CHAPTER

9 Green Ideology

Preview

The term 'green' was first used in connection with environmentally-orientated politics when it was employed to describe conservation and preservation movements which had sprung up in late nineteenth-century USA. The term nevertheless became more prominent from the 1970s onwards, first through its use by environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, established in 1971, but more significantly through the tendency of many emerging environmental parties to brand themselves as 'Green parties'. The most influential of these new parties, and the model on which many other such parties were based, was the German Greens (*Die Grünen*), founded in 1980. From this point onwards, the term was adopted more widely, being used to refer, amongst other things, to green philosophy, green politics and green ideology (sometimes called 'ecologism', 'political ecology' or 'greenism').

Green ideology is based on the belief that nature is an interconnected whole, embracing humans and non-humans, as well as the inanimate world. This has encouraged green thinkers to question (but not necessarily reject) the anthropocentric, or human-centred, assumptions of conventional political ideologies, allowing them to come up with new ideas about, among other things, economics, morality and social organization. Nevertheless, there are different strains and tendencies within green ideology. Some greens are committed to 'shallow' ecology (sometimes viewed as environmentalism, as opposed to ecologism), which attempts to harness the lessons of ecology to human ends and needs, and embraces a 'modernist' or reformist approach to environmental change. 'Deep' ecologists, on the other hand, completely reject any lingering belief that the human species is in some way superior to, or more important than, any other species. Moreover, green ideology has drawn from a variety of other ideologies, notably socialism, anarchism and feminism, thereby acknowledging that the relationship between humankind and nature has an important social dimension. Each of these approaches to the environment offers a different model of the ecologically viable society of the future.

Origins and development

Although modern environmental politics did not emerge until the 1960s and 1970s, ecological ideas can be traced back to much earlier times. Many have suggested that the principles of contemporary green ideology, or ecologism (see p. 247), owe much to ancient pagan religions, which stressed the concept of an Earth Mother, and to eastern religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Daoism. However, to a large extent, green ideology was, and remains, a reaction against the process of industrialization. This was evident in the nineteenth century, when the spread of urban and industrial life created a profound nostalgia for an idealized rural existence, as conveyed by novelists such as Thomas Hardy and political thinkers such as the UK libertarian socialist William Morris (1834–96) and Peter Kropotkin (see p. 153). This reaction was often strongest in those countries that had experienced the most rapid and dramatic process of industrialization. For example, Germany's rapid industrialization in the nineteenth century deeply scarred its political culture, creating powerful myths about the purity and dignity of peasant life, and giving rise to a strong 'back to nature' movement among German youth. Such romantic **pastoralism** was most likely to surface during the twentieth century in right-wing political doctrines, not least the 'Blood and Soil' ideas of the German Nazis.

The growth of green ideology since the 1960s has been provoked by the further and more intense advance of industrialization and urbanization, linked to the emergence of post-material sensibilities among young people in particular. Environmental concern has become more acute because of the fear that economic growth is endangering both the survival of the human race and the very planet it lives on. Such anxieties have been expressed in a growing body of literature. Rachel Carson's *The Silent Spring* (1962), a critique of the damage done to wildlife and the human world by the increased use of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals, is often considered to have been the first book to draw attention to a developing ecological crisis. Other important early works included Ehrlich and Harriman's *How to Be a Survivor* (1971), Goldsmith *et al.*'s *Blueprint for Survival* (1972), the unofficial UN report *Only One Earth* (1972) and the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth* (1972).

A new generation of activist pressure groups have also developed – ranging from Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth to animal liberation activists and so-called 'eco-warrior' groups – campaigning on issues such as the dangers of pollution, the dwindling reserves of fossil fuels, deforestation and animal experimentation. Together with established and much larger groups, such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature, this has led to the emergence of a high profile and increasingly influential green movement. From the 1980s onwards, environmental questions have been kept high on the political agenda by green parties, which now exist in most industrialized countries, often modelling themselves on the pioneering efforts of the

PASTORALISM
(German) Literally, a 'world-view'; a distinctive, even unique, set of presuppositions that structure how a people understands and engages emotionally with the world.

Key concept
Ecologism

Ecologism is, broadly, the belief in nature as an interconnected whole, embracing humans and non-humans as well as the inanimate world. A distinction is often drawn between ecologism and environmentalism. 'Environmentalism' refers to a moderate or reformist approach to the environment that responds to ecological crises but without fundamentally questioning conventional assumptions about the natural world. It thus includes the activities of most environmental pressure groups and is a stance that may be adopted by a range of political parties. Ecologism, in contrast, is an ideology in its own right (otherwise known as green ideology), in that it adopts an ecocentric or biocentric perspective that accords priority to nature or the planet, and thus differs from the anthropocentric, or human-centred, perspective of conventional ideological traditions.

German Greens. Environmental issues have also become an increasingly major focus of international concern and activity. Indeed, as discussed in the final section of the chapter, the environment could arguably be regarded as *the* global political issue. The UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972, was the first attempt to establish an international framework to promote a coordinated approach to environmental problems. The idea of 'sustainable development' (see p. 256) was advanced in the 1987 Brundtland Report, a product of the work of the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, and by the Rio 'Earth Summit' in 1992 (see p. 262).

Core themes: return to nature

Thinking about the environment only acquired a fully ideological character through the rise of the green movement. By the end of the 1970s, green thinking was widely viewed as an ideology in its own right, having gone beyond a mere pressure-group-like concern for the environment, commonly called '**environmentalism**'. However, green ideology takes ideological thinking in novel and challenging directions. Its starting point is largely or entirely ignored by other political ideologies: the idea of an intrinsic relationship between humankind and nature (or non-human nature, to avoid confusion with the notion of 'human nature'). Green theorists believe that conventional ideologies commit the sad, even comic, mistake of believing that humans are the centrepiece of existence. David Ehrenfeld (1978) called this the 'arrogance of **humanism**'. Instead of preserving and respecting the Earth and the diverse species that live on it, humans have sought to become, in the words of John Locke (see p. 52), 'the masters and possessors of nature'. Green ideology has therefore uncovered new ideological terrain. It differs from both the 'politics of material

ENVIRONMENTALISM
A concern about the natural environment and particularly about reducing environmental degradation: a policy orientation rather than an ideological stance.

HUMANISM
A philosophy that gives moral priority to the achievement of human needs and ends.

distribution', as practised by the classical ideologies (notably liberalism, conservatism and socialism) and 'identity politics' (see p. 282), as practised by most of the so-called 'new' ideologies that have emerged since the 1960s (such as second-wave feminism, ethnocultural nationalism, religious fundamentalism (see p. 188) and multiculturalism). What makes green ideology deeper and, in a sense, more radical than other political ideologies is that it practises the 'politics of sensibilities'. By attempting to re-orientate people's relationship with and appreciation of 'the non-human' – the world 'out there' – green ideology sets out to do nothing less than transform human consciousness and, in the process, radically reconfigure our moral responsibilities. In order to give expression to this vision of interconnectedness, green thinkers have been forced to search for new concepts and ideas in the realm of science, or rediscover ancient ones from the realms of religion and mythology. The central themes of green ideology are:

- ecology
- holism
- sustainability
- environmental ethics
- from having to being.

Ecology

The central principle of all forms of green thought is **ecology**, a term coined in 1866 by the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel. Ecology developed as a distinct branch of biology through a growing recognition that plants and animals are sustained by self-regulating natural systems – ecosystems – composed of both living and non-living elements. Simple examples of an ecosystem are a field, a forest or, as illustrated in Figure 9.1, a pond. All ecosystems tend towards a state of harmony or equilibrium through a system of self-regulation. Biologists refer to this as **homeostasis**. Food and other resources are recycled, and the population size of animals, insects and plants adjusts naturally to the available food supply. However, such ecosystems are not 'closed' or entirely self-sustaining: each interreacts with other ecosystems. A lake may constitute an ecosystem, but it also needs to be fed with fresh water from tributaries, and receive warmth and energy from the sun. In turn, the lake provides water and food for species living along its shores, including human communities. The natural world is therefore made up of a complex web of ecosystems, the largest of which is the global ecosystem, commonly called the 'ecosphere' or 'biosphere'.

