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Radical Green politics in America today is divided between two camps: antitoxics groups, organized against environmental hazards in economically distressed communities, and conservation activists and scientists, who work toward the restoration of biodiversity in wilderness areas. Both camps consist of grassroots organizations that emphasize all persons' collective responsibility for healthy environments. Both camps, while generally not self-consciously Marxist or even New Leftist, recognize that the consumerist logic of the market-state—"grow or die"—will continue to result in the degradation of clean water and air, animal well-being, and human flourishing. As such, both camps are frontal challenges to the American liberal ideal that the pursuit of enlightened self-interest somehow guarantees that all members of the body politic will achieve a reasonable standard of living in relatively healthy home and work environments.

But the affinities between antitoxics and biodiversity activists are initially difficult to discern in the face of the deep disagreements between the two camps. The antitoxics movement has its origins in the plight of human communities—urban, suburban, and rural—precariously situated close to health hazards such as waste dumps, polluted water supplies, contaminated soil sites, and toxic storage plants. Antitoxics argue that

large industrial polluters in collusion with local public officials look for economically distressed areas in which to build hazardous facilities that promise immediate economic gains for the area's inhabitants. In urban areas, more often than not, poor people of color are most directly impacted by these new economic initiatives; in many suburban and rural areas, low-income whites are often disproportionately affected by the use and abuse of their environment and its resources. "Numerous studies have found that those who live in close proximity to noxious facilities are disproportionately people of color or of low income, and race has been found to be the stronger indicator of the two."[1] The antitoxics movement, therefore, is primarily concerned with environmental justice for *disenfranchised persons* who have suffered from historic class and racial discrimination and now have been deprived of their right to live and work in safe and healthy environments.

The new preservationist movement focuses primarily on the exigency to restore ecological richness and vitality in under- and nondeveloped areas that have not been irredeemably damaged by the influx of human populations. Here the emphasis falls on rehabilitating wildlife and wilderness areas for the sake of biodiversity rather than on the promotion of justice as such for disadvantaged human communities that have suffered environmental degradation. Otherwise disparate groups and movements such as Greenpeace, the Sea Shepherd Society, Earth First!, and Deep Ecology are united by their vigorous bioregional attempts to recover the integrity of nonhuman species by preserving their habitats. One such movement, the Wildlands Project, states that its mission is "to help protect and restore the ecological richness and native biodiversity of North America through the establishment of a connected system of reserves."[2] From this perspective, the best way to address the degraded environments of impoverished human cities and towns is to do so indirectly through the promotion of wild spaces that ensure the welfare of *all* life, not just human life.

At first glance, then, the differences between the antitoxics and the new conservationists appear stark and irreconcilable: either the focus falls on enabling disenfranchised human communities to overcome historic economic and environmental degradation, or it is on protecting the ecosystemic integrity of all beings without assigning any special concern to the needs of human beings. The understandable but unfortunate continuation of this disagreement further fragments an already divided environmental movement.

In light of this division within contemporary Green populism, what role if any can an environmentally nuanced spirituality play in healing this breach? Can champions of wilderness preservation and antitoxics activists find common ground in a "sustainable spirituality," to use

Charlene's Spretnak's felicitous phrase, that both seeks to protect nature for its own sake and fight social injustice?[3] I define *sustainable spirituality* as a nonsectarian spiritual vision concerning the deep interrelationships of all life-forms on the planet and the concomitant ethical ideal of preserving the integrity of these relationships through one's social and political praxis. While different historic religious traditions have articulated this vision in their own idiom—for example, the Jewish and Christian idea of the "Spirit" as binding all things to one another; or the Buddhist notion of "dependent origination," the belief that no entity, human or otherwise, is ontologically separate from any other entity—such a vision is not the province of any one tradition. On the contrary, sustainable spirituality is a generic sensibility available to all persons interested in crafting a holistic vision of life on the planet. This mode of spiritual awareness neither entails (nor precludes) belief in God (or the gods) nor subscription to any particular creed or ritual practice. Its roots are deep in the rich soil of various earth-friendly spiritualities. Sustainable spirituality offers its practitioners a powerfully useful root metaphor—the image of all life as organically interconnected—that can enable a fresh reappraisal of the debate between biocentric conservationists and advocates for environmental justice.

This essay is divided into three parts. Parts one and two use a case-study approach to explicate the agendas of antitoxics groups and contemporary conservation coalitions, respectively. Part three considers the role of sustainable spirituality in mediating the differences that now divide the two movements. In light of this mediation, I conclude with suggestions concerning the challenge of Green populism to the market mentality of the late capitalist West.

Toxic Sacrifice Zones and the Quest for Justice

Many local economies in urban and rural America today are dependent upon the production and management of toxic wastes. In economically distressed communities, the promise of a stabilized tax base, improved infrastructure, and jobs for underemployed residents is almost impossible to resist. The waste management industry offers an immediate quick fix to chronic poverty and instability in declining cities and neighborhoods that can no longer attract government and private investment. The price for allowing the storage and treatment of biohazardous materials in one's community may be long-term environmental problems. But people in the grip of poverty and joblessness have few options when their very survival, materially speaking, is contingent upon the construction of a trash incinerator or chemical dump in their neighborhood.

Corporate investors know a good thing when they see it. Waste management facilities cannot be sited where politically empowered middle-

and upper-class residents will fight the establishment of such facilities through the courts. Close proximity to hazardous industries immediately depresses property values in residential areas where virtually no one wants to risk endangering his or her physical and economic well-being by allowing such a liability to be built in their own backyard. And in those rare instances where such facilities have come on line in high-income areas, the residents have the means and mobility to "'vote with their feet' and move away from a high risk place of residence."[4]

Recent popular movements of resistance to the expansion of the toxics industry into various communities—poor and middle class alike—is surprisingly resilient. The conflict at Love Canal, New York, in the 1970s is the best known example of a successful grassroots response to callous irresponsibility in the powerful waste industry. A citizens' movement led by Love Canal homeowner-activist Lois Gibbs protested Hooker Chemical's disposal of toxic chemicals into the ground on which homes and schools were later built. The Love Canal homeowners convincingly documented the deleterious health affects that had resulted from living in the middle of a chemical dump and persuaded officials to buy out and permanently relocate town residents.[5] Other local antitoxics campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s are also notable, if not always as successful: the protest against siting a PCB landfill in Warren County, North Carolina; the movement against building a waste incinerator by the Mothers of East Los Angeles; the campaign by Native American activists against building a waste-to-fertilizer plant on native lands in Vian, Oklahoma.[6]

The problems and prospects of antitoxics campaigns in blighted urban areas is graphically evident in the resistance to a series of waste management plants in Chester, Pennsylvania, a postindustrial city just west of Philadelphia. Chester is an impoverished, predominantly African-American community in an almost all-white suburb, Delaware County. Its median family income is 45 percent lower than the rest of Delaware County; its poverty rate is 25 percent, more than three times the rate in the rest of Delaware County; and its unemployment rate is 30 percent. Chester has the highest infant mortality rate and the highest percentage of low-weight births in the state.[7] Chester would appear to be the last place to build a constellation of hazardous facilities. Nevertheless, three waste and treatment plants recently have been built on a square-mile site surrounded by homes and parks in a low-income, African-American neighborhood in Chester. The facilities include the Westinghouse trash-to-steam incinerator, the Delcora sewage-treatment plant, and the Thermal Pure Systems medical-waste autoclave. A fourth waste processing plant devoted to treating PCB-contaminated soil has recently received a construction permit. The clustering of waste industries only a few yards from a large residential area has made worse the high rate of asthma and other

respiratory and health problems in Chester; it has brought into the neighborhood an infestation of rodents, the omnipresence of five hundred trucks a day at all hours, soot and dust covering even the insides of people's homes, and waves of noxious odors that have made life unbearable.[8] In a landmark health study of the environmental degradation of Chester, the EPA found that lead poisoning is a significant health problem for the majority of Chester children; that toxic air emissions have raised the specter of cancer to two-and-a-half times greater than the average risk for area residents; and the fish in Chester waters are hopelessly contaminated with PCBs from current and previous industrial abuses.[9]

The EPA study has made public what many Chester residents have long known: the unequal dumping of municipal wastes in Chester has permanently undermined the health and well-being of its population. Chester is a stunning example of environmental racism: 100 percent of all municipal solid waste in Delaware County is burned at the Westinghouse incinerator; 90 percent of all sewage is treated at the Delcora plant; and close to a hundred tons of hospital waste per day from a half-dozen nearby states is sterilized at the Thermal Pure plant.[10] As Jerome Balter, a Philadelphia environmental lawyer puts it, "When Delaware County passes an act that says all of the waste has to come to the city of Chester, that *is* environmental racism."[11] Or as Peter Kostmayer, former congressman and head of the EPA's midatlantic region says, high levels of pollution in Chester would "not have happened if this were Bryn Mawr, Haverford or Swarthmore [nearby well-to-do white suburbs]. I think we have to face the fact that the reason this happened is because this city is largely—though not all—African American, and a large number of its residents are people of low income."[12] *Chester has become a "local sacrifice zone," where the disproportionate pollution from its waste-industrial complex is tolerated because of the promise of economic revitalization.*[13] But the promise of dozens of jobs and major funds for the immediate areas around the existing toxics industries have never materialized. Indeed, of the $20 million the Westinghouse incinerator pays to local governments in taxes, only $2 million goes to Chester while $18 million goes to Delaware County.[14]

