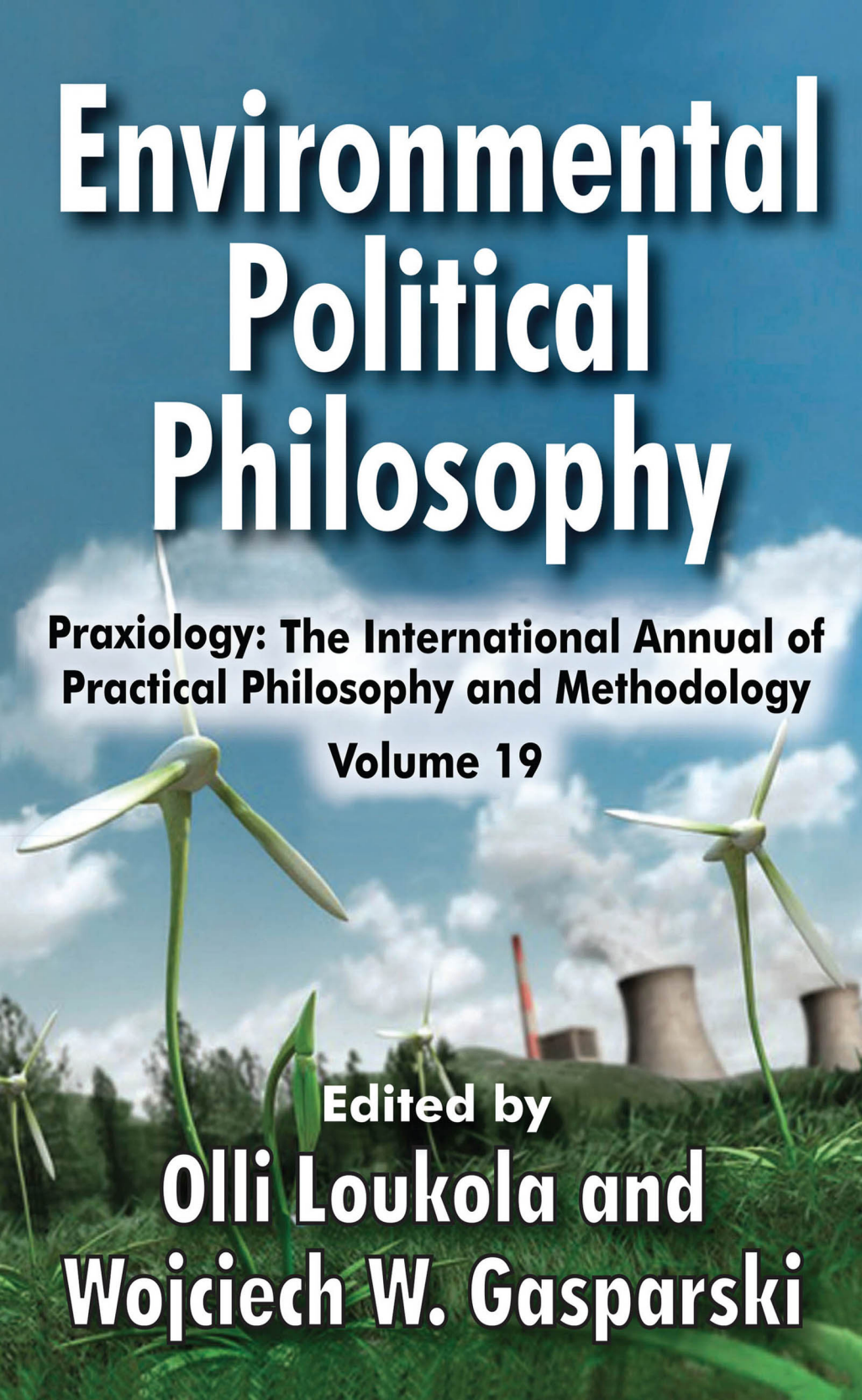
Environmental Political Philosophy

Praxiology: The International Annual of Practical Philosophy and Methodology

Volume 19



Edited by

Olli Loukola and Wojciech W. Gasparski

Environmental Political Philosophy

THE LEARNED SOCIETY OF PRAXIOLOGY

PRAXIOLOGY:
The International Annual of Practical Philosophy and Methodology Vol. 19

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Editorial

Wojciech W. Gasparski
Editor-in-Chief

Readers who carefully follow praxiological considerations related to different areas of human activity are familiar with the praxiological dimensions of *effectiveness* and *efficiency*, and of an ethical one *ethicality*. They are collectively identified as the "triple Es." There are also other Es added to the triad depending on the particular area of a discourse. Sometimes it is the E of education. This time yet another "E" is going to the fore—the E of *ecology* is ready to join the collection of profound Es. Ecology is the dimension which represents the context of human action, that is its environment, whether natural or social.

The area of problems presented in this volume has its predecessor in the action theory section of the Mario Bunge's *Treatise on Basic Philosophy*, Vol. 8 *Ethics* (1989). The book was about axiology, moral theory, and praxiology. Special chapter of the treatise, closely related to the action theory, was devoted to social philosophy within which the quoted author had pointed out the idea of social reform based on "global or systemic view" (p. 356). The view was described in the following way:

> "We reject pure environmentalism because the economy must be kept going lest we all starve; pure biologism because we cannot keep in good health without a clean environment and an adequate income; pure economicism because economic prosperity is worthless unless we enjoy good health and can make use of our income; pure politicism because freedom and participation are pointless if we are sick, destitute, or ignorant; and pure culturalism because the production and consumption of cultural goods take health, economic means, and a modicum of freedom and leisure.

> To put it in positive terms: Progressive social reform, that is social development, is at the same time environmental, biological, economic, political, and cultural." (Bunge 1989, p. 256)

The reform appealed by Bunge was named as *ecosociodevelopment* (p. 358) and characterized not only as a protection against harm, but also actions for a reform needed:

> "Designing and implementing ecosociodevelopment involves much more than such purely environmental protection measures as rational waste management, reforestation, and desert reclamation. To be effective and lasting, the reform must cover nearly every aspect of social life everywhere and it must win the support of all but those who are sick with economic or political greed." (Bunge 1989, p. 358)

Bunge suggested that the reform should include long list of different types of actions: disarmament, international cooperation, environment security, nuclear security, alternative energy sources, pure technology and agriculture, careful consumption, upgrading education, improving quality of life, etc. He knew it would not be possible to fulfill the reform overnight. Therefore, the suggestion was a direction rather than a construct, however, although:

> [. . .] we must protect our planet, but not at the cost of social development. The alternative is neither environmental protection nor social development, but either a continuation of the present course toward ultimate environmental catastrophe, or the improvement in the quality of life for everyone in and through ecosociodevelopment. The order is tall but the stakes are high. (Bunge 1989, p. 362)

It is striking how actual it still is, even more now than two decades ago. This is why it is proper to refer to the idea presenting the contemporary version of the issue as perceived by eminent scholars who raise environmental policy-making as perceived from praxiological point of view.

The idea is convergent with what is called now as sustainable development, or simply sustainability (Gomis et al. 2010), i.e., continuous and harmonious process of a chain of careful use of resources, of wise production, and of recycling whatever is possible to be used again. Sustainability is one of the main issues of the Fifth World Congress of the International Society of Business, Economics, and Ethics organized in Warsaw, Poland, in 2012 at the premises of Kozminski University. This is why this book is dedicated to the Congress[1] with the hope that it will give additional important impulse to the efforts of protecting the planet.[2] Once the Congress is organized in Europe, the contributors to this volume are mainly scholars of European affiliation.

Notes

1. Two of the earlier volumes of the Praxiology series were dedicated to the previous ISBEE congresses: Vol. 5—Wojciech W. Gasparski & Leo V. Ryan, eds., *Human Action in Business: Praxiological and Ethical Dimensions* was dedicated to the 1st ISBEE Congress held in Tokyo, Japan in 1996; Vol. 8—Leo V. Ryan, Wojciech W. Gasparski, Georges Enderle, eds. *Business Students Focus on Ethics* was dedicated to the 2nd ISBEE world Congress held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 2000.
2. It was the ISBE promoter Professor Richard T. De George who pointed out the dubious effect of environmental issues: "In many instances of environmental harm, the harm done is not wanton and produces some good. From a utilitarian point of view we must ask whether more good is done than harm, looking at all those affected, not only immediately but in the long run as well. From a deontological perspective we need to ask whether the activities violate people's rights. From either perspective we must remember that though harming the environment is bad, at least to the extend that it directly or indirectly harms people, the actions that cause the harm frequently have positive effects as well, as in the case of pesticides, which can be of great help in keeping people alive because of higher crop yields than would otherwise be possible. In dealing with environmental harm, therefore, the task is to minimize the harm done while maximizing the benefits made available by increased scientific knowledge and technological advances, and while respecting the rights of all those affected." (De George 1995, p. 208)

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Introduction

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Environmental concerns are political concerns and the best way to understand environmentalism is as a complex set of political ideas.
Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics,
Robert C. Paehlke, 1989

1.

The need for remedies for the environmental problems of our world is today more urgent than ever before in the history of humankind. Environmental issues have been high on the social agenda since the 1970s, but compared to the current situation, the previous worries concerned mainly particular instances of use of natural resources, regional pollution, or animal rights. These concerns appeared in public discussion only occasionally raised by some radical activists or academic dissenters. The philosophical quest of environmentalism, which emerged, focused more on creating an understanding of the apparent neglect of nature in the human mind and history. The practical measures and policies needed to resolve existing environmental problems were more or less left to the activists to deal with. Today, the immense expansion of environmental

research and knowledge along with heightened popular interest in environmental issues has penetrated the social agenda thoroughly, and has directed attention much more noticeably to their social, political, and practical implications. Environmental catastrophes appear more concrete and tangible to us; they are also seen as results of human action, and not as mere contingencies and accidents of the capricious and unpredictable forces of nature. People today are much more conscientiously aware of issues such as climate change, species extinction, resource depletion, and land degradation, and recognize the requirements they impose on us through calls for sustainability, environmental protection, ecological diversity, environmental justice, and the rights of animals and of future generations, to name a few.

The politicized and social nature of environmental issues is by no means a novel suggestion, as is apparent in the opening quotation from 1989 by Robert Paehlke. Yet the mainstream orientation in environmental philosophy at the end of the twentieth century was that of environmental ethics, concentrating on individuals' ethical relationships with nature. At the same time, a parallel orientation was developing, focusing on outlining the relationship between nature and society. The classics in this field were Andrew Dobson's *Green Political Thought* (1990) and Robert Goodin's *Green Political Theory* (1992). The emphasis of these works—which soon become central tenets of environmental political philosophy—was to reflect on environmental issues, especially environmental protection, in a critical tone through notions and principles derived from social and political theories and ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism, and ecosocial theories (cf. Murray Boochin: *The Ecology of Freedom*, 1982). Notably, also a number of writers who had previously been oriented towards environmental ethics, such as Robin Attfield (*Environmental Ethics*, 2003) and Bryan Norton (*Sustainability*, 2005), have over the past years focused more conscientiously on environmental political principles.

2.

In environmental political philosophy the questions raised are: What are justified common environmental values, goals, and policies in society? How can we legitimize the primacy of environmental protection over certain other central human goals? Can we justify infringements on rights, and on what basis? The essential undercurrent here is that environmental issues are not questions of mere efficiency or technology, solvable through increased knowledge of processes and mechanics of

nature, or by boosting or targeting research, or by more conscientious allocation of resources and the development of technology. Neither are they issues resolvable solely by increased civic edification and environmental campaigns, or endless appeals to eco-friendly actions. What is typical of environmental issues is their character as problems of collective action, ensuing counterproductive or even tragic results for the whole of humankind. For such reasons, environmental political philosophy directs its attention towards human action from a social and political point of view: it focuses on social morality, theories of justice, judicial regulation, and democratic decision making through the notions of social rights, duties, and responsibilities. What is sought after is a broad framework of social and political norms, a system of principles, laws, and sanctions targeted specifically to understanding and governing human action in radically changed environmental conditions. Such a framework is necessary to effectively solve environmental problems.

