

THREE DIMENSIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

David Schlosberg
London School of Economics/Northern Arizona University

Prepared for the European Consortium for Political Research Annual Joint Sessions,
Grenoble, France, 6-11 April 2001. Workshop: The Nation-state and the Ecological
Crisis: Sovereignty, Economy and Ecology.

This is a DRAFT; please to not quote without permission of the author. Comments
welcome at d.schlosberg@lse.ac.uk or david.schlosberg@nau.edu.

Introduction

While much work has been done in the past few years on the definition of environmental justice (see especially Dobson 1998, 1999; Low and Gleeson 1998), this work has focused exclusively on theories of distributional justice, and on applying that framework of justice to nature, particularly with a goal of ecological sustainability in mind. My concern, however, is that conceptions of 'justice' can be understood much more broadly than they are in this recent environmental literature. Discussions of social justice in the last decade have been pushed beyond the 'distributive paradigm' into questions of recognition, difference, and political participation (Young 1990; Fraser 1997, 1998). I wish here to attempt an application of an expanded notion of social justice to an examination of environmental and ecological justice.

In examining the 'justice' of the environmental justice movement, both in the U.S. and internationally, I have found claims for justice to be about more than just distribution of environmental goods and bads – now or into the future. The issue of distribution is always present and always key, but it is not the only framework of justice referenced by these movements; issues of cultural recognition and political participation are crucial components of movements' definitions of environmental justice. A thorough notion of environmental justice would reflect both the theoretical discussions on expanding the definition of social justice to include recognition and participation *and* take note of a similar discourse in the movement. So this argument for defining environmental justice in a tripartite manner comes from a theoretical perspective, but also, importantly, from demands made by environmental social movements as well.

But I want to go a bit further, and also, apply this framework to ecological justice. In this sense, it is not enough to talk of the distribution of environmental goods and bads now and into the future; the framework around maldistribution must be examined, and issues of the recognition and participation of both future generations of humans and the natural world must be addressed as part of a larger definition of environmental and ecological justice. Certainly, there are key differences in applying an expanded notion of social justice to the question of environmental justice on the one hand (justice among humans on environmental issues) and ecological justice on the other (justice toward the natural world). But one of my central claims here is that the same language of social justice can be applied to both environmental arenas. While environmental justice movements use the expanded discourse of social justice – including both recognition and participation along with distributional issues in their broad demands – green political theory generally has addressed these additional issues outside of a framework of justice. The discursive shift in identifying issues of recognition and participation as issues of justice might be a way of bringing together the more human-based and nature-focused movements for environmental and ecological justice.

One of Dobson's key recent concerns has been the difficulty involved in crossing the discursive boundaries between social justice and environmental sustainability. He notes (Dobson 1999) the difficult relations between academic versions of justice and the movements for social and environmental justice on the ground, and argues (Dobson 1998) that the agenda and language used for a defense of the non-human world may be different from the agenda of distributive justice and sustainability. In other words, Dobson's recent picture is one of academics and activists of social, environmental, and ecological justice all speaking past one another. One of the things I hope to do here is articulate a definition of environmental and economic justice that allows such varied audiences to speak to, rather than past, one another.

This also moves toward one of the goals of a broad environmental political theory, identified by Eckersley (1992:70), to forge more links with other emancipatory struggles. Eckersley then suggested that an 'ecological emancipatory theory must accommodate all human emancipatory struggles within a broader, ecological framework.' I agree with the goal, but think the framework is not necessarily an ecological, or ecocentric one, but instead a notion of *social* justice that is applicable to both human and ecological struggles. Environmental and ecological justice are, first and foremost, issues of justice, not environment.

So within the present essay there is both a theoretical task – to explore recent arguments expanding the approach to social justice beyond the distributive – and a more critical, strategic goal – to explore the possibility of using the expanded language of justice to link environmental and other movements for justice. In making this argument, I will first address the theoretical arguments against the primacy of the 'distributive paradigm' (Young 1990), and then appraise existing theories of environmental justice in this light. The discourse of movements that specifically articulate demands for environmental justice will be examined for support of this expanded definition; then I will take on the more difficult task of applying concepts such as recognition and participation to nature – though much of this has been addressed outside the language of justice. Finally, I want to make both a theoretical and strategic argument about the viability of such a broad, diverse understanding of justice, and the possible benefits to environmental movements from such an adoption. Throughout, though admittedly only in a limited capacity, I also will reflect on the implications of this notion of justice for the subject of this workshop: the greening of the state.

The Recent History of Social Justice

Justice, in the realm of contemporary political theory, has been almost exclusively concerned with the question of the equity of the distribution of social rights and goods. Rawls' classic *A Theory of Justice*, for example, defines justice as 'a standard whereby the distributive aspects of the basic structure of society are to be assessed' (1971: 9). Brian Barry (1999) differentiates issues of justice from those of right and wrong along these lines – justice is referred to only in cases where some distributive consideration comes into play. Theories of justice, then, focus on the schemes and processes of a just distribution – the structure and rules guiding just institutions (impartial vs. substantive, or procedural vs. consequentialist), what is to be distributed, and what the principles governing those proposed distributions should be (needs, desert, or entitlement, for example, in the work of Miller 1976). Certainly, the literature and arguments here are rich – and ripe ground for a thorough examination of their relation to environment. I am going to avoid this ground in this essay, not only because such a study has already been done (Dobson 1998; Low and Gleeson 1998), but also because, more importantly for my approach here, the distributive paradigm of justice itself has come under scrutiny, and this opens up a realm of new questions.

As Iris Young has argued (1990: 1), ‘While distributional issues are crucial to a satisfactory conclusion of justice, it is a mistake to reduce social justice to distribution.’ In moving toward justice, issues of distribution are crucial, but incomplete. Young asks not only what distribution looks like, but also – crucially – what *determines* poor distributions. Distributional injustice, she argues, comes directly out of social structures, cultural beliefs, and institutional contexts. The central question regarding distributional justice is not, in the first instance, ‘what is the best model for distribution’, but instead ‘how does the current maldistribution get produced?’ If distributional differences are constituted, in part, by social, cultural, economic, and political processes, any examination of justice needs to include discussions of the structures, practices, rules, norms, language, and symbols that mediate social relations (Young 1990: 22). This does not mean that we ignore distributional issues, but rather include them in a broader understanding of justice.

Central to Young is an examination of oppression – the root of unjust distributions. Social justice means the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression. As Young argues, ‘any aspect of social organization and practice relevant to domination and oppression is in principle subject to evaluation by ideals of justice’ (1990: 15). Oppression, for Young, includes practices of exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. The social and institutional factors that produce oppression, and so distributive inequity, she argues, are often created by a lack of recognition of identity and difference and the exclusion from the political process this engenders. Again, this does not reject a concern for distribution as an element of justice, but complements it by starting with domination and oppression and examining all they construct: poor distribution, mis- or non-recognition, and political exclusion. Recognition, then, along with inclusion in the political process, become the keys to relieving both social oppression and distributional inequity.

Young is not alone in this attempt to expand the discourse of justice theory. Charles Taylor (1994) and Axel Honneth (1992, 1995) have each focused on the importance of recognition as an element of justice. As Honneth argues (1992: 187), the key is a link between recognition from others and our own human dignity. AThe language of everyday life is still invested with a knowledge B which we take for granted B that we owe our integrity, in a subliminal way, to the receipt of approval or recognition from other persons (p.188). A lack of recognition – demonstrated by various forms of insults, degradation, and devaluation at both the individual and cultural level – inflicts unjust harm. In this sense, Taylor argues, ‘recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need’ (1994: 26).¹ Lack of recognition is a harm, an injustice, as much as an inequitable distribution of goods.

Gould (1996) agrees that justice entails recognition, and like Young, links such recognition to political participation. She argues that ‘taking differences seriously in public life requires ... a radical increase in opportunities for participation’ (p. 181). All of these theorists note the direct link between a lack of respect and recognition and a decline in a person’s membership and participation in the greater community, including the political and institutional order. In focusing on the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression, Young (1996: 23) argues that justice must focus on the political process as a way to address a variety of injustices, including both the inequitable distribution of social goods and the conditions undermining social recognition. Democratic decision making procedures are then both an element of and a condition for social justice.

None of this, argues Young, crosses the liberal no-fly zone into particular pictures of the ‘good’. ‘The liberal commitment to individual freedom, and the consequent plurality of

¹ The human psychological element of this claim will become an issue as I attempt to apply recognition to nature later in the essay.

definitions of the good, must be preserved in any reenlarged conception of justice' (1990: 36). Social justice for Young refers to institutional conditions and the social norms that lead to exclusion from the community of justice. Theories of justice may strive to take place behind a veil of ignorance or impartiality, but actual injustices do not – hence the need to address the cultural and institutional aspects of justice in dealing with real policy issues. Again, this does not lead to a construction of a theory of the good, to any particular substantive notions of justice, or even to any particular substantive consequences; it simply expands what is to be examined and addressed in bringing the social practice of justice closer to some of the imagined thought experiments of political theory.