Chester is Delaware County's sacrifice zone. The surrounding middle-class, white neighborhoods would never allow the systematic overexposure of their citizens to such a toxics complex. The health and economic impact of siting even one of the facilities now housed in Chester would likely be regarded as too high of a risk. But to build a cluster of such complexes in nearby Chester is another matter. Nevertheless, many in Chester have tried to fight back against this exercise in environmental apartheid. The Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living, led by community activist (or as she prefers, "reactivist") Zulene Mayfield, has used nonviolent resistance tactics—mass protests, monitoring of emissions levels, pro-

tracted court actions, and so forth—to block the expansion of the complex. In opposition to granting a permit for operation for the fourth waste facility to be built in the area, the soil remediation plant, former Chester democratic mayor Barbara Bohannan-Sheppard concluded her remarks at a public hearing with the following:

> Chester should not and will not serve as a dumping ground. A dumping ground for what no other borough, no other township, or no other city will accept. Yes, Chester needs the taxes, Chester needs the jobs. But, Chester also needs to improve its image and not be a killing field.[15]

Hope is not lost in Chester. There is a growing awareness of the injustice being done to low-income, often minority communities that have suffered from the unequal distribution of environmental hazards in their neighborhoods. Bill Clinton recently signed an executive order mandating all federal agencies to ensure the equitable location of polluting industries across race and economic lines.[16] But the signs are not good that the Chester Residents organization can successfully combat the expansion of the waste industry in their area. Ms. Bohannan-Sheppard recently lost her reelection bid and was replaced by a proindustry mayor and city council. No major environmental organization has taken up the Chester cry against environmental racism as its own. And time is running out as the investors in the fourth envisioned waste plant are preparing to overcome the last legal hurdles to bringing the soil remediation firm on line.

What role if any can Green spirituality play in the struggle against environmental racism in areas like Chester, Pennsylvania? In response, it should first be noted that few people see it as in their interests to express solidarity with disadvantaged communities that have suffered the brunt of unequal distribution of environmental risks. Many people have become inured to the gradual environmental degradation of their home and work environments and most likely consider the development of occasional toxic "sacrifice zones" and "killing fields" to be a tragic but necessary result of modern technological life and its attendant creature comforts. If everyone has the right to pursue his or her own material self-interests, and if some persons are better able to do this on the basis of their natural advantages because of family or national origin, socioeconomic class, and so forth, then it follows that some disadvantaged groups will be marginalized in the human struggle for increased wealth, security, and power. Green spirituality challenges this liberal assumption by affirming instead that all persons are fundamentally equal and that everyone has the right to family stability and meaningful work in a healthy environment regardless of one's racial, cultural, economic, or sexual identity. *Moreover, Green*

spirituality affirms the common interdependence of all persons with each other—indeed, of all species with each other—as we all struggle to protect the integrity of the life-web that holds together our planet home. In religious terms, Green religion testifies to the bond of unity that unites all God's children together on a sacred earth. As the participants of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit put it: "Environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction."[17] Earth-centered religion values the interconnections between all members of the biosphere in contradistinction to the liberal ideal of maximizing self-interest.

I envision Green spirituality as a distillation of the earth-centered sensibilities within different world religions. It is not a reductionist syncretism of all global spiritualities into one totalizing perspective but rather a selective and self-conscious interpretation of many different religious traditions for the sake of renewing the earth and its inhabitants. The earth-centered mythologies of different world religions make up the content of sustainable spirituality. Depending upon one's religious and cultural background and interests, possible religious ideas, among many others, that could be candidates for inclusion in such a spiritual vision are the following: the Jewish narrative of a common creation story where all species possess inherent worth as the handiwork of the Creator;[18] the Christian idea of the Holy Spirit, the animating power of life in the universe who unifies and sustains all things;[19] the Chinese doctrine of *Ch'i*—the vital force within nature that dynamically integrates all forms of life into common flow patterns;[20] and the Amerindian and neopagan imagery of the earth as our Great Mother which entails the values of care and respect for the "body" of our common parent.[21] Alternately theistic and nontheistic, scriptural and preliterate, eastern and western, these earth-friendly religious traditions offer a body of rich stories and images for enabling the quest for environmental justice.[22]

As a Green hermeneutic of these traditions (and many others could be mentioned as well), sustainable spirituality is an exercise in rhetorical reason rather than a scientific enterprise in the narrow sense of that term. Its goal is to motivate all persons to live responsibly on the earth; its aim is not to prove through observation and experimentation that the doctrines and beliefs of green religious traditions are incorrigibly certain. The point of sustainable spirituality is not to demonstrate empirically that the world really *is* just as Green spirituality figures it to be (though there is compelling evidence to support the claim that the earth is an interconnected living organism, a claim consistent with the spiritual vision adumbrated here). Rather, the point is to imagine the world as a communitarian family of beings that mutually depend upon one another

in order to liberate sisterly feelings for the many life-forms that populate the earth. Neither disinterested nor value free in orientation, Green spirituality does not claim to provide scientific or metaphysical descriptions of the physical world; instead, it offers spiritually nuanced refigurations of the world that can set free a primal sense of identification with all forms of life—to set free, as Jonathan Edwards wonderfully puts it, the union of heart with Being as such.[23]

In the struggle against environmental injustice, Green spirituality can serve an important role: the inculcation of a comprehensive world view concerning the underlying unity of all things that can sustain communities of resistance over the long haul. While this model cannot directly fund the material needs of antitoxics campaigns, it can fire the imagination and empower the will as members of embattled communities seek to end the inequitable dumping of hazards and toxins in their neighborhoods. The study and use of fact sheets and health reports alone is not enough to enable the struggle over the long term and in the face of overwhelming odds. By motivating all of the participants to better understand their interdependence on one another—to envision the common bond between rich and poor, city folk and suburbanites, anglos and people of color, humankind and otherkind—Green religion provides the attitudinal resources necessary for enduring commitments to combatting environmental racism and injustice.