The development of scientific ecology radically altered our understanding of the natural world and of the place of human beings within it. Ecology conflicts quite dramatically with the notion of humankind as 'the master' of nature, and instead suggests that a delicate
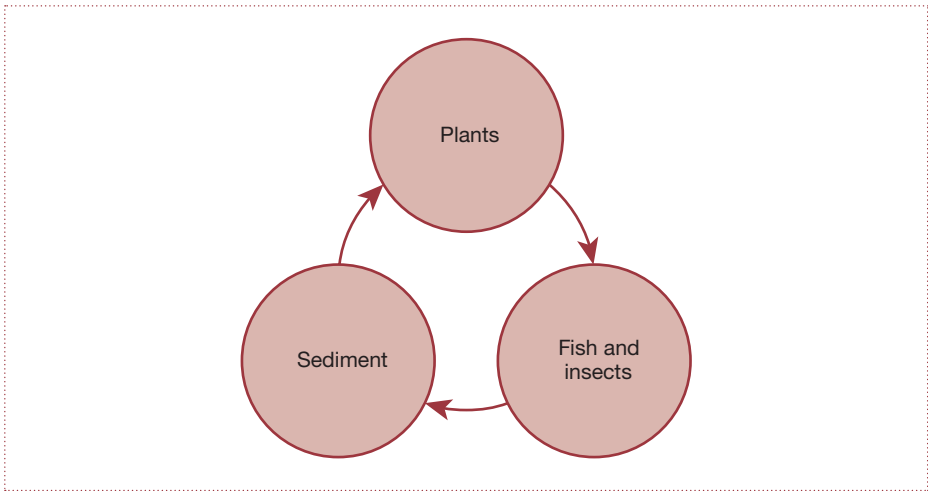
ECOLOGY
The study of the relationship between living organisms and the environment; ecology stresses the network of relationships that sustains all forms of life.

HOMEOSTASIS
The tendency of a system, especially the physiological systems of higher animals, to maintain internal equilibrium.

Figure 9.1   **A pond as an ecosystem**

network of interrelationships that had hitherto been ignored sustains each human community, indeed the entire human species. Green thinkers argue that humankind currently faces the prospect of environmental disaster precisely because, in its pas-sionate but blinkered pursuit of material wealth, it has upset the 'balance of nature' and endangered the very ecosystems that make human life possible. This has happened in a broad variety of ways. These include the exponential growth in the world's human population; the depletion of finite and irreplaceable fuel resources such as coal, oil and natural gas; the eradication of tropical rain forests that help clean the air and regulate the Earth's climate; the pollution of rivers, lakes and forests and the air itself; the use of chemical, hormonal and other additives to foodstuffs; and the threat to biodiversity that has resulted from the thousandfold increase in species extinction that has coincided with the dominance of the human species.

Green ideology provides a radically different vision of nature and the place of human beings within it, one that favours **ecocentrism** and challenges **anthropocentrism**. However, green or environmental thinkers have applied ecological ideas in different ways, and sometimes drawn quite different conclusions. The most important distinction in the environmental move-ment is between what Arne Naess (see p. 265) termed '**shallow ecology**' and '**deep ecology**'. The 'shallow' or

ECOCENTRISM
A theoretical orientation that gives priority to the maintenance of ecological balance rather than the achievement of human ends.

ANTHROPOCENTRISM
A belief that human needs and interests are of overriding moral and philosophical importance; the opposite of ecocentrism.

SHALLOW ECOLOGY
A green ideological perspec-tive that harnesses the lessons of ecology to human needs and ends, and is associated with values such as sustain-ability and conservation.

DEEP ECOLOGY
A green ideological perspec-tive that rejects anthropo-centrism and gives priority to the maintenance of nature, and is associated with values such as biocentric equality, diversity and decentralization.

PERSPECTIVES ON... NATURE

LIBERALS see nature as a resource to satisfy human needs, and thus rarely question human dominion over it. Lacking value in itself, nature is invested with value only when it is transformed by human labour, or when it is harnessed to human ends.

CONSERVATIVES often portray nature as threatening, even cruel, characterized by an amoral struggle and harshness that also shapes human existence. Humans may be seen as part of nature within a 'great chain of being', their superiority nevertheless being enshrined in their status as custodians of nature.

SOCIALISTS, like liberals, have viewed and treated nature as merely a resource. However, a romantic or pastoral tradition within socialism has also extolled the beauty, harmony and richness of nature, and looks to human fulfilment through a closeness to nature.

ANARCHISTS have often embraced a view of nature that stresses unregulated harmony and growth. Nature therefore offers a model of simplicity and balance, which humans would be wise to apply to social organization in the form of social ecology.

FASCISTS have often adopted a dark and mystical view of nature that stresses the power of instinct and primal life forces, nature being able to purge humans of their decadent intellectualism. Nature is characterized by brutal struggle and cyclical regeneration.

FEMINISTS generally hold nature to be creative and benign. By virtue of their fertility and disposition to nurture, women are often thought to be close to nature and in tune with natural forces, while men, creatures of culture, are out of step or in conflict with nature.

GREENS, particularly deep ecologists, regard nature as an interconnected whole, embracing humans and non-humans as well as the inanimate world. Nature is sometimes seen as a source of knowledge and 'right living', human fulfilment coming from a closeness to and respect for nature, not from the attempt to dominate it.

'humanist' perspective accepts the lessons of ecology but uses them essentially to further human needs and ends. In other words, it preaches that if we conserve and cherish the natural world, it will continue to sustain human life. This amounts to a form of 'light' or 'enlightened' anthropocentrism, and is reflected in a concern with issues such as cutting back on the use of finite, non-renewable resources and reducing pollution. While some regard such a stance as a form of 'weak' ecologism, others classify it as environmentalism to distinguish it more clearly from ecologism. The 'deep' perspective, however, advances a form of 'strong' ecologism that completely rejects any lingering belief that the human species is in some way superior to, or more important than, any other species, or indeed nature itself. It is based on the more

TENSIONS WITHIN... GREEN IDEOLOGY		
'Shallow' ecology	VS	'Deep' ecology
environmentalism	⬌	ecologism
'light' anthropocentricism	⬌	ecocentrism
science	⬌	mysticism
humankind	⬌	nature
limited holism	⬌	radical holism
instrumental value	⬌	value-in-nature
modified humanism	⬌	biocentric equality
animal welfare	⬌	animal rights
sustainable growth	⬌	anti-growth
personal development	⬌	ecological consciousness

challenging idea that the purpose of human life is to help sustain nature, and not the other way around. (Deep ecology is discussed in greater detail on pp. 268–70.)

Holism

Traditional political ideologies have typically assumed that human beings are the masters of the natural world, and have therefore regarded nature as little more than an economic resource. In that sense, they have been part of the problem and not part of the solution. In *The Turning Point* (1982), Fritjof Capra traced the origin of such ideas to the scientists and philosophers, such as René Descartes (1596–1650) and Isaac Newton (1642–1727). The world had previously been seen as organic; however, these seventeenth-century philosophers portrayed it as a machine, whose parts could be analysed and understood through the newly discovered scientific method. Science enabled remarkable advances to be made in human knowledge and provided the basis for the development of modern industry and technology. So impressive were the fruits of science, that intellectual inquiry in the modern world has come to be dominated by scientism. However, Capra argued that orthodox science, what he referred to as the 'Cartesian–Newtonian paradigm', amounts to the philosophical basis of the contemporary environmental crisis. Science treats nature as a machine, implying that, like any other machine, it can be tinkered with, repaired, improved on or even replaced. If human beings are to learn that

SCIENTISM
The belief that scientific method is the only value-free and objective means of establishing truth, and is applicable to all fields of learning.

they are part of the natural world rather than its masters, Capra suggested that this fixation with the 'Newtonian world-machine' must be overthrown and replaced by a new paradigm.

