Planning Theory for Environmentally Sustainable Planning

Stanley M. Stein and Thomas L. Harper*
University of Calgary

Attitudes to land use planning have been changing significantly over the past decade, reflecting a widening concern regarding environmental sustainability. Planning theory is still struggling to respond to these claims and to incorporate environmental concerns. The traditional technocratic rational planning approach (notwithstanding its claims to comprehensiveness) is not only clearly inadequate, but exacerbates the problem. However, we argue that planning theory does not need what deep ecology and bio-egalitarian approaches recommend: a Kuhnian radical paradigm shift and a new ultimate moral principle. We critique this radical position on the grounds that it cannot claim to be ethical, it can not be socially legitimated, and thus, it will not achieve the desired end of an environmentally sustainable world. We argue that what planning theory does need to deal with the challenge of sustainability is a more moderate neo-pragmatic/incremental approach, reflectively chosen principles, a normative ethical basis for justification, and an authentic moral vision. These desiderata can be readily incorporated into the emerging 'communicative action' paradigm, making it the most promising response to the environmental challenge.

Keywords: planning theory, paradigm shifts, environmental sustainability. Deep Ecology, incrementalism, neo-pragmatism.

THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

One of the most pressing challenges to contemporary planning comes from the growing recognition that our public decisions have serious environmental implications. In order to respond to the challenge of environmental sustainability, Beatley (1994) persuasively argues that planning criteria must be broadened to include a wide variety of ethical factors in land use decision-making.

Many environmentalists argue that because the Modernist approach has so clearly failed to deal with the current environmental crisis, we need a complete break with the moral foundation of western civilization. They believe that the very notion of sustainability is misconceived, as there is nothing worth sustaining

* Planning Program, Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N IN4.

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in our moral culture. They urge us to move away from what they call the anthropocentric value system to a new perspective where Human beings no longer have priority in the scheme of things and have no special privilege (Leopold, 1949: 220). We will refer to this view as Deep Ecology (Naess, 1973) or Biocentric Egalitarianism (Taylor, 1986). We will focus on two aspects of this position which have significant implications for planning. The first aspect is that those who hold it want to construct a new moral paradigm that would be appropriate to a new environmental culture. They often appeal to Kuhn's (1970) notion of a paradigm shift. For example, Livingston asserts that 'deep environmentalism is concerned with accomplishing a fundamental 'paradigm shift', an appropriate way of culturally perceiving the relationship between man and nature' (1985:12). The second aspect is that the new paradigm is often reduced to a single ultimate absolute moral principle, such as Leopold's: 'a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise' (1949:224–25).

Planning theory is still struggling to respond to these claims and to incorporate environmental concerns. The traditional technocratic rational planning approach exacerbates the problem. Recent significant contributions in the area of planning ethics (Hendler, 1995) have attempted to integrate ethics, environmental concerns, and planning (Beatley, 1994; 1995; Jacobs, 1995). While it is of great practical value, much of this work seems to accept the claims of Deep Ecology. We believe these claims must he viewed more critically. The emerging 'communicative action' paradigm[1] (Healey, 1993; Innes, 1995) holds much more promise of an adequate response. Our recent work (Harper and Stein, 1994; 1995b; forthcoming) seeks to articulate a Neo-pragmatic theoretical basis for this paradigm. We will adopt this perspective here to critically examine some implications of the Deep Ecology claim, and to make some recommendations regarding what Planning Theory does and does not need as it seeks to respond to the challenge of environmental sustainability.

WHAT PLANNING THEORY DOESN'T NEED: A RADICAL PARADIGM SHIFT

The Nature of Paradigm Shifts

Kuhn's (1970) notion of 'paradigm shift' is notoriously ambiguous, used in a variety of different and conflicting ways. These uses vary from incremental modifications in our thinking, beliefs and ways of behaving, through to very radical shifts in conceptual scheme that lead to a complete chasm of incommensurability between old and new paradigms.

An example of an incremental (but very significant) shift occurs when one realizes that dwindling resources and environmental desecration may require shifts in the use of productive resources, and changes in economic and political institutions (e.g. limitations on property rights, on human freedom, on popula-

tion growth, etc.).[2] While such changes are often referred to as paradigm shifts (Rees, 1995), we view them as incremental. It is only because so much is held constant that they can be debated and evaluated (Harper and Stein, forthcoming). No radical shift in our basic moral perspective is needed. Instead of a radical paradigm shift, we have the continued reweaving of our moral beliefs (along with other beliefs) which constitute moral change (progress). We would describe the current shift in planning (to the new communicative action paradigm) as incremental in this sense. While radical environmentalists may claim that this is too conservative to deal with the current crisis, we reply that even minor modifications in thought and beliefs can lead to major shifts in practice.