Deep Ecology and Wilderness Activism

Radical conservationism today is a practical application of the philosophy of Deep Ecology.[24] The goal of neopreservationism is to renew and reconnect endangered bioregions in order to promote ecological richness and diversity. The core insight of Deep Ecology—namely, that all living things are equal in value and possess the inherent right to grow and flourish—provides the underlying warrant for this goal. First formulated by Arne Naess in a 1973 article by that name, Deep Ecology articulates a spiritual vision of nature as a communal exercise in biotic interdependence, where each life-form is a bearer of equal and intrinsic worth.[25] The ethical corollary to this model centers on equal regard for all species populations. Insofar as all life-forms are codependent members of the biosphere, the hierarchical distinctions that prioritize the interests of humankind over otherkind are consistently effaced.

Since Naess's landmark article, current studies in biocentric moral philosophy stress an attitude of equal regard as the *summum bonum* of environmental ethics. Since all organisms, from single-celled bacteria to highly developed mammals, are coequal centers of biological activity, the maintenance of healthy environments in which the realization of a biocommunity's life cycle can be sustained is the primary concern of a

nature-based ethic. The moral rule that results from this premise is variously formulated as the "duty of noninterference," the "principle of minimum impact," or the "principle of nonmeddling."[26] This rule, then, entails a hands-off, live-and-let live behavioral norm that would encourage the practice of thoughtful noninterference in various biotic populations. In conflict situations where humans and other life-forms have competing claims to resources and habitats, the ethical goal would be to develop policies that register *no or as little human impact as possible* on the natural world. Practically, this would entail that in situations where nonessential human interests are furthered by the destruction of plants and animals (for example, in the case of the bulldozing of a coastal wetland in order to make room for a housing development), the decision should be to make little or no provision for such environmental impact. On the other hand, however, in situations where the essential integrity and well-being of a species population is at stake, human or nonhuman, more latitude could be given to measures that will benefit the needy population in spite of the negative effects on the populations not benefiting from the measures in question (for example, in cases where the study and use of some organic specimens are necessary for eradicating certain human diseases). Nevertheless, the same rule applies in both situations, namely, the path of minimum impact on other species.[27]

A minimal impact orientation rooted in Deep Ecology philosophy is the mainspring of neoconservationism. The work of Dave Foreman and others with Earth First! in the 1980s and the Wildlands Project in the 1990s represents the leading edge of this movement. Earth First! emerged out of the disillusionment with the protracted environmental policy debates of the 1970s. Wilderness Society staffer Dave Foreman and some of his colleagues broke with a number of the Group of Ten major environmental organizations and founded the direct-action wilderness defense movement Earth First! in the early 1980s.[28] Foremen and other Earth First!ers became well known for highly public, colorful acts of "monkey-wrenching" or "ecotage" in their efforts to undermine the industrial exploitation and destruction of unprotected wild habitats. Foreman and associates appropriated the sometimes gnomic ruminations of Deep Ecology and turned this philosophy into an ideological foundation for controversial, often illegal forays into saving wild places. Taking their cues from the Deep Ecology activism embodied in the novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang* by Edward Abbey, Earth First! members style themselves as the final line of defense against a rapacious industrial machine hell-bent on destroying the last undeveloped areas in North America, with special emphasis on the vast frontiers of the American West. Earth First!'s vision of restoring a Green Wild West in the aftermath of a mass ecocide of biblical proportions—a sort of cowboy apocalypticism—is given voice in the figure of George Hayduke in Abbey's novel:

> When the cities are gone, he thought, and all the ruckus has died away, when sunflowers push up through the concrete and asphalt of the forgotten interstate freeways . . . when the glass-aluminum skyscraper tombs of Phoenix Arizona barely show above the sand dunes, why then by God maybe free men and wild women on horses . . . can roam the sagebrush canyonlands in freedom . . . and dance all night to the music of fiddles! banjos! steel guitars! by the light of a reborn moon!—by God, yes![29]

Hayduke is an antindustrial saboteur who prophesies certain eschatological doom; his end-time fantasy provides the master metaphors for Earth First!'s extremist rhetoric. Through vandalizing logging vehicles, spiking trees targeted for logging, and generally playing havoc with wilderness development operations, Earth First! has emerged as the most charismatic, if not always most successful, activist organization for wilderness preservation in the wake of the Reaganesque market-oriented model of "wise use" environmentalism.