An inherent element of this wider socio-political orientation is then to look at environmental issues from a more dynamic perspective. The underlying idea is put forth well by Robin Attfield in his contention that "the very changed context of ethics requires us to rethink not only our responsibilities and related ethical questions, but also how we should collaborate to discharge responsibilities in a technological and interconnected world" (Attfield 2009, p. 233). "Environment" is conceptualized not as a stagnant, unfaltering, and fixed entity or state of affairs, but as a dynamic and developing phenomenon with various instantiations, among others as a resource-pool necessary for human existence, a locale for our everyday activities, or a source of unique aesthetic pleasure, in addition to the traditional notion of "Mother Nature" filling us with awe and wonder. This is "environment" with a plurality of guises which manifest themselves in active interaction with human beings and form the inherent locus of our common life and survival in the contemporary world. The mere fact that there is no one "environment" but a plurality of "environments" is a source of a multitude of confusions and conflicts in values. It also raises serious questions about the relationships and interconnections of these disparate "environments" which we live in.

As these considerations show, the emphasis on practicality that is under discussion here surely does not mean merely opting for a swift solution, but refers much more importantly to the need for a deeper understanding of the complicated connection between theory and practice. Such an orientation is the central element in environmental pragmatism, which commits itself to an "open-ended inquiry into the specific real-life

problems of humanity's relationship with the environment, . . . fueled by recognition that theoretical debates are problematic for the development of environmental policy" (Katz and Light 1996, p. 2). It is easy to agree here with the well-known philosophical article of faith that practice is patently blind without theory, just as theory is empty without its practical instances.

One of the purposes of this book is to show that the focuses and methods of environmental philosophy, surveyed above, may be enriched though praxiological considerations. In general, praxiology refers to the study of human conduct, examination of the general concepts of individual as well as collective action. Thus a further crucial element of environmental political philosophy is brought out through such studies: that is, the question of what constitutes efficient action or effective decision making, including their planning and implementation. The tools of praxiology are the "triple E" criteria, that is, effectiveness, efficiency, and ethics as the central determinants of merits of actions from the point of view of how well they reach their objectives.[1] This opens up a whole new palette for evaluating conflicting environmental objectives, their relative importance, the degrees of efficiency, and risks and expectations, among other things. With this focus, praxiology is clearly a study which starts from an empirical orientation, and that in the evaluation of actions and policies, ethical considerations are seen in conjunction with effectiveness and efficiency. This emphasis is bound to create debates and conflicts, and certainly a search for rules of priority.

At the same time, this starting point reflects truthfully the central tensions of the current conceptualization of environmental problems: how to use resources sustainably and how to control and direct policies efficiently and outcomes effectively, while respecting the principal ethical guidelines and practices. Contemporary environmental problems are often seen—as are most economic and political issues of our society—as the push and pull of ethics and efficiency, of means and purposes, of instruments and goals. This is a starting point which clearly needs to be criticized for its narrowness and constricted nature, as a number of philosophers in this collection have done, yet the criticism needs to be reformulated to be accessible within other environmental disciplines, primarily environmental politics, economics, and law.

3.

Environmental political philosophy operates in the dynamic and exacting intersection of severe contemporary problems of a local and global

nature. Most of the ethically challenging environmental issues and hard cases arise in novel and outlandish situations and circumstances for which we have no ethical precedents, established codes of conduct, or approved or legitimate practices. These are the kinds of situations, which challenge many of the traditional dogmas of political philosophy, especially the principles of political democracy, canons of rights, notions of justice and fairness, and convictions about human duties and responsibilities. Understanding the underlying ideas and meanings of these concepts helps us to understand what they can offer us when applied to environmental issues. This helps us further when we analyze and trace the origins of the contemporary debates and solutions that are offered in these situations.

However, in order to construct normative guidelines telling us what we *should* do, we need to know first what we *can* do. And this lack of knowledge is one of the characteristic features of contemporary environmental problems: we are uncertain of the chains of cause and effect, and what exactly are the effects of our actions. Because of our contemporary technology, we now have the power to affect large swathes of the biosphere and mould the circumstances of the future generations for centuries to come. Yet technology as such is blind; it can be used for good as well as for bad. The moral issue here is discretion in the use of that power, for instance, estimating those substantial and fatal impacts of our actions and omissions that matter most. We need to appraise carefully whether we may do what we have the power to do, and what the results of our actions are. This is the kind of conceptual consideration which drives environmental political philosophy to focus more attentively on human liabilities and responsibilities than theories of traditional political philosophy are accustomed to. Time and history are patently present here: we can see now where we have come from and what we have done; at the same time, we are well aware that something has gone terribly wrong, and we are capable of causing an enormous amount of damage and suffering, and not only to humans, but also to the whole world.

The justification for redefining the notions and principles of political philosophy is exactly this need to properly, accurately, and fairly address new and challenging environmental predicaments. Thus the central idea of this volume is that ethical and practical studies should be commenced side by side, each reflecting, analyzing, and profiting from the work of the other. It is, as Mario Bunge so aptly put it, that "[o]nly the union of the two fields can tackle the problems surrounding the full legitimacy—both praxiological and moral—of action" (Bunge 1999, p. 2).

Ultimately, environmental political philosophy is revealed to be a highly critical enterprise. It involves exploring environmental pasturelands armed with customary philosophical skepticism and distrust: criticizing the concepts, theories, and results of the environmental sciences; suspecting the resolutions, policies, and goals of public and private institutions; and mistrusting the moral opinions, motives, and capacities of individual actors. In this enterprise our goal is to utilize the traditional notions of political philosophy, while at the same time carefully evaluating the habitual substance of these notions in the face of new environmental challenges. Thus we need to ask such critical questions as "What sort of societal principles would promote effective and just solutions to the environmental problems we face today?"; "Are rights as we conceive of them today sufficient for the protection of nature and the environment?"; or "How should decision making and governance be organized in order to promote environmentally benign practices among individual citizens and other societal actors?" These and similar questions you will find in this collection of essays.

4.

The essays collected here bring together a group of young writers with selected senior scholars, and the result is a colorful and lively selection of perspectives from disparate fields and from different generations of academia. With such a variety of viewpoints, it is naturally difficult to find any one decisive and tenacious trend of thought which would systematize the field of environmental political philosophy into a coherent discipline. Yet there is one persistent thread built into the collection, one which connects the diversity of topics, and that is the clearly urgent need for change and to determine the practical measures these changes require. As many of the writers of this collection emphasize, these changes are to be radical and overarching, penetrating all our worlds and the worlds around us, requiring thorough modifications to human thinking, human behavior, and human societies. Answering this challenge requires that we relate theoretical knowledge to practical action, or as it is phrased below, "Theorizing the World" along with "Acting in the World."

