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Race, Class, and the Environment

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BOOK REVIEW: DAVID E. CAMACHO, ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICES, POLITICAL STRUGGLES: RACE, CLASS, AND THE ENVIRONMENT (1998)

The environmental justice movement is the result of the increasingly pro-active attitude of environmental activists. No longer content to prevent environmental harm, environmentalists are now arguing for active participation in environmental decision making and clean-up. This shift from shield to sword has culminated in the environmental justice movement. The move has political ramifications as well. Older conservative groups like the National Audubon society find themselves allied - at least in ideology - with local civil and poverty rights organizations.

Environmental justice is the struggle of the poor and minorities to ensure an equal distribution of the externalities caused by industrial processes. Recent studies confirm that the poor are the most prominent victims of environmental injustice. Poor minorities suffer the most.

Environmental Injustices: Political Struggles: Race, Class, and the Environment (David E. Camacho ed.) offers a compelling collection of articles on environmental justice and political process theory and provides specific cases demonstrating the realities of environmental injustice. The book is divided into four sections: *A Framework for Analysis*, *Environmental Injustices*, *Confronting Environmental Injustices*, and *Environmental Justice*. The collection emphasizes the political process and finds a need for greater representation of low-income individuals as well as people of color in the advocacy and policymaking process. The contributors to the collection are professors of political science, government, public policy, and economics. While some of the articles have the feel of academic research, many of the contributors have worked in government, primarily at the local level, and many have been involved in grassroots environmental movements. Beyond the statistics and political theory, the collection presents a clear portrait of the issues surrounding the environmental justice movement. Two common themes throughout the collection are the need to increase power through the political process at the grassroots level and the need to foster an ethic that emphasizes a right to a clean environment for the planet and all of its people.

The book begins by discussing the political process model. The model postulates that political decisions are primarily the result of an elite few with the wealth and power accessing the levers of government to achieve their goals. Change is achieved by organizing large groups of people with similar interests that in the aggregate have sufficient wealth and political power to get the attention of the elites who can then make change. In the absence of environmental pressure, business interests will tend to dominate environmental decision making. This dominance has often meant inadequate legislation and a heavy reliance by environmentalists on the judicial process instead of the political process. Tied to the notion of the political process model is an ongoing contrast between a Eurocentric outlook on the environment and a more earth-centered outlook embraced by, among others, many Native Americans.

Beyond abstract political theory, the focus of the book is on local organization. The case studies emphasize the problems of several specific localities: Tucson, Arizona; El Paso County, Texas; the state of Ohio; various Indian reservations; and some urban municipalities. The case studies demonstrate that the scope of the problem of environmental injustice encompasses both race and class. While specific problems tend to be local, the same types of problems are shared by a number municipalities across the country. The collection points out the need to unify the national law making body with local political bodies. The book presents a pathway to success grounded in local action with participation from a diverse range - in terms of gender, race, and class - of organizers. Changing the ethic of America is a difficult goal. Local political action and unity among those with a concern for the earth is a good starting point.

David E. Camacho, the editor of the collection, uses his opening article to provide a framework for the book. His opening article defines the environmental justice movement and explains the political barriers to the successful implementation of equitable environmental policy. Camacho's political model of elite dominance, where social movements are attempts by excluded groups to leverage political power, seems particularly applicable to grassroots movement for the equitable distribution of environmental externalities. His model claims that three factors are most relevant to political insurgency: political opportunities for the group within the larger political scheme, the level of organization of the group, and the collective assessment for successful

insurgency within the group. Camacho also discusses the resource mobilization theory of pluralism and points out the need for permanent organizational structures to come from the environmental justice movement. The heavy emphasis on theory in Camacho's opening article is highly abstract for an opening to a collection on environmental injustices. However, he successfully applies the logic of this theory to the environmental movement in the latter half of the article. The theory also provides an effective and applicable framework for the reader to use as an aid in understanding the later case studies.