In searching for this new paradigm, ecological thinkers have been attracted to a variety of ideas and theories, drawn from both modern science and ancient myths and religions. However, the unifying theme among these ideas is the notion of holism. The term 'holism' was coined in 1926 by Jan Smuts, a Boer general and twice prime minister of South Africa. He used it to describe the idea that the natural world could only be understood as a whole and not through its individual parts. Smuts believed that science commits the sin of reductionism: it reduces everything it studies to separate parts and tries to understand each part in itself. In contrast, holism suggests that each part only has meaning in relation to other parts, and ultimately in relation to the whole. For example, a holistic approach to medicine would consider not just physical ailments but would see these as a manifestation of imbalances within the patient as a whole, taking account of psychological, emotional, social and environmental factors.

Although many green thinkers criticize science, others have suggested that modern science may offer a new paradigm for human thought. Capra, for example, argued that the Cartesian–Newtonian world-view has now been abandoned by many scientists, particularly by physicists like himself. During the twentieth century, with the development of so-called 'new physics', physics moved a long way beyond the mechanistic and reductionist ideas of Newton. The breakthrough was achieved at the beginning of the twentieth century by the German-born US physicist Albert Einstein (1879–1955), whose theory of relativity fundamentally challenged the traditional concepts of time and space. Einstein's work was taken further by quantum theory, developed by physicists such as Niels Bohr (1885–1952) and Verner Heisenberg (1901–76). In quantum theory the physical world is understood not as a collection of individual molecules, atoms or even particles, but as a system, or, more accurately, a network of systems. A systems view of the world concentrates not on individual building blocks, but on the principles of organization within the system. It therefore stresses the relationships within the system and the integration of its various elements within the whole.

HOLISM
A belief that the whole is more important than its parts; holism implies that understanding is gained by studying relationships among the parts.

SYSTEM
A collection of parts that operate through a network of reciprocal interactions and thereby constitute a complex whole.

An alternative and particularly fertile source of new concepts and theories has been religion. In *The Tao of Physics* (1975), Capra drew attention to important parallels between the ideas of modern physics and those of eastern mysticism. He argued that religions such as Hinduism, Daoism and Buddhism, particularly Zen Buddhism, have long preached the unity or oneness of all things, a discovery that western science only made in the twentieth century. Many in the green movement have been attracted by eastern mysticism, seeing in it both a philosophy that gives expression to ecological

wisdom and a way of life that encourages compassion for fellow human beings, other species and the natural world. Other writers believe that ecological principles are embodied in monotheistic religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam, which regard both humankind and nature as products of divine creation. In such circumstances, human beings are viewed as God's stewards on Earth, being invested thereby with a duty to cherish and preserve the planet.

However, perhaps the most influential concepts for modern greens have been developed by looking back to pre-Christian spiritual ideas. Primitive religions often drew no distinction between human and other forms of life, and, for that matter, little distinction between living and non-living objects. All things are alive: stones, rivers, mountains and even the Earth itself, often conceived of as 'Mother Earth'. The idea of an Earth Mother has been particularly important for green thinkers trying to articulate a new relationship between human beings and the natural world, especially so for those sympathetic to ecofeminism, examined later in the chapter.

In a similar vein, James Lovelock (see p. 265) developed the idea of the Gaia hypothesis (see p. 253). The idea of Gaia has developed into an 'ecological ideology' that conveys the powerful message that human beings must respect the health of the planet, and act to conserve its beauty and resources. It also contains a revolutionary vision of the relationship between the animate and inanimate world. However, Gaia philosophy does not always correspond to the concerns of the green movement. Humanist ecologists have typically wished to change policies and attitudes in order to ensure the continued survival of the human species. Gaia, on the other hand, is non-human, and Gaia theory suggests that the health of the planet matters more than that of any individual species living on it at present. Lovelock has suggested that those species that have prospered have been ones that have helped Gaia to regulate its own existence, while any species that poses a threat to the delicate balance of Gaia, as green thinkers argue that humans currently do, is likely to be extinguished. Lovelock has nevertheless been strongly committed to science, and, contrary to the views of many in the environmental movement, has stressed the importance of nuclear power in providing a solution to environmental problems.

Key concept
Gaia Hypothesis

The Gaia hypothesis advances the idea that the Earth is best understood as a living entity that acts to maintain its own existence (Gaia is the name of the Greek goddess of the Earth). The basis for the Gaia hypothesis is that the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans and soil exhibit precisely the same kind of self-regulating behaviour that characterizes other forms of life. Gaia has maintained 'homeostasis', a state of dynamic balance, despite the major changes that have taken place in the solar system. The most dramatic evidence of this is the fact that although the sun has warmed up by more than 25 per cent since life began, the temperature on Earth and the composition of its atmosphere have remained virtually unchanged.

Sustainability

Green thinkers argue that the ingrained assumption of conventional political creeds, articulated by virtually all mainstream political parties (so-called 'grey' parties), is that human life has unlimited possibilities for material growth and prosperity. Indeed, green thinkers commonly lump capitalism and socialism together, and portray them both as examples of 'industrialism'. A particularly influential metaphor for the environmental movement has been the idea of 'spaceship Earth', because this emphasizes the notion of limited and exhaustible wealth. The idea that Earth should be thought of as a spaceship was first suggested by Kenneth Boulding (1966). Boulding argued that human beings have traditionally acted as though they live in a 'cowboy economy', an economy with unlimited opportunities, like the American West during the frontier period. He suggested that this encourages, as it did in the American West, 'reckless, exploitative, and violent behaviour'. However, as a spaceship is a capsule, it is a 'closed' system. 'Open' systems receive energy or inputs from outside; for example, all ecosystems on Earth – ponds, forests, lakes and seas – are sustained by the sun. However, 'closed' systems, as the Earth itself becomes when it is thought of as a spaceship, show evidence of '**entropy**'. All 'closed' systems tend to decay or disintegrate because they are not sustained by external inputs. Ultimately, however wisely and carefully human beings behave, the Earth, the sun, and indeed all planets and stars, will be exhausted and die. When the 'entropy law' is applied to social and economic issues it produces very radical conclusions.

ENTROPY
A tendency towards decay or disintegration, exhibited by all 'closed' systems.

FOSSIL FUELS
Fuels that are formed from the decomposition of buried dead organisms, making them rich in carbon; examples include oil, natural gas and coal.

No issue reflects the law of entropy more clearly than the 'energy crisis'. Industrialization and mass affluence have been made possible by the exploitation of coal, gas and oil reserves, providing fuel for power stations, factories, motor cars, aeroplanes and so on. These fuels are **fossil fuels**. They are also non-renewable: once used up they cannot be replaced. In *Small Is Beautiful* (1973), E. F. Schumacher (see p. 265) argued that human beings have made the mistake of regarding energy as an 'income' that is being constantly

Key concept
Industrialism

The term 'industrialism', as used by environmental theorists, relates to a 'super-ideology' that encompasses capitalism and socialism, left-wing and right-wing thought. As an economic system, industrialism is characterized by large-scale production, the accumulation of capital and relentless growth. As a philosophy, it is dedicated to materialism, utilitarian values, absolute faith in science and a worship of technology. Many green thinkers thus see industrialism as 'the problem'. Ecosocialists, however, blame capitalism rather than industrialism (which ignores important issues such as the role of ownership, profit and the market), while ecofeminists argue that industrialism has its origins in patriarchy.

topped-up each week or each month, rather than as 'natural capital' that they are forced to live off. This mistake has allowed energy demands to soar, especially in the industrialized West, at a time when finite fuel resources are, green thinkers warn, close to depletion and unlikely to last to the end of the twenty-first century. As the spaceship draws towards the close of the 'fossil-fuel age', it approaches dis-integration because, as yet, there are insufficient alternative sources of energy to compensate for the loss of coal, oil and gas.

Not only have humans failed to recognize that they live within the constraints of a 'closed' ecosystem, but they have also been unwisely cavalier in plundering its resources. Garrett Hardin (1968) developed a particularly influential model to explain why over-exploitation of environmental resources has occurred, in the form of the 'tragedy of the commons'. The parable of the 'tragedy of the commons' sheds light on the behaviour of individuals within the community, the actions of groups within society, and the strategies adopted by states within the international system. However, the parable also highlights why it is often so difficult to tackle environmental problems at any level. Any viable solution to the environmental crisis must offer a means of dealing with the 'tragedy of the commons'.

Nevertheless, green economics is not only about warnings and threats; it is also about solutions. Entropy may be an inevitable process; however, its effects can be slowed down or delayed considerably if governments and private citizens respect ecological principles. Green thinkers argue that the human species will only survive and prosper if it recognizes that it is merely one element of a complex biosphere, and that only a healthy, balanced biosphere will sustain human life. Policies and actions must therefore be judged by the principle of '**sustainability**'. Sustainability

SUSTAINABILITY
The capacity of a system to maintain its health and continue in existence over a period of time.

sets clear limits on human ambitions and material dreams because it requires that production does as lit-tle damage as possible to the fragile global ecosystem. For example, a sustainable energy policy must be based on a dramatic reduction in the use of fossil fuels and a

Key concept
Tragedy of the Commons

The idea of the 'tragedy of the commons' draws parallels between global environmental degradation and the fate of common land before the introduction of enclosures. Common land or common fisheries stocks encourage individuals to act in rationally self-interested ways, each exploiting the resources available to satisfy their needs and the needs of their families and communities. However, the collective impact of such behaviour may be devastating, as the vital resources on which all depend become depleted or despoiled. Thus, as Hardin (1968) put it, 'Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all'. The parable of the 'tragedy of the commons' is usually used to justify tackling environmental problems either by strengthening political authority or by restricting population growth.

search for alternative, renewable energy sources such as solar energy, wind power and wave power. These are by their very nature sustainable and can be treated as 'income' rather than 'natural capital'.

Sustainability, however, requires not merely the implementation of government controls or tax regimes to ensure a more enlightened use of natural resources, but, at a deeper level, the adoption of an alternative approach to economic activity. This is precisely what Schumacher (1973) sought to offer in his idea of 'Buddhist economics'. For Schumacher, Buddhist economics is based on the principle of 'right livelihood' and stands in stark contrast to conventional economic theories, which assume that individuals are nothing more than 'utility maximizers'. Buddhists believe that, in addition to generating goods and services, production facilitates personal growth by developing skills and talents, and helps to overcome egocentredness by forging social bonds and encouraging people to work together. Such a view moves economics a long way from its conventional obsession with wealth creation, creating what Schumacher called economics 'as if people mattered'.

There is nevertheless considerable debate about what sustainability implies in practice. Reformist or **modernist ecologists** support 'weak' sustainability, which tries to reconcile ecology with economic growth through getting richer but at a slower pace. One way in which this could be achieved would be through changes to the tax system, either to penalize and discourage pollution or to reduce the use of finite resources. However, radical ecologists, who include both **social ecologists** and deep ecologists, support (if to different degrees) 'strong' sustainability, which places far greater stress on preserving 'natural capital' and is more critical of economic growth. If, as some radical ecologists argue, the origin of the ecological crisis lies in materialism, consumerism and a fixation with economic growth, the solution lies in 'zero growth' and the construction of a 'post-industrial age' in which

MODERNIST ECOLOGY
A reformist tendency within green politics that seeks to reconcile ecology with the key features of capitalist modernity.

SOCIAL ECOLOGY
A broad tendency within green politics that links ecological sustainability to radical social change, or the eco-anarchist principle that human communities should be structured according to ecological principles.

Key concept
Sustainable Development

Sustainable development refers to 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland Report, 1987). It therefore embodies two concepts: (1) the concept of need, particularly the essential needs of the world's poor; and (2) the concept of limitations, especially related to the environment's ability to meet future as well as present needs. So-called *weak* sustainability takes economic growth to be desirable but simply insists that growth must be limited to ensure that ecological costs do not threaten its long-term sustainability, allowing 'human capital' to be substituted for 'natural capital'. *Strong* sustainability rejects the pro-growth implications of weak sustainability, and focuses just on the need to preserve and sustain 'natural capital'.

people live in small, rural communities and rely on craft skills. This could mean a fundamental and comprehensive rejection of industry and modern technology – literally a 'return to nature'.

Environmental ethics

Green politics, in all its forms, is concerned with extending moral thinking in a number of novel directions. This is because conventional ethical systems are clearly anthropocentric, orientated around the pleasure, needs and interests of human beings. In such philosophies, the non-human world is invested with value only to the extent that it satisfies human ends. One ethical issue that even humanist or 'shallow' ecologists grapple with extensively is the question of our moral obligations towards future generations (see p. 258). However, the notion of cross-generational justice has also been criticized. Conventional moral thinkers have sometimes argued that, as all rights depend on reciprocity, it is absurd to endow people who have yet to be born with rights that impose duties on people currently alive, since the unborn cannot discharge any duties towards the living. Moreover, in view of the potentially unlimited size of future generations, the burdens imposed by 'futurity' are, in practical terms, incalculable. The present generation may, therefore, either be making sacrifices for the benefit of future generations who may prove to be much better off than themselves, or their sacrifices may be entirely inadequate to meet future needs.

An alternative approach to environmental ethics involves applying moral standards and values developed in relation to human beings to other species and organisms. The most familiar attempt to do this is in the form of '**animal rights**'. Peter Singer's (1976) case for animal welfare had considerable impact on the growing animal liberation movement. Singer argued that an altruistic concern for the well-being of other species derives from the fact that, as sentient beings, they are capable of suffering. Drawing on utilitarianism, he pointed out that animals, like humans, have an interest in avoiding physical pain, and he therefore condemned any attempt to place the interests of humans above those of animals as '**speciesism**'. However, altruistic concern for other species does not imply equal treatment. Singer's argument does not apply to non-sentient life forms such as trees, rocks and rivers. Moreover, the moral imperative is the avoidance of suffering, with special consideration being given to more developed and self-aware animals, notably to the great apes. On the other hand, Singer's argument implies that a reduced moral consideration should be given to human foetuses and mentally impaired people who have no capacity for suffering (Singer, 1993).

Nevertheless, the moral stance of deep ecology goes much further, in particular by suggesting that nature has value in its own right; that is, intrinsic value. From this perspective, environmental ethics have nothing

ANIMAL RIGHTS
Moral entitlements that are based on the belief that as animals are non-human 'persons', they deserve the same consideration (at least in certain areas) as human beings.

SPECIESISM
A belief in the superiority of one species over other species, through the denial of their moral significance.

Key concept
Future Generations

The idea that the needs and interests of 'future generations', those yet to be born, should be taken into account in ethical reasoning is deeply rooted in green thought because the ecological impact of present actions may not be felt for decades or even centuries. What can be called cross-generational justice can be seen as a 'natural duty', an extension of a moral concern for our children and, by extension, their children, and so on. Concern for future generations has also been linked to the idea of 'ecological stewardship'. This is the notion that the present generation is merely the custodian of the wealth that has been generated by past generations and so is obliged to conserve it for the benefit of future generations.

to do with human instrumentality and cannot be articulated simply through the extension of human values to the non-human world. Goodin (1992), for instance, attempted to develop a 'green theory of value', which holds that resources should be valued precisely because they result from natural processes rather than human activity. However, since this value stems from the fact that the natural landscape helps people to see 'some sense and pattern in their lives' and to appreciate 'something larger' than themselves, it embodies a residual humanism that fails to satisfy some deep ecologists. The distinctive ethical stance of deep ecology is discussed at greater length later in the chapter.

From having to being

Green ideology seeks not only to revise conventional moral thinking, but also to reshape our understanding of happiness and human well-being. In particular, green thinkers have advanced a critique of **materialism** and consumerism. Consumerism is a psycho-cultural phenomenon whereby personal happiness is equated with the consumption of material possessions, giving rise to what the German psychoanalyst and social philosopher Erich Fromm (1979) called a 'having' attitude of mind. For green theorists, 'having' – the disposition to seek fulfilment in acquisition and control – is deficient in at least two respects. First, it tends to undermine, rather than enhance, psychological and emotional well-being. As modern advertising and marketing techniques tend to create ever-greater material desires, they leave consumers in a constant state of dissatisfaction because, however much they acquire and consume, they always want more. Consumerism thus works not through the satisfaction of desires, but through the generation of new desires, keeping people in an unending state of neediness, want and aspiration. Such thinking is sustained by the emerging discipline of 'happiness economics', which suggests that once citizens enjoy fairly comfortable living standards it is not absolute wealth but relative wealth that affects subjective well-being (Layard, 2011).