Following this train of thought, the essays are divided into three parts, all congregating around the concept of change and its requirements. The first chapter, "Changing Concepts," gathers together articles that focus on the need to change and rephrase our conceptual frameworks, to re-evaluate and reinterpret those central traditional concepts of our moral, social, and political discourses, such as rights, justice, and democracy.

What exactly they amount to under these new circumstances are discussed in the first five articles. The second call for change is dealt with in the chapter "Changing Society," which examines how we should restructure society to better meet these new environmental needs and challenges. The third chapter, "Changing Human Beings", focuses on the need to change our attitudes, values, and thinking to give proper attention to other than merely human interests.

Yet the changes called for and dealt with in this collection are by no means located on a one-dimensional continuum. The main interrelationship in the analysis of the environmental challenges, that is, the interaction between theory and action, is sketched in the graphics as the second dimension. The essays with more theoretical or conceptual orientation are located towards the top, while the ones with more practical or empirical orientation are closer to the bottom. On the other dimension, essays dealing with issues traditionally belonging to political philosophy, political theory, or the political sciences can be found on the left, while the right-hand side encompasses more individually oriented essays, with a moral or humanistic disposition. In between these dimensions, certain key terms and distinctive properties are named and specified in order to help the reader identify relevant topics.

5.

Part I—"Changing Concepts"—gathers together articles that focus on the need to examine and reevaluate our conceptual frameworks of political and social philosophy under these new circumstances. The topics concentrate on analyses of central concepts such as "justice", "rights" and "democracy", and of their foundations, especially in the contemporary mainstream theory of political philosophy, that is, liberalism.

The first essay, Olli Loukola's "Environmental Justice: From Theory to Practice and Back to Theory," concentrates on environmental justice, which is a typical example of the new concepts of the field, though it has its roots deep in history and philosophy. Over the past decades "environmental justice" has referred almost exclusively to the social movement of the same name, while the mainstream theorists of justice have more or less avoided the whole subject. Yet the general contemporary field of justice—from conceptual considerations to concrete requirements—is shaped anew today because of the new dialogue between theory and practice, a process in which environmental issues importantly figure.

The close connection between activism and theorizing has always been an important part of environmental thinking. This becomes apparent

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political ideologies
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I.3 Stevens: Perfectionist Liberalism, Natural Law Jurisprudence, and Environmental Law
moral requirements
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ACTING IN THE WORLD

also with Paul McLaughlin's examination of the roots of radical political philosophy in "Remarks on Ecological Radicalism." As a species of this type, he defines ecological radicalism as an argumentation about the interaction between socio-political norms, practices, and institutions and other elements of the natural world. As such it represents a kind of "natural turn" in political philosophy: an extension of concern beyond traditionally understood socio-political matters, motivated by a profound sense of ecological crisis.

In "Perfectionist Liberalism, Natural Law Jurisprudence, and the Philosophical Foundations of Environmental Law," Christopher Stevens continues the task of argumentation and redefining, this time with the concept of environmental human rights. He argues that the current interpretations in human rights-based legislation threatens the environment and ecological integrity, and offers alternative grounds for its reform. In this essay rich in philosophical topics, Stevens discusses the concept of intrinsic value, natural law, and moral and political perfectionism. Most of this discussion is undertaken within the framework of liberal political and moral theory, which is also the background of the essays of Laakso and Kyllönen. The starting point here is that liberal theory is in difficulty when trying to demonstrate its applicability in environmental contexts.

In "Environmental Sustainability in Political Liberalism: Meeting the Alleged Inadequacy Posed by the Neutrality Thesis," Marjukka Laakso discusses the compatibility of environmental sustainability and liberal democracy, in the Rawlsian framework. She argues that environmental sustainability requires public coordination and public decision-making procedures. The reason for this is that individual volition does not suffice to guarantee a place of priority for environmental concerns in societal decision-making. Nor is individual responsibility alone effective enough for managing environmental issues, a discussion that will continue in Part III.

In liberal theory, these considerations are linked with questions concerning the justificatory legitimacy of environmental policies. Those policies often need to make radical requirements of citizens' private behavior, in the area where coercion is customarily regarded as illegitimate. For this reason, many are highly skeptical of the efficacy of democratic decision-making in environmental issues. To remedy this, public participation and deliberation has been introduced as a way to legitimize environmental policies and the infringements they make on individual liberty. Simo Kyllönen examines this claim in his "Public Participation and the Legitimacy of Climate Policies: Efficacy versus

Democracy?" and finds the arguments inadequate in a number of ways. His main argument is that if and when a justification can be given that makes drastic climate policies legitimate, it is based only partially on public deliberation among citizens. More important here is the publicity of the political decisions and their justifications: citizens should be able to see that the process has been fair and inclusive so that no relevant perspective has been left out and the outcome is not biased.

Part II—"Changing Society"—continues this theme but shifts the focus towards a wider look at the changes required in the name of environmental concerns. We need not only to reevaluate our central political concepts, but also our existing political structures and principles.

Timo Airaksinen frames the theme of the efficacy and legitimacy of democratic decision-making in environmental issues with the question whether politics is capable of not only protecting our natural environment but also destroying it. In "Between Democracy and Antagonistic Environmental Politics," he reaches a conclusion through an enticing argumentation—and with a little help from the Tasmanian tiger—which reflects well the convictions of the articles of the previous chapter. That is, that politics conceived as an open and democratic debate of the realization of common good—as in the liberal theory—is in fact impotent and incapable of controlling the forces which damage and destroy our natural environments.

Wojciech W. Gasparski continues the discussion by examining the requirements for designing of society in "A Designing Human Society: A Chance or a Utopia?" In the essay, he pinpoints the three central problems of decision-making, that is, the rejection of the axiom of unlimited resources, setting the survival of mankind as the supreme goal, and the vital role of practical problem-solving. What is especially interesting here is to notice the continuing importance of the questions raised in this article, which was originally published almost thirty years ago.

In "On the Role of Values in the World of Technology," Ladislav Tondl discusses the role and possibilities of technology as a means for solving societal problems. According to Tondl, since construction of technical works and technical artifacts are goal-directed activities, they contain an inherent attitude of value. This is especially vital in the application of new and previously unknown technologies, which open up new visions, spheres, and challenges to human thought. The human capability of moving in and between different "possible worlds" is vital here as a method of charting the emerging new requirements and responsibilities.

The last two essays concentrate on the capability of the economic structures of society to cope with environmental concerns. One popular attempt to institutionalize the various value-aspects of nature in the markets and society has been to translate them into monetary measures, that is, by giving them a price as natural resources. These are today conceptualized as "ecosystem services," whose prices can be estimated through economic methods of valuation. Gabriel Malenfant analyses these methods in "On Green Economics: The Limits of Our Instrumental Valuations of Nature," and even though the notion as such sounds appealing, and the methods are highly technical and sophisticated, they fall desperately short for providing morally sound guidelines for decision-makers. The reason for this is the simple fact that individually expressed preferences and desires, which these methods are capable of measuring, do not amount to genuine values.

In "Tackling Environmental Degradation and Poverty: A New Agenda for Entrepreneurs in Transition Economies," Boleslaw Rok focuses on the close and interdependent relationship between poverty and environmental sustainability, issues which are particularly burning in the so-called transition economies, the countries of Eastern Europe (EE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Rok argues that the reduction of poverty and environmental degradation requires active participation from the various market actors and concentrates on analyzing how to best engage or motivate these actors into creating "an economic playing field based on the principles of fairness and justice." The motivation of such actors takes place from their own starting point, by showing that they can at the same time create financial value but also improve people's lives and environmental conditions.

Part III—Changing Human Beings"—returns the discussion to the more traditional themes of environmental philosophy, those of individual action, behavior, and motivations. The emphasis here is on societal considerations, that is, asking questions such as what do such considerations require of us as individuals, as members of society, or as citizens of the local and global community? One central theme of the chapter is the possibility of extending moral consideration towards the various kinds of entities inhabiting the natural world with us—animals, plants, organisms, microhabitats, ecosystems, or even non-living things.

The chapter starts with Külli Keerus's attentive analysis of "Moral Status in Practice." A central feature of our Western moral discourse has been its inherent individualism, meaning here the unfortunate inclusion of solely human individuals within the realm of moral consideration.

Other worldly entities have only been granted a secondary moral status, as subsidiaries in the service of man. The notion of "moral status" or "moral standing" has been frequently raised as capable of extending moral consideration to these other entities. It would also serve as a justification of equitable treatment, thus motivating us to action. In her essay, Keerus demonstrates, however, that in spite of its initial appeal, the notion of moral status does not possess the required binding force that would oblige us to treat other entities with the same respect as our fellow human beings.

This theme is continued at more general level in "Romance, Reason, and Poetry in Ecological Philosophy," where Erazim Kohák paints a wonderfully vivid picture of the sensibilities of the earlier romantic environmental movement from the end of the last millennium. He discusses the way environmental issues have been conceptualized in philosophy as well as art, as ways to capture human existence and meaning. Most importantly, he tries to draw imperatives for action from this rich cultural background, and combines it with certain characteristics of human nature when asking the very relevant question whether "we humans are capable of so great a behavior modification," as survival within the Earth's limitations would require.

In "Sustainable Development as an Axiological and a Civilizational Challenge," Tadeusz Borys takes a broader view of these topics by discussing a new development paradigm. Borys emphasizes the need for a clear articulation and construction of our existing values—the task which was driven to the margin in the twentieth century—because ". . . without disclosing our systems of values, we are not able to clearly answer the question as to which social, economic, ecological, spatial, political, and institutional orders we want to accomplish." For this purpose, "an axiological diagnosis of a human" is needed, and it is to be conducted by asking the fundamental question of the true nature of human beings. According to Borys' enquiry, this diagnosis leads us to endorse more moderate anthropocentrism which is based on a "holistic vision of humaneness."

Another angle is presented by Caitlin Wilson in "Educating for Sustainability." She describes her experiences when facilitating a group of students from North America studying in Iceland on a summer program on renewable energy and sustainable development (SIT Study Abroad, 2009). A number of experimental pedagogies were used during the program, and Wilson draws from these experiences, aided by an analysis of the literature, two interesting conclusions. The first is that education

for sustainable development is a particularly suitable field for using manifold pedagogical and didactic methods, with "multidisciplinarity, active student participation, immersion in nature, experiential learning elements such as field study, a critical approach, holistic presentation, firm grounding in reality, as well as consideration of ethical issues on the personal, subjective, and sociocultural levels." The other interesting result is that this mixing of skills, talents, knowledge, and personal commitment created a strong positive outlook for the future among the students. Instead of being overwhelmed by the intensified flow of information of environmental problems and dangers, the students felt that a sustainable future was possible and feasible.

The last essay of this collection is Tomas Kavaliauskas' "The Creators of Global Warming" which deviates from the other contributors by raising a serious skeptical doubt. He asks whether we humans are excessively priding ourselves on our capabilities to change the world, by "treating ourselves as the exceptional life form that has extraordinary say in the planet's well-being, quality of functioning, cycles of seasons, and its evolutionary rhythm." Kavaliauskas asks whether such an "anthropogenic approach" is truly able to overcome the dualism between nature and humankind, or whether we are merely exhausting ourselves with the burdens of social and environmental responsibilities.

6.

As can be seen, this collection of essays is crowded with common themes, with threads linking contributions from various areas, from one discipline to another, and with very little apparent systematic connection apart from the general anxiety about the whole situation. But rather than being an indication of missing logic or internal coherence among the disciplinary contributions, it is rather a symptom of the various and so far undetermined challenges posed by environmental concerns.

All this may well indicate failures of the traditional disciplines to properly address these problems, but more importantly, it indicates the need and opportunity for new and interdisciplinary work, and novel and innovative linking of theoretical analysis to practical conclusions. This is what I hope to be the most important lesson to be learned from this colorful collection of essays.