The most interesting part of this opening article, and a recurring theme in the collection, is the observation that mainstream environmental groups have been slow to accept the cause of protecting the interests of the poor, particularly poor minorities. Environmental wastes must go somewhere, and therefore conservation-minded groups find themselves in a bind. Citing a study by John G. Bretting and Diane-Michelle Prindeville, Camacho suggests that mainstream environmental groups are beginning to take "the moral high road" by adopting a position that no group should have to live alongside poisons. Established environmental groups lend legitimacy and empowerment to local organizations and help them solidify into organizations rather than just passing movements.

The second introductory article expands on the importance of collective action, persuasively portraying the environmental justice movement in a civil rights context. Professor Sandweiss argues that the poor, and poor minorities in particular, are a clear class that suffers from inaction. Sandweiss discusses a major policy initiative directed towards the poor, minorities, and environmentalists that was enacted by the Clinton administration to overcome some of this tendency towards inaction. Executive Order 12898 forces each federal agency to address the disproportionately high environmental effects of its policies on minority and low-income populations. This political action is described as a step in the right direction. Sandweiss cautions that real change must be local and that the entrance of lawyers and national legal organizations has the potential to divert resources from achieving tangible local change. This argument has some merit and is partially embraced by Professor Longo in his discussion of the environmental justice movement and the judiciary later in the text.

Part II moves from the theoretical to describe the practical significance of the problem. Harvey White chronicles racial differ-

ences in the allocation of pollutants. He points out that manufacturing and older automobiles in economically depressed areas contribute to poor air quality and the concentration of toxics. His observation that many of these communities invite in manufacturing and purchase older cars underscores a sad reality and a major obstacle to change in the environmental justice field. The poor are truly caught between Scylla - unemployment and low economic growth - and Charibdes - local pollution. In many instances the choice is not given. The "passing down" of siting through the political process is one shocking example of how externalities are forced down the throats - literally in the case of contamination of local food stocks - of the poor.

The "passing down" of environmental problems is one of the most astute observations recurring in the collection. The wealthy, including wealthy conservation groups, want to move wastes out of their area. The poor are often willing to take the waste for financial gain, usually jobs or inexpensive goods and services, or are forced to take the waste because of a lack of political ability to stop the trickle-down. Jeanne Clarke and Andrea Gerlak present a compelling example of this problem in their Tucson case study. From landfills to superfund sites there exists a racial and class difference in attitudes and goals. In this case study, the Latino population is outspoken about white indifference. One Latino district supervisor called the white politicians the "saguaro-savers" for not showing up to important hearings about waste siting in poorer communities while taking time to defend natural areas against golf course development. The Latino representatives had to plead with the Sierra Club and Audubon just to get letters opposing the placement of toxic TCE plumes in their district. Clearly a consensus has not been built and a consensus seems unlikely to emerge as long as the focus is on shifting waste, not eliminating it.

Professor Berry takes a gestalt approach as she attacks Eurocentrism. She argues that a Eurocentric mentality fosters feelings of superiority and paternalism by the establishment (i.e., those holding Western European values), and makes them think they can dominate the earth. The bleak history of Indian water rights provides compelling support for her argument. Her demonstration of the U.S. government's conflicting goals towards Native Americans, of assimilation and separation and of paternalism tinged with exploitation, have created a difficult situation for Native Americans. Professors Bath, Tanski, and Villar-

real continue the attack on Eurocentric values, pointing to the *Colonia* settlements along United States-Mexico border with no water, sewage, or other basic services. Their acknowledgement that market incentives, and in particular the interest of the local real estate industry to service only those who can pay, may play a role in addition to racism and classism, thereby underscoring that a basic change in thinking is necessary to move from a waste shifting society to a clean living society.

The third section of the collection ostensibly returns to examining the three factors underlying political process theory. John Bretting and Diane-Michele Prindeville profile a number of women grassroots leaders. For the psychologically minded, the work is both fascinating and unique. However, the link to the political process is weak. Nevertheless, the women are almost unanimously optimistic in their outlook and seem to labor in love.¹

In another article loosely tied to political process theory, Peter Longo examines the effect of the judicial process on environmental injustice. He notes that by requiring heightened standing,² greater agency and legislative deference,³ and heightened requirements for obtaining attorney's fees,⁴ Justices Rehnquist and Scalia have forced the debate over environmental justice out of the judiciary and into the local governments. Longo sees the move from national courts and legislatures to local communities as potentially empowering. Grassroots organizations will be able to create change in forums where they can actually be heard. While the rhetoric of local actions is appealing, it is at odds with much of Part II which demonstrates that local action alone has been ineffective in addressing environmental injustices.

The last section of the book represents a move from the political process model to a focus on changing the environmental ethic. Professor Timney argues that businesses and policy makers must be forced to examine the problems of pollution. She wryly notes that some progress has been made in Ohio, in particular the Cuyahoga River no longer burns. Nevertheless, the statistics indicate that the poor and minorities are still victims of

1. If the leadership of these women is any indication, we should welcome Elizabeth Dole to the White House in 2000. A cross party ticket with the environmentally tenacious Al Gore would likely yield great gains for environmentalists.

2. *Lujan v. National Wildlife Federation*, 497 U.S. 871 (1989).

3. *Id.* (dicta).

4. *Ruckelshaus v. Sierra Club*, 463 U.S. 680 (1982).

pollution and that they often allow pollution to be dumped in their communities in exchange for jobs.

Linda Robyn and Camacho proffer an article on developing an environmental ethic where society is not predicated on growth and technological development. While the argument ties in with the earlier attacks on Eurocentrism, its abstract and generalist nature shifts it from the academic towards the coffee table genre. Thankfully Camacho has one last article which concludes the collection. This last piece also advocates thinking about the environment in new terms; however, it is better grounded in pragmatic thought. The article emphasizes the need to form coalitions in order to foster environmentally sustainable policies for all people. A shift from musical waste to no waste.

In total, the collection is an informative body of case studies and political science papers that drives the significance of the problem of environmental injustice home. The reader is left with no doubt that the poor – and poor minorities in particular – bear almost all of the negative externalities generated by modern industrial society. The solution is less convincing. On a broad level it is true that we need to foster an ethic that is predicated on balance with nature and on achieving an overall reduction in waste byproducts. If this is the real solution, however, we are still awaiting a plan. The case studies and the political process model could be woven together more tightly. In particular, while the environmental ethic essays at the end of the work were informative, a clearer return to the political process theory would have helped unify the case studies and theory presented. Nonetheless, *Environmental Injustices, Political Struggles* provides a worthwhile read for anyone interested in the field of environmental justice. Taken separately, the academic articles are of a very high quality and the case studies are both compelling and stimulating.

Dylan Golden

BOOK REVIEW: MICHAEL TOBIAS, *NATURE'S KEEPERS: ON THE FRONT LINES OF THE FIGHT TO SAVE WILDLIFE IN AMERICA* (1998).

The discovery of America had untold repercussions on the European world. The inhabitants of Europe suddenly had a new continent to explore. This exploration led to the discoveries of new forms of life—new animals, new plants, and new cultures. These discoveries also gave the European invaders new objects to exploit and destroy. The fur trade is one such example of this exploitation. The beaver was highly prized in Europe at the time of colonization of North America. Beaver fur was hard to obtain in Europe, in part from years of trapping. America was a fertile source of beaver pelts. So plentiful in fact that European explorers took beaver pelts from Native Americans which were being used for children's diapers. This desire for beaver pelts decimated the beaver population. It also demonstrates the historical desire for animal pelts, with no consideration of the ramifications of killing of those animals.

This desire for furs and animal skins has not abated at the end of the twentieth century. Any examination of an upscale department store will reveal many products containing animal fur and skins. The desire for fur is not limited, however, to a small number of animals. Often people desire an exotic animal as a pet, or the fur of some rare animal, or misguidedly seek the internal organs of another to cure some illness. These desires have led to an explosive growth in the illegal trade of animals and animal parts.