As for the state, a tripartite notion of justice doesn't diminish the state's role; in fact, it expands it into the participatory realm as well. But oppression generally, and recognition more specifically, requires a broader focus. One of Young's criticisms of theories of distributive justice is that they take all goods as static rather than as the outcomes of, or functions of, social relations and institutional processes. Distributive problems happen for a reason – some institutional, but others cultural, social, and/or symbolic – and those reasons and practices and norms must themselves be addressed. Additionally, recognition is not really a thing; it is a relationship, a social norm, embedded in social practice. Distribution focuses on the state as a neutral arbiter, but a state can't allocate recognition; a state could not simply 'distribute' recognition as it could other goods. A state can attempt to allocate participatory opportunities, which may assist in overcoming issues related to maldistribution, but it can not give recognition in the cultural arena.

Importantly, these developments in justice theory have been heavily influenced by the discourse and practice of social movements in the past few decades. Young, along with Nancy Fraser (1997, 1998), argue that there has actually been a shift in the claims of new social movements toward demands for recognition and participation as elements of justice. Calls for the recognition of group difference have, at times, eclipsed claims for social and economic equity, yet the two demands more often exist simultaneously in the same movement. One only has to recall the striking images of US civil rights activists in the 1960s marching while holding a simple and poignant message: 'I Am A Man'. Certainly, the call there went beyond justice as distribution, into the realm of recognition as an underlying and crucial demand of justice (and beyond a focus just on the state, into the social realm). It may seem improper, to some theorists, that Young and Fraser shift the focus away from the more traditional territory of distributive justice toward the more post-material demands of new social movements around race, gender, and sexuality. But this shift is, in many ways, not only due to the limits of the theoretical focus on the distributional paradigm, but also simply in response to the empirical reality of the demands of these movements. One of my own tasks is the examination of environmental justice in light of the demands of movements invoking the concept.

Academic Definitions of Environmental Justice

Unfortunately, advocates and practitioners of green theory and philosophy (with few exceptions) have not really picked up on either the calls of Young and Fraser or environmental justice movements to extend analyses of justice beyond the distributive realm. For much of the last two decades, most authors in the field have avoided an examination of the interface between justice and the environment, focusing instead on environmental values or ethics. More recently, however, authors such as Dobson, and Low and Gleeson, have begun to use the language of distribution to frame sustainability and environmental justice.

It is important, in beginning this examination, to note the relationship, and differences, between the ideas of Aenvironmental justice and Aecological≅ justice; the first is often used to discuss the relationship among people regarding environmental goods and bads,

while the second is used to discuss the relationship between people and the rest of the natural world (Low and Gleeson 1998). This dichotomy also fits both movements concerned with environmental issues: environmental justice, focused primarily (but not entirely) on human health, and environmental or green movements focused on our treatment of nature. Dobson (1998, 1999) attempts to move beyond this environmental/ecological dichotomy by examining the relationship between distributive notions of social justice and understandings of environmental sustainability. As Dobson argues, poverty is often identified with environmental degradation, and relative wealth determines access to environmental goods (or, at least, avoidance of bads). Where one ends up in the distribution of social justice determines, in some way, one's environment. In this way, Dobson argues, distributive justice is crucial for environmental justice on the one hand, and environmental sustainability and ecological justice on the other. This is a crucial link; but I want to supplement that link with a broader language of justice.

As thorough and comprehensive as Dobson's study is, he remains within the distributional paradigm of justice, and does not address key issues of how identity, recognition, and political process play into environmental justice. Instead, he makes rather clear his position that 'all justice is distributive' (1998: 17). All environmental injustice, then, is a matter of the maldistribution of goods and bads, including environmental ones. Dobson goes on to offer a comprehensive examination of possible relationships between the varied discourses of distributive justice and environmental sustainability. The comparisons and matchups are thorough and exhaustive, and the myriad relations make for a complex, though illuminating, matrix. He takes apart various elements of the distributive model proposed by a wealth of authors in political and social theory, examining the 'community' of justice (dispensers and recipients), what is distributed, the principles of distribution (utility, need, desert, entitlement, etc.), and whether the theory is partial or impartial, proceduralist or consequentialist, and particular or universal. Dobson then examines how these various notions combine with four different versions of environmental sustainability, and concludes that distributive justice and environmental sustainability are only compatible within particular (and limited) definitions and frameworks of both justice and sustainability.

These conclusions, though, regarding the limited possible relationships between theories of social justice and models of environmental sustainability, are limited by the sole focus on justice as distributional. By remaining in the distributive paradigm, Dobson misses important notions of justice, including those examined by the theorists discussed above and notions articulated under the broad banner of the environmental justice movement -- including academics and activists he cites in his text. I believe this needlessly limits the possible convergences between social justice and environmental sustainability. While Dobson is concerned that environmentalists and social justice activists often talk past one another, his own response is to limit the theoretical and discursive realms where the movements can meet. My own suggestion is to expand the discourse of environmental justice to enable talk that has previously gone 'past' to make sense to all the parties involved.

Like Dobson, Low and Gleeson (1998) take on an environmental analysis of various notions of distributive justice. Again, the examination is thorough and admirable, demonstrating once again that the issues that come out of the intersection of discussions of environment and justice are both quite challenging and interesting. Their goals differ a bit from Dobson, as they aim both to develop general principles of environmental justice, and to suggest cosmopolitan and global institutions charged with carrying them out. But I also find their efforts incomplete. Like Dobson, they resist a move beyond the distributive paradigm, and proudly so. The distribution of environmental quality is the core of environmental justice with the emphasis on *distribution* (Low and Gleeson 1998: 133). Again, I think the focus, and so the conclusions, are limited.

Reading either Dobson or Low and Gleeson on the question of environmental justice is frustrating, however, as they each acknowledge and discuss valid issues of justice which the distributive paradigm simply can not encompass. Dobson, for example, approvingly cites the work of Laura Pulido (1996). Pulido has focused on environmental justice struggles in the US southwest, and has argued that environmental movements of the poor focus not only on economic justice, but also on cultural identity and survival as an element of environmental justice. It may be true that the victims of environmental injustice encounter environmental problems through their economic inequality, but that economic inequality is also tied to cultural inequality. Pulido (p. 29-30) suggests that resolutions to environmental justice will be found not only through economic restructuring or redistribution, but through the alteration of power relations, cultural practices, and systems of meaning. While attempting to encompass the articulations and discourse of what Pulido calls *Asubaltern* environmentalism, \cong Dobson's adherence to the distributive paradigm simply can not cover challenges made by Pulido – and, as we will see, the environmental justice movement – in the realms of power, culture, and social meaning.

Dobson (1998: 235-6) makes explicit his agreement with Brian Barry's (1999) more 'narrow' conception of justice, and argues that issues of respect and affinity are *not* issues of justice, as they go beyond distribution. But, again, if it is necessary, as Young argues, to take into consideration institutional, cultural, and symbolic limits to attaining distributive justice, then even if we focus on weaker forms of environmental sustainability we still must examine why we treat both exposed human communities and nature as we do to cause the environmental inequities we have. The misrecognition of these communities, noted by the movement for environmental justice, and the misrecognition of nature, noted in a number of ecological discourses (social ecology, ecocentrism) are integral not only to condition of human communities and of nature generally, but also to this distributive approach to conceptions of sustainability as well. Any attempt to find common ground between sustainability and justice necessitates an examination and understanding of the misrecognition – not just maldistribution – of both those communities striving for environmental justice and the natural world.

Likewise, Low and Gleeson (1998) miss the opportunity to use their own concerns to move beyond a narrow conception of distributive justice. They acknowledge the contextual and cultural bases of the meanings of both of the terms *Aenvironment* \cong and *Ajustice* \cong (pp. 46, 48, 67), but can not bring this notion of cultural difference into their definition of either environmental or ecological justice. Justice is understood as a *Auniversal* moral relationship we share with other humans \cong but one that *Ahas* to be interpreted through culturally specific institutions which will vary \cong (p. 67). They seem to see the importance of acknowledging the variety of cultural contexts from which meaning is derived, in terms of both nature and justice. They also insist that autonomy is a key principle of justice (p. 199). In addition, the two principles of ecological justice developed by Low and Gleeson (p. 156)² only indirectly affect distribution. They are really about recognizing and respecting 1) the potential of nature and 2) the dependence of humans on the realization of this potential in nature. As much as Low and Gleeson insist that environmental and ecological justice are fundamentally distributive issues, their own discussions and principles get more at the underlying social and cultural *conditions* of environmental maldistribution.