MATERIALISM
An emphasis on material needs and their satisfaction, usually implying a link between pleasure or happiness and the level of material consumption.

Key concept
Postmaterialism

Postmaterialism is a theory that explains the nature of political concerns and values in terms of levels of economic development. It is based loosely on Abraham Maslow's (1908–70) 'hierarchy of needs', which places self-esteem and self-actualization above material or economic needs. Postmaterialism assumes that conditions of material scarcity breed egoistical and acquisitive values, meaning that politics is dominated by economic issues (who gets what). However, in conditions of widespread prosperity, individuals tend to express more interest in 'postmaterial' or 'quality of life' issues. These are typically concerned with morality, political justice and personal fulfilment, and include gender equality, world peace, racial harmony, ecology and animal rights.

Second, materialism and consumerism provide the cultural basis for environmental degradation. This occurs as the 'consumer society' encourages people to place short-term economic considerations ahead of longer-term ecological concerns, in which case nature is nothing other than a commodity or resource. In this light, green ideology can be seen to be associated with the ideas of postmaterialism and anti-consumerism.

In line with green ideology's postmaterial orientation, green thinkers have tended to view human development as dangerously unbalanced: human beings are blessed with massive know-how and material wealth, but possess precious little 'know-why'. Humankind has acquired the ability to fulfil its material ambitions, but not the wisdom to question whether these ambitions are sensible, or even sane. As Schumacher (1973) warned, 'Man is now too clever to survive without wisdom.' However, some 'shallow' or humanistic ecologists have serious misgivings when this quest for wisdom draws green ideology into the realms of religious mysticism or New Age ideas. Many greens, particularly those who subscribe to deep ecology, have nevertheless embraced world-views that are quite different from those that have traditionally dominated political thought in the developed West. This, they argue, is the basis of the 'paradigm shift' that green ideology aims to bring about, and without which it is doomed to repeat the mistakes of the 'old' politics because it cannot move beyond its concepts and assumptions.

In their search for an alternative model of human well-being, green theorists have generally emphasized the importance of 'quality of life' issues and concerns, thereby divorcing happiness from a simple link to material acquisition. Such thinking is taken most seriously by eco-anarchists, ecofeminists and especially deep ecologists. In line with Fromm, they have been more willing to contrast 'having' with 'being', the latter representing satisfaction that is derived from experience and sharing, leading to personal growth, even spiritual awareness. The key feature of 'being' as an attitude of mind is that it seeks to transcend the self, or individual ego, and to recognize that each person is intrinsically linked to all other living things, and, indeed, to the universe itself. The Australian philosopher Warwick Fox (1990) claimed to go beyond deep ecology in embracing 'transpersonal ecology', the

essence of which is the realization that 'things are', that human beings and all other entities are part of a single unfolding reality. For Naess, self-realization is attained through a broader and deeper 'identification with others'. Such ideas have often been shaped by Eastern religions, most profoundly by Buddhism, which has been portrayed as an ecological philosophy in its own right. One of the key doctrines of Buddhism is the idea of 'no self', the notion that the individual ego is a myth or delusion, and that awakening or enlightenment involves transcending the self and recognizing the oneness of life.

Types of green ideology

Deep ecologists typically dismiss conventional political creeds as merely different versions of anthropocentricism, each embodying an anti-nature bias. They claim to have developed an entirely new ideological paradigm (although many reject the term 'ideology' because of its association with human-centred thinking), developed through the radical application of ecological and holistic principles. Nevertheless, other ecological or environmental thinkers have drawn inspiration, to a greater or lesser extent, from established political traditions. Such a stance is based on the belief that these traditions contain values and doctrines that are capable of accommodating a positive view of non-human nature, and of shedding light on why the ecological crisis has come about and how it can be tackled. In this sense, green ideology, like nationalism and feminism, can be regarded as a cross-cutting ideology. At different times, conservatives, liberals, socialists, anarchists and feminists have claimed a special sympathy with the environment, associating green ideology with very different goals and themes (see Figure 9.2, p. 267). The most significant sub-traditions within green ideology are:

- modernist ecology
- social ecology
- deep ecology.

Modernist ecology

Modernist or reformist ecology refers to the form of green ideology that is practised by most environmental pressure groups and by a growing range of mainstream political parties. Modernist ecology is reformist in that it seeks to advance ecological principles and promote 'environmentally sound' practices, but without rejecting the central features of capitalist modernity – individual self-seeking, materialism, economic growth and so on. It is thus very clearly a form of 'shallow' or humanist ecology. The key feature of modernist ecology is the recognition that there are environmental 'limits to growth', in the sense that pollution, increased CO_2 emissions, the exhaustion of non-renewable energy sources and other forms of environmental degradation ultimately threaten prosperity and economic

performance. The watchword of this form of green ideology is therefore sustainable development (in the sense of 'weak' sustainability) or, more specifically, environmentally-sustainable capitalism. As, in economic terms, this means 'getting richer more slowly', modernist ecology extends moral and philosophical sensibilities only in modest directions. Indeed, it is often condemned by more radical ecologists as hopelessly compromised: part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

The two main ideological influences on modernist ecology are liberalism and conservatism. Liberalism has, at best, an ambivalent relationship with green ideology. Radical ecologists criticize individualism (see p. 27) as a stark example of anthropocentrism, and condemn utilitarianism (see p. 46), the moral philosophy that underpins much of classical liberalism, on the grounds that it equates happiness with material consumption. On a larger scale, liberalism's atomistic view of society has been seen as the political expression of the 'Cartesian–Newtonian paradigm' (Capra, 1982). However, the stress found within modern liberalism on self-realization and developmental individualism can be said to sustain a form of 'enlightened' anthropocentrism, which encourages people to take into account long-term, and not merely short-term, interests, and to favour 'higher' pleasures (including an appreciation of the natural world) over 'lower' pleasures (such as material consumption). This can be seen, for example, in John Stuart Mill's (see p. 53) criticism of rampant industrialization and his defence of a stationary population and a steady-state economy, on the grounds that the contemplation of nature is an indispensable aspect of human fulfilment.

Conservatives, for their part, have evinced a sympathy for environmental issues, on two main grounds. First, ecoconservatism has drawn on a romantic and nostalgic attachment to a rural way of life threatened by the growth of towns and cities. It is clearly a reaction against industrialization and the idea of 'progress'. It does not envisage the construction of a post-industrial society, founded on the principles of cooperation and ecology, but rather a return to, or the maintenance of, a more familiar pre-industrial one. Such environmental sensibilities typically focus on the issue of conservation and on attempts to protect the natural heritage – woodlands, forests and so on – as well as the architectural and social heritage. The conservation of nature is therefore linked to a defence of traditional values and institutions.

Second, conservatives have advocated market-based solutions to environmental problems, even espousing the idea of '**green capitalism**'. Market-based environmental solutions include the adoption of tax structures that incentivize 'eco-friendly' individual and corporate behaviour, and emissions trading schemes such as that proposed by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on climate change. The theory of green capitalism has two features. The first is the assumption that the market mechanism can and will respond to pressure from more ecologically aware consumers by forcing firms to produce 'environmentally sound' goods and adopt 'green' technologies. Such thinking relies on the idea of

GREEN CAPITALISM
The idea that a reliance on the capitalist market mechanism will deliver ecologically sustainable outcomes, usually linked to assumptions about capitalism's consumer responsiveness.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN ACTION . . .
The Rio 'Earth Summit'

EVENTS: In June 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (better known as the 'Earth Summit') took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. With more than 150 states in attendance, together with 1,400 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 8,000 journalists, this was the largest international conference so far held. The conference approved a comprehensive plan to promote sustainable development, at the heart of which was the Framework Agreement on Climate Change. The Framework Agreement called for greenhouse gases to be stabilized at safe levels on the basis of equity and in accordance with states' 'common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities'.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Rio 'Earth Summit' was a milestone conference in establishing the idea of environmental limits to growth, thereby challenging the then-dominant belief that markets effectively maintain a balance between population, resources and the environment. Moreover, it was the first international conference to give significant attention to the issue of climate change, helping to push climate change to the top of the international environmental agenda. In so doing, it was supported by both the burgeoning influence of environmental NGOs and a growing body of scientific evidence upholding the notion of anthropocentric climate change. The Framework Agreement on Climate Change was of particular importance, in that it provided the basis for all subsequent international agreements on the issue, including the Kyoto Protocol, negotiated in 1997, the only conference to date to set binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