In the early 1990s Earth First! split into two factions. Dave Foreman organized the minority faction into a splinter organization that publishes the journal *Wild Earth* and advocates for the Wilderness Project, an ambitious network of activists and scientists working to establish a connected system of wilderness parks and preserves. This rump faction represents a significant change in philosophy and tactics from the larger Earth First! movement: wilderness *recovery* is now the watchword of the minority group instead of wilderness *defense*, and the angry monkeywrenching tactics of civil disobedience have been replaced by the moderate discourse of earth science and public policy studies. Instead of Hayduke-like apocalypticism, the Wilderness Project is seeking long-term solutions to declining biodiversity in wilderness areas; instead of the countercultural youthful hostility to mainstream bureaucratic environmentalism, the Wilderness Project is eager to make common cause with any prowilderness groups, from biocentric grassroots movements to the more conservative Group of Ten environmental organizations, including entities such as the Sierra Club and the World Wildlife Fund.

The central focus of the Wildlands Project is the enactment of a system of nature preserves for the sake of furthering biological growth and diversity. This system would consist of interconnected core reserves that would allow genetically diverse populations to crossfertilize, evolve, and flourish.

> The mission of The Wildlands Project is to help protect and restore the ecological richness and native biodiversity of North America through the establishment of a connected system of reserves. . . . The environment of North America is at risk and an audacious plan is

> needed for its survival and recovery. Healing the land means reconnecting its parts so that vital flows can be renewed. . . . Our vision is continental: from Panama and the Caribbean to Alaska and Greenland, from the high peaks to the continental shelves, we seek to . . . restore evolutionary processes and biodiversity.[30]

While this mission statement may appear to hark back to turn-of-the-century conservationism, the goals of contemporary preservationism are different from the ideals of the national parks and related movements that have sought to set aside scenic places for the sake of human recreation and edification. *Today the concern is with the preservation of whole ecosystems in order to sustain the health of the planet in general rather than with the establishment of picturesque sites and outdoor zoos, so to speak, whose purpose is to refresh and uplift the human spirit.* What distinguishes neopreservationism from its conservationist precursors is its plea for the establishment of large nature preserves as nurseries for comprehensive biodiversity without which, its proponents argue, diverse life on the planet as we know it will be seriously eroded—if not extinguished altogether.

What is the relevance of sustainable spirituality to contemporary conservation efforts? Initially it seems that religion and conservationism have little in common. Indeed, one of the sources of disagreement that led to the split among Earth First!ers in the first place was the contention by Dave Foreman and his allies that the movement had been coopted by spiritually oriented, social justice types who were blunting the hard edge of the movement's originally uncompromising anti-industrial message.[31] Foreman's protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, both militant and bureaucratic forms of neoconservationism are deeply spiritual movements at their core. Let me explain. I have argued that grassroots nature activism represents the tactical edge of Deep Ecology philosophy. As such, the expansive vision of a transcontinental wilderness recovery strategy within neopreservationism is animated by a deeply felt spiritual awareness that all life, human and nonhuman, has intrinsic value and should not be subordinated to the growth needs of late capitalist societies. I label this intuitional perspective "spiritual" in this context because its exponents are committed to preserving the integrity of life as such as an ultimate value. Whatever may or may not be said about its scientific merits, Deep Ecology is a spiritual vision of the highest order concerning the organic wholeness and biotic equality of all life-forms on the planet; and insofar as contemporary conservationism is politically applied Deep Ecology, it is a bearer of Green spirituality to a culture that hungers for authentic religion in an age of corporate televangelism and reactionary fundamentalism.

In the same way, then, that Green religion can empower long-term antitoxics commitments in the face of powerful countervailing market

forces, it can also engender a comprehensive, emotionally resonant worldview concerning the sacred, inviolable character of every biotic community. Thus the reason for recovering wilderness places is not for the sake of human flourishing—though human flourishing would be a direct consequence of such recovery work—but because all members of the life-web deserve to achieve their full biological potential as much as possible. In short, green spirituality helps to answer the "Why" question for conservationism, namely, Why care about wild places in the first place? The answer is because such places make up the fragile life-support systems that render the earth a teeming biosphere of interconnected living things. Wild places are the nurseries that make biodiversity possible. This understanding of the distinctive role of wilderness in evolutionary processes is both a scientific and spiritual insight: scientific, because it recognizes that wilderness is essential to maintaining diversity at all levels, and spiritual, because this recognition accords to wilderness the supreme value of being essential to the maintenance of life itself.