Note

1. The first two concepts also have established applied environmental equivalents, namely "eco- effectiveness," and "eco-efficiency." And environmental ethics has naturally been around since the very beginning.

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Part 1

Changing Concepts

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Environmental Justice: From Theory to Practice and Back to Theory[1]

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> *Over hundreds of years, writers on justice in different parts of the world have attempted to provide the intellectual basis for moving from a general sense of injustice to particular reasoned diagnoses of injustice, and from there to the analyses of ways of advancing justice.*
>
> The Idea of Justice (Sen 2009, p. 5)

1. Introduction

In this essay, I will present certain observations about the background conditions involved in the analysis of the concerns for justice within the environmental field. These conditions are entangled, affecting both of the contemporary justice discourses in the field, that is, environmental justice theories and the environmental justice movement. They also explain some of the specific emphasis that marks both discourses.

As I see it, the conditions that are entangled here are the following: Firstly, there is the continuous search for a description of the current state of the environment which is attached to certain normative rules and goals which are expressed as various kinds of concerns for jus-

tice. Secondly, this search is undertaken with the purpose of outlining practical actions to be institutionalized as guidelines, principles, practices, customs, policies, or the like. Thirdly, it is understood that in order for individuals, companies, offices, institutions, or countries to be motivated to act accordingly, these actions and policies need to be supported by the best possible arguments, that is, they need to be justified, legitimized, validated, sanctioned, or authorized in some manner.

Although these three conditions are surely present in most similar instances of societal or political changes and turning points, there are certain elements in the environmental sphere, which I think makes them a special case, critically challenging our contemporary scientific and philosophical thinking and practice. We can indeed learn much from them. The first element is the three-centuries-old, but still topical, question of the place of normative elements, often expressed as the separation between facts and values, which continues to puzzle philosophers and scientists in their enquiries. The second is the special nature of environmental problems. Such problems are extremely complex in structure, involve complicated chains of causality, and are often wide-ranging or global not only in space but also in time (i.e., future generations). Most importantly, they seem dramatic and impactful to the verge of being untreatable.

In this essay, I will analyze these aspects mainly from the viewpoint of environmental justice. Some of these considerations surely apply to environmental action, some to environmental philosophy, and some only to environmental justice, though I will not analyze these issues here. Instead, the main focus of this paper is to evaluate the two-way relationship between environmental justice theories and environmental justice movement. This involves the idea that environmental justice theories can be used to analyze, distinguish, and assess the moral concerns of the environmental justice movement. At the same time, these analyses can be used to broaden the perspectives of the theories by pinpointing new, potentially relevant aspects of justice. Even though this idea seems appealing and commonsensical, a number of difficulties are still involved.

2. The Environmental Justice Movement and Environmental Justice Theories

For an astonishingly long time, it has been doubtful whether "environmental justice" actually exists in its own right as part of the field of political philosophy, and as such is involved in the theoretical enquiry of questions of justice within the spheres of the environment and nature. For the past twenty years or so, the concept has referred almost exclusively

to various environmental political movements. A prime example of such usage—and of the tensions involved with the scholarly analysis and activist elements of justice—can be found in Carl Talbot's 1997 article "Environmental Justice." Here, the writer describes the characteristics of the environmental justice movement, but at the same time has a strong critical attitude toward what the notion should imply. Problems that are mentioned in the article, such as dumping waste and hazardous products in the Third World countries, siting of polluting industry in poor neighborhoods, and people of color becoming concentrated in occupations with high health risks are surely cases of infringements of justice. Indeed, Talbot is right in claiming that such issues are too rarely discussed in mainstream philosophical literature. There is specifically one suggestion in his article which deals with the potential basic orientation of a "new" movement of environmental justice, and which at the same time illustrates something important about the nature of the environmental justice movement:

> For this new movement for environmental justice, matters of the environment are not confined to how to best manage or preserve some extra-urban "wilderness"; rather, the environment is part of a broader framework of economic, racial, and social justice. This perspective represents a significant challenge to the way mainstream environmental groups have commonly presented the environmental agenda as primarily occupied with the conservation of pristine wilderness and wildlife. The exclusion of any discussion of urban or industrial concerns in mainstream environmentalism is reflected in the histories of environmentalism, which concern themselves with the romantic champions of wild "Nature", such as the 19th century national parks advocate John Muir and Aldo Leopold, whose "land ethic" has become so revered by much of modern environmentalism, but say nothing of struggles to improve the urban and industrial environments.[2]

The message that could be read from this passage is that the environmental justice movement was no longer addressing the proper concerns of justice, and reason for this was that the movement was changing, had changed, and was in need of a change. As such it is a social movement, and this is an indicative feature of the environmental justice movement as such: instead of practical harmonization in the attainment of a common goal, it is plagued by competing movements, conflicting policy recommendations, and antagonistic doctrines.

The second message of Talbot's text and another indicative feature for the whole field is described in the popular media: "Environmental Justice is a movement . . . [which] seeks an end to environmental racism and [seeks to] prevent low-income and minority communities from an unbalanced exposure to highways, garbage dumps, and factories. The Environmental Justice movement seeks to link 'social' and 'ecological'

environmental concerns, while at the same time preventing de facto racism, and classism."[3] Thus there exists today, and has in fact existed throughout the movement's history, a pronounced goal to "link" together social and ecological environmental concerns.[4] The environmental justice movement is a typical social and political movement in the sense that it to tries to couple existing empirical problems with goals judged worthwhile, valuable, or necessary. The debates which surround these goals are naturally intense.

The third indicative feature is that there is a strong inclination to justify these goals, as all social movements try to do. Justification is sought for a number of things, and an analysis of their nature and importance is sorely needed. Some have got to do with the empirical feasibility and efficaciousness of the proposed measures and instruments, with their inherent uncertainty and doubtfulness. Others deal with the applicability and practicality of the goals and ideals at a more general level, especially when legitimizing resulting policies, strategies, and goals. In short, environmental movements are trying to do the right things for the right reasons; in the terms used in academic enquiry, they are trying to link correct descriptions and working instruments with right goals, such as savings the world. Facts, motivations, and normative goals all play central role in this package.