The decimation of wildlife populations in America by this desire for fur is the subject of Michael Tobias' book, *Nature's Keepers: On the Front Lines of the Fight to Save Wildlife in America*. Tobias is concerned with the way that the American people approach the killing of animals. His book offers a unique perspective on the issues surrounding wildlife preservation. Tobias is concerned with the consumerism stance that Americans often seem to have towards the wildlife that surrounds them. This consumerism is one theme that emerges from his book. Tobias argues that the degradation and decimation of animal populations is in large part due to people's desire to have a unique pet, or unique fur, or gain the bragging rights associated with the mass slaughter of animals.

The other major theme that emerges from Tobias' book is the woeful inadequacy of U.S. laws designed to protect animals and their populations. As Tobias points out, there are few enforcers of the wildlife protection laws in comparison with the number of general law enforcement officers. Thus, many violations of wildlife protection laws are never even discovered. Furthermore, of the violations that are discovered, few are ever prosecuted. Prosecutors generally give crimes committed against humans a much higher priority than crimes committed against animals, and thus, they concentrate on the human crimes. Even if the perpetrators of crimes against wildlife are prosecuted, vague laws make conviction difficult and provide inadequate punishments. Thus, while laws do exist to protect wildlife, they often fail to provide wildlife with adequate protection.

Tobias primarily focuses on those individuals and agencies that help protect wildlife and those that do not. The Prologue sets the stage for Tobias' book, and exemplifies his concern about the slaughter of American wildlife. He indicates that while the popularity of the National Parks is increasing, the actual time spent in wilderness areas and appreciating nature is short. Furthermore, the land area devoted to nature and wildlife is shrinking. Tobias declares that within the whole of the United States, an area equivalent to the state of Georgia consists solely of paved roads devoid of any life. He then describes the pressures on wildlife populations caused by the demand for animal parts used for various "cures," and the high levels of poaching present in America. He asserts that the United States is the worst offender in the international smuggling of illegally caught and killed animals. These issues are used to frame the portrayals that permeate the rest of his book.

Chapter One begins with the portrayal of Jim Hannah who is a ranger of the Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska—one of the largest natural protected areas in the world. Tobias' portrayal of Hannah is one of David against Goliath. Tobias tells a story of inadequate resources and manpower to protect fully and completely the resources in the park. For instance, Tobias points out that there are only five law enforcement rangers for the entire park and preserve, which consists of approximately 13 million acres. Another difficulty facing Hannah and the other rangers is the many exploitable loopholes in the laws governing the killing of animals. For example, Tobias mentions that the Lacey Act, which prohibits poaching in National Parks,

contains an exception for subsistence hunting. This loophole makes it difficult to determine whether a particular person is actually poaching or rightfully taking advantage of the exception.

Hannah's story ends with him finding evidence of a poaching, and then sending the evidence he found to the Clark Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon. This lab is the only wildlife forensics lab in the world, and is open to all of the state fish and wildlife agencies, the United States Forest and National Park services, and the 120 national signatories of the 1975 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Tobias describes some of the cases that the lab has handled, and results that it has experienced. The lab's findings and results are astounding. This wildlife lab appears to be on par with the FBI's top forensics lab. The chapter ends with profiles of other people that are in the business of saving wildlife, including Ruth Musgrave, the founder of the Center for Wildlife at the School of Public Law of the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque.

Chapter Two describes the training that agents in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service receive once they are accepted as special agents in the Service. His description resembles the training that one would expect from a human law enforcement agency such as the FBI. The trainees are taught how to quickly handcuff perpetrators, how to disable and gain advantage over them, and how to interpret the applicable wildlife laws. Individual participants are profiled, giving insights on their beliefs and why they decided to become Fish and Wildlife agents. Tobias' interviews revealed an interesting fact about the agents—most were hunters themselves. Thus, they were not extreme protectionists, unwilling to allow any killing. Rather, the agents were concerned with the responsible management of the wilderness. This surprising fact helps humanize the agents and demonstrate that the wildlife protection laws are not against hunting and killing per se, but rather are against the indiscriminate exploitation and destruction of animals. Tobias succeeds in providing the reader with a better understanding of the people who are trying to enforce the wildlife protection laws.

Operation Renegade opens the third chapter of Tobias' book. Operation Renegade is the name of the Fish and Wildlife Service's investigation and sting operation designed to stop the underground smuggling of parrots into the United States from Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and Mexico. Tobias presents

this case as both an example of the techniques that the Fish and Wildlife Service uses, and its reliance on tips, which provide the main source of information about illegal activity. The case also serves as a demonstration of how an individual may want to protect wildlife, but actually contributes to its degradation. The main perpetrator in Operation Renegade was a renowned author of books on parrots, and someone who helped create a Recovery Committee to save the Spix's macaw. The operation also uncovers the corruption present in a quarantine station in Chicago. Tobias describes the history of the Lacey Act, providing a background for the laws being enforced in Operation Renegade. Tobias concludes the chapter by describing the results of Operation Renegade.

A harrowing case study of poaching follows the description of Operation Renegade. Tobias relates the tale of a poacher from Missouri. Both sides of the story are presented; both the convicted poacher's story, and the rangers' who caught the poacher. As the case unfolds, a pattern of indiscriminate killing by the convicted poacher is shown. The authorities obtained diaries that chronicled the various kills the poacher made. The diaries list the killing of 190 white tailed deer, 275 turkeys, and a variety of other animals including birds, foxes, raccoons, bobcats, bears, coyotes, antelopes, prairie dogs, sage grouse, caribou, elk, big-horn sheep and moose. The prosecution later admitted evidence of \$277,000 worth of wildlife that the poacher and his son killed, including 287 deer at a cost of \$500 each, and 300 turkeys at \$200 each, as well as the values for nineteen dead antelopes, four big-horn sheep and four elk. The most harrowing facet of this case study is that the poacher was indoctrinating his son into the poaching "culture," teaching the son how to kill animals and forcing him to do so, even when the son did not really enjoy killing. This case story tells of triumphant story of how the wildlife authorities are able to stop some of the carnage by the poachers. However, it took authorities twenty years to obtain enough evidence to convict the poacher. This passage of time helps indicate some of the difficulties that the wildlife protectors face.

The book then describes some government policies towards wildlife, some third party protests and some wildlife research studies. One such government policy is the Animal Damage Control (ADC) Program, as administered by the United States Department of Agriculture. The mission of the ADC program ostensibly is to discourage and kill animals that are suspected

predators. Most often, farmers and ranchers apply for ADC funds to protect their livestock and crops from the depredations of predators. However, as the book describes this program, the ADC is responsible for the large-scale slaughter of wildlife under the guise of protection. Between 1989 and 1990, Tobias reports that 3,283,883 animals were killed under the ADC. Included in this number were such unlikely predators as owls, doves, geese, squirrels, rattlesnakes, ducks and turtles. The ADC is also responsible for the use of compound 1080, a lethal poison combining strychnine, sodium cyanide and thallium sulfate. Compound 1080 has no antidote, and is so toxic that one pound of it can kill one million pounds of animals. This poison is used on livestock in "exploding" collars designed to kill any predator that attacks the livestock. However, as Tobias points out, the poisoned animal carcasses can poison other animals that feed on the carcass, and can also poison unintended victims that come into contact with the livestock, such as dogs, or even children.

Tobias then concentrates on research studies and protests that have involved animals. One animal researcher that Tobias discusses is Marc Berkoff. Berkoff studies coyote behavior. His research has uncovered complex forms of communication among coyotes, finding that they are a "close-knit, cohesive social unit." Berkoff's research convinced him that livestock losses due to coyote attacks are usually less than deaths from other causes, and that the current method of predator control (killing individuals and dens of coyotes) will not curtail coyote populations and the problems with coyotes. Another animal research scientist, Dr. Con Slobodchikoff has made similar conclusions regarding his research of prairie dog populations. Tobias delves into Slobodchikoff's research about prairie dogs, and indicates that prairie dogs are social beings that play a vital role in the ecology of the prairie grasslands.

Researchers are not the only ones who have taken positions on predator control which are contrary to the ADC. Tom Skeelee is another such individual. Skeelee founded the nonprofit Predator Project to educate the public on the importance of predators. The Predator Project is successfully changing the American public's perception of predators. Pat Wolff is another individual who seeks to change the policies and attitudes that America has toward predators. Wolff's activities have had some effect, as shown by the prohibition against ADC operations on state owned land

in New Mexico.¹ Both Wolff and Skeele demonstrate the successful impact that independent protestors have had on ADC policies and attitudes on predator control in general.

Tobias concludes his book with additional examples of the harming of wildlife in America. He lists numerous endangered species and describes some of the problems that even non-endangered species face with respect to hunting and other acts of depredation. He also exhorts people to become involved with wildlife issues. He gives examples of wildlife friendly philosophies, such as the Episcopal Church of America, the Jains, and the teachings of Saint Francis of Assisi. Without radical change, Tobias' book suggests a grim future for wildlife in America, indeed the world.

Tobias raises some critical issues in his book, and he vividly portrays the plight of wild animals. However, the book is not without its flaws. One problem with the book is its lack of focus. The different sections of the book, the numerous stories about various individuals, are not adequately linked together. Often, Tobias begins discussing some other agency or person's actions in the middle of a biographical sketch. This leads to confusion, and obscures the particular point that he is trying to convey to the reader. A closely followed central theme would improve the book immensely, and enable the reader to gain a better sense of, and appreciation for, the immense problems and difficulties facing wildlife. Focusing on one set of graduates from the Fish and Wildlife training program would help to give the reader a story to follow, instead of the disjointed vignettes that Tobias offers. As the book is currently structured, each chapter stands alone, and has little connection with any of the others. Even a fictional narration that spans all the chapters of the book would strengthen Tobias' message.

Another flaw with the book is that Tobias almost completely ignores a crucial part of America's wildlife—its plants. Tobias does mention in passing, some of the plant species that are on the verge of extinction (such as the Hawaiian Cooke's kokio tree), but he never addresses the multitude of problems that plant life faces. Plants are part of America's wildlife, and they are arguably more vital to the earth's ecology than any animal alive. Plants help regulate the earth's atmosphere, provide oxygen, and

1. However, the succeeding governor of New Mexico invited the ADC back onto New Mexico land in 1994, so this success was short-lived.

offer a food source for many animals, which in turn provide a food source for many predators. Tobias' concentration on animals ignores the reality that if an animal's food source disappears, that animal is likely to disappear despite humankind's best efforts to protect it from extinction. Protecting animals alone is not enough. Humans are just as guilty of killing and eradicating species of plants as they are of killing and eradicating animals.

Tobias seems to acknowledge that management of wildlife is needed, and that this management entails some killing of wildlife. However, he also seems to imply that ideally, people should not kill wildlife at all. Tobias' remarks about being surprised that many of the Fish and Wildlife agents enjoy hunting and his own confession of being a vegetarian exemplifies his idea that any killing of animals is wrong and that in a perfect world, no animal would be killed. Unfortunately, this idea is not realistic. People have to kill some type of living thing in order to survive, either animal or plants. Tobias does not seem to realize the fundamental truth that humans are predators and that even vegetarians participate in the killing of a living thing. Thus, stopping the killing of wildlife is not feasible if people are to survive. Instead, a system of conservation and protection is the best course of action; a system that integrates the preservation of wildlife while still acknowledging that people must kill some wildlife to survive.

It is Tobias' emphasis on the killing of animals that is the most critical flaw in his book. His constant listing of animals that are being needlessly killed detracts from his message. These listings desensitize the reader to the plight of wildlife, making the book seem like just another tome of doom and gloom about the illegal killing of wild animals. Tobias comes across as the preacher in the park announcing that the world is going to end tomorrow. This is really unfortunate, since Tobias' underlying message about the plight of wildlife is important. The crisis facing America's wildlife should not be marginalized like the preacher in the park.

Michael Tobias' book, despite its flaws, does provide a good understanding of the problems facing wildlife in America today, from illegal killings, ineffectual laws, and the inherent difficulty of enforcing the existing wildlife protection laws. Tobias' book serves as a good introduction to the issues regarding wildlife in America.

Fred Haist

