Climate Crisis, Ideology, and Collective Action

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In memory of my mother and father

"Nightmare, nightmare, struggle, despair and dream..."
—Thomas McGrath, *Letter to an Imaginary Friend*

According to new scientific research, there exist nine *planetary boundaries*, which are interlinked Earth-system processes and biophysical constraints: climate change, rate of biodiversity loss, interference with the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, stratospheric ozone depletion, ocean acidification, global freshwater use, change in land use, chemical pollution, and atmospheric aerosol loading. Crossing even one of these boundaries would risk triggering abrupt or irreversible environmental changes that would be very damaging or even catastrophic for society. Furthermore, if any of these boundaries were crossed, then there would be a serious risk of crossing the others. However, as long as these boundaries are not crossed, "humanity has the freedom to pursue long-term social and economic development."[1]

Unfortunately, the following three boundaries have already been crossed: climate change, rate of biodiversity loss, and interference with the nitrogen cycle. The threat that humanity has posed to the conditions of life for our own and other species has never been greater.[2]

In response to this emergency, let us consider the following moral argument. Call it the *Urgency Argument*:

1. One should urgently act to halt any grave threat posing serious harm to others.
2. Crossing any of the nine planetary boundaries would be a grave threat posing serious harm to human development.
3. Therefore, humanity should urgently act to avoid crossing these boundaries, or, if already crossed, to reverse course and resume social and economic development within them.
4. Dangerous climate change will result from crossing one of the nine planetary boundaries.
5. But dangerous climate change is caused by releasing excessive greenhouse gas emissions into the earth's atmosphere (>350 ppm CO_2).
6. Therefore, humanity should urgently act to reduce greenhouse gas

1 Rockström et al. 2009.

2 The planetary boundaries associated with stratospheric ozone depletion, ocean acidification, global freshwater use, and change in land use have not yet been crossed; and those boundaries associated with chemical pollution, and atmospheric aerosol loading have yet to be quantified scientifically.

emissions into the earth's atmosphere to a safe target (<350 ppm CO_2).[3]

But given the imminent prospect of severe climate disruption, why as yet has there occurred relatively little collective action in response? Psychologist Daniel Gilbert thought he had the answer. In an opinion piece provocatively titled "If Only Gay Sex Caused Global Warming"[4] Gilbert argued[5] that the real psychological obstacle to effective action on climate change is that human brains have evolved to deal most effectively with threats that:

- are intentional and personal;
- violate our moral sensibilities;
- are a clear and present danger; and
- involve quick changes rather than gradual changes
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Unfortunately, as Greg Craven has noted, climate change has none of these properties; "[i]t is impersonal, morally neutral, in the future, and gradual, and we're just not wired to watch out for stuff like that."[6]

Lisa Bennett has offered additional neurological evidence: not only do humans initially assess risks not by means of rational analysis but through emotion, but we also depend heavily on our background worldview for interpreting information. For example, individuals with "hierarchical" worldviews are likely to discount the need for political action on climate change, whereas individuals with "egalitarian" worldviews are likely to be motivated to participate in a movement for climate justice.[7]

What should we make of Gilbert's and Bennett's explanations? Let us be blunt. They are striking examples of what we could call ideological evasion by recourse to neuroscience. Essentially, they are claiming that the fault lies not in external social conditions but within us.

3 Premise one is a moral presupposition that relies on broad intuitive appeal, whether from consequentialist, deontological, or virtue-based approaches. For evidence in support of premise two, see Wijkman and Rockström 2012, pp. 36-48; in support of premise four, see Anderson 2012; and in support of premise five, see Hansen and Sato 2012. Berners-Lee and Clark 2013 provides an up-to-date, but non-technical, overview of climate science research and projections. From a frustratingly contrarian perspective, Mark Lynas well explains the concept of planetary boundaries but then chides Green activists for their "pessimism" and insists—with scant argument—that there is no need for "ditching capitalism, the profit principle, or the market" (Lynas 2011, p. 9).

