. Some of the competitors are achieving remarkable, unheard of efficiencies, such as the Swiss PAC-CAR II, with equivalent energy use that compares to one gallon of U.S. gasoline going 12,670 miles. Remarkable too, its designers claim that its only emissions are water.<sup>72</sup> Such technological and environmental advances point to the tangible prospect of a far greener world. As the first section of this chapter details, however, these initiatives remain cutting edge as the prevailing free-market conservative business norm largely remains unwilling to even concede to the ominous consequences that stem from gross fuel inefficiency and man-made global emissions.

Such reversals in policy and practice point to an intriguing aspect of entrepreneurial capitalism; its resilience and absorbing capacity to ingeniously reengineer its goals and products despite the formidable costs and risks such revision incur on its short-term profitability. More surprising, is the prospect of a snowball effect as other energy companies join the bandwagon, conceding, albeit often reluctantly, the seriousness of global warming. The following advertisement placed by ExxonMobil is illustrative of these tensions:

‘Climate change is a serious and long-term challenge that has the potential to affect every part of the globe.’ [This] quote – *with which we agree entirely* – [was] among those endorsed by government leaders at the recent G8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland.<sup>73</sup>

While the sincerity of some energy company’s public platitudes may be suspect, particularly from companies that made momentous profits after post-Katrina and have yet to invest substantial profits in new technologies, it suggests something intriguing

---

<sup>72</sup> For details visit the Shell website on the eco-marathon at <http://www.shell.com/home/Framework?siteId=eco-marathon-en>, accessed on July 22, 2006.

<sup>73</sup> “Research into climate solutions” an advertisement by ExxonMobil in *The New York Times*, August 4, 2005, p. A19. (Emphasis added).

regarding the interaction between the United States government and big business. Given the unwillingness of the Bush administration to even seriously address global warming, these concessions by energy companies illuminate profound divergence among an influential constituency. Their views ultimately may persuade policy-makers as to the direness of climate change.

Conversely, in bits and pieces, there are government officials from all over the globe pushing big business to take on some of the responsibility. As *The Standard* reports “Ministers from China, the United States, India, Japan, South Korea and Australia met top executives from mining and energy companies ...to seek high-tech ways of addressing the issue” at a recent international conference in Sydney. This conference was an attempt to implore large energy companies to spend billions of dollars on reducing harmful pollutants. Government ministers aim to pressure companies to “‘step up to the plate’ and accept the task of halting warming.” The conference also garnered controversy from environmental activists because both the United States and Australia have not ratified protocols aimed at reducing greenhouse gases. “Critics said the conference is a smokescreen to divert attention from the US and Australian refusal to ratify Kyoto.”<sup>74</sup> Notwithstanding environmental criticism of such conferences, these forums are indicative of a rising sense of urgency in formidable pockets within both private and public sectors.

Another company that has been environmentally pro-active is Patagonia, a successful, high-end, predominantly outdoor clothing retailer. Their catalogue often

---

<sup>74</sup> Neil Sands, “Business hears call on climate” *The Standard*, China’s Business Newspaper, January 12, 2006. [http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news\\_print.asp?art\\_id=9714&sid=6210544](http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news_print.asp?art_id=9714&sid=6210544) accessed on March 3, 2006.

includes an environmental essay insert, written by prominent voices in environmentalism, such as recent pieces by Jared Diamond or Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Topics addressed include global warming or the failure of the present-day Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to address and fund critical domestic environmental issues. The political views of Patagonia are explicit; it is likely their activism accounts for much of their popularity with consumers. Unlike many companies in the garment industry, (often notorious in their operations or operatives in less developed country settings for indifference to workers' rights or to abiding by progressive environmental standards that are required in more developed nations), Patagonia is actively engaged in the production process to insure that their goods are as environmentally-friendly as possible. Patagonia products are often made out of recycled or organic materials. Another recent illustration of a changing business ethos is found in computer giant Dell's initiative to provide free recycling of its products to consumers.<sup>75</sup> In *Garbage Land*, Elizabeth Royte persuasively describes the global problem in the disposal of toxic "e-waste".<sup>76</sup> This crisis is particularly acute in the developing world where America's old computers, cell phones and other sundry electronic devices frequently wind up, its considerable e-waste "outsourced" to lands with little environmental oversight and much poverty. Thus companies that take responsibility for the disposal of their goods demonstrate substantive revision of their obligations to consumer and planet alike. It implicitly recognizes that the obligations of production do not end upon the sale and warranty of their goods, but must extend to the quality of their disposal as well. In this respect, the "distance"

---

<sup>75</sup> "Dell Will Offer Free Recycling For Its Computer Equipment," *Associated Press, Wall Street Journal*, June 29, 2006, p. D3.

<sup>76</sup> Elizabeth Royte, *Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2005). For specifics on the hazards and disposal of e-waste, see Chapter 8 "Mercury Rising" pp. 158-175.

problematic of consumption is ameliorated by the green initiatives of companies such as these. As more and more consumers become conscientious about where and how their goods and services originate, the more likely it is that other companies will follow the Patagonian and Dell models.

There is further evidence of seemingly incompatible cooperation between environmentalists and specific big businesses. A *Wall Street Journal* article in 2003 describes their surprising cooperation in order to protect the Alaskan rainforest. Why would big business get involved? Because

All three companies, [KB Home, Staples, Inc. and Hayward Lumber Inc.], have worked with the environmental group to devise policies aimed at reducing their dependence on wood taken from virgin forests like the Tongass, which ranks as the largest national forest in America. The policies have been developed, in some cases, following pressure from environmental groups and shareholders.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, the KB Home director of government and public affairs wrote the Forest Service stating that ... “we need not violate our most precious natural assets.” While the office supply store, Staples, proclaimed that “it was committed to phasing out paper products made from endangered forests.”<sup>78</sup>

One underestimated variable in the increasing collaboration between big business and environmental groups is the role of the consumer. Environmental activism alone will not prod private enterprise toward the green. It is the consumer that ultimately holds the key to understanding this dynamic. For example, the recent growth of the Whole Foods Company is driven by consumer demand for organic foods. Similar momentum is to be found in consumer demand in a growing array of environmentally conscientious goods

---

<sup>77</sup> Jim Carlton, “Big Businesses Oppose Logging In Alaska Forest” *The Wall Street Journal*, August 25, 2003, p. B1.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

and services. A *New York Times* article describes the phenomenon in the home improvement business.

These environmentally conscious stores, which sell such items as eco-timber and insulation made of recycled jeans, are poised to become a national presence.

‘The time is ripe, the market is ready, and the products are mature,’ said Greg Snowden, the chief executive of Green Fusion Design Center, in San Anselmo, Calif., which opened in 2004. He says he expects sales at Green Fusion, which is described on the company’s Web site as ‘a unique retail store, gallery and education center,’ to double, to \$2 million this year, compared with 2005.

Just a few years ago, green-minded homeowners were relegated to buying supplies in small stores with a limited selection of merchandise, most of it imported. But today the idea of green homebuilding is becoming more mainstream.<sup>79</sup>

Even more promising is the keen interest that more well-known retailers are taking in this burgeoning demand for greener products. As the article subsequently describes:

Not to be undone, Home Depot is testing a green theme in all of its Canadian stores. EcoOptions, as it is called, is part of a marketing effort that promotes environmentally friendly products, including natural fertilizer and mold-resistant drywall.

If Canadians respond, “we could imagine rolling it out in the U.S.,” said Ron Jarvis, a merchandising vice president at the Home Depot in Atlanta.

Wendy Liebmann, the president of WSL Strategic Retail, a retail consultancy in New York, says the Home Depot’s flirtation with green reflects a fundamental shift in consumer attitudes.

“There is a growing sensibility and sensitivity about taking care of ourselves, our homes, and our earth,” Ms. Liebmann said. “It’s not a fringe movement like we saw 15 years ago.”<sup>80</sup>

The growing market for green products is no longer a niche business as the preceding makes evident. Special sections in the media describe their growth and variety.<sup>81</sup>

Green production, however, is not without its critics. As even green marketers concede, there is nothing that is pure green, for much of what passes for green may be in the eye of the beholder with varying thresholds of acceptability. For example, the hybrid car may be considered “green” by its enthusiasts, but other environmentalists are

---

<sup>79</sup> Ernest Beck, “Earth-Friendly Materials Go Mainstream” *The New York Times*, January 5, 2006, p. F8.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, a special section on “The Business of Green: The New Black,” *The New York Times*, May 17, 2006, G1-G12. This insert contains a potpourri of articles including ones on collaboration between companies and environmental groups, General Electric, investment in renewable energy, green residential high-rises, recycling for profit, sustainable design and Eco-advertising by big businesses.

dismayed that the success of this technology means the abandonment of government commitments to investment in the building of quality mass transportation systems or to encouraging bicycle use and laying out bike paths. The fact that SUVs are increasingly sold with this technology only adds to the environmental concern that “going green” is a delusional and dubious proposition. Obviously, greener options exist.

One other concern is expressed by left-leaning social critics regarding the costs associated with these new greener products, such as organic food, clothes, homes with state-of-the-art green features, and other technological advances, such as appliances, fixtures, and vehicles that are far more efficient in their use of natural resources. Critics point to the huge costs attached to greener goods and services. Affluent, educated consumers buy these products. Whole Foods products, for example, are far more expensive than what an older neighborhood supermarket typically stocks on its shelves. Well aware of their reputation for pricey high-end products, the company recently launched an advertising campaign that emphasizes that they do, in fact, have competitive pricing, succumbing to the need to offer coupons and deals to consumers. But even given this, there is the prospect of an ever-increasing disparity in ability to afford these items. In the long-term, these greener goods and services translate into better health and less expensive consumption. Such privileges protect against environmental hazards or save money over time on the use of scarce natural resources that are vulnerable to pricing volatility. If these innovations do not become affordable to the many, then there is the danger of a *privileged, insular environmentalism* instead of a norm of communal responsibility to all of humanity. This is a legitimate concern, but it may well be that over time, as demand increases, greener products will become less expensive and more

readily available to a wider range of socio-economic classes. Indeed, as Alex MacGillivray claims, there is a “slippery slope from exotic luxury to banal commodity,” that what were once rare luxuries in cost and quantity “became utterly ubiquitous” in another era.<sup>82</sup> His account of the global spice trade is compelling historical evidence of the “democratizing [of] luxury.”<sup>83</sup>

A larger concern is whether any global increase in material ability is truly sustainable on a global scale. A related consideration is whether the mainstreaming of organic products will turn what has traditionally been localized into just another enormous agri-business venture where small farms and producers get swallowed up or pushed out by multi-national corporations with formidable supply demands. Thus, for example, Wal-Mart’s entry into the organic foods business is indicative of a double-edged sword: lower prices and healthier food for consumers, but with the likely risk of watering down the meaning of what constitutes organic labeling while eroding the local nature of organic commerce.<sup>84</sup>

Finally, mainstream environmental groups like the Sierra Club have helped encourage green business by promoting companies with green technology and by recommending the boycotting of companies with dismal records, such as ExxonMobil Corporation whose profits have skyrocketed while its reputation has sunk to perhaps its lowest nadir since Exxon Valdez oil spill. In fact, the United States Congress may be

---

<sup>82</sup> Alex MacGillivray, *A Brief History of Globalization: The Untold Story of Our Incredible Shrinking Planet*, (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2006), p. 94.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>84</sup> Melanie Warner, “Wal-Mart Eyes Organic Foods, and Brand Names Get in Line” *The New York Times*, May 12, 2006, Front Page and C4.

moving toward an examination of price gouging in the energy business, especially ExxonMobil, thanks to extraordinary earnings in 2005.

In the aftermath of Katrina, many energy companies reported record earnings in 2005. ExxonMobil announced a 43% increase in profits over the preceding year, taking in over \$340 billion in revenue and \$36.1 billion in profits. These were record breaking numbers in U.S. company history. They also rose to the number one spot on the Fortune 500 list for 2006, replacing Wal-Mart. Their departing chairman was given a retirement package (estimated at nearly \$400 million) that has even free-market conservatives cringing and politicians threatening congressional hearings. ChevronTexaco Corp. and ConocoPhillips also reported sizeable revenue increases, the former, 28 percent, the latter, 37 percent, moving them up the Fortune 500 list as well. Revealingly short-sighted is the frequent strategy of rewarding shareholders, top executives with stratospheric bonuses, or buying back company shares rather than investing their momentous gains into greener research and design.

ExxonMobil, in particular, has a notorious, well-deserved environmental reputation. Lee R. Raymond, the recently departed chairman is described as “abrasive,” a man “who dismissed fears of global warming and branded environmental activists ‘extremists.’” His replacement, Rex W. Tillerson, aspires that Exxon Mobil “no longer be the oil company that environmentalists love to hate.” Yet, “Mr. Tillerson noted, that he, like Mr. Raymond before him, remained unconvinced that there was ‘still significant uncertainty around all of the factors that affect climate change.’ This all suggests that the new chairman is primarily interested in “softening” the company’s reputation, but without making significant changes in their goals, for they remain “firmly committed to



oil and gas, not alternative energy.” According to the *New York Times*, “...despite the shift in style to a less adversarial tone, the substance of Exxon’s position has not changed with the new chairman.” Their intransigence clearly plays a sizeable role in their extraordinary revenues and profits.

But to its many critics, Exxon, based in Irving, Tex., is locked in an increasingly frustrating race for additional oil supplies and is failing to help develop alternative fuels, curb consumption and act on the real threat of global warming.

‘They have to be part of the solution,’ said Kert Davies, a research director at Greenpeace. ‘They have too much money; they are too powerful. Without Exxon pulling with the rest of the world, it will take longer to solve global warming.’

For Shawnee Hoover, the campaign director of Exxpose Exxon, a coalition of the nation’s leading environmental groups, including Greenpeace and the Sierra Club, ‘Exxon has this prehistoric culture.’

She added: ‘They dig their heels in.’

But at Exxon, executives see very little reason to alter a course that has proved exceptionally profitable.<sup>85</sup>

Despite its new attempt to revise its public image it seems clear that the company is not committed to adopting the green initiatives of other energy companies. Exxon Mobil exemplifies the worst consequences of tolerating unconstrained free-market practices.

Unless the United States government substantively applies larger penalties and incentives, as well as more stringent regulation of the energy industry, for the foreseeable future there will, unfortunately, remain companies rightly vilified for their environmental record and narrow focus on short term profits prioritized over greener business practices. Notwithstanding companies such as Exxon Mobil, it is increasingly evident that many other companies are motivated to change to greener businesses practices. Whether they are motivated by green altruism or calculated profit decision-making, or something in between, is almost beside the point *if* in the long run such strategies do lead to greater

---

<sup>85</sup> Jad Mouawad, “The New Face Of an Oil Giant: Exxon Mobil Style Shifts a Bit” *The New York Times* Business Day, March 30, 2006, p. C1.

For information on the Exxpose Exxon, see their website at <http://www.exxposeexxon.com/>, accessed on April 24, 2006.

conscientiousness and creativity. Although it is a given that some businesses have attempted to capitalize on consumer concerns, (to “greenwash” as it is called), without actually engaging in its practice, these unethical practices should not distract from a larger picture of a green revolution in the making.<sup>86</sup> There is increasing evidence of genuinely green initiatives in an expanding array of market sectors.

Of course, consumers have collective power in orchestrating this change by being prudently educated in their purchasing choices. If, for example, the coalition Exxpose Exxon can publicly deliver their message to a wider American audience, then it is likely that consumers will think twice about filling their tank at any Exxon Mobil station. In an unrelated but similar matter, the Bee County board in Texas has called for residents to boycott Exxon Mobil stations thanks to skyrocketing fuel prices and their record breaking profits. The move is not without its critics, who note that not only is Texas the heart of oil country, but that gas tax revenues help the district. Yet a recent Beeville Bee-Picayune poll showed that 72% of those polled supported the boycott. Grassroots actions such as this have tremendous potential.<sup>87</sup> So too, can investors make a difference by putting capital into promising green enterprises. Much of the green transformation in business practices derives from the influence and pressure of shareholders and consumers. Inevitably, however, an opposing investment strategy is also evident.<sup>88</sup> But

---

<sup>86</sup> For example, see Kimberly Lisagor, “How Green is Your Eco-Lodge? Here’s how to avoid ‘greenwashing,’ the scam that’s cashing in on the ecotourism boom,” *Men’s Journal*, February 2006, p. 34.

<sup>87</sup> AOLNews report viewed at:

<http://articles.news.aol.com/news/article.adp?id=20060430160209990003&ncid=NWS0001000000001>  
accessed on May 1, 2006.

<sup>88</sup> Conversely, an antithetical right-wing investment strategy also exists. The Free Enterprise Action Fund, for example, is committed to investing in companies not disposed toward “corporate social responsibility” believing that publicly held companies have no right to contribute company assets toward environmental or social justice organizations. For a detailed account of this, see Daniel Gross, “Thank You for Investing: A

there are many more emerging funds tailored for investment in businesses that emphasize social justice and environmental issues. As the price of oil has surged, for example, wind farms are capitalizing by selling bonds in their ventures. Collectively, these dynamics connote what the book *Natural Capitalism* extols:

Away from the shrill divisiveness of media and politics, people are remarkably consistent in what kind of future they envision for their children and grandchildren. The potential outcome of natural capitalism and sustainability also aligns almost perfectly with what American voters are saying: They want better schools, a better environment, safer communities, family-wage jobs, more economic security, stronger family support, lower taxes, more effective government, and more local control. In this, we are like all people and they are like us.

Natural capitalism is not about fomenting social upheaval. On the contrary, that is the consequences that will surely arise if fundamental social and environmental problems are not responsibly addressed. Natural capitalism is about choices we can make that can start to tip economic and social outcomes in positive directions. And it is already occurring – because it is necessary, possible, and practical.<sup>89</sup>

Not surprisingly the prevailing business consensus continues to contest if not undermine environmental science in the political arena of policy-making. Yet these outlying green free-market proponents deviate from this staunch free-market perspective in promising and tangible ways. The maturation of green entrepreneurialism is worth an attentive eye in the years to come. Surely green free-market devotees will expound and expand upon this growing ethos, promulgating greener business norms, practices, and products that, in all likelihood, will increasingly be viewed as “necessary, possible, and practical.”

---

very curious right-wing mutual fund” at Slate.com, <http://www.slate.com/id/2140997/>, accessed on May 10, 2006.

<sup>89</sup> Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (Boston: Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Company, 1999) p. 322.

## Chapter V

### National Security Conservatives

*It is an incontestable truth, that there is more havoc made on one year by men, of men, than has been made by all the lions, tigers, panthers, ounces, leopards, hyenas, rhinoceroses, elephants, bears, and wolves, upon their several species, since the beginning of the world; though these agree ill enough with each other, and have a much greater proportion of rage and fury in their composition than we have.*

Edmund Burke, 1756

*To prove that these sorts of policed societies are a violation offered to nature, and a constraint upon the human mind, it needs only to look upon the sanguinary measures, and instruments of violence which are every where used to support them. Let us take a review of the dungeons, whips, chains, racks, gibbets, with which every society is abundantly stored, by which hundreds of victims are annually offered up to support a dozen or two in pride and madness, and millions in an abject servitude and dependence. There was a time, when I looked with reverential awe on these mysteries of policy; but age, experience, and philosophy, have rent the veil; and I view this sanctum sanctorum, at least, without any enthusiastic admiration. I acknowledge indeed, the necessity of such a proceeding in such institutions; but I must have a very mean opinion of institutions where such proceedings are necessary*

Edmund Burke, 1756

The American Air Force announced an initiative to find alternative energy resources to supplement the enormous quantities of fossil fuel consumed by its aircrafts and tanks in May of 2006. “Energy is a national security issue” said Michael A. Aimone, the Air Force assistant deputy chief of staff for logistics.<sup>1</sup> This Air Force goal is not to find green, renewable resources, but to utilize coal or “Syntroleum”, a synthetic fuel derived from natural gas. Nor does it aim to prioritize the fuel efficiency of their military equipment. But when oil prices get above 40 to 45 dollars a barrel (presently, they are well over 70 dollars a barrel), the Air Force believes that this is a cost-effective initiative.

---

<sup>1</sup> Thom Shanker, “Military Plans Tests in Search for an Alternative to Oil-Based Fuel,” *The New York Times*, May 14, 2006, p. A16.

But their recent objective begs the question. Why, given decades of awareness as to the obvious security and geo-political repercussions oil shortages, prices surges, and escalating global demand and competition for finite resources presented, were objectives such as this not well-sustained following the 1973 oil embargo by conservative national security experts?

Most of the energy conservation steps that Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter launched in the aftermath of the oil embargo were dismantled during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. Dorothy Wickenden describes what happened:

He (Jimmy Carter) and Congress... took on the energy emergency with a vigor that seems unimaginable these days. They deregulated oil and gas prices, created the Department of Energy, and got utilities to increase their use of natural gas and coal. They also allocated hefty sums for solar and other alternative-energy sources and pursued President Ford's policy of higher fuel-economy standards for new cars. By the time Carter left office, the consumption of foreign oil had fallen by nearly two million barrels a day, to seven million barrels. Predictably, as oil prices dropped, so did the urge to conserve. Ronald Reagan revoked environmental policies and ripped Carter's solar panels off the White House roof, and Americans learned to love big cars again. We now import about thirteen million barrels of foreign oil a day, an increase of eighty-five percent.<sup>2</sup>

With hindsight, the dismantling of these initiatives appears short-sighted, even egregiously myopic, given the emphasis on national security within this type of conservatism. Certain explanations for the neglect of energy conservation stand out. The primary explanation often given is that when the price of fossil fuels subsequently dropped, the economic incentives for alternative energy options were diminished. Yet while the economic reality of lower energy prices, (thus lowering free market incentives to research and design alternative energy sources), the powerful lobbying pressures of the manufacturing and automobile industries, as well as the normative changes in American

---

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Wickenden, "Comment: Fuel Duel" *The New Yorker*, May 22, 2006, pp. 27-28.

culture, (ergo, that larger homes and SUVs became the preferences of many consumers), all provide explanation for why these initiatives were not well-sustained. As well, environmentalists point to the longstanding ties which exist between big business and the Republican Party. For example, *Sierra* recently investigated members of Congress (all Republican) for “some of the most anti-environmental members” that “are also ethically challenged,” pointing out that old-fashioned corruption itself offers much explanatory insight. In the article, the scandal surrounding *uber*-lobbyist Jack Abramoff, Congressmen Tom Delay, Richard Pombo, “Duke” Cunningham and several other Republicans, is absolutely related to these politicians overt environmental hostility.<sup>3</sup> The mindset that one “does not bite the hand that feeds it,” whether ambiguous or blatant, provides explanation of undue influence, if not corruption. One normative factor, as well, is the commonly shared presumption that suggesting such propositions as “gas tax,” would be tantamount to political suicide. This assumption has also insured that Democratic politicians have also lacked the political fortitude to propose higher energy taxes. Last, but not least, is the overlapping ties the energy and automobile industries with conservatives in recent decades. But all of this does not provide *sufficient* explanation for the national security conservative indifference, oftentimes hostility, to energy conservation and green, renewable energy research and development.

Conservative policies post-Carter primarily are largely to blame for the failure of the American federal government to expand, let alone sustain, earlier energy policies. So what compromised national security interest in energy conservation? Of all the conservative dispositions, the principles and practices of this particular type are the most

---

<sup>3</sup> Paul Rauber, “Two-Time Losers,” *Sierra*, September/October 2006, pp. 38-43.

perplexing. National security views should connote narrow but highly compatible common ground with environmental perspectives regarding energy consumption, but until recently, this, in fact, has not been the case.

This chapter describes the national security conservative disposition and then analyzes the relationship between their convictions regarding energy consumption and demand and the security needs of the United States. Although American national security experts are not necessarily conservative, this ideological disposition is far more dominant in conservative political circles, the country's intelligence and security agencies, as well as defense-oriented think-tanks. The chapter concludes with an examination of national security outliers that now collaborate with environmental organizations for mutually compatible reasons.

Since at least the oil embargo in the 1973, there has been a well-sustained and compelling environmental case made for the promotion of green, domestic renewable energy, greater efficiency and conservation. From a national security conservative perspective there has also been a compelling case to be made, but one not well-sustained in their discourse and policy making. Why, given an explicit concern regarding this issue, did national security conservatives abandon policy initiatives that obviously would have strengthened the security of the nation?

A recent article in *Daedalus* by three energy experts summarizes the predicament the United States faces in a short, well-thought out analysis, noting that recent crises, such as that in California (2000-2001), the Northeast (2003) and the post-hurricane disruptions (2005) in supply and higher costs are indicative of dire, larger disasters to

come. They outline five related trends that foretell the likelihood of “more substantial future catastrophes”:

... the country faces at least five immense and interconnected energy challenges due to (1) the risk of oil-supply disruptions; (2) increasing electricity usage; (3) a fragile electric-power (and overall energy) infrastructure; (4) the lack of sustained efforts to push energy-efficiency practices; and (5) the growing environmental impacts of increasing energy consumption.<sup>4</sup>

Their concluding assessment is explicitly clear:

As a consequence of these trends, the goal of energy independence seems more distant in 2006 than it did in 1974, when President Nixon first proposed it as a way to deal with the oil embargo. ... the fact remains that the United States cannot continue upon its present course. The country has become progressively vulnerable to economic, political, and military threats because of its growing fuel consumption and an increasingly challenged energy infrastructure. The nation’s policymakers in business and government, as well as citizenry, need to realize that the recent trends in energy consumption, production, and distribution reflected in this energy assessment cannot be sustained indefinitely. Americans must confront energy concerns as a top priority and learn to overcome the social, political, and technical obstacles that have hindered true progress for more than three decades.<sup>5</sup>

One omission in this otherwise excellent summation of current energy problems is any critical analysis of *why* the past thirty years of United States policy-making so demonstrably failed to effectively ameliorate these well known, long-standing serious vulnerabilities. Again, in this respect, the role of national security conservatives is particularly inexplicable.

Of course, recently renewed concern about American dependence on foreign energy resources driven by these recent shortages, blackouts, distribution problems, and escalating prices has returned with greater urgency and clarity to many consumers, businesses, think-tanks and government policy-makers. There is growing awareness that America’s “addiction to oil” threatens the economy and security of the country, enriches

---

<sup>4</sup> Marilyn A. Brown, Benjamin K. Sovacool and Richard F. Hirsh. “Assessing U.S. Energy Policy”, *Daedalus*. American Academy of Arts & Sciences, Summer 2006, pp. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.



hostile countries, funds terrorism, and compromises the country's geo-political interests and foreign policy. The prospect of future scarcity, thus increasing competition and conflict with other energy-hungry countries, looms as well.

In theory, encouraging energy conservation and domestic renewable energy should be desirable to national security conservative and environmentalist alike. So why, given past national security consideration, did conservatives fail to pursue goals more amenable to these energy concerns? This section analyzes the reasons underlying this failure despite the recognition of future problems articulated by some national security conservatives in government and academia. It then describes and analyzes national security conservative outliers today that actively collaborate with environmental organizations and why they may face an uphill battle to convince their own brethren of both security and environmental imperatives that necessitate significant revision of American energy policy and consumption practices. More generally, the relationship between security and environmental scarcity will also be examined, for problems such as over-population especially in impoverished countries with little infrastructure and scarce resources, as well as the effects of global warming in vulnerable lands, are not just environmental and human rights considerations. Dire global security implications exist as well.

American national security conservatives share traits that distinguish them from other types of conservatism. They are, as a group very much ideologically diverse as well, but as their name literally indicates, all prioritize security and the interests of their own nation-state. Thus actors within this type situate security and survival over other conservative principles. They are keenly aware of the bifurcation in power structures

within and without sovereignty: the domestic is predicated upon hierarchical authority, while the international “state” remains one of anarchy. Given the uncertainties of cooperation and the lack of authority in international relations, fear and competition, that is, defensive and offensive realism, dominate state interaction with one another. States invariably are motivated to maximize their security and power. It follows from this that the consideration of balance of power, a nation-state’s relative power capabilities, and the imperative of self-help, as well as free riding, are all critical to assessing national interest, especially in an arena where the fear of predatory nation-states and concern for self-preservation are always a reality. Realists characterize these dynamics as a security dilemma, for the actions of one nation state trigger anxiety in another nation-state, which then is inclined to react to protect itself against this perceived threat, thus contributing to a spiraling escalation in competitive action and reaction.

Conservatism is often galvanized into reaction when its traditional mores are deemed threatened. Such threats encompass economic, cultural and moral encroachments on traditional norms and institutions, but, when a national security disposition is preponderant, the most critical factors are security and survival. All else is secondary.

Realist contributions to American conservatism can be traced to two waves. The first occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when émigrés of pragmatic orientation aimed to import European ideas to their own country’s fledgling academic institutions. The second wave occurred in the 1930’s and 40’s, when German émigrés to the United States, brought to their new country not just their lives but their life experiences. Their political views were informed by the necessity of exit and the brutal victimization and murder of

family and community in their former homeland. These experiences strengthened the conviction of man's propensity for evil. Persuaded by harrowing accounts of atrocity and the cataclysmic events of World War II, their new country adopted not just these immigrants, but their worldview too. American *realpolitik* was strengthened as a plausible approach to foreign affairs. Pragmatism, power and prudence were essential in the predisposition and its execution in American international relations. Political practitioners of the *realpolitik* include President Richard Nixon and his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. Substantive realist philosophy underlay the actual practice of *realpolitik* in America.

Tumultuous historical events often harbinger volatile revision of the existing social and institutional norms. War and revolution, for instance, sparked and spread by ideological views that are anarchic and/or utopian, challenge a nation's status quo: the privileges, practices, and mores of its existing traditional society. Since the Industrial Revolution, communism, fascism and socialism, in different times and places, have been powerful ideological threats to liberal nation-states. Thus these assorted political ideologies, and any real world execution, compel *situational* conservative reaction, as political scientist Samuel Huntington has noted, none with more urgency than those deemed threats to the nation's safety and security and insuring international stability.

Given this, it is no surprise that American conservatives were galvanized during the Cold War, forming the core of resistance in rhetoric and action. The spread of communism was perceived as a global threat of the greatest urgency. The United States and the former USSR spent decades as bi-polar foes, driven to design, build and retain weapons capable of escalating global capacity for devastation. The often single-minded

focus on the relative power of these two countries post-World War Two contributed to a growing body of international relations scholarship keenly mindful of the legacy of two world wars and the havoc that ideological revision wrought on entire peoples and nations. From the vantage point of conservatism, both the defeat of the Axis powers in World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall were requisite proof of the diligence needed to resist radical attempts to change the existing world order.

The philosophical worldview of national security conservatives rests on an enduring skepticism of human goodness. They are well aware of the critical role might plays in resisting these threats, sustaining a bleak political worldview. As Peter Viereck observes in tracing the tradition's origins:

Whether intentionally or unconsciously, whether literally or as a metaphor for behavior, conservatives apply to politics the Christian doctrine of man's innate Original Sin. Herein lies a key distinction between conservatives and liberals. Men are not born naturally free or good (assume conservatives) but naturally prone to anarchy, evil, mutual destruction. What Rousseau called the "chains" that hinder man's goodness – society's traditional restrictions on the ego – are in reality the props that make man good. They fit man into a stable, durable framework, without which ethical behavior and responsible use of liberty are impossible.<sup>6</sup>

It follows that this worldview, (invoked in secular vein as well from Thucydides to Morgenthau), sustains its contemporary resonance in conservatism. *Realpolitik*, for practical example, gained legitimacy in the 1930s with the influential work of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (though not a conservative in most respects). It subsequently flourished in the 1940s and 1950s with notable contributions from such realist figures as Nicholas Spykman, Frederick Schuman to the well known and influential book by Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*.

---

<sup>6</sup> Peter Viereck, *From John Adams to Winston Churchill: Conservative Thinkers* (New Brunswick, (U.S.A.): Transaction Publishers, 2006, originally published, 1956) pp. 13-14.

In World War Two's aftermath, the American perception of the USSR and China as emerging threats to world order and stability grew stronger. George Kennan, for example, articulated a policy position of containment that became a core strategy in American foreign relations for decades to follow. In a climate of fear, danger, and uncertainty, born out by modern calamities of epic proportion, national security became increasingly integral to American conservatism. The organic underlying reality – that man is intrinsically evil – is historically borne out time after time, from the ancients into modernity. Given this, the Machiavellian worldview continues to resonate as a necessary disposition in international relations. Pragmatism and realism are mandatory in order to view the world as it is not how utopian conceptions think it ought to be.

While the liberal international relations tradition has contributed much to an understanding of international environmental cooperation, national security conservatives have not devoted much resources or intellectual contribution to these concerns. One repercussion of this ideologically lopsided treatment is that the most prolific contributors to the literature of environmental politics, liberal international relations scholars, are oft to harbor a Kantian or Wilsonian worldview regarding the potential for global cooperation. Other contributors to this eclectic, growing body of literature include less mainstream, often marginalized contributions from socialists, feminists, Marxists, constructivists, and deep ecologists. It follows that the contributions from realist conservatives typically reject the arguments advanced by these other voices. Given the tradition's classic suspicions and skepticisms, their input into environmental discourse and practice, not surprisingly, is rarely remedial but reactive to these other views.

A meaningful indicator of this realist disposition is found in their contributions contesting liberal international relations theories of democratic peace. Christopher Layne, for example, defends a realist mindset in a piece in the anthology *Debating the Democratic Peace*. He argues:

International politics is an anarchic, self-help realm.... There is no central authority capable of making and enforcing rules of behavior on the international system's units (states). The absence of a rule-making and enforcing authority means that each unit in the system is responsible for ensuring its own survival and also that each is free to define its own interests and to employ means of its own choice in pursuing them. In this sense, international politics is fundamentally competitive.

Furthermore:

In a realist world, cooperation is possible but is hard to sustain in the face of the competitive pressures that are built into the international system's structure. The imperative of survival in a threatening environment forces states to focus on strategies that maximize their power relative to their rivals. States have powerful incentives both to seek the upper hand over their rivals militarily and to use their edge not only for self-defense but also to take advantage of others.... In the international system, fear and distrust of other states is the normal state of affairs.<sup>7</sup>

Echoing Machiavelli, Layne concludes his essay with a common realist refrain of what ails liberal international relations theory. It is "based on hope, not fact" and "the world remains what it has always been: international politics continues to occur in an anarchic, competitive, self-help realm. This reality must be confronted, because it cannot be transcended."<sup>8</sup>

Realist national conservatives are often ill-equipped to examine the state of environmental politics between nation-states because it has focused its scrutiny on more tangible measures of a nation's might and resources relative to other nation-states. Little attention is given to environmental issues unless they are explicitly correlated with a

---

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Layne, Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace", *Debating the Democratic Peace*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 163.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

nation's capabilities. National security conservatives, as conservatives are in general, are more explicitly committed to their nation-state's interests. Quinton explains, "So far the conservative is a nationalist. He sees it as the chief task of government to pursue the national interest, by, particularly, warding off attack from outside and seeking its prosperity."<sup>9</sup> Conservatives "endorse security, both internal, the preservation of the social order, and external, the defense of the community from enemies outside, and also prosperity, the general economic well-being of the community and its members".<sup>10</sup> National security conservatives are suspicious of any attempts to cede their nation's sovereignty to supranational authority, no matter the narrowness of intent or jurisdiction.

The acute prominence given to security issues also connotes a worldview viscerally opposed to idealistic solution sets, particularly when they involve dynamics above and beyond the nation-state. Some of this rests, of course, on a disposition that remains fundamentally skeptical of rapid change and ideological theories that conservatives have also viewed (not without good reason) as critically flawed and dangerous in the remedies they advance. As a skeptical "anti-ideology" conservatism views any call for ideological revision as a sizeable threat to social mores and institutions presently existing. As scholars of classical conservatism explain, tradition is paramount; it is conjoined with innate skepticism of "abstract political theory".<sup>11</sup> Thus, "It is more calculated to endorse Burke's recommendation of a cautious prudence than the excited

---

<sup>9</sup> Quinton, p. 259.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 255.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 255.

elimination of the existing order of things”<sup>12</sup> such as utopian conceptions that “start from certain propositions about ends.”<sup>13</sup>

National security conservatives claim deeper roots than Burke. Specifically, conservative realists and neo-realists invoke a long intellectual legacy: Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes are antecedents. Their modern day progeny include Morgenthau and Mearsheimer, and in conservative neo-realism, scholars such as Waltz. Contemporary realists and neo-realists do not necessarily self-identify as conservative, (nor, it is fair to point out, is it accurate to paint past “realist” voices as such), but, nonetheless, they collectively contribute insight into the more pragmatic and skeptical aspects of the tradition. As the scholar Clinton Rossiter observes in his 1955 book *Conservatism in America*:

Realism, common sense, adaptability, expediency, respect for unpleasant facts – these, apparently, are the elements the moral anatomist will discover when he lays bare the everyday mind of the Conservative.<sup>14</sup>

Rossiter goes on to note their “difference of temper, of ‘mood and bias’” from that of the liberal. Indeed, he continues, “Perhaps it is too simple to say that these differences in temper boil down to the contrast between pessimism and optimism, but it cannot be denied that the Conservative’s confidence in man, democracy, and progress is far weaker than the Liberal’s, even the Sensible Liberal’s.”<sup>15</sup> In laying out his laundry list of conservative principles, Rossiter’s first is that “The mixed and immutable nature of man, in which wickedness, unreason, and the urge to violence lurk always behind the curtain of

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 256.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 255.

<sup>14</sup> Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 56.



civilized behavior.”<sup>16</sup> Collectively, Rossiter’s depictions readily paint realist as well as conservative.

Realism traces its roots to ancient, tumultuous events of epic proportion. Again, what Rossiter describes as quintessentially conservative also informs realism:

In the record of this century, as in the record of the whole past, the Conservative reads of wickedness, folly, misery, and failure; of the cruel delusion of promises of Utopia; of the tyranny of force, the weakness of reason, the fragility of liberty; of the inevitable decay of his own civilization.<sup>17</sup>

Realism traces its origins to the account of the Peloponnesian War by the ancient Greek historian Thucydides (460?-400? B.C.). The Melian Dialogue, in particular, holds special resonance in realism. There, Thucydides describes a conflict between the more powerful Athenians as they attempt to convince the citizens of the island of Melos to submit to their authority for “... you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”<sup>18</sup>

The Melian refusal to surrender, faith in their gods, and hope of Athenian goodwill, ultimately led to their ruin. For, as Thucydides recounts, eventually they failed and “surrendered at discretion to the Athenians, who put to death all the grown men whom they took, and sold the women and children for slaves, and subsequently sent out five hundred colonists and settled the place themselves.”<sup>19</sup> The indigenous islanders of Melos were conquered and destroyed by the stronger Athenians. The dialogue between Athens and Melos provides an ancient lesson of enduring importance throughout human

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 64.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> Robert B. Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. (New York: The Free Press, 1996), p. 352.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 357.

history: the utility of power in nation-state relations conjoined with cynicism of the naïve weak for harboring faith in salvation from the strong.

*The Prince*, written by Machiavelli in 1513, respects not power but man's propensity for evil. In its day, it was revolutionary in its skepticism, pragmatism, and political realism, offering a view that was rarely expressed in public. Machiavelli was well aware of *The Prince's* ability to shock:

I fear that my writings ... may be deemed presumptuous, differing as I do, especially in this matter, from the opinion of others. But my intention being to write something of use to those who understand, it appears to me more proper to go to the real truth of the matter than to its imagination; and many have imagined republics and principalities which have never been seen or known to exist in reality; for how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation. A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good.<sup>20</sup>

Machiavelli has been appropriated (or condemned) by many varieties of political ideologies over the years, but what makes this work resonate with conservative thought is the following: its recognition of evil and the importance of power, combined with skepticism of “imagined” regimes rather than what exists in reality. There is too, the insistence that “a prudent man should always follow in the path trodden by great men....”<sup>21</sup> As well, the following quote from Machiavelli is resonates well with conservative thought: “It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.”<sup>22</sup> Like Thucydides before him, Machiavelli was keenly mindful of the necessity for a realist perspective in human affairs.

---

<sup>20</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1950) Chapter XV, p. 56.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p.19.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

The realist tradition also harkens back to the Leviathan. Thomas Hobbes wrote this seminal work in 1651. It was a momentous, ground breaking contribution to political theory. Both conservative and liberal thought owe much to his legacy. The sovereign, Hobbes argued, was contractually obligated to provide security. His view of sovereignty finally broke the tether between the conception of nationhood and an earlier association linking it predominantly to the ambitions and tribulations of reigning political figures. In the new Hobbesian depiction, the republic was a contract between rulers and ruled, a necessity in order to maintain order and stability. Without security, there can be no “Industry”, “Culture” “Navigation”, there is “no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society.” The *Leviathan's* evocation what a state of insecurity entails is immortalized in the following words by Hobbes that there is “continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.”<sup>23</sup> The nation-state was un-tethered from the personality of specific political leadership and religious affiliation, institutionalizing the idea of *res publica* into modernity. The most important reason for the appropriation of Hobbes by realists, however, is due to the *Leviathan's* emphasis on achieving security.

Of course, not all national security conservatives rest their presumptions on these seminal texts to which realist scholarship draws upon. Notwithstanding this legacy of realpolitik, the type is eclectic, a seemingly incompatible canopy of voices inform it. National security conservatives includes paleo-conservative isolationists arguing that American security is best insured through less global engagement as well as their antithesis, neoconservatives that argue the reverse: that America needs to be globally

---

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Ch. XIII, p. 89.

proactive to insure its security. Neo-conservatives are more willing to run risks, to engage in military ventures and bureaucratic reconstruction of other nation-states far from home.

One present manifestation of the range of their differences is exhibited in the divide over the Iraq War with vehemently held positions on both sides.<sup>24</sup> But despite the magnitude of ideological difference, they share common ground in prioritizing American hegemony, security and prosperity. All are skeptical of international political regimes, perceiving them as encroachments on the autonomy and authority of the United States. The United Nations, for example, earns their wrath as an inept, bloated bureaucracy with an agenda to erode American sovereignty. National Security conservatives may deign to counter selective transparency and collaboration with foreign nations, but balance of power, and the enduring reality of man's propensity for evil, underlie motive. Yet such beliefs, presumably, would warrant an approach that lauds conservation, particularly with respect to reliance on materials from outside national borders. Not necessarily because it is green, but because it supports American security; thus *patriotic*.

Nonetheless, there are dominant elements within this category which complicate the picture: the mutually beneficial relationships between the government, energy and military industries. These intricate ties make such conservative common sense, less common. Vice President Dick Cheney's ties to Halliburton and the reality of American dependence on foreign oil present critical ideological and policy making conundrums. Not surprisingly, American energy companies and car manufacturers have lobbied hard

---

<sup>24</sup> The anti-war contingent includes the ideologically incompatible paleo-conservative Pat Buchanan and realist-oriented scholars, like Mearsheimer and Walt, who collectively made their case against the war known in the media.

to lessen environmental regulation, fuel standards, and other measures which would promote conservation, greater fuel efficiency and renewable energy sources. The recent energy bill was a grave disappointment to environmentalists. A *The New York Times* editorial asserts that "... [it] does not take the bold steps necessary to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil, and it also fails to address the looming problem of global warming," the *Times* concluded that "both houses conspired in some spectacular giveaways."<sup>25</sup> These interests present formidable obstacles to what should presumably imply strong, shared interest in achieving energy independence.

It follows that this disposition is distinctive in the lack of attention given to consumption and environment. Unlike free-market conservatives, they do not invest much effort and expense into eco-skeptic ventures. With their state-centric security mindset, the government's ability to maintain order and resist external threats invariably takes precedence over any free-market/libertarian principles that favor limited government. Along related lines, they disagree with libertarian conservatives in their tolerance and advocacy of government surveillance for national security reasons. Given their general priorities, environmental issues are not afforded the serious attention free-market advocates give to the subject. What differentiates this type of conservatism with respect to these issues? In both principle and practice, it is its *omission* rather than its reaction.

This past neglect is found in both academic and practical illustration. The explanation for environmental politics being "off the realist radar" is straightforward. Because this disposition was and remains preoccupied with so-called "high" politics of

---

<sup>25</sup> "Energy Shortage," Editorial, *The New York Times*, July 28, 2005, p. A24.

balance of power and relative military and economic capabilities between nation-states, environmental issues rarely warrant even tertiary consideration in their theories and practices. Free market proponents, of course, have far more invested (in both literal and principle contexts) with the repercussions of less consumption or more environmental regulation.

In practice, the 1973 Arab oil embargo should be *the* marker for substantive rethinking of the national security perspective. So too, presumably, should later energy upheavals have galvanized this disposition toward energy conservation and alternatives, including the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the present war in Iraq, as well as shortages in fuel supply, large-scale power outages, and skyrocketing prices after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. These volatile events should have illustrated, yet again, just how vulnerable the United States was when energy shortages occur. Indeed, should engage the stalwart national conservative, for what would happen if such crises were even more likely and prolonged in the future?

Critical ancillary worries also enter the equation. There is recognition of growing global demand in an increasingly tight oil market. Emerging economic powerhouses – notably India and China – are competing more and more with the United States. As their economies rapidly expand, they too, need to satiate growing energy demands. There is as well, a realistic fear of future terrorist attacks that conceivably would target critical vulnerabilities within the United States; the country's energy infrastructure is viewed as particularly inviting to terror attack. Correspondingly, there is widespread recognition that these resources continue to be extracted from regions with substantive political instabilities, such as in the Middle East, Venezuela, and breakaway regions of Russia.

They are often governed by less desirable, undemocratic leadership that tends to compromise other foreign policy considerations. Finally, there is a growing consensus among geologists and energy specialists that demand will continue to increase as fossil fuel resources dwindle in capacity.<sup>26</sup> All of these considerations make energy security a critical imperative.

Recent academic scholarship has begun to revitalize interest in the critical interaction between environmental scarcity and violent conflict. Political scientist Homer-Dixon, for example, makes credible and alarming arguments that foresee the likelihood of future global catastrophes. He writes:

Our research showed that environmental scarcities are already contributing to violent conflicts in many parts of the developing world. These conflicts are probably the early signs of an upsurge of violence in the coming decades that will be induced or aggravated by scarcity. The violence will usually be subnational, persistent, and diffuse. Poor societies will be particularly affected since they are less able to buffer themselves from environmental scarcities and the social crises they cause. These societies are, in fact, already suffering acute hardship from shortages of water, forests, and especially fertile land.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, Homer-Dixon argues that these have significant “implications for international security” for “environmental scarcity has insidious and cumulative social impacts, like population movement, economic decline, and the weakening of states.” He predicts that “the rate and extent of such conflicts will increase as scarcities worsen” which, in turn, “will have serious repercussions for the security interests of both the developed and developing worlds.”<sup>28</sup> The prospect of massive and unpredictable

---

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Kenneth S. Deffeyes, *Hubbert's Peak: The Impending World Oil Shortage*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, “Thresholds of Turmoil: Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict” *Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in the New Environmental Politics*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), p. 62

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 84

immigration patterns, further environmental degradation, and domestic and international political instability are all increasingly likely in Homer-Dixon's view.

Another critical voice is also to be found in the writings of the realist-inclined *Atlantic Monthly* contributor, Robert D. Kaplan. His depictions are alarming, portending anarchical scenarios driven by scarcity and climate change. But despite the urgency of these possibilities, he points out in *The Coming Anarchy* that:

Mention "the environment" or "diminishing natural resources" in foreign-policy circles and you meet a brick wall of skepticism or boredom. To conservatives especially, the very term seems flaky.

It is time to understand "the environment" for what it is: the national-security issue of the early twenty-first century. The political and strategic impact of surging populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution, and, possibly, rising sea levels in critical, overcrowded regions like the Nile Delta and Bangladesh – developments that will prompt mass migrations and, in turn, incite group conflicts – will be a core foreign-policy challenge from which most others will ultimately emanate, arousing the public and uniting assorted interests left over from the Cold War.<sup>29</sup>

Further, Kaplan insists that "The environment ... is part of a terrifying array of problems that will define a new threat to our security...." Since the Industrial Revolution, mind sets and solution sets have all too often been solely premised on social and political causes, neglecting the variable of nature in their equations. Kaplan is pessimistic about what this past neglect foretells, warning, "But nature is coming back with a vengeance, tied to population growth. It will have incredible security implications."<sup>30</sup> As well, Kaplan cites the academic contributions of Homer-Dixon and Deudney in support of his bleak position. In theory, these critical, serious contributions, suggest that national security conservatives would be compelled to focus on environmental issues as a security concern, warranting promotion to the realm of "high" politics.

---

<sup>29</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, (New York: Vintage, 2001), pp. 19-20.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.



Yet the reality is that national security conservatives, while aware of these concerns, generally have not been creative in their remedies. They are rarely inclined to adopt measures that are compatible with environmental considerations, even given the potential of common ground.<sup>31</sup> Of course, national security conservatives understand the dangers energy shortages, particularly, trigger in global stability. They also recognize that as a superpower, the United States should actively pursue foreign fossil fuel independence. Yet their ideas often are incompatible with environmental goals like the promotion of domestic, clean, renewable energy resources or in encouraging Americans to conserve. Instead, national conservatives principally advocate that energy dependence is predicated on the exploitation of domestic resources including shale oil, coal mining as well as expanding nuclear energy capabilities. Since the early 1970's, their agenda has been to push for diversification of fossil fuel supply, including off shore continental drilling, the leasing of public lands, such as in Alaska, as well as expanding American refining capacity and insuring that the federal government retains substantial strategic reserves. Proposed alternative energy resources advocate more nuclear energy facilities and coal mining, rarely renewable resources. They mimic, in these respects, the agenda of free-market conservatives with ties to the energy industry.

Their notion of "diversification" substantively excludes the promotion of greener energy alternatives. Thus omitted are explicit calls for government incentives to encourage private enterprise to research and develop alternative energy resources and

---

<sup>31</sup> In fact, environmental considerations are often viewed as conflicting with the practices and safety of American troops. For example, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warned that environmental protection may be dangerous to the safety of the military and must be weighed accordingly, citing that the protection of desert tortoises in Iraq was jeopardizing the safety of American troops. As the article states: "The military is rarely on the same side as environmentalists in political battles." "Rumsfeld: Military Trumps Environment" *The Associated Press*, August 29, 2005. Viewed at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2005/08/29/national/w100155D22.DTL>, accessed on May 24, 2006.

technologies. Also missing is an ethos of conservation or calls for greater efficiency in production and consumption practices. Now that oil and gas prices are historically high, however, there is evidence of reconsideration, yet it is not yet clear how sustained these new calls for alternative resources (such as ethanol and hydrogen-fuel cell technology) or conservation will be in the future if cheap energy prices return. The energy initiatives during the Carter Presidency, for example, were dismantled in during Reagan's tenure when prices of energy fell and the era of the larger car returned, thus suggesting, that history could indeed repeat itself.

One illuminating illustration of these ties is found in the principally neo-conservative organization called "Project for the New American Century" founded in 1997.<sup>32</sup> Their statement of principles is signed by some of the following names: Elliott Abrams, Gary Bauer, William J. Bennett, Jeb Bush, Dick Cheney, Francis Fukuyama, Norman Podhoretz, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz. Two of these, interestingly – Fukuyama and Gaffney – have changed their views somewhat since signing the document. Their goal is to increase American defense spending, modernize the armed forces, and "accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles."<sup>33</sup> An article in September of 2003 by Lewis E. Lehrman in the *Weekly Standard* is posted on their website and is representative of the organization's views regarding energy and national security.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> <http://newamericancentury.org/>, accessed on May 22, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> <http://newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>, accessed on May 22, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Lewis E. Lehrman, "Energetic America" *Weekly Standard*, September 23, 2003 can be viewed at <http://newamericancentury.org/global-20030923.htm>, accessed on May 22, 2006.

First, it should be noted that Lehrman believed that “energy prices have probably peaked for the near term.” Notwithstanding this now obviously incorrect prediction, he calls for a “sensible energy policy.” It should “aim to keep prices down for the long term, by increasing domestic supplies instead of relying on demand destruction.” Specific points include the following: energy must be cheap as it is correlated to US employment, that energy consumption has grown, unlike in Japan and Germany, because of an increasing population and job growth, and that America needs to encourage more nuclear energy plants and coal extraction as well as calling for domestic drilling for crude oil and natural gas on public and private lands. No where is there a call for conservation or greater fuel efficiency, while alternative energy sources (solar, geothermal, wind, and hydrogen) are dismissed “because, in general, they are not and will not soon be competitive with fossil fuels on total cost and reliability” nor, combined, do they make a sizeable percentage of American energy consumption. This policy position now appears astonishingly short-sighted even given their national security priorities. Lehrman writes:

... a policy of restoring greater energy independence and maintaining inexpensive energy is not only possible but necessary – if Americans truly desire increased national security, a vibrant basic materials industry, and rapid economic growth.

And what about remaining on the cutting edge of research and development with respect to alternative energy materials? Surely that too would make the economy “vibrant”? In the meantime, Japan and Germany now dominate the solar panel industry, producing the most technologically advanced and efficient solar panels, thanks, in no small part, to their governments’ initiatives. Much of the failure of American industry to gain a hold in this emerging, and now profitable business, is attributable to policy

positions that largely neglected the possibility, did not provide incentives, and catered to the desires of the “basic materials industry” instead.

Again, the close ties between the energy industry and conservative politicians is explains much of the compromising of national security. In an article in *The New Republic*, Michael Crowley, describes the reigning Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Joe Barton, as having embedded ties to the energy industry, pushing through legislation favorable to their interests. As Crowley shows, the favor was returned with generous campaign contributions to Barton and other Republicans. Crowley describes him as “a kind of junior DeLay” noting that when DeLay retires, he will be the senior House representative for Texas. He writes that “His fund-raising from the industry he regulates, for instance, smells of a scandal waiting to happen.”

And, like DeLay, Barton champions a pro-industry agenda with no apparent concern for appearances. Just two months after his tearjerker of an energy bill, he exploited concerns over energy supplies in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to jam through still more energy subsidies, ease environmental regulations on refineries, and press for more offshore oil and gas drilling.<sup>35</sup>

Without becoming too conspiratorial, there is much evidence of mutually beneficial relationships, such as this one, existing between the energy industry and the Republican corridors of political power. It points to an obvious explanation for why so little has been done to promote energy conservation, even given national security considerations. These ties compromise American national security.

In a recent *Foreign Affairs* essay Daniel Yergin resubmits a call for “ensuring energy security.” There is little there to encourage environmentalists. To the contrary, there are specific references which alarm. Yergin writes that insuring energy security

---

<sup>35</sup> Michael Crowley, “On the Hill: Barton Fink”, *The New Republic*, May 22, 2006, pp. 8 – 10.

means that there is “the need to incorporate regulatory and environmental flexibility.”<sup>36</sup> While he concedes that “the paradigm of energy security for the past three decades is too limited and must be expanded to include many new factors,” there is only passing concession in his conclusion to “encouraging a growing role for a variety of renewable energy sources as they become more competitive.”<sup>37</sup> There is too, the quick and undefended dismissal of conceivable secession from the fossil fuel market. This, he asserts, “is not an option.”<sup>38</sup> Yergin describes the imperatives for energy security well, but his remedies disappoint, focusing as they do on a limited conception of what diversification entails. There is only a cursory nod to green energy remedies. Global warming, more generally, is neglected. Such narrowness of vision, exhibited both in the past and present, remains inexplicably counterproductive to the fundamental priorities of national security conservatives.

### ***National Security Outliers***

Again, outliers in this group are bound by fundamental priorities: balance of power, insuring hegemony, and the nation’s security. In this realm, neoconservatives are clearly influential today, though they by no means speak for the majority of American conservatives. Their foreign policy position favors military force, the use of pre-emptive strikes, and nation-building with multi-lateral support, but also without such support if deemed necessary. It follows that neo-conservatives, not compromised by ties to the

---

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Yergin, “Ensuring Energy Security” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 85, No. 2, March/April 2006, p. 80.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69 and p. 82.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 76.

energy sector or the military, view the continued dependence on foreign fossil fuels as a national security issue.

One sign of a growing phenomenon is anecdotal but illuminating: neo-conservatives driving Toyota Priuses.<sup>39</sup> Robert Bryce writes, “a curious transformation is occurring in Washington, D.C., a split of foreign policy and energy policy: Many of the leading neoconservatives who pushed hard for the Iraq war are going green.”<sup>40</sup>

According to Bryce, prominent neoconservatives like James Woolsey, the former director of the CIA, and Frank Gaffney, the president of the Center for Security Policy, are both active in promoting greater fuel efficiency and alternative energy sources. In fact, neocons and greens collaborated on a policy paper through the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, which “proposes that the federal government invest \$12 billion to: encourage auto makers to build more efficient cars and consumers to buy them, develop industrial facilities to produce plant-based fuels like ethanol; and promote fuel cells for commercial use.”<sup>41</sup>

An ancillary coalition has also been formed called “Set America Free.”<sup>42</sup> In a policy paper “A Blueprint for U.S. Energy Security” the coalition outlines key strategies including promoting hybrid electric vehicles, ultralight materials, “plug-in” hybrid technology, flexible fuel as well as alternative fuels including additives, ethanol, methanol and biodiesels. Their policy recommendations are to provide incentives to auto manufacturers and tax incentives to businesses switching to conservationist energy

---

<sup>39</sup> Robert Bryce, “As Green as a Neocon: Why Iraq Hawks are driving Priuses,” <http://slate.msn.com/id/2112608>, January 25, 2005

<sup>40</sup> Bryce, Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Bryce, Ibid. For more on the Center for Security Policy see their website at <http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/index.jsp?section=today>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.setamericafree.org/index.htm>

technology and fuels. They also wish to encourage mass transportation from the federal to the local levels. Their main ambition is to reduce American reliance on petroleum from unstable and hostile countries significantly.<sup>43</sup> As the website asserts “Oil dependence is a national security issue.” Although the security aspects of fuel independence are the primary motivation for this coalition of diverse actors, they certainly do not downplay the environmental issues involved with fossil fuel consumption and the greenhouse gases and other repercussions of this dependence. The green is an important variable in the equation to “set America free.”

In “An Open Letter to the American People,” setamericafree.org appeals to Americans to help achieve dependence from foreign energy. Reasons for reducing this dependence include the following points. First, “America consumes a quarter of the world’s oil supply while holding a mere 3% of global oil reserves. It is therefore forced to import over 60% of its oil, and this dependency is growing.” Second, “most of the world’s oil is controlled by countries that are unstable or at odds with the United States” and “our petrodollars” thus “contribute materially to the terrorist threats we face.” The letter continues: “At the strategic level, it is dangerous to be buying millions of dollars of oil from nations that are sponsors of or allied with radical Islamists who foment hatred against the United States.” Third, such dependence creates infrastructure vulnerabilities to terrorist attack. Fourth, China is mentioned as a competitor for global oil supplies. Fifth, “oil dependence has considerable economic implications.” Of most relevance here, is the sixth and final reason:

Finally, environmental considerations argue for action to reduce imports of foreign oil. While experts and policy-makers disagree about the contribution the burning of fossil fuels is

---

<sup>43</sup> The Set America Free blueprint can be viewed at <http://www.setamericafree.org/blueprint.pdf>

making to the planet's temperatures, it is certainly desirable to find ways to obtain energy while minimizing the production of greenhouse gases and other pollutants."

Collectively, these reasons "require concerted action, at last, aimed at reducing the Nation's reliance on imported oil."<sup>44</sup> An interesting omission in their call is any suggestion that such actions would include conservation. Their blueprint offers far more details in this respect. It is clear that this letter is designed to make their call as publicly palatable as possible. That is, they seek to encourage participation from "red state" patriotic Americans that find the first five points resonate. The omission of conservation suggests a fear that such a call may illicit resentment instead in suggesting that Americans constrain their consumptive energy habits. In other words, arguments principally addressing the country's security and economic prosperity are persuasive to most Americans. Arguments that emphasize conservation may be counterproductive to certain strata of the population.

Obviously, these diverse groups involved in the "Set America Free" initiative have different priorities in their collaboration, but, so far, their efforts give greens some hope of future government policies that are favorable to conservation. But as Bryce points out "So far, the neocons are the only ones on the right to break with Bush on energy policy," speculating that this may be because they tend to be tied to academia and government rather than having direct ties to the energy business. As the outliers within theological conservative thought suggest, however, there may be more breaks looming than Bryce realized at that time. The notable concession of President Bush in his State of

---

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.setamericafree.org/openletter.htm>, accessed on April 3, 2006.



the Union address being illustrative of renewed consideration – and tension -- regarding the importance of energy to national security.

Another noteworthy change is the endorsement of higher gas taxes by some neoconservatives. Although this initiative is unlikely to succeed, any consideration to raising gas taxes is noteworthy given the taboo in conservative circles on raising taxes.<sup>45</sup> Such breaks from the prevailing mindset, suggest that some actors within this category are willing to consider alternative strategies that incorporate policy positions overwhelmingly unpalatable to conservatives. This further suggests that outliers are acutely worried about emerging problems of resource scarcity and national security implications.

One interesting consequence of this emerging sensibility among these outliers is the now shared common ground with more liberal voices. For example, *The New York Times* calls the American dependence on foreign fossil fuels “The Saudi Syndrome.”<sup>46</sup> As well, Thomas Friedman writes favorably about conservation, labeling himself a “geo-green.”<sup>47</sup> Even more intriguing, if not promising, is James Woolsey’s assertion on the “Set America Free” website that “We’ve got a coalition of tree huggers, do-gooders, sodbusters, hawks, and evangelists.”<sup>48</sup> A hybrid political confluence is gaining ground. This common ground is tenuous, but neoconservatives now have the influence and arguments to persuade.

---

<sup>45</sup> Daniel Gross, “The Prius and the Olive Tree: Why are Conservatives Supporting Higher Gas Taxes?” <http://www.slate.com/id/2101349>, May 27, 2004.

<sup>46</sup> “The Saudi Syndrome,” Editorial, *The New York Times*, January 1, 2005, p. A12.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, “The Geo-Green Alternative,” *The New York Times*, January 30, 2005. p. A17.

<sup>48</sup> Woolsey is quoted on the coalition’s home page at <http://www.setamericafree.org/index.htm>, accessed on 23 February 2006.

If this union of strange bedfellows bears fruit, there are caveats attached that are worthy of serious reflection. There may be perils associated with such an alliance. The merit of integrating security with environmental politics concerns some scholars. As Daniel Deudney argues, “Overall, the pervasive recourse to ‘national security’ paradigms to conceptualize the environmental problem represents a profound and disturbing failure of political imagination.”<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, Deudney cautions

The movement to preserve the habitability of the planet for future generations must directly challenge the power of state-centric nationalism and the chronic militarization of public discourse. Environmental degradation is not a threat to national security. Rather, environmentalism is a threat to the conceptual hegemony of state-centered national security discourses and institutions. For environmentalists to dress their programs in the blood-soaked garments of the war system betrays their core values and creates confusion about the real tasks at hand.<sup>50</sup>

Clearly this warning is an important one to heed. Linking national security to environmental redress could have negative repercussions that environmentalists need to take seriously in weighing the pros and cons of collaborative initiatives.

Deudney and Homer-Dixon are not the only academics examining the consequences of integration. Simon Dalby mentions other critical shortcomings in encouraging and expanding military solution sets in environmental preservation efforts. In his characterization, advocates of synergy are hopeful that

If military establishments are seen as upholding their respective national interests, and if the national interests of many states now include resource conservation and environmental protection, then it supposedly follows that military institutions would be used to protect environments and facilitate resource development.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Daniel H. Deudney, “Environmental Security: A Critique” *Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in the New Environmental Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 213-214.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p. 214.

<sup>51</sup> Simon Dalby, “Threats from the South? Geopolitics, Equity, and Environmental Security” *Contested Grounds*, p. 169.

But Dalby rightly warns that this will lead to “coerced conservation” and that “using the military is rarely adequate to either protect ‘nature’ or deal with the poverty and lack of resources that many in the South face.” There is, as well, Dalby reminds us, the additional “question of what is being conserved (secured?) where and for whom is asked.”<sup>52</sup> Oppressive military intervention could play out in ways not necessarily in the general population’s best interest, but in the material interests of a select few. These thoughtful concerns warrant serious consideration in weighing the merits of commingling environmental “security” with national security approaches to environmental remediation.

These cautions notwithstanding, the newfound emergence of a green national security sensibility speaks to a promising metamorphosis in conservative thought. It puts “conserve” back in “conservative.” It “thinks outside the box” of dominant conservative paradigms. This development may weaken the (as yet) resilient bond between the oil industry and conservative politics. However, the animosity between National Security conservatives and left-wing environmentalists means that common ground between them is strewn with grievances and betrayals of other significant ideological conflicts.

The narrow compatibility is clear. What it now takes is determination, organization and constant pressure directed at the dominant eco-skepticism of today’s conservatives. The integration of national security with environmental problems is not without serious flaws; not the least of which is that national security conservatives and greens historically have had keenly polar ideological dispositions. Notwithstanding, the

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 170.

outliers within suggest the realistic prospect of bridging this divide. The question will remain, however, as to whether this emerging green national security sensibility is too little, too late.

## Chapter VI

### Conservationist Conservatism

*Every believer in manliness and therefore manly sport, and every lover of nature, every man who appreciates the majesty and beauty of the wilderness and wild life, should strike hands with the far-sighted men who wish to preserve our material resources, in the effort to keep our forests and our game beasts, game-birds, and game-fish – indeed, all the living creatures of prairie and woodland and seashore – from wanton destruction.*

Theodore Roosevelt, 1905

The conservationist conservatives, sometimes nicknamed the “Sierra-Club or Moosewood Republicans”, are a weakened set within American conservatism.<sup>1</sup> Collectively, this type is an outlier today, for while they may self-identify as conservative, their more right-wing brethren are not convinced. Conservation conservatives, however, share common philosophical ground with classical conservative thought. These green conservatives advocate and prioritize traditional conservative principles: prudence, stewardship, frugality, moderation, and respect for the natural world. Academic members of this type hark back to prominent intellectual figures. They do this to remind conservatives of these past conservationist values so strongly rooted in intellectual precedent: Edmund Burke, Irving Babbitt, Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, Peter Viereck, and the poet, T. S. Eliot.

This harkening back is not limited to just an intellectual legacy. Conservationist conservatives include political figures in American Republican history with notable records of extolling and protecting the country’s natural resources: Theodore Roosevelt,

---

<sup>1</sup> David D. Kirkpatrick uses “Moosewood Republicans” in his review of Rod Dreher’s book *Crunchy Cons*. It means “the only evangelical Christians in the world with a copy of *The Moosewood Cookbook*.” “Moosewood Republicans: Communes, ecology and organic cooking. This is conservatism?” (*New York Times Book Review*, March 12, 2006), p. 31.

Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon. There is another, often overlapping, subset of importance: conservationists that hunt and fish. This type has long been committed to conservationist; however, in recent decades their green disposition has been submerged primarily thanks to the antipathy existing between gun rights and gun control groups.

This chapter explores these green conservative actors, their variation and involvement in environmental politics and then concludes with an analysis of their future role in conservative politics and conservation. Four distinct but often overlapping subsets are distinguishable. The first suggests an expanding grassroots conservatism which is often apolitical but personally practiced by a diverse group of Americans that self-identify as conservative. It includes families that home-school, organic farm or purchase organic, greener goods. They are concerned about the environment, but not necessarily politically active. The second subset primarily consists of academic scholarship by individuals that self-identify as conservative environmentalists. They contribute to the literature written the past few years, providing intellectual gravitas to green conservatism in practice. The third subset comprises politically active environmentalists. This type includes members of the organization Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP) as well as contemporary Republican politicians that have strong environmental records relative to their colleagues. The fourth and final type are conservationists that hunt or fish. Some individuals, of course, are easily situated in more than one of these subsets. For example, John R. E. Bliese, a conservative professor who writes about the environment, is also an active member of the REP and President Theodore Roosevelt is not just notable for his conservationist policies, but an avid sportsman committed to the preservation of wilderness. Collectively, these actors connote a largely untapped

phenomenon, now ripe for capturing a greater role in conservative political discourse and policy-making.

### *Grassroots Green Conservatism*

One emerging element indicates stronger grassroots level participation that has not as yet translated into significant environmental policy-making influence. That is, many of these voices, both green and conservative, are not necessarily politically active, thus their ability to influence is inchoate, but ripe for galvanization. There is no question that this type is not substantively impacting today's conservative policy and practice. Yet this growing grassroots conservative phenomenon may well foretell future collaboration between these diverse voices and their rarer green political conservative counterparts that participate, but remain marginalized, within the Republican Party today. Their motives are green and conservative in ways that are compatible and reverberate with the tradition's intellectual roots.

This phenomenon is finally getting public notice. In a recent book by Rod Dreher called *Crunchy Cons*, the author colorfully depicts this outlier within conservatism. The author characterizes himself and others of this hue as "birkenstocked Burkeans." Collectively, they represent a "diverse tribe of countercultural conservatives." His book is a fascinating, timely study of an emerging trend. What began for Dreher as an article soon blossomed into a book when he received positive feedback from readers that share and practice this more classically conceived conservative disposition. A disposition oft neglected in more influential modern American conservative thought and practices today.

The book begins with a “Crunchy-Con Manifesto.” Four of ten principles Dreher lays out resonate with Sierra Club Republicanism and Classical conservative thought:

2. We believe that modern conservatism has become too focused on material conditions, and insufficiently concerned with the character of society. The point of life is not to become a more satisfied shopper.

3. We affirm the superiority of the free market as an economic organizing principle, but believe the economy must be made to serve humanity’s best interests, not the other way around. Big business deserves as much skepticism as big government.

5. A conservatism that does not recognize the need for restraint, for limits, and for humility is neither helpful to individuals and society nor, ultimately, conservative. This is particularly true with respect to the natural world.

10. Politics and economics will not save us. If we are to be saved at all, it will be through living faithfully by the Permanent Things, preserving these ancient truths in the choices we make in everyday life. In this sense, to conserve is to create anew.<sup>2</sup>

Dreher devotes chapter two entirely to “Consumerism.” He situates his so-called “crunchy-cons” view as distinct from the prevailing conservative ethos:

The fundamental difference between crunchy conservatives and mainstream conservatives has to do with the place of the free market in society. Crunchy cons believe in the free market as an imperfect but just and effective means to the good society. When the market harms the good society, it should be reined in. Because crunchy cons, as conservatives, do not believe in the perfectibility or essential goodness of human nature, we keep squarely in front of us the truth that absent the restraints of religion, community, law, or custom, the commercial man will tend to respect no boundaries in the pursuit of personal gain. Absolute power corrupts absolutely, whether it’s in the hands of big government or big business.<sup>3</sup>

Dreher frets that a consumerist culture ultimately is self-destructive:

A society built on consumerism must break down eventually for the same reason socialism did: because even though it is infinitely better than socialism at meeting our physical needs and gratifying our physical desires, consumerism also treats human beings as merely materialists, as ciphers on a spreadsheet. It cannot, over time, serve the deepest needs of the human person for

---

<sup>2</sup> Rod Dreher, *Crunch Cons: How Birkenstocked Burkeans, gun-loving organic gardeners, evangelical free-range farmers, hip homeschooling mamas, right-wing nature lovers, and their diverse tribe of countercultural conservatives plan to save America (or at least the Republican Party)*, (New York: Crown Forum, 2006, pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.



stability, spirituality, and authentic community. We should not be surprised that it has led to social disintegration.<sup>4</sup>

Dreher utilizes “the late crunchy-con economist” E. F. Schumacher’s work, *Small is Beautiful*, to buttress his argument, insisting that Schumacher “concluded that economics undertaken without spiritual, human, and ecological values is like sex without love, writing that ‘the essence of civilization is not in a multiplication of wants but in the purification of human character.’<sup>5</sup> Sounding much like a Kirkian or the present-day

Wendell Berry, Dreher insists:

We cannot carry on indefinitely under an economic system that pillages our resources, divides our communities, weakens our families, and compromises our character. Either we figure out a way to live our economic lives according to traditional values, or we advance the cause of chaos and our own demise.<sup>6</sup>

Small businesses, localized economic activity, an agrarian sensibility, are all invoked and deemed quintessentially conservative. His message also transcends petty bipartisan divisions. Yes, he often does sound like a left-wing environmentalist, but his motives stem from decidedly conservative principles. Not just hyper-materialist society is critiqued, but the environmental disregard of conservative thought today too.

Chapter Six is devoted to “The Environment.” Green themes lightly broached in earlier chapters, are returned to with greater focus. Wendell Berry is invoked:

[His] conservationism is of the sensible kind you would expect from a thoughtful and pious man who lives on and works the land, and who understands the need for harmony, for balance between the nature idolatry practiced by many liberal environmentalists and the blasphemy carried out by many conservatives. As the Bible says, man was given dominion over the things of the earth, but also required to exercise stewardship of the gift. Whether you’re a religious believer or not, that is traditional wisdom worth heeding.

And it is wisdom that political conservatives can and should embrace, and translate into public policy. The standard line is that the environment is for Republicans what defense is for Democrats: not an issue that comes naturally to them. Republicans need only familiarize

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 53.

themselves with the teaching of some of modern conservatism's founding fathers, as well as the Holy Scriptures, to find the theoretical basis for a conservative environmentalism.<sup>7</sup>

Other points are made regarding the influence that consumers can have “for it is far better to rely on market forces to shepherd society toward beneficial ends than to depend on the governments.”<sup>8</sup> Dreher argues that Whole Foods, for example, indicates an emerging synergy between savvy (albeit, mostly affluent) consumers and attune businesses responding to the growing demand for greener goods and services.

Dreher also understands the impediments green conservatism entail but his argument rests on principles that should resonate with many:

It's not easy being a green conservative, but if we conservatives want to be true to our principles, we have to move in that direction. It is morally right. It is religiously correct. It is economically prudent. It strengthens national defense. And it makes a better world for our children, and our children's children.<sup>9</sup>

You can't get much more conservative than this. Dreher weaves conservative principles into his green conservatism: national defense, future generations, prudence, religion and morality are all emphasized.

One criticism of *Crunchy Cons* is the omission of contemporary works preceding his that argues along similar lines. While his book is eclectic, colorful and timely, it clearly is written for a popular, not necessarily academic, audience. Certain themes are familiar, yet its antecedents are unacknowledged by Dreher. Nonetheless, Dreher ably captures an emerging phenomenon of green conservatism at the grassroots level.

### *Green Intellectual Conservatism*

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 172.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 176.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 178.

There are other notable past works that argue in similar fashion but with more intellectual depth than Dreher provides. Perhaps the most substantive academic scholarship exploring this connection is John R. E. Bliese's, *The Greening of Conservative America*, published in 2002. A professor of communication studies, Bliese clearly states his theme in his introduction. He aims to resuscitate conservative thinkers from past generations whose views, he argues, are compatible with environmental issues. He is mindful that such an endeavor must not cross the line of revisionism:

These scholars were not themselves 'environmentalists' in today's sense, for most of their works were produced in the years before environmental problems became acute. But if you read their works, you will find that the principles of the conservative political philosophy that they developed clearly support environmental protection. That is, of course, what you would expect. Conservatives ought to be in favor of conserving things: our cultural heritage, our civilization, our basic political and social institutions that established our freedom – as well as our natural heritage, our natural resources, and our planet.

Unfortunately, over the past thirty years and more, conservatives have contributed very little that is positive to the analysis of our environmental problems or to the formation of environmental policies.<sup>10</sup>

The author's exegesis of these earlier conservative voices points to the same incongruities noted in this book's introduction. Bliese puts this well:

In sum, there is an enormous discrepancy today between the ideas and principles of the conservative political philosophy, on the one hand, and the antics and opportunism of many conservative politicians and pundits, on the other.<sup>11</sup>

Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, Friedrich Hayek, even Leo Strauss, are invoked by Bliese, some in greater detail and depth than others. (Indeed, it is curious that Strauss is mentioned but not utilized. It may well be that he, in fact, had little to say, unlike Kirk and Weaver, both of whom substantively wrote about these issues.) But it is an ambitious and valuable project, weaving past intellectual thought and principles in its first three chapters with later chapters on specific environmental issues including

---

<sup>10</sup> John R. E. Bliese, *The Greening of Conservative America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

pollution, global warming, endangered species, and sustainability. Like Dreher, Bliese delineates conservative principles that are relevant – he has nine of them – in order to argue the tradition’s positive environmentalism. They are the following:

1. Conservatism is not materialistic.
2. Freedom of the individual is extremely important.
3. An ever present corollary of freedom is responsibility.
4. Private property is a fundamental social institution.
5. The free market is a fundamental social institution.
6. Piety, especially piety toward nature, should be our governing attitude.
7. Society is intergenerational.
8. Prudence is the most important political virtue.
9. Conservatives are not ideologues; conservatism is not an ideology.<sup>12</sup>

One of the more interesting elements is the author’s attempt to argue that free markets and private property rights are, indeed, compatible with an environmental ethos. Implicit in this venture, which is not without tensions, is the ambition to wrestle environmentalism away from a presumption that it is inherently anti-capitalist and anti-free-market.

It is not that Bliese endorses absolute libertarian conservatism; he views it as an “extreme position that all preservation of nature should be left to the market.” On the contrary, he insists “We have an obligation of stewardship.”<sup>13</sup> Bliese comes across, in this respect, as a techno-optimist along the lines of *Natural Capitalism*. In other words, free markets and private property warrant inclusion in his list of conservative principles, but it is done with caveats.

In sum, the proper role for conservatives is to use the market where it would work to protect the environment, as opposed to the liberals’ penchant for command-and-control regulation, and to restrain the market where it would degrade the environment, as opposed to the libertarians’ penchant for sacrificing anything that cannot be turned to a profit. The principles of conservatism are, in fact, the best basis on which to confront the dilemma of market imperfections versus governmental imperfections in every concrete instance, where liberals and

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pp. 46-47.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 252.

libertarians alike are prone to ignore it and carry on their merry way even in the face of obvious failure. By making use of market-based mechanisms, tempered by the basic virtues of piety and prudence, conservatives could have the best policies for a much cleaner environment, a more efficient system with equitable assignment of costs (“the polluter pays”), sustainable use of natural resources, and a much better quality of life for ourselves and for countless generations to come.<sup>14</sup>

Bliese is making an observation similar to Dreher’s: the markets, just like governments, are imperfect, thus, they too, must have constraints placed upon their activities. A devotion to free-market principles, absent constraints, makes Bliese just as leery as any polar proposition: any utopian environmentalist solution-set rejecting capitalism.

There is an earlier work by a conservative that is also worthy of note. In 1995 Gordon Durnil wrote *The Making of a Conservative Environmentalist*. This contribution to the emerging literature exploring the synergy between the green and conservative thought provides additional value in a different direction. Unlike Bliese’s work, this is less theoretical, more practical. Instead, Durnil examines policy making rather than providing an exegesis of earlier conservative voices that are compatible with this ethos. His views are compatible with Bliese’s but focuses instead on specific institutions, environmental issues, such as water and air, and the interaction between politicians, environmentalists, media, public and government institutions. The Bliese book is largely an intellectual contribution. The Durnil book offers a hands-on contribution.

Durnil’s expertise stems from his background as a Republican politician and lawyer. One of his positions was working for the former Bush administration as the United States Chairman of the international Joint Commission, a U.S.-Canadian organization contending with environmental issues in the Great Lakes. In 1992, he also

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 261.

was Head of Delegation for the International Joint Commission to the U.N. conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Thus, his views are informed by his own practical experiences as a conservative and an environmentalist weighing in the policy-making process and decision-making at the international level.

An unintentional frustration exists in this contribution. It is the realization that the Republican administration has only become more anti-environmental, particularly since President George W. Bush's tenure began in 2000. Unfortunately, Durnil does not (of course, cannot) cover timelier elements now in play. In fact, what is most discouraging in reading his book, now a decade old, is realizing how marginalized his perspective remains in present day conservative decision making. The frustration is unintentionally abetted by the optimism of the author's conclusion. He writes: "These are grim matters, but I am optimistic about the future. I have always been an optimist." His final words still remain largely unheard: "And one last word for my conservative colleagues: we should be leading this parade!" Clearly, his position, while promising, remains premature in practice.

There is an important related dynamic intersecting environmental conservatism. There exists an overlapping, similar conservative disposition primarily focused on animal rights. In *Dominion*, conservative Matthew Scully, a former special assistant and speechwriter to President George W. Bush, writes with cogent, poignant force of the moral importance of good animal stewardship. Moral and religious explanations are provided. Presumably, this perspective would appeal to conscientious conservatives put off by the tactics and radicalism of left-wing animal rights groups, such as PETA. In

*Crunchy Cons*, Dreher refers to Scully's *Dominion* as a significant influence on his own evolving environmentalism.

...it took about fifty pages of Matthew's book for me to realize how closed-minded and dishonest I, a conservative, had been about animal rights and the environment. How often I had sneered at environmentalists to hide the fact that I didn't really understand what they were talking about, and, more to the point, didn't want to?

In *Dominion*, Matthew wrote that when we look at an animal (and, he might have said, a forest) and see it only in terms of what practical use it can be to us, we are not seeing what's really there, only an extension of ourselves. Conservatives see quite clearly the danger of sentimentalizing the natural world; hence our dismissive attitude toward those environmental extremists who see no essential difference between a redwood tree, a spotted owl, and a human being. But what we on the right don't see so well is the cost, moral and otherwise, of our hardheaded so-called realism.<sup>15</sup>

Dreher explores the connection further in a conversation he has with Scully. In his book he recounts part of their conversation:

'Conservatives I respect a great deal are always telling us that man is not just an economic being, but a moral actor,' [Scully] said. 'Well, there are moral costs to efficiency. Most people will tell you that the cruelties of factory farming are intolerable, and they want nothing to do with them. All people have to do, then, is to consult their own standards and live by them.'

'That's how I see it too,' I replied. 'But lots of times, when you point out that this or that way that conservatives live doesn't seem particularly true to conservative principles, boy, does that make right-wingers mad. I don't know about you, but I've found that one of the quickest ways to start a fight with most people in our tribe is to say that factory farming is problematic from a conservative point of view. They get real hot about how if we didn't have these things, where would we get cheap chicken?'

'As if that's the highest good!' Matthew said. 'Conservatives have assumed this posture of disdain and even contempt for people concerned about the natural world and animals, but you don't need anything more complicated than a simple standard of animal husbandry.'

As Matthew sees it, proper animal 'husbandry,' which comes from word roots meaning 'bound to the house' – that is, the animals were seen as organically connected to the farmer's home – means that man asserts his own legitimate demands on animals, but gives them something in return. You protect them from predators, and you breed them in a way that accentuates their strengths.

'And you let them live their lives as animals,' he said, not as biological products mass-produced in a factory farm.... And in a way, it is the same philosophy that guides the men with whom I grew up hunting deer: a respect for the natural rhythm and conditions of life, and honor for the animals and their condition.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Dreher, p. 154.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 157-158.

Their conversation continues, exploring the reasons for the abandonment of such moral considerations by their “tribe.” Both Dreher and Scully believe that the conservative lauding of efficiency translates into self-interest’s precedence over traditional conservative principles. In this newer conservative view, Scully hypothesizes, conservatives “tend to see people more as consumers.” Dreher concurs, “Conservatives should be the first to understand that we’re not just here to make money, that we have other duties in life.”<sup>17</sup>

That this fundamentally indifferent or even hostile right-wing attitude to animal welfare also extends to trees, fields, mountains, and rivers hardly needs detailing here. Many conservatives easily recall having been part of conversations in which fellow conservatives held forth arrogantly about paving over the wetlands, or improving a pasture by putting in a parking lot. Some of this gets said simply for shock value, but it does reflect a fundamental scorn for the natural world, except insofar as money can be made out of it.<sup>18</sup>

Dreher continues by invoking earlier conservative views, such as Richard Weaver and Russell Kirk, reinforcing the argument advanced in the classical conservative chapter of this work:

How did the conservative movement become identified with such prideful philistinism? We weren’t always like this. Readers... of the philosophical gathers of modern American conservatism, cannot fail to be impressed with the profound respect those men had for the natural world, and their distress over the way industrial capitalism saw nature merely as a thing to be exploited....

Traditionalist conservatives know that absent the restraining hand of religion, tradition, or the state, there is nothing to prevent human beings from acting in ways contrary to their own best interests, or those of the community.”<sup>19</sup>

The preceding conveys an additional remarkable tenet also much ignored today. That is the notion of self-restraint, an ethos found in Enlightenment era thought yet selectively omitted from conservative intellectual claims.

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. pp. 158-159.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 159.



*Sierra Club Republican Policy-makers and Activists*

The tenure of Christine Todd Whitman, the former head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the first term of the George W. Bush administration, suggests the marginalized status of conservationist conservatives. In her recent book, *It's My Party Too*, Whitman concedes that “The Bush administration deserves credit for some important environmental measures” but, notwithstanding,

Unfortunately, our efforts... which have produced some impressive results, have been overshadowed by those in the administration, and in key leadership roles in the Congress, who never seem to miss an opportunity to dismiss environmental protection as a priority.<sup>20</sup>

And further on Whitman writes:

Although I share the frustration so many Republicans feel over the excessive emphasis on writing even more regulations, and on the tactic the environmentalists use of refusing to recognize the progress we've made, the problem is that too many Republicans these days (especially those in leadership posts in Washington) often go to the opposite extreme – denying that the environment needs any additional legal and regulatory protection and seeking to roll back some regulations that have done so much good.<sup>21</sup>

Given Whitman's account of a frustrating EPA tenure, her assessment of the impediments and disappointments she faced seems rather diplomatic. Of special note: Whitman's account of her profound failure to convince President Bush as to the dangers of global warming and the merit in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

No such diplomatic restraint is found with Russell Train another former EPA head during the Nixon administration.<sup>22</sup> In an interview with *Mother Jones*, Russell Train

---

<sup>20</sup> Christine Todd Whitman, *It's My Party Too: The Battle for the Heart of the GOP and the Future of America* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), p. 155.

<sup>21</sup> Whitman, p. 168.

<sup>22</sup> For more on Train's contributions to environmental policy in the United States, see the biography by J. Brooks Flippen, *Conservative Conservationist: Russell E. Train and the Emergence of American Environmentalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

argues that the current Bush administration has “declared war on the environment.” He claims:

There has been a tendency on the part of this administration, this White House, to – some call it – distort science. And if they don’t like the science, they take out that particular finding.... I think this administration is not a conservative administration. I think it’s a radical administration. It represents a radical rollback of environmental policy going back to a period many, many years ago. It’s backward.<sup>23</sup>

Undoubtedly, Train and Whitman are not influential within their own party these days.

But they are not completely alone. In an interview with Elizabeth Royte, Martha Marks discusses her role as founder and President of Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP).<sup>24</sup> She endorses the conservative line of self-reliance and smaller government “but there are two things the federal government must do because the states cannot: provide a strong national defense and protect the environment.” She monitors and lobbies Republican politicians, seeking common ground with empathetic leaders, such as Senator John McCain, other moderate members of Congress, moderate Republican voters and former Republicans “who have left the party in disgust.”

Martha Marks advances an argument that recalls conservatism’s past legacy of activism. President Theodore Roosevelt, Barry Goldwater, and Richard Nixon were all conservationists as well as conservatives. She also points out that “rank-and-file Republicans seem to be way ahead of their representatives on Capitol Hill.”<sup>25</sup> Her organization aims to convince Republican leadership that being green is compatible with

---

<sup>23</sup> Russell Train, “Conversation with a Conservative: Russell Train,” *MotherJones.com/Commentary*, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Royte, “A Voice in the Wilderness,” *Onearth*, The Natural Resources Defense Council, Volume 26, #3, Fall, 2004. pp. 27-29. For the REP web site see <http://www.repamerica.org/> accessed on 9 February 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Martha Marks, “Time for the GOP to steal back its conservation legacy”, <http://www.repamerica.org/opinions/op-eds/8.html>, accessed on February 9, 2006.

not just its past legacy of conservation, but compatible with the sentiments of their constituency. What does the REP want? They want:

Clean air and water, food free from harmful chemicals, clean, efficient businesses and industries, a high quality of life in our cities and rural communities, strong results-oriented enforcement of environmental laws, economic development for communities without the ravages of sprawl, high priority for funding of natural resource stewardship and environmental protection, protection for posterity of our national parks forests, wildlife refuges, wild lands and waters, and effective legal protection for threatened and endangered plants and animals in their native habitats.<sup>26</sup>

They identify themselves as “real Republicans” interested in bipartisan efforts to ameliorate and protect the environment through stewardship and conservation. Nothing, they insist, is more conservative than conservation.

Environmental issues the REP lobbies for cover much ground. Recent media statements the organization has released span a range of issues they are committed to defending. For example, a September 22, 2005 press release argues that “efficiency is [the] right answer for strengthening energy security.”<sup>27</sup> But like many other environmental organizations they fear, especially in the aftermath of Katrina, that energy shortages and escalating prices should not catalyze oil drilling on public, protected lands. In this instance, their arguments are compatible with outliers within the national security category too. In another press release aimed to combat the Interior Department’s ambitions to open Alaskan lands to drilling, Jim DiPeso, the policy director of REP, argues against their agenda. In a January 13, 2006 release he states:

We use 25 percent of the world’s oil production, yet 98 percent of the world’s oil reserves are located outside the United States. Making oil drilling the dominant use of many of our nation’s finest public lands and offshore waters will do little except deplete U.S. oil even faster and perpetuate our nation’s dangerous dependence on oil and the unfriendly regimes that export oil. An unbalanced energy policy that focuses only on drilling, gives lip service to energy

---

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.repamerica.org/AboutREP/philosophy.html>, accessed on February 9, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.repamerica.org/opinions/pressreleases/release9-22-05.html>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

efficiency, and shortchanges diversification into non-petroleum alternatives is dangerously shortsighted and doomed to failure.<sup>28</sup>

In an earlier press release in December of 2005, the REP lauds the Congressional defeat of the most recent attempt to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Specific Republican figures are praised for their support of the REP position. REP Government Affairs Director, David Jenkins states in this release title “Arctic Decision a Victory for Traditional Conservative Principles”:

‘We are very proud of Senators Lincoln Chafee and Mike DeWine, who helped block [Alaskan Senator Ted] Stevens’ scheme to muscle his oil drilling hobby horse through Congress by hanging it onto a vital defense appropriations bill. Had Stevens succeeded, it would have set a terrible precedent for lawmakers to violate Senate rules and hold vital appropriations bills hostage to their narrow, special interest agendas. Thanks to our conservation-minded Republican lawmakers, good government won the day,’ Jenkins said.<sup>29</sup>

As well, DiPeso is quoted further in the release. He reminds conservatives of their legacy behind the REP’s lobbying efforts:

‘The Arctic Refuge is a spectacular place like nowhere else in America. President Dwight D. Eisenhower protected the Refuge in 1960 so that future generations of Americans could marvel at its vast array of wildlife, enjoy its beauty, and experience the epic wildness that shaped our country’s history and culture. Thanks to courageous Republicans in the House and Senate, President Eisenhower’s legacy of good stewardship is still intact, serving as an inspiring example that his political successors in the Republican Party leadership could learn a great deal from.’<sup>30</sup>

Notwithstanding, the organization is well aware that most of the time their efforts are not successful. Even the President’s recent State of the Union “addicted to oil” remark is critiqued as a welcome concession, but little more than words, when action is what is needed. In a February 1, 2006 press release DiPeso cautiously states:

‘While the president’s clean energy proposals are welcome, greater energy efficiency is equally important.... We have the scientific know-how and the business smarts to get our nation off the dangerous oil treadmill and create a more sustainable energy future. American inventors, engineers, and entrepreneurs can develop and market the energy solutions that will keep us safe,

---

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.repamerica.org/opinions/pressreleases/release1-13-06.html>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.repamerica.org/opinions/pressreleases/release12-22-05.html>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

save us money, and protect our environment. All that's needed is the political will to marshal the necessary resources and get the job done. It's the smart and patriotic thing to do.'<sup>31</sup>

Most interesting, is a follow up press release just five days later. By February 6, 2006, the REP was far more disappointed. The political backlash by eco-skeptical conservatives angered by Bush's statement made it increasingly clear that the President was Janus-faced rather than substantively willing to revise his energy policy positions. His remarks were, indeed, more words than action. The title of this release gets directly to the point: "REP Disappointed by President's Energy Bait-and-Switch." It goes on to reveal the organization's considerable anger and frustration:

President Bush's inclusion of Artic National Wildlife Refuge drilling revenues in his proposed 2007 budget grossly contradicts the call in his State of the Union speech to reduce America's addiction to oil.

'The administration's speedy retreat from the president's oil addiction statement and the assumption of Artic Refuge oil drilling in the president's budget make it clear that when it comes to oil this White House is more about getting a fix than fixing our energy problems,' said REP Government Affairs David Jenkins. 'The rhetorical bait-and-switch illustrated just how much control big oil interests have over the president's agenda.'

'We can't end our addiction to oil by expanding our dependence on oil,' REP Policy Director Jim DiPeso said. 'We must chart a new energy direction and let go of the false, addiction-feeding notion that our nation can drill its way to energy security. We will never find energy security in the Alaskan wilderness.'

'The math of our oil addiction is unyielding. America uses 25 percent of the world's oil production, yet holds only 2 percent of global oil reserves. Draining America first will leave us worse off. Anyone who asserts that drilling the Artic Refuge is a step toward energy independence is out of touch with reality.' DiPeso said.

'Let's hope that in a challenging election year, Congress will reject the president's special-interest energy agenda and actually pursue the public's best interest,' Jenkins said. 'To retain control of Congress our party must move beyond a shortsighted energy agenda designed to prop up oil industry profits. It must pursue more forward-thinking energy solutions that protect the American people.'<sup>32</sup>

More recently, the REP weighed in on the resignation of Interior Secretary Gale Norton, viewing the vacancy as an "Opportunity for President to Re-Orient Conservation

---

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.repamerica.org/opinions/pressreleases/release2-1-06.html>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.repamerica.org/opinions/pressreleases/release2-6-06.html>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

Policies” as a press release on March 10, 2006 asserts. The REP had opposed her appointment in 2001 because, to quote the founder and President Martha Marks,

‘...our original concerns about her proved correct. Under her watch, the Interior Department has catered almost exclusively to selfish interests, at the expense of the balanced, science-based stewardship of wildlife, parks, monuments, refuges, and other public lands that the American people expect of their government.’

‘we urge President Bush to take advantage of this opportunity to do it right the second time around. He can greatly improve his conservation record with a new Interior Secretary who will put the public interest first and give highest priority to careful, conservative stewardship of the natural and cultural treasures that fall under the department’s care.’<sup>33</sup>

Once again, however, what looked like a promising opportunity soon revealed a darker side. Later on in March, the REP was once again on the offensive believing that Norton was engaging in “last-minute policy” decisions that were not in the best interest of the environment. Norton was implementing a policy that entailed recognizing obscure “right-of way” claims in a “giveaway” of public lands. DiPeso asserts that

‘Secretary Norton’s last-minute directive threatens to slice up and fragment the very natural treasures that she has been charged with safeguarding. It would allow webs of damaging roads to be punched through pristine lands that deserve the highest level of protection.... This decision will foment invasions of ATVs and dirt bikes. Unless this decision is blocked we could also see America’s most cherished national parks and wild areas crisscrossed with busy highways bringing noise and pollution’

The REP believes that this “new policy will clear the way for approval of highway right-of-way claims across public lands. States and counties have asserted thousands of miles of such claims across the crown jewels of America’s protected public lands. The release ends with the angry words of REP Director David Jenkins:

‘Time and again, Secretary Norton has allowed parochial agendas and greed to trump the public’s interest in protecting nationally significant lands for all Americans. She is closing out her abysmal tenure with a terrible policy that could result in lasting damage to America’s natural heritage.’<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.repamerica.org/opinions/pressreleases/release3-10-06.html>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.repamerica.org/opinions/pressreleases/release3-23-06.html>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

Clearly these REP statements indicate growing fissures within the party; it is not just Democrats and Independents angered at the Bush administration's environmental policy decisions. The REP also monitors the record of public officials within federal agencies covering environmental planning and policy. Norton, like her Reagan era predecessor James Watts, is particularly infamous among environmentalists. As well, members of the executive and legislative branches of the federal government are lauded or condemned for their environmental records and voting practices. This is an effective lobbying strategy utilized by many political action groups, NGOs and businesses that wish to influence government policy. The Sierra Club, for example, keeps a detailed scorecard on their environmental records. This is helpful for constituents wishing to assess their representatives' policy positions.<sup>35</sup>

What prominent Republicans does the REP praise? Their Honorary Board of "distinguished Republicans" conveys the organization's limited influence today. Only three United States Senators are acknowledged: Lincoln Chafee (Rhode Island), Susan Collins (Maine), and John McCain (Arizona). Although the same number, percentage wise, the following is slightly more promising. Three former Republican EPA Administrators are recognized as well: William Ruckelshaus (California), Russell Train (Washington DC), and Christine Todd Whitman (New Jersey). The remaining 31 Republicans listed comprise private citizens, former or current Congressmen and woman, and three former (notably, no present) Governors Republicans that merit high regard. A recent REP scorecard on Congressional members mentions other praiseworthy politicians, some of whom sit on their honorary board too. The list includes

---

<sup>35</sup> <http://whistler.sierraclub.org/votewatch/>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

Congressman Sherwood Boehlert (NY), Jim Saxton (NJ), Michael Fitzpatrick (PA), Michael Castle (DE), Christopher Shays (CT), Frank LoBiondo (NJ), Nancy Johnson (CT) Christopher Smith (NJ), Jim Leach (IA), Wayne Gilchrest (MS), Jim Ramstad (MN), and Timothy Johnson (IL). This is not a lengthy or geographically diverse list.

(NOTE: check if they WON or LOST in midterm 2006 elections)Who earns their wrath? The lowest scores were given to House members Richard Pombo (CA) and Joe Barton (TX). In the Senate, Ted Stevens (AK) earned their lowest score with a -10 rating on a scale from 1 – 100. Not far above, still in negative territory, were Larry Craig (ID), Christopher Bond (MI), and James Inhofe (OK), all at a -3 rating.<sup>36</sup>

Most interesting, is how many of these Republican House and Senate members remain in the single digits. Even Senator John McCain (AZ) earns an unimpressive score of 63, but *relative* to his colleague from Arizona, Jon Kyl with a score of 13, McCain's score looks respectable. All of this illuminates the REP's limited ability to persuade their party towards greener policy making decisions.

However, their marginalization from most political conservatives today does not mean that their future role in conservative circles will remain so; given the increasing emergence of outliers in conservatism, at both the grassroots and policy-making level, the prospect of resurgence in strength and influence is far more probable than it may have appeared a few years ago. Recent events (Katrina, rising fuel prices and shortages, uncertainties in Iraq and Iran, global warming) have also lent themselves, paradoxically, to a resurgence in environmental conscientiousness within conservative circles.

Undoubtedly, the REP is not now a force to be reckoned with in contemporary

---

<sup>36</sup> The REP Scorecard can be viewed at [http://www.repamerica.org/2005\\_scorecard.pdf](http://www.repamerica.org/2005_scorecard.pdf), accessed on April 21, 2006.



conservative political circles, yet it is well situated to galvanize and network with emerging conservative green outliers.

*The Sporting Conservationists:*

It is an understatement to state that these are difficult times for hunters and environmentalists to find common ground. But it was not always such, nor need it be in the future. Today mainstream environmental organizations tend to align with gun control and animal rights organizations. Conversely, hunters, ranchers and fisherman, principally are predisposed to a “red state” disposition, and thus, mostly support right wing organizations, most notably, the powerful National Rifle Association (NRA), the foremost gun lobby in the United States. The NRA and environmental movement have been longstanding foes. The NRA often lobbies politicians for more roads on and access to publicly owned and protected wilderness land. The consequence of this bifurcation is obvious: it has led to such profound ideological divisions that collaboration is extraordinarily complex and difficult to remediate. Yet as Paul Schullery, a historian of the American conservation movement, reminds his readers in his introduction to *Theodore Roosevelt Wilderness Writings*, “Nature-lovers often forget that two of the greatest figures in American nature study, Audubon and Leopold, were also enthusiastic hunters.”<sup>37</sup> Indeed, he notes, “Roosevelt’s hunting is a knotty problem to some modern readers.” Schullery continues:

Because hunting is now morally repugnant to many people, modern nature enthusiasts have compartmentalized themselves into camps – some armed with binoculars, some with back packs,

---

<sup>37</sup> Paul Schullery ed., “Introduction,” *Theodore Roosevelt: Wilderness Writings*, (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1986), p. 19.

some with fishing rods, some with rifles, and so on; and often their rivalries and disagreements defeat their common goal of resource protection.”<sup>38</sup>

As the historian John F. Reiger notes in his well-researched book, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, “American sportsmen, those who hunted and fished for pleasure rather than commerce or necessity, were the real vanguard of conservation.”<sup>39</sup>

He writes further:

Regardless of which of the three main areas of early conservation we pick – wildlife, timberlands, or national parks – sportsmen let the way. During the 1870s and the 1880s, local and state associations forced one legislature after another to pass laws limiting and regulating the take of wildlife by market men and sportsmen alike....

Finally, in 1887, Theodore Roosevelt, George Bird Grinnell, and other prominent sportsmen founded the Boone and Crockett Club, named after two of America’s most famous hunters. Though almost ignored by academic historians, it, and not the Sierra Club, was the first private organization to deal effectively with conservation issues of national scope.<sup>40</sup>

Theodore Roosevelt’s conservationist legacy seems especially incongruous given the divide today. He wrote, “True sportsmen, worthy of the name, men who shoot only in season, and in moderation, do no harm whatever to game.” Meanwhile he disdained both the “perverted sportsmen,” who is “the kind of game-butcher who simply kills for the record slaughter” and “the professional skin or market hunter” as being “the real offender” although “he is of all the others the man who would ultimately be most benefited by the preservation of game.”<sup>41</sup> The past conservationist deeds of sportsmen such as Roosevelt is often neglected because of the “irreconcilable differences” which now divide hunter and environmentalist.

But recent developments suggest that this divide is not insurmountable. As a recent article by the writer Michael Blanding tellingly points out: “Increasingly...hunters are viewing environmental issues as part of their own cause. ‘What good are the guns if

---

<sup>38</sup> Schullery, p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2001 3<sup>rd</sup> rev. & expanded ed., orig. pub.1975, University of Oklahoma Press), p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Reiger, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Roosevelt, pp. 150-151.

we have nowhere left to hunt – if there’s no more habitat?’ asks David Stalling, Western field coordinator of Trout Unlimited and former president of the Montana Wildlife Foundation....”<sup>42</sup> Blanding goes on to describe the fractures now occurring within the NRA as some of its membership objects to its environmental hostility. Collectively, for these types, nothing is more conservative than conservation.

### *Chapter Conclusion*

One encouraging indicator is that polls consistently show broad American support of environmental issues. According to a recent Gallup Poll many more Americans are worried about the environment and energy:

According to Gallup’s annual environment survey, updated Mar. 13-16, 2006, Americans today are more negative about the quality of the environment than in previous years. But they show no corresponding increase in their willingness to make the environment a priority over economic or energy concerns.<sup>43</sup>

There’s the rub: an unwillingness to make it a “priority.” Clearly, complexities are attached to interpreting this in a positive light. In other words, it would be foolhardy to suggest that numbers indicating that the majority of Americans are concerned, that this necessarily translates into the making of environmentalism into a priority, more citizen influence and activism. First, there is the issue of *Not In My Back Yard* (a.k.a. NIMBY), which entails a mindset not necessarily the same as a globally conceived ethos of *Not On Planet Earth* (a.k.a. NOPE). In theory, green activism should be bipartisan. Typically it is when the issue is of concern to a local community. But this does not translate into a sustained ethos that promulgates consistent political influence over time and a range of green issues.

---

<sup>42</sup> Michael Blanding, “Gun Crazy: The Revolt against the NRA” *The New Republic*, September 4, 2006, p.14.

<sup>43</sup> <http://poll.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=22471>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

Second, in a hierarchy of concerns that the American people have, environmental issues do not rank as high as other competing concerns: national security, taxes, medical costs, social security, etc. This explains why polls showing broad American support for environmentalism does not necessarily translate into policy making that are representative of these values. Other issues compete as well with environmentalism: immigration, abortion, right-to-die, stem-cell research, the death penalty, corruption and crime. Further, this lack of representation is impeded by an active opposition retaining sizeable political influence today as detailed in earlier chapters.

Third, specific environmental issues that appear more uncertain, are not well understood nor well addressed in the public domain, including schools and the media, means global environmental problems are particularly low on the public's radar. Most Americans, for example, are not well versed in the intricacies of global warming. A recent Gallup poll reveals that global warming is not considered an "urgent issue" by most Americans. Only a third believes that global warming poses a "serious threat in their lifetime." Republican concern, particularly, has even dipped since 1999.<sup>44</sup> What evidence they read about, typically, appears to affect areas they do not live in (Alaska, Bangladesh, etc.). This perception of *distance* from locality overlaps the first problem; an environmental ethos that is localized to a specific community (theirs) and a specific perception of looming danger (say, for example, a proposed incinerator in their neighborhood) makes their activism selective and intermittent. Thus it tends to be inefficacious as an enduring political influence.

---

<sup>44</sup> <http://poll.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=22291&pg=1>, accessed on April 21, 2006.

Conversely, although rising fuel prices could harm the economy and significantly hurt economically vulnerable Americans, they do afford an opportunity to promulgate realization and activism in more environmentally sound ways. The fact that organizations like the REP are already depicting environmental degradation as a national security issue as well as an environmental issue, suggests that they may gain momentum and influence within conservative politics. In fact, greener Republicans may just well resurge in public popularity. Although moderate Republicans with strong environmental records, such as Chaffee of Rhode Island, lost reelection, so too, did the likes of Richard Pombo, a nemesis to all environmentalists whether liberal or conservative. The loss of Republican majorities in both houses may mark a pivotal transformation in the ability of the democrats to work with like-minded Republicans across the aisle. As well, Republican moderates like Christine Whitman may be able to capitalize on these grass roots, rank and file conservatives, providing momentum toward policy positions far more favorable to the green than what now passes for conservative politics and practice.

In a recent *Star-Ledger* article, Whitman argues that the GOP is at a “low ebb” and “critical point” because the polls continue to show erosion in public support of the party. She argues that Republicans have become too divisive and too “preoccupied by the Christian conservative agenda.” As the article details:

‘The rhetoric is getting harsher, and we’re having more divisive elections’... We can’t just agree to disagree anymore without being disagreeable.... People see their opponents as not just wrong, but evil.’

Whitman is spreading her word of ‘radical moderation’ and making campaign contributions to moderate candidates through a political action committee she formed last year after releasing her book, ‘It’s My Party Too: The Battle for the Heart of the GOP and the Future of America.’

The book has just been published in paperback, giving new spark for an effort she hopes will pave the way for mavericks like Sen. John McCain of Arizona or former New York City

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to run for president in 2008. Whitman has collected \$1 million for moderate Republicans in as many as 120 elections across the nation.<sup>45</sup>

Although this article does not address environmental politics, Whitman has always self-identified herself as a green conservative. Her website lists organizations that she is associated with, many of which are decidedly moderate by Republican standards today. For example, Republicans for Choice and the Log Cabin Republicans as well as the REP are listed as “strategic partners” on her website. The recent and notable downslide in the Republican Party’s support among Americans and their subsequent losses in the 2006 midterm election suggest too that these more moderate voices within conservatism are ripe for resurgence in popularity, influence, and bipartisan cooperation. Many Republicans have had enough of the administration’s shift toward more extreme positions and this may bode well for the moderates in future elections.

There are also renegade outliers with ambiguous records of environmental activism. In this respect, Senator John McCain and Hummer-aficionado California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger come to mind. Both of their records suggest crossover. They just may well calculate that their political future is tied to policy positions more responsive to their green constituencies. Both have been outspoken about global warming. There is no way to predict if a conservationist disposition will be sustained over the long term, but it should be clear that the past few years provide considerable impetus for just that possibility.

Recent polls show President Bush’s popularity at record lows. It is not just Democrats that can take advantage of the fallout. Moderate Republicans too can

---

<sup>45</sup> Deborah Howlett, “Whitman pushes GOP moderation” *The Star-Ledger*, April 17, 2006. See at <http://www.mypartytoo.com/news/04-17-06.html>, accessed on April 22, 2006.

capitalize on the growing unpopularity of the current administration, proclaiming, as Whitman now does, that “it is my party too.” The recent escalation in fuel prices provides additional impetus to capitalize on the administration’s unpopularity. Politicians from both parties have tried to capitalize on this situation. The current situation, however, is an embarrassment to both parties as it heightens the realization that they have been negligent and irresponsible for decades in forming prudent energy policies.

There is a more general bitter disillusionment ripening among conservatives worth considering as well. In the past few years many books authored by past or present Republican cognoscenti indicate increasing hostility with the party’s general direction under its current leadership. Their respective titles make their specific indictments loud and clear. For example, recent books include the following by lapsed Republican David Brock (*The Republican Noise Machine: Right Wing Media and How It Corrupts Democracy*), *Wall Street Journal* reporter Ron Suskind (*The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House and the Education of Paul O’Neill*), former Reagan administration official, Bruce Bartlett with a very angry expose (*Imposter: How George W. Bush Bankrupted America and Betrayed the Reagan Legacy*), and Andrew Sullivan (*The Conservative Soul: How We Lost It, How To Get It Back*). As a whole, these books illuminate the strong sense of betrayal many conservatives are now willing to express publicly.

Last, one further example of this growing conservative backlash is the recent *New York Times* bestselling book by Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy*. Phillips is a former Republican strategist quite critical of the substantial influence religious fundamentalists

now hold in American politics. The work is not directly focused on environmental issues, but it does play an important subtext to a larger argument advanced regarding the American dependence on foreign oil. The dedication page sets the stage:

This book is dedicated to the millions of Republicans, present and lapsed, who have opposed the Bush dynasty and the disenlightenment in the 2000 and 2004 elections.<sup>46</sup>

Clearly sentiments overt from the get go. This is an ambitious, angry and well researched work. Many things irk Phillips: federal deficit spending, consumer debt, the War in Iraq, the party's increasing religious zealotry, willingness to promote faith in the public realm, and disregard for science, "notably biotechnology, climate studies, and straight-talking petroleum geology", as well as attitudes regarding consumption (especially energy consumption) and the environment.<sup>47</sup> Underpinning all of his concerns is the preponderant role he deems extreme religions play in American politics. The abandonment of energy conservation, rising debt, and indifference to it consequences, for are integrally related to religious views that dominate today.

The Republican national coalition's unusual outlook must me underscored by an additional energy-related point. Some 30 to 40 percent of the Bush electorate, many of whom might otherwise resent their employment conditions, credit-card debt, heating bills, or escalating costs of automobile upkeep (from insurance to gas prices), often subordinate these economic concerns to a broader religious preoccupation with biblical prophesy and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The explanation is mostly theological.... But there is a strong connection to oil, gas, and energy – a tie that inhibits American policy-making deliberations.<sup>48</sup>

Phillips continues:

Evangelical religion is clearly beginning to inhibit science and geology. In recent years, as evangelicals have gained importance, corporations have begun to take note, hiring more Washington lobbyists with biblical worldviews or Christian right connections.... For three

---

<sup>46</sup> Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, (New York: Viking, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 174

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p. 63.



decades, and with considerable national significance, it has been at the junction of the religious right and laissez-faire natural –resource, energy, and environmental policy.<sup>49</sup>

As Phillips sees it, a hyper-consumptive materialistic society, often lauded by the religious right, are culpable. Meanwhile,

Environmentalists raise a credible voice but usually a less influential one. Voters have come to expect cheap gasoline, electricity, and gas and oil heating – as well as the comfort, mobility, and personal independence that hydrocarbons facilitate....

John and Jane Q. Citizen mostly ignore these trends and details, and know nothing of geologist Hubert’s bell-shaped charts of peak oil. Senior oil executives sometimes discuss them in industry conferences, but elected officials – many with decades of energy platitudes under their belts – typically shrink from opening what could be a Pandora’s box of political consequences. Oil was there for our grandfathers, they insist, and it will be there for our grandchildren; it is part of the American way.

The politics of oil dependence in the United States, in sum, is ingrained and possessive – a culture of red, white, and blue assumptions of entitlement, a foreign policy steeped in covert petroleum emphasis, and a machismo philosophy of invade-and-take-it.<sup>50</sup>

This is a *Republican’s* indictment. Such internecine battles do not bode well for the party’s ability to stay its present pro-consumptive, anti-environmental course.

But are Sierra Club Republicans likely to make a difference? For the foreseeable future, their influence is bound to be light. As Marks herself concedes,

We’re not under any illusions that we’ll see a magnificent transformation in the Republican Party anytime soon. This is a long-term project.<sup>51</sup>

Today Sierra Club Republicans are conservative outliers. Notwithstanding, there is potential for far greater collaboration with other green conservative outliers as denoted in earlier chapters as well as mainstream environmental organizations. This may be especially true if Michael Blanding’s article illuminating the internal divisions within the NRA membership over its environmental antipathy and extreme gun rights policies (the NRA even rejects child-safety locks and background checks) become even greater.

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. pp. 64-65.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

<sup>51</sup> Quote from Royte, p. 29.

Taken as a whole, this conservative type, with its notable history of environmental conservatism, makes it well-positioned for a vital, ameliorative role in galvanizing vastly different ideological conservatives to imagine, extol and practice a greener ethos.

## Conclusion

*Every effort to return by a too simple route to the harmony and harmlessness of nature inevitably results in daemonic politics in which human ambitions and lusts defy the restraints of both nature and reason.*

Reinhold Niebuhr

*To take stock of the question, we must step outside the binary oppositions in which it often becomes ensnared: high literary culture versus technicological subculture, tradition versus modernity, romantic obscurantism versus the universalism of the Enlightenment, and so on. For many of us, the theater of contemporary culture is in effect played out within these impossible alternatives.*

Luc Ferry

### What's So Wrong with Hyper-Consumption?

The detrimental repercussions of hyper-consumptive practices are not only environmental. Many academic disciplines have contributed to our understanding of its other side affects. Consumption specialists within the field of psychology, for example, in examining this dynamic permeating modern market society, research how it harms individual and collective well-being. They emphasize the growing list of mental disorders and social problems consumptive practices induce such as status anxiety, depression, debt and acquisitive disorder (AD), to name a few of the correlated side effects<sup>1</sup> Yet as the historian Peter Stearns observes:

Consumerism has always been hard to protest against. Its manifestations are amorphous. Many people seemed to like some features of consumerism, from the first, even if they hesitated about the larger phenomenon. How can the idea of a better material life be attacked? What's wrong

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the following three books: an anthology of essays edited by Tim Kasser and Allen D. Kramer, *Psychology and Consumer Culture: The Struggle for a Good Life in a Materialistic World* (Wash. DC: American Psychological Association, 2004), Peter C. Whybrow, M.D., *American Mania: When More Is Not Enough* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005) and Tim Kasser, *The High Price of Materialism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002).

with consumerist leisure forms that almost everyone seems to enjoy? Individual critics of consumerism can easily sound like elitist grumps.<sup>2</sup>

Barry Schwartz, a scholar in the discipline of psychology, argues in *The Paradox of Choice* that too much “choice” can be as socially problematic as too little. For example, he has a section addressing “Helplessness, Depression, and Modern Life” in which he finds “explosive growth” in clinical depression. Most alarming, is that clinical depression is beginning at much earlier ages.<sup>3</sup> Suicide rates too have increased, compounded, he argues, by rising expectations, individualism and self-blame. In his view the social consequences of hyper-consumption are often insidiously harmful and not well-addressed in the general society as a critical variable in mental disorders. Even the seemingly benign luxury of “choice” is complicit:

The “success” of modernity turns out to be bittersweet, and everywhere we look it appears that a significant contributing factor is the overabundance of choice. Having too many choices produces psychological distress, especially when combined with regret, concern about status, adaptation, social comparison, and perhaps most important, the desire to have the best of everything – to maximize.<sup>4</sup>

Schwartz does offer sensible prescriptive advice, such as learning to “satisfice more and maximize less” for, as he credibly argues, “there are no insistent instructions from society about shopping too much.”<sup>5</sup> His remedies are not dramatic, but limited, focusing more on individual reflection and action rather than collective institutional change.

There is also growing recognition that happiness and material prosperity do not go hand in hand. After a certain measure of “want” is met the payoff, in terms of well-

---

<sup>2</sup> Peter N. Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Barry Schwartz, *The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004). Schwartz writes that “as many as 7.5 percent of Americans have an episode of clinical depression before they are fourteen.” p. 209.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223 – 225.

being, begins to drop off considerably. “Maximizers,” Schwartz claims, are more susceptible to the lure of the marketplace, the short-lived thrill from the novelty of purchase, and also depression. Another important area of study within the field of psychology, are contributions that specifically address the consequences of mass consumptive society on children. Susan Linn’s book, *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*, is representative. The accumulative message of these contributions is principally dire, that there is something wrong with hyper-consumption, that it may well undermine our mental well-being.

Both Thorstein Veblen and Vance Packard critically covered consumption terrain from sociological perspectives. Since Veblen’s *Theory of the Leisure Class*, first published in 1899, and Packard’s contributions in the late 1950s and 60s, the dynamics of hyper-consumption have only continued to escalate. People find it difficult to escape the grip of materialism, let alone reflect upon the costs incurred upon individuals and collective society. Both Veblen and Packard were well known and read by many in their times. Yet never has the need for market society to “confront consumption” been greater, despite the visibility both authors provided then and still do today. Packard presciently warned of advertisers’ “psycho-seduction of children” and their promotion of “babes in consumerland.”<sup>6</sup> The manipulation of taste, desire and purchase begins at birth. But here we are over forty years later and not much has changed about the contours of the debate within academia or with the issue’s lack of public prominence. This is despite a recent increase in consumption-focused books, many of which are not polemics, but pragmatic in context and remedy.

---

<sup>6</sup> Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1960).

Other disciplines question and study hyper-consumption through other lenses. Historians, such as Peter Stearns on a global scale, or Lizabeth Cohen, David Shi and Gary Cross within America, trace its development and analyze its distinctions from past consumer practices. Philosophers, such as Peter Singer, and theologians, such as Vincent Miller and Colleen McDannell, examine its moral, ethical and religious implications. Economists, such as Robert H. Frank and Juliet Schor, have made prolific contributions to consumption studies. Anthropologists too, like Daniel Miller, and even English professor James Twitchell have substantively weighed in on consumptive society.

Of course, there are critical environmental concerns that should impel society to question and change its hyper-consumptive practices. Scientists and environmentalists draw attention to the harmful consequences of our abundant quantities of waste, often toxic waste, greenhouse gas emissions, rampant development that encroaches and erodes bio-diverse habitats, and likelihood our human practices are irreparably altering the earth's ecosystems to the point where life as we know it becomes unsustainable.

Of critical importance, is the relationship environmental degradation and scarcity have to geo-political considerations. Thomas Homer-Dixon, Daniel Deudney and Robert Kaplan, for example, have all cogently warned of the dangers environmental damage causes not just to the earth, but as an agent of global instability. Environmental change is an important but neglected variable in international conflicts and potential conflicts. Indeed, recent natural catastrophes, such as tsunamis, hurricanes, and rising sea levels, all underscore the reality of these concerns and their geo-political consequences: skyrocketing energy prices, growing global competition, demand and sporadic shortages for these resources.

The national security of the United States itself is endangered by the failure to seriously consider and remedy environmental problems. Environmental problems necessitate cooperation and consensus on an international scale. Without the explicit and genuine commitment of America no global remedy is possible. And without the explicit and genuine commitment of American conservatives at this time, no global remedy is possible.

### **Looking Forward**

This is a critical time to scrutinize American conservative views of consumption and the environment. The past few years have spawned a reawakening among many Americans, including conservatives. Global warming and energy dependence are the two most critical subsets to the emerging consensus that America must reign in its addictive habits. The country's dependence on foreign oil, hyper-consumptive practices, alarming and growing levels of individual, institutional and governmental debt, and eroding global relationship between the United States and the rest of the world and its out-sourcing of its own toxic waste and dirty industries, accumulate into a grim understanding that American culture must change its consumptive practices and policies.

Paradigms that prevail today may change tomorrow. And ideologies are not stagnant; they are subject to change. In this respect, the American conservative tradition is no exception despite the core ideas that seemingly band it together under one tent. It is clear that this tent is large, fractious and discordant. Keep in mind the following picture of the conservative tent, for it includes the likes of such individuals as the libertarian journalist H. L. Mencken, the evangelical Reverend Pat Robertson, the isolationist

political pundit Pat Buchanan, and the hawkish neo-conservative Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. None of the preceding figures have much in common. Indeed, to all intents and purposes, they are intellectual combatants, not collegial or cooperative members of the same house. Yet all reside under the conservative canopy.

Contemporary perspectives regarding consumption and the environment are subject to revision. Indeed, although earlier chapters depict a diversity of range and motive, the prevalent ethos today is primarily eco-skeptic and lauds consumption. Yet in the unpacking of conservative views, three critical points become clear. First, the dominant view today is not congruous with an earlier conservative intellectual legacy. An exegesis of the tradition's roots, its prominent intellectual contributions, illustrates a profound neglect of important aspects of its core values: frugality, prudence, stewardship, conservation and reverence for the land. Second, once the contemporary conservative perspective is unpacked, a complex diversity of explanations for this consensus that runs counter to its legacy becomes evident. Third, and most significant in looking forward, is the range of outliers within each type of conservatism depicted. The possibility of synergy among these voices has far more potential to substantively reformulate the prevailing conservative view than at any time in the past few decades. When ideologies begin to shift, submerged fault lines become more prominent. These divisions mean that the prospect of a conservative reclamation of these core intellectual roots is more than just unfounded conjecture. If this is to happen, and the ideology remains ascendant in political practice, then the consequences of an ideological shift will significantly impact policy making in political practice.



Consider global warming, an issue long scorned or dismissed by eco-skeptics, thanks to the seemingly nebulousness of repercussion. But its public prominence has returned with vengeance to remind us of our fragile, dependent relationship with nature. Even some former skeptics, Gregg Easterbrook comes to mind, now concede that the evidence of global warming has become “near-unanimous” and that the “research is now in, and it shows a strong scientific consensus that an artificially warming world is a real phenomenon posing real danger”.<sup>7</sup> It is becoming more apparent to many Americans that their consumptive practices do, in fact, irreparably impact the well-being of our planet as well as the long-term security, survival and collective well-being of the human species. The prospect of remedy may follow if the consensus continues to build.

The classical conservative tradition and today’s outliers collectively illuminate the prospect. In the figure below, a summary of their qualities and perspectives reinforces the argument advanced in these pages. (See Figure: Conclusion-I). Theological conservatives like the Reverend Cizik and organizations like Creation Care, are actively opposing the prevalent mindset shared by many of their leaderships’ religious colleagues. They are particularly keen to combat the impact of global warming and their mission is rooted in a religious framework. God intended man to appropriately steward the land and the religious and affluent cannot neglect the consequences their practices have on impoverished regions around the globe. Global warming mandates a religious obligation.

Green free market conservatives are gaining ground too. It is not just a “green” ethos that informs this shift, though, of course, that can be found too. What is happening within this category, perhaps more than any of the others, is a post-industrial sensibility

---

<sup>7</sup> Gregg Easterbrook, “Finally Feeling the Heat”, *New York Times*, May 24, 2006, p. A27.

that takes corporate responsibility for its environmental consequences far more seriously, while also recognizing that a greener business sensibility makes sense both to their future earning prospects and strengthens their appeal among like-minded consumers. It is fair to surmise that a green revolution is in the making.<sup>8</sup>

As well, there are prominent outliers within the national security category. These conservative outliers fundamentally prioritize security. The consequences of global warming, violent unpredictable weather patterns, scarcity and dependence on foreign energy resources that contribute to global warming and create critical geo-political tensions, have pushed environmental issues up into the realm of “high” politics among some national security conservatives. Former director of the CIA James Woolsey has been one of the principle neo-conservative figures emphasizing the importance of the green. He has collaborated with George Shultz, a former Secretary of State and Senator Richard Lugar (R-Indiana) on policy papers that forcefully articulate the imperative of greater energy independence and environmentally-friendly energy resources. No longer is global environmental politics just an arena for the “softer” schools of international relations.

Finally, conservationist conservatives, long the only consistent preserve of an explicitly classical conservative ethos, may have a pivotal role in galvanizing these other outliers into reclamation of conservatism’s neglected intellectual heritage. To large degree, with some exceptions, they represent a subset of conservatism that is labeled “moderate” or “blue-state” Republican. Its members include Christine Whitman, Russell

---

<sup>8</sup> Lately there has been an abundance of media attention given to this phenomenon. See, for example, a recent *Newsweek* cover story with sundry articles: “The New Greening of America: From Politics to Lifestyle, Why Saving the Environment Is Suddenly Hot” July 17, 2006 and the “Special Green Issue” of *Vanity Fair*, May 2006.

Train, Senator McCain, California Governor Schwarzenegger, and former Massachusetts Governor William Weld as well former Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon.

**Figure: Conclusion-I**

**Typology of Conservative Outlying Views**

<b>NAME OF TYPE</b>	<b>QUALITIES</b>	<b>VIEW OF THE GREEN AND CONSUMPTION</b>	<b>TYPES OF ACTORS</b>	<b>TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS</b>
<b>Classical</b> (Similar to Figure I-IV)	Stewardship Prudence Frugality Conservation	Explicit Environmentalism	Berry Sullivan Bliese Durnil	Not Applicable
<b>Theological</b>	Religiously conceived environmental ethos	Concern regarding Global Warming Energy Dependence Global Poverty	Berry Cizik Ball Warren	Creation Care Evangelical Climate Initiative Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) WWJDrive
<b>Free-Market</b>	Free-Market and Green	Techno-optimistic Innovative “Natural Capitalism” Proponents of Greener Markets	Conserv. Business Executives & Entrepreneurs e.g. Paulson	Patagonia Ben and Jerry’s Whole Foods Organic Farm Cooperatives Goldman Sachs
<b>National Security</b>	Security Scarcity Energy Consumption	Energy Efficiency And Alternative Resources Green as “high” politics	Gaffney Woolsey Wurmser May Lugar Shultz	Institute for the Analysis of Global Security (IAGS) Foundation for the Defense of Democracies Committee on the Present Danger
<b>Sierra Club Republicans</b> (Same as Figure I-IV)	Classical Conservatism	Conservation Stewardship Explicit Proponents of an Environmental Ethos	Roosevelt Bliese Whitman Marks Dreher	Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP)

In looking forward, three future paths are possible given these diverse conservative outliers. In the first and least likely path for the near future an outlying synergy is sparked within conservatism. This outcome would revitalize the connection between conservatism and conservation. The second path is the first's antithesis: that much remains the same with the continuing marginalization of these conservative outlying voices and the further strengthening of its current eco-skeptic mindset. The outliers will be further disenfranchised, articulating minority views within conservatism with little or no alliance formation among themselves or with similarly inclined actors and organizations outside the conservative tent. Given the vitality of these outliers, this path too, is unlikely, but certainly more feasible than the first. In the third and most likely path, pragmatism and collaboration are generated among these outliers, mainstream environmental groups and businesses at the forefront of green capitalist innovation orchestrate increasing alliance formation to resolve these looming environmental problems generated by our hyper-consumptive practices. In order for the third path to take hold, Sierra Club Republicans need to *remind* conservatives of the compatibility existing between classic conservative thought and an ethos of conservation, that environmentalism is not antithetical to its tradition. Given the emergence of these diverse outliers, green conservatism is now ripe for greater coalescence and strength.

### **Post-industrial Remedy**

This book argues that the array of consumptive views reveal immense ideological diversity and incompatibility within the conservative tradition. Does this portend a hopeless situation? Not necessarily. In fact, it affords opportunity. Aligning these

outliers in their aversion to the prevailing eco-skepticism of conservatives should be an important goal of all environmentalists, no matter their ideological pedigree, in turning the tide the other way.

A competitive market that is receptive *and* responsive to greater public awareness of the social and ecological ill effects of consumption as well as the role which commerce plays in creating “need,” makes for more discerning and educated producers and purchasers. We all recognize that advertising influences behavior, but so do social norms that do not originate from the market. Norms, and the public visibility that some social issues are given, can have an impact on producers and consumers. For example, the recent public attention given to fast-food “super-sizing” has had an unexpectedly positive impact on both the public’s consumption of such items and fast food chains willingness to offer healthier fare. Even consumer market researchers have been taken aback.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, these public battles are vulnerable to parody: as in the tobacco company commercials providing references to smoke cessation programs. (Which begs the question: did this come about from litigated settlement or public relations gone awry?) Sometimes, it may be hard to trace the trajectory back, but producers can be compelled – through publicity and pocketbook, through regulation and litigation – to change their ways. Green free market advocates show promise in this direction. The great ingenuity of capitalism is its precocious ability to amalgamate all who counter it.

---

<sup>9</sup> Marion Burros, “In the Temple of Supersizing, Eating Light Draws Converts,” *The New York Times* (Wednesday, October 29, 2003) p. F-1. Burros writes that according to “the NPD Group, a consumer market research firm, the proportion of lunch orders in which salad was the main course rose to 6 percent this year from 4.5 percent last year. And the percent of lunches that included fries dropped to 22 percent from 25 percent. ‘You just never see that happen.’ said Harry Balzer, vice president of the firm.” And another analyst is quoted: “Fast-food customers are gravitating toward products they perceive as healthier and fresher.”

The deep ecologist will always view this dynamic as insidious, but it need not be viewed so by mainstream environmentalists.

One large problem with our “consumer republic” is that consumption is rarely subject to sustained public discourse. This book situates a diverse and divergent range of views of consumption in modern society, yet the topic remains intermittently advanced, and certainly not holistically conceived, in the public domain. Consumer advocacy does exist, and can be quite effective, but typically in bits and pieces, not as a whole. As a collective society we do not spend a great deal of time reflecting on the sheer abundance of goods, services, and choices defining modern life.

The first step toward creating a post-industrial and post-consumptive society of discerning, green consumers is normative. This is to inoculate our children, beginning in their early education. A *hyper-consumptive* society is most seductive to our youth. Invariably, the obverse is also true, that radical alternatives are equally seductive to *some* of our youth. It is in society’s best interest to be well-informed consumers, to understand the environmental and social costs attached to living in a materialistic culture.

The encroachment of advertising into the school, home, and family entertainment has taken hyper-consumption to new levels of cultural infiltration. Lizabeth Cohen points out as well that our privacy is eroding, not necessarily just by government surveillance, but by “advertisers and marketers ... [that are] constantly gaining more precision in pinpointing the demographic and lifestyle trends of consumer segments.”<sup>10</sup> So far the public remains curiously passive about the ability of marketers (and political and charitable groups too) to learn the most banal and intimate details of our daily lives.

---

<sup>10</sup> Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), p. 402.

It makes good civic common sense to incorporate an examination of consumption into education, to make citizens more aware of the tremendous power of the marketplace. This can be done without moralizing or ideological indoctrination. It can be done to illustrate how companies and advertisements and stores go about making commodities enticing and how consumers are vulnerable to their tactics. Greater public awareness brings empowerment, better product quality, aesthetics, citizen privacy, and the “green.”

A second step is practical. Government incentives, such as funding for research and development and subsidies or tax deductions to consumers for buying green goods makes sense. This could be combined with penalties, such as higher taxes on products that are harmful to the environment or fuel inefficient.

It is discouraging to realize how little fortitude politicians have in this regard, even for the most modest of initiatives. For example, higher taxes on wasteful energy consumption, such as that from SUVs, could be a simple starting point. The revenue could be used to fund research for renewable, green energy sources. Yes, there now exists a “gas guzzler” tax in the United States, but the loophole is absurdly large as it only impacts cars, not “trucks.” Indeed, at the same time, there are still substantial federal tax deductions for businesses that buy SUVs; this is a particularly egregious windfall that makes sense only to its beneficiaries, vehicle manufacturers and purchasers. A modest increase in gas taxes makes sense too, in order to discourage both car manufacturers and consumers from making or buying gas guzzlers. If the 2005 hurricane season has any positive consequences, it may be the increasing public recognition of the planet’s finite resources and the economic and security vulnerabilities energy dependence creates. Fuel

efficiency, not just energy independence, should be *the* political mantra, not the rare exception in policy making.

The federal government's role does not need to entail penalties alone. Government incentives to consumers for buying goods and services that are environmentally sound creates demand and fosters alternative social norms. Hybrid cars, for example, hold additional appeal because federal tax rebates are presently given when purchased.<sup>11</sup> Many initiatives have been successful at the state level too. Some offer additional incentives and tax rebates to encourage their purchase and use. Energy efficient, environmentally friendly vehicles often have special highway privileges in certain states that larger-sized gas guzzling vehicles are not privy to. Car pools and hybrids may use express highway lanes during rush hour. These are modest steps, but the collective impact could be substantial. Even more beneficial, of course, would be a federal initiative of Marshall Plan proportions for a nationwide mass transportation system. Of course, the prospect of any such initiative remains questionable in today's political climate. But recent events have altered the political consensus of what is publicly palatable. Finding a "middle-ground" should be easier than in the past few decades.

A third step is normative *and* practical. It is to re-conceptualize market society as heading toward a post-industrial sensibility. What this means is, paradoxically, recognizing that human innovation, creativity and ingenuity, the ability to adapt to

---

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Gross, "Hummer vs. Prius: The Surprising Winner in the War for America's Auto Soul", <http://slate.msn.com/toolbar.aspx?action=print&id=2096191> *Slate.msn.com*, February 26, 2004. This article is encouraging. Despite the current United States government's indifference to promoting frugal energy production and consumption, this article implicitly shows that social norms can and do have an impact on consumer habits. According to Gross, there is a six-month waiting list for the 2004 Toyota Prius while the Hummer now sits unsold on the lot. This gives credibility to the argument that social norms (and, undoubtedly, higher gasoline prices) can recalibrate consumers to more virtuous civic consumption.



change, as well as liberal, market-oriented principles and practices, are critical qualities in fostering a greener trajectory. Normatively, this entails the combination of environmental and techno-optimistic perspectives. Practically, it means encouraging and sharing green advancements with less impoverished regions of the world. For example, the wind and solar energy businesses have become increasingly efficient and less expensive. It makes sense to promote their use in regions like Africa, India and China. Clean, inexpensive, sustainable energy use in areas that are off the grid or rapidly developing would improve the quality of life, the economic and environmental well-being and stability of volatile and poor regions. It also may mean that less developed countries could “skip” some of the environmental hazards associated with the industrial development of modern market societies. As the free market chapter details, a post-industrial ethos is not a utopian fantasy, for evidence of its growth is already apparent in technologically advanced countries. The challenge is to promulgate green solution sets on a global scale.

There is, inevitably, the naysayer. Environmentalists like Paul Ehrlich and his collaborators insist that there is no environmental “middle ground,” writing “Laypeople frequently assume that in a political dispute the truth must lie somewhere in the middle, and they are often right. In a scientific dispute, though such an assumption is usually wrong.”<sup>12</sup> Ehrlich and his colleagues are being disingenuous because science problems invariably entail social solutions. Furthermore, these issues address a fundamentally different type of speculative science than formulaic mathematical science where

---

<sup>12</sup> Ehrlich, et. al., “No Middle Way on the Environment,” *The Atlantic*.

hypotheses are proved true or false. In other words, there is room for a middle ground if we want practical, quintessentially liberal solutions sets to these problems.

While there are credible degrees of uncertainty within the scientific community about the consequences of the earth's environmental problems, the general consensus about our consumption practices and their effects on the world is overwhelmingly grim. In such circumstances, are we better off following draconian absolute measures or juggling the myriad of complex and contradictory interests and issues at stake? Hirschman might add: "after so many failed prophesies, is it not in the interest of social science to embrace complexity, be it at some sacrifice of its claim to predictive power?"<sup>13</sup> Indeed, one prediction that is probable is the likely failure of any absolute prediction or prescription.

Thus a temperate approach that entails acknowledgement of the environmental havoc and social pathologies consumption induces, balanced with caution toward the siren lure of radical remedy, as well as the intransigence afforded by its polar lure – the knee-jerk reaction to deny that a problem even exists, to bury one's head in the sand, or respond with excessive and unreflective skepticism – are sensible objectives. By placing the issue of consumption, at its best and at its worst, into our public discourse, mainstream remedy holds better promise. To let the debate be defined solely by radical or conservative views, whether they be situated on the far left or the far right, whether it be devoutly libertarian or green, will not promote solution, but further social malaise and lack of remedy.

---

<sup>13</sup> Hirschman, p. 139.

The spectrum of consumption perspectives reflects enduring, albeit contradictory, intellectual lineages. It is most evident in the incompatibility between radical deep ecologists and unfettered capitalist devotees donning eco-skeptic caps. For these absolutists, there is no satisfactory compromise. For the remainder, the promise of remedy will derive from the breadth and depth of a fertile middle ground.

## **Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, catastrophic episodes of punctuated equilibrium, whether induced by human hand, nature, or some combination of the two, often provide forceful catalyst for ideological revision.<sup>14</sup> The participation of a greener American conservatism is vital to the likelihood of prescriptive change in the country's environmental policy-making. Presidential advisor Karl Rove's newfound "forward-thinking" after the atrocity of 9-11 is indicative of the striking ability of an ideology to reengineer itself in the face of unforeseen calamity. Thus too, in the absolute devastation of Hurricane Katrina, it was remarkable, yet not surprising, to hear President Bush finally urge Americans to practice prudent conservation – invoking principles that have been thunderously silent in the prevailing era of conservatism. His State of the Union concession that Americans were "addicted to oil" too, is indicative of the cumulative pressure catastrophe has thrown upon the administration. Although his critics speculate that such calls for conservation are meant as short-term ameliorative actions rather than enduring future policy positions.

And yet, in a different context, Katrina reflects the divide between rival political views in predictably frustrating ways. In one extreme view, humanity is culpable, thus

---

<sup>14</sup> A recent anthology regarding this dynamic is Robert Repetto, ed., *Punctuated Equilibrium and the Dynamics of U.S. Environmental Policy* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006).

receiving nature's comeuppance. Here, recent hurricanes are an omen of future environmental catastrophe thanks to human industry. At the other extreme, environmentalists are viewed as responsible for fuel shortages and surging prices in Katrina's aftermath. Here, the impediments that environmental organizations have created regarding oil drilling in pristine lands are culpable. Inevitably, some religious perspectives see opportunity in the tragedy's aftermath. Here, the wrath of God bore down on a region of moral indecency. Punishment was inflicted upon New Orleans. These exploitative views serve their purpose well: to cast blame on others and to galvanize constituents. This interaction of media, politics, and religion in the aftermath of catastrophe has become a predictable and discouraging play.

It is worth reiterating that American conservatisms have evolved in ways that contradict earlier values of their legacy. Yet the views of outliers suggest that there is elasticity. The challenge now is to galvanize these disparate green outliers to reach mutual ground on a range of pressing environmental issues through a savvy blend of classic and emerging green conservatism.

The words of John Gray remind conservatives that

We are well occupied in doing good in minute particulars, in preserving what is left of beauty and wilderness in the natural world, and in doing what we can to tend and renew amenity and stability in the common environment of human settlements."<sup>15</sup>

Or, to quote Andrew Sullivan:

Conserving is, well, conservative.... [It] benefits everyone regardless of ideology. Why, in any case, should conservatives be so hostile to environmentalism?<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Gray 1994, 177.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Sullivan, "Hawks, Hippies, Holies: The New Green Coalition," *Sunday Times*, 9 April 2005.

This suggests that if conservatives within *Classic*, *Theological*, *Free market*, *National Security* and *Sierra Club Republican* dispositions are advocating conservation, then there is the prospect of future green coalescence within and without American conservatism.

Recent events reinforce this prospect. There are evangelicals becoming activists against global warming. There are free market conservatives committed to pursuing and investing in green entrepreneurial research and design. There are right-wing hawks arguing for American energy independence and alternative fuels. There are Republican politicians committed to environmental reform and improved regulatory oversight of industry. These separate actors have different motives for their activism, but collectively, the sum of these parts is formidable enough to erode the tradition's prevailing disposition, that is, its present-day indifference if not hostility to environmental concerns. Furthermore, outlying conservative organizations and mainstream environmental groups engaged in "outreach" with one another portend greater bipartisan initiatives, cooperation and policy-making influence.

Yet it would be naïve to extrapolate that these diverse conservative outliers will translate into widespread reflection upon American hyper-consumptive practices. Given the integral role of shopping in sustaining American prosperity and growth, the likelihood of Americans tightening their proverbial spending belt is, frankly, not realistic. As Stearns explains: "Simply put, in most situations, from the eighteenth century onward, the forces propelling consumerism were stronger than those opposing it in the Western world."<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding its forceful, entrenched appeal, by questioning the conservative transformation from frugality to hyper-consumption and debt (and the

---

<sup>17</sup> Stearns, p. 70.

ideological incongruities such shifts present within conservatism), a step forward is taken. Specific issues (global warming, energy conservation) *do* resonate powerfully with some conservative voices. It may or may not spark reflection and normative change of general consumptive habits. It will take initiative, synergy and talent to seed and nurture the American self-reflection necessary to propel change toward prudent stewardship.

Of course, change comes with costs difficult to foresee. One might be provincial environmentalism, emphasizing the local over the global. Given that global environmental problems transcend nation-state boundaries this will remain a piecemeal approach with discouraging odds for widespread success. Another cost might be narrow, issue-specific green policy-making, such as energy conservation or more research and development directed toward renewable resources conjoined with support for further drilling opportunities on pristine lands. Indeed, there is a Janus-faced quality to many of the President Bush's recent energy conservation initiatives. Yes, new incentives have been initiated for alternative energy research and development, but huge subsidies are still being given to American fossil fuel companies while they simultaneously accumulate gargantuan record profits.

Yet another critical cost is the likelihood of an increasing confluence between national security and environmental security, particularly if national security conservatives dominate future environmental policy-making processes. Scarcity, in particular, may provide dangerous impetus. The result would be egregious given the West's hyper-consumptive habits. Environmental imperialism could be as catastrophic as environmental degradation itself.

Notwithstanding these dangers, a window of opportunity exists. What is needed now is clear understanding of both the promise and peril of common ground created by these fledgling returns to conservation in conservative American thought.

## Bibliography

Arnold, Ron. *Ecology Wars: Environmentalism as if People Mattered*. Bellevue, WA: The Free Enterprise Press, 1993.

Arnold, Ron. *EcoTerror: The Violent Agenda to Save Nature: The World of the Unabomber*. Bellevue, WA: The Free Enterprise Press, 1997.

Arnold, Ron, and Alan Gottlieb. *Trashing the Economy: How Runaway Environmentalism is Wrecking America*. Bellevue, WA: The Free Enterprise Press, 1994.

Babbitt, Irving. *Democracy and Leadership*. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1979, orig. pub. 1924.

Bailey, Ronald, ed. *Global Warming and Other Eco-Myths: How the Environmental Movement Uses False Science to Scare Us to Death*. New York: Competitive Enterprise Institute, 2002.

Barkey, Michael B., ed. *Environmental Stewardship in the Judeo-Christian Tradition: Jewish, Catholic and Protestant Wisdom on the Environment*. Grand Rapids, MI: Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty and Wash. DC: Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (ICES), 2000.

Barry, John and Robyn Eckersley, eds., *The State and the Global Ecological Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005.

Bartlett, Bruce. *Imposter: How George W. Bush Bankrupted America and Betrayed the Reagan Legacy*. New York: Doubleday, 2006.

Bartlett, Woody. *Living by Surprise: A Christian Response to the Ecological Crisis*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003.

Beaudoin, Tom. *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are with What We Buy*. Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2003.

Bennett, Bill. *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 1993.

Bennett, Jane and William Chaloupka, eds. *In the Nature of Things: Language, Politics, and the Environment*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993.



- Berkowitz, Peter, ed. *Varieties of Conservatism in America*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004.
- Berkowitz, Peter, ed. *Varieties of Progressivism in America*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004.
- Bernstein, Steven. *The Compromise of Liberal Environmentalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Berry, Wendell. *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2002.
- Berry, Wendell. *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Christ's Teachings about Love, Compassion & Forgiveness*. Shoemaker Hoard, 2005.
- Berry, Wendell. *The Gift of the Good Land*. North Point Press, New York, 1982.
- Berry, Wendell. *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1997.
- Blatt, Harvey. *America's Environmental Report Card: Are We Making the Grade?* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005.
- Bliese, John R. E. *The Greening of Conservative America*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002.
- Bloom, Alan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 1987.
- Bradford, M. E. *Remembering Who We Are: Observations of a Southern Conservative*, 1985. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1985..
- Bramwell, Anna. *Ecology in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Breen, T. H., *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Brock, David. *The Republican Noise Machine: Right-wing Media and How it Corrupts Democracy*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004.
- Brown, Lester. "Redefining National Security," *Worldwatch Paper*, N. 14, 1977.
- Brown, Marilyn A., Benjamin K. Sovacool and Richard F. Hirsh. "Assessing U.S. Energy Policy", *Daedalus*. American Academy of Arts & Sciences, Summer 2006, pp. 5-11.

- Buckley Jr., William F. *God & Man at Yale: The Superstitions of "Academic Freedom"*. Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, 2002.
- Burke, Edmund. Isaac Kramnick, ed. *The Portable Edmund Burke*. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.
- Burke, Edmund. *The Vindication of Natural Society Or A View Of The Miseries And Evils Arising To Mankind From Every Species Of Artificial Society*. Kessinger Publishing, Rare Reprints, orig. pub. 1756.
- Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962.
- CATO Handbook on Policy*, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C. 2005.
- Ceaser, James W. *Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Chase, Alston. *Harvard and the Unabomber: The Education of an American Terrorist*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003.
- Clapp, Jennifer and Peter Dauvergne. *Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005.
- Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.
- Conca, Ken, Geoffrey D. Dabelko, eds. *Green Planet Blues: Environmental Politics from Stockholm to Johannesburg*. Third Edition. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004.
- Crunden, Robert M., ed., *The Superfluous Men: Conservative Critics of American Culture, 1900-1945*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1999.
- Critser, Greg. *Fat Land: How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.
- Crocker, David A., and Toby Linden, eds. *Ethics of Consumption: The Good Life, Justice, and Global Stewardship*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998.
- Cross, Gary. *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

- Cowen, Tyler. *In Praise of Commercial Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Crosby, Alfred W. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. First published, 1986.
- Crunden, Robert. *The Superfluous Men: Critics of American Culture, 1900-1945*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1999, (Orig. pub. 1977).
- Glyn Davis and Kay Dickenson, eds. *Teen TV: Genre, Consumption and Identity*. London: BFI Publishing, 2004.
- Dean, John W. *Conservatives Without Conscience*. New York: Viking, 2006..
- De Certeau, Michel. Trans. By Steven Rendall. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988.
- Deffeyes, Kenneth S. *Hubbert's Peak: The Impending World Oil Shortage*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- De Graaf, John, David Wann, and Thomas H. Naylor. *Influenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2001.
- De Grazia, Victoria. *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Devine, Robert S. *Bush Versus the Environment*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004..
- Dreher, Rod. *Crunchy Cons: How Birkenstocked Burkeans, Gun-Loving Organic Farmers, Evangelical Free-Range Farmers, Hip Homeschooling Mammams, Right-Wing Nature Lovers, and Their Diverse Tribe of Countercultural Conservatives Plan to Save America (or at Least the Republican Party)*. Crown Forum, 2006.
- Deudney, Daniel H., Richard A. Matthew, eds. *Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in the New Environmental Politics*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.
- Devigne, Robert. *Recasting Conservatism: Oakeshott, Strauss, and the Response to Postmodernism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997.
- Diggins, John Patrick. *Thorstein Veblen: Theorist of the Leisure Class*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

- Dionne, Jr., E. J. *Why Americans Hate Politics*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2004.
- Dobson, Andrew and Robyn Eckersley, eds. *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Douglas, Mary and Baron Isherwood. *The World of Goods: Towards Anthropology of Consumption*. New York: Routledge: 1979.
- D'Souza, Dinesh. *The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno-Affluence*. New York: Free Press, 2000.
- Durnil, Gordon K. *The Making of a Conservative Environmentalist*. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Easterbrook, Gregg. *A Moment on the Earth: The Coming Age of Environmental Optimism*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996.
- Easterbrook, Gregg. *The Progress Paradox: How Life Gets Better While People Feel Worse*. New York: Random House, 2003.
- Eckersley, Robyn. *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004.
- Ehrlich, Paul R., Gretchen C. Daily, Scott C. Daily, Norman Myers, and James Salzman. "No Middle Way on the Environment." *The Atlantic*, Volume 280, No. 6; December, 1997: 98 – 104.
- Eliasson, Per and Sven G. Nilsson. "You Should Hate Young Oaks and Young Noblemen' The Environmental History of Oaks in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Sweden." *Environmental History*. October 2002, pp. 659-677.
- Ferry, Luc. *The New Ecological Order*. Translated by Carol Volk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Originally published as Luc Ferry, *Le nouvel ordre ecologique: L'arbre, l'animal et l'homme*. Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1992.
- Fleischacker, Samuel. *On Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: A Philosophical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Flippen, J. Brooks. *Conservative Conservationist: Russell E. Train and the Emergence of American Environmentalism*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006.
- Frank, Robert H. *Luxury Fever: Money and Happiness in an Era of Excess*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1999.

- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its Discontents*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961.
- Friedman, Jonathan. *Consumption and Identity*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994.
- Friedman, Milton. *Capitalism and Freedom: Fortieth Anniversary Edition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002, originally pub. 1962.
- Friedman, Milton and F. A. Hayek. *The Road to Serfdom*. See Hayek.
- Frohnen, Bruce, Jeremy Beer, and Jeffrey O. Nelson, eds. *American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2006.
- Galbraith, John Kenneth. *The Affluent Society*. Boston and New York: Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ed. Originally published, 1958.
- Genovese, Eugene D. *The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Gertner, Jon. "The Nuclear Option", *The New York Times Magazine*. July 16, 2006, p.36.
- Glacken, Clarence J. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.
- Gobe, Marc. *Emotional Branding: the New Paradigm for Connecting Brands to People*. New York: Allworth Press, 2001. How-to book in marketing brands in a consumer democracy.
- Goldwater, Barry. *The Conscience of a Conservative*. New York: Hillman Books, 1960.
- Goodchild, Philip. *Capitalism and Religion: The Price of Piety*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Gore, Al. *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Rodale, 2006.
- Gore, Senator Al. *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.
- Gottlieb, Roger S., ed. *Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003.

Gray, John. *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government and the Common Environment*. New York: Routledge: 1994.

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. New York: Bantam Books, 1982, orig. pub., 1787-1788.

Hamlin, Christopher and John T. McGreevy. "The Greening of America, Catholic Style, 1930-1950" *Environmental History*, Vol. 11, #3, July 2006, pp. 464-499.

Harris, Lee. *Civilization and its Enemies: The Next Stage of History*. New York: Free Press, 2004.

Harris, Sam. *Letter to a Christian Nation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Hart, Jeffrey. *The Making of the Conservative Mind: National Review and its Times*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2005.

Hartz, Louis. *The Liberal Tradition in America*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1991, originally published 1953.

Hawken, Paul, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins. *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1999.

Hayek, F. A. and Milton Friedman. *The Road to Serfdom*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994, originally pub. 1944.

Hays, Samuel P. *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993, orig. pub. 1987.

Hays, Samuel P. *A History of Environmental Politics Since 1945*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000. (Especially Chapter 9, "The Environmental Opposition.")

Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Routledge, 2002. First published, 1979.

Helvarg, David. *The War Against the Greens*. Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 2004.

Hendricks, Stephenie. *Divine Destruction: Wise Use, Dominion Theology, and the Making of American Environmental Policy*. Hoboken, NJ: Melville House Publishing, 2005.

Hill, Brennan R. *Christian Faith and the Environment: Making Vital Connections*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998.

Hirsch, Fred. *Social Limits to Growth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. Originally published, 1976.

Hirschman, Albert O. *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed.

Hirschman, Albert O. *Rival Views of Market Society and Other Recent Essays*. New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books, Viking, 1986.

Hobbes, Thomas. (1651) *Leviathan*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985 ed.

Hollander, Jack M. *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, Not Affluence, is the Environment's Number One Enemy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Holmes, Stephen. *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Homer-Dixon, Thomas F. *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Huber, Peter. *Hard Green: Saving the Environment from the Environmentalists: A Conservative Manifesto*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.

Huber Peter W. and Mark P. Mills. *The Bottomless Well: The Twilight of Fuel, the Virtue of Waster, and Why We Will Never Run Out of Energy*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.

Huntington, Samuel P. "Conservatism as an Ideology" *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (June 1957), pp. 454-473.

Kagan, Donald and Frederick W. Kagan. *While America Sleeps: Self-Delusion, Military Weakness, and the Threat to Peace Today*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2000.

Kagan, Robert and William Kristol, eds. *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000.

Kaplan, Robert D. *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*. New York: Vintage, 2001.

Kaplan, Robert D. *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*. New York: Random House, 2002.

Kasser, Tim. *The High Price of Materialism*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002.

- Kasser, Tim, and Allen D. Kanner, eds. *Psychology and Consumer Culture: The Struggle for a Good Life in a Materialistic World*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2004.
- Katz, Eric, Andrew Light and David Rothenberg, eds. *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000.
- Kaufman, Wallace. *No Turning Back: Dismantling the Fantasies of Environmental Thinking*. San Jose: toExcel, 1994.
- Kempton, Willet, James S. Boster and Jennifer A. Hartley. *Environmental Values in American Culture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995.
- Kennedy, Robert, Jr. *Crimes Against Nature: How George W. Bush and His Corporate Pals Are Plundering the Country and Hijacking Our Democracy*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.
- Keynes, John Maynard. *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1964.
- Kirk, Russell. *The American Cause*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1957.
- Kirk, Russell. *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice: Essays of a Social Critic*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1956.
- Kirk, Russell. *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2001, 7<sup>th</sup> Revised Edition.
- Kirk, Russell. *The Politics of Prudence*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 1998.
- Kirk, Russell, ed. *The Portable Conservative Reader*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.
- Kirk, Russell. *The Roots of American Order*. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1974.
- Klare, Michael T. "The New Geography of Conflict", *Foreign Affairs*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2001, May/June, Vol. 80, #3, pp. 49-61.
- Klein, Naomi. *No Logo*. New York: Picador USA, 2002.
- Kristol, Irving. *Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea*. Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1999.
- Kuczynski, Alex. *Beauty Junkies: Inside Our \$15 Billion Obsession with Cosmetic Surgery*. New York: Doubleday, 2006.



Kurtz, Paul, ed. *Science and Religion: Are They Compatible?* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003.

Kuttner, Robert. *Everything for Sale: The Virtue and Limits of Markets.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

LaHaye, Tim and Jerry B. Jenkins. *Are We Living in the End Times?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1999.

LaHaye, Tim and Thomas Ice. *Charting the End Times: A Visual Guide to Understanding Bible Prophecy.* Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001.

Lane, Robert. *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Lasch, Christopher. *Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991.

Lasch, Christopher. *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991.

Lasn, Kalle. *Culture Jam: How to Reverse America's Suicidal Consumer Binge – and Why We Must.* New York: Quill, 2000. Also, Culture Jammers Website: [www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org)

Layne, Christopher. "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace." *Debating the Democratic Peace.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997, pp. 157-201.

Levine, Lawrence W. *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

Lewis, Martin W. *Green Delusions: An Environmentalist Critique of Radical Environmentalism.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.

Lewis, Sinclair. *Babbitt.* New York: Bantam Books, 1998, orig. pub. 1922.

Light, Andrew and Avner de-Shalit, eds. *Moral and Political Reasoning in Environmental Practice.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003.

Light, Andrew and Holmes Rolston III, eds. *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. (Comment: A wide ranging selection of essays, good general overview of eco-thinkers, philosophers.)

Linker, Damon. *The Theocons: Secular America Under Siege.* New York: Doubleday, 2006.

- Linn, Susan. *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*. New York: The New Press, 2004.
- Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Locke, John. *Political Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Lomborg, Bjorn. *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World*. Partially translated by Hugh Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Lorey, David E., ed. *Global Environmental Challenges of the Twenty-First Century: Resources, Consumption, and Sustainable Solutions*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2003.
- Luke, Timothy W. *Capitalism, Democracy, and Ecology: Departing from Marx*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
- Luke, Timothy W. *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Luke, Timothy W. *Screens of Power: Ideology, domination, and Resistance in Informational Society*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- MacGillivray, Alex. *A Brief History of Globalization: The Untold Story of Our Incredible Shrinking Planet*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2006.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. (1513) *The Prince and the Discourses*. New York: The Modern Library, 1950.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Virtue*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.
- Maimonides, Moses. Shlomo Pines, Trans., *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Volumes I and II. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963.
- Malthus, Thomas Robert. *An Essay on the Principle of Population and A Summary View of the Principle of Population*. Originally published, 1798. London: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Mandelbaum, Michael. *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005.

- Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991. Originally published, 1964.
- Marmot, Michael. *The Status Syndrome: How Social Standing Affects Our Health and Longevity*. New York: Times Books, 2994.
- McDannell, Colleen. *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- McMichael, Tony. *Human Frontiers, Environments and Disease: Past Patterns, Uncertain Futures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- McNeill, J. R. *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.
- Mencken, H.L. S. T. Joshi, ed. *On Religion*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002.
- Merchant, Carolyn. *Earthcare: Women and the Environment*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Meyer, John M. *Political Nature: Environmentalism and the Interpretation of Western Thought*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001.
- Michaels, Patrick J. *Meltdown: The Predictable Distortion of Global Warming by Scientists, Politicians, and the Media*. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 2004.
- Miller, Daniel. *A Theory of Shopping*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Miller, Vincent J. *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture*. New York: Continuum, 2005.
- Milner Jr., Murray. *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: American Teenagers, Schools, and the Culture of Consumption*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Minteer, Ben A. *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006.
- Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat. *The Spirit of the Laws*. Originally published, 1748. Translated by Anne M. Cohler et. al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Mooney, Chris. *The Republican War on Science*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.
- Moore, Laurence R. *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

Muller, Jerry Z. *Adam Smith: In His Time and Ours*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Muller, Jerry Z. *The Mind and the Market: Capitalism in Modern European Thought*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

Muller, Jerry Z. ed. *Conservatism: An Anthology of Social and Political Thought from David Hume to the Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Myers, David. *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty*. New Haven: Yale Note Bene, 2001, orig. pub. Yale University Press, 2000.

Myers, Norman and Jennifer Kent. *The New Consumers: The Influence of Affluence on the Environment*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2004.

Nash, George H. *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*. Wilmington, Delaware: 1998.

James A. Nash. "On the Subversive Virtue: Frugality" in David A. Crocker and Toby Linden, eds. *Ethics of Consumption: The Good Life, Justice, and Global Stewardship*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998.

Nash, Roderick Frazier, ed. *American Environmentalism: Readings in Conservation History*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1990, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

Nash, Roderick Frazier. *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Politics*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

Nash, Roderick Frazier. *Wilderness & the American Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press Nota Bene, 2001, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Orig. pub. 1967.

Nelissen, Nico, Jan Van Der Straaten and Leon Klinkers, eds. *Classics in Environmental Studies: an Overview of Classic Texts in Environmental Studies*. Utrecht: International Books, 1997.

Nestle, Marion. *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.

- Nisbet, Robert. *Conservatism: Dream and Reality*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005.
- Nock, Albert J. *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*. Tampa, FL: Hallberg Publishing Corporation, 1994.
- Northcott, Michael S. *The Environment & Christian Ethics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Norton, Anne. *Republic of Signs: Liberal Theory and American Popular Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Oakeshott, Michael. "On Being Conservative." *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991.
- Ophuls, William. *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity: Prologue to a Political Theory of the Steady State*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1977.
- Orr, David W. *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*. Wash., DC: Island Press, 1994.
- Orr, David W. *The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture and Human Intention*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Orren, Karen and Stephen Skowronek. *The Search for American Political Development*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Ottman Jacquelyn A., Edwin R. Stafford, Cathy L. Hartman. "Avoiding Green Marketing Myopia," *Environment*. Washington: June 2006. Vol. 48, Iss 5; pp. 22, 16 pp.
- Packard, Vance. *The Hidden Persuaders*. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1960. First published, 1957.
- Packard, Vance. *The Status Seekers*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959.
- Packard, Vance. *The Waste Makers*. New York: New York: Giant Cardinal, 1963. First published, David McKay Company, Inc., 1960.
- Paehlke, Robert C. *Democracy's Dilemma: Environment, Social Equity, and the Global Economy*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003.
- Paterson, Mark. *Consumption and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Phillips, Kevin. *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: Viking, 2006.

Pollan, Michael. *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World*. New York: Random House, 2001.

Ponting, Clive. *A Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.

Pope, Carl and Paul Rauber. *Strategic Ignorance: Why the Bush Administration is Recklessly Destroying a Century of Environmental Progress*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2004.

Pope John Paul II. *A Year with John Paul II: Daily Meditations from His Writings and Prayers*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

Pope John Paul II. *Pope John Paul II: In My Own Words*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1998.

Postrel, Virginia. *The Future and its Enemies: The Growing Conflict over Creativity, Enterprise, and Progress*. New York: Touchstone, 1998.

Postrel, Virginia. *The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value is Remaking Commerce, Culture, and Consciousness*. New York, HarperCollins, 2003.

Princen, Thomas, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca, eds. *Confronting Consumption*. Cambridge, MA. and London: The MIT Press, 2002.

Prose, Francine. *Gluttony*. The New York Public Library and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Quart, Alissa. *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers*. Cambridge MA, Perseus Publishing, 2003.

Quinton, Anthony. "Conservatism" in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995. Eds. By Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit. pp. 244-268.

Raimondo, Justin. *Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement*. California: Center for Libertarian Studies, 1993.

"Realism on Energy and the Environment: Hard Facts from William Tucker, Ben Wattenberg, Michael Novak, Joel Kotkin, Bjorn Lomborg & Others." *The American Enterprise: Politics, Business, and Culture*. January/February 2005.

Ridley, Matt and Bobbi S. Low. Can Selfishness Save the Environment?" *The Atlantic*, September 1993. <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/enviro/selfish.htm>

Reiger, John F. *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2001 3<sup>rd</sup> rev. & expanded ed., (orig. pub.1975, University of Oklahoma Press).

Riesman, David. *The Lonely Crowd*. New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2001. First published, Yale University Press, 1961.

Roberts, Paul. *The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World*. New York: Mariner Books, 2005.

Roosevelt, Theodore. Paul Schullery, ed. and intro. *Theodore Roosevelt Wilderness Writings*. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1986.

Rossiter, Clinton. *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion*. New York: Vintage Books, 1962.

Rossiter, Clinton. *Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in the Modern Democracies*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005.

Royte, Elizabeth. *Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2005.

Rubin, Louis D. Jr., Introduction. *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*, By Twelve Southerners. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977. Originally published, 1930.

Rudin, James, Rabbi. *The Baptizing of America: The Religious Right's Plans for the Rest of Us*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006.

Sagoff, Mark. "Do We Consume Too Much?" *The Atlantic*. Volume 279, No. 6; June, 1997: 80 – 96.

Samuelson, Robert J. "Shop 'til We Drop?" in "Shopping and the American Way of Life." *The Wilson Quarterly*. Winter 2004, Volume XXVIII NO. 1: 22-29. Also, essays by Paco Underhill, "Inside the Machine" 30-41, and Daniel Akst, "Buyer's Remorse" 42-47.

Sandler, Lauren. *Righteous: Dispatches from the Evangelical Youth Movement*. New York: Viking, 2006.

Schneider, Gregory L., ed. *Conservatism in American Since 1930: A Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.

- Schor, Juliet B. *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*. New York: Scribner, 2004.
- Schor, Juliet B. and Douglas B. Holt, eds. *The Consumer Society Reader*. New York: The New Press, 2000.
- Schor, Juliet, et. al. *Do Americans Shop Too Much?* Boston: Beacon Press, 2000.
- Schor, Juliet B. *The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1998.
- Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York: Perennial, 2002.
- Schwartz, Barry. *The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.
- Scitovsky, Tibor. *The Joyless Economy: An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Scruton, Roger. *The Meaning of Conservatism*. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2002.
- Scully, Matthew. *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002.
- Sessions, George, editor. *Deep Ecology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Readings on the Philosophy and Practice of the New Environmentalism*. Boston and London: Shambhala, 1995.
- Shabecoff, Philip. *Earth Rising: American Environmentalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2000.
- Shi, David E. *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1985, 2001.
- Silverstein, Michael J., and Neil Fiske. *Trading Up: The New American Luxury*. New York: Portfolio, Penguin Group, 2003.
- Simon, Julien, interviewed by William Buckley. "Answer to Malthus?" *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (March 1982), pp. 205-218.
- Simon, Julien, ed. *The State of Humanity*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.
- Simon, Julien. *Hoodwinking the Nation*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999.



- Slater, Don. *Consumer Culture & Modernity*. Oxford: Polity Press, 2005.
- Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981.
- Smith, Toby M. *The Myth of Green Marketing: Tending Our Goats at the Edge of Apocalypse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Starke, Linda, et. al. eds. *State of the World 2004: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- Stearns, Peter N. *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Steger, Manfred B. *Globalism: The New Market Ideology*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002.
- Stelzer, Irwin, ed. *The Neocon Reader*. New York: Grove Press, 2004.
- Strassler, Robert B. ed. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to The Peloponnesian War*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.
- Sullivan, Andrew. *The Conservative Soul: How We Lost It, How To Get It Back*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006.
- Switzer, Jacqueline Vaughn. *Green Backlash: The History and Politics of Environmental Opposition in the U.S.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997.
- Suskind, Ron. *The Price of Loyalty*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.  
*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Tradiditonal Hebrew Text*. Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985.
- Taylor, Bob Pepperman. *Our Limits Transgressed: Environmental Political Thought in America*. Lawrence, Kansas: the University Press of Kansas, 1992.
- Taylor, Bron Raymond, ed. *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
- Teachout, Terry. *The Skeptic: The Life of H. L. Mencken*. New York: Perennial, 2003.
- Teich, Albert H., ed. *Technology and Man's Future*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972.

- Tocqueville, Alexis De. *Democracy in America*. New York: Mentor, 1984, orig. pub., 1835.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Tucker, Richard P. *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Tucker, William. *Progress and Privilege: America in the age of Environmentalism*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982.
- Twitchell, James B. *Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch, College, Inc., and Museumworld*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.
- Twitchell, James B. *Lead Us Into Temptation: The Triumph of American Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Twitchell, James B. *Living It Up: Our Love Affair with Luxury*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Underhill, Paco, "Inside the Machine" See Samuelson, Robert J.
- Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: The Modern Library, 2001. Originally published: New York: Macmillan, 1899.
- Viereck, Peter and Claes G. Ryn. *Conservatism Revisited: The Revolt Against Ideology*. New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publishers, 2005.
- Viereck, Peter. *From John Adams to Winston Churchill: Conservative Thinkers*. New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publishers, 2006.
- Viguerie, Richard A. *Conservatives Betrayed: How George W. Bush and Other Big Government Republicans Hijacked the Conservative Cause*. Los Angeles: Bonus Books, 2006.
- Wackernagel, Mathis and William E. Rees. *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth*. Gabriola Island, B.C. Canada, 1996.
- Wallis, Jim. *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.

- Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979.
- Wapner, Paul. *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics*. New York, SUNY Press, 1996.
- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life: What On Earth Am I Here For?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Weaver, Richard M. *Ideas Have Consequences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984, orig. pub. 1948.
- Weaver, Richard M. *Visions of Order: The Cultural Crisis of Our Time*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006. Orig. pub. 1964.
- Weber, Max. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Translated, Edited and Introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946, 1958.
- White, Lynn, Jr. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" *Science*, 1967.
- Whitman, Christine Todd. *It's My Party Too: The Battle for the Heart of the GOP and the Future of America*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005.
- Williamson, Chilton Jr. *The Conservative Bookshelf: Essential Works That Impact Today's Conservative Thinkers*. New York: Citadel Press Books, 2004.
- Williamson, Judith. *Consuming Passions: The Dynamics of Popular Culture*. London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1986.
- Worldwatch Institute. *State of the World 2004: Special Focus: The Consumer Society*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- Worldwatch Institute. *State of the World: 2003*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- Worster, Donald. *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Originally Published, 1977.
- Zukin, Sharon. *Point of Purchase: How Shopping Changed American Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2005.