Low and Gleeson are also quite attentive to the arguments regarding political participation. They certainly see the link between participation and empowerment, quote approvingly from some who have addressed the issue, speak positively of participatory and

² 'Every natural entity is entitled to enjoy the fullness of its own form of life,' and 'all life forms are mutually dependent and dependent on non-life forms'.

discursive procedures to attain environmental justice, and so seemingly understand the claim for a larger venue of justice. But they do not incorporate participation into their principles of ecological justice; rather, their proposed global cosmopolitan institutions leave little room for expanded participation, and would seem to diminish, rather than extend, political inclusion on environmental issues at the local level.

Still, I do not want to argue that *all* academic and theoretical notions of environmental justice remain wed solely to the distributive paradigm. There are examples of those who do attempt to integrate issues of recognition and, especially, political participation, and it should be no surprise that Iris Young is one of those examples. Hunold and Young (1998) apply Young's argument that decision-making and the political process are issues of justice to the case of hazardous waste citing. Their argument is that public deliberation of such issues transforms the understanding, and so resolution, of a problem. It is not only the most likely way to a distributively fair solution, but the process itself respects the interests and autonomy of people (p. 87). Robert Lake (1996) also insists, along the lines of Young, that one simply cannot have a thorough distributive justice without having justice in the *procedures* for producing that distribution. While Lake argues that the environmental justice movement in the U.S. is focused on distribution at the expense of participation, he notes the attention given to the issue of procedural equity in the movement.³ Along the lines of both Young and Lake, Hampton (1999) relates distributional equity with public participation. He argues that the promotion of environmental equity requires the provision of conditions and resources which enable communities to freely express their opinions (p. 165). Various involved publics, he notes, should be allowed to make their values explicit, and have the procedural opportunity to examine various differences and compatibilities. Ultimately, this public participation, based in various values, should have some real effect on policy; that is crucial in promoting a full sense of justice in a community.⁴

What is interesting about these examples of an expanded notion of the justice of environmental justice is that they come from academics who have combined theoretical and empirical work, with a keen attention to the issues and movements of environmental justice. Still, with a focus on participation, none of them make the explicit connection between the distributive and participatory realms of justice and issues of recognition and cultural identity. And none of these authors attempt to apply the same expanded framework of justice to nature, or ecological justice. I would like to go a bit further in bringing these three notions of justice together. First, I will examine the actual demands of movements that identify themselves as pursuing 'environmental justice'. The point there is that even if environmental justice is limited to the distributive in the theoretical realm, movements articulate a broader conception. I will then move on to the more difficult question of applying such a broad notion of justice to nature.

The 'Justice' of Environmental Justice Movements

For a movement that has the term 'justice' in its name, it is rather odd that there isn't really a thorough exploration of the term in the literature of the movement. There are bits of a definition in various writings, but very little directly on the subject. Rather, what one sees in the literature is a variety of framings of the issue, by a rich assortment of both academics and activists. Still, the argument here is that the movement embodies and represents understandings of justice as distribution, recognition, and procedure – all interpretations of

³ I think Lake underestimates this emphasis, however. See Schlosberg 1999, chapter 6, for a discussion of the U.S. movement's focus on participation and communication.

⁴ Otherwise, Hampton (1999: 173) argues that 'limited incorporation reduces participation programs to an inconsequential democratic drama' – a feeling often reported by environmental organizations involved in inauthentic attempts at inclusion.

justice appear throughout the literature. In Robert Bullard's first edited collection on the movement (Bullard 1993), for example, there is no systematic attempt to define the broad term 'environmental justice.' However, mentions of equity (in the distribution of environmental ills), recognition (with a focus on cultural and racial recognition) and participation (particularly authentic, as opposed to inauthentic or token, inclusion) are evident throughout the book. The same can be said for other collections on the topic (Bryant 1995; Bryant and Mohai 1992; Bullard 1994; Camacho 1998; Faber 1998; Hofrichter 1993).

Obviously, the environmental justice movement in the U.S. focuses on justice as an issue of distributional equity. The most often cited evidence of environmental injustice is in the realm of distribution -- specifically the inequitable share of environmental ills that poor communities and communities of color live with. Here, the call for 'environmental justice' focuses on how the distribution of environmental risks mirrors the inequity in socio-economic and cultural status. Studies which demonstrated such inequity, such as a 1983 United States General Accounting Office report and the 1987 study by the United Church of Christ, *Toxic Wastes and Race*, spurred the movement. Similar conclusions have been found in studies done with regard to hazardous waste disposal sites, various types of incinerators, polluted water, toxic releases from industry, lead poisoning, and other types of environmental dangers (see, for example, collections edited by Bryant and Mohai, 1992; Bullard 1993). In addition, studies have shown that agencies such as the EPA enforce environmental laws in poor communities and communities of color less stringently than they do in wealthy white communities (Lavelle and Coyle 1992). The bottom line here is that the 'unifying insight of environmental justice recognizes that neither the costs of pollution nor the benefits of environmental protection are evenly distributed throughout our society' (Edwards 1995: 36).⁵

Internationally, the equity argument is also central. Certainly, at the center of the recent related protests against global financial and trade institutions, against the globalization of the food system, and for indigenous rights -- all part of a larger global environmental justice movement -- is the issue of equity; economic or distributive injustice is a key and constant rallying cry. The most basic critique is that the currently favored model of development increases and exacerbates inequity, both between the North and the South and between elites and the impoverished in southern nations -- again, not just in economic goods, but in environmental goods and bads as well. Questions regarding who benefits and at whose expense, as well as a demand for the accounting of the full costs of trade to communities, workers, and nature, are key in the publications of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch (1999) and Global Exchange (2000) -- two of the major organizers of anti-WTO, IMF and World Bank protests. Likewise, in the movements for democratic food security and indigenous rights, criticism is leveled at systems and processes which deprive people of their land-based livelihood while enriching others, particularly large corporations based in the north. The central critique of the institutions of this new world economy is that they promote an inherently inequitable distribution of economic goods and related social and environmental bads. Social justice, environmental justice, and ecological justice are tied together in these critiques, as the poor suffer both social and environmental inequity and nature is drained of resources for economic gain. This distributional element of the injustice

⁵ There are numerous arguments about the accuracy of the equity claim, as some studies have attempted to show no racial or class bias. Differences in findings occur depending on the level of analysis (from state-level data down to census tract) and the nature of the environmental problem (toxic releases, incinerators, waste dumps, etc.). For a discussion of the criticisms of the inequity approach, and a response from one of the researchers on the United Church of Christ study, see Goldman 1996. For constructive overviews of the equity literature, see Szasz and Meuser (1997) and Lester and Allen (1999).

of economic globalization is clear enough, and much has been written on the issue.⁶ Calls for environmental justice, then, both in the U.S. and globally, focus on distribution; but that's just one dimension of justice.

Central to environmental justice struggles is an engagement of issues of individual and cultural meaning and identity. Pulido (1996: 25) argues that one key difference between the members of mainstream environmental organizations and members of environmental justice organizations in the U.S. is that the latter draw people who already exist as a social or spatial entity in some way, as workers, a class, or community. These communities insist on recognition as an integral part of their political demands. Bullard (1993: 7-8) argues the 'focus of activists of color and their constituents reflects their life experiences of social, economic, and political disenfranchisement.' Struggles for environmental justice 'are embedded in the larger struggle against oppression and dehumanization that exists in the larger society.' The bottom line here is that environmental justice activists often see their identities devalued and make a direct connection between the defense of their communities and the demand for respect. The movement, then, turns to recognition as a key component of the justice of environmental justice.

This question of recognition is discussed in the movement at both the personal and community level; misrecognition is experienced in both realms. The more personal issue comes up in numerous activist testimonials. Cora Tucker, an African-American activist, discussed her reaction at a town board meeting, when white women were addressed as AMrs. So and So, while she was addressed simply as ACora by the all-white, all male board. 'I mean it's not like you gotta call me Mrs. Tucker, but it was the respect' (quoted in Krauss 1994: 267). During the campaign to halt a proposed incinerator in South Central Los Angeles, women's concerns were often dismissed as irrational, uninformed, and disruptive. As Hamilton (1994: 215) argues, male city and corporate officials "used gender as the basis for discrediting women's concerns." Misrecognition and disrespect on the individual level is an everyday experience for these activists; again, authentic recognition is a key element of their demand for justice.

But importantly, it is not just an issue of recognition on an individual level; activists make a direct connection between the defense of their communities, cultures, and collective identities and the demand for respect. This is certainly central to Native American and other indigenous communities and activists. The politics of recognition raises questions about the lack of sovereign voice among indigenous peoples and about the manner in which their cultural identity has been misrepresented and disrespected. (Grim 1996). In one study of indigenous and Chicana women in the southwest U.S., threats to the environment are interpreted as threats to their families and communities. They see toxic contamination of their communities as systematic genocide (Bretting and Prindeville 1998: 149). As Pena argues (1999: 6), 'to the extent that we construct our identities *in place*, whenever the biophysical conditions of a place are threatened, undermined, or radically transformed, we also see these changes as attacks on our identity and personal integrity.'

