CHAPTER 1

The Development of Modern Ecopolitical Thought: From Participation and Survival to Emancipation

INTRODUCTION

The environmental crisis and popular environmental concern have prompted a considerable transformation in Western politics over the last three decades. This transformation has culminated in the development of new political cleavages, the formation of Green political parties, and the revision of old political platforms by existing parties.[1] This, in turn, has generated new areas of political study and analysis as journalists, academics, and other observers seek to come to terms with these new political developments. Whatever the outcome of this realignment in Western politics, the intractable nature of environmental problems will ensure that environmental politics (or what I shall refer to as "ecopolitics") is here to stay.

How can we make sense of these new political developments? If we look back over the ecopolitical literature of the last three decades, it is possible to discern three major ecopolitical preoccupations that can be encapsulated in the themes of participation, survival, and emancipation. To some extent, these three themes may be seen as roughly characterizing the general ecopolitical preoccupations of the last three decades respectively, although this temporal association is a loose one only and should not be pressed too far (i.e., "later" ecopolitical themes are discernible in earlier periods just as "earlier" themes are discernible in subsequent periods). Indeed, the last three decades have seen a general broadening of ecopolitical dialogue as a result of the gradual interpenetration of these themes or phases of inquiry. That is, the participatory, survivalist, and emancipatory phases may be seen as representing the thesis, antithesis, and higher synthesis respectively in the ecopolitical dialogue of the last three decades.

The emergence of a general Green philosophy and Green political parties in the late 1970s and 1980s may be seen as representing this third emancipatory moment. That is, although Green political thought sometimes draws on the New Left participatory thinking of the 1960s and some aspects of the survivalist or

7

so-called doomsday environmental literature of the early 1970s, it nonetheless represents a new, ecologically inspired political orientation that has raised new political issues and called into question old political responses. Of course, the label *Green* is an extraordinarily elastic one that has been applied to, or appropriated by, all manner of environmental and political positions over the past decade. However, from the point of view of participants in the Green movement and in Green political parties, the word *Green* represents a distinctive body of ideas and a new political force. The developmental, tripartite characterization of ecopolitical thought presented in this chapter is offered as one way in which we may locate and distinguish the broad contours of a general Green (i.e., emancipatory) political perspective from other ecopolitical perspectives. Of course, within this broad Green ballpark there are many different and more subtle interpretations of the theory and practice of Green politics. Indeed, we shall see that Green politics has its own internal spectrum of debate, with its own competing "political wings." What is noteworthy, however, is that the most important of these wings are not the familiar left and right wings of conventional politics, although such divisions can be found. Rather, the most significant internal difference is to be found between what I shall call *anthropocentric Greens* and *ecocentric Greens*. As we shall see, this new environmental cleavage can be used to shed very new light on very old political debates.

<center>*THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMATIC AS A CRISIS OF PARTICIPATION*</center>

The 1960s marked the beginning of widespread public concern over environmental degradation in the developed countries of the West.[2] However, it took roughly a decade of persistent political agitation over such matters as pesticides, nuclear power plants, toxic waste dumps, large scale industrial developments, and pollution before an "environmental crisis" was officially recognized as a matter of local, national, and international concern.[3] The first Earth Day celebrations in 1970, the emergence of a panoply of new environmental laws in Western countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the development of interdisciplinary environmental studies programs in higher education institutes, and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972 all represent significant landmarks of national and international recognition of environmental problems.

    Yet much of this official recognition, such as new environmental legislation, also helped to define and contain environmental problems as essentially matters of poor planning rather than as indicators that the optimistic and cornucopian assumptions of the post–World War II growth consensus might need to be revised. In particular, the notion that there might be ecological limits to economic growth that could not be overcome by human technological ingenuity and better planning was not seriously entertained until after the much publicized "limits to growth" debate of the early 1970s. As John Rod-

man observed in the context of the United States, environmental problems were originally perceived in the 1960s as a "crisis of participation" whereby excluded groups sought to ensure a more equitable distribution of environmental "goods" (e.g., urban amenity) and "bads" (e.g., pollution).[4] This is not surprising given that the early wave of environmental activism was generally seen as but a facet of the civil rights movement in its concern for more grassroots democratic participation in societal decision making, in this case, land and resource usage. The growth in public concern over environmental problems was thus widely interpreted as being only, or at least primarily, concerned with participatory and distributional issues, that is, issues concerning "who decides" and "who gets what, when, and how." The upshot was that by the 1970s environmental problems were, as Rodman has put it,

> domesticated by mainstream political science, reduced to the study of pollution control policy and environmental interest groups, and eventually absorbed within the framework of "the policy process" and the "politics of getting."[5]

This kind of characterization of the problem was widely shared by both policy makers and political theorists. This is not to say that new critiques, sensibilities, and theoretical paths did not emerge in the 1960s and early 1970s. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,* Murray Bookchin's *Our Synthetic Environment,* and, to a lesser extent, Charles Reich's prophetically titled *The Greening of America* represent three important landmarks in the emergence of a new sensibility that celebrated the living world and was deeply critical of dominant Western attitudes toward the nonhuman world.[6] These contributions were, however, exceptions. By and large, there were few major theoretical innovations in social and political thought in the 1960s that arose specifically from a consideration of the environmental crisis. This tendency to treat environmental protest as an aspect of the wider pursuit of distributive justice and democratic planning was especially marked among socialist, social democratic, and liberal welfare theorists—a tendency that has continued through the 1980s. Perhaps the exemplar of this kind of social democratic analysis is Hugh Stretton's award winning book *Capitalism, Socialism and the Environment,* which opens with the unequivocal declaration that:

> This book is about the distribution of environmental goods: the shares that go to rich and poor in the developed democracies of Europe, North America, Japan and Australasia.[7]

Although I must hasten to add that distributional questions remain crucial questions in any ecopolitical inquiry, to circumscribe the problem in this way can nonetheless serve to reinforce rather than challenge the prevailing view that the environment is simply a human resource (albeit a resource to be utilized more efficiently and equitably).

By virtue of the radical democratic and participatory nature of environmental protest in the 1960s, many political commentators tended to regard it as an adjunct of the New Left. Yet even this association was soon to come under challenge as a rearguard action developed against environmentalism by labor, socialist, and liberal welfare activists and theorists. The discovery of the socially regressive consequences of some environmental reforms (e.g., the costs of pollution abatement being passed on as higher prices; unemployment resulting from the closing down of polluting industries) soon gave rise to the now familiar accusation that environmental protest is an elitist, middle-class phenomenon that threatens the hard won material gains and jobs of the working class.[8] Such social conflicts provide a significant indication of the gradual realignment of political cleavages that has been taking place in the West between the so-called New Class (or New Middle Class) that furnishes the core activists of the environmental movement and the two traditional classes of industrial society, namely, the owners/controllers of capital and the working class.[9] The growing tension that developed between the demand for environmental reform, on the one hand, and redistributive justice and economic security, on the other hand, has remained an enduring and vexed issue in ecopolitical discussion.

The 1960s and early 1970s were also a time of theoretical stocktaking and revision for socialist theory—a revision spearheaded by the rise of the New Left. In particular, Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* and the essays collected in Jürgen Habermas's *Toward a Rational Society* played an influential role in tracing many of the problems of industrial society—including its environmental dislocations—to the dominance of instrumental or technocratic rationality.[10] This contributed to the widening of the New Left's agenda to include questions of life-style, technology, and the exploitation of nature. The ready absorption of these ideas by the counterculture and "back-to-nature" movements of the 1960s was defended eloquently by political theorists and cultural historians such as Murray Bookchin, Theodore Roszak, and Charles Reich.[11] Many of the issues raised by these writers, such as the importance of consciousness change and alternative worldviews, remain significant currents in modern emancipatory/Green theorizing.

Yet, with the exception of the work of Roszak and, to some extent, Marcuse and Bookchin (whose contributions are explored in chapters 5 and 7), none of these early theoretical developments mounted a serious challenge to anthropocentrism or argued for a new humility and compassion in our dealings with the nonhuman world. Rather, the growing concern for environmental quality was incorporated into the New Left's agenda for greater individual and community autonomy and control. After all, the overriding revolutionary goal of the New Left, as George Katsiaficas succinctly describes it in his comprehensive international study, was "the decentralization and self-management of power and resources."[12]

To most New Left thinkers, then, questions concerning humanity's power vis-à-vis the rest of nature were dealt with in terms of who exercised such power and on whose behalf. Of course, these were (and still are) crucial questions, as I have already noted, yet they remained embedded in an essentially anthropocentric framework and were firmly wedded to the "participatory" ethos of the times. As we shall see in chapter 5, even the innovative attacks on the ideology of "scientism" and instrumental rationality waged by Critical Theorists such as Marcuse and Habermas only partially transcended this framework (enough, however, for me to identify these theorists as emancipatory theorists, albeit in the anthropocentric rather than ecocentric stream). Their overriding concern was to open up improved channels of political communication in order to facilitate the achievement of a democratic consensus that would direct the development and use of technology toward more human liberatory ends. This was also the major thrust of William Leiss's critique of "the domination of nature."[13] Although these critiques were innovating and provocative and remain important contributions to emancipatory thought, their overriding objective was the liberation of "inner" rather than "outer" nature (i.e., human instincts or human communication rather than the nonhuman community). As we shall see in chapter 5, Critical Theory's objection to the domination of nature ultimately comes to rest on the human-centered argument that it leads to the domination of *people*.

This brief characterization and critique of the participatory theme in ecopolitical thought should not be interpreted as a rejection of the contribution of the New Left. Questions concerning citizen participation, self-management, and distributive justice remain central issues in emancipatory thought. These themes are reflected, for example, in two of the so-called four pillars upon which the platforms of many Green parties rest, namely, grassroots democracy and social justice.[14] Yet these themes are merely a necessary—as distinct from a sufficient—condition for a proper characterization of emancipatory thought. That is, while these themes are essential aspects of Green political thought, they do not *distinguish* Green thought from other ecopolitical perspectives. The "discovery" of "ecological interconnectedness"—which was brought to public attention in the early 1960s with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* but did not gather momentum until the late 1970s and early 1980s—was to set in train significant theoretical innovations, the *political* repercussions of which are only beginning to be worked out in any degree of detail. As we shall see, the most significant of these has been the attempt by emancipatory theorists to revise and incorporate the principles of individual and community autonomy into a broader, ecological framework.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMATIC AS A CRISIS OF SURVIVAL

The "crisis of survival" theme in ecopolitics rose to prominence in the early 1970s following the publication of the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth*

and *The Ecologist* magazine's *Blueprint for Survival*.[15] Although evidence of widespread environmental deterioration had been steadily accumulating since the 1950s, the sensational and widely publicized findings of these two reports posed a considerable challenge to the sanguine belief that we could all continue with business and politics as usual.[16] The mounting evidence of environmental degradation stemming from the exponential growth in resource consumption and human population was shown to pose very real threats to the earth's biological support systems. Although there were important differences between the two reports they shared the same general message. That is, the environmental crisis amounted to much more than a crisis of participation: what was at stake was the very survival of humanity.[17] The metaphor of our planet as spaceship Earth—which had become popular following the circulation of images of the "Whole Earth" taken from outer space by NASA—was widely employed to emphasize a new appreciation of the fragility and finiteness of the Earth as an "oasis in the desert of infinite space."[18] This marked the emergence of a deeper appreciation of the *global* dimensions of environmental degradation and the *common fate* of humanity. However, some of the ecopolitical solutions offered in the wake of this new awareness of global environmental degradation and resource scarcity (such as Garrett Hardin's "life-boat ethics") did not prove to be particularly "brotherly."

Not surprisingly, the dire projections of *The Limits to Growth* and *Blueprint for Survival* (which carried the endorsement of many eminent British scientists) had a significant impact on the world's media and prompted calls for a swift and multifaceted response from national governments. (The ensuing debate was intensified by the 1973–74 oil crisis, which came as a timely reminder of the heavy oil dependence and hence vulnerability of industrialized countries.) Indeed, *The Ecologist*'s detailed solution outlined in *Blueprint for Survival* provided the impetus for the formation in 1973 of Europe's first Green party, the British People's Party (which later became the Ecology Party in 1975 and the British Green Party in September 1985). This party adopted *The Ecologist*'s radical "blueprint" as its basic theoretical statement.[19] *Blueprint for Survival* has proved to be a landmark publication in Green politics in foreshadowing many of the goals and policies that are found in the platforms of the various Green parties that formed in the late 1970s and 1980s.

In concentrating mainly on the physical limits to growth, however, the MIT study commissioned by the Club of Rome spawned a plethora of counter-arguments to the effect that the problems were susceptible to "technological fix" and pricing solutions that would alleviate the negative ecological externalities of economic growth without the need for any fundamental changes in political values or the pattern and scale of economic activity. Moreover, the particular projections of the MIT team were criticized for containing methodological flaws and resting on unduly pessimistic assumptions.[20]

Yet the methodological problems that have been discovered in *The Limits to Growth* have not, by and large, seriously detracted from its essential message. The Club of Rome's 1974 updated survey (prepared in response to criticisms of its 1972 report) concluded, in a slightly more optimistic tone, that growth was possible, provided it was ecologically benign:

> For the first time in man's life on earth, he is being asked to refrain from doing what he can do; he is being asked to restrain his economic and technical advancement, or at least to direct it differently from before; he is being asked by all future generations of the earth to share his good fortune with the unfortunate—not in a spirit of charity, but in a spirit of survival.[21]

Indeed, many of those who have been most critical of this body of so-called doomsday literature have acknowledged that the crisis is real and that far-reaching changes in both our values and institutions are required if ecological and social catastrophe is to be averted.[22] Moreover, the basic message of *The Limits to Growth* and *Blueprint for Survival* has been reinforced by later, more refined studies of global trends in population growth, resource consumption, and ecological deterioration. For example, the major study of the world's environmental problems commissioned by President Carter in *The Global 2000 Report to the President of the U.S.* summarized its findings as follows:

> If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically, and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now. Serious stresses involving population, resources, and environment are clearly visible ahead. Despite greater material output, the world's people will be poorer in many ways than they are today.[23]

The annual *State of the World* reports, published by the Washington based Worldwatch Institute, and the recent Brundtland Report (*Our Common Future*) have continued to reinforce this message.[24]

Not surprisingly, many of the ecopolitical publications that appeared in the climate of the early 1970s—especially those that appeared in the immediate aftermath of the "limits to growth" debate—shared an overriding preoccupation with human survival, a sense of great urgency, a new, practical and empirical frame of mind, and a preparedness to call for tighter governmental controls.[25] Gone were the heady New Left calls for freedom, citizen participation, and the "good life." In their stead came sober discussions of resource rationing, increasing government intervention, centralization, and population control. The new message, expressed eloquently by Robert Heilbroner in the closing pages of *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect* (a landmark survivalist publication that typified the mood and temper of the period), was that the

individualistic Promethean spirit must give way to the example of Atlas—the spirit of fortitude, resolutely bearing whatever burdens were necessary to sustain life.[26] Appropriately, the cover of Heilbroner's book bears a picture of a doleful Atlas, stoically bearing the load of the Earth on his shoulders.

As early as 1968, Garrett Hardin set the tone of this phase of the discussion in his influential essay "The Tragedy of the Commons" with his warning that freedom in the unregulated commons brings ruin to all.[27] Hardin's well-known parable of the medieval herdsmen overstocking the commons vividly demonstrates the tragic dynamic that arises when people are motivated by an economic "rationality" that has as its sole objective the maximization of individual gain in the short term. Hardin has argued that when people act according to such an economic rationality they will inevitably despoil the commons, even when they have full knowledge of the mounting public cost that the pursuit of private gain will bring.[28] Hardin's answer to the tragedy—"mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon by the majority of the people affected"—marked this survivalist school as one whose overriding preoccupation was to find the means of warding off disaster and discover a minimally acceptable way of life rather than search for the "good life."[29]

Hardin did not, however, extend his ecosocial contract theory (which rested on *mutual agreement* by the *majority* of the people affected) to the global population problem. His notorious neo-Malthusian "life-boat ethic," which argued against a more equitable distribution of the world's resources on the grounds that we would *all* "go under," has been widely condemned for protecting the advantages of the affluent and pronouncing a death sentence for the poor.[30] As Richard Barnet has argued:

> The specter of the hungry mob supports Hobbesian politics, a world of struggle over inadequate resources that cries out for Leviathan, the authoritarian state that can keep minimal order. The Malthusian fantasy offers an alternative to the Leviathan state. There is no need for a civil authority to regulate scarce goods, because Nature, cruel only to be kind, periodically thins the surplus population by famine.[31]

As we have seen, the general preoccupation with survival also stamped Heilbroner's somber inquiry, which opened with the searching question: "Is there hope for humanity?" After exploring world demographic trends in the context of the persistent threat of nuclear war and the escalation of environmental degradation, Heilbroner reached a reluctant and pessimistic conclusion. Given "human nature" (which Heilbroner saw as fundamentally selfish), our only hope for survival lay in our obedient rallying behind a centralized, authoritarian nation—the only institutional form that Heilbroner saw as capable of extracting the necessary sacrifices, regulating distribution, and redirecting agriculture and industry along ecologically sustainable lines.

Since Heilbroner's major concern was the fundamental issue of human survival, he did not address (and, at the time, would probably have thought it a luxury to consider) the question of how to preserve and foster the more agreeable aspects of human nature, at least during the convulsive period of transition. Faced with the urgency of the interrelated crises confronting humankind (particularly the environmental crisis), Heilbroner adopted an empirical frame of mind, focusing on how people are likely to behave rather than on what people might eventually become. In this context, he insisted that we cannot afford to ignore obdurate human characteristics and build a future on unrealistic beliefs.[32] In Heilbroner's assessment, people will not willingly acquiesce in giving up a way of life, particularly where it entails the enjoyment of relative privileges. It is this premise that set the tone of Heilbroner's entire analysis.

It deserves mention, however, that although Heilbroner saw centrally planned, authoritarian states as the necessary transitional scenario, it is clear that this is not what he would personally wish for. Rather, he expressed a preference for "a diminution in scale, a reduction in the size of the human community from the dangerous level of immense nation states toward the 'polis' that defined the appropriate reach of political power for the ancient Greeks."[33] In Heilbroner's view, however, this vision (which is the one generally promoted in *Blueprint for Survival*) was highly improbable in the short and immediate term.

Heilbroner's political conclusion—that external constraints on human behavior are essential to make possible the transition from a growth oriented to a steady state society—has also been endorsed to a large extent by William Ophuls.[34] Like Heilbroner, Ophuls also admits his preference for a smaller scaled, face-to-face democracy of the Greek city state or Jeffersonian type, which he sees as the most appropriate vehicle for the pursuit of "the good life," but he considers that "reforming a 'corrupt people' is a Herculean task" (recall Heilbroner's Atlas!). In Ophuls' view, we are ultimately confronted with a limited choice between "Leviathan or oblivion."[35] Although Ophuls has since moderated his position by placing a greater emphasis on the need for self restraint than on the need for external coercion, he continues to maintain that the latter must be resorted to if calls for the former are unsuccessful.[36]

Ophuls and Heilbroner may be seen as offering more interventionist variants of Hardin's call to "legislate temperance" by "mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon" in order to mitigate the ecologically and socially destructive rationality that characterizes human behavior in the unmanaged commons. Heilbroner's and Ophul's fellow Americans are seen as sharing the same characteristics as Hardin's herdsmen—"selfish hedonists rationally seeking private gain." They therefore have much in common with the model of the self-interested human who roamed in Hobbes's and Locke's state of

nature insofar as they are seen as being in perpetual (Hobbes) or intermittent (Locke) conflict with the interests of the larger social and natural community to which they belong. In such a context, salvation can only come from the surrender of a considerable degree of individual liberty to a central authority. Indeed, Ophuls has frequent recourse to the social contract theories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, suggesting that the constitutional limits of the central authority of the future might be struck in accordance with a new "ecological contract" that would (hopefully) be based on prudent self-restraint and seek harmony not only among humans but also between humans and the rest of nature.[37] However, unlike the social contract of Locke (which was based on cornucopian assumptions), the ecological contract would be based on the Hobbesian premise of scarcity and would therefore require an all powerful Leviathan, not just a limited government.[38] That is, if certain freedoms were not voluntarily surrendered by citizens, then restrictions would have to be imposed externally by a sovereign power.[39]

The authoritarian solutions proffered by Heilbroner and Ophuls and the life-boat ethics of Hardin have prompted a number of critics to ask just what is to be sacrificed in the name of human survival and to ponder whether perhaps the price might be too high.[40] In particular, the dire analyses of this survivalist school have been widely criticized (particularly, but not only, by socialist theorists) for displaying an insensitivity to old conflicts such as national rivalry and the gap between rich and poor. As Andrew Feenberg has observed, this insensitivity

> leads to a politics of despair that would freeze the current relations of force in the world—and with them the injustices they sustain—as a condition for solving the issue of survival.[41]

Similarly, Enzensberger has criticized those who employ the "brotherly" rhetoric of spaceship Earth for conveniently overlooking the difference between "the bridge and the engine room."[42] Others critics, reasserting the participatory theme, have argued that it is the very *erosion* of liberal democracy that has enabled powerful elites to pursue, with the backing of the State, environmentally destructive growth.[43] What is needed is *more* rather than less participation in government; the survivalists, according to this view, have seriously overestimated the capabilities of centralized institutions and underestimated the capabilities of decentralized, democratic political institutions to respond to the crisis.[44]

While agreeing with the need for more participation, some political theorists have expressed more deep-seated reservations about the capacity of liberal democracy to meet the ecological challenge. As Susan Leeson has put it:

> if authoritarianism is the response to the inability of popular govern-
> ments to impose the limits required to avoid ecological disaster,

such a response merely reflects the crisis to which modern political philosophy and liberalism have led; it is not itself a solution.[45]

What is needed, these critics argue, is a fundamental reexamination of the basic axioms of liberalism such as possessive individualism, private property, limited government, and market freedom. According to Leeson:

it was the unleashing of the passion for material abundance, legitimized by Hobbesian natural right, amplified by Locke, combined with the rejection of the classical commitment to reason and proper limits that caused the ecological crisis.[46]

It was this kind of ecological critique of liberalism that led many ecopolitical theorists to turn to the broad socialist tradition as an alternative. Yet, as we shall shortly see, other ecopolitical theorists found many of the ecologically problematic assumptions of liberalism to be also embedded in the socialist tradition.[47] From this important dialogue between survivalists and their critics there emerged the highly contested question: is socialism ecologically salvageable or must we look elsewhere, that is, beyond liberalism *and* socialism, for ecopolitical enlightenment?

Despite the widespread criticism of the authoritarian response to the deepening ecological crisis, it would be wrong to dismiss the survivalists' contribution out of hand. First, they have done much to draw attention to the seriousness of the ecological crisis and have challenged the widespread complacency concerning the ability of existing political values and institutions to respond to the crisis. Second, the controversial nature of the authoritarian solutions that surfaced in the wake of the "limits to growth" debate has encouraged the search for more deepseated cultural transformations along with alternative, nonauthoritarian institutions that would foster a more cooperative and democratic response to the environmental crisis. In this respect, the above authoritarian scenarios have become sobering reminders of what can and might happen if too little remedial action is taken, or if it comes too late. These scenarios have thus served as a useful foil for later democratically and ecologically oriented theorists who have sought to develop an alternative solution to the environmental crisis that incorporates yet revises and transcends the general participatory ethos of the 1960s, which had been largely premised on now discredited cornucopian assumptions.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMATIC AS A CRISIS OF CULTURE AND CHARACTER AND AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EMANCIPATION[48]

Many of those who were critical of the survivalist school responded by extending ecopolitical debate beyond the realm of the *physical* limits to growth to the point of questioning the very notion of material progress and

lamenting the social and psychological costs associated with the dominance of instrumental rationality. Included among these costs were alienation, loss of meaning, the coexistence of extreme wealth and extreme poverty, welfare dependence, dislocation of tribal cultures, and the growth of an international urban monoculture with a concomitant reduction in cultural diversity.[49] For those who took this step, the sanguine reliance on future "technological fixes" and better planning—seen by many other critics of survivalism as the definitive rejoinder to the "limits to growth" projections—was increasingly recognized as part of the problem rather than the solution. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, a growing number of ecopolitical thinkers were pointing to the new cultural opportunities that lay in what had hitherto been pessimistically approached by the survivalists as a dire crisis with a limited range of options. In short, this new breed of ecopolitical theorists began to draw out what they saw as the emancipatory potential that they believed was latent within the ecological critique of industrialism. Moreover, this new project entailed much more than a simple reassertion of the modern emancipatory ideal of human autonomy or self-determination. It also called for a reevaluation of the foundations of, and the conditions for, human autonomy or self-determination in Western political thought.

The general tenor of this third, emancipatory phase of ecopolitical inquiry may be best introduced in the voices of some of its leading contributors. As William Leiss has explained:

> No elaborate argument should be necessary to establish that there are some limits to economic and population growth. But everything depends upon whether we regard such limits as a bitter disappointment or as a welcome opportunity to turn from quantitative to qualitative improvement in the course of creating a conserver society.[50]

John Rodman has sounded a similar theme in pointing out:

> to the extent that limits are perceived as external to us, they may have to be imposed on us by authoritarian governments; whereas the more they are perceived as arising from within personal and social experience—e.g., in the form of frustration resulting from the "limits to consumption"..., then the more the "limits to [industrial] growth" emerge "naturally," and the appropriate role for government appears, which is not to repress growth, but to stop forcing it...and to facilitate the transition to the steady state.[51]

As early as 1965 Murray Bookchin argued, in a prophetic and pioneering essay entitled "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought," that the insights of ecology offered a critique of society "on a scale that the most radical systems of political economy have failed to attain."[52] Since that time Bookchin has maintained the argument that the cultivation of an ecological society, resting

on the principles of social ecology, will serve to *expand* rather than narrow the realm of freedom or self-directedness in first (i.e., nonhuman) and second (i.e., human) nature.

Theodore Roszak, another pioneer of this emancipatory approach to ecopolitics, has pointed to what he sees as the "vital reciprocity" between person and planet:

> My purpose is to suggest that the environmental anguish of the Earth has entered our lives as a radical transformation of human identity. The needs of the planet and the needs of the person have become one, and together they have begun to act upon the central institutions of our society with a force that is profoundly subversive, but which carries the promise of cultural renewal.[53]

Rudolf Bahro, in a somewhat ironic tone, has signalled his indebtedness to the environmental crisis because it has forced us to reexamine the question of emancipation in fresh terms. According to Bahro, if the Earth were infinite and if there were no problems of energy shortages and resource depletion, we would continue to believe (falsely, in Bahro's view) that the road to freedom lay in material expansion.[54] Bahro has argued that the environmental crisis, which he has claimed to be the "quintessential crisis of capitalism," has forced us to reexamine not only the psychological costs of the competitive and expansionary ethos of our materialist culture but also our imperialist attitude toward other species.

