

~~~~~  
**Article**  
~~~~~

Global Ethics and Quality of Life

Richard Evanoff


~~~~~  
**Article**  
~~~~~

Global Ethics and Quality of Life

Richard Evanoff*

Introduction

This paper is the third of a three-part series which attempts to outline a bioregional paradigm for a global ethic as an alternative to the dominant development paradigm (for preliminary definitions of the two paradigms, see Evanoff 2009c). The series offers a critique of the central notion of the dominant development paradigm that continued economic growth will eventually help developing countries “catch up” with the developed countries in terms of material affluence. The first paper in the series (Evanoff 2009b) argued that this goal is not only unachievable but also undesirable because it undermines the ability of the environment to sustain both human and non-human flourishing and reduces both natural and cultural diversity. The second paper (Evanoff 2010) suggested that the dominant development paradigm exacerbates rather than overcomes social inequalities both within and between cultures. The third paper, presented here, contends that the dominant development paradigm fails to promote genuine well-being in terms of both human health and quality of life for all but a wealthy minority. The series concludes that a bioregional alternative to the dominant development paradigm is better able to meet the goals of a global ethic based on ecological integrity, social justice, and human flourishing (proposed in Evanoff 2005).

“What people want”

Despite evidence indicating that the earth has finite limits which make the “catch-up” model of development impossible to achieve, many

* Professor, School of International Politics, Economics and Communication, Aoyama Gakuin University

people continue to believe that more growth is good and that nothing should be done to curb economic activity and our present consumer culture (for critiques of consumerism see Durning 1992; Schor 1998; Westra and Werhane 1998; Frank 1999; Hayden 1999; Rosenblatt 1999; Schor and Holt 2000; DeGraaf, Wann, and Naylor 2001; Princen, Maniates, and Conca 2002; Cohen 2003; Dawson 2003; de Geus 2003; Ehrlich and Ehrlich 2004; Myers and Kent 2004; Guha 2006; Jackson 2006; Robinson 2006; Trainer 2007). Consumers in the developed world want to continue enjoying their affluent lifestyles, while people in the developing world aspire to achieve those same affluent lifestyles. Profit-driven corporations make great efforts to both stimulate and satisfy consumer demand, the media continues to promote highly consumptive lifestyles through advertising, and governments tend to favor pro-growth policies that are politically popular but unlikely to be sustainable over the long term.

The dominant development paradigm is frequently defended on the grounds that development along capitalist lines is “what people want” and so it is incorrect to claim, as development critics do, that development is something *imposed* on people. From a neo-liberal perspective the wants of individuals are inviolable and any attempt to deny individuals “free choice” with respect to how those wants are satisfied is oppressive and authoritarian. This argument supports the contention that people have a *right* to development, an idea enshrined in the UN’s Declaration on the Right to Development.

While the right to development can be understood in a variety of (sometimes conflicting) ways, it is frequently interpreted in accordance with the dominant development paradigm as the right to attain first-world lifestyles. On this interpretation it is hypocritical for people in developed countries to deprive people in developing countries of the opportunity to attain equal levels of material affluence; critics of the dominant development paradigm can thus be portrayed as being opposed to the goal of achieving international social justice. Since capitalist-style development is also usually taken as being the sole means by which people can overcome poverty and destitution, critics of the domi-

nant development paradigm can also be portrayed as being misanthropic and unconcerned about human suffering.

Supporters of the bioregional paradigm are clearly opposed to the “right to development” if development is defined as the right of everyone in the world to attain the overconsumptive lifestyles which now prevail in the first world. Traditional societies, when not exploited by outside powers, are in fact sometimes better able to provide for a full range of basic human physical, psychological, and social needs in an environmentally sensitive way than industrial societies are. If, however, the “right to development” is defined as the right of everyone in the world to meet basic human needs in a socially just and environmentally sustainable way (*cf.* Dower 1992), then the bioregional paradigm not only supports this right but, it can be argued, also provides the best means for achieving it.