What we want to critique here is the more radical use of paradigm, a use consistent with Kuhn's original intent,[3] and still employed by some interpreters (Feyerabend, 1993; Leopold, 1949; Livingston, 1985; Naess, 1973; Taylor, 1986). In its most extreme form, a radical paradigm shift is where different paradigms are seen as entire conceptual schemes which are incommensurable; each paradigm is completely opaque from the point of view of the other, with respect to both meaning and reference.[4] On this extreme view, different paradigms become unintelligible to those who have not *converted* to them; 'such that those within different paradigms literally live in 'different worlds" (Rosa, 1995:24). Thus, even if the same words are used in the new paradigm they will mean something quite different.

Radical Paradigm Shifts and Justification

Essentially, the difficulty with this approach is that it leaves no room for a critical and interpretive perspective from which to determine the meaning, reference and justification of elements within different paradigms. Unless there is some overriding Archimedean point outside either paradigm (an assumption both we and Kuhn reject), there is no way to evaluate and interpret two different competing paradigms. Thus a radical paradigm shift precludes any possibility of legitimation and justification of views to those who inhabit the established paradigm.

In fact, a radical paradigm shift in ethical perspective would be a shift to a paradigm which is not an ethical perspective at all. If our disagreement is so fundamental about what you call moral and what I call moral, then we must ask: is it really 'morality' that we are both talking about?

In contrast to this Kuhnian view, the pragmatist sees the entire process of interpretation of a conceptual scheme, language or paradigm as one of grafting that scheme onto your own. It requires significant overlap between perspectives (paradigms). Any talk of differences in concepts and beliefs also requires this overlap.

Radical Paradigm Shifts and Language

The Kuhnian view of radical paradigm shift presupposes a segmented, rather than a holistic, view of language. It assumes that language can be segmented bit by bit, and finds maximum coherence on the level of paradigm, so that segments of language (paradigms) can be severed from other segments of language. This means that a radical paradigm shift carries with it the possibility of drastic alteration of key concepts.

Thus, Deep Ecology requires a shift from an anthropocentric ethic to an ecocentric ethic. It holds that 'all things in the biosphere have an equal light to live and blossom... all organisms and entities in the ecosphere... are equal in intrinsic worth' (Devall and Sessions, 1985:67). But this is a false view of language. Language should be viewed as holistic. As Wittgenstein observes: 'when we first begin to believe anything, what we believe is not a single proposition; it is a whole system of propositions (light dawns gradually over the whole)...' (1959: para. 141). From our pragmatic perspective, one can speak of segments of language such as morality and science, but these language games can not be sharply severed from each other or from the language as a whole. The meaning and reference of terms and the justification of beliefs can not be isolated and segmented as Kuhn suggests.

Here we can see how justification and the determination of meaning can not be sharply separated. When the shift becomes as radical as the Deep Ecologists propose, not only do we find it impossible to justify the shift. but the terms we use start to lose their meaning and reference. At some point, it is no longer clear that we know what apparently ordinary terms mean. Perhaps this is why some interpreters view Deep Ecology principles as metaphorical rather than literal.

Whenever we utter a sentence, there is a whole lot more that is presupposed. In an important sense the entire language is presupposed. Changes in the system can occur in many ways but only if the system as a whole maintains stability. The model of holism can be captured in Otto Neurath's image of the ship at sea: it can be altered and improved fragment by fragment, but not completely and not all at once. There must be significant overlap of concepts and beliefs between paradigms as well as commonality within paradigms: '... a change which is a veritable improvement from both perspectives is not a ('revolutionary') transition between two incommensurable paradigms, but a piece of ('evolutionary') progress *within* a prefixed horizon' (Rosa, 1995:24). It is this commonality that makes it possible for change to be both intelligible and justified.

ABSTRACT UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES

Deep Ecologists who argue for paradigm shifts often try to provide a new abstract universal metaphysical principle for their new environmental ethic. Armstrong-Buck maintains that:

> ...the natural world has intrinsic value... is intuitively... acknowledged by many people.... the growth of this [view] into a widely shared ethos capable of guiding human activity... requires... an adequate metaphysical theory, since a metaphysical theory can give penetration to, and a wider and consistent application of our intuition (1986:241).

Behind this urge is a foundational idea: that moral judgment flows from indubitable first principles. But there are no such first principles! This should be clear from the vast variety of (and unending nature of) disagreement about purported first principles available.

One thing we have learned from the Post-modernist and pragmatic attacks on Modernism, is that there is no god's eye perspective, no Archimedean point which can give us an absolute perspective for grounding our beliefs—not god, nor science, nor some universal conception of rationality. Very often, what had been thought of as indubitable truths turned out on closer inspection to be temporal prejudices or ideological distortions. If there are fixed points, they are relative to a larger framework. As Wittgenstein suggests:

> What stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing; it is rather held fast by what lies around it... it is not single axioms that strike me as obvious, it is a system in which consequence and premise give one another *mutual* support (1959: par 142, 144).

Furthermore many of these first proposed principles are consistent with a variety of inconsistent concrete judgments. The problem is, that these principles are so abstract, and so open to multiple interpretations, and so remote from ordinary life, that they are useless as a basis for the justification of practical concrete action.