However, effective international action on environmental matters has been difficult to achieve, especially in relation to climate change, where greenhouse gas emissions have continued to increase. Even the Kyoto process had a limited impact, as binding emission targets only applied to developed states, and, even then, were rejected by major emitters such as the USA, Russia and Australia. The key problem is that, in the absence of a supranational global authority, states will only cooperate in areas where their national interests overlap, and, in the case of environmental issues, these are rare. This is because tackling climate change imposes significant costs on states in terms of investment in 'green' technologies, but especially through accepting lower levels of economic growth. Confronted by a trade-off between ecology and the economy, states are encouraged to be 'free riders', enjoying the benefits of a healthier atmosphere without having to pay for them.

consumer sovereignty and acknowledges the impact of the trend towards so-called 'responsible consumption'.

The second way in which capitalism is supposedly 'green' is linked to the idea that long-term corporate profitability can only be achieved in a context of sustainable development. Capitalism, in short, has no interest in destroying the planet.

> **CONSUMER SOVEREIGNTY**
> The notion, based on the theory of competitive capitalism, that consumer choice is the ultimately determining factor within a market economy.

However, there are important differences within modernist ecology over the proper balance between the state and capitalism. Although some supporters of green capitalism favour unregulated market competition, most modernist ecologists support a managed capitalist system in which environmental degradation is treated as an externality, or 'social cost', that can only be dealt with effectively by government.

Social ecology

Social ecology is a term coined by Murray Bookchin (see p. 265) to refer to the idea that ecological principles can and should be applied to social organization, in which case an anarchist commune can be thought of as an ecosystem. However, the term can also be used more broadly to refer to a range of ideas, each of which recognizes that environmental degradation is, in some way, linked to existing social structures. The advance of ecological principles therefore requires a process of radical social change. Social ecology, thus defined, encompasses three distinct traditions:

- ecosocialism
- eco-anarchism
- ecofeminism.

Ecosocialism

There is a distinct socialist strand within the green movement, which has been particularly pronounced among the German Greens, many of whose leaders have been former members of far-left groups. Ecosocialism has drawn from the pastoral socialism of thinkers such as William Morris, who extolled the virtues of small-scale craft communities living close to nature. However, it has more usually been associated with Marxism. For example, Rudolph Bahro (1982), argued that the root cause of the environmental crisis is capitalism. The natural world has been despoiled by industrialization, but this is merely a consequence of capitalism's relentless search for profit. In this view, capitalism's anti-ecological bias derives from a number of sources. These include that private property encourages the belief that humans are dominant over nature; that the market economy 'commodifies' nature, in the sense that it turns it into something that only has exchange-value

and so can be bought and sold; and that the capitalist system breeds materialism and consumerism, and so leads to relentless growth. From this perspective, the idea of 'green capitalism' is a contradiction in terms. Any attempt to improve the environment must therefore involve a process of radical social change, some would say a social revolution.

The core theme of ecosocialism is the idea that capitalism is the enemy of the environment, while socialism is its friend. However, as with socialist feminism, such a formula embodies tension between two elements, this time between 'red' and 'green' priorities. If environmental catastrophe is nothing more than a by-product of capitalism, environmental problems are best tackled by abolishing capitalism, or at least taming it. Therefore, ecologists should not form separate green parties or set up narrow environmental organizations, but work within the larger socialist movement and address the real issue: the economic system. On the other hand, socialism has also been seen as another 'pro-production' political creed: it espouses exploiting the wealth of the planet, albeit for the good of humanity, rather than just the capitalist class. Socialist parties have been slow to adopt environmental policies because they, like other 'grey' parties, continue to base their electoral appeal on the promise of economic growth. As a result, ecologists have often been reluctant to subordinate the green to the red, hence the proclamation by the German Greens that they are 'neither left nor right'.

Ecosocialists argue that socialism is naturally ecological. If wealth is owned in common it will be used in the interests of all, which means in the long-term interests of humanity. However, it is unlikely that ecological problems can be solved simply by a change in the ownership of wealth. This was abundantly demonstrated by the experience of state socialism in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, which produced some of the world's most intractable environmental problems. Examples include the Aral Sea in Central Asia, once the fourth biggest lake in the world, which has shrunk to 10 per cent of its original size as a result of the re-routing of two rivers; and the Chernobyl nuclear explosion in the Ukraine in 1986.

Eco-anarchism

Perhaps the ideology that has the best claim to being environmentally sensitive is anarchism. Some months before the publication of Rachel Carson's *The Silent Spring*, Murray Bookchin brought out *Our Synthetic Environment* ([1962] 1975). Many in the green movement also acknowledge a debt to nineteenth-century anarcho-communists, particularly Peter Kropotkin. Bookchin (1977) suggested that there is a clear correspondence between the ideas of anarchism and the principles of ecology, articulated in the idea of 'social ecology', based on the belief that ecological balance is the surest foundation for social stability. Anarchists believe in a stateless society, in which harmony develops out of mutual respect and social solidarity among human beings. The richness of such a society is founded on its variety and diversity. Green thinkers also believe that balance or harmony develops spontaneously within nature, in the form of ecosystems, and that these, like

👥 KEY FIGURES IN... GREEN IDEOLOGY

Ernst Friedrich ('Fritz') Schumacher (1911–77) A German-born UK economist and environmental theorist, Schumacher championed the cause of human-scale production and advocated 'Buddhist economics', or 'economics as if people mattered'. In his seminal work *Small Is Beautiful* (1973), Schumacher attacked conventional economic thinking for its obsession with growth for growth's sake, and condemned the value system on which it is based, particularly the fact that it is divorced from nature. In contrast, he stressed the importance of morality and 'right livelihood'.

Arne Naess (1912–2008) A Norwegian philosopher, writer and mountaineer, Naess has been described as the 'father' of deep ecology. His philosophy, Ecosophy T (the 'T' is for the Tvergastein hut in which he lived in solitude high on a Norwegian mountain), which was influenced by the ideas of Spinoza, Gandhi's ethic of non-violence and Taoist thought, was based on the assertion that 'the Earth does not belong to human beings', as all creatures have an equal right to live and bloom.
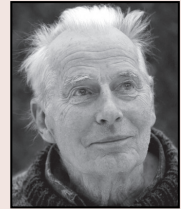
James Lovelock (born 1919) A UK atmospheric chemist, inventor and environmental thinker, Lovelock is best known as the inventor of the 'Gaia hypothesis'. This proposes that the Earth is best understood as a complex, self-regulating, living 'being', implying that the prospects for humankind are closely linked to whether the species helps to sustain, or threaten, the planetary ecosystem. Lovelock was also the first person to alert the world to the global presence of CFCs in the atmosphere, and he is, controversially, a supporter of nuclear power.

Murray Bookchin (1921–2006) A US anarchist social philosopher and environmentalist, Bookchin was a leading proponent of the idea of 'social ecology'. As an anarchist, Bookchin emphasized the potential for non-hierarchic cooperation within conditions of post-scarcity and radical decentralization. Arguing that ecological principles should be applied to social organization, he linked the environmental crisis to the breakdown of the organic fabric of both society and nature. His major works in this field include *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982) and *Re-enchanting Humanity* (1995).
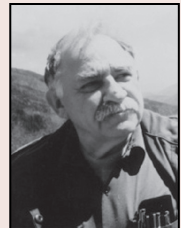
Caroline Merchant (born 1936) A US ecofeminist philosopher and historian of science, Merchant's work has highlighted links between gender oppression and the 'death of nature'. Merchant developed a feminist critique of a scientific revolution that explained environmental degradation ultimately in terms of the application by men of a mechanistic view of nature. On this basis, she argued that a global ecological revolution requires a radical restructuring of gender relations. Merchant's chief works include *The Death of Nature* (1983) and *Radical Ecology* (1992).