The same issues are central to environmental justice globally. There are many references in the literature critical of the global economy to the danger of a growing global monoculture. This is not just a critique of the singular vision of neo-liberal globalization, but a lament for the present and coming loss of diverse cultures. The call for justice, in this instance, is a call for recognition and preservation of diverse cultures, identities, economies,

⁶ See, for example, Greider 1996, or essays in Mander and Goldsmith 1996, as well as the websites of the leading NGOs involved in the protests: <www.globalexchange.org> and <www.tradewatch.org>.

and ways of knowing. An anti-WTO declaration by the Indian group Peoples Global Action (1999) makes this position quite clear:

This unaccountable and notoriously undemocratic body called the WTO has the potential not only to suck the sweat and blood of the masses of the two-thirds of the world, but also has started destroying our natural habitats, and traditional agricultural and other knowledge systems developed over centuries and our cultural diversity by converting us into objects... (Peoples Global Action 1999).

Clearly, a notion of environmental justice here encompasses distributive and cultural recognition on both social and ecological issues. Participation is also key. A statement by The Coordinating Body for the Indigenous People=s Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) makes clear the demand that both governments and NGOs must recognize the existence of the population= indigenus to the region (quoted in Conca and Dabelko 1998: 338). COICA=s statement is full of demands for cultural recognition and respect, autonomy and respect for indigenous laws and practices. The principal point here is that part of the injustice wrought by globalization is a lack of recognition, and so a destruction, of various cultural identities, including cultures= ties to the land.⁷

So it is key that equity is not the only issue of justice addressed by various groups and movements identifying with the call for environmental justice. Recognition is a crucial, and obvious, aspect for many in the environmental justice movement both in the U.S. and globally; and the defense of community is nothing less than a matter of cultural survival. And the response to this is not solely a focus on redistribution, or even on the demands for recognition; it is empowerment and voice, which brings us to the third notion of justice.

Without a doubt, the demand for political participation in decisions governing communities is central to the environmental justice movement. The construction of inclusive, participatory decision-making institutions -- a "place at the table," or equal, informed, respectful participation -- is at the center of environmental justice demands. Benjamin Chavis includes the history of excluding people of color from the mainstream environmental groups, decisionmaking boards, commissions, and regulatory bodies= in his definition of the phrase Environmental racism= (Chavis 1993: 3). In Freudenberg and Steinsapir=s study of the U.S. movement (1992: 31), the first and major shared perspective across the grassroots is the Aright of citizens to participate in making environmental decisions B [with an] emphasis on process as well as content of decision making.= Gould, Schnaiberg, and Weinberg (1996: 4) state that 'these groups are attempting to exercise their rights as citizens. They seek to have some say in the local development of their communities, in order to ensure that the quality of their lives will be protected.' Capek=s environmental justice Aframe= (1993: 8) includes a demand for accurate information, respectful and unbiased hearing of claim and democratic participation in deciding the future of contaminated communities. Bullard (1994: xvii) stresses grassroots groups are simply 'demanding a shared role in the decision-making processes that affect their communities. They want participatory democracy to work for them.' In the Principles of Environmental Justice, activists' calls for

⁷ Vandana Shiva applies this same critique to the related issue of the globalization of the food production system. Shiva (1997: 2000) notes the crucial link between food diversity and cultural diversity; many cultures are defined by their particular local diet B for example, some are rice-based, others cereal-based or millet-based. But globalizing the food supply destroys local production and market practices, and local cultural identity suffers. Another important cultural injustice of the globalization of the food system is the destruction of the current localized culture of farming, to be replaced by a singular, corporate, and highly engineered process. The complaint is that it is not just a livelihood that is to be destroyed (and a sustainable one at that), but various regional peoples= and culture=s ways of life. For Shiva, globalization creates Adevelopment= and Agrowth= by the destruction of the local environment, culture, and sustainable ways of living.

procedural equity were put on par with other demands.⁸ And in the international realm, in particular in reference to the globalization model of the WTO et al and the exclusion of indigenous peoples, a fundamental critique focuses on the relationship between social, cultural, and ecological devastation and the lack of democratic participation in the construction and ongoing processes of the institutions of globalization.

The lack of participation in environmental decision-making comes, in very large part, from the limitations of race, class, and gender. These present a range of structural obstacles – including less access to political, legal, scientific, and other resources – to full participation in environmental decisions. Environmental justice activists call for policy-making procedures that encourage active community participation, institutionalize public participation, recognize community knowledge, and utilize cross-cultural formats and exchanges to enable the participation of as much diversity as exists in a community. Obviously, through these principles and policy suggestions, a shared and respected role in the decision-making process is a key demand of the movement. Coming to voice, and to participation, is central to environmental and social justice, as it breaches a range of structural and cultural obstacles – including cultural degradation, oppression, and lack of political access.

The common objection raised to this expansion of the environmental justice discourse here is usually articulated like this: ‘Members of environmental justice organizations desire recognition and demand participation to be sure, but they would trade them in a heartbeat for distributional equity.’ The problem with this response is that it simply assumes that (re)distributional equity can occur within existing social, economic, and institutional conditions. The point of including issues of recognition and participation in a larger theory of justice is that distributional equity simply *can not* come about otherwise. Environmental justice groups *will never have the opportunity* to trade recognition for a better distribution of environmental bads; such a distribution will not come about without satisfaction of the broader elements of justice: recognition and participation in environmental decision-making.

As for the state, responses to calls for environmental justice, if any, are usually distributional in tone. The first major legislative proposal in the US on environmental justice, sponsored by then-Senator Al Gore, was solely distributive in its analysis and proposed solutions (though it was never passed by the then-Democratic Congress). Likewise, the EPA’s first attempt to come to grips with the environmental justice issue (USEPA 1992) focused exclusively on the issue of distribution of environmental risks. Both of these policy moves were criticized by many in the US environmental justice community for not taking into account racial discrimination (the issue of cultural recognition and disparagement) and for not including the input of many academics and activists who had been working on the environmental justice issue for years (issues of both recognition and, more directly, participation). The point here is that a state response to environmental justice, if it is only couched in distributional terms, can not fully address the multi-hued notion of environmental justice.

But even state responses that attempt to address other aspects of justice often fall short. Again in the US, environmental justice activists have been less than satisfied with participation offered them by, for example, the EPA in its advisory committees on environmental justice. Just because one is given some sort of A voice ≅ does not mean that they will be satisfied with a process that continues to deny them real – equitable – results. Likewise, a A place at the table ≅ will be welcomed, but will be seriously questioned if that

⁸ The Principles include demands that "public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples," "the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation," and "the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination for all peoples" (Lee 1992: xiii-xiv).

participation does not result in a real change in the level and quality of community recognition in the development of environmental policy.

Policy-makers and agencies need to understand that simply providing one element of justice B some studies of distributional inequity, some recognition of activists and communities by validating their issues, some limited notion of participation by including communities in policy discussions B will ultimately be unsatisfactory. Arguments arise that the policy-makers or agencies are merely engaging in inauthentic strategies to buy time and distract the movement; a more strongly worded critique would be that these political entities are giving a certain level of (ultimately inauthentic) recognition and/or inclusion in order to defuse the movement and, ultimately, deny them distributional equity, real recognition, and/or real participation.

The environmental justice movement uses the broad, rather than narrow, language of social justice – incorporating distribution, recognition, and participation. It is a quite straightforward task to look at definitions of social justice, examine the movement's aims, language, literature, and actions and define 'environmental justice' in broad terms. In fact, the EJ movement simply demonstrates what Young and Fraser, among others, have argued: that movements for social justice articulate justice in terms which include not only distribution, but cultural identity, recognition, and participation in political processes which affect them. It is one thing, however, to apply the expanded notions of social justice to a movement with primarily social concerns – especially as the actors within these movements make clear their broad position. But I think it is also possible to extend these extra-distributional notions of justice to the natural world as well as the social.

Recognition and Ecological Justice

This part, the extension of justice in terms of recognition and participation to nature, is a bit more difficult, as I don't immediately have the assistance of the advocates of ecological justice using these terms. In fact, the advocates for ecological justice on the theoretical level stick closely to the distributional paradigm, and advocates for the recognition of nature and ecological democracy articulate their position outside the language of justice.

Iris Young's argument in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* is fairly straightforward. Theories of distributive justice might very well offer models and procedures by which distribution may be improved, but none of them thoroughly examine the underlying social, cultural, and institutional conditions underlying maldistribution in the first place. Following this, as for environmental justice, there are reasons for poor distribution of environmental goods and bads, and reasons for our lack of attention of extending distributive justice to nature and future generations. If, as Young argues, domination and oppression should be the starting points for a concept and study of justice, we should begin there for a study of ecological justice as well. One element of an integrated environmental justice argument here is that the lack of recognition in our understanding and treatment of nature is at the heart of such domination, and so distributive environmental problems. Ecological justice, i.e. doing justice to nature to allow the sustainability of natural capital, the protection of irreplaceable nature, or the protection of natural 'value' or processes of nature generally,⁹ demands an extension of recognition to nature. As with social justice generally, we need to examine structures, mores, norms, language, symbols that mediate our relation with nature. Much of this has been done in the vast literature of green theory – certainly most green theorists have argued that there is an institutionalized and culturally embodied mis- or

⁹ These are Dobson's three basic working definitions of sustainability.

malrecognition of nature.¹⁰ But this has not been done from within a framework of justice, and not with an aim of developing a reconstructive theory of ecological justice.

There are, however, a couple of hurdles to jump before extending notions of either justice or recognition to nature. First is the rather obvious question of whether ‘justice’ is something that even can be extended to nature. Dobson (1998) has thoroughly covered this question, but I do need to justify this next step – in essence, justify the concept of justice *to* nature, *ecological* justice, as something other than an oxymoron. Most theorists of justice, from Rawls to Barry, dismiss the notion that justice can be extended beyond the human community. The common argument is that justice and injustice are only applicable to relations among creatures considered moral equals. For Barry (1999), the questions regarding human treatment of nature are ones of right and wrong, but not of justice. Sustainability can be addressed using the language of distributive justice, however, because the issue is our treatment of future generations of humans – our moral equals. Dobson (1998: 172) notes that these sentiments of leaving nature and animals out of traditional theories of justice (including those of Rawls, Nozick, and Walzer) seem to come more out of a *desire* to exclude nature, and not from sound theoretical reasoning, and those reasons usually center around a fear of giving nature an equal moral footing. I do not think that examining the misrecognition of nature, in exploring the extension of social justice to nature, necessitates putting animals or nature itself on equal moral footing with human beings. Leopold (1949), one of the key founders of contemporary environmental thought, viewed nature as an extension of our own moral community, to which we have obligations; but, as Sagoff argues (1993: 86-7) Leopold held this view without advocating an equal right for flora or fauna, or an egalitarian moral system within nature. Instead, this form of recognition simply extends a concern for, and a recognition of, a nature which is our community, context, and home. To say that this nature should be a part of our moral considerations is not to say all the critters within it have equal moral worth.

The recognition of nature is the pretext, or the context, necessary for a better distribution of environmental goods and bads. In this sense, extending recognition to nature is not unlike extending recognition with regard to issues of gender, culture, or sexuality. Key to understanding injustice in these areas is a recognition of the social norms, language, and mores that mediate the context of those who are culturally denigrated, and so less well off in the scheme of justice. Jodi Dean’s notion of ‘accountability’ is useful here; in Dean’s framework this means making people realize that they are accountable in the construction of the identity of others. The view here is a basic Foucauldian one: we, our institutional contexts, and here I would add our conception of nature, are constructed through relationships and discourse, both direct and indirect. While Dean’s focus is on gender and sexuality, the ‘accountability’ she describes is certainly useful in discussing a recognition of nature:

My demand for recognition, then, calls upon you to address the context and relationships in which ‘we’ are formed. I am asking you to take responsibility for your complicity in the ways in which I am excluded and devalued. You must be accountable, admitting your privilege and the costs at which it has been bought. (Dean 1996: 52).

I am not attempting to anthropomorphize nature here by having it take on Dean’s words, but the effect is crucial: what nature is, and how it has been treated, is maintained in part by our own – and I mean here individual, cultural, and institutional – complicity in the construction of the relationship with nature. Becoming accountable for that treatment, and recognizing

¹⁰ This is obviously common ground for Bookchin’s (1986) radicalized understanding of nature, as well as the ecocentric approach.

both our own role in, and alternatives to, this construction, are important components of recognition. Still, and crucially, such recognition does not require us to give a moral equality to nature or its components; it only demands we give attention to the reasons for, and processes of, the degradation of the natural world.

Another articulation of this difficult hurdle, I think, is the attempt to simply find a *grounds* for extending recognition to nature. Taylor and Honneth, as I discussed previously, are key proponents of extending a concern for recognition into a conception of justice. But both authors focus thoroughly on the individual *psychological* aspects of the need for recognition. For Honneth (1992: 190-1), there are three forms of disrespect, and all have an inherent psychological dimension. First is physical disrespect, where physical abuse and the loss of the autonomous control of one's body do damage to one's basic confidence. Second, structural exclusion from social rights leads to a loss of feeling of self-respect. And third, a cultural denigration of one's social group keeps an individual from attributing social value to their own qualities. All misrecognition then, even systemic social and cultural domination, is most importantly a psychological loss to individuals. The idea here, for both Honneth and Taylor, is that self-worth comes from recognition by others; hence the need for reciprocal recognition or intersubjective recognition. Extending such a concern to nature would obviously necessitate a subjectivity in nature many wish to avoid, I think for good reasons. But this psychological need can not be applied to nature, as recognition from humans is not a vital need of nature in terms of its self worth.

Thankfully, Fraser dismisses the focus on the individual psyche offered by Taylor and Honneth, and offers a framework applicable to nature. Her more structural argument is that misrecognition is 'a *status injury* whose locus is social relations, not individual psychology' (1998: 25). Fraser (p. 7) offers three different forms of misrecognition not necessarily tied to the psychological status of the victim: cultural domination, non-recognition (being rendered invisible), and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public and cultural representations). None of these demand a focus on the psychological effects of the victim, but rather force attention on the institutional, cultural, and symbolic norms and practices which spawn such misrecognition. Certainly, we can see nature being subject to all three of *these* forms of misrecognition. Here the key to justice is misrecognition on the part of a society, not the psychological affects on the particularly affected subjects.

Fraser's focus is on gender, but the language used to legitimate recognition concerns works as well for nature. Just as redressing gender injustice requires attention to both distribution and 'the status order' of contemporary society, so does redressing environmental and ecological justice. The remedy for the injustice of misrecognition in the realm of gender, argues Fraser is cultural or symbolic change: the revaluing of disrespected identities. Fraser admits that this may involve wholesale transformation of societal patterns of representation and communication. 'Overcoming misrecognition, accordingly, requires changing institutions and social practices' (Fraser 1998: 26). The point here is to make the same argument with regard to nature.

There are really two different directions to go in constructing a recognition of nature, both of which have been addressed by green theorists (though not within the context of justice). These are, generally, 1) a focus on the physical integrity of nature and the recognition of nature's own processes of unfolding potential, evolution, and growth; and 2) a focus on the recognition of the importance of the respect of nature to present and future human communities. A recognition of the physical integrity of nature can be based on a respect for nature's bodily integrity, the recognition of the potential in nature to develop, a respect for autopoiesis, and/or a respect for agency in nature (though not subjectivity or rationality). This is certainly the more ecocentric and bioregional argument, in particular the

respect for autopoietic, or self-organizing and self-correcting systems (see, in particular, Eckersley 1992; McGinnis 1998).

Honneth makes the claim in his discussion of recognition that physical abuse is one key form of disrespect, and the absence of physical abuse is one element of recognition and, so, of justice. Clearly, we can expand this notion of the recognition of physical integrity to nature, so that an abuse of that integrity, or a harm to the ‘body’ of nature, is an element of disrespect and malrecognition. The language of a right to physical integrity here, crucial to Honneth’s discussion of recognition, is brought in for the same basic reason for both human and natural physical integrity: the respect of agency and a respect for the development of potential. Sagoff (1990) also uses the term ‘dignity’ in discussing something that we share with environment; he argues that this helps us define our relations with current and future generations, and with nature itself. In essence, this is all embodied in Low and Gleeson’s (1998: 156) first principle of ecological justice: ‘every natural entity is entitled to enjoy the fullness of its own form of life’. We can see recognition, then, as necessary for the unfolding or realization of the potential of nature – both human and non-human. This form of recognition of nature requires a move away from a solely individualistic notion of recognition to a more broad ecological one applicable to habitats and ecosystems: the recognition of the potential of a landscape or an ecological community to flourish.

But the recognition of nature can come from a more human-centered perspective. Even reverent bioregionalists such as Jim Dodge (1981) see such a recognition as, ultimately, in the self-interest of people. ‘To understand natural systems is to begin an understanding of the self, its common and particular essences – literal self-interest in its barest terms. ... When we destroy a river, we increase our thirst, ruin the beauty of free-flowing water, forsake the meat and spirit of the salmon, and lose a little bit of our souls.’ Hayward (1998) makes a much more direct argument that respect for nature comes directly out of a respect for ourselves and each other. Hayward argues that humans have an interest in self-respect and integrity which provides reasons to respect non-human beings and their environments. If we have an interest in respecting ourselves and others, we don’t have a reason to withhold that respect from the rest of nature. We are part of nature, and it is part of our human interest to integrate ecological concerns. Basically, Hayward argues for a concern for nature based on rational, enlightened, and expanded self-interest rather than a belief in the intrinsic value of nature.

For Hayward, enlightened self-interest gets at the fact that ‘others’ interests play a part in shaping one’s own interests, and indeed that others’ interests are partly constitutive of them’ (1998: 67). Solidarity goes a step further, into ‘expanding one’s own sense of self and world’ (ibid.); this doesn’t mean abandoning self-interest, but instead recognizing the mutual constitution of interests with others. Solidarity involves justice and care and develops when one group is oppressed and others feel ‘they want to side with those involved, take their part, and make the cause their own’ (p. 77). In this, a ‘more universalistic sense of justice is integral to solidarity’. Hayward’s argument is that this recognition of nature, as part of a larger community of justice, involves a solidarity with nature that does not require having to defend an ecocentric position.¹¹

¹¹ There are some problems with this general expansion as a path to recognize nature. Plumwood (1993), for one, argues that such a tactic fails to recognize the importance of particularity. This sort of ethical universalization is incomplete, she argues, as it does not necessarily help us develop specific moral practices. Plumwood’s argument is that a care for particular others is essential to a more generalized morality. ‘With nature, as with the human sphere, the capacity to care, to experience sympathy, understanding, and sensitivity to the situation and fate of particular others, and to take responsibility for others is an index of our moral being’ (Plumwood 1993: 288). The general expansion of recognition is not enough for Plumwood; it must be tied to the practice of particular care and respect.

Finally, before moving on to discuss just what recognition of nature entails, there is the question of whether such a process violates liberalism's concerns. As with Young's general argument regarding recognition, the extension of the community of justice to nature does not necessarily cross the liberal no-fly zone into a notion of the good. The basic idea of the 'preservation' of nature can be seen as a 'good', and so as a litmus test of justice could be labeled illiberal. But including the natural world in the community of justice, and in the deliberation of justice, remains procedural. Justice flows from recognition and discourse, in particular recognition and discourse that attempts to undermine past institutionalized dominations. Those address the procedural conditions for justice, not particular pictures of the good. Still, and admittedly, the range of available and acceptable pictures of the 'good life' would certainly be narrowed, just as it was for some when recognition and the franchise was expanded to blacks, women, the colonized, and indigenous peoples. But there is a key difference between reducing available notions of the good life in order to protect the possibility of justice for all, and insisting on particular notions of the good.¹² Justice extended to nature may do the former, but certainly not the latter.

Ecological Democracy and Environmental Justice

Justifying recognition of nature is one thing; figuring out what to do about it in a participatory context is another. Certainly, we can read the exclusion of nature, in terms of its oft invisibility in policymaking, as an institutional impediment to doing justice to nature. As Fraser (1998: 26) argues, when 'patterns of disrespect and disesteem are institutionalized, for example, in ... social practices and group mores that structure everyday interaction, they impede parity of participation, just as surely as do distributive inequities... A society whose institutionalized norms impede parity of participation is morally indefensible, *whether or not it distorts the subjectivity of the oppressed*' (italics in original). Again, the criticism of such an exclusion does not depend on psychological harm. In this case, a harm to the physical integrity of nature, or a violation of nature's agency, as a result of exclusion, is enough to warrant reflection on the institutional structures that lead to these violations. As Young argues in the case of social justice, the exclusion from the process of decision-making and governance is itself an injustice, not only because it is a result of the lack of recognition and cultural dismissal of the party involved, but also because it is that exclusion that brings about distributional inequity. 'Put this way, the connection between democracy and justice appears circular. Ideal processes of deliberative democracy lead to substantively just outcomes because the deliberation begins from a starting-point of justice' (Young 2000: 34).

There are two issues that need to be brought into political discussions in order to do justice to nature. First, how are we to bring the recognition of the variety of institutional and cultural biases against nature – those that lead to distributional problems (including sustainability) and those regarding non-recognition that lead us to make nature invisible – into environmental decision-making? And second, how are we to bring nature itself into democratic discourse?

As for the first, more open and participatory structures of environmental decision-making are key. Much has been written on the topic¹³, and I see no need to restate arguments here. The only addition I make here is a conceptual one: such models of environmental democracy are not only key aspects of expanded democratization, but of expanded notions of environmental justice as well. I think it is key here that movements for environmental justice insist on participatory and procedural mechanisms to address injustice. Williams and

¹² See also Dobson's (1998: 202) discussion of this point with regard to nature.

¹³ Starting not only with Dryzek (1996, 2000), but also Mason (1999), Plumwood (1998), Williams and Matheny (1995), and the edited collections by Doherty and deGues (1996), Lafferty and Meadowcraft (1996), and Mathews (1996).

Matheny's 'dialogic model' of social regulation (1995), for example, includes access to usable information, a broad pattern of opportunities for citizen participation, and policy-making institutions that can adjust to the ambiguity and difference in communities. Such recognition and participation is not only an argument for expanded ecological democracy, but is also an integral element in achieving justice as well. The point is not only the basic democratic one of involvement in decisions which affect you, but also the larger discursive point of expanding discourse in both political and civil society so that different understandings and experiences of the environment, and in this case nature as well, are heard and intersubjectively recognized in a democratic context. In other words, participation is aimed not only at strategic, instrumental, ends such as policy decisions, but at getting diverse understandings recognized by others. In recent attempts at 'collaborative' environmental decision-making, even policy 'failures' (where there is no decision) are intersubjectively successful. Participants often leave saying they don't *agree* with others, but understand their positions, and the reasons for those positions, much better and more sympathetically (Robar 1998). Such political engagement encourages the recognition of difference, and, ideally, the crafting of policy with such difference in mind.

But diverse human participation is not necessarily the only end of environmental democracy. As Dryzek argues, institutional participation could, in a sense, be extended to a nature experiencing an infringement of physical integrity or potential. This is where Dryzek's notion of ecological communication becomes not just an element of ecological democracy, but of ecological justice as well. In the last decade Dryzek has argued for the recognition of agency in nature; he suggests extending communication to entities that can act as agents even though they lack subjectivity (Dryzek 1996: 20). If we accept nature as an agent, one that has its physical integrity and 'bodily' processes respected, we should also listen to its 'speech'. Dryzek argues that we should listen to the 'signals' emanating from nature and treat these signals from the natural world with the same respect as we do signals coming from human subjects (1996: 21). Disruptions to the physical integrity of nature, especially, should catch our attention – things such as global warming, species extinction, droughts, BSE, etc.¹⁴ This certainly gets away from the presumed rationalistic prejudice of deliberative democracy to other forms of communication (hence Dryzek's insistence on 'discursive' rather than 'deliberative'). Just as Young (1996) wants to expand such discourse to include forms of communication other than the blatantly purposive/argumentative, Dryzek accepts something as non-rational as 'signals' from nature. Dryzek, of course, is not suggesting the actual presence of nature in democratic conversations; the call is for an expansion of the politics of ideas, brought about by institutional openness, rather than a politics of presence.

Following the point made above, such discourse allows for the presentation – and intersubjective recognition – of different points of view, including interpretations of nature's signals. In one public hearing I attended, regarding the fill of wetlands for the construction of a semiconductor manufacturing plant, a woman gave her testimony dressed as an endangered Fenders Blue butterfly, which lived in the wetland. The testimony was poetic, and described the affect of the construction and the everyday work of the plant on the life of the butterfly. The audience – quite large and rowdy given the controversy over the construction – was rapt, and a strong point was made. Unfortunately, the testimony was being given to a Colonel in

¹⁴ Global warming, for example, is demonstrated not just in atmospheric studies, but also by a slew of individual 'signals' coming from nature – songbirds returning earlier, butterfly species moving north, insect eggs hatching earlier, colors of insects lightening, in addition to weather related issues such as increased rainfall in certain areas and, generally, the earlier arrival of spring. All of these individual global 'warnings' adds up to global warming. Additionally, I should note the past year in Britain has entailed one 'signal' after another that things are amiss in our relations with nature – including not just the increased rainfall and flooding, but also the spread of BSE and Foot and Mouth diseases.

the Army Corp. of Engineers, who was visibly uncomfortable and had no way of incorporating the testimony into his decision-making process, which was based entirely on whether or not the plan violated the Clean Water Act. The point here is that processes which are more amenable to the inclusion of such testimony – participatory mechanisms which meet the butterfly criteria – can bring recognition of both nature’s signals and various human interpretations of them.¹⁵ Again, this is not the place to get into discussions of just what discursive environmental democracy would look like, but I think it is crucial that both environmental justice and ecological justice have an integral element of the inclusion of affected communities – human and natural – in democratic discourse and decision-making.¹⁶

Now none of this requires us to halt all detrimental interactions with nature. Certainly, we can and will *affect* the potential of nature, just as we limit, or redirect, our own potential. The point is not necessarily the interference with nature, but with its ultimate integrity and agency. The level and quality of that interference is crucial, but it is an issue most properly dealt with through reflective and open discourse – reflective and open to nature’s signals as well as the diversity of human ethical and cultural perspectives. As in choices about how high university tuition levels will be, what level of public assistance should be given the poor, what level of health care available in a society, or what punishment for crimes entails, these decisions will affect the potential of the agents involved. But the key is that they be democratically assessed within a participatory framework – one that begins with recognition and makes choices with full cognizance of the effects. This obviously gets at the crucial role of participatory and discursive structures in achieving just ends; but it also demonstrates that this type of environmental and ecological justice is purely procedural, and the various possible ‘goods’ are discursively engaged in a democratic process.

Pluralistic Justice: Unity without Uniformity

As I mentioned earlier, one of the things Dobson concludes after his exhaustive study of environmental justice (1998: 239) is that environmental activists and justice activists often speak past – rather than to – each other. One of my own goals here is to develop a more broad conception of environmental and ecological justice so that environmental justice activists and those concerned with ecological justice can speak clearly to one another using the same language. Dobson (following Norton 1991) argues that a notion of sustainability based in the human interests of future generations will forge a coalition between anthropocentrists and ecocentrists, as well as others outside the environmental movement. But I think a broader notion of justice, beyond both the distributive and human interests, will allow for even broader alliances. I agree with Dobson that both justice and natural sustainability have multiple meanings, and can be pursued and related in multiple ways; I just don’t see that as the hindrance that Dobson does. Unlike Dobson, I think radical ecological demands *can* be couched in terms of justice. I want to expand the notions of justice in the environmental conversation theoretically, in order to legitimate a broader discursive alliance among groups pursuing social, environmental, and ecological justice in different ways.

¹⁵ Likewise, the presence of sea turtles at the Seattle WTO protests in 1999 demonstrated the exclusion of nature from the deliberations.

¹⁶ In this case, however, nature is included through proxy. But proxies are already commonly used in liberal decision-making, such as those that act on behalf of children’s or prisoner’s rights. Even existing generations – the young, but not yet ‘communicatively competent’ – are taken into consideration through the proxy of interest groups. Future generations, which can’t even send ‘signals’ as nature can, may ‘participate’ by having proxies take their concerns into present discourse; we can make the same argument for nature.

Further, I want to follow Fraser and Young in arguing that such an alliance is theoretically justified.¹⁷

The whole point of Nancy Fraser's forays (1997, 1998) into the examination of various justice claims – distribution, recognition, and participation – is to show that they are not antithetical, but in fact integrally related. She argues that the supposed split between 'social justice' articulated in distributional terms on the one hand, and 'cultural politics' articulated as identity politics on the other, represents a false dichotomy. Neither a politics of redistribution or a politics of recognition will, in isolation, suffice to remedy injustice. 'In general, then, one should roundly reject the construction of redistribution and recognition as mutually exclusive alternatives' (1998: 23). Likewise, Honneth (1995: 165) argues that as crucial as a politics of recognition is as an element of justice, it should only *extend*, and not supplant, the notion of justice as distributive. And Young, of course, insists that the relationship between justice as equity and justice as recognition is played out in the procedural realm, as both hinder the ability of individuals and communities (including, we add here, nature) to participate.

The point here is that these various injustices are intricately linked, and must be addressed simultaneously. Any idea of a distributional just treatment of nature will simply not come about without addressing both the issues of recognition and procedure. Justice, then, requires not just an understanding of unjust distribution and a lack of recognition, but, importantly, the way the two are tied together in social, cultural, and political processes. These notions of justice are not competing notions, nor are they contradictory or antithetical. Claims for justice, then, need to be integrated into a comprehensive political project. I think the environmental justice movement represents such a project, and also that the language of justice allows for an even more comprehensive conception of environmental justice, as well as a more comprehensive environmental movement, encompassing both environmental and ecological justice.

For Peter Wenz (1988) pluralistic notions of justice are fine on a theoretical level. Like Dobson, Wenz explored numerous versions of distributive justice with an eye toward their application in the environmental arena; I think his point here stands even when extended beyond the distributive. Environmental justice, he argues, is understood in numerous ways, depending on context. Wenz (p. 313) sees value in the fact that we are attracted to using one theory in one kind of situation and a different theory in a different kind of situation.≡ He argues that we need a pluralistic theory of environmental justice that enables us to appeal in a consistent manner to principles featured in a variety of theories, even when those principles can not all be reduced to or derived from a single master principle.≡ In this, Wenz resurrects a classic notion of pluralistic philosophy, best articulated by William James. For James (1909), pluralism is not just a validation of difference, but a recognition that difference may never come together into a coherent, single, social unity. Connections can be made in the pluralistic universe without recourse to an insistence on uniformity; the result is what James calls a *multiverse*≡ rather than a universe – unity without uniformity.¹⁸

Like Wenz, though with a focus on the existing practice of the environmental justice movement, David Harvey alludes to the importance of recognizing the varied notions of the justice of environmental justice – but in a problematic way. Harvey (1996: 388) moves beyond the purely distributive, and approvingly notes the important refusal on the part of the U.S. environmental justice movement to cast the discussion in monetary terms alone. Equity may be about costs and benefits, but justice is much broader, and the U.S. movement

¹⁷ And here again, the focus moves from the state to the realm of civil society.

¹⁸ For more on the relationship between theories of pluralism and environmental justice, see Schlosberg 1999.

demonstrates this. The use of identity-based arguments for recognition, including those of various racial and indigenous groups, is apt under the circumstances, argues Harvey. But he sees something missing in this picture of multiple notions applied as the situation differs. Harvey (p. 398) argues that we are therefore confronted with a plurality of theories of justice, all equally plausible and all equally lacking in one way or another. Harvey sees the initial justification and necessity of local and particular battles with their different readings of justice. But, he argues, they are ultimately contradictory. Worse, the movement, he insists, can not be successful without pulling together a single universal critique and definition of environmental justice. Harvey (p. 400) wants the movement to create a more transcendent and universal politics, which has to transcend particularity, and adopt a politics of abstraction capable of reaching out across space... Harvey here insists on a move from the multiple and particular to the singular and universal, but he does so by insisting on transcending, dismissing, and replacing the local.

Notions of environmental justice, as well as an environmental justice movement, can be unified, but not uniform. I think it is a mistake, theoretically and strategically, to insist on such unification or a singular discourse of environmental justice removed from local experience and interpretation. An insistence on uniformity would limit the diversity of stories of injustice, the multiple forms it takes, and the variety of solutions it calls for. A broad notion of environmental and ecological justice can serve as a large discursive arena, in which various notions of justice, and the varied movements which endorse them, can engage. I agree with Lyotard's (1984) famous (well, to academic theorists anyway) admission that justice is not an outmoded or suspect goal – it just can not be based in a singular conception or consensus. Justice, for Lyotard, is 'a multiplicity of finite meta-arguments' (p. 66) locally based, temporary, and changeable. So discourse on justice is absolutely crucial, as is openness to various interpretations of the term. Such a discourse allows engagement across various notions of not only justice, but of the good as well.¹⁹

One basic point here is that this diverse understanding of justice – one that encompasses issues of distribution, recognition, and participation – offers language that allows for the linkage of varied issues and movements. I am not arguing that there should be one movement for environmental justice encompassing all problems from global warming to wilderness protection to community toxics issues; in fact, I see such an insistence as theoretically problematic and strategically incoherent. I am only suggesting that a broad and thorough notion of social justice – though importantly, and by definition, one based in locality and particularity – has both theoretical and strategic benefits. First, it expands the notion of justice used in environmental and ecological justice along the lines of recent theoretical developments on social justice. Second, this helps to discursively link varied environmental movements, for example those working on environmental justice and those focused on ecological preservation; i.e. it helps them speak to, rather than past, one another. And third, as this definition of justice is not a uniquely environmental or ecological definition, but one of social justice generally, it makes possible further discourse with other movements for social justice.

In other words, not only is a broad and inclusive notion of justice a way to rethink the limits of the distributive approach, but it also allows a link between concepts of environmental and ecological justice, and between environmental issues and other issues of

¹⁹ Certainly, the common criticism of Lyotard's position – that it does not allow for an examination of the macrostructures and institutions which create inequality – is undermined by the openness to examining the conditions of justice, and by bringing in both recognition and participation. An openness to difference may not *require* a critique of structural, institutional, and cultural issues related to inequality, but it certainly does not rule them out, and in fact welcomes them originating from local experiences.

social justice. What an inclusive understanding of justice encourages is a broad network of movements for social justice by offering a discursive realm in which to engage – one familiar to a variety of participants from diverse perspectives.