WHAT PLANNING THEORY DOES NEED: A PRAGMATIC, INCREMENTAL APPROACH

A Pragmatic Approach

Instead of attempting to find an acceptable universal metaphysical principle, we recommend a society that is pragmatic. As Richard Rorty observes:

> when such a [pragmatic] society deliberates, when it collects the principles and intuitions to be brought into equilibrium, it will tend to disregard those drawn from philosophical... accounts of the self or rationality (1990:286).

The foundational view has things the wrong way around. The search for ultimate first principles, more often then not, stems from a commitment to action, rather than a source of its justification. Environmentalists are often looking for an *ex poste* rationale for doing what they intuitively believe is right.

Principles (but not metaphysical ones) do have a role to play in the process of justification, but it is not a hierarchical one—abstract principles do not have any privileged position. Rather, they are part of an interactive process of holistic mutual adjustment. As Richard Rorty remarks, there is a 'give-and-take between intuitions about the desirability of particular consequences and intuitions about general principles, with neither having the determining force' (1990:298). We want to advance a more appropriate model of language and justification of belief—one that (1) recognizes the need for stability of intuition, as well as change, and (2) incorporates context as well as principle. This model is Rawls' (1985) wide reflective equilibrium (WRE).[5]

On this view, principles are one factor in justification, important but not superior to a host of other factors, including considered judgments (i.e. intuitions) and background theories and information. We weigh one against the other, sometimes modifying principles and other times modifying intuitions, in a search for a coherent reflective equilibrium (Harper and Stein, 1995a). It is an incremental and non-hierarchical affair. Incremental as our beliefs and concepts evolve over time; and non-hierarchical in blurring the lines between theory and practice, between abstract principle and concrete intuition, and between judgment and action (Harper and Stein, forthcoming).

In some ways Arnie Naess' current position sounds similar. He recently remarked:

> What is more pressing then debating norms is to work out... priorities of certain kinds of action'.... environmental ethical views make up only part of a total and can only be understood internally related to a *total view*' (1992:53).

He now recognizes that first principles are of little use for arriving at a general intersubjective legitimation of concrete action. But he is too sanguine regarding this situation, because he feels that

> ... people with seemingly deeply different religious or metaphysical ultimate views may work together in practical efforts to improve the ethical standard of human environment interaction (1992:57).

At this point we part company with Naess; he seems to be saying 'base your action on whatever metaphysical first principle you like so long as the action is right'. Beatley's position seems similar; he describes his approach as 'moral pluralism, which suggests no single paradigm is applicable in all circumstances', i.e.

which moral approach applies will be determined by the 'specifics of each land-use case' (1994:17). This gives the impression that we should look at each moral theory independently, deduce the consequences for particular situations, and then choose one we like for that situation. But what do we do when several different moral approaches are applicable, and they give conflicting answers? As Naess or Beatley present it, the choice then appears arbitrary. Of course they and other environmentally friendly individuals may agree on what are the right views, but how do they persuade others? How can they justify their views? Their positions are incomplete.

But we have seen that one cannot deduce or legitimize right action and belief from absolute and *universal* metaphysical principles. So how *can* one legitimize right belief? Our answer to the question of legitimacy involves bringing the Deep Ecology view into wide reflective equilibrium. The problem with Naess' position is that his reflective equilibrium is not wide enough. While WRE *is* coherentist, it is not viciously circular. Any circularity involved is perfectly benign. As N. Goodman eloquently argues when applying reflective equilibrium to logic:

> ... rules and particular inferences alike are justified by being brought into agreement with each other. A rule is amended if it yields an inference we are unwilling to accept; an inference is rejected if it violates a rule we are unwilling to amend. The process of justification is the delicate one of making mutual adjustments between rules and acceptance of inferences, and in the agreement achieved lies the only justification needed for either (1965:64).

And, as Rawls (1985) argues, the same is true for morality. Coherence is sufficient to provide justification when the equilibrium is wide enough; when the vocabulary, the language game, the form of life, is rich enough to provide interlacing legitimation. There is nothing further to which we can appeal!

Neo-pragmatism gives no privileged status to deep ecological) or any other) principles. When looked at this way, the deep/shallow distinction disappears, and our moral concerns regarding the environment can no longer be sharply separated from other moral concerns. Our concern for the tree must be weighed against our concern for the livelihood of the logger. Once these moves are made, the apparent need for a moral paradigm shift disappears!

The Necessity of Incremental Change[6]

Ironically, those who reject foundationalism

> ... often see themselves as revolutionaries... saying that our language and our culture need radical change before our utopian hopes can be realized... This insistence on radicality is foundationalism turned on its head... (Rorty, 1995:201).

But this 'urge to make all things new, to insist that nothing can change unless everything changes' (Rorty, 1995:201) is inconsistent with antifoundationalism.

Incrementalism is unavoidable in a postmodern (post-positivistic, nonfoundational) world. Positivism attempted to provide a scientific foundation for all knowledge. Postmodernist critiques have pointed to the inadequacy of the positivistic attempt, and have undermined the very notion of an absolute foundation for knowledge. In a postpositivistic world, values, beliefs and knowledge are recognized as dependent on consensus.