Rudolf Bahro (1936–98) A German writer and green activist, Bahro is best known for his attempts to reconcile socialism with ecological theories. In *Socialism and Survival* (1982), Bahro presented capitalism as the root cause of the environmental crisis, and socialism as its solution, thereby linking the issues of social justice and ecological sustainability. However, Bahro subsequently moved beyond conventional ecosocialism, arguing, in *From Red to Green* (1984), that the ecological crisis had become so pressing that it must take precedence over the class struggle.

anarchist communities, require no external authority or control. The anarchist rejection of government within human society thus parallels the green thinkers' warnings about human 'rule' within the natural world. Bookchin therefore likened an anarchist community to an ecosystem, and suggested that both are distinguished by respect for the principles of diversity, balance and harmony.

Anarchists have also advocated the construction of decentralized societies, organized as a collection of communes or villages, a social vision to which many deep ecologists are also attracted. Life in such communities would be lived close to nature, each community attempting to achieve a high degree of self-sufficiency. Such communities would be economically diverse; they would produce food and a wide range of goods and services, and therefore contain agriculture, craftwork and small-scale industry. Self-sufficiency would make each community dependent on its natural environment, spontaneously generating an understanding of organic relationships and ecology. In Bookchin's view, decentralization would lead to 'a more intelligent and more loving use of the environment'.

Without doubt, the conception that many green theorists have of a postindustrial society has been influenced by the writings of Kropotkin and William Morris. The green movement has also adopted ideas such as decentralization, participatory democracy and direct action from anarchist thought. However, even when anarchism is embraced as providing a vision of an ecologically sound future, it is seldom accepted as a means of getting there. Anarchists believe that progress will only be possible when government and all forms of political authority are overthrown. In contrast, many in the green movement see government as an agency through which collective action can be organized, and therefore as the most likely means through which the environmental crisis can be addressed, at least in the short term. They fear that dismantling or even weakening government may simply give free rein to those forces that generated industrialization and blighted the natural environment in the first place.

Ecofeminism

The idea that feminism offers a distinctive and valuable approach to green issues has grown to such a point that ecofeminism has developed into one of the major philosophical schools of environmentalist thought. Its basic theme is that ecological destruction has its origins in patriarchy: nature is under threat not from humankind but from men and the institutions of male power. Feminists who adopt an androgynous or sexless view of human nature argue that patriarchy has distorted the instincts and sensibilities of men by divorcing them from the 'private' world of nurturing, home-making and personal relationships. The sexual division of labour thus inclines men to subordinate both women and nature, seeing themselves as 'masters' of both. From this point of view, ecofeminism can be classified as a particular form of social ecology. However, many ecofeminists subscribe to essentialism, in that their theories are based on the belief that there are fundamental and ineradicable differences between women and men.

	Modernist ecology	Social ecology			Deep ecology
		Ecosocialism	Eco-anarchism	Ecofeminism	
Key themes	• Enlightened anthropo-centrism • Limits to growth • 'Weak' sustainability • Future generations	• End of commodifi-cation • Collectivize wealth • Production for use	• Decentraliz-ation • Self-management • Critique of consumerism	• Essential difference between women and men • Women linked to 'nature' • Men linked to 'culture'	• Radical holism • Value-in-nature • Biocentric equality • 'Strong' sustainability
Core goal	Balance between ecology and capitalist modernity	Social revolution: replace capitalism with socialism	Dismantle structures of political authority	Overthrow patriarchy and establish matriarchy	Paradigm shift: cast off mechanistic/atomistic world-view

(Above table headed by a double-arrow axis: ← Anthropocentrism Ecocentrism →)

Figure 9.2   Types of green ideology

Such a position is adopted, for instance, by Mary Daly in *Gyn/Ecology* (1979). Daly argued that women would liberate themselves from patriarchal culture if they aligned themselves with 'female nature'. The notion of an intrinsic link between women and nature is not a new one. Pre-Christian religions and 'primitive' cultures often portrayed the Earth or natural forces as a goddess, an idea resurrected in the Gaia hypothesis. Modern ecofeminists, however, highlight the biological basis for women's closeness to nature, in particular the fact that they bear children and suckle babies. The fact that women cannot live separate from natural rhythms and processes in turn structures their politico-cultural orientation. Traditional 'female' values therefore include reciprocity, cooperation and nurturing, values that have a 'soft' or ecological character. The idea that nature is a resource to be exploited or a force to be subdued is more abhorrent to women than men, because they recognize that nature operates in and through them, and intuitively sense that personal fulfilment stems from acting with nature rather than against it. The overthrow of patriarchy therefore promises to bring with it an entirely new relationship between human society and the natural world, meaning that ecofeminism shares with deep ecology a firm commitment to ecocentrism.

If there is an essential or 'natural' bond between women and nature, the relationship between men and nature is quite different. While women are creatures of nature, men are creatures of culture: their world is synthetic or (literally)

man-made, a product of human ingenuity rather than natural creativity. In the male world, then, intellect is ranked above intuition, materialism is valued over spirituality, and mechanical relationships are emphasized over holistic ones. In politico-cultural terms, this is reflected in a belief in self-striving, competition and hierarchy. The implications of this for the natural world are clear. Patriarchy, in this view, establishes the supremacy of culture over nature, the latter being nothing more than a force to be subdued, exploited or risen above. Ecological destruction and gender inequality are therefore part of the same process in which 'cultured' men rule over 'natural' women.

Deep ecology

The term 'deep ecology' (sometimes called 'ecocentrism', 'ecosophy' or 'ecophilosophy') was coined in 1973 by Arne Naess. For Naess, deep ecology is 'deep' because it persists in asking deeper questions concerning 'why' and 'how', and is thus concerned with fundamental philosophical questions about the impact of the human species on the biosphere. The key belief of deep ecology is that ecology and anthropocentrism (in all its forms, including 'enlightened' anthropocentrism) are simply irreconcilable; indeed, anthropocentrism is an offence against the principle of ecology.

This rejection of anthropocentrism has had profound moral and political implications. Deep ecologists have viewed nature as the source of moral goodness. Nature thus has 'intrinsic' or inherent value, not just 'instrumental' value deriving from the benefits it brings to human beings. A classic statement of the ethical framework of deep ecology is articulated in Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* ([1948] 1968) in the form of the 'land ethic': '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'. Such a moral stance implies '**biocentric equality**'. Naess (1989) expressed this in the idea that all species have an 'equal right to live and bloom', reflecting the benefits of **biodiversity**. Such ecocentric ethical thinking has been accompanied by a deeper and more challenging philosophical approach that amounts to nothing less than a new **metaphysics**, a new way of thinking about and understanding the world. In addressing metaphysical issues, deep ecology is radical in a way and to a degree that does not apply elsewhere in ideological thought. Deep ecology calls for a change in consciousness, specifically the adoption of 'ecological consciousness', or 'cosmological consciousness'. At the heart of this is an 'inter-subjective' model of selfhood that allows for no distinction between the self and the 'other', thereby collapsing the distinction between humankind and nature.

BIOCENTRIC EQUALITY
The principle that all organisms and entities in the biosphere are of equal moral worth, each being an expression of the goodness of nature.

BIODIVERSITY
The range of species within a biotic community, often thought to be linked to its health and stability.

METAPHYSICS
The branch of philosophy that is concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of existence, or being.

Deep ecology is also associated with a distinctive analysis of environmental degradation and how it should be tackled. Instead of linking the environmental crisis to particular policies or a specific political, social or economic system (be it industrialization, capitalism, patriarchy or whatever), deep ecologists argue that it has more profound cultural and intellectual roots. The problem lies in the mechanistic world-view that has dominated the thinking of western societies since about the seventeenth century, and which subsequently came to affect most of the globe. Above all, this dominant paradigm is dualistic: it understands the world in terms of distinctions (self/other, humankind/nature, individual/society, mind/matter, reason/emotion and so on) and thus allows nature to be thought of as inert and valueless in itself, a mere resource for satisfying human ends. In this light, nothing less than a paradigm change – a change in how we approach and think about the world – will properly address the challenge of environmental degradation. Deep ecologists have looked to a wide range of ideas and theories to bring about this paradigm change, including, as discussed earlier, modern physics, Eastern mysticism and primitive religion. Each of these is attractive because it offers a vision of radical holism. In emphasizing that the whole is more important than its individual parts, they are clearly non-dualistic and provide a basis for an ecocentrism that prioritizes the maintenance of ecological balance over the achievement of narrowly human ends.