References

- Barry, Brian. 1999. *Sustainable and Intergenerational Justice*. In Andrew Dobson, ed., *Fairness and Futurity: Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bookchin, Murray. 1986. *The Modern Crisis*. Philadelphia: New Society.
- Bretting, John, and Diane-Michele Prindeville. 1998. *Environmental Justice and the Role of Indigenous Women Organizing Their Communities*. In David Camacho, ed., *Environmental Injustices, Political Struggles: Race, Class, and the Environment*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Bryant, Bunyan. 1995. *Environmental Justice: Issues, Policies, and Solutions*. Covelo, CA: Island Press.
- Bryant, Bunyan, and Paul Mohai, eds. 1992. *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards: A Time for Discourse*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Bullard, Robert D., ed. 1993. *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*. Boston: South End Press.
- Bullard, Robert D., ed. 1994. *People of Color Environmental Groups 1994-95 Directory*. Atlanta: Environmental Justice Resource Center.
- Camacho, David, ed. 1998. *Environmental Injustices, Political Struggles: Race, Class, and the Environment*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Capek, Sheila. 1993. *The Environmental Justice Frame: A Conceptual Discussion and an Application*, *Social Problems*, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp. 5-24.
- Chavis, Benjamin Jr. 1993. *Foreward*. In Robert Bullard, ed., *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*. Boston: South End Press.
- Conca, Ken and Geoffrey D. Dabelko, eds. 1998. *Green Planet Blues: Environmental Politics from Stockholm to Kyoto*. Second Edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Dean, Jodi. 1996. *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism After Identity Politics*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Dobson, Andrew. 1998. *Justice and the Environment: Conceptions of Environmental Sustainability and Dimensions of Social Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dobson, Andrew, ed. 1999. *Fairness and Futurity: Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dodge, Jim. 1981. "Living By Life: Some Bioregional Theory and Practice." *CoEvolution Quarterly* 32: 6-12.

Doherty, Brian and Mariuis de Geus. 1996. *Democracy And Green Political Thought: Sustainability, Rights And Citizenship*. London: Routledge.

Dryzek, John S. 1996. *Democracy in Capitalist Times: Ideals, Limits, and Struggles*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, John S. 2000. *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eckersley, Robyn. 1992. *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Edwards, Bob. 1995. AWith Liberty and Environmental Justice for All: The Emergence and Challenge of Grassroots Environmentalism in the United States.≡ In Bron Taylor, *Ecological Resistance Movements*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Faber, Daniel, ed. 1998. *The Struggle for Ecological Democracy*. New York: Guilford.

Fraser, Nancy. 1997. *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the APostsocialist≡ Condition*. New York: Routledge.

Fraser, Nancy. 1998. ASocial Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation.≡ In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, Vol. 19*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

Freudenberg, Nicholas, and Carol Steinsapir. 1992. "Not in Our Backyards: The Grassroots Environmental Movement." In *American Environmentalism: The U.S. Environmental Movement, 1970-1990*, eds. Riley E. Dunlap and Angela G. Mertig. Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis.

Global Exchange. 2000. ATop Ten Reasons to Oppose the IMF.≡ Available on the web at <www.globalexchange.org/wbimf/TopTenIMF.html>; accessed 23 June 2000.

Goldman, Benjamin A. 1996. AWhat is the Future of Environmental Justice?≡ *Antipode* 28, No. 2: 122-141.

Gould, Carol. 1996. ADiversity and Democracy: Representing Differences.≡ In Seyla Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gould, Kenneth, Allan Schnaiberg, and Adam Weinberg. 1996. *Local Environmental Struggles: Citizen Activism in the Treadmill of Production*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Greider, William. 1996. *One World Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

- Grim, John. 1996. ACultural Identity, Authenticity, and Community Survival: The Politics of Recognition in the Study of Native American Religions.≅ *American Indian Quarterly* 20, No. 3-4: 353-78.
- Hamilton, Cynthia. 1994. "Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles." In Robert D. Bullard, ed., *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*. San Francisco: Sierra Club.
- Hampton, Greg. 1999. AEnvironmental Equity and Public Participation.≅ *Policy Sciences* 32: 163-174.
- Harvey, David. 1996. *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hayward, Tim. 1998. *Political Theory and Ecological Values*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hofrichter, Richard, ed. 1993. *Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice*. Philadelphia: New Society.
- Honneth, Axel. 1992. "Integrity and Disrespect: Principles of Morality Based on the Theory of Recognition." *Political Theory* 20: 187-201.
- Honneth, Axel. 1995. *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hunold, Christian and Iris Marion Young. 1998. AJustice, Democracy, and Hazardous Siting.≅ *Political Studies* 46, No. 1: 82-95.
- James, William. 1977 [1909]. *A Pluralistic Universe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- James, William. 1977 [1909]. *A Pluralist Universe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Krauss, Celene. 1994. "Women of Color on the Front Line." In Robert D. Bullard, ed., *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*. San Francisco: Sierra Club.
- Lafferty, William M. and James Meadowcroft. 1996. *Democracy And The Environment : Problems And Prospects*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Lake, Robert W. 1996. AVolunteers, Nimbys, and Environmental Justice: Dilemmas of Democratic Practice.≅ *Antipode* 28, No. 2: 160-174.
- Lavelle, Marianne, and Marcia Coyle. 1992. "Unequal Protection." *The National Law Journal*. September 21.
- Lee, Charles, ed. 1992. *Proceedings: The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit*. New York: United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice.
- Leopold, Aldo. 1949. *A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Lester, James and David Allen. 1999. *Environmental Justice in the U.S.: Myths and Realities*. Paper given at the Western Political Science Association annual meeting, Seattle, WA.
- Low, Nicholas and Brendan Gleeson. 1998. *Justice, Society and Nature: An Exploration of Political Ecology*. London: Routledge.
- Lyotard, Jean-Francois. 1984. *The Postmodern Condition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mander, Jerry and Edward Goldsmith, eds. 1996. *The Case Against the Global Economy, And For a Turn Toward the Local*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Mason, Michael. 1999. *Environmental Democracy*. London: Earthscan.
- Mathews, Freya, ed. 1996. *Ecology and Democracy*. London: Frank Cass.
- Miller, David. 1976. *Social Justice*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Norton, Bryan G. 1991. *Toward Unity among Environmentalists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Peoples Global Action. 1999. *A Draft Declaration of Indian People Against the WTO*. Available on the web at <www.agp.org/agp/en/PGAInfos/980516india.html>; accessed 23 June 2000.
- Peña, Devon. 1999. *Nos Encercaron: A Theoretical Exegesis on the Politics of Place in the Intermountain West*. Paper given at the New West Conference, Flagstaff, AZ.
- Plumwood, Val. 1993. "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism." In Michael Zimmerman, ed., *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Plumwood, Val. 1998. "Inequality, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality." In John Dryzek and David Schlosberg, eds., *Debating the Earth: The Environmental Politics Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. 1999. *A Statement From Members of International Civil Society Opposing a Millennium round or a New Round of Comprehensive Trade Negotiations*. *Mobilization Against Corporate Globalization: A Guide to Civil Society's Activities Surrounding the Seattle WTO Ministerial November 29-December 3, 1999*. Washington, D.C.: Public Citizen.
- Pulido, Laura. 1996. *Environmentalism and Social Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Rawls, John. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Sagoff, Mark. 1993. "Animal Liberation, Environmental Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce." In Michael Zimmerman, ed., *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Schlosberg, David. 1999. *Environmental Justice and the New Pluralism: The Challenge of Difference for Environmentalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shiva, Vandana. 1997. *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*. Boston: South End Press.
- Szasz, Andrew and Michael Meuser. 1997. "Environmental Inequalities: Literature Review and Proposals for New Directions in Research and Theory." *Current Sociology* 45, No. 3: 99-120.
- Taylor, Charles. 1994. *Multiculturalism*. (Amy Gutman, ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. 1987. *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites*. New York: United Church of Christ.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. 1992. *Environmental Equity: Reducing Risk for All Communities*. Two Volumes. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- United States General Accounting Office. 1983. *Siting of Hazardous Waste Landfills and Their Correlation with Racial and Economic Status of Surrounding Communities*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Wenz, Peter S. 1988. *Environmental Justice*. Albany, NY: SUNY.
- Williams, Bruce and Albert Matheny. 1995. *Democracy, Dialogue and Environmental Disputes*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Young, Iris Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Young, Iris Marion. 1996. "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy." In Seyla Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Young, Iris Marion. 2000. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.