When we seek to justify a belief or an action (to give reasons for it), we appeal to a 'web' of other concepts and beliefs which are shared.[7] If we attempted to change everything at once, then there would be nothing left on which to base the justification. Once we give up absolute metaphysical foundations, the only way to legitimize our views, the only way to save them from arbitrariness, is to appeal to our moral tradition, to the language game and the form of life in which they are embedded.

We do not mean this to be conservative in the sense of disallowing unconventional points of view, radical utopian alternatives, or ingenious unorthodox proposals for change. As we have said elsewhere, all voices must he heard and evaluated. What we do mean by incrementalism is that in the public sphere, new views must be legitimized and justified by connecting them to our current views in a way which bring them into coherence.

What this does preclude is the very possibility of the violent break with our tradition that the proponents of a radical paradigm shift suggest. That is why Deep Ecologists who seek such radical change all search for indubitable metaphysical principles to legitimize their view. No such search is necessary, nor can their principles provide sufficient legitimation for concrete action. In fact, the statements made by Deep Ecologists which seem to imply the need for a paradigm shift must he interpreted incrementally if they are to function in a way that is productive.

REFLECTIVELY CHOSEN PRINCIPLE[8]

While we have argued that planning theory has no need for absolute universal principles, and that principles need to be tested against concrete situations, we do believe that planning theory has a need for reflectively chosen principles.

From a pragmatic perspective, no sharp (absolute) distinction can be drawn between 'theory' and 'practice', between 'abstract' and 'concrete', between 'philosophical ideas' and 'theorizing about planning', nor between 'what philosophers say' and 'what planners do and say'.[9] Thus philosophical reflection, practical reflection and meaningful action greatly overlap each other. Treating such distinctions as absolute reflects an essentialist, foundationalist (Modernist) view. A pragmatic view treats distinctions as end points on continua, useful for particu-

lar purposes, and subject to modification to make them more useful as the context changes.

The extent to which philosophical reflection is relevant to a practical social activity like planning practice depends on the social context. If society had a high degree of consensus and solidarity, and if planners and planning theorists shared this consensus (or even agreed about what is wrong and how to fix it), then there would he little practical need for deep reflection on the principles which legitimize planning. But here and now, there is no such consensus. This is very evident in the area of environmental planning. Even the most deeply entrenched principles are 'up for grabs'. For some time, Friedmann (1987; 1993) has been drawing our attention to a crisis in planning, a crisis which he sees as both practical and philosophical.

The extent to which philosophy is relevant to planning theory also depends on the context. Philosophical presuppositions are epidemic in planning theory and its debates. When we examine what planners say and do, we often find that they are drawing (at least implicitly) on philosophical ideas, and raising philosophical questions. For example, the debate between Rational Comprehensive Planners who believe in an absolutist notion of rationality and Postmodernists who celebrate the cult of difference is a thoroughly philosophical debate (Harper and Stein, 1995b). It is important to uncover, illuminate, and correct presuppositions which distort debates about planning.

Every conceptual move has benefits and costs. We should be aware of what is *lost* in any change. For example, it has been argued that we should change the nature of responsibility to shift the stress from the individual to society, or that we should broaden the definition of rape to include verbal harassment. What we should carefully consider is: do we want the social and legal consequences of these shifts? Various Deep Ecologists argue that we should expand the circle of moral concern to include all sentient beings, all living beings, or even all of the environment. Do we really want the consequences of giving equal rights to rocks?

Other Deep Ecologists advocate expanding the notion of teleos (end purpose) to non-persons: 'all organisms are teleological centers of life in the sense that each is a unique individual pursuing its own good in its own way' (Beatley, 1994: 123). From this it is then argued that we have a moral obligation to preserve that good (of ecosystems, for example). What this does is extend the notion of moral goodness to areas that have never been objects of moral goodness. If we do this in a consistent way. however, we will include 'goodness' that we might not want to consider as moral goodness. For example the state, the multinational corporation, or the capitalist system, each have their own teleos. Does this make them 'good'? We should consider the costs of giving up this distinction between goodness in the purely teleological sense and goodness in the moral sense. In each case, we need to he very aware of what we are giving up, as well as what we expect to gain.

We should modify concepts and develop principles which best reflect our current experience and our intuitions, in a WRE process. Critical reflection on our principles is important to avoid changes (even incremental ones) which take us in the wrong direction. In our current intellectual climate where change is so readily embraced, constant vigilance is required.

JUSTIFICATION

We have argued that it is essential that shifts in (moral) thought be justified. But, as a matter of fact they may not he. Although the question of justification is so crucial it may not always arise. The paradigm shift may occur whether or not it is justified; it may be *caused* by factors which leave out justification (e.g., propaganda, Skinnerian conditioning, habit, brain surgery). Thus we may come to exclude Jew from the class of moral objects as easily as we may include classes of animals. We may come to regard people as no better than trees or corporations or nations. The shift may occur even if we never address the question of whether it *should* occur. But we have a moral obligation to address this question

One might ask: why bother with justification, isn't it part of one more dualism found in the Enlightenment tradition that has been rejected by Deep Ecologists and postmodernists? Could we not, and should we not, give up the practice of justifying our beliefs and actions to others? The answer is again a pragmatic one. We would submit that maintaining this practice is essential for our (moral) purposes. Some Post-modernist thinkers, as well as scientific reductionists, are in favor of eliminating the distinction between justification and cause, between rational persuasion and coercion (physical and non-physical). A famous example is B.F. Skinner, who argues that both are just forms of behavioral modification (1971). But there is no good reason (except a mistaken desire to reduce everything to science) why we should destroy this crucial contrast.

The distinction between justification and cause is important. Justification requires giving reasons which are good and sufficient within the context; and it is always propositional. Particularly in the public realm of liberal democratic societies, justification requires an ethical basis. The only possible basis for our decisions is what we know, and have good reason to believe, here and now.

The distinction between justification and cause should be seen as a continuum. At one end we have rational persuasion; on the other end, physical coercion, behavioral conditioning, etc. Towards the center of the continuum we find examples of tacit non physical coercion, e.g., advertising, propaganda, ideological distortion, etc. If we gave up the distinction between justification and cause we would no longer have a reason to treat any of these differently. For example, we could no longer talk about eliminating ideological distortion or false consciousness (i.e., beliefs once thought to be reasonable, which turn out on closer inspection to be manipulative, serving the interests of some group at the expense of

others). If we gave up the contrast between justification and cause, then everything would be manipulative, and nothing would be manipulative.

But do we want to view all argument in this way? We don't think so. Neither do most environmentalists. They seek to change minds in a reasonable fashion. They want to *persuade* us of the justice and *legitimacy* of their cause; that is what all the articles and books are about. For our practical purposes, justification is important (even though it cannot be given an absolute foundation).

A STRONG NORMATIVE ETHICAL BASIS

Is Radical Conceptual Change Supportable?

We have suggested that incremental conceptual change, through reweaving and modification can lead to very significant change. Could such change still be radical enough to support the extreme alteration in paradigm and ethical principle suggested by the Deep Ecologists?

Postmodernists might appeal to Richard Rorty for support here. He argues that radical conceptual change is possible and perhaps desirable. We could adopt a new language game which

> ... does not pretend to have a better candidate to do the same old things which we did when we spoke the old way. Rather, it suggests that we might want to stop doing those things and do something else. But it does not argue for this suggestion on the basis of antecedent criteria common to the old and new language games. For just insofar as the new language game is really new, there will be no such criteria (1989:9).

In other words, perhaps we had best just change the subject! Essentially Rorty is accepting the idea that a radical paradigm shift brings with it the opacity we noted above; thus a radical paradigm shift within a specific area of inquiry is impossible to justify upon grounds internal to the area. Rorty accepts the radical nature of Kuhn's thought: "It seems to me that Kuhn and his fellows have shown that there never was something called 'the method of the natural sciences'" (1980:43). There are no methodological canons which can be used to justify a shift. However perhaps it can be justified on other grounds (e.g. moral grounds) even though there is no shared meaning or reference. Or perhaps it does not need to be justified at all.

In considering Rorty's suggestion, it is important to understand the context. He is speaking about the modern philosophical tradition, which he believes has exhausted itself. He argues that this tradition has not served us in the ways we had hoped it would. It has not provided an absolute foundation for our thought (moral or scientific). In other words philosophy has not served our interests,

practical, scientific or moral. For example, he asserts that discussing the nature of truth is no aid in determining whether or not Jones missed the bus, and discussing the nature of the metaphysical self does nothing to answer whether or not we should redistribute wealth in order to aid those individuals who are worse off than ourselves. And Rorty believes that the proper 'method' in contemporary philosophy is not to attempt to refute philosophical positions, since that would involve the very philosophical vocabulary he believes we should abandon. He suggests that

> Interesting philosophy is rarely an examination of the pros and the cons of a thesis. Usually it is, implicitly or explicitly, a contest between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new vocabulary which vaguely promises great things (1989:9).

His method is 'to redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways, until you have created a pattern of linguistic behavior which tempts the rising generation to accept it' (1989:9).

Now is this the sort of thing the Deep Ecologists want to do when they speak of a paradigm shift? We think perhaps it is. This is a view held explicitly by some deep ecologists, and others seem close to it. In an important statement of his deep ecological perspective, Arnie Naess argues for

> Rejection of the man-environment image in favor of *the relational, total field-image*. Organisms as knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations. An intrinsic relation between two things A and B is such that the relation belongs to the definitions or basic constitutions of A and B, so that without the relation A and B are no longer the same things. The total-field model dissolves not only the man-in-environment concept, but every compact thing-in-milieu concept—except when talking at a superficial or preliminary level of communication (1973:95).

What he hopes to achieve through the use of this semantic stipulation is a moral perspective which removes all reference to the individual person. This position would require a radical shift away from traditional morality to a new way of speaking. Our traditional concerns for human rights etc. would have no role to play once the new language is accepted. But is this a situation where we really want to change the subject? Is our concern for the environment something other than a *moral* concern? We think not.

How do we judge a suggestion like Naess'? We cannot do so from some commonly held, shared moral position since the proposal is that we make a radical break with that tradition. To use Rorty's rhetoric, we cannot (and need not) argue for the new vision by using some common vocabulary. That would be futile

since the whole point of the radical paradigm shift is to replace that old vocabulary by a new one. We have, in an important sense, changed the subject. But then how do we accept the recommendation? What is the point of the change? Rorty suggests that the test for accepting the new vocabulary is whether it 'vaguely promises great things'. Great for what? How is it more fruitful? Here is where the analogy between Rorty and Deep Ecology ends.

When Rorty proposes a new philosophical vocabulary which "tempt[s] the rising generation to accept it', he does not want a new vocabulary for its own sake. He does not want the new vocabulary of Goebels and Rosenberg, tempting as it may have been to a new generation of Germans, to replace the old liberal bourgeois vocabulary. Something *remains* standing for Rorty. It is *morality*. Rorty (like Rawls) does not want to give up the liberal democratic concern for the individual. In fact when Rorty speaks of 'great' or 'better' things, he intends to preserve our moral vocabulary. It is our moral and practical interests as we know them that tell us what is 'great', what is 'better'. It is interesting to note Kuhn himself argues that what bridges different paradigms are the values of the scientific community which are held constant. Even in science, it is not the values that shift.

This is the crucial difference between Rorty and the Deep Ecologist. Rorty wants to give up philosophy for a moral reason: he argues that it will help to achieve a more humane, moral, and creative society. Perhaps this makes sense. The Deep Ecologist wants to give up morality for a moral reason. This makes no sense at all.

How Do Deep Ecologists 'Justify' Their Position?

Why does the Deep Ecologist want to give up conventional morality? What goals do they have? What reasons can be given for the change? What justification can be offered? We can conceive of several possibilities. Except for the first one, all tacitly acknowledge our inability to completely break free from our conventional morality (to completely abandon our societal 'ship').

1. They attempt to reduce the moral perspective to a one based on science or ecology, e.g. Bio-egalitarianism (Odum, 1974). Thus, Aldo Leopold suggests that the shift to what he calls ecological consciousness is a stage in biological or ecological evolution. He argues that the

> extension of ethics is actually a process of ecological evolution. Its sequence may be described in biological as well as philosophical terms... These are two definitions of one thing (1933).

We would reply that this reductionistic and scientistic approach misconstrues the type of justification required to solve our environmental (and social) crisis. Why is this shift 'better' than our current morality? It is not *morally* better. This answer is a nonstarter; it always begs the question. It can only be given after the

new vocabulary has been accepted. But we have not (so far) accepted the shift; we are still within the old paradigm, asking why we should accept the new one. From this perspective, the change is unintelligible and unjustifiable.

2. They argue that by following the preferred new morality (pantheism, eco-feminism, bio-egalitarianism etc.), we will also encourage, in fact enhance, our other deeply embedded values (fraternity, sorority, freedom etc.). Whether this claim is correct will be a matter of empirical investigation—we doubt that it is. But the point to be made here is that the test of legitimacy is those deeply embedded values and not the proposed new morality.

3. They modify their new principle to conform to our present values. This is an old philosophical gambit: here's the part where you say it, and here's the part where you take it back. Thus the bio-centric egalitarian puts forward a principle like 'humans are not inherently superior to other living things' (Beatley 1994: 123), but then acknowledges the need for a hierarchy, where some impacts on the natural environment are permissible for 'important social purposes' (1994: 123), which may include cultural and recreational values.[10] Now it conforms to our moral intuitions. This is done to avoid obvious counter-examples which are morally repugnant. The basic Bio-egalitarian principle would value a child no more than a tree. A hierarchy brings it back into conformity with our ordinary morality. Then we are no longer dealing with a radical view. But is there now any point to the new principle?[11]

4. They borrow the words of the old view—concepts that are taken to be morally relevant such as consciousness, rights, personhood—and either change their meaning (another way to 'just change the subject') or else extend their application in a way that eliminates all significant contrast from their application. For example. Livingston attempts to extend the concept of consciousness to refer to just about every natural phenomenon (1986). This extension severs the conceptual relationship between consciousness and morality, which is based on the idea that we should be concerned about objects to which a course of action *matters*—objects who are subjects, who experience pain and pleasure, who care about what happens. When consciousness is extended to all objects. the concept then becomes empty.

5. They argue that our old way of thinking and talking will inevitably lead to a deterioration of the natural environment and (at best) severely diminished opportunities or (at worst) a destruction of all, including future generation. And this (according to our conventional sense of morality) is morally wrong. What if we believe that an environmental crisis is imminent, and rational persuasion will not get the behavior changes necessary to avert the crisis? Could we then he morally justified in advocating a radical paradigm shift to get people to accept 'new speak', if this would *cause* people (rather than persuade them) to modify their behavior?