In a similar vein, Christopher Stone, in his eloquent defence of the "rights" of nonhuman beings, has regarded the environmental crisis as offering an opportunity for metaphysical reconstruction and moral development. In voicing the approach taken by a growing number of ecophilosophers, Stone has argued that:

> whether we will be able to bring about the requisite institutional and population growth changes depends in part upon effecting a radical shift in our feelings about "our" place in the rest of Nature.
>
> A radical new conception of man's relationship to the rest of nature would not only be a step towards solving the material planetary problems; there are strong reasons for such a changed consciousness from the point of making us far better humans.[55]

Pursuing this same theme, Bill Devall and George Sessions have argued for the cultivation of new "character and culture." By this they mean the "development of mature persons who understand the immutable connection between themselves and the land community or person/planet" and who act in ways that "serve both the vital needs of persons and nonhumans."[56]

What is common to these various responses to the ecological crisis? First and foremost, the environmental crisis is regarded not only as a crisis of

participation and survival but also as a crisis of culture in the broadest sense of the term, that is, "the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action."[57] Indeed, this was exemplified as early as 1972 in the manifesto of the New Zealand Values Party (the world's first national Green party), which spoke of New Zealand being

> in the grip of a new depression. It is a depression which arises not from a lack of affluence but almost from too much of it. It is a depression of human values, a downturn not in the national economy but in the national spirit.[58]

Second, emancipatory ecopolitical theory may be understood as challenging ecopolitical discourse and widening its agenda on three interrelated levels: human needs, technology, and self-image. At the political level, emancipatory theorists have taken the claims of the ecology movement seriously and have embarked upon a critical inquiry into the structure of human needs and the "appropriateness" of many modern technologies. It is no longer considered adequate merely to challenge, say, the site of a nuclear power plant, freeway or chemical industry, or merely to insist on better safety devices or pollution filters. Instead, this third phase of ecopolitical inquiry has sought to draw attention to the more fundamental question: to what extent do we really need these kinds of energy sources, these means of transport, these industries and technologies, and the like? Surely *more of us* (human and nonhuman) can live richer and fuller lives if humans can become less dependent on this kind of technological infrastructure and the kinds of commodities and lifestyles it offers? As Cornelius Castoriadis has observed, whereas the working class movement has mainly tackled the theme of authority (hence its focus on participatory and distributional issues), the ecology movement is now questioning

> the scheme and structure of needs and the way of life. And that constitutes a very important transcendence of what could be seen as the unilateral character of former movements. What is at stake in the ecological movement is the whole conception, the total position and relation between humanity and the world and, finally, the central and eternal question: what is human life? What are we living for?[59]

Third, this theme of cultural malaise and the need for cultural renewal has meant that emancipatory ecopolitical theorists have directed considerable attention toward the revitalization of civil society rather than, or in addition to, the state. This is reflected in the concern of emancipatory theorists to find ways of theoretically integrating the concerns of the ecology movement with other new social movements, particularly those concerning feminism, peace, and Third World aid and development. This new theoretical project is con-

cerned to find ways of overcoming the destructive logic of capital accumula-
tion, the acquisitive values of consumer society, and, more generally, all sys-
tems of domination (including class domination, patriarchy, imperialism,
racism, totalitarianism, and the domination of nature).

This is indeed a bold and ambitious theoretical project and one for
which the most influential political philosophies of modern times—conser-
vatism, liberalism, and orthodox Marxism—appear either poorly or only par-
tially equipped. Indeed, the limitations in these political philosophies have
served as general theoretical points of departure for emancipatory ecopoliti-
cal theorists.

<div align="center">

THE EMANCIPATORY CRITIQUE OF CONSERVATISM, LIBERALISM,
AND ORTHODOX MARXISM

</div>

Although the emancipatory critique of the major political traditions has been
mainly directed against liberalism and orthodox Marxism, it is useful to
explore briefly the relationship between Green political thought and conser-
vatism.[60] This is especially so since many observers on the Left have often
wrongly characterized environmentalism—and, by implication, Green politi-
cal thought—as simply a new incarnation of conservatism. Now it is certain-
ly true that there are some notable points of commonality between conser-
vatism and many strands of environmentalism. The most significant of these
are an emphasis on prudence or caution in innovation (especially with
respect to technology), the desire to *conserve* existing things (old buildings,
nature reserves, endangered values) to maintain continuity with the past, the
use of organic political metaphors, and the rejection of totalitarianism.
Indeed, these links have occasionally been manifest in the appearance of ad
hoc political alliances between environmental activists and traditional con-
servatives over specific issues such as the preservation of threatened old
buildings and landscapes. Moreover, some of the political tributaries that
have flowed into contemporary ecopolitical thought, and in some cases
Green political thought, may be traced to conservative sources (e.g., Thomas
Carlyle via William Morris, Edmund Burke via William Ophuls).[61]

Yet those who have noted the correlation between conservatism and
some strands of environmentalism have acknowledged that environmental-
ism also contains strong elements of radicalism in its call for a rapid and far-
reaching response to the current crisis. This peculiar mixture of radicalism
and conservatism has understandably confounded some observers and has
prompted the suggestion that perhaps environmentalists could be understood
as "radical conservatives" or, more precisely, "ideational conservatives
pushed into situational radicalism."[62]

However, these and other general categorizations of environmentalism
cannot be simply transposed onto ecopolitical thought, least of all Green

political thought. In the case of the latter, one can certainly find some of the elements of conservatism already mentioned, such as a rejection of totalitarianism, caution in technological innovation, a desire to conserve threatened buildings and landscapes, and the use of organic political metaphors. However, these elements have been rewoven into a new constellation of ideas that has a distinctly radical political edge, both in the original sense of going to the root of the problem and in the more popular sense of demanding a widespread transformation of the political and economic status quo. As we have seen, Green political thought is imbued with a culturally innovative and egalitarian ethos, which puts it at considerable odds with conservatism's opposition to social and political experimentation and cultural change and its endorsement of hierarchical authority and the established order of things. Unlike political conservatives, emancipatory ecopolitical theorists are concerned to challenge and ultimately transform existing power relations, such as those based on class, gender, race, and nationality, to ensure an equitable transition toward an ecologically sustainable society. Indeed, when it comes to modern variants of political conservatism, Greens have been some of the most vociferous critics of such neoconservative ideologies as American Reaganism, British Thatcherism, and their respective successors. Not surprisingly, emancipatory theorists have passed over conservativism (traditional and neo-) as a source of political enlightenment. Whatever the similarities to be found between conservatism and Green political thought, their fundamentally different stances with regard to power relations means that conservatism may be summarily dismissed as a serious contender in the emancipatory ecopolitical stakes.

Liberalism and Marxism, however, have attracted greater attention from emancipatory theorists, although most of this has also been critical. In particular, emancipatory theorists have done much to draw attention to the similarities between liberalism and Marxism. They have noted, for example, that while social relations between humans are theoretically different under capitalism and socialism, the relationship between humans and the rest of nature appears to be essentially the same. This has also proved to be the case historically. As Langdon Winner has remarked:

> A crucial failure in modern political thought and political practice has been an inability or unwillingness even to begin...the critical evaluation and control of our society's technical constitution. The silence of liberalism on this issue is matched by an equally obvious neglect in Marxist theory. Both persuasions have enthusiastically sought freedom in sheer material plenitude.[63]

Indeed, the international nature of environmental degradation has lent force to the broader claim by emancipatory theorists that the modern ecological crisis is the quintessential crisis of *industrialism* rather than just Western

capitalism. Industrialism encompasses the "state capitalism" of communist nations as well as the largely privately controlled market capitalism of Western nations, both of which are seen by emancipatory theorists as resting upon the ideologies of growth and technological optimism. This ecological critique is therefore concerned to emphasize the shared expansionary ethos of both West and East. In the Soviet Union, this ethos was, until recently, encapsulated in the Program of the Soviet Communist Party approved in 1961 at the twenty second party Congress, which stated that "Communism elevates man to a tremendous level of supremacy over nature and makes possible a greater and fuller use of its inherent forces."[64] One could just as easily substitute Western capitalism for communism in this confident assertion of modern humanity's technological mastery of nature.

To be sure, it was classical liberalism, underpinned by *laissez faire* economics and defended in the writings of John Locke and Adam Smith, rather than communism that originally underscored the fundamental direction of modern bourgeois political economy by basing it on cornucopian assumptions and an expanding economy. As Susan Leeson has argued:

> Lockean thought legitimated virtually endless accumulation of material goods; helped equate the process of accumulation with liberty and the pursuit of happiness; helped implant the idea that with ingenuity man can go beyond the fixed laws of nature, adhering only to whatever temporary laws he establishes for himself in the process of pursuing happiness; and helped instill the notion that the "commons" is served best through each man's pursuit of private gain, because there will always be enough for those who are willing to work.[65]

Within this Lockean framework, the nonhuman world was seen in purely instrumental terms, that is, as no more than a means to human ends. After all, according to Locke, the Earth had been given to humans for "the support and comfort of their being"; moreover, the mixing of human labor with nature was an act of appropriation that created something valuable (i.e., property) out of something otherwise *valueless* (the Earth in its state of "natural grace").[66]

Of course, it must be noted that some influential liberal philosophers have challenged this instrumental and expansionary ethos and introduced important qualifications concerning the extent to which it is permissible for humans to dominate the nonhuman world. Scattered among the writings of J. S. Mill, for example, one can find a defence of ecological diversity and a brief but eloquent case for a stationary state economy.[67] And Jeremy Bentham's extension of his utilitarian calculus to all sentient beings has provided the philosophical touchstone for contemporary animal liberation theorists such as Peter Singer.[68]

Although some emancipatory theorists, such as John Rodman, have noted and discussed these byways in liberal thought, the general tendency

has been to look to other political traditions for the ideals and principles that would underpin an ecologically sustainable *post-liberal* society.[69] Indeed, the classical liberal defenders of individualism and *laissez faire* economics are seen by emancipatory ecopolitical theorists as apologists for the very dynamic that has led to the "tragedy of the commons." And, as the survivalists had shown, the logical sequel of this dynamic is authoritarianism from above rather than self-limitation from below. Moreover, emancipatory theorists largely accept the democratic socialist critique of liberalism that the exercise of economic freedom by the privileged renders the exercise of both economic and political freedom largely illusory to the mass of ordinary working people, the unemployed, and the peoples of developing countries. In particular, the exercise of the inalienable rights of the individual heralded by liberalism, notably property rights (which confer the right of exclusive use and disposal of land, labor, and capital) together with freedom of contract and market incentives, is seen as leading to the concentration of ownership of capital and a system of power relations that negates the otherwise laudable liberal goal of free, autonomous development for each individual. Moreover, emancipatory theorists (like democratic socialists) do not consider it an acceptable solution merely to rely on the redistributive largesse of the welfare State to iron out excessive inequalities, since this merely brings the dispossessed into the market as passive consumers rather than self-determining producers (their only area of effective choice being how to spend their limited welfare checks). Accordingly, emancipatory ecopolitical theorists are concerned to reassert the New Left themes of participation and self-management, but in a new ecological (rather than cornucopian) context.

More importantly, liberal ideals were born in and depend upon a frontier setting and an expanding stock of wealth, with claims for distributive justice being appeased by the "trickle down" effect (which maintains relative inequalities in wealth and power). Emancipatory theorists point out that once the frontier becomes exhausted, the gap between rich and poor is bound to intensify, and the prospects of distributive justice and a more egalitarian society will become more remote.

This combined ecological and social critique of liberalism has led emancipatory theorists to reject the philosophy of possessive individualism and turn toward alternative political theories that are more consonant with an ecological perspective or, at the very least, respectful of "ecological limits," and are better able to foster some kind of democratic, cooperative, and communitarian way of organizing social and economic life.[70]

However, the orthodox Marxist alternative, while seen by many emancipatory theorists to be *theoretically* preferable to liberal political philosophy (in seeking collective economic decision making and a fairer distribution of society's stock of wealth), was found to be ultimately wedded to the same expansionary ethos and anthropocentric framework as liberalism. Moreover,

as the evidence of ecological degradation in Eastern Europe mounts, communism in practice is being increasingly regarded as an unmitigated disaster from the point of view of ecological sustainability. As we shall see in chapter 4, orthodox Marxists, by and large, merely disagreed with liberals on how the drive to cornucopia was to be realized and on how the "spoils of progress" were to be managed and divided. Like Locke, Marx saw economic activity, the act of producing via the appropriation of nature, as essential to human freedom. And like Locke, Marx regarded the nonhuman world as no more than the ground of human activity, acquiring value if and when it became transformed by human labor or its extension—technology. Where Marx differed from Locke and other liberal theorists was in his rejection of the institution of private property on the grounds that it gave rise to class domination and the appropriation of surplus value from the worker.

The upshot of this critical rereading of the two most influential pillars of modern political philosophy was sobering. From Hobbes and Locke through to Marx, the notion of human self-realization through the domination and transformation of nature persisted as an unquestioned axiom of political inquiry. As Rodman has shown, in the modern era the solution to poverty, injustice, and inequality had become dependent on the abolition of scarcity via technological innovation and industrial growth—an approach that has been traced to the Enlightenment ideal of the progressive liberation of humans from all traditional and natural limits.[71] Now, however, emancipatory theorists have carried forward the survivalist argument that the modern era must be seen as but a temporary suspension of the tradition of scarcity, as an aberrant period in human history. Some have likened it to the "pioneer" stage of ecological succession (i.e., where rapid growth and aggressive exploitation takes place), which must soon phase into a more mature, steady-state, climax community.[72]

Although emancipatory theorists are in general agreement that liberalism and orthodox Marxism provide unsuitable theoretical underpinnings for an ecologically benign, conserver society, they differ markedly on the question of alternatives. As we shall see in chapters 4 to 7, this new breed of ecologically oriented theorists rapidly divided over the question as to what kind of post-liberal social and political theory could best address the interrelated social and environmental problems of the modern world: was it neo- or post-Marxism, democratic socialism, utopian socialism, anarchism, feminism, or some revised combination thereof?

At a more fundamental ecophilosophical level, deep divisions also developed over the question of our proper relationship to the nonhuman world. While most emancipatory theorists agree that it is not enough simply to return to the participatory and countercultural ethos of the 1960s (with its cornucopian assumptions of an ever growing stock of wealth), serious disagreement developed as to *how far* the anthropocentric assumptions and technological

aspirations of the modern world needed to be revised. This has given rise to *the* most fundamental division within emancipatory ecopolitical thought.

THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC/ECOCENTRIC CLEAVAGE
WITHIN EMANCIPATORY THOUGHT

It should be clear from the above brief introduction to emancipatory inquiry that it is best understood as representing a *spectrum* of thought rather than a single ecopolitical theory or an internally coherent bundle of ideas—a situation that reflects the current state of day-to-day Green politics. Although there are many different areas of disagreement, the most fundamental division from an ecophilosophical point of view is between those who adopt an anthropocentric ecological perspective and those who adopt a nonanthropocentric ecological (or ecocentric) perspective. The first approach is characterized by its concern to articulate an ecopolitical theory that offers new opportunities for *human* emancipation and fulfilment in an ecologically sustainable society. The second approach pursues these same goals in the context of a broader notion of emancipation that also recognizes the moral standing of the nonhuman world and seeks to ensure that it, too, may unfold in its many diverse ways. This anthropocentric/ecocentric cleavage follows the ecophilosophical cleavage that is central to the relatively new but rapidly expanding field of environmental philosophy. The centrality of this distinction is reflected in the large number of broadly similar distinctions that have been coined not only in ecopolitical thought and environmental philosophy but also in environmental history and environmental sociology. It is reflected, for example, in Arne Naess's influential distinction between shallow ecology and deep ecology; in Timothy O'Riordan's characterization of "technocentrism" and "ecocentrism"; in the "Imperialist" and "Arcadian" traditions of ecological thought identified by the environmental historian Donald Worster; in Murray Bookchin's distinction between "environmentalism" and "social ecology"; in William Catton and Riley Dunlap's distinction between the dominant "Human Exemptionalism Paradigm" of mainstream sociology and the "New Ecological Paradigm" of the "post-exuberant age"; and in Alan Drengson's distinction between the "technocratic" and "pernetarian" (i.e., person-planetary) paradigms.[73]

Although some of these distinctions bear different nuances, they all contrast a human-centered orientation toward the nonhuman world with an ecology-centered orientation. In the case of the former, the nonhuman world is reduced to a storehouse of resources and is considered to have instrumental value only, that is, it is valuable only insofar as it can serve as an instrument, or as a means, to human ends. The latter approach, on the other hand, also values the nonhuman world—or at least aspects of it—for its own sake.

While Naess's brief but fertile characterization of deep and shallow

ecology has proved to be the most influential in ecophilosophical circles, I will use the more general ecocentric/anthropocentric distinction for the purposes of this inquiry since it is more immediately descriptive of the two opposing orientations it represents.[74] Deep ecology, or (after Fox) "transpersonal ecology," may be understood as representing one very promising and distinctive *kind* of ecocentric approach (transpersonal ecology and other examples of ecocentric approaches are discussed in chapter 3).[75]

An alternative approach to classification might have been to locate emancipatory theory on the familiar left/right political spectrum. However, as we have seen, most contributors to this third phase of ecopolitical inquiry tend, in any event, to cluster to the left of this traditional spectrum insofar as they are seeking some kind of communitarian, cooperative, or democratic socialist solution (and here, it is not clear which of these approaches are supposed to be "more to the left"). Its use as an analytical framework in this context is therefore decidedly limited.

Another dimension that might be more profitably applied to these various left-leaning emancipatory approaches is that of community versus state control. In terms of our tripartite characterization of ecopolitical theory, this dimension would shed light on the different attempts by emancipatory theorists to resolve the tension between the participatory and survivalist themes of ecopolitical thought already discussed. It would also bring into sharp relief the differences between emancipatory theorists on matters such as political organization and strategy. However, as important as these themes are to Green political theory (particularly with respect to the debates between ecoanarchists and ecosocialists, as we shall see in chapters 6 and 7), the community versus state control dimension does not highlight what is distinctive about the emancipatory approach (i.e., the emphasis on cultural renewal, the emphasis on developing an ecological consciousness, and the critique of industrialism). More importantly, such a dimension does not adequately register the major *ecophilosophical* debates in emancipatory thought. Nonetheless, the community versus state control dimension can serve as a useful adjunct to the more overarching ecophilosophical dimension.

The anthropocentric/ecocentric dimension registers the major ecophilosophical differences within emancipatory ecopolitics and brings into sharp focus the novel and challenging scope of these new ideas. Moreover, it does this in a way that helps to *explain* some of the diverging *political* responses to different ecological issues adopted by different schools of emancipatory thought, as I show below in my discussion of what I identify as two "litmus test" ecological issues.

For the reasons developed in the next two chapters, I will be arguing that an ecocentric philosophical orientation provides the most comprehensive, promising, and distinctive approach in emancipatory ecopolitical theory. Accordingly, the various Green political theories examined in part 2 of this

inquiry will be assessed in terms of where they fit on the anthropocentric/eco-centric emancipatory dimension. To the extent that they fall short of a com-prehensive ecocentric perspective, they will be judged inadequate. To the extent that they point to problems associated with an ecocentric perspective, their critique will be addressed and evaluated. And to the extent that they con-tribute to the rounding out or further elaboration of an ecocentric political per-spective, particularly on social and institutional questions where much work needs to be done, their contribution will be incorporated accordingly.

What, then, are the salient features of the ecocentric approach? In terms of fundamental priorities, an ecocentric approach regards the question of our proper place in the rest of nature as logically prior to the question of what are the most appropriate social and political arrangements for human communi-ties. That is, the determination of social and political questions must proceed from, or at least be consistent with, an adequate determination of this more fundamental question. As exemplified in some of the quotations selected to introduce this third phase of inquiry, ecocentric political theorists are distin-guished by the emphasis they place on the need for a radical reconception of humanity's place in nature. In particular, ecocentric theorists argue that there is no valid basis to the belief that humans are the pinnacle of evolution and the sole locus of value and meaning in the world. Instead, ecocentric theo-rists adopt an ethical position that regards *all* of the various multilayered parts of the biotic community as valuable for their own sake. (There are, of course, different degrees of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, as will be seen in the following chapters. Here I am simply characterizing a thorough-going ecocentric perspective.)

The special emphasis given to ecological interconnectedness by ecocen-tric theorists is seen as providing the basis for a new sense of both *empathy* and *caution*. By this I mean a greater sense of compassion for the fate of other life-forms (both human and nonhuman) and a keener appreciation of the fact that many of our activities are likely to have a range of unforeseen consequences for ourselves and other life-forms.[76] The magnitude of the environmental crisis is seen by ecocentric theorists as evidence of, among other things, an inflated sense of human self-importance and a misconceived belief in our capacity to fully understand biospherical processes. The ecocen-tric perspective is presented as a corrective to these misconceptions insofar as it underscores the need to proceed with greater caution and humility in our "interventions" in ecosystems.

It was the adoption of this thoroughgoing ecocentric perspective that most set this particular group of emancipatory ecopolitical thinkers apart from most of the influential New Left theorists of the 1960s who had addressed the problem of environmental degradation. To be sure, there has been an important re-assertion by ecocentric theorists of New Left themes (such as autonomy, self-management, and the critique of technocratic ratio-

nality) in response to authoritarian ecopolitical solutions. However, these themes have been relocated in a new ecocentric theoretical framework that draws inspiration from the insights of ecology rather than from the human-centered orientation of the New Left. Anthropocentric Green theorists, on the other hand, have maintained greater continuity with the New Left themes of the 1960s. The main point of difference, however, is that anthropocentric Green theorists have revised the cornucopian assumptions of the 1960s in the wake of the "limits to growth debate" of the early 1970s. The result is a more ecologically informed (albiet still human-centered) emancipatory theory that provides a much more comprehensive critique of economic growth and technocratic rationality.

Ecocentric and anthropocentric emancipatory theorists offer diverging responses to a range of important practical social and ecological issues. In particular, I would point to two "litmus" ecopolitical issues that highlight these ecophilosophical differences: human population growth and wilderness preservation. The ecocentric stream of emancipatory thought is noted for its greater willingness to advocate not simply a lessening of the growth rate of the human population but also a long term *reduction* in human numbers.[77] Rather than directly address the matter of absolute numbers, the anthropocentric stream tends to direct attention to the social causes of population growth and argue the case for a more equitable distribution of resources between the rich and poor. The ecocentric stream is also noted for its greater readiness to advocate the setting aside of large tracts of wilderness, regardless of whether such preservation can be shown to be useful in some way to humankind. The anthropocentric stream, in contrast, tends to be more preoccupied with the urban and agricultural human environment. Large scale wilderness preservation tends not to be supported unless a strong human-centered justification can be demonstrated.

The ecophilosophical differences between ecocentric and anthropocentric theorists should not, of course, obscure the significant commonalities between these two streams of emancipatory thought. As we have seen, both streams are distinguishable from other ecopolitical approaches in terms of their more penetrating diagnosis of environmental problems (i.e., these are seen as representing not just a crisis of participation and survival but also a crisis of culture and character). Both streams are also united in their optimistic attempt to offer a creative synthesis of the themes of participation and survival through the more encompassing theme of emancipation, which promises new opportunities for *universal* human self-realization. At the policy level, both streams are critical of indiscriminate economic growth, large scale organizations, "hard" (as distinct from "soft") energy paths, and ecologically and socially destructive technologies. Where these two approaches differ, however, is in the way in which they integrate these critiques and in the ecophilosophical justifications they provide for their alternative approaches.

Having located the ecocentric emancipatory stream in the larger body of ecopolitical thought, the central questions to be examined in this inquiry can now be presented: (i) does an ecocentric approach have a natural ally within the existing pantheon of modern political traditions with which it can forge a theoretical link; or (ii) can an ecocentric approach be assimilated into any one of a number of different political traditions after appropriate revisions; or (iii) must ecocentric theorists develop an entirely novel political arrangement?

In order to narrow down the field of choice, it will be useful at this stage to outline a response to these questions from the perspective of emancipatory ecopolitical thought in general. This will provide the general parameters for the ensuing inquiry.

Although there is at present no unanimity among emancipatory theorists in response to these questions, definite leanings are discernible. First, as we have seen, emancipatory theorists are united by their intention to "head off" the acknowledged possibility of the survivalist solution, namely, that only a centrally planned, authoritarian State is capable of steering modern industrialized society through the convulsive process of de-industrialization into an ecologically sustainable, post-industrial society.

Second, the conservative political tradition may be ruled out as a serious contender, notwithstanding the resonances with emancipatory ecopolitical thought that have been briefly noted in this chapter. This is because conservatism's endorsement of the established order, hierarchical authority, and paternalism and its resistance to cultural innovation and social and political experimentation put it at considerable odds with the egalitarian and innovative orientation of emancipatory thought.

Third, all emancipatory theorists roundly reject "free market" liberalism and neoconservatism as giving free rein to the very dynamic that has given rise to the "tragedy of the (unmanaged) commons." This does not entail an outright rejection of entrepreneurial activity or of the market as a method of resource allocation, but it does require that the market become subordinate to ecological and social justice considerations. Beyond this, however, emancipatory theory, particularly the ecocentric stream, is still very much in its infancy and there is, so far, little agreement as to what mix of private and public economic endeavor would best secure a socially just and ecologically sustainable society. The arguments for the rejection of classical liberal philosophy have already been canvassed earlier in this chapter and will not be pursued in any detail in the remainder of this inquiry. It should be noted, however, that the emancipatory critique of liberalism has not led to an outright rejection of the entire cluster of liberal values. The (usually unacknowledged) retention by emancipatory theorists of the enduring liberal values of tolerance for diversity, basic human rights (e.g., freedom of speech, assembly, and association), and (for some) limited government indicates that emancipatory political theory is decidedly *post-* rather than *anti-*liberal.

Fourth, although Marxist and neo-Marxist theories have also attracted their due share of ecological critiques, they have, on the whole, proved to be more resilient than classical liberal approaches. Marxism's penetrating critique of capitalist relations and its promise of universal human self-realization has continued to exert a considerable sway on the anthropocentric and, to a much lesser extent, ecocentric streams of emancipatory thought. For these reasons, Marxist and neo-Marxist responses will be critically explored in detail in chapters 4 and 5 (if only to demonstrate why both are ultimately incompatible with an ecocentric perspective).

Fifth, in view of the broad egalitarian and democratic ethos of emancipatory thought and its sympathy with the concerns of new social movements, feminist, democratic socialist, utopian socialist, and anarchist approaches have enjoyed widespread support among emancipatory theorists of both persuasions. Accordingly, these political theories (or ecophilosophies, in the case of ecofeminism) and will be examined in chapters 3, 6, and 7.

Sixth, no emancipatory theorist has been able to come up with an entirely novel social and political arrangement, that is, one that has not already been mooted in modern social and political theory. By this I am not meaning to argue that there is nothing new or distinctive about Green political thought, only that the newness or distinctiveness of Green political thought is not primarily to be found in the various social and political insititutions defended by its theorists.[78] Rather, the principal newness or distinctiveness of emancipatory thought (and this applies more to the ecocentric than the anthropocentric stream) lies in the different ecophilosophical perspective that is brought to bear upon contemporary problems, the different and more encompassing kind of critique that is applied to existing social and political institutions, and the different and more encompassing ethical and political justifications provided for the various (not unfamiliar) social and political arrangements that are proposed.