

Renewing the Commons:

University Reform in an Era of Weakened Democracy and Environmental Crises

By

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Preface

This book is about the convergence of crises: the increasing rate at which environmental systems are being degraded; the threat posed by the market-liberals and their fundamentalist Christian allies to our democratic institutions; and the seeming inability of university faculty in most disciplines to recognize how the mis-education they help to perpetuate is contributing to the inability of most Americans to recognize the importance of revitalizing the cultural and environmental commons as sites of resistance to the excesses of the market-liberals, and to the efforts of the fundamentalist Christians to create a theocracy.

The over-arching theme of the book, however, is that the misuse of our political language prevents the voting public, as well as the political pundits that frame how issues and policies are to be understood, from recognizing the real agenda of the mislabeled liberals and the mislabeled conservatives. Just as most university faculty are silent about how the world's diverse cultural commons represent alternatives to the current emphasis on economic globalization, and the environmental destruction it contributes to, they are also complicit in perpetuating the current formulaic labeling of the market-liberals in President George W. Bush's administration, and such think tanks as the CATO and the American Enterprise Institutes, as conservatives. At the same time, the formulaic use of the label of liberal is applied to people who are working to conserve the separation of church and state, an independent judiciary, the separation of powers between the three main branches of government—and the gains made of over the years in social justice and environmental issues. Unfortunately, the deep cultural assumptions underlying both market and social justice liberals lead to a political vocabulary that makes it difficult to think about the nature and importance of what remains of the cultural and environmental commons.

The misuse of our most widely used political labels creates a special challenge for the readers of this book. In an effort to use our political vocabulary in a more historically accurate and currently accountable way, I titled a recent book, Mindful Conservatism, which had the subtitle of Rethinking the Ideological and Educational Basis of an

Ecologically Sustainable Future. The suggestion that conservatives should be mindful by reflecting about which aspects of the culture and environmental commons need to be intergenerationally renewed as essential to living in ways that are ecologically sustainable, should have been enough of a clue that the book was not promoting the agenda of right wing political groups. The response of the book store owners in Eugene, Oregon who self-label themselves as liberals, was to avoid carrying the book even though its main argument was that the environmentalists and people who are working to renew the cultural commons are the genuine conservatives—and the anti-environmental Republican presidents following Richard Nixon were in the market liberal tradition of thinking. In effect, the word “conservatism” precipitated a knee-jerk reaction even though, and this is the great irony, Eugene is one of the most conservative communities in the true sense of the word—in resisting selling out to environmentally destructive corporations and as a center of environmental and social justice activism.

It is hoped that readers avoid bringing to their reading of this book the same formulaic pattern of thinking that too often carries forward the misconceptions they learned in their public school and university classes—and that are daily reinforced by journalists and media pundits. As I point in the following chapters, both the preservation of our democratic institutions and the ecosystems we depend upon are, in part, dependent upon understanding what the terms “liberal” and “conservative” stand for—and thus what we are voting for when politicians label themselves as either a conservative or as a liberal. We are in deep trouble when voters associate conservatism with a president that expands the free enterprise system by giving corporations a significant role in writing legislation that deals with environmental, energy, and health care issues, when his advisors openly acknowledge that their economic agenda is derived from the writings of John Locke, Adam Smith, and Milton Friedman-- and when the president and his advisors view their task as that of limiting the role of government in addressing the needs of the poor and marginalized.

Our political and environmental troubles are further deepened when liberals use the same language that emphasizes the importance of the autonomous individual and that equates change with progress, that leads to anthropocentric and ethnocentric ways of thinking—and that contributes to the current silence about the need to conserve the

diversity of the world's commons as well as the traditions that are the basis of our democratic institutions. If readers keep in mind that the conservative thinkers we should take seriously include Edmund Burke, Michael Oakeshott, Wendell Berry, and Vandana Shiva—and that the market-liberals draw their inspiration from the classical tradition of liberal theorists (as well as from current libertarian writers) then my analysis and suggestions for reforming universities may appear as more cogent.

Throughout the book I have attempted to be consistent in what I see as a more accurate and accountable use of the terms liberal and conservative. Thus, I identify President Bush and his advisors as market-liberals—as they are trying to overturn rather than conserve our multi-party system of government, as well as the gains made over the last decades in the area of civil liberties, the labor movement, and environmental protection. I avoid labeling the ideas of Leo Strauss and his followers in the Federalist Society as conservatives, as Strauss argued against a democratic form of government. I also avoid associating conservatism with the ideology of many members of the Federalist society, which is centered on the idea that decisions of the Supreme Court must adhere to the “original intent” of the men who wrote the Constitution, represents a reactionary way of thinking. A genuine conservative would argue for conserving the political and legal consensus on social justice issues that have been reached since the Constitution was written. The opposite of a conservative way of thinking can be seen in the following statement by Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. “The fallacy,” he wrote in 2002, “is in thinking of the Constitution as a living document—that is, a text that means from age to age whatever (or perhaps the Court) thinks it ought to mean.” The argument for going back in time to an earlier source of authority that undercuts the legal achievements over the last two hundred years, which were the outcome of a democratic process, should be labeled as the expression of a reactionary thinker.

In the analysis of the fundamentalist Christians, which are an important part of President Bush's political base, I refer to them as reactionary extremists, rather than as conservatives. Their claim that they know God's actual agenda for human kind, and that they alone are responsible for carrying out God's will until the Second Coming, puts them in opposition to our democratic traditions—including the pluralistic nature of our society and the Constitutional guarantees of individual liberties. They are reactionaries in

that they want to go back to the time when the oral tradition was transformed into the written text of the Bible. They do not want to conserve the viability of the Earth's natural systems, and they have nothing to say about conserving what remains of the World's diverse cultural commons against the destructive forces of an every-expanding market economy. The deepening social and environmental crises, is for them, a sign that the end-time is near, and that the prospects for their own salvation will be enhanced by instituting God's government on earth—that is, creating a theocracy.

In addition to a concern about a more accurate use of our political language, there is a second concern that arises from the way references to current politicians can make a book appear as outdated as soon as they disappear from the scene. The issues I am addressing will likely become more important even after such current political figures as President George W. Bush, Pat Robertson, and Antonin Scalia disappear from political life. What is more important is that the trends to which these and other politicians and religious leaders contribute will continue. These trends include the misuse of our political language, the current friend/enemy approach to politics, the expansion of a market economy that makes increasing numbers of people vulnerable to the loss of employment and health care and pension benefits, the drive to create a one-party system of government or (for the fundamentalist Christians) a theocracy, the further undermining of the world's diversity of cultural commons that enable people to live less money-dependent lives, and, most important of all, the deepening ecological crisis that will exacerbate the shortage of fresh water, sources of protein, and lead to more destructive weather patterns as global warming accelerates. Thus, it is hoped that the reader will give more attention to the trends that I am discussing, as well as to my arguments for the need to introduce curriculum reforms in universities that address what students need to know about living in a more sustainable post-industrial world.

I wish to thank several people who were kind enough to read and comment on several chapters in this book. Joan and Stanley Pierson, as well as Rebecca Martusewicz, made valuable suggestions for improving the discussion of the anti-democratic end-game of the fundamentalist Christians. And I am indebted to Daniel Barnhart for reading the entire manuscript and for recommending changes that led to a more readable book. Lastly, I am further in debt to my wife, Mary Katharine Bowers, for her many forms of

support, and for her ability to accept a slower approach to household repairs that resulted from my daily routine of spending four to five hours each day at my writing desk.

Chapter 1 The Convergence of Crises: Challenges Facing Higher Education

The evidence is growing that American society is already undergoing fundamental changes that most thoughtful people would identify as the converging of crises—any one of which could radically change everyday life as we now know it. For the majority of Americans, however, life today is a mix of personal and family pressures, which are framed against the background of the still prevailing myths about the unending nature of social progress and the opportunity for individual success and happiness. Vast numbers continue to flock to the local Wal-Mart, hoping that this retail marvel will succeed in lowering prices even more. Equally vast numbers fill fundamentalist and evangelical churches where in a near pep-rally atmosphere the belief is reinforced that their growing momentum as a national political force is the expression of God's plan for America. And not be overlooked are the millions of men and women filing into university and professional sports arenas, that gather at the auto race tracks around the country, and that tee-off on the thousands of golf courses, that convey what they think is important in life by the size of the sports utility and macho pickups they drive. For them, there are no long-term threats to the American dream beyond that of rising gas prices--only minor set-backs that will be overcome by science, technology, and more economic growth.