Mediating the Debate, Green Religion, and Market Values

To this point I have considered the antitoxics movement and conservationism as often opposing factions, albeit factions that share a comprehensive spiritual vision of restored nature. Yet it is the oppositional character of each movement in relation to the perceived concerns of the other group that is so striking and, at the same time, in dire need of mediation. On the one hand, antitoxics leaders like Lois Gibbs sometimes appear to see little relationship between combatting pollutants in the home and workplace and the mainstream environmental movement's interest in protecting plant and animal habitats: "Calling our movement an environmental movement would inhibit our organizing and undercut our claim that we are about protecting people, not birds and bees."[32] On the other hand, Dave Foreman sometimes strikes a misanthropic note in order to underscore the dissimilarities between wilderness protection and fighting against the social causes that force some human communities into toxic environments: "We aren't an environmental group. Environmental groups worry about health hazards to human beings, they worry about clean air and water for the benefit of people and ask us why we're so wrapped up in something as irrelevant and tangential and elitist as wilderness. . . . [But] wilderness is the essence of everything. It's the real world."[33] To put the differences between the two movements in the most extreme terms, the antitoxics are sometimes derided as anthropocentric and not truly biocentric while the neopreservationists are criticized as antihuman and ecofascist.

The claim has been made that "[a] balance *can* be struck between *preserving* the wild and *reorganizing* our transactions in cities, suburbs, and countryside."[34] But how can such a mediation between antitoxics and

neopreservationists be possible if the one appears to prioritize the needs and interests of discrete human populations while the other appears to prioritize the needs and interests of the organic whole? My thesis is that Green spirituality has the resources for forging rapprochement between these two movements by articulating the operative worldview that is logically entailed by both forms of environmental populism. I am not arguing that this worldview is self-consciously understood as such by adherents of both movements, but that it is the mind-set that is implied by the commitment to the integrity and sanctity of life shared by both groups. This shared worldview is holistic in its vision of the biosphere, prophetic in its despair over the earth's declining biological carrying capacity, and interventionist in its struggle against global market forces that have degraded human and nonhuman environments alike. *"Wholeness" is the epithet for a life-centered spirituality adequate to the ecocrisis of our times.* The English word "whole" is a derivative of a constellation of old Teutonic and old English terms that signified well-being, health, and healing. Etymologically, the word "whole" stems from the Germanic *Heil,* which is associated with vitality, integrity, strength, soundness, and completeness. Likewise, the English word "holy"—derived from *heilig* (a cognate of *Heil*)—historically also had the meanings of well-being and integrity in addition to its denotation as consecrated and set-apart. Wholeness, the whole, and the holy, then, are terms that have historically cross-pollinated one another. To uphold, therefore, the integrity of the *whole* is to experience the *holy* or sacred through living a life of personal and communal *healing* and *well-being*.[35]

My suggestion is that sustainable religion enables a mediation between antitoxics and conservationists by explicating the common spiritual-holistic philosophy that is implied by the beliefs and actions characteristic of both movements. It is important, however, to nuance my claim about the joint status of this implied mind-set so that adherents in both groups can recognize their own orientation in what I am labeling a common worldview. At its core this worldview stresses unity and interdependence, but it also carries different valences of meaning for each group: for antitoxics the commitment to ecological unity can still emphasize attention to human needs in systemically unjust situations; for conservationists, the inherent equality between humans and nonhumans means that the question of human welfare is generally subordinated to, or at best addressed indirectly by, the task of preserving the integrity of whole bioregions. Both groups stress biotic interdependence, but for antitoxics this stress need not include the espousal of biotic equality in the Deep Ecology sense. My point is that rapprochement between the two movements need not entail agreement on all issues, including the question of biotic equality. As long as members of both organizations can recognize their tacitly

held (if not always explicitly articulated) commitment to the unity and integrity of all living things, then the ground has been laid for mediating the oppositional stances the two groups sometimes take in relation to the interests of the other group. If, therefore, this common ground can be secured—that is, a unitary vision of all organisms and entities as interdependent, if not always coequal members of an organic whole—then the response to the question whether environmental justice or wilderness recovery should be one's primary focus is a response that is tactical, strategic, and contextual—not deep-down philosophical. The problem, then, is not one of disagreement over the fundamental orientation needed to combat further ecocide but over the political focus and practical measures necessary for enacting this core vision of sustainable ecocommunities, human and nonhuman alike.

For those who suffer from the daily onslaught of toxins in the homes and places where people work and play, it is understandable why such communities seek first and foremost to liberate themselves from the killing fields of America's waste industries. To force such communities into the false choice of unsafe livelihoods or chronic unemployment is an unconscionable Catch-22 that results from aggressive industry efforts to dump toxins into neighborhoods that can least afford to house such hazards. Under these conditions it makes tactical sense for antitoxics groups first to labor against the unequal distribution of waste products in degraded human ecosystems close to home before turning to the equally important task of combatting the despoliation of wildland ecosystems in more remote locales. I am suggesting that this decision should be understood in strategic terms. It is not that antitoxics activists do not appreciate the basic connection between human health and the welfare of the biosphere—indeed, as I have argued here, the implied commitment to holism on the part of antitoxics necessitates just such an understanding, at least tacitly—but rather that the direct threat of killer toxins in their immediate neighborhoods should propel antitoxics to organize against these threats first and foremost.

By the same token, the imminent decline and eventual extinction of numerous species and habitats across North America—from large predators and shorebird populations to native forests and tallgrass prairies—understandably shoulders conservationists with a heavy burden for the long-term health and biodiversity of the continent. This burden should not and need not be regarded in opposition to the similar but distinct environmental burden of antitoxics; rather it is one among many counterpoints to the expansive medley of approaches one can take to restoring the harmony among all living things. For embattled citizens of toxic neighborhoods who are fighting the daily struggle for their very survival, it makes sense for such persons to take up the antitoxics cause as their own;

by the same token, for individuals and communities whose survival needs are not as immediately critical, it is equally understandable why such persons privilege the reclamation and rehabilitation of nonhuman nature and only consider the needs of human populations in relation to sustaining the health of the wider biosphere. In spite of these differences, I believe the bedrock commitment to the integrity and inviolability of life as such among antitoxic and biodiversity activists is the common spiritual vision that sustains both movements. While this common vision leads to different strategic interventions on behalf of healing the Earth, the reverence for life at the foundation of each group needs to be recalled amid the welter of the claims and counterclaims advanced by defenders and detractors of both movements.

The debate between antitoxics and conservationists may appear initially irresolvable. But when one considers the lived context of the environmental crisis as understood by the different disputants in the debate—for example, the daily stream of pollutants into minority urban neighborhoods, on the one hand, or the ongoing attenuation of biodiversity in wild habitats, on the other—then the debate becomes one over which tactics and strategies are effective in which particular circumstances and not over which moral claimant is right or wrong. *One's social location—urban/rural, rich/poor, black/white, and so forth—largely determines the appropriate response to the ecocrisis*. "Nature" is not the special preserve of wilderness activists alone; nature is the lived environment common to humankind and otherkind alike wherever both kinds live and work and love and eat. Nature is the lead-filled air breathed in by schoolchildren in toxic urban killing fields; nature is the pristine landscapes and watersheds that still survive in rural parks and wildlands. Whether antitoxics or neopreservationist in orientation, how one responds to the challenges presented by nature in its myriad forms is shaped by the particular places one inhabits. Thus the environmental orientations of both groups—groups whose core philosophy is similar but whose organizational approaches are often different—are equally legitimate and equally dependent upon the social, economic, and ethnic locatedness of the different participants in the common struggle for ecological wholeness and balance.

Finally, it is important to note that sustainable spirituality is not only valuable as a means of forging a common link among radical Green activists who are alternately justice oriented and biodiversity centered, respectively. In turn, it shines a bright spotlight on the exploitative growth philosophy of market individualism that has led to the environmental squalor that characterizes our own time. Even as sustainable spirituality hopes to mediate the dispute between both forms of Green populism by specifying the animating worldview behind each movement, it also seeks to arbitrate this understandable but unnecessary dispute by identifying

expansionist market forces as the real culprit in creating both human sacrifice zones and depleted wilderness areas. When everything is a potential commodity for buying and selling—including whole neighborhoods like Chester, Pennsylvania, or America's current and prospective wilderness reserves, as envisioned by the Wilderness Project—human poverty and biological poverty are the inevitable result. *When every organism or entity becomes commodified or thingified, then life and world lose their sacred character and become objects to be bought and sold.* When all life-forms, human and nonhuman, only have meaning as "products" or "resources" to enable the growth of the market state, the prospects for environmental sanity are meager indeed.

Economic competition breeds more competition, market growth breeds more growth, and the needs and values of fragile human and wilderness ecosystems have little hope for survival against these withering assaults. Growth-obsessed market liberalism driven by the "mindless 'laws' of supply and demand, grow or die, eat or be eaten" tears apart the social and ecological fabric that supports life in urban slums and rural bioregions alike.[36] Sustainable spirituality reminds both the advocates of environmental justice and wilderness protection that they share a core vision of healthy and diverse communities living together on a Green planet. This visionary role is the priestly function of sustainable spirituality: to inculcate in all who struggle for a Green future a common worldview and ethic that can sustain the combatants over the long term. But sustainable spirituality performs a prophetic role as well. It decries the rapacious power of the market to undermine our collective ability to grasp the inherent value and worth of Life itself wherever it is found in the biotic communities that make up our planet home. This unitive vision of a Green sacred Earth has the potential to renew and sustain antitoxics campaigners and neopreservationist activists alike in the long struggle against the regnancy of market liberalism—a regnancy that must be overcome if the prospects for life on the planet in the twenty-first century are to improve.

Notes

1. Bob Edwards, "With Liberty and Environmental Justice for All: The Emergence and Challenge of Grassroots Environmentalism in the United States," in Bron Raymond Taylor, ed., *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*, ed. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), p. 37.
2. "The Wildlands Project Mission Statement," *Wild Earth* 5 (Winter 1995/96): inside front cover, n.a.
3. See this discussion in Charlene Spretnak, *The Spiritual Dimensions of Green Politics* (Santa Fe: Bear, 1986), pp. 25–53; cf. Catherine L. Albanese, *Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 171–78.
4. Edwards, "With Liberty and Environmental Justice for All," p. 37.
5. See Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993), pp. 184–91.
6. See Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 162–67.
7. I have drawn this information from "Chester Decides It's Tired of Being a Wasteland," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 26, 1994; and Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living, "Environmental Justice Fact Sheet" and "Pollution and Industry in Chester's 'West End,'" pamphlets. I am grateful to Swarthmore College students Laird Hedlund and Ryan Peterson for making available to me their expertise and research concerning the Chester waste facilities.
8. Maryanne Voller, "Everyone Has Got to Breathe," *Audubon*, March–April 1995.
9. Editorial, "Chester a Proving Ground," *Delaware County Daily Times*, December 8, 1994; and "EPA Cites Lead in City Kids, Bad Fish," *Delaware County Daily Times*, December 2, 1994.
10. Maryanne Voller, "Everyone Has Got to Breathe," *Audubon*, March–April 1995; and Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living, "Environmental Justice Fact Sheet," pamphlet.
11. "_____," *Delaware County Times*, 1 August 1995.
12. Howard Goodman, "Politically Incorrect," *Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine*, February 11, 1996.
13. The phrase belongs to Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, p. 163.
14. Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living, "Pollution and Industry in Chester's 'West End,'" pamphlet.
15. Barbara Bohannan-Sheppard, "Remarks," Department of Environmental Resources Public Hearing, 17 February 1994, transcript.
16. Bill Clinton, Executive Order Number 12898, February 1995; cf. Gretchen Leslie and Colleen Casper, "Environmental Equity: An Issue for the 90s?" *Environmental Insight*, 1995.
17. The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, "Principles of Environmental Justice," in Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 634.
18. See, for example, Arthur Green, "God, World, Person: A Jewish Theology of Creation, Part I," *The Melton Journal* 24 (Spring 1991): 4–7.
19. On this point see my *Fragments of the Spirit: Nature, Violence, and the Renewal of Creation* (New York: Continuum, 1996), pp. 133–70.

20. See Tu Wei-ming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature," in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 67–78.
21. On Native American traditions see John A. Grim, "Native North American Worldviews and Ecology," in *Worldviews and Ecology*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, pp. 41–54; on neopagan resources see Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in American Today*, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), pp. 372–421.
22. For a collection of source material and analysis on Green religion, see Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth*; for general analysis also cf. David Kinsley, *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995); and Tucker and Grim, *Worldviews and Ecology*.
23. On Edward's spirituality see Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), pp. 1–26; cf. William A. Clebsch, *American Religious Thought: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 11–56.
24. I say radical conservationism in order to distinguish this movement from the reformist orientation of mainstream conservationism. The radicals seek to preserve maximum biological diversity in wilderness areas as their goal, while the reformists emphasize responsible development and resource management as their goals. Groups such as Earth First!, Greenpeace, and the European Greens belong in the radical grouping, while entities within the Group of Ten environmental organizations (for example, the National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation) can be grouped under the reformist label. For the differences here see Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, pp. 157–82.
25. See Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement," *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 95–100.
26. The articulation of this rule is quoted from Paul W. Taylor, *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 174; Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985), p. 68; and Tom Regan, "The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic," *Environmental Ethics* 3 (1981): 31–32.
27. In the vein of the noninterference maxim, Taylor provides a helpful list of five principles—self-defense, proportionality, minimum wrong, distributive justice, and restitutive justice—for resolving conflicting "claims" between human and nonhuman populations. He also provides a number of case-studies illustrating the relevance of these principles to different hypothetical conflict scenarios. See Taylor, *Respect for Nature*, pp. 256–313.
28. On the history of Earth First! see Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (New York: Harmony Books, 1990), Christopher Manes, *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1990); and Bron Raymond Taylor, "Earth First! And Global Narratives of Popular Ecological Resistance," in *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), pp. 11–34.
29. Edward Abbey, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), pp. 100–101.
30. "The Wildlands Project Mission Statement," *Wild Earth* 5 (Winter 1995/96): inside front cover, n.a.

31. On this point see Bron Taylor, "The Religion and Politics of Earth First!" *The Ecologist* 21 (November/December 1991): 258–66.
32. Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, p. 318.
33. Ibid., p. 197.
34. Roger S. Gottlieb, "Spiritual Deep Ecology and the Left: An Attempt at Reconciliation," in Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth*, 529; cf. a similar attempt to resolve the conflicts between Deep Ecology–inspired wilderness advocates and environmental justice proponents in Michael E. Zimmerman, "The Threat of Ecofascism," in this volume.
35. Definitions and etymologies for these terms are drawn from *The Oxford English Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).
36. The quotation is from Murray Bookchin, "What is Social Ecology?" in Michael E. Zimmerman, ed., *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993), p. 368. Much of my thinking about the relationship between environmental degradation and market liberalism has been inspired by the writings of social ecologists Bookchin, Janet Biehl, and John Clark. For a thoughtful counterpoint to this approach cf. the argument for a modified "social liberalism" in Avner de-Shalit, "Is Liberalism Environment-Friendly?" in this volume.