In addition to its moral and philosophical orientation, deep ecology has been associated with a wider set of goals and concerns. These include:

- *Wilderness preservation*. Deep ecologists seek to preserve nature 'wild and free', based on the belief that the natural world, unspoilt by human intervention, is a repository of wisdom and morality. **Preservationism** is nevertheless different from conservationism, in that the latter is usually taken to imply protecting nature in order to satisfy long-term human ends. The 'wilderness ethic' of deep ecology is often linked to the ideas of Henry David Thoreau (see p. 153), whose quest for spiritual truth and self-reliance led him to flee from civilized life and live for two years in virtual solitude, close to nature, an experience described in *Walden* ([1854] 1983).
- *Population control*. Although greens from many traditions have shown a concern about the exponential rise in the human population, deep ecologists have placed a particular emphasis on this issue, often arguing that a substantial decrease in the human population is the only way of ensuring the flourishing of non-human life. To this end, some deep ecologists have rejected aid to the developing world; called for a reduction in birth rates, especially in the developing world; or argued that immigration from the developing world to the developed world should be stopped.

PRESERVATIONISM
The disposition to protect natural systems, often implying keeping things 'just as they are' and restricting the impact of humans on the environment.

- *Simple living*. Deep ecologists believe that humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of nature except, as Naess put it, to satisfy vital needs. This is a philosophy of 'walking lighter on the Earth'. It certainly implies an emphasis on promoting the quality of life ('being') rather than the quantity of possessions ('having'), and is often linked to a postmaterial model of self-realization, commonly understood as **self-actualization**. This implies being 'inwardly rich but outwardly poor'.
- *Bioregionalism*. This is the idea that human society should be reconfigured in line with naturally-defined regions, each 'bioregion', in effect, being an ecosystem. **Bioregionalism** is clearly at odds with established territorial divisions, based on national or state borders. Although deep ecologists seldom look to prescribe how humans should organize themselves within such bioregions, there is general support for self-reliant, self-supporting, autonomous communities.

Nevertheless, the role and importance of deep ecology within larger green political thought has been a matter of considerable controversy. Not only has the significance of deep ecology, in terms of the philosophical and ethical debates it has stimulated, greatly outweighed its practical importance within the green movement, but it has also attracted sometimes passionate criticism from fellow green thinkers. Humanist ecologists roundly reject the idea that their views are merely a 'shallow' version of deep ecology, arguing instead that deep ecology is philosophically and morally flawed. The philosophical flaw of deep ecology is the belief that anthropocentrism and ecology are mutually exclusive. From this perspective, a concern with human well-being, or at least long-term and sustainable human well-being, requires respect for ecology rather than its betrayal. The moral flaws of deep ecology stem from the idea of the 'intrinsic' value of nature. In the humanist view, environmental ethics cannot be non-anthropocentric because morality is a human construct: 'good' and 'bad' are only meaningful when they are applied to human beings and their living conditions. Deep ecology has also come under attack from social ecologists, notably Murray Bookchin. For Bookchin, deep ecology is not only socially conservative (because it ignores the radical social change that needs to accompany any 'inner' revolution) but, in turning its back on rationalist thought and embracing mysticism, it is also guilty of succumbing to what Bookchin called 'vulgar Californian spiritualism' or 'Eco-la-la'.

SELF-ACTUALIZATION
An 'inner', even quasi-spiritual, fulfilment that is achieved by transcending egoism and materialism.

BIOREGIONALISM
The belief that the territorial organization of economic, social and political life should take into account the ecological integrity of bio-regions.

Green ideology in a global age

The environment is often viewed as the archetypal example of a 'global' issue. This is because environmental processes are no respecters of national borders; they have an intrinsically transnational character. As countries are peculiarly environmentally

vulnerable to the activities that take place in other countries, meaningful progress on environmental issues can only be made at the international or even global level. This lesson has been particularly underlined by the issue of climate change, regarded by some as the most urgent and important challenge currently confronting the international community.

It is also clear that the modern green movement has a marked global orientation, reflected in strong concerns about globalization (see p. 20) and its tendency, as a result, to operate in alliance with the wider anti-globalization or anti-capitalist movement. Anti-capitalism (see p. 161) thus has a marked ecological dimension. This stems from the belief that industrialism and its underpinning values – competitive individualism, materialism, consumerism and so on – have become more deeply entrenched as a result of economic globalization. Globalization, in this sense, is a form of hyper-industrialism. While green activists have expressed general concerns about globalization, a key focus of their criticism has often been the policies of the institutions responsible for managing the modern global system. For example, the liberalization of global trade carried out under the auspices of the World Trade Organization has been held responsible for ever-higher levels of pollution, and the World Bank has been accused of engineering ecologically unsustainable 'development'.

However, major factors stand in the way of the worldwide spread of the green movement, making it difficult – and perhaps impossible – for green ideology to develop into a truly global ideology. One of these factors is that, although effective action over the environment has to be international or global in character, cooperation at this level has been very difficult to bring about. This occurs because what states accept would be generally beneficial to them may not be the same as what benefits each of them individually. The collective good therefore conflicts with the sum of states' national interests. On the issue of climate change, for instance, international cooperation is seriously hampered by the costs that reducing CO_2 emissions would impose on individual states, in terms of investment in sometimes expensive mitigation and adaptation strategies as well as, most important, accepting lower levels of economic growth. If each state has an interest in being a 'free rider', benefiting from the sacrifices that other states make without making similar sacrifices itself, international action over climate change – and perhaps over environmental issues generally – is doomed to be inadequate.

A further problem is that the environment may be destined to remain a concern only for the developed world. As far as the developing world is concerned, the strictures of green ideology appear to deny them the opportunity to catch up with the industrialized West. Western states developed through large-scale industrialization, the exploitation of finite resources and a willingness to pollute the natural world, practices they now seek to deny to the developing world. Such divisions can be illustrated clearly by the problem of burden-sharing over climate change. From the perspective of the global South, the developed world has a historical responsibility for the accumulated stock of carbon emitted since the beginning of the

industrial age. In effect, developed countries have used up a large part of the safe, carbon-absorbing capacity of the atmosphere, and made substantial gains in terms of economic growth and prosperity as a result. The developing world, in contrast, is both disproportionately badly affected by climate change and has the fewest capabilities to tackle it. This implies either that emissions targets should not be imposed on developing countries (as in the Kyoto Protocol), or that such targets should take into account historical responsibilities and be structured accordingly, imposing significantly heavier burdens on the developed world than the developing world. The theory of postmaterialism, moreover, suggests that not until poverty levels in the developing world have reduced substantially will populations be prepared to prioritize quality of life issues, such as the environment, over their desire for prosperity and economic growth.

Finally, it is questionable whether the green movement, even supported by the larger anti-capitalist movement, has the capacity seriously to check the advance of economic globalization. Apart from the enormous, and perhaps irresistible, power of the corporate and other interests that are driving the globalization process, the anti-growth message with which green ideology is associated presents political difficulties. The politics of zero, or even sustainable, growth may be so electorally unattractive to populations (in both the developed and developing worlds) that it proves to be democratically impossible. If this is the case, green ideology may simply prove to be an urban fad, a form of post-industrial romanticism, which is likely to be restricted to the young and the materially affluent. A further challenge facing the green movement is the very scale of the changes it calls for. Green ideology – especially, but not only, in the guise of deep ecology – is associated with theories, values and sensibilities that are entirely at odds with those that have traditionally dominated industrialized societies. The problem confronting green ideology may therefore be that it is based on a philosophy that is deeply alien to the culture it must influence if it is to be successful. However, this may also be the source of its appeal.