An example of this last position can be found in an article on environmental ethics and education which suggests that

> We believe that the seriousness of our environmental predicament suggests the need to develop much more harmonious and respectful relationships within the earth community. Some of the newer concepts in environmental ethics in many ways represent more appropriate ethical models far better suited to the problem at hand (Martin and Beatley, 1993:125).

In other words we should inculcate an ethic of respect and intrinsic value—if we do not the world will come to an end. There is great irony in this view since it attempts to justify a biocentric egalitarian ethic (based on respect for the intrinsic value of nature) on *instrumental* grounds, i.e. on grounds that our *human* interests will not be served unless such an ethic is adopted. This sounds as if we pick and choose an ethic in each situation in order to solve the 'problems at hand'—making the choice of ethic merely a means to some other end. But the whole point of Deep Ecology is to reject both instrumental and 'anthropocentric' arguments!

A further sense in which this is (probably unintentionally) unethical is that it appears to advocate manipulation rather than education or persuasion. Assume that such claims are true (even though we don't believe they are). The problem is then that we would have two classes of people: the elite, for whom the shift is justified on moral grounds—it will save our world—and the masses (including our students), who are unable to grasp the urgency of the crisis (the rationale for change), and who are being manipulated into doing the 'right thing'. This paternalistic elitism would be profoundly undemocratic. History should make us very suspicious of those who want to dominate the world in order to save it. They are often more interested in the domination than the salvation.[12]

AN AUTHENTIC MORAL VISION

A Moral Vision

We believe that, contrary to the arguments of Deep Ecologists, we do have the normative resources from our moral tradition, which can provide the moral basis of *meaningful* sustainable development. The scientistic views that we outlined are distortions of a moral perspective that we have in our grasp. The scientistic account of morality is a truncated notion of morality, one that is impoverishing rather than enriching. And (as we discuss below) the Deep Ecology view, if taken literally, leads to actions which are clearly immoral.

This does not mean that our moral views should he frozen. Of course our moral views can, do, and often should, change. But given what we have said regarding the holistic nature of our thought, such change should be incremental, modeled on a WRE process. Rather than model moral change on a radical

Kuhnian view of science, perhaps a better model is one patterned on the change that occurs in legal institutions or, perhaps in literary criticism.

Nor does this mean that we are closed to other points of view. Other perspectives, either self-generated or the accumulated wisdom of others (other cultures) may well be invaluable in a critical evaluation of our views. But in the final analysis, it is we who must make that judgment, applying our ethical tradition, our intuitions, and our scientific knowledge to the current situation, as best we can, in a process of WRE. The only alternative is totalitarian manipulation (overt or covert) (Rorty, 1991:38).

The Authentic Individual

Unless an authentic moral vision (of the person and of society) is recovered by critical reflection, even incremental change can lead us in very wrong directions. The amalgamation of the (economic) utilitarian conception of morality, the instrumental notion of rationality, the atomistic notion of the individual as an isolated satisfaction maximizer, and the materialistic view of progress as economic progress is a caricature of an authentic moral vision.

The authentic individual—the truly autonomous individual assumed by political liberalism (Rawls, 1993)—far from being an alienated utility maximizer, is an individual situated in a community, a community that is itself situated in a meaningful environment. Only under these circumstances can a person have a basis for validating his or her actions. John Rawls suggests:

> As free persons, citizens recognize one another as having moral power to have a conception of the good. This means that they do not view themselves as inevitably tied to the pursuit of the particular conception of the good and its final ends which they espouse at any given time. Instead, as citizens, they are regarded as, in general, capable of revising and changing this conception on reasonable and rational grounds... (1980:544).

The choice of the ends of life can, indeed must, involve rational reflection. And the reflection required goes beyond the limits of maximizing quantifiable utility. Authentic values—values which reflect our true interests and our true needs—are values such as friendship, love. solidarity, integrity, creativity, harmony. These values give meaning to the world we live in, and thus meaning to our lives.

As David Papineau suggests in his review of E.O. Wilson's book *The Diversity of Life*:

> Killing a species is not just economically unwise... it is wrong. The diversity of nature is as much a part of our heritage as paintings and buildings. It may not be our own creation, but it is an essential

> part of the world that nurtures and makes us human. We quite rightly go to great lengths to preserve the Parthenon and the Mona Lisa. But our descendants will not thank us if at the same time we allow the elephant, the chimpanzee and hundreds of other species to perish (1992).

These are ends worth having, ends higher (to borrow a term from Charles Taylor [1989]) than those presented to us by a materialistic and distorting ideology. These ends can be argued for, but certainly not in terms of instrumental rationality.

Similar remarks can be made regarding the notion of progress. Years ago, Collingwood pointed out that what is seen as progress from one point of view is not necessarily progress from another. He invites us to imagine a community of fish-eaters that has changed their method of catching fish from a less to a more efficient one. Would this be called an example of progress? Collingwood suggests that it may very well not be:

> But from whose point of view is it an improvement? The question must be asked because what is an improvement from one point of view may be the reverse from another (1963:23).