These three features are typical characteristics of those social and political groups that make up the environmental justice movements, and are also the reasons, why they are not mere scholarly theories. Environmental movements have always been searching for plausible ways of legitimizing the policies, strategies, and goals they suggest and advocate. This need has amplified exceedingly over the past years for various reasons: to start with, in contemporary democratic societies all societal decisions need to be legitimized. A further reason is that the natural ally of all environmental decisions and policies over the past decades, the natural sciences, have turned out to be far less capable of supplying scientific bases for these decisions. They have not been able to provide descriptions and predictions of the state and development of nature and the environment as hoped for. Especially, the various uncertainties in scientific research have produced spin-off effects often directly undermining the goals and demands of the environmental movements. Scientific uncertainties have laid a shadow on the overall reliability of scientific knowledge, and more concretely, they have made environmental decision-making increasingly difficult. Measures and methods for determining policy options and possible actions have proved to be

highly unreliable, and the various kinds of ethical, economic, and societal uncertainties accruing further complicate the picture.

All this has led the environmental movement to search for common grounds with not only the natural sciences, but increasingly often with the social sciences and philosophy. To put this simply, the environmental movement's search for broader and more convincing perspectives to solve the various serious environmental crises of our world is not a question of merely finding straightforward technical answers. Much more is at stake in these crises.

With these developments, the role of philosophers has expanded over the past decades. The demand for expertize in dealing with normative questions enabled the outbreak of applied and practical ethics from the 1980s onwards. This was made possible by the major shift at the end of the 1970s in moral philosophy, sometimes called "the Great Expansion of Ethics,"[5] which suggested that moral and political philosophers would be able to articulate normative and substantial assessments on contemporary practical issues and problems. Certain socially pressing moral questions such as abortion, animal rights, or euthanasia served as a marketing window of these capabilities of philosophical enquiry.

Despite these attempts by different discourses to approach each other, they are still far apart. Even though many of the problems of the environmental justice movement follow from the fact that their theoretical input is limited, not always scientific, and sometimes plainly false, there is a clear tendency to downscales the impact of theory for various reasons.[6] Very often their analyses is merely varying and strong beliefs of a speculative nature. The movements deal with empirical cases, and their assumptions, concepts, and explanations as well as justifications are strongly dependent upon each other, and the result is that they are too often curious and/or misconceived mixtures of normative goals and descriptions of social and natural sciences. Even though this is often the case with various social movements, it seems to be particularly prevalent within the environmental movement.

Or what should one say of a claim like "elite-driven environmental programs act as a disciplining mechanism against the poor," also to be found in Talbot's text? With such an extremely strong claim, one would clearly need more explanations and theoretical input on a number of questions, starting with the potential truth of the whole claim: Is it really the case that environmental problems are elite-driven programs targeted against the poor? What constitutes a "disciplinary action"? Who are the elite doing that? How does such a mechanism emerge? How does

it work? And how do you prove such claims? I am not saying here that these explanations are necessarily false, but that they need to be verified, and that is the task for (usually social) scientific inquiry. Thus more theoretical input is needed, and at various levels.

Moreover, it is also claimed we are dealing with issues of justice: but what kind of a breach of justice exactly is it, and on what basis? Which exactly are the injustices here and why do they take place? How and where are we to look for the roots and solutions to this contravention? What are the moral statuses of the people involved? Who are the exploiters and exploited here? What are the canons of justice in operation here? If we do not have a plausible theory of justice at our disposal, we cannot analyze these questions very far; even if we see this situation amounting to an infringement of justice at face value, we may well disagree of its nature, and what it requires of us. Indeed, the movement has not been particularly active in searching for support for their convictions from existing theories of justice.

There is therefore a need to clarify the roles of two kinds of scholarly theories here—scientific theories describing and explaining the situation, and justice theories defining, classifying, and analyzing the moral problems involved.

The scientific input in the concerns raised by the environmental justice movement usually comes from the results of "Environmental Science." The discipline is, however, far from being a settled, accepted, and established academic enterprise, with a variety of disciplines crossing each other's disciplinary borders. But if the scientific study of nature and the environment is in a state of confusion and change, the philosophical study of the environment is pretty much in a similar state. Environmental philosophy, the area where philosophical questions concerning nature and the environment are generally dealt with, is also an intensely debated and contested field. Although being the mainstream emphasis of environmental philosophy over the past two decades, environmental ethics never managed to produce the kinds of conclusions that would have addressed the kinds of practical concerns the environmental movement raised. This is in part due to the fact that environmental philosophy has never really been able to set its agenda independently of the practical concerns raised by the environmental movement as some other traditional fields of philosophy have been able to do in their respective fields.

But this is not just a drawback for the enterprise, since it is here, in environmental problems, that theoretical questions and practical concerns collide in a most profound manner, and this is bound to be instructive

and edifying in a number of ways. This makes environmental philosophy an especially interesting field of contemporary philosophy: it is a wonderful example of the difficulties and problems incurred when philosophy is used as an applied discipline, and especially in conjunction with other sciences. It is also here that philosophy runs not only into a crash course with other sciences, but also with everyday moral feelings and intuitions. We are indeed here, as Sze and London phrase it, at a crossroads of social movements, public policy, and academic research.[7]

My focus here is, where exactly do the normative considerations of justice fit into this framework? Moreover the starting problem with environmental justice theories is quite simply that we do not really have such theories, or certainly we did not have them at the time of Talcot's article. Our general theories of justice over the past few decades have been rather limited topically. In fact they have dealt with a restricted set of questions, and environmental issues have never really been on this agenda. Yet this problem of the missing theories of environmental justice is not an isolated problem from the rest of social and political philosophy; so let us take a brief look at the historical origins of this problem.

3. Theories of Justice

In order to evaluate the ways of theorizing environmental justice, it is necessary to reflect what the theories of justice in general are and have been. Do environmental justice concerns differ from the general concerns of justice? Do they have some sort of special character?

These are indeed two separate questions, and the first—what is the nature of justice?—is discussed intensely within the contemporary mainstream of political philosophy, while the second —what is the nature of environmental justice?—has not been a mainstream topic in a similar way. So far there exists no comprehensive and systematic analysis of the justice concepts used and appealed to in the various environmental justice contexts,[8] be they academic or activist by nature. One goal of this chapter is to outline some of the preliminaries for such an analysis.