The argument that wants are inviolable ignores the fact that a great deal of “what people want” is not based on a rational assessment of genuine need but is socially constructed. Shiva writes, “. . . affluence and overproduction generate new and artificial needs and create the impulse for over-consumption, which requires the increased exploitation of natural resources” (1992, p. 190). Following Norton (1984; 1987, p. 9), a distinction can be made between “felt-preferences,” which are based on immediate wants, and “considered preferences,” which are based on thoughtful reflection. Choices made on the basis of felt-preferences are unreflected on and do not consider the consequences the choices will have for oneself, for others, and for the environment. Choices made on the basis of considered preferences, however, are reflected on in an attempt to imaginatively determine what consequences the choices will have on oneself, others, and the environment.

A relational theory of human need

While it has been suggested that a bioregional global ethic should concern itself with meeting basic human needs, the concept of what constitutes a basic human need has been notoriously difficult to define in development theory (*cf.* Aman 1991). The early “basic needs” approach

tended to define needs in terms of the objective goods and services people need in order to achieve a certain minimum standard of living.

One difficulty with this approach is that while humans obviously have a basic need for food, shelter, clothing, health care, and the like, *how* these needs are satisfied is culturally variable. The actual goods and services an individual needs to function well in a given society is to a large extent determined by how the society itself is organized. In some regions of the United States, for example, an automobile is in fact an absolute necessity. Without an automobile one would literally be unable to satisfy one's other basic needs for work, food, and other essential goods since the whole society has been designed around automobile use. Obviously in countries with good public transportation systems, such as Japan, an automobile is not a necessity in the same way. If Americans reconstructed their society in a way which provided adequate public transportation for all, the use of automobiles could no longer be regarded as a necessity.

A second difficulty with the basic needs approach is that the attempt to specify in advance a list of the objective goods and services which individuals are presumed to need denies individuals the right to decide for themselves what constitutes a "good life." The basic needs approach can thus be used to justify the paternalistic idea that decisions about the goods and services to be provided should be made by governments and development agencies, rather than by citizens themselves on the basis of their own considered preferences.

In direct opposition to the objectivism of the basic needs approach is the view that needs are entirely subjective and/or culturally determined. Beckerman, for example, contends that the Brundtland Report's attempt to define a sustainable economy as one which enables humans to meet their basic needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their basic needs is indefensible:

. . . [S]uch a criterion is totally useless since "needs" are a subjective concept. People at different points in time, or in different income levels, or with different cultural or notional backgrounds, will differ

with respect to what “needs” they regard as important. Hence, the injunction to enable future generations to meet their needs does not provide any clear guidance as to what has to be preserved in order that future generations may do so (1994, p. 194).

Beckerman’s subjectivism is consistent with a liberal orientation which reduces needs to a matter of felt-preferences. This liberal position appears inadequate, however, because consumers may choose to consume goods which they want but do not need or, conversely, not to consume goods which they need but do not want. Determining what one needs, therefore, cannot be reduced to a matter of felt-preference. Some goods may be objectively desirable even though they are not subjectively desired. While it may be impossible to surmise what future generations will want, it is by no means impossible to surmise what they will need.

Largely to get around difficulties with both the objectivist and the subjectivist accounts, Sen sought to define needs not in terms of the acquisition of particular goods and services but rather in terms of the opportunities (“capabilities”) individuals have to engage in certain activities (“functionings”) which enable them to achieve a good life (for a succinct summary of this position see Sen 1993). Sen defends individual autonomy while simultaneously affirming the objectivity of capabilities and functionings, i.e., the notion that there are certain general opportunities people must have if they are to enjoy a genuinely high quality of life. Doyal and Gough (1991) have similarly attempted to reconcile objectivist and subjectivist theories by advancing a two-pronged approach that emphasizes, for example, both the need for health, insofar as health is a precondition for all other human functionings, and the need for autonomy, meaning that individuals should have the ability to create meaningful and worthwhile lives for themselves.

While the views just described are indeed successful in overcoming the objective-subjective dichotomy of the previous positions, they fail to link a concept of needs to the larger social and environmental conditions which set the parameters in which choices are made. The concept of autonomy in particular fails to address the fact that while the choices

individuals make may contribute to their own well-being, they may simultaneously have negative consequences for others and for the environment. To the extent that the choices individuals make have consequences only for themselves, the liberal contention that society should not interfere with autonomous choice may be defensible. But to the extent that the choices individuals make have negative consequences for others and for the environment, they are no longer a purely individual affair but become a matter of public deliberation. In such cases, individuals do not have the exclusive right to choose, but rather society has the right, indeed the obligation, to limit the choices which individuals are able to make.

As an alternative, a relational theory of human needs can be posited which defines needs in terms of the ability of individuals to maximally self-actualize themselves in the context of a given set of social and environmental circumstances. Unlike Aristotelian approaches (*cf.* Nussbaum 1993), which seek to establish an essentialist definition of what constitutes human flourishing (*eudamonia*), a relational view sees “flourishing” in the context of the specific forms of interaction people have with both their natural and their social environments; needs are therefore subject to evolutionary change and cultural variation.

Personal autonomy, in this view, must be seen in the context of such relationships. In deciding whether or not a particular lifestyle choice is justified, it must be considered not only in light of the rights people have as individuals but also in light of the responsibilities they have to others and to nature. Autonomy can be legitimately constrained when individuals engage in actions which create socially unjust or environmentally degrading situations. From a relational perspective it is impossible to evaluate the various goals both individuals and societies set for themselves in isolation from the various ethical relationships they have with other individuals, other societies, and the environment.

This goal-directed nature of need fulfillment is captured in Doyal and Gough’s “grammar of needs,” which follows the formula: “*A* needs *X* in order to *Y*” (1991, p. 39). *Y* is the specified goal and *X* the means undertaken to achieve it. It is clear, however, that needs can be satisfied

through a variety of different means. Max-Neef (1991) makes a useful distinction between needs and satisfiers. While certain human needs, such as the needs for clean air, safe food, personal fulfillment, and social interaction can be regarded, within reasonable parameters, as “universal” (recognizing, for example, that some individuals may have a greater need for food or social interaction than others), the means for satisfying these needs may, to some extent, be personally and culturally variable. All humans have a need for food, for example, but the *kind* of food that is eaten will vary from person to person and culture to culture.

While there is room for a great deal of diversity in how needs are satisfied, Max-Neef contends that satisfiers should be chosen which fulfill several needs at the same time and do not come into conflict with the satisfaction of other needs. For example, children who play computer games may satisfy their need for leisure but only on the basis of an isolated, passive, and environmentally insensitive consumerism. Children who play games outdoors with friends not only satisfy their need for leisure, but also get exercise and develop social skills, all in environmentally sound ways.

The ethical dimension of Max-Neef’s model becomes apparent in his contention that satisfiers should be chosen not simply in accordance with how well they fulfill an individual’s need but also in accordance with the impact the use of a particular satisfier has on social justice and environmental integrity. A tomato that is locally produced at fair wages in an organic manner satisfies not only the nutritional needs of the individual but also meets the requirements of social justice and environmental integrity; a tomato that is produced in socially unjust and environmentally destructive ways for the global market may also satisfy the nutritional needs of the individual but not meet the requirements of social justice and environmental integrity (see Bahouth 1994 and the discussion in Evanoff 2009a).

How a product is produced is therefore morally relevant. This view is contrary to free trade doctrines enforced by the WTO which hold that countries cannot set up protective trade barriers against goods produced in another country which are made in socially exploitive or environ-

mentally damaging ways, e.g., soccer balls made by child labor or tuna caught with driftnets. By regarding all choices as a matter of consumer preference, public debate on the ethical dimensions of free trade is intentionally suppressed while corporations continue to maximize profits in the absence of any form of democratic social control.

Developing the full range of human potential

In accordance with a triadic model of environmental ethics, based on ecological integrity, social justice, and human flourishing (Evanoff 2005), basic human needs should be satisfied in ways that maintain both social justice and environmental integrity. A high quality of life should be defined not in terms of attaining overconsumptive first-world lifestyles but rather in terms of providing both for the basic material needs of individuals and for their full psychological, social, and cultural development. Basic physiological needs, which roughly correspond to Doyal and Gough's concept of "health," are undoubtedly the most universal precisely because they are biological rather cultural (although differences in the biological constitution of individuals may still make them slightly variable). Physiological needs can be fairly objectively defined as those needs which must be satisfied if a human being is to enjoy both life and health. The basic needs for clean air, water, food, shelter, and so on, fall into this category. It can be further argued that the health needs of the individual are dependent upon a healthy environment: basic physiological needs cannot be satisfied in an environment with polluted air, polluted water, degraded land, inadequate material resources, and so forth.

Psychological needs are also important, however. Mere survival in the biological sense does not allow individuals to reach their full potential as human beings. Basic needs, therefore, cannot be defined purely in physiological terms. In Maslow's (1954) "hierarchy of needs," the full development of the human personality requires the satisfaction not only of physiological and security needs, but also of love, esteem, self-actualization, cognitive, and aesthetic needs. All such taxonomies are necessarily incomplete, of course. The human personality is capable of differentiating itself in a virtually infinite variety of ways and it is likely,

therefore, that the ability of some individuals to realize their full potential may involve actualizing a range of possibilities that is much wider than those which appear on Maslow's list. It is also clear that while needs may be ordered hierarchically, "lower" needs can on occasion be trumped by "higher" needs (e.g., a writer foregoing sleep in order to work on his book).

Psychological needs are more difficult to specify precisely because they involve choosing from among various courses of action. While fairly objective standards can be established for determining, say, the amount of caloric intake a particular individual needs, it becomes more difficult to objectively specify how much affection or intellectual stimulation that same individual may need. Psychological needs, therefore, are more subject to personal and cultural variation. Nonetheless, it can be agreed that the full development of the human personality requires the satisfaction not only of material, but also of social and spiritual needs. This accords with the contention of deep ecologists (*cf.* Devall and Sessions 1985, pp. 66–67) that the self realizes itself not isolation from, but in the context of, the relations it has with others both in society and in nature. Social ecologists similarly affirm "... an ideal of a many-sided self, in which diverse aspects are not repressed, but rather attain a mutually compatible development. The self is seen as an organic whole, yet as a whole in constant process of self-transformation and self-transcendence" (Clark 1993, p. 351).

From this perspective efforts to create a global consumer society place a reductionist emphasis on fulfilling material needs to the exclusion of our equally important needs for love, belonging, intellectual stimulation, aesthetic contemplation, self-actualization, and interaction with both others and nature. We are reduced to being little more than producers and consumers in the context of the global market, rather than full human beings with aspirations for personal and social growth which may extend well beyond what mere consumer goods can offer. Humans become, in Marcuse's (1964) pregnant phrase, "one-dimensional." The one-sided emphasis on production and consumption leads us to become fixated at the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy and unable to develop our full

human potential. Defining quality of life simply in terms of the acquisition of consumer goods leads to a shriveling of human possibilities. Life becomes an endless round of production and consumption, with little time left for other pursuits. We do not become free, but remain slaves to the system.

While the concept of self-actualization, as formulated by Maslow, has been criticized on the grounds that it promotes a self-centered individualism which ignores a concern for others (i.e., the quest for a private Nirvana which involves turning one's back on the suffering of others), it is important to note that late in his career Maslow (see especially 1968) shifted from a purely humanistic to a transpersonal psychology which sees the highest forms of self-actualization as transcending the ego and embracing a concern for others and, indeed, the larger cosmos. Individuals cannot actualize themselves in the absence of relationships with others. Fox (1990) has developed a similar approach to the individual-nature relationship with his notion of a transpersonal ecology: self-actualization is only possible in the context of the relations one has both with others and also with nature. Therefore, to the extent that individuals attempt to create better societies and better natural environments, they extend the opportunities of both themselves and others (both human and non-human) to achieve self-realization. The highest life — and one that many would also say is the most intrinsically rewarding — is not a life that is lived purely in terms of calculated self-interest, but rather one which concerns itself with the interactive relationships one has with both society and nature.

Simplicity and overconsumption

If the notion that reducing material consumption is compatible with improving quality of life initially seems counter-intuitive, this is only because the doctrine of unlimited growth is premised on the notion that human well-being should be defined purely in terms of material acquisition rather than in terms of the development of a person's full physical, social, and spiritual potential. It is clear, however, that there is only a tenuous connection between higher levels of economic growth, as repre-

sented by increases in GNP, and genuine increases in human well-being. Waring (1990) has written, for example, that while the \$2.2 billion that the Exxon Corporation spent trying to clean up the Exxon Valdez oil spill — plus the millions of dollars spent on litigation — were all duly recorded as having contributed to America's GNP, the economic value of the plants, animals, fish, and shoreline that were destroyed was not subtracted. Daly has been particularly critical of the phenomenon he calls "growthmania": regarding the costs of environmental pollution and resource depletion as *contributions* to economic growth. Daly and Cobb (1989) have proposed an "Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare" (ISEW) to replace GNP as a measure of economic well-being. The ISEW adds the benefits of unpaid household labor, for example, but subtracts the costs of long-term environmental damage — neither of which are presently accounted for by GNP. When figures from the ISEW are compared with those of GNP, the results are striking: while economic growth has increased over the past several decades in the United States, America's actual quality of life, both personally and environmentally, has declined.

A higher quality of life may in fact be compatible with a reduction in GNP. Constantly changing fashions, advertising intended more to stimulate desire than to provide information, and planned obsolescence (intentionally designing products so that they break after a given period of time and the consumer has to replace them) all contribute to economic growth but they do not necessarily contribute to a higher quality of life. By curbing unnecessary consumption and making products that last longer, overall economic growth would undoubtedly decline sharply but both society and the environment would ultimately benefit. If technology is indeed the answer to our environmental problems, making products that last even twice as long as they do now would go a long ways towards meeting Trainer's goal of reducing overconsumption by 80%, with no effect whatsoever on quality of life (see Trainer 1985 and the discussion in Evanoff 2009c). Brown writes that "... a modest additional investment in high-quality engineering that greatly extends the lifetime of products could actually lower the GNP" (1981, p. 365).

The main reason why such reductions in consumption cannot be made is not only because people “want” consumer lifestyles, but also because companies can increase profits by selling products which are quickly used up and need to be replaced. Schnaiberg and his colleagues (Schnaiberg 1980; Schnaiberg and Gould 2000) have called this the “treadmill of production.” Companies have found that they can reduce costs and increase production by investing in new technologies which replace human labor. Such increases in production result in both a greater demand for environmental resources and an increase in environmental pollution. Production workers, faced with job losses and declining incomes, are then induced to believe that the only way to provide more and better jobs is by increasing investments in technology to expand production even further. Governments are also persuaded to support expanding production as a way to maintain or increase tax revenues. The result is that the faster new investments are made and industry expands, the more difficult it actually becomes to sustain a given level of human welfare. The treadmill theory suggests that we have become “. . . a society running in place without moving forward” (Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2004, p. 297). In other words, increases in industrial production result not in more jobs and a higher standard of living, but rather in a lower quality of life for all but those who profit directly from such corporate activities.

As employment shifts from high-paying to low-paying and often temporary or part-time jobs with few benefits, workers find that they must work harder and harder just to maintain their same standard of living. The increased entry of women into the workplace has not only had the positive effect of furthering gender equality, but also the negative one of increasing the number of people competing for jobs in the workforce, resulting in an overall reduction in wages. Whereas a single income earner was sufficient to provide for the needs of a family in the past, double-income families now struggle just to make ends meet. A sensible solution to this situation would be to actually reduce working hours per person, thus making jobs available to all who want them, with no reduction in incomes. Gorz (1980) has made exactly this proposal, suggesting

that all of the needs of people living in modern societies could be met by working a mere 24 hours per week. Such societies would be based on the principles of eliminating the socially useless and environmentally destructive overproduction of inessential goods, and instead producing durable goods which meet genuine human needs. The result would be a dramatic increase in leisure time for all, which would enable people to creatively enjoy their lives instead of simply being stuck in the rat-race of never-ending production and consumption. In this scheme the only losers would be those who profit most from the present system.

At present the very meaning of life lies in our ability to produce and consume. From the time we are born we are socialized into a system in which virtually all of our activities are channeled not towards the attainment of our own ends but rather towards meeting the needs of the industrial system. Education is not so much a matter of increasing our understanding of the world but rather of getting the skills necessary to find a good job. After we enter the workforce, we get up in the morning, spend most of our day at work, come home, relax, go to bed, and get up the next morning to repeat the same routine all over again. On weekends we are obliged to go shopping so that we can consume all of the products we have been making during the week. We amuse ourselves not through creative activities with family and friends but through the passive consumption of products provided by the entertainment and leisure industries. Social relations and friendships are formed less on the basis of mutual interests than on careful calculations of who will help us "get ahead." Even marriage becomes tainted with the idea that financially successful people make better partners than poorer ones. As Tina Turner sings, "What's love got to do with?" Status is based not on character or achievements but rather on what we have and how much of it. It hardly bears asking whether all of this in fact constitutes a high quality of life.

Supporters of voluntary simplicity (see Elgin 1982; Devall 1988; 1993; Andersen 1995; McKibben 1995; Luhrs 1997; Schwarz and Schwarz 1998; St. James 1998; Schut 1999; Burch 2000; Mills 2002) suggest that once individuals free themselves from the treadmill of production and

consumption and adopt simpler lifestyles, they are in fact in a better position to explore the richer possibilities of human experience. Culture as well can flourish once it is based on active participation in creative activities rather than on passive consumerism. Living simpler lives can be argued for not only on the grounds that reduced levels of consumption improve quality of life, but also on the grounds that limiting overconsumption makes it easier for the poor to meet their basic needs and reduces environmental stress. The pursuit of opulence not only deprives overconsumers of the ability to actualize their fullest potential, but it also creates socially unjust conditions in which underconsumers are unable to provide for even their basic physiological needs, let alone their higher psychological needs. In the same way that an individual's physiological needs cannot be satisfied except in the context of a good environment, so too can an individual's psychological needs not be satisfied except in the context of a good society.

The main defect with the concept of voluntary simplicity, at least as it has been developed thus far, is that it rests on the voluntarist idea that a more ecological society could be created if everyone simply *chose* to live simpler lifestyles. As such, it largely ignores the wider structural changes which must be made in the social, economic, and political realms to achieve a truly just and sustainable society. In the context of the global market goods and services are produced not for those who genuinely need them but rather for those who have sufficient money to purchase them. Financial, social, and natural resources are put not into the service of attempting to address the problem of human well-being, particularly with regard to the poor, but are instead being squandered on the creation of an ever-increasing variety of consumer goods.

The global economy is characterized by the overproduction of consumer goods (Greider 1997) and the underproduction of goods and services that would meet basic human needs. Instead of seeking to provide better education, health care, and basic living conditions for the majority of the earth's inhabitants, the modern economy preoccupies itself with the development of such extravagances as multi-media systems, high-definition television, and computerized cars for a relatively wealthy

minority. Such discrepancies are primarily social in nature: they arise out of the particular way in which the economy is structured and can only be resolved by restructuring the economy in more equitable ways. A system is structurally unfair when some individuals are given ample opportunities to satisfy their wants while others are given insufficient opportunities to satisfy even their basic needs.

A more equitable distribution of wealth (along the lines suggested in Evanoff 2010) would eliminate the overconsumption of unnecessary goods (since the rich would have less money to spend on them), and direct the economy towards the production of goods that meet genuine needs (since the poor would have more money to buy them). At present the top 20% of people living in developed countries account for 86% of expenditures on private consumption, while the bottom 20% account for only 1.3% (Kim *et al.* 2000, p. 14). Defenders of the market claim that the market provides people with the goods and services they want, in quantities that they need, and at prices that they can afford. It seems evident, however, that this maxim applies only to that minority of the earth's population which already has the financial resources to buy the goods and services on offer; it simply does not apply to a large majority of the world's poor.

The net result of income inequality is the fact that developed countries, which comprise approximately one-quarter of the world's population, consume about three-quarters of the earth's resources at a rate per capita that is 15 times that of most people living in the developing countries (Trainer 1985, p. 3). Aggregate figures do not tell the whole story, of course, since, as averages, they fail to indicate gross differences of wealth and consumption *within* both the first and third worlds: elites in the third world may consume far more than non-elites in the first world, for example. Nonetheless, it can be recognized that overconsumption by a minority of the world's population is a root cause of both social injustice and environmental degradation.

Bioregionalists and others who advocate limiting consumption are often accused of wanting to push civilization back to Neanderthal times. But the cries of pro-growth advocates that reversing economic growth

will result in poverty and misery increasingly seem to resemble the protests of an overweight person who fears that going on a diet and sharing a bit of his food with others will kill him. The bioregional paradigm does not want to eliminate consumption — everyone has to consume those goods necessary to sustain life — but merely to reduce it to truly sustainable levels. Modest increases in consumption for the truly poor, coupled with massive decreases in overconsumption among the rich, are entirely compatible with this goal. As has been argued, economic priorities should be reoriented towards satisfying basic human needs for all rather than producing increasingly extravagant luxuries for the few.

The dominant development paradigm simply assumes that a “good life” can be equated with increases in material affluence, largely ignoring the personal, social, and environmental costs such lifestyles entail, as well as the full range of other personal, social, and environmental needs which must be provided for if people are to have a truly good life. A level of material affluence adequate to meet basic human needs is essential, of course, but this is quite different from simply assuming that the overconsumptive affluent lifestyles aspired to by people in both the developed and developing countries are indeed worthy of being aspired to. In short, there should be a wider cross-cultural dialogue on the supposed “goodness” of modern consumer lifestyles.

Conclusion

While there has been substantial progress during the past 50 years in some areas of human development (child-death rates have been halved and malnutrition has declined by one-third, for example), one-fourth of the world’s population still lives in severe poverty (“Poor and Rich — The Facts,” 1999). Due credit can be given to the role the dominant development paradigm has played in promoting genuine progress when it has, but, as this series has attempted to demonstrate, the dominant development paradigm is also responsible for increased environmental degradation and for permitting a minority of the world’s people to enjoy wealth and luxury while others remain in dehumanizing poverty. Supporters of the dominant development paradigm argue that the solution to

any outstanding problems is simply more capitalist-style development. In this series we have attempted to demonstrate, however, that the dominant development paradigm contains major shortcomings which make it ultimately unable to provide everyone on the planet with the means for achieving a high quality of life that is socially just and environmentally sustainable. By reducing overconsumption among the rich and increasing underconsumption among the poor, an alternative bioregional paradigm would be better able to realize a global ethic based on the goals of ecological integrity, social justice, and human flourishing.

References

- Aman, Kenneth, ed. (1991). *Ethical Principles for Development*. Upper Montclair: The Institute for Critical Thinking.
- Andersen, Dorothy Norvell, ed. (1995). *Downwardly Mobile for Conscience Sake*. Eugene: Tom Paine Institute.
- Bahouth, Peter (1994). "The Attack of the Killer Tomato." *Earth Island Journal* (Summer): 17.
- Beckerman, Wilfred (1994). "'Sustainable Development.'" *Environmental Values* 3: 191-209.
- Brown, Lester (1981). *Building a Sustainable Society*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Burch, Mark (2000). *Stepping Lightly*. Gabriola Island: New Society.
- Clark, John (1993). "Introduction to Social Ecology." In *Environmental Philosophy*. Ed. Michael E. Zimmerman. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Cohen, Lizabeth (2003). *A Consumers' Republic*. New York: Vintage.
- Daly Herman E. and John B. Cobb (1989). *For the Common Good*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Dawson, Michael (2003). *The Consumer Trap*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- de Geus, Marius (2003). *The End of Over-Consumption*. Utrecht: International Books.
- DeGraaf, John, David Wann, and Thomas H. Naylor (2001). *Affluenza*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Devall, Bill (1988). *Simple in Means, Rich in Ends*. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith.
- (1993). *Living Richly in an Age of Limits*. Layton: Gibbs Smith.
- Devall, Bill and George Sessions (1985). *Deep Ecology*. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith.
- Dower, Nigel (1992). "Sustainability and the Right to Development." In *International Justice and the Third World*. Ed. Robin Attfield and Barry Wilkins. London: Routledge.
- Doyal, Len and Ian Gough (1991). *A Theory of Human Need*. London: Macmillan.
- Durning, Alan (1992). *How Much is Enough?:* New York: W. W. Norton.
- Ehrlich, Paul R. and Anne H. Ehrlich (2004). *One with Nineveh*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

- Elgin, Duane (1982). *Voluntary Simplicity*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Evanoff, Richard (2005). "Reconciling Self, Society, and Nature in Environmental Ethics." *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 16(3): 107–114.
- (2009a). "Bioregionalism and Cross-Cultural Dialogue on a Global Ethic." *Aoyama Journal of the School of International Politics, Economics, and Communication* 78: 151–168.
- (2009b). "Global Ethics and Ecological Sustainability." *Aoyama Journal of the School of International Politics, Economics, and Communication* 79: 101–119.
- (2009c). "Two Paradigms for Cross-Cultural Dialogue on a Global Ethic." *Aoyama Journal of the School of International Politics, Economics, and Communication* 77: 17–33.
- (2010). "Global Ethics and Social Justice." *Aoyama Journal of the School of International Politics, Economics, and Communication* 80: 27–45.
- Fox, Warwick (1990). *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Frank, Robert H. (1999). *Luxury Fever*. New York: Free Press.
- Gorz, Andre (1980). *Ecology as Politics*. Trans. Patsy Vigderman and Jonathan Cloud. Montréal: Black Rose Books.
- Gould, Kenneth A., David N. Pellow, and Allan Schnaiberg (2004). "Interrogating the Treadmill of Production." *Organization and Environment* 17: 296–316.
- Greider, William (1997). *One World, Ready or Not*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Guha, Ramachandra (2006). *How Much Should a Person Consume?* Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hayden, Anders (1999). *Sharing the Work, Sparing the Planet*. London: Zed Books.
- Jackson, Tim, ed. (2006). *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Consumption*. London: Earthscan.
- Kim, Jim Yong, Joyce V. Millen, Alec Irwin, and John Gershman, eds. (2000). *Dying for Growth*. Monroe: Common Courage.
- Luhrs, Janet (1997). *The Simple Living Guide*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1964). *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Maslow, Abraham H. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- (1968). *Towards a Psychology of Being*. 2nd ed. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand.
- Max-Neef, Manfred (1991). *Human-Scale Development*. New York: Apex Press.
- McKibben, Bill (1995). *Hope, Human and Wild*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Mills, Stephanie (2002). *Epicurean Simplicity*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Myers, Norman and Jennifer Kent (2004). *The New Consumers*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Norton, Bryan G. (1984). "Anthropocentrism and Nonanthropocentrism." *Environmental Ethics* 6: 131–148.
- (1987). *Why Preserve Natural Diversity?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha (1993). "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach." In *The Quality of Life*. Ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- "Poor and Rich — The Facts" (1999). *New Internationalist* 310: 18–19.

- Princen, Thomas, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca, eds. (2002). *Confronting Consumption*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Robinson, Tim (2006). *Work, Leisure, and the Environment*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Rosenblatt, Roger, ed. (1999). *Consuming Desires*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Schnaiberg, Allan (1980). *The Environment*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schnaiberg, Allan and Kenneth A. Gould (2000). *Environment and Society*. West Caldwell: Blackburn Press.
- Schor, Juliet B. (1998). *The Overspent American*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Schor, Juliet and Douglas B. Holt, eds. (2000). *The Consumer Society Reader*. New York: New Press.
- Schut, Michael (1999). *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life*. Ridgefield: Morehouse.
- Schwarz, Walter and Dorothy Schwarz (1998). *Living Lightly*. Charlebury: Jon Carpenter.
- Sen, Amartya (1993). "Capability and Well-Being." In *The Quality of Life*. Ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Shiva, Vandana (1992). "Recovering the Real Meaning of Sustainability." In *The Environment in Question*. Ed. David E. Cooper and Joy A. Palmer. London: Routledge.
- St. James, Elaine (1998). *The Simplicity Reader*. 3 vols. New York: Smithmark.
- Trainer, F. E. (1985). *Abandon Affluence!* London: Zed Books.
- (2007). *Renewable Energy Cannot Sustain a Consumer Society*. Heidelberg: Springer.
- Waring, Marilyn (1990). "Measuring the Economy: People, Pollution, and Politics." *Building Economic Alternatives* 2(2): 8–14.
- Westra, Laura and Patricia H. Werhane (1998). *The Business of Consumption*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