4 Gilbert 2006.

5 See Greg Craven's (2009, 72-3) careful reconstruction of Gilbert's argument.

6 Craven 2009, p. 73.

7 Bennett 2008.

Each of our individual brains has failed us; and this is why we haven't set about to do together what we must in order to mitigate climate change.

Yet, as neuroscientist Steven Rose has insisted, "the mind is wider than the brain."[8] Likewise is the reach of ideology.

Consider that denial about climate change is hardly new but only the latest in a long series of corporate and pseudo-scientific efforts to discredit evidence for, and undermine action, on such problems as acid rain, dangers of secondhand smoke, and ozone depletion.[9] Such efforts rely not on how the human brain is hardwired to distinguish between immediate and long-term risk but on what Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway call a deliberate strategy of "doubt-mongering." In short, urgent action on climate change requires not a rewiring of our brains but a fundamental critique of, and struggle against, global capitalism. Activists must take up the difficult issues of how best to challenge the dominant ideological structure of climate change denial and how most effectively to mobilize collective action in favor of radical social transformation.

No doubt such a perspective goes against the contemporary grain of organizing efforts by otherwise admirable reform-oriented environmental organizations like 350.org.[10] Yet even a greener capitalism is scarcely plausible apart from the sustained pressure exerted by a deeper systemic challenge to the capitalist mode of production itself. Climate justice activists simply must confront capitalism as a whole—above all with respect to its "mental conception of the world."[11] This is why Annie Leonard's challenge to mainstream environmentalists is refreshingly candid: "Can we put capitalism on the table and talk about it with the same intellectual rigor that we welcome for other topics?"[12]

I. Ecological rift: a new climate case against capitalism

Consider now a second moral argument, which we may call the *Unsustainability Argument*:

8 Rose 2005, p. 88.

9 Oreskes and Conway 2010.

10 In his impressive recent book Eaarth (McKibben 2010), the co-founder of 350.org, Bill McKibben still fails to identify capitalism as the chief cause of the climate crisis.

11 See Marx's footnote on technology (1990, pp. 493-4n.4) and Harvey's commentary (2010a, pp. 189-201).

12 Leonard 2010, p. xxii.

1. The capitalist mode of production has already crossed, and will unavoidably continue to cross, one or more of the nine planetary boundaries.

2. A mode of production that unavoidably crosses even one of the nine planetary boundaries is ecologically unsustainable.

3. Therefore, the capitalist mode of production is ecologically unsustainable.

4. An ecologically unsustainable mode of production is a grave threat posing serious harm to human development.

5. Therefore, the capitalist mode of production is a grave threat posing serious harm to human development.

The first, and most important, premise of this argument can readily be justified. Without external constraints imposed by the state or by organized social forces, capitalism will have a strong tendency to exceed the nine planetary boundaries. There are three basic features of capitalism that account for this problem.[13] First of all, a relentless profit imperative underlies capitalist accumulation. Since capitalist firms face competitive pressure from other firms, there exists a strong motivation for them to externalize costs onto the natural world.

Secondly, the profit imperative inherent in capitalism results in an ever-expanding search for new markets or, as Marx strikingly put it in the *Grundrisse*, to regard natural "boundaries as mere "barriers" to be overcome or simply shifted elsewhere[14]—with no less deleterious effects.[15]

Thirdly, capitalism emphasizes short-term economic calculation to the detriment of long-term planning that is essential for sustainable human development. Even worse, "capitalist time" invariably collides with, and disrupts, such natural rhythms, cycles, and temporalities as weather patterns,[16] the migration of species,[17] and seasonal adaptation.[18]

13 See Williams 2010, pp. 191-214; Derber 2010, pp. 105-15; and Baer 2012, pp. 57-116.

14 On this dialectical interplay between ecological "rifts" and economic "shifts," see Foster, Clark, and York 2010, pp. 73-87.

15 Marx 1973, pp. 334-5. See the implicit disagreement between Harvey (2010b, pp. 70-84) and Foster, Clark, and York (2010, pp. 13-49, 275-87) on whether or not contemporary capitalism can in fact continue to turn the nine planetary boundaries into barriers.

16 See Cullen 2010.

17 See Wilcove 2007.

18 See Foster and Kreitzman 2009.

In sum, capitalism has tended "to undermine the very process of interaction with nature on which it, like every other form of human society, depended."[19] Indeed, as John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark, and Richard York have powerfully argued, capitalism has introduced a profound "ecological rift" into the relationship between humanity and the natural world, which has arisen from "the conflicts and contradictions of the modern capitalist society" and has severely disrupted the essential metabolic interchange between human beings and nature. As they write, "the planet is now dominated by a technologically potent but alienated humanity—alienated both from nature and itself; and hence ultimately destructive of everything around it. At issue is not just the sustainability of human society, but the diversity of life on Earth."[20] And so, they continue, "for a sustainable relation between humanity and the earth to be possible under modern conditions, the metabolic relation between human beings and nature needs to be rationally regulated by the associated producers in line with their needs *and* those of future generations. This means that the vital conditions of life and the energy involved in such processes need to be conserved."[21] But capitalism is incapable of reigning in its relentless drive to expansion beyond what planetary boundaries can withstand. As a result, Foster, Clark, and York conclude, an "ecological revolution" against global capitalism is not only desirable but is imperative.[22]

II. Some difficulties for collective action

Building on the Unsustainability Argument, consider now the *Obstruction Argument*:

1. Humanity should urgently act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the earth's atmosphere to a safe target (<350 ppm CO_2).
2. But capitalism structurally obstructs individual actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a safe target.
3. Therefore, collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a safe target is necessary.
4. But capitalism also obstructs collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a safe target.

19 Harman 2010, p. 307.

20 Foster, Clark, and York 2010, p. 14.

21 Foster, Clark, and York 2010, p. 60.

22 See especially Foster, Clark, and York 2010, pp. 423-42.

5. If both individual and collective means of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a safe target are obstructed, then the obstruction itself must be removed.

6. But capitalism cannot be removed through individual actions.

7. Therefore, capitalism must be removed through collective action.

How might we justify the second and sixth premises of the Obstruction Argument? How exactly does capitalism obstruct individual actions to tackle the problem of climate change? In no small part this occurs by means of ideological practices and strategies.

If we consider what Raymond Geuss has called ideology in the "pejorative sense,"[23] we can see that the onset of climate change has generated an especially pernicious ideology, or rather an "assemblage"[24] of ideological strategies and practices. In particular, ideology operates on, and distorts, people's historically contingent beliefs, desires, and intentions; and by so doing presents the latter as if they were universal, natural, and inevitable.[25]

The upshot is that ideology "interpellates individuals as subjects"[26] not just with respect to such mental states as beliefs but also with respect to desires, intentions, and resolutions.[27] Following Terry Eagleton, let us note that ideology has a twofold nature: it operates at both cognitive and conative levels.[28] In the first instance, ideology channels or obscures what is known to people; in the second instance, ideology weakens or misdirects people's desires, intentions to act as they determine best and resolutions to resist countervailing temptations. With some notable exceptions,[29] Marxists have devoted more attention to the cognitive than to the conative side of ideology. Without denying the importance of that extensive, and impressively variegated, tradition, literature, and debate, in what follows let us aim to reset a theoretical imbalance.

23 Geuss 1981, pp. 4-22.

24 David Harvey (2010b, p. 128) has incorporated Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblage (see Deleuze and Guattari 1987, passim) into a new critical Marxist lexicon.