The central figures of political philosophy in the early 1980s were such philosophers as John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and Robert Nozick, and later David Gauthier. These theorists wrote extensively about justice in their works, and presented precise, constrained, and focused analyses from their perspective of what justice means and what it consists of. This amounted to the idea expressed in the first sentences of Rawls's *Theory of Justice* from 1971: "[j]ustice is the first virtue of social in-

stitutions, as truth is of systems of thought."[9] With this straightforward definition this central concept of political philosophy is given a precise interpretation. At the same time it is cleared from all the previous transcendental and metaphysical notions, such as of justice as discovery of harmony, justice as divine command, or natural law, in addition to the various religious conceptions of justice. Rawls located justice firmly and concretely in the basic structures of society, as a safeguard for individuals against unjust political arrangements: "A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue. Likewise, laws and institutions, no matter how efficient and well-arranged, must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override."[10] This sort of definition limited potential questions and topics concerning justice to more manageable chunks, thus allowing for more precise and coherent analysis of these topics. Nozick, for his part, fixed the central notions of political philosophy tightly into his individualism, conceptualizing justice as a question of distribution of property.

Along with these ideas, justice came to mean the distribution of the benefits and burdens of the liberal society, carefully safeguarded by individual rights. Accordingly, the study was conceived as the search for the principles of distributive justice. Influenced by certain simple theorems of economic theory, these were conceptualized as a set of normative principles designed to allocate goods of limited supply relative to demand. The principles suggested have been categorized in a number of ways,[11] for instance: (1) Which are the benefits and burdens we are to distribute? Are we talking of money, wealth, opportunities, or the like? (2) Who are the subjects of this distribution? Are they natural persons, groups, reference classes, professions, or the like? and (3) On what basis should the benefits and burdens be distributed? Is equal division vital, or should we pay attention to individual characteristics, such as merit, or should we resort to free market transactions? The dominant principles supported on the basis of these distinctions enumerated in the textbooks are usually versions of egalitarianism, utilitarianism, libertarianism, or variations on liberal theories.

During the past twenty years of increased interest in environmental issues, this discourse of justice never really touched the discourse of the environmental justice movement. The academic discussions of political philosophy along the principles of justice set by John Rawls were highly

theoretical, concentrating on distributional patterns and principles, while the discussions within the environmental justice movement have been conspicuously practical, concentrating on empirical breaches of justice. The latter discourse has focused on analyzing and outlining the processes that construct maldistributions of societal bads and goods; or to give a representative example from Talbot again, ". . . to analyze patterns of disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards experienced by minority and low-income communities, to understand how such patterns have developed, and to develop programs by which disproportionate exposures can be remedied and prevented."[12]

In its analyses of concrete maldistributions, the environmental justice movement has utilized a plurality of different more or less articulated conceptions and notions of justice, adopted from various sources such as traditional notions of justice, strong intuitions, societal values, or political and religious doctrines. As if an answer to the call of Talbot presented in the beginning of this essay, definitions have increasingly often been drawn from theoretical discussions of political theory and philosophy. This discussion has, however, been found restricting and limited in a number of ways. As a result, there is an intense development under the way in both discourses—environmental justice movement, and political theory and philosophy. Along with the development of justice theories, and the various needs posed by applied ethics and applied philosophy, academic theorists have started to search for new ways of analyzing and conceptualizing the notion of justice. In a similar manner, environmental activists have realized the increasing need for theoretical analysis in order to fruitfully and efficiently analyze contested practical situations. Thus there is a reciprocal pull within both discourses—justice theory and the justice movement—toward each other. But what exactly are these centripetal forces, what are these needs that these two discourses are looking for in each other?

One way to look at this relationship is through the recent analysis of Amartya Sen in *The Idea of Justice* (2009). As descendants of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Enlightenment thought, the theories of justice as distribution have an emphasis on reforming political institutions and the protection of individuals and their rights.[13] According to Sen, there were in fact two lines of reasoning about justice emerging "with the radical thought of that period." The first, which he calls "transcendental institutionalism," originated from Thomas Hobbes and was followed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and concentrated on identifying just institutional arrangements for society, what "perfect justice" is comprised of in the

sense of "identify[ing those] social characteristics that cannot be transcended in terms of justice." The goal was to "get the institutions right," to find perfectly or ideally just institutions, and the methodological tool for these purposes was the social contract theory. This is indeed the very same mainstream of justice theories that I have been talking about here. Sen also names Ronald Dworkin, David Gauthier, and Robert Nozick as representatives of such theorists, since they "share the common aim of identifying just rules and institutions, even though their identifications of these arrangements come in very different forms."[14]

Sen outlines the second "line of thought" by contrasting it to transcendental institutionalism and what it was lacking. It did not concentrate on relative comparisons of justice and injustice, and it did not analyze "moral or political imperatives regarding socially appropriate behavior." The idea here is that the society based on a favored set of principles and institutions of transcendental institutionalists would still crucially "depend also on noninstitutional features, such as actual behaviors of people and their social interactions." And it is these behavioral assumptions, "norms of behavior," that have been neglected within this line of reasoning. These kinds of "comparative approaches" were taken seriously by Enlightenment theorists such as Adam Smith, the Marquis de Condorcet, Jeremy Bentham, Mary Wollstonecraft, Karl Marx, and John Stuart Mill. In contrast to transcendental institutionalists, they were "concerned with social realizations (resulting from actual institutions, actual behavior and other influences)."[15]

Sen invokes another distinction that is apparently the basis for the distinction between the two types of justice thought, but is nevertheless a more general categorization. This is the distinction between the "arrangement-focused view of justice" as practiced by the mainstream theorists of (distributive) justice and "realization-focused understanding of justice" as practiced by the latter theorists, Mill, Marx, etc. The first refers to "organizational propriety and behavioral correctness, while the latter stands for "a comprehensive concept of realized justice": "In that line of vision, the roles of institutions, rules and organization, important as they are, have to be assessed in the broader and more inclusive perspective . . ., which is inescapably linked with the world that actually emerges, not just the institutions or rules we happen to have."[16] Where the mainstream of justice then goes wrong here, according to Sen, is that "we have to seek institutions that promote justice, rather than treating the institutions as themselves manifestations of justice, which would reflect a kind of institutionally fundamentalist view."[17]