He goes on to suggest that those who reject the change are not being irrational:

> The generation that rejects the change does so because the way of life that it knows and values is built around the old method, which is therefore certain to have social... associations that express the intimacy of its connection with this way of life as a whole (1963: 23).

Thus, to them the change is not progress. A more efficient method of production may produce more material wealth but may, at the same time, severe relations that sustained a viable and meaningful way of life. The idea that progress is a matter of achieving the most efficient means to an end repeats the error of restricting rationality to the instrumental.

CONCLUSION

Our concern here is not with correcting some esoteric theoretical error. The worry lies in the practical application of these ultimate principles which could lead to severely harmful consequences. If we take the Bio-egalitarian position seriously, then people are of no more moral concern than any other life forms. Leopold believes that a civilized man's 'sense of right and wrong may he aroused quite as strongly by desecration of a nearby woodlot as by a famine in China' (1933). And Spitler argues, that if animals and plants have the same inherent worth as humans, killing a human would be considered 'no more morally repre-

hensible than swatting a fly or stepping on a wildflower' (1982:260), a position he considers totally unacceptable, as should we all. Do we really want children to be treated the same way as trees and mosquitoes? When a principle violates our moral intuition so clearly, there is something very wrong with it.

In one way, Deep Ecology bears a disturbing similarity to Communism, Fascism, and Nazism. All advocate that the interests of some collectivity should over-ride those of the individual person. For Communism, the collectivity is the proletariat; for Fascism, the state, for Nazism, the master race; for Deep Ecology, the eco-system. Regardless of the nature of the collectivity, in the end, the consequence is real suffering by real individuals—you, I and our children. Perhaps such principles are only metaphors, although they are seldom presented in this way. If the metaphor becomes literal, it will require (or at least tend to cause) us to denigrate human rights and interests. And this is a real danger.

Our primary purpose is not to provide an argument against Deep Ecology or any other particular view. Rather, it is to make a plea for a pragmatic and incremental approach to the solution of environmental problems, an important although not exclusive concern in the next century.[13] We believe that the notion of sustainable development captures this incremental approach. Depending on the point of view adopted, the idea of a radical 'paradigm shift' is either dangerous or it is consistent with this gradual approach (i.e. it is not really radical).

We have argued that no jettisoning of traditional morality is required, no paradigm shift is required, to provide a sustainable environmental basis for planning. What we do require is a reaffirmation of our deeply entrenched moral values, values that may have been temporarily lost by many in today's alienated and impoverished society. These values include respect for individuals in the context of community, respect for dialogue and for reason (while acknowledging the power of intuition and emotion), more equitable distribution of both political and economic power, and the virtues of moderation, humility and the willingness to change one's mind. These 'old' values also include a concern for the environment, not merely as instrumental to our well-being and survival, but also for its intrinsic value, as something worth preserving for its own sake. We need to recapture a perspective which truly is worth sustaining.

Significant changes are needed in the way we make decisions if planning is to become environmentally sustainable. We plead for a view that is inclusive, a communicative view which strives for an overlapping consensus of all those who seek solution of the environmental crises. We believe that eloquent advocates of sustainability like Beatley can justify their (generally very reasonable) positions without adopting a radical view. The most unproductive thing we could do is to advocate radical paradigm shifts or new absolute metaphysical principles, or to argue about the differences between deep and shallow ecology. This simply causes divisions amongst those who should be allies. Deep Ecologists and Bio-egalitarians and other 'radical environmentalists' are in grave danger of fiddling while Rome (our planet) burns.

NOTES

1. In referring to the new (communicative action) 'paradigm' we are implying a 'paradigm shift' in the moderate (incremental) sense which we discuss later.
2. Of course, such limitations require substantiation, both scientific and moral.
3. Kuhn originally uses 'paradigm shift" in the radical (though perhaps not the most radical) sense: his later use is more incremental.
4. For a more extended discussion of the implications of the extreme view see Stein (1994) and Harper and Stein (1996).
5. The term 'reflective equilibrium' seems to have originated with Goodman (1965). Rawls (1971) brought it into ethical discourse. Daniels (1985) coined the term 'wide reflective equilibrium' to distinguish it from the narrow reflective equilibrium of ethical intuitionists (Nielsen, 1991).
6. Much of this section is based on (Harper and Stein, forthcoming).
7. The notion of a web of concepts and beliefs comes from a philosophical position known as 'holism'. The idea is that we can not justify a concept in isolation; the unit of justification is the whole language.
8. Much of this section is based on Harper and Stein (1993).
9. Quine (1969) demonstrated that no clear line could be drawn between questions of meaning and of fact, and Williams (1972) pointed to the difficulty of maintaining the fact/value distinction in practice.
10. Beatley does argue an obligation to minimize any such impacts.
11. What Beatley seems to want from Bio-egalitarianism is a recognition that 'nature has certain inherent worth which demands respect' (1994: 129). But he doesn't need radical Bio-egalitarianism to get this.
12. We are not attributing such motives to Martin and Beatley, but suggesting they may find themselves in bad company if they go too far along this path.
13. We should not ignore poverty, social inequality, or racism.

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