25 See Geuss's (2008, pp. 52-3) recent formulation.

26 To use Louis Althusser's expression. See Althusser 2008, pp. 44-51.

27 On the irreducibility of intentions and resolutions to beliefs and desires, see Holton 2009.

28 Eagleton 2007, p. 19. Eagleton himself distinguishes "cognitive" from "affective" aspects of ideology.

29 See especially Eagleton 2007, pp. 33-61 on "ideological strategies." See also Meyerson 1991.

There undoubtedly never exists a condition of perfect ideological dominance by one group over others, whether at the level of belief, desire, intention, or resolution. In the introduction to his trenchant critique of "American ideology" Howard Zinn offered an especially lucid account of such ideological unevenness. In Zinn's view,

the dominance of [an ideology] is not the product of a conspiratorial group that has devilishly plotted to implant on society a particular point of view. Nor is it an accident, an innocent result of people thinking freely. There is a process of natural (or, rather, *unnatural*) selection, in which certain orthodox ideas are encouraged, financed, and pushed forward by the most powerful mechanisms of our culture. These ideas are preferred because they are safe; they don't threaten established wealth or power.[30]

Since ideology cannot be restricted to ideas or beliefs alone, we should add to Zinn's account that person's basic desires, intentions, and resolutions equally become distorted, channeled, weakened, or misdirected as a result of ideological strategies serving powerful socio-economic interests.

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Consider now the fourth premise of the Obstruction Argument: "capitalism also obstructs collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a safe target." By "collective action" let us understand, following Alex Callinicos, "any attempt by persons to co-ordinate their actions so as to achieve some goal or goals."[31] Yet collective action is easier to envision and encourage than it is to carry out successfully. A number of difficulties arise along the way. Let us consider seven of these difficulties. Too many individuals

- may not know basic facts about the problem; or
- may not want to know basic facts about the problem; or
- may not know what to do about the problem; or
- may not want to know what to do about the problem; or
- may not intend to do anything about the problem; or
- may not resolve to act with others to solve the problem; or
- may fail to act with resolve with others to solve the problem.

At each step along the way to collective action, specific ideological strategies arise to delay, distort, obstruct, or misdirect individuals. The

30 Zinn 1990, p. 3.

31 Callinicos 2004, p. 153.

task for activists in general—and for anti-capitalists specifically—is to intervene at each link in this sequence of practical reasoning about the desirability of collective action. How best can we help to educate, agitate, and organize an anti-capitalist movement for climate justice? Consider each step in order as it pertains to the problem of climate change.

If *individuals do not know the basic facts about climate change*, then the appropriate response is to demand better science education and to disseminate such information effectively through corporate or alternative media.[32]

However*, if individuals do not want to know basic facts about climate change*, we encounter not *ignorance* about a problem that can be relatively easily corrected but instead *stupidity* proper. In this case, what is required is a detailed account of the "genesis of stupidity" along the lines of what Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno once attempted, namely, to examine stupidity as a "scar"—a symptom of a damaged psychic life.[33]

But stupidity is only part of the problem. As James Rachels once observed, "accepting a moral argument often means that we must change our behavior. People may not want to do that. So, not surprisingly, they will sometimes turn a dear ear."[34] Moreover, anxiety about an uncertain future is a key factor that inhibits willingness to accept risks involved in social transformation. Chris Hedges writes that "our passivity is due, in part, to our inability to confront the awful fact of extinction, either our own inevitable mortality or that of the human species. The emotional cost of confronting death is painful. We prefer illusion."[35]

How should activists respond to such flight from the painful truth of climate change? By instilling courage in others that radical change is necessary, that future delay will only make matters worse.

Simply acknowledging, and knowing in the abstract about, a collective problem takes us only so far along the way to collective action. The next three steps are crucial. Firstly, *individuals may not know what to do about climate change*. The appropriate response to such practical

32 See, for example, the thoughtful proposals by Mooney and Kirshenbaum 2009 and Olson 2009 for improving basic scientific literacy in the United States.

33 Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, pp. 213-4. Also see Pierce 2010.

34 Rachels and Rachels 2009, p. 160.

35 Hedges 2010, pp. 198-9.

uncertainty would be to offer concrete tactics and strategies that are appealing. An exceptionally fine, detailed program is the demand by the U.K.-based Campaign against Climate Change's for the establishment of a National Climate Service and creation of the "one million, green climate jobs."[36]

However, there is another aspect of this first obstacle: any serious solution to climate change must break with the "productivist" and "consumerist" logics of capitalism.[37] Yet, as Ozzie Zehner has argued, there exist widespread "green illusions" that pursuing alternative technologies alone can provide a sure path to a sustainable future.[38] Even the vaunted pursuit of greater economic efficiency turns out, under scrutiny, to be a pernicious trap that will result in greater consumption, faster depletion of natural resources, more waste, and continued surpassing of planetary boundaries.[39] What is required, by contrast, is a rapid shift from production for profit to production for meeting human needs; and a profound transformation in individual and collective patterns of consumption, regardless of the technologies deployed.[40]

Secondly, *individuals may not want to know what to do about climate change*. Here the problem is not ignorance, stupidity, or practical uncertainty, but a range of "rogue desires,"[41] ranging from disillusionment and despair to cynicism. Consider cynicism. Even if we allow for a distinction[42] between official cynicism from above and populist *kynicism* from below, not all ideology is an exercise of "cynical reason." For example, as Chris Mooney and Sheril Kirshenbaum have argued, one of the main reasons in the United States for the lack of public demand for climate change policy has been the failure of basic science education in schools and in corporate media to provide accurate information about the gravity of the problem.[43]

36 See the campaign's excellent pamphlet: Neale et al. 2010.

37 See especially Baer 2012 and Tanuro 2013.

38 Zehner 2012.

39 On the perils of the "efficiency trap," see Hallett 2013.

40 For a set of concrete proposals on how this might occur, see especially Berners-Lee and Clark 2013.

41 On the concept of "rogue desires" see Meyerson 1991, pp. 130-45.

42 See Zizek 2009, pp. 24-7.

43 Mooney and Kirshenbaum 2009.

Thirdly, *individuals may not intend to do anything about the problem*. Such paralysis above all afflicts academics whose fetish of deliberation reins in every decision about what to do for fear that it may be premature or ill considered. In this case, a good Sartrean response would be to insist that failure, or refusal, to act, is by default still a form of action—but in bad faith.[44] The only way out of bad faith is to undergo what Simone de Beauvoir once called a radical "conversion."[45] As a result of such conversion, an individual would recognize that his or her concrete freedom is not separate from, but is interdependent with, the concrete freedoms of everyone else. However, de Beauvoir clearly rejected all "utopian reveries" of voluntary conversion by oppressors to the cause of freedom; they must be forced to change through revolt by the oppressed themselves acting in concert.[46]

The final two links in the theoretical-practical chain bring us at last to the threshold of collective action. Consider, though, the following difficulty: *individuals may not resolve to act with others to solve the problem of climate change*. Here we encounter above all an ideological strategy that Andrew Szasz has brilliantly identified and critiqued: what he calls the "inverted quarantine."[47] Through illuminating case studies—from the 1961 U.S. "fallout shelter panic" to the current reliance on bottled drinking water—Szasz examines how individuals have often responded to perceived social and environmental threats "by *isolating themselves*...by erecting some sort of barrier or enclosure and withdrawing behind it or inside it." Instead of acting jointly with others to bring about structural change by "making history," individuals opt to deal with collective problems on their own. This inverted quarantine strategy as a "mass phenomenon" invariably leads to the displacement of politics through consumption as individuals seek to "shop their way to safety."[48]

The appropriate response to the perverse logic of "inverted quarantine" is to construct means by which individuals can break out from such an "I-mode" and adopt instead a "we-mode" that embodies

44 On the connection between ideology and bad faith in Sartre, see Coombes 2008, especially 89-116.

45 Beauvoir 1976, pp. 13-4, 66-7. On the concept of "conversion" in Beauvoir's (and Sartre's) writings, see Deutscher 2008.

46 Beauvoir 1976, pp. 96-7.

47 Szasz 2007.

48 Szasz 2007, p. 5.

genuinely shared intentions, resolutions, and commitments.[49] Without such a transformation, collective action regarding climate change is not possible.

Finally, *individuals may fail to act with resolve with others to solve the problem*. This is a political manifestation of what philosophers have traditionally called "weakness of the will," but more simply could be termed *ethical weakness* (or *backsliding*[50]).

In the Marxist tradition, scant attention has been paid to the problem not of the ideological obscuring of what is in one's class interest but why *even if one does know, and resolve to act upon this interest, one may still fail to do so*.[51] It is true enough that class interests often conflict with those based, for example, on race, gender, and nationality; but a deeper analysis of human moral psychology suggests that there is an affective undercurrent to political decision making and acting. And this undercurrent is difficult to navigate successfully.

The solution to the problem of ethical weakness cannot be found in simply consciously vowing to maintain sound judgment now and in the future. What is needed is more akin to cultivating what Spinoza called "fortitude," or, more simply, ethical strength.[52] How is this possible? In part 5 of the *Ethics* Spinoza recommended certain imaginative practices that inspired what the Marxist sociologist and Spinoza scholar Georges Friedmann called "spiritual exercises."[53] As Friedmann proposed in a journal entry dating from the French Resistance to German occupation, "this effort upon oneself is necessary; this ambition—just. Many are those who are completely absorbed in militant politics, preparation for the social Revolution. Rare, very rare, are those who, to prepare for the Revolution, want to make themselves worthy of it."[54]

Yet spiritual exercises are not the exclusive preserve of individuals. Ethical strength cannot be based on one's internal resources alone. On the contrary, the enduring Spinozist question is, "How can we

49 I borrow the distinction between "I-perspective" and a "we-perspective" from Tuomela 2007.

50 See Mele 2012.

51 A notable exception is Meyerson 1991, pp. 165-8.

52 Spinoza classifies "fortitude" (*fortitudo*) as a key "active affect" in the *Ethics*; see the note to proposition 59, part three, and the note to proposition 73, part four (Spinoza 1996, pp. 102-3, pp. 154-5). Holton 2009, pp. 112-36 uses the term "strength of will," but he thereby presumes the existence of a "will," which is an unnecessary postulate.

53 Friedmann 1970, p. 359.

54 Friedmann 1970, pp. 359-60.

increase our individual powers to act by joining together with others?"[55] What we need above all to envision and put into practice is the common exercise of ethical strength made possible through collective action. In the face of threatened or actual state violence, the pressing question then becomes how to give each other courage.

III. From weakness to strength: building an anti-capitalist movement for climate justice

Let us take stock. Thus far we have considered an Urgency Argument, an Unsustainability Argument, and an Obstruction Argument. Add finally a fourth argument, which links the results of the previous three. Call it the *Removal Argument*:

1. The capitalist mode of production is a grave threat posing serious harm to human development.
2. Any mode of production that is a grave threat posing serious harm to human development should be removed.
3. But capitalism *must* be removed through collective action.
4. Therefore, capitalism *should* be removed through collective action.

Of course building a successful anti-capitalist movement for climate justice won't be easy. It will require no less than "a world uprising transcending all geographical boundaries."[56] Indeed, parents who gaze at their children in the early morning hours while the latter are fast asleep may worry that the prospects for success are not great. Yet honest despair or even rage is preferable to what Roger Hodge has aptly termed the "mendacity of hope."[57] As Thomas McGrath once put it so eloquently, "[A]nger sustains me—it is better than hope—/it is *not* better than/Love.../But it *will* keep warm in the cold of the wrong world."[58]

There are anger and despair aplenty in Chris Hedges' recent work. Hedges has stared into the capitalist abyss and decried liberal complicity with a descent into barbarism. Hedges warns that corporate interests have seized all mechanisms of power, from government to mass propaganda. They will not be defeated through elections or influenced through popular movements. The working class has been wiped out. The economy is in ruins. The imperial expansion is teetering on collapse. The ecosystem is undergoing terrifying changes unseen in recorded human

55 See Spinoza's note to proposition 18 in part four of the *Ethics* (Spinoza 1996, pp. 125-26).

56 Foster, Clark, and York 2010, p. 440.

57 Hodge 2010.

58 McGrath 1997, p. 317.

history. The death spiral, which will wipe out whole sections of the human race, demands a return to a radical militancy that asks the uncomfortable question of whether it is time to break laws that, if followed, ensure our annihilation."[59]

Yet in spite of the dismal state of the world Hedges discerns a glimmer of hope arising from such renewed militancy:

The best opportunities for radical social change exist among the poor, the homeless, the working class, and the destitute. As the numbers of disenfranchised dramatically increase, our only hope is to connect ourselves with the daily injustices visited upon the weak and the outcast. Out of this contact we can resurrect, from the ground up, a social ethic, a new movement."[60]

Hedges acknowledges that "it is too late to prevent profound climate change." But, he quickly adds, "why allow our ruling elite, driven by the lust for profits, to accelerate the death spiral? Why continue to obey the laws and dictates of our executioners?"[61]

Although Hedges rightly stresses the imperative to resist the global capitalist order, he fails to provide a nuanced assessment of what is required for successful collective action against capitalism. Here David Harvey offers an invaluable strategic corrective to Hedges' tendency to lapse into moralistic denunciations and desperate appeals to rebellion.

Harvey has identified "seven distinctive 'activity spheres' within the evolutionary trajectory of capitalism" and within which that any anti-capitalist movement must intervene if it is to increase its strength and effectiveness: "technologies and organizational forms; social relations; institutional and administrative arrangements; production and labour processes; relations to nature; the reproduction of daily life and of the species; and 'mental conceptions of the world'."[62] For Harvey, a movement can begin in any of these activity spheres, but "the trick is to keep the political movement moving from one sphere of activity to another in mutually reinforcing ways."[63] Such a "co-revolutionary politics"[64] has the following implication:

59 Hedges 2010, pp. 194-5.

60 Hedges 2010, p. 156.

61 Hedges 2010, p. 202.

62 Harvey 2010b, p. 123.

63 Harvey 2010b, p. 228.

64 Harvey 2010b, p. 241.

[W]e can start anywhere and everywhere as long as we do not stay where we start from! The revolution has to be a *movement* in every sense of the word. If it cannot move within, across and through the different spheres then it will ultimately go nowhere at all. Recognising this, it becomes imperative to envision alliances between a whole range of social forces configured around the different spheres. Those with deep knowledge of how the relation to nature works need to ally with those deeply familiar with how institutional and administrative arrangements function, how science and technology can be mobilised, how daily life and social relations can most easily be re-organised, how mental conceptions can be changed, and how production and the labour process can be reconfigured."[65]

It is striking that for Harvey a militant workers' movement will not necessarily be at the forefront of this "broad alliance of the discontented, the alienated, the deprived and the dispossessed."[66] On the contrary, he fully expects that a "youthful, student-led revolutionary movement" will lead the way.[67] Whether Harvey is correct in his forecast, or whether Charles Derber is right to stress that "the labor movement is at the intersection of the economic and environmental crises that make a green revolution possible"[68] cannot be decided *a priori* and apart from efforts actually to build a global alliance that would formulate structural reforms leading beyond capitalism and toward democratic eco-socialism.[69] At any rate, as I have argued above, the ultimate goal of such an alliance should be nothing less than the creation of a new world[70]: an ecologically sustainable planet, a planet whose boundaries still allow for the flourishing of human beings and other species, a planet fit for our children and theirs.[71]

65 Harvey 2010b, pp. 138-9.

66 Harvey 2010b, p. 240.

67 Harvey 2010b, p. 239.

68 Derber 2010, p. 209.

69 An excellent initial formulation of a "transitional program" for eco-socialists to rally around may be found in Baer 2012, pp. 213-44.

70 On the impracticality, even the undesirability, of restoring the nature to a pristine "original baseline," see MacKinnon 2013.

71 Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for Crisis and Critique, especially for noticing, and suggesting how to correct, a serious flaw in an earlier version of the Obstruction Argument.

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