For another sector of the American population that is less represented at these playgrounds of the more prosperous segment of society (including those willing to pile up massive credit card debt to maintain the illusion of their success and social standing), there is a sense of uncertainty about their economic future. In these same shopping malls and churches, as well as in the diminishing number of factories, there is a growing concern that the dream of upward mobility for those willing to work hard and to be part of a loyal and reliable work force has recently reversed, so that downward mobility is becoming a more likely prospect for millions of Americans. Outsourcing to regions of the world where labor is cheaper, and downsizing that can be achieved through the use of new technologies, now represent the inescapable realities that are leading to the concern

and pain connected with the downward mobility, as workers have their health care and retirements benefits reduced—or eliminated entirely. Many of them are still saddled with their prior decisions about making a social statement by driving a high-status fuel inefficient car or pickup that is now becoming an increasing economic burden, and about building up a level of credit card debt that could go on indefinitely—which is the plan of the credit card industry for seducing the heavy borrowers into thinking that the minimum low monthly payment is their road back to prosperity. For the people who have not figured out how they are being further entrapped by the credit industry's low minimum payment scheme, Congress's recently passed bankruptcy law should awaken them to the realization that there is little chance of escaping a life plagued by meeting debt repayment schedules, while also continuing to face the uncertainties of future medical bills without the safety net of health insurance. With the salaries of the heads of corporations now averaging 500 times greater than that of the average factory and service worker, the politically passive nature of the expanding American underclass raises the question about how knowledgeable they really are about the sources of their growing impoverishment. The widespread support of a president who promises to further a moral agenda that is based on the cultural mores documented in the Bible, while promoting the interests of the corporations that are responsible for the expansion of the American underclass, makes the question about the efficacy of our public schools and universities even more urgent.

As I will later take up the issue of how public schools and universities contribute both to the surprisingly passive response to the economic inequities in American society, as well as to the lack of awareness of the other deepening ecological crises that are being increasingly discussed in the more responsible journals and newspapers, it is important here to recognize the strange mix of indifference and jubilation toward what millions of Americans consider to be the end of human history. Their understanding of the future is based on an otherworldly agenda that leads to viewing any major crisis as a sign that they are getting closer to the day when prophecy will be fulfilled—and when they will be lifted up above this fallen and corrupt world by the Rapture. For them, the words and narratives on the printed pages of the Bible are to be taken literally. This requires ignoring how the shift from the orally-based religions of pastoral cultures to a printed text that in turn has undergone translations by men who represented different cultural ways of

knowing and political regimes, makes the Bible a layered text of culturally mediated interpretations. It does not seem to matter that the early pastoral cultural groups that became the foundation of today's three major religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) did not have the concept of global environmental limits. Nor does it seem to matter that these pastoral cultures did not know how to recognize when a society starts down the slippery slope that ends in an authoritarian state, or how a society that amasses such a huge debt that foreign governments may start to withdraw support of its currency—thus forcing it into a deep economic crisis. But the silences and culturally different experiences and insights contained in the Bible do not seem to bother the millions of Americans who rely upon it as their primary source of knowledge about how to respond to the changes taking place around the world.

On the surface American society appears as widely varied in lifestyles, levels of political sophistication, shared myths, and (perhaps most importantly) silences. Aside from a minority of Americans who are attempting to alert others to the dangers that lie at the end of the slippery slope we are now descending, most Americans share President George W. Bush's view that global warming is simply part of the normal cycle of climate change that operates on a scale that is beyond human influence. Thus, they share the President's view of environmentalists as one of the chief impediments to further economic growth and prosperity. The second crisis that even fewer people are aware of (and if they are aware of it they are too often too fearful to mention it in public) is the growing public support for replacing a democratically diverse and tolerant society with an authoritarian and ideologically driven system that is extending its control over the media, political process, federal courts, and fundamentalist churches. It is interesting that it is the older citizens who remember their early years in Europe that are most likely to comment on how the current trends in American society correspond to the ways in which democratic institutions there were undermined and replaced with authoritarian regimes.

The third crisis that is likely to have a more immediate and transforming impact on everyday life, as both the still prosperous and the growing underclass know it, is connected to the trillion plus dollar debt that our government now owes to foreign governments such as Japan, South Korea, and China. The American addiction to hyper-consumerism, an addiction shared even by people who can only support the habit by

going further into debt to the credit card companies, along with the continuing expansion of the military budget and the increasing demands of entitlement programs, is forcing the government to borrow two billion dollars a day from foreigners and foreign governments.

As the national deficit increases, and if the value of the dollar declines, foreign governments may begin to follow through on what they are now discussing mostly behind close doors—namely, switching to other currencies and thus reducing their exposure to the economic losses that are accompanying the falling value of the U.S. dollar. It is not a question of whether this will happen, but when. And when it does, we will see an economic depression spreading across the land which will only increase China's status as an economic superpower and source of further environmental devastation. Another likely impact of a national financial crisis will be acceleration down the slippery slope that leads to an authoritarian society. This, in turn, will have a devastating impact on the environment. Unless Americans suddenly learn how to live less materially-based lives, the environment is likely to be ravaged even more-- as is the case in different parts of the world where extreme poverty has led to stripping the land of whatever resources are still available.

At this point the reader may be wondering whether what is learned in American public schools and universities has anything to do with the average Americans' state of denial about the rate and scope of the ecological crisis, or with how close to a majority of Americans support the current spread of authoritarianism through our institutions and social life, or with the widespread indifference to how our wasteful lifestyles and governmental policies are placing our collective futures in the hands of foreign governments that will turn on us when it seems economically advantageous to do so. As I will attempt to show in the following chapters, public schools and universities are very much complicit in contributing to the ways of thinking and lifestyles that are at the root of these crises, and to the way in which the public is either ignoring them or actively supporting political ideologues that are relying upon the ideas of early liberal thinkers who were specifically addressing the problems of a society that was just emerging from the feudal traditions of the past.

The immediate connection that can be made between the kind of education that is received in universities (and by extension, in public schools) and the three crises we now

face is that the politicians, corporate elites, religious leaders, and media personalities that reach millions of people, and the well-dressed middle class that wildly wave the flag and applaud at political gatherings that promote the policies exacerbating these crises are mostly university graduates. This supposedly highly educated class, along with many members of the working and underclass that have only a high school education, either are vocal supporters of legislation that weaken the legal framework for environmental protection, or are passive and self-absorbed bystanders of the partisan politics being played out at the local, state, and national level. A significant proportion of the nation's university and public school graduates continue to support politicians whose ideologically driven idea is that by increasing the national debt through tax-cuts for the already wealthy they can achieve the centuries' old liberal ideal of reducing the size of government. The list of other policies that are supported by these university graduates, with many having been educated in the nation's most elite universities, include support for a foreign policy of pre-emptive wars that are alienating our traditional sources of support by foreign governments, as well as massively increasing our national debt. The list also includes support for the Patriot Act and the current attempt to place judges on the federal courts who view their responsibility as that of reversing the laws that protect civil rights and that provide for governmental oversight of abuses by many of the nation's corporations. Current governmental efforts to undermine the separation of church and state, the gains made in the labor movement, and the tradition of an independent judiciary are also receiving the support of these university graduates—and if it is not active support, then it takes the form of passive acceptance.

If the graduates are from the nation's many fundamentalist and evangelical colleges and universities, the question needs to be asked about what they learned with regard to loving their neighbors (regardless of their sexual orientation), and loving their enemies. Why do they approve of the killing of innocent people who are caught up in our wars of aggression by limiting their concern to the fate of the unborn fetus? And what have they learned from the history of Europe where the various state sponsored religions of past centuries led to protracted wars and a horrific loss of life for those belonging to the wrong religion? While the question about what the Bible teaches with regard to stewardship of the environment is now being asked by some of the leaders within the

network of evangelical churches, the resistance that will arise within the evangelical movement to adopting a land ethic can be seen in the political reality of how they voted in the 2004 election. According to Pew Research Center, four out of every five voted for President Bush, and identify themselves as Republicans. In commenting on how seriously evangelicals should take their responsibility as stewards of the environment, the Reverend Ted Haggard (the President of the National Association of Evangelicals) urged his followers to become “pro-business environmentalists”.

Although I will be criticized for making generalizations that are not based on empirical research, I will nevertheless identify a number of characteristics of the people who, for the most part, had to have a university education in order to achieve the level of income needed to make the payments on the oversized house, the oversized SUV or massive pickup, and to be employed in a white collar career as a journalist, doctor, teacher, salesperson, lawyer, and so forth. In effect, the population I am describing represents the blind-to-the-environment mentality that can be seen at any university football or basketball game where the alumni gather to renew their romanticized recollections of their early years as college students and to engage in the camaraderie of watching their university prevail over its rivals. What deserves special attention is the size of the car, SUV, or pickup that these university graduates drive—as well as the number of vehicles with decals that identify with the political party that is accelerating the gap between the rich and the poor—and that is undermining our traditions of civil liberties. As students, they demonstrated an ability to read and regurgitate back what their professors wanted, but they now seem unable to read the signs of the times—that is, the increase in the number of illnesses and deaths caused by toxins in our environment, the newspaper accounts of our increasing dependence upon foreign sources of oil, the outsourcing of jobs, the growing dismay and hostility of our former allies, the corruption and greed that has spread through the highest levels of corporate America, and the drumbeat of warnings about our national debt. Many of these university graduates now refuse to read newspapers such as the New York Times and the Washington Post, to watch television programs other than what is offered on the Fox television network, and avoid listening to National Public Radio—or any other source of information that

questions the direction that our society is moving in. Criticism, for many of them, is an unpatriotic act.

The purchasing habits of many Americans who have not gone to college or university suggest that the public schools have been equally ineffective. While existing at the lower end of the economic pyramid, many of these public school graduates nevertheless find it necessary to own a massively oversized pickup, to go deeply in debt on their credit cards, and to let their lack of self-discipline that takes them to a health-threatening level of obesity (the latter often being a characteristic of alumni returning to cheer on their team). The trashing of the environment that results from their lifestyle is simply not part of their awareness. Nor do many of them express concern with public issues—except those that affect their immediate family and neighborhood. In a recent survey of 112,000 high school students (with many of them heading on to some form of higher education), it was found that 49 percent of the students thought that newspapers must first gain the government’s approval before stories critical of governmental policies could be printed. This finding is particularly disturbing, as it means that nearly half of this large number of high schools students are either ignorant of the basic freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution or have decided that freedom of expression and assembly are too dangerous in these times. Regardless of whether it is an expression of ignorance or an ideologically based belief that free expression is dangerous, these students have accepted one of the basic foundations of an authoritarian government—namely, that the government possesses the right to control what the people think. If a similar survey had been taken of high school students’ attitudes toward global warming and the out-of-control national debt, I strongly suspect that the findings would be equally alarming for those of us concerned with a democratic and ecologically sustainable future.

Many more examples from all strata of society and levels of education could be cited to support my contention that public schools and universities are complicit in reinforcing a mind-set that is more attuned to participating in a hyper-consumer society than to recognizing the early stages of the crises that are no longer a matter of speculation—but are now affecting everyday life. This generalization could also be checked out for accuracy by enterprising sociologists, and I think they would find that most university graduates have not heard of the cultural commons and its relationship to

the environmental commons. They would also find that most university graduates assume that technology is both culturally neutral and the best indicator of progress—and would be unable to identify the nature of the traditions that have been lost through this unquestioning approach to technological innovation. I am also certain that research would confirm that few university graduates recognize when scientists stray into the area of scientism, or the dangers that arise from the mixing hubris with the idea that no aspect of culture is beyond scientific explanation and technological control. The list of what university graduates should know but do not also includes an inability to recognize the ethnocentric basis of recent failed foreign policies. And the question that I have found to lead to a blank stare from university graduates is “What are the characteristics of fascism and why have fascist regimes arisen in response to the problems of modernity?” It is especially interesting that when they finally get the courage to respond to the question, they associate fascism with the death camps of Nazi Germany—but not with its proponents in such countries as France, Great Britain, Spain, Hungary, and Norway.

Perhaps the most visible failure of public education, from public schools through graduate school, that contributes most to our collective movement down the slippery slope leading to an increasingly authoritarian society, can be seen in the way journalists, media pundits, and academics misuse our political language. As these groups continually reinforce the public’s misconceptions associated with the words “liberal” and “conservative,” the public, in turn, continues to identify themselves with labels that represent the opposite of the beliefs and values that they actually hold. That is, so-called conservative think tanks and most Republicans who label themselves as conservatives actually support the expansion of market-liberalism, while most critics of the governmental policies that are undermining the legal basis for environmental protection and our civil rights identify themselves as liberals. The following analysis of the forces contributing to the three crises--the rise of authoritarianism, the further degradation of natural systems we depend upon, and the looming national debt-based plunge in the value of the dollar-- as well as my recommendations for reforming what is learned in universities and public schools, requires using our political language in ways that contribute to greater political accountability. What we least need at this time is the

mindless repetition of context-free political labels that reproduce the misconceptions of previous generations.

One can only wonder how the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections would have turned out if the political labels of liberal and conservative had been used in a more accurate and historically accountable way. Newspapers ranging from the New York Times and the Washington Post to papers serving the smaller communities across America continue to label President George W. Bush and Vice-President Cheney as conservatives. In a recent New York Times article, for example, Cheney was referred to as a “free-market conservative.” In one of these nationally prominent papers the so-called conservatives in Congress were described as organizing to overturn the Endangered Species Act. The formulaic thinking of the reporter required stating that resistance was coming from the “liberal” environmentalists. The same mindless use of our two most prominent political labels is exhibited in the way the American Civil Liberties Union is labeled as liberal, and such think tanks as the American Enterprise Institute as conservative. Both misconceptions are particularly surprising as the ACLU has as its primary goal the conserving of the civil rights guaranteed in the Constitution, while the American Enterprise Institute promotes the liberal idea that unrestricted market forces are the engine of social progress.

It is hard to determine whether extremist radio talk show hosts such as Rush Limbaugh mislabel themselves out of general ignorance or because they follow the money—which is largely controlled by corporations. Surely, universities must share a major portion of the blame for the twin sins of omission and commission. The omission is in the failure to present students with an understanding of the history of political thought in the West—from the founders of liberalism in the writings of John Locke, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill to Milton Freidman and the current CATO libertarian think tank. A university graduate, for example, should understand how Adam Smith’s idea of a free market within the small communities of his era, where the patterns of moral reciprocity that accompany face-to-face relationships with neighbors that must be relied upon in future situations, has been transformed into universal doctrine that combines a competitive, survival-of-the-fittest form of individualism with the myth of social progress. His economic theory is now being used to undermine both cultural diversity and the community’s traditions of moral reciprocity that served as a constraint on the relentless drive to exploit markets and the environmental commons that the community

relied upon. A university education should also include studying the history of philosophic conservatism, from Edmund Burke and the authors of *The Federalist Papers* to contemporary environmental writers such as Wendell Berry and Gary Snyder. The other failure of most university faculty is in the way they repeat the formulaic thinking that reinforces identifying Republicans and corporations with conservatism, and the efforts to achieve social justice as the expression of liberalism.

This mindless habit of identifying the efforts to expand the traditions of social justice with liberalism and the centers of economic and political power with conservatism is reinforced in many other ways. A case can easily be made that universities simply reinforce this more widely held set of misunderstandings. The irony is that the core values and assumptions of these early liberal thinkers, when taken out of the context of the social injustices of their times, now are used to justify the central role that competitive markets play in achieving progress, just as the rules of critical discourse within universities today are based on the assumption that competition between ideas ensures that most progressive ideas will emerge. Other core liberal ideas, which go back to John Stuart Mill, hold that individuals should be free to create themselves, and that change is necessary for progressing beyond the constraints of traditions and intergenerational bonds. The idea of a linear form of progress, which has the same standing as the acceptance of gravity, underlies the liberal's proclivity toward innovation and experimentation—and their indifference toward asking about the importance of what is being overturned—in the workplace, in community patterns of self-sufficiency, and in the self-renewing capacity of natural systems.

The twin foundations of conservatism, according to Edmund Burke, include the idea that each generation has a responsibility to carry forward the achievements of the past and to ensure that the prospects of future generations are not diminished. The other core value is to be cautious in adopting change. The guiding principle that Burke gave us was to ensure that the innovation represented a genuine improvement—and not be embraced on the basis of some outside expert's claim that it represents progress. Environmental conservatives such as Wendell Berry and Vandana Shiva, while subscribing to the core ideas of Burkean conservatism, place special emphasis on conserving community (that is, intergenerational knowledge and systems of mutual aid)

that have a smaller environmental impact. Berry writes eloquently about the dangers of a form of individualism that does not put down roots, and that continually searches for opportunities to turn the environment into an exploitable resource. For Shiva, the patenting of indigenous knowledge, which forces more of everyday life into a money-based economy, is a form of piracy—which she calls “biopiracy”.

The basic differences between liberalism and conservatism continue today, except journalists and others continue to get the labels wrong. President George W. Bush and his supporters, while being labeled as conservatives, pursue policies that support the free-market orientation of corporations and such colonizing institutions as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Indeed, President Bush and his market-liberal supporters are unstinting in their efforts to further privatize what remains of the commons. Their liberalism can also be seen in their reliance on abstract ideas, rather than proven traditions of international cooperation, as the basis of foreign policy. In effect, they embrace another core feature of traditional and contemporary liberalism: the idea that change is inherently progressive in nature. Their agenda for average Americans is to reduce what remains of the government’s safety net, thus forcing them to rely upon their own resources in a competitive environment where the fittest will survive and the supposedly less deserving will experience the full consequences of their lack of initiative and responsibility.

The genuine conservatives are focused on sustaining what remains of the commons—those aspects of the human and natural communities that are mutually supportive and freely available to all. This may take the form of upholding intergenerational knowledge as providing alternatives to being dependent upon industrial approaches to food, health care, entertainment, and so on. In addition, they take seriously the Burkean emphasis on the intergenerational renewal of the genuine and hard-won achievements of the past, such as protecting the gains in the labor movement, the rights guaranteed in the Constitution, the social security system, and the overturning of institutional sources of racial and gender inequality. If we were to use our political terms in a more accountable way, we would see the fundamental difference between the liberalism that supports the right of corporations to exploit the environment in ways that diminish the prospect of future generations and the conservatism that is reflected in the

efforts to achieve greater social justice and to renew the intergenerational knowledge of how to preserve the cultural and environmental commons. The many ways that the cultural and environmental commons are being transformed into new market opportunities, such as Monsanto's ownership of genetically altered seeds that the farmer must purchase anew each year and the marketing of information on the most private aspects of peoples' daily habits, can in no way be identified with conservatism. The traditional responsibility of the farmer to save from the current crop the seeds that are best suited to the nature of the local soil, moisture, and length of growing season is the expression of conservatism, while the logic of industrial/liberal culture that is undermining the intergenerational knowledge and responsibility of the local farmer should be seen as the expression of the liberal-driven expansion of the industrial/consumer based culture. The liberalism is expressed in the quest for new technologies that will return a greater profit, while the conservatism of the farmer is expressed in balancing the needs of the family and community with the needs of the environment to renew itself on a long-term sustainable basis.

The widespread nature of the distemper that is causing market liberals to be labeled as conservatives (and letting the self-labeling of extremists such as Rush Limbaugh to go unchallenged) can even be seen in the writings of otherwise perceptive political observers. Thomas Frank's recent book, What's the Matter with Kansas: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America (2004) is typical. The main focus of his analysis—that is, why Biblical fundamentalists in Kansas vote for Republicans whose economic policies drive many working class and rural fundamentalists to the edge of economic ruin—is highly insightful. Frank, however, perpetuates the basic confusion that plagues American political discourse by identifying “business rationality” with conservatism. He further reinforces the confused thinking that most Americans accept as a basic truism by also identifying social justice activists with liberalism. Frank pins the label of conservative on both the Republicans of George W. Bush's persuasion and on the Biblical fundamentalists whose main political agenda is to impose on the rest of society their moral extrapolations from what they assume is a literal interpretation of the Bible—a book that encodes the culturally influenced interpretations of the men who translated even earlier translations of a printed text that began as an oral tradition. Frank

acknowledges that there are differences in the politics of various groups in “conservative” Kansas, which leads him to identify the more reflective and less doctrinaire Republicans in the urban areas of Kansas as the “mods” (meaning moderate) and the free-market/corporate supporters who align themselves with the moral agenda of the Biblical fundamentalists as “cons” (meaning hard-core conservatives). Frank, like the journalists and media pundits, does not recognize that the limited political language into which he forces his analysis carries forward long and widely held misunderstandings that reduce the accuracy and thus the importance of his analysis.

His two categories of conservatism are fundamentally misleading. The Republicans who promote the primacy of a market economy over all else should have been referred to as free-market liberals, and the people who want to impose the moral certainties they find from their reading of the Bible should be identified as reactionary religious extremists. That is, the latter group wants to make the present fit a past that supposedly is the source of the unchanging moral templates we all should live by. And they are extremists in wanting to impose their reactionary position on the rest of society—an effort that is partially succeeding at the expense of our country’s tradition of separation of church and state. Their efforts to replace our less than perfect traditions of democratic decision making with a theocracy that is led by a political leader who bases the country’s foreign policies on his personal communication with God can in no way be identified with the conservatism of Burke, the authors of *The Federalist Papers*, and the people who currently are working to renew the cultural and biological commons.

What is needed today is an expanded political vocabulary, one that more accurately designates what people stand for, and thus what they should be held accountable for. The libertarians are the one group that identify themselves correctly—even though journalists and others continue to refer to them as conservatives. For example, in the “about us” section of the CATO Institute website, there is a statement that says that only in America is the Institute’s political philosophy identified as conservative. What is now needed is a political language that more accurately identifies the values, assumptions, and agendas of other politically oriented groups. Instead of referring to Christian fundamentalists as social conservatives, they should be named “religious conservatives”. As this may still be too general perhaps the specific religious

tradition should also be designated, such as Catholic conservatives, Orthodox Jewish conservatives, Evangelical conservatives, Muslim conservatives, and so on. The word “reactionary” should also be used when referring to groups that want to make the supposedly unchanging present fit a past of which we have little accurate knowledge. “Traditionalist” should also become part of our political vocabulary, as this is the word that refers to the mistaken belief that traditions do not and should not change—and there are many people who hold this view. Thus, some groups in the Christian fundamentalist camp might be more accurately referred to as “traditionalist” or even “reactionary” Christians—just as the word orthodox indicates a distinctive set of beliefs and practices within the Jewish community. “Reactionary” may be the more accurate term as it communicates to the average reader that these Christians want to force everybody to live in accordance with what they interpret as the absolutes of the past.

People working to conserve habitats, species, and to reduce the adverse human impact on the viability of natural systems should be identified as “environmental conservatives.” Those working to revitalize the commons (the non-monetized aspects of cultural and natural systems) should be called “mindful conservatives” in that their task is to reflect on how new technologies and policies (such as the promotion of economic globalization) will affect the community’s networks of mutual support and intergenerational knowledge that provide alternatives to being dependent upon the continuing spread of consumer culture. The phrase “cultural conservatism” is also accurate when it is used to designate how learning the language systems of the culture that one is born into reproduces (conserves) the taken-for-granted ways of thinking and acting in ways that generally involve only minor individualized reinterpretation.

An example of this process of linguistically based cultural conservatism can be seen in how scientists working on the cutting edge of brain research continue to rely upon the same mechanistic metaphors that Newton and Kepler used to understand natural phenomena. This example highlights the need to be mindful; that is, to reflect on the immediate and long-term consequences of reproducing traditional ways of thinking that were progressive when they were first introduced—but now represent a reactionary and formulaic way of thinking. And there are other examples where the genuine insights of the past have become lost through the failure to recognize that words have a history, and

that past understandings may represent a deeper wisdom than what our current metaphors convey. There is still another expression of conservatism that we all share; namely, the temperamental conservatism of being comfortable with certain kinds of food, friends, patterns of interaction, ways of communicating ourselves to others, and so forth.

Most people have difficulty in recognizing the various forms of social activism as the expression of conservatism. Activists who address issues of social justice, which range from creating safer working environments and a sustainable wage to eliminating the racial and gender barriers that encode centuries of prejudice and exploitation, have a long tradition of identifying themselves as liberals and progressives. The moral legitimacy that these groups now associate with liberalism, which ironically is also shared by many environmentalists who identify themselves as liberals, has caused them to ignore the contradiction between the community strengthening nature of their activism and the core liberal assumptions that are used to justify the exploitation of others—as we can now see in the Bush Administration’s energy, drug, and tax policies. For generations now the idea that liberals work to improve the well-being of others, and that the conservatives are the perpetrators of exploitive and self-serving practices has resulted in a formulaic way of thinking that is now seemingly encoded in the genetic make-up of people who identify themselves as liberals.

But the key issue of whether a person is a liberal or a conservative turns on the fundamental distinction of whether the activism is directed toward strengthening the community (and the cultural and environmental commons) or is strengthening the market-oriented industrial culture that places more value on profits and efficiency than on the well-being of workers, more value on exploiting the environment for immediate gain than on the practices that do not degrade the self-renewing capacity of natural systems, and that requires a form of education that perpetuates the core abstract liberal values of individualism, progress, and freedom that are essential to a consumer dependent lifestyle. If we take this distinction seriously, it would be more accurate to identify social justice activists as social justice conservatives, and if their activism is in conserving the viability of natural systems they should be called environmental conservatives. And if their formulaic use of language has made it too difficult for these activists to combine “social justice” with “conservatism”, then they should simply identify themselves as social or,

better yet, eco-justice activists, and call the faux conservatives what they really are: market liberals.

This expanded political vocabulary should also include the philosophical conservatives, and there are many of them who have addressed the tensions and double binds that accompany the impact of modernization on the traditions of the world's cultural and environmental commons. This group includes, among others, Edmund Burke, T. S. Eliot, Michael Oakeshott, Ivan Illich, Alasdair MacIntyre, Robert Bellah, and Gregory Bateson. And if we were to consider the important conservative thinkers of non-Western cultures, we would have to include Mahatma Gandhi and Masanobu Fukuoka as sources of wisdom that we in the West should learn from.

To return to the earlier question: namely, what would have been the likely impact on the presidential election if journalists and media pundits had used the political vocabulary in a more accurate and accountable way? Would President Bush's chance of being re-elected have been improved if he were correctly labeled as a free-market liberal, or would Al Gore and John Kerry have encountered a ground swell of support if their respective agendas had been labeled as that of social justice conservatives? Unfortunately, we will not be able to answer this question because of the long-standing tradition of misusing our political language by journalists, media pundits, and the general public. The question, nevertheless, is worth considering. While the election is now behind us, the more important challenge is to understand where the policies that the voters approved by a small margin are taking us. That is, are they leading the nation to achieve greater social justice at home and abroad or to the further transformation of the local and foreign commons into exploitable markets that will lead to the further spread of poverty and the violence that arises out of a sense of hopelessness?

As continuing to misuse our political language will not contribute to making an intelligence response to the crises that we face, I will try to be consistent in using the terms liberalism and conservatism in a more historically accurate and currently accountable manner. This will require keeping in mind that some of the misconceptions of these early liberal theorists (specifically, their ethnocentrism and thus their tendency to write in ways that are still read as truths that have universal validity) have contributed to the ease with which today's elites can now take these early liberal ideas out of their

historical context in order to justify today's colonizing agendas. I shall return to this problem in a later discussion of reforming what is learned in public schools and universities. But for now, I want to emphasize that the following discussion will be misunderstood if the reader continues to allow the Orwellian use of our political language to dictate how to think. The difficulty in resisting the doublespeak that Orwell predicated can be seen in how current authoritarian practices are labeled as "democratic", the destruction of the cultural and environmental commons as "progress", and the colonization of other cultures as "development". More specific examples include referring to the new legislation that allows for putting more mercury into the atmosphere as the Clean Air Act, and for opening nearly 20 million acres of pristine national forest to the logging industry as the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

The primary task now is to recover our sanity, as well as help to ensure that the hard won achievements of previous generations of social justice activists, and that the more recent gains of the environmentalists, are not entirely lost. This will require avoiding the double speak that has no place in a democracy—which is an insight that is not passed on to the younger generation in many families, but could be learned if our educational institutions were fulfilling their responsibilities for ensuring that the forces of authoritarianism are held in check. Thus, I will use the word liberal to refer to politicians, educational reformers, media pundits, and corporate elites that take the following for granted: that change is inherently progressive and linear in nature, that the basic social unit is the autonomous individual—and thus source of ideas and values, that experts can discover ideas and values that have universal validity—and that local cultural contexts are unimportant, that competition in the market place and between ideas is the basis of progress, that the task of the liberal is to emancipate other cultures from their traditions and thus from their sources of backwardness, that the intentions of elites (social theorists, politicians, and media pundits) are always to speak for the well-being of those who are culturally different and economically vulnerable, and that new ideas and technologies should be embraced and universally imposed without a concern for the forms of cultural self-sufficiency that are being lost.

I shall use the word conservative when referring to people working to strengthen the cultural and environmental commons, to politicians who remember the past struggles to

create the institutional protections necessary in civil society and who work to ensure that these protections are not lost, to social theorists and activists who have made gains in the labor movement and in achieving social and economic justice for people, to environmentalists who are working to conserve the ability of natural systems to renew themselves on a long-term sustainable basis, to elders and others who renew the culture's wisdom of the importance of moral reciprocity within the human and human/Nature communities, to the mentors that renew the culture's traditional arts and crafts by helping the next generation to combine mastery of the traditions with the discovery of their own talent and need for self-expression, and to the activist resisting the efforts of market-oriented liberals to economically colonize the world's diverse cultural and environmental commons.

And I will try to be consistent in referring to other individuals and groups as traditionalists (those who think that traditions do not change), as extremists (those who want to impose their Truth on the rest of humankind), as reactionary (those who want to return to earlier times--such as a period of segregation, a patriarchal dominated society, the moral codes of the pastoral cultures that lived thousands of years ago in what is now called the Middle East). And I shall use the term fascist to refer to those who advocate a center-controlled authoritarian political system that shares many of the characteristics of the fascist movements in Norway, Great Britain, Italy, Hungary, Romania that emerged following World War I, and more recently in Chile.

In an earlier book, The Culture of Denial (1997), I explained how the pattern of thinking, as well as the cultural assumptions it is based upon, is reinforced in Western universities—and how this pattern of thinking contributes to the continuing expansion of the industrial culture that is degrading the Earth's natural systems. The following chapters will represent an expansion on this earlier critique by focusing on how the various disciplines and professional schools contribute to the mind-set that places consumerism and the unrelenting pursuit of personal happiness above a concern with a more socially just society; including the pursuit of self-interest above a concern with the increasingly visible ascendancy of anti-democratic economic and political forces that are redefining politics as a struggle between friends (the true-believers in the ameliorative

nature of market-liberalism) and enemies (those who want to build on the hard-won social justice achievements of the past).

Many professors who think of themselves as social-justice oriented liberals will be critical of this generalization—and I will admit at the outset that many of them make an important contribution by keeping alive an awareness of unresolved social justice and eco-justice issues. However, what is not recognized by these professors is that by identifying themselves as liberals, and by identifying the colonizing oriented market-liberals as conservatives, they are contributing to a double bind way of thinking. That is, their analysis and prescriptions for achieving a more socially just society are based on many of the same deep cultural assumptions that underlie the close alliance between powerful politicians and the corporate elites that are currently responsible for the increasing disparity in the distribution of wealth and political power. To put it more succinctly, their embrace of the cultural assumptions underlying the liberalism that historically associated traditions with whatever obstructed progress and favored special privileges now makes it difficult for them to recognize that achieving social justice means building on past achievements—that is, on traditions that represent the hard fought gains of previous generations. And in sharing many of the same cultural assumptions that gave conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the earlier and now current phase of the industrial revolution that has been the main force in the enclosure (privatizing and commodification) of the cultural and environmental commons, these professors are unable to recognize that the patterns of self-sufficiency and moral reciprocity that are the basis of the commons are “traditions.”

The problem is that if the word tradition only has a pejorative connotation, and carries forward the Enlightenment way of associating the word with the hold that the church and other feudal institutions had over people’s lives, there is little possibility that the liberal professors can help their students understand the importance of the world’s diverse cultural and environmental commons as sites of resistance to the market liberals’ agenda of achieving economic globalization. To fully understand the nature of the world’s diverse cultural commons, it is necessary to possess a more complex understanding of the nature of tradition—including the anti-tradition traditions that underlie the industrial culture (which has led to the formation of highly useful and life

sustaining traditions of knowledge even as it is driven to transform more aspects of the commons into new markets).

One of the reasons that few university graduates understand the complex nature of their culture's traditions is that the word progress, which is mantra of the industrial culture, has become the god-word of social groups that have very different political agendas. A number of years ago the American historian, Louis Hartz made the point that no American business wanted to be identified with conservatism. That is, they all wanted to be understood as the promoters of progress, which they were unstinting in their efforts to equate technological progress with the improving the quality of people's lives. At the same time, the words progress and progressive were adopted by educators, social reformers, and even religious groups that had a social reform agenda—one that was often critical of the injustices resulting from the greed and exploitation practiced by big and small corporations. Promoters of technological progress (including progress in constantly improving the bottom line regardless of the level of exploitation required) and promoters of social justice in the world thus branded themselves with the same word that the Enlightenment thinkers used to separate themselves from the restrictive and unjust traditions of the feudal past.

Another example of how a current social justice group uses the same legitimating metaphor as the group they criticize can be seen in how the Rockridge Institute represents itself. The linguistic double bind can be traced to the influence of George Lakoff who is a social justice oriented linguist at the University of California. The Institute's "progressive vision" includes promoting alternatives to the political agenda of "conservatives"—whom they identify as the corporations and their paid representatives now holding seats in Congress, and as the religious fundamentalists. What is most interesting is that the Institute's guiding assumptions and values are also shared by the market liberals that are mistakenly identified as conservatives. That is, both the mislabeled conservatives (politicians and corporate elites) and the self-labeled liberals at the Institute uphold the values of progress, freedom, liberty, sustainability (which corporate culture interprets as sustainable increases in profits), and liberation from traditions. One has only to compare the websites of the Rockridge Institute and those of the CATO Institute and the American Enterprise Institute to see how the liberal tradition

of thinking that Lakoff's organization embraces is nearly identical to the values and assumptions that underlie these faux conservative think tanks. The dominant cultural assumption taken-for-granted by both the liberal Rockridge Institute and the liberals in the CATO Institute (its libertarian theorists give a more individual/freedom spin on the core liberal values) and the American Enterprise Institute is to focus on the future as a horizon of unlimited possibilities.

This temporal orientation, where the past (the ever expanding seedbed of traditions) is ignored, is especially prominent in how the Rockridge Institute summarizes the importance of the environment. Included in the Institute's guiding principles is the statement that "environmentalism is about nurturance and the future." This statement is partially correct, as there is always a future that we need to be concerned about. But there is more to the environment than its future. There is also its rootedness in a past that stretches back to the earliest formation of life on this planet. To cite another problem of adopting the core values that are shared by market liberals (which Lakoff and his colleagues at the Institute mislabel as conservative): by ignoring the traditions that are the bedrock of their social justice agenda (the Constitution, Bill of Rights, rule of law, an independent judiciary, previous social justice achievements in the areas of civil rights and the labor movement, environmental legislation, etc.) Lakoff's misuse of our political categories contributes the current reluctance to ask what we are losing by framing the core liberal values of individualism, freedom, and progress in terms of a future that is conceptually and morally disconnected from the traditions of the past. In effect, the social justice agenda of George Lakoff and his many supporters contribute to the silences that their political opponents also want to maintain—indeed, must maintain if they are to transform the political and economic institutions in ways where there is no longer resistance to their attempt to merge religious authoritarianism and the universalizing of a market-based lifestyle.

The double bind in the thinking of this social-justice group, as well as the double binds in the thinking of social justice academics that identify themselves as liberals, should not be interpreted as a generalization that applies to all university professors. University professors represent a wide range of ideological orientations, from the extreme left to the extreme right. Many identifying themselves with the latest academic fad that

has its origins in the writings of Continental social theorists who have not yet become aware of the ways in which we are overshooting the sustaining capacity of natural systems. When the faculty of fundamentalist and evangelical colleges are added to the mix, the politics of the next generation of citizens is likely to become even further hostile to conserving the traditions and values of a pluralistic, democratic, and tolerant society. In spite of this range of ideological interpretations of what should be achieved in our progress-oriented society, a generalization that does apply is that within this diversity of thinking of how to spin the liberal values of individualism, progress, and freedom there is a shared silence about examining the cultural assumptions that are major contributors to the hyper-consumer society that is trashing the environment, and contributing to the erosion of the political traditions that are the basis of a democratic and culturally diverse society.

There is also a shared silence about the cultural forms of resistance to the growing dominance of a market-based culture. That is, few graduates of our universities and public schools have any understanding of the nature and importance of the cultural commons, and how the revitalization of the world's diverse cultural commons is essential to ensuring that the environmental commons do not become overwhelmed. The widespread silence about the world's diverse commons will have increasingly important consequences if foreign countries decide that it is no longer in their interest to support America's current level of budget imbalances, and we slip into a deep depression. The irony is that the knowledge and values that would, if this were to develop, enable people to be less dependent upon a money economy is being rapidly eroded, especially by the way in which universities have relegated the forms of knowledge, relationships, and systems of mutual support to low-status—and thus not worthy of being passed on to students. And in not knowing the importance of what their consumer, individualistically centered lifestyle is destroying, the students' future prospects will be further limited. It's especially noteworthy that their prospects are already being diminished by the outsourcing of jobs and the new automated technologies that make downsizing possible, and by a government that is working to establish the legal basis for a market-liberal government that no longer assumes responsibility for the economic well-being of its most needy citizens and for protecting the right of free expression. Except for a few academics

who exist on the margins of their disciplines there is little discussion of how a post-industrial culture can reconnect with the traditions of self-sufficiency and mutual support that go back to the beginning of humankind.

The following chapters provide a more in-depth examination of current political trends, of the ways in which universities are contributing to these trends by reinforcing the deep cultural assumptions that underlie these trends—and by the silences they perpetuate. The curricular reforms that will help to reverse the further expansion of an industrial/consumer dependent culture that is vulnerable to taking an authoritarian political turn will also be a major focus. Thus, chapter two will address the specific ways in which universities are complicit in promoting the changes taking place in American society that are driven by politicians, corporate interests, and religious leaders who are working to eliminate all forms of opposition to their ideas, values, and economic interests. The well organized efforts of these anti-democratic groups are already moving the country in the direction of an authoritarian society by further undermining what remains of an independent, informed, and critical press. Giving corporations a privileged role in the writing of legislation in Congress, undermining what remains of the tradition of a non-partisan judicial system, and the breakdown of the separation of church and state, are other changes that the majority of Americans either actively promote or passively accept. The segment of the population that is resisting these measures, including the Patriot Act and the President's policy of ignoring international treaties while engaging in pre-emptive war, is surprisingly small and muted.

The way in which a frog will remain passive as the temperature in a pan of water rises until its biological systems are overwhelmed is an apt analogy for understanding the passive response of so many Americans, including graduates of our universities, to the recent political changes in society. The political and economic forces working to undermine our democratic institutions are like the water that is increasing in temperature, and the majority of Americans (including many who are graduates of our universities) are like the frog. Different efforts to undermine an open, politically diverse society, such as the Patriot Act and the constant efforts to manage public opinion by giving TV stations supposedly independently produced news reports, but that are actually produced by government agencies, has caused a few Americans to react to the rising temperature of an

authoritarian political system. But the majority of Americans, like the frog that is passive in the face of the rising temperature until it is too late, are also passive about how their political freedoms are being undermined. Indeed, a large segment of the population wants the heat to be turned up even higher—until all the liberals and other non-conformists disappear.

One of the tasks of chapter two will be to explain the many ways in which the forms of knowledge that universities represent as high-status and as the basis of modernity contribute both to the active support for and passive acceptance of the dismantling of our democratic traditions. This will involve considering the connections between the advocates of a curriculum based on the Western canon, and the ideas of Leo Strauss that have spread through such critical branches of government as the Presidency and the federal court system. It will also require an examination of how other aspects of the high-status knowledge and values promoted by universities contribute to the silence about the nature of the cultural and environmental commons that represent alternatives to an individual-centered, consumer-dependent lifestyle.

The ideas and values that are central to what universities have elevated to high-status must also be assessed in terms of their ethnocentrism, and how this ethnocentrism contributes both to the growth of authoritarianism at home and the colonization of other cultures. The long-standing myths that underlie the high-status knowledge promoted by universities also need to be examined in terms of the double binds that still go largely unrecognized. This will require explaining how these myths are perpetuated by what is seemingly the most highly educated segment of the population—myths that are even taken-for-granted by social justice advocates such as George Lakoff. The way in which many social justice oriented academics take-for-granted many of the same deep cultural assumptions (myths) that are shared by the market liberals and other seemingly progressive forces (corporations, market liberal politicians who have a global agenda), and that share the same ethnocentrism with the religious fundamentalists and evangelicals, may be a major reason that so many university graduates who also see themselves as advocates of social justice and modern development for the rest of the world are unable to recognize that how they are part of the problem—and not the solution. As mentioned earlier, the misuse of our political language on the part of both

groups can be in large part attributed to the silences that now characterize a university education. There is also a need to consider how the hubris, ethnocentrism, market-orientation, and colonizing spirit that are all part of the tradition of liberalism, when carried to an extreme, can overwhelm its social justice achievements --and transform itself into a form of fascism that has distinctive cultural characteristics.

Chapter three will focus on how the high-status knowledge promoted by universities contributes to our collective inability to live less environmentally destructive lives. This will require considering the traditions of thinking promoted in universities that lead people to view their identities as separate from the ecosystems that their biological and psychological self is dependent upon. The emphasis on objective information, on the primacy of the individual's perspective, and on viewing human intelligence as able to control and even create artificial replacements for the loss of natural systems, as I shall argue, are part of the reason that most Euro- and Anglo-Americans do not recognize that their fate is intertwined with the fate of the environment. There are also fundamental misconceptions that are perpetuated in a university education about how to understand the nature of environmental education—with one of the main problems being to treat the environment as separate from the cultural practices and values that have degraded the local ecosystems that students are encouraged to rehabilitate. There is also a widespread assumption, again promoted by a combination of silence and hubris, that scientists can come up with a technological solution for any environmental problem we might face. Many Americans do not recognize the limits of scientific knowledge, including when scientists have drifted into the troubled waters of scientism. Their recent predictions include how they can save us from our non-scientifically based values (E.O. Wilson), how humans will be replaced by computers (Han Moravec and Ray Kurzweil), and genetically engineer a “gene-rich” super class of people (Lee Silver). These false promises contribute to myth that science and technology will save us from the consequences of being wasteful environmental citizens.

The university education of journalists is also given special attention, as journalists play a powerful educational role by perpetuating in their writings the misuse of our two main political categories, as well as the myth that represents technology as

inherently progressive in nature. They also reinforce the ethnocentrism that most of their readers acquired in their own educational experiences, which has the effect of leaving their readers uninformed about why non-Western cultures resist American approaches to economic development. Instead of understanding the cultural differences in values and ways of thinking, journalists help to perpetuate the myth of cultural backwardness and underdevelopment—which leads to further efforts to impose the American lifestyle on other cultures in the name of democracy and individual freedom.

Chapter four examines the fundamentalist Christian's agenda for replacing what remains of our democratic institutions and pluralistic society with a theocracy that is based on a literal interpretation of passages in the Old Testament. Until the Second Coming, the fundamentalist Christians view their role as "regents of God." Their task is to divide society into the two categories that reflect the friend/enemy approach to politics that has been the hallmark of authoritarian regimes in other Western countries during the last century. The "friends" are the people who live by the fundamentalist Christians' interpretation of God's commandments, while the "enemies" are the people who think critically, make their own decisions about their reproductive rights, work to achieve greater social justice in society, take seriously the scientific evidence that supports the theory of evolution, enter into gay relationships, base their values on secular sources or a Social Gospel interpretation of the Bible, and want to conserve both the viability of natural systems and democratic institutions. The chapter examines why the fundamentalist Christians are unable to support such essential characteristics of a democratic society as cultural pluralism, negotiation, compromise, dialogue, acceptance of being outvoted—but expecting to make a stronger representation of their ideas in the future. Given the anti-democratic agenda of the fundamentalist Christians and many evangelical Christians, the question is raised about how so many graduates of secular universities find it so easy to align themselves with this part of President George W. Bush's political base. When we consider how the fundamentalist Christians view the destruction of the environment and other sources of social chaos as necessary to the Second Coming that will separate the saved from those destined to an eternity in the fires of Hell, the question becomes even more urgent.

Chapter five will be used to suggest that a third way to curriculum reform must be undertaken—one that avoids the long standing interpretation of a liberal education that is based on reading the great thinkers of the West, and the idea that a university education should replicate a shopping tour through a mega-store of relevant delights—which are largely packaged in terms of the internal politics of the university where turf (ensuring student enrollment for the department) becomes a hidden factor that limits the students’ choice of what they want to learn. As I recall my own undergraduate tour through the great thinkers of the West, none of them addressed environmental issues, the destruction of the cultural and environmental commons, or the ethnocentric foundations of their own theory of knowledge.

The alternative is what I shall call “the third way” to curriculum reform. This involves juxtaposing a deep understanding of the world’s diverse cultural and environmental commons with an equally deep understanding of the early and present forms of enclosure—that is, how what was shared on a largely non-monetized basis became transformed into commodity or service that must be bought. Making the historical tension between the efforts to sustain the cultural and environmental commons and the efforts to enclose it a core area of study in the university curriculum would help to overcome the current silence about how to live less consumer, individualistic-centered lives. It would also enable students to recognize in their own communities the different aspects of the cultural commons where mutual support, mentoring, and the reliance on intergenerational knowledge, would enable them to be more self-sufficient and thus less dependent upon a money economy that has been a source of entrapment. Any of the three crises—an increasingly totalitarian society controlled by corporations that are driven to maximize profits by shedding workers, a deepening ecological crisis that disrupts the economics of relative self-sufficiency in communities, and the collapse of the American dollar when foreign governments cease to buy federal treasury notes and bonds—will leave vast numbers of people dependent upon the local cultural commons’ mutual support systems and intergenerational knowledge. Making the world’s diverse cultural commons the central focus of university education reform overcomes other areas of silence—such as the widespread ignorance of the belief and value systems of other cultures and how these cultures have nurtured the cultural and environmental commons

that their lives are dependent upon. This understanding may awaken many university graduates to the dangers of a foreign policy that is driven by the messianic idea of transforming the world's cultures to fit our self-image and values. Learning about the many ways in which the commons, including that of the students' local commons as well as the commons of other cultural groups, are being enclosed would help to awaken them politically to the many ways in which they are being forced to become further dependent upon a money economy—in an era where the industrial approaches to work are fast disappearing and more people are earning less. The understanding of the forms of enclosure in this technologically mediated environment may also awaken a greater concern about the importance of local democracy and thus cultural pluralism—especially as people become more involved in the mutual support systems in their community.

The typical response of academics to this proposal for reform will likely be one of resistance, as they will (and as I have witnessed) assume that by making the commons and the processes of enclosure by market liberals the central focus of study their specialized areas of interest will become marginalized. This fear is unfounded, as every area of inquiry represented by the diversity of university departments can be re-oriented so that the traditions of inquiry and current issues can be refocused on how they relate to strengthening the commons—or on the current forms of enclosure and the colonization of the commons. The tradition of Western philosophers, as well as philosophers and wisdom traditions of other cultures can be studied from a variety of perspectives relating to whether they understood, promoted, undermined, or were silent about the nature of the interdependence between the cultural and environmental commons. Similarly, courses in journalism, political science, economics, history, business, psychology, and so forth, can add to the students' understanding of the commons—including the past misconceptions that have led to various forms of enclosure and cultural domination.

The last chapter should end on a note of optimism. Given the analysis in previous chapters of how the market-liberal and religious fundamentalists are undermining our democratic institutions and the social justice achievements of the past, the last chapter is used to examine the shared characteristics of fascist regimes (the end of the slippery slope) that have emerged from weakened democracies during the period between the two world wars. In effect, the last chapter ends with a summary of the challenge we face

between the anti-democratic end game that the market-liberal and religious fundamentalists are pursuing and the need to strengthen the cultural commons across the country as sites of local democratic decision making. As the cultural commons also provide alternatives to being overly-dependent upon a money economy (a dependency that is becoming increasingly unreliable for many people) they also represent sites of resistance to the further spread of economic globalization. The intergenerational traditions of mutual support that are at the center of a viable cultural commons also result in a smaller ecological footprint than is found in a hyper-consumer way of existence. As most students graduate from universities without a knowledge of their local cultural commons, and why it is important to conserve the diversity of the world's cultural commons, the question is raised about whether university faculty will continue to pursue their individualistic research and teaching agendas --which are based on many of the same deep cultural assumptions that underlie the industrial culture that is now being globalized. Or will they work to bring about the reforms in the university curricula that address the forms of knowledge that students will need in a post-industrial and more ecologically sustainable world?

Chapter 2 The Anti-Democratic and Anti-Social Justice Record of Powerful University Graduates

The question that should concern anyone interested in whether American universities are part of today's solution or part of the problem is "Why are so many university graduates working to undermine our democratic traditions as well as the hard fought legacy of social justice achievements? There are continual references today to the "partisan" nature of American politics at both the state and federal level. Unfortunately, the word partisan does not adequately convey the real characteristic of American politics that has emerged with a degree of friend/enemy stridency that is unique in the country's checkered history. Partisan suggests a contest between two adversarial political groups, but the word fails to indicate the fundamental attitude that is shared by a significant percentage of American voters, which is that those who oppose the market liberal political agenda of the administration of President George W. Bush should be viewed as the enemy that must be completely overwhelmed—if religious conversion fails to work. Even members of the President's own political party that publicly oppose White

House sponsored legislative initiatives find themselves not only attacked, but facing opposition from within their own party at re-election time.

It is doubtful that any member of Congress or of a state legislature has read Carl Schmitt's little book, On the Political, that explains how a political group that rejects making compromises eventually comes to view the democratic process itself as the chief obstacle that stands in the way of achieving their political goals. When the political group claims not only to be the guardian of economic and moral absolutes, conveyed both by the printed word of God's will but also by God's personal communication with the President, making compromises with the opposition—especially an opposition that is ignorant of God's will-- is to betray the special responsibility for carrying out the will of God. Thus, those who question, oppose, or urge compromises must be viewed as the enemy. The rise of friend/enemy politics is thus a more accurate way of describing the nature of the political process at the highest levels of today's government. As democracy, and the institutions that enabled it to function over the last two centuries, safeguards the expression of differing ideas and values, promotes compromise as the way of resolving differences, and protects (not always adequately) the minority from the majority, democracy itself becomes seen as the institutional framework that is seen as protecting the enemy. It must then be overturned, but in a manner that appears to be the outcome of a democratic process.

Schmitt wrote on how a friend/enemy approach to politics would displace the democratic process during the post-World War I period when the German fascists were working within the democratic process to undermine the multiparty system of the Weimar Republic. During those turbulent times, democracy was viewed as encouraging moral relativism, protecting the rights of foreigners and others who did not live by the Truth, and as coddling the people who were too weak to support the nation's destiny—which was to impose its will on the rest of the world. In America today, the enemies are the people who hold secular and thus morally relative values, who want to limit the spread of market forces in order to protect the environment and reduce the spread of poverty, and who want to continue to achieve greater social justice for the vast numbers of Americans who live near or below the poverty line. Those who claim that there is a natural law that dictates a market approach to all aspects of daily life, who claim that moral absolutes cannot be compromised, and who claim that the men who wrote the Constitution did not want it to be interpreted in light of social changes,

cannot make compromises—except in a strategic way that will create the illusion of being committed to democracy while continuing to work toward the ultimate goal of a one-party system of government (a “Republican one-party system” as Carl Rove has stated on several occasions).

In the American political context, what were regarded as the achievements that contributed to the common good—democratic process of debate and compromise, achievements in the areas of civil rights and the labor movement, government sponsored safety nets that limit the depth of poverty into which people could fall, legislative efforts to limit the abuse of natural systems, and so forth—must now be reassessed in light of the Truths held by a strange yet mutually supportive mix of anti-democratic forces. These include the millions of Fundamentalists and Evangelical Christians, as well as the Republicans (and many Democrats) that believe in the power of market forces to ensure progress for those who are deserving, that government should not be used to help the economic and moral losers. Along with the corporate elites, they continue to claim that the ecological crisis is a great hoax perpetuated by “liberal” scientists--but think that “sustainability” is a word that best describes their approach to profits. This group also includes members of the Federalist Society, media pundits such as Rush Limbaugh and Bill O’Reilly, the high-level political operatives in President Bush’s administration, and the millions of flag-waving and cheering Americans that wait for their chance to appear as the well-dressed supporters in the President’s photo-ops and television appearances. What is important to note is that a great many of the people who are working to overturn the past achievements of the democratic process, and to replace them with their own understanding of economic and moral Truths, are graduates of public colleges and universities—and of religiously based colleges. And many of the men and women working at the highest levels of government, and in such think tanks as the CATO and the American Enterprise Institutes that formulate the principles guiding the Administration’s domestic and foreign policies, are graduates of America’s most elite universities.

Given that the slippery political slope that we are now on is not due to the lack of university educated politicians, the questions that needs to be asked are: What is the ideological orientation that is reinforced in most American colleges and universities? What are the silences in the curricula that contribute to the current failure to recognize the parallels between the current anti-democratic forces in this country and how, over the last 100 years, similar anti-

democratic forces in other Western countries led political disasters? While American universities are exceedingly complex institutions, these questions are particularly relevant as many of the most social justice and environmentally oriented professors take-for-granted many of the deep cultural assumptions that underlie the globalization of a consumer and technology dependent lifestyle. As I will explain later, these professors emphasize the social justice agenda of liberalism, while the promoters of President's Bush's domestic and foreign agenda stress the market interpretation of liberalism. Underlying both seemingly different traditions are a shared set of cultural assumptions. But, first, the examples of the anti-democratic groups and policies need to be identified more fully if we are to recognize that this period of American politics has far more ominous implications than previous periods of rough and tumble politics.

The Anti-Democratic Ideas of Neoconservatives

There are continual references in the media to the influence of such "neocons" as Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Perle on President Bush's foreign policy of pre-emptive wars, as well as the policy of imposing American values and institutions on other countries. Because the President justifies his imperialistic agenda on the grounds that it involves the spread of democracy and freedom, the vast majority of the American public fail to recognize it for what it is. Nor do they recognize that this policy sows the seeds of ongoing insurrections, as well as increasing the likelihood of terrorist attacks on American soil. The press and politically oriented television programs often have neocons as commentators that reinforce the message that the President was justified in invading Iraq, and in ignoring international treaties as well as the advice of America's former allies. William Kristol and Michael Novak are among the President's most visible defenders. But the question that needs to be asked is how many Americans really understand the basic ideas and assumptions of the neocons that make the support of President Bush's policies the litmus test of a person's patriotism? How many know that the men and women who adopted this misleading label were originally liberals who began in the late fifties and early sixties to separate themselves from other liberals they regarded as too naïve about the dangers of communism?

Led by Irving Kristol, Gertrude Himmelfarb, and Norman Podhoretz, the early neoconservatives expanded their attack to include what they viewed as the social engineering approach of their former liberal colleagues. While calling themselves conservatives, they revived the earlier laissez-faire liberal argument for reducing the role of government in

providing programs that enabled people to escape from poverty and limited opportunities. The problem with government sponsored welfare programs, they argued, is that they failed to address how poverty is rooted in the moral wasteland of an individualistic, permissive, no-fault-of-the-individual way of thinking. The true responsibility of government, according to William Kristol, is to promote what he called the “politics of liberty” and the “sociology of virtue”. What he and other neoconservatives meant by these high-sounding phrases is that the government should eliminate the anti-poverty programs and, in their place, promote the social uplifting potential of capitalism—which was to be freed of governmental restraints as well as the criticisms of left-wing academics.

In effect, the current sea-change that President George W. Bush envisions for the role of government can be traced back to the books of laissez-faire liberals who had re-branded themselves as neoconservatives. Two of the most prominent were George Gilder’s Wealth and Poverty (1981) and Michael Novak’s The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism (1982). The importance of placing responsibility on individuals, and of locating the source of their success or failure in the state of their moral development, which underlies the President George W. Bush’s efforts to reduce entitlement and poverty reducing program, have over the last decades been reinforced in the writings of other neoconservative writers such as John Q. Wilson, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Charles Krauthammer. But the most notable defense of making the recovery of moral values the first line of defense against the ills of society was Gertrude Himmelfarb’s book, The Demoralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values (1995). Himmelfarb’s defence of the superiority of Victorian morality over today’s individual subjectivism is interesting for a number of reasons, but the one that is most relevant to understanding the classical liberal roots of the neoconservative thinkers is her reliance on the ideas of Adam Smith. He understood, according to Himmelfarb, that “self-interest stood not in opposition to the general interest...but as the instrument of the general interest. Self-discipline and self-interest were thought of as the source of self-respect and self-betterment....” By way of contrast, in our individually-centered world self-esteem is assumed to adhere to the individual regardless of “how he behaves or what he accomplishes”.

The writings and public pronouncements of the neoconservatives can, on one level, be seen as laying the conceptual and moral groundwork for reverting back to the laissez-faire economic environment that social justice activists had worked to restrain through the

establishment of governmental agencies and laws. The neoconservative arguments that capitalism must be allowed to expand on a global basis, as well as their emphasis on limiting the role of government through various forms of privatization—in owning what previously were municipal, state, and federal responsibilities, and in meeting the increasing financial risks as corporations eliminate or reduce retirements programs and health insurance—are just two of the reasons that the label of neoconservative is so profoundly misleading. As I will discuss later how the failures of a university education contribute to the public’s acceptance of the Orwellian linguistic double speak that is one of the signs of an emerging authoritarian society, I will focus here on an aspect of neoconservative (actually, market liberal) thinking that is more clearly aimed at overturning of our democratic institutions than the current debates about values and educational reforms.

The Ideas of Leo Strauss

If one had to summarize the key idea that characterizes the domestic and foreign policies of the George W. Bush administration that can be traced back to its source in the thinking of Leo Strauss, it would be that the natural elite should govern the vulgar masses. This, of course, is an oversimplification. But it accurately summarizes a key feature of Straus’ idea of governance. In writing about the nature and purpose of a liberal education, Strauss states that democracy should be rejected “because it is as such the rule of the uneducated.” After fleeing Nazi Germany, Strauss became a professor at the University of Chicago; and as a writer and teacher he influenced the thinking of successive generations of neoconservative thinkers and government officials. In addition to Irving Kristol and Gertrude Himmelfarb, the list of his followers includes Justice Clarence Thomas, Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork, Paul Wolfowitz, former Assistant Secretary of State Alan Keyes, and former Secretary of Education William Bennett. If people still hold the view that the ideas of philosophers do not matter in this utilitarian age, they would be totally wrong.

Strauss wrote about the importance of the ideas of the early Greek philosophers, particularly their understanding of the natural laws that dictate how justice is to be understood. From their writings Strauss concluded that the key aspect of a just social order is that the natural hierarchy among men and women must be the basis of everyday politics. And what determines one’s place in this hierarchy that separates those who govern from the masses who live in accordance with the modern myth that all men are equal is that the governing class is

steeped in a knowledge of the past great thinkers. This distinction between the educated, “the gentlemen [that] are meant to set the tone of society...by making it in broad daylight” and the masses was as central to the thinking of Strauss as it remains among his contemporary followers.

Strauss considered the failure of modern society to be its emphasis on equality and freedom, which he viewed as leading to a life of moral relativism and the widespread acceptance of mediocrity. What people should strive for, as Strauss explained, is greatness and virtue. But as only a few are able to understand the great minds of the past, the masses that lack the intellectual ability and moral discipline should be governed by those who know what greatness requires. Natural law thus should govern the fundamental division in society, with the masses needing the authority of religious beliefs. The more dogmatic the religion, the more the nihilistic impulses of the masses will be restrained. The governing elite, on the other hand, will move the society toward greatness not through reason (which the masses will not understand because of their constant pursuit of instant gratification), but by presenting them with misinformation that reaffirms their belief that a strong government will save them both from external threats and the possibility that their consumer driven lives might end in chaos.

In effect, Strauss’s political philosophy provides the conceptual framework that enables diverse groups to find a common approach to greatness. For religious fundamentalists, liberal economic imperialists in the highest reaches of government, liberal theorists supported by the Pentagon and think-tanks such as the CATO and American Enterprise Institutes, and political strategists such as Carl Rove, the task of the strong leader is to undermine democratic institutions and to reverse the social justice achievements of the lower classes—all in the name of higher patriotic values. The irony is that just as the political wisdom of Plato and Aristotle did not take account of other cultural ways of knowing, or that humans must adapt their ways of thinking and living to the long-term sustaining capacity of natural systems they depend upon, the political leadership of the neoconservatives in President George W. Bush’s administration is similarly out of touch with a culturally diverse and ecologically fragile world. But the jury is still out on whether Strauss was correct in his prediction that religious dogma, a steady stream of misinformation, and the ritual use of god-words such as democracy and freedom will be all that a significant percentage of the public will ask for in exchange for their uncritical support.

The Anti-Democratic Agenda of the Federalist Society

The Federalist Society provides the best evidence that supports the argument that a university education, particularly a law school education, is contributing to a powerful segment of society that is dedicated to undermining the democratic process, and thus the ability of social justice activists to address the unresolved problems of society. Started in 1979, the year Ronald Reagan became President, the Federalist Society has expanded to where it now has over 25,000 members with many, such as Orin Hatch (Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman), Supreme Court justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia, with Edwin Meese, Robert Bork, and Kenneth Starr being other major players at the highest level of national politics. The Society now has chapters in some 60 cities, and students' chapters on 140 of the country's 182 accredited law school campuses. It has become the most powerful political network of lawyers, judges, and legal scholars in the country--with a heavily funded program for bringing new law students into its ranks.

But what is most important in terms of the question of why so many university graduates are actively greasing the slippery political slope our country is moving down is the anti-democratic nature of the Society's judicial philosophy. The elitist ideas about governance that were articulated by Leo Strauss are clearly evident. Just as the wisdom of Plato and Aristotle is to guide the "gentlemen" who must govern in a society that has been debased by the democratic ideology that leads to moral relativism and the celebration of mediocre achievement, the Federalists maintain that the basic legal framework of the country (the Constitution) should not be interpreted in terms of the shifting moral priorities of the easily manipulated masses. Rather, the central doctrine of the Federalist cabal is that judges should adhere to the precise wording of the Constitution. That is, the original intent of the men who wrote the Constitution should be the guide to adjudicating between competing claims. However, original intent is difficult to determine without engaging in an interpretation; and an interpretation is exactly what the Federalists think is necessary to avoid. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia has suggested that the problem of imposing current ways of understanding on the original intent of the writers of the Constitution can be overcome if the meaning of the text can be ascertained apart from anyone's intention. He translates this conceptual double bind to mean that the object of understanding is limited to what is said (written), rather than to interpreting what the authors' meant. For example, strict adherence to

what is written would mean that the Fourteenth Amendment's protection of "liberty" cannot be extended to include rights, such as the right to privacy and autonomy—which are both essential interpretations in the *Roe v. Wade* Decision. In a talk given in May, 2002, titled "God's Justice and Ours," (*First Things* 123, pp. 17-21), Scalia summarized what the doctrine of original intent means by stating that he is opposed to the "conventional fallacy that the Constitution is a 'living document'—that is, a text that means from age to age whatever the society (or perhaps the court) thinks it ought to be."

The central idea, in effect, is that judges, regardless of which court they preside over, should never interpret the Constitution in light of changes in how a majority of Americans understand social justice issues. Rather, by adhering to the "original intent" of the men who wrote the Constitution, the judges supposedly would be rendering decisions that are politically neutral. That objectivity and neutrality can be achieved is a myth that has its roots in what is learned in public schools and universities. Even though both educators, judges, and the public cannot escape interpreting what they see, hear, and experience more generally, the advocates of "original intent" are willing to ignore the inescapable nature of their need to interpret in order to hold onto the myth of objectivity and political neutrality. The myth of objectivity serves a number of useful purposes, such as not having to take personal responsibility—or to reflect on the assumptions and self-interests one brings to the interpretation. For Federalist theorists and jurists adhering to the myth of objectivity as well as the idea that original intent can be known by a person schooled in today's high-status and ethnocentric knowledge required for earning a university degree, the myth serves to hide the real political motive that only the most naïve would not be aware of. While the doctrine of "original intent" may appear to the naïve public as elevating the foundations of our most basic laws above partisan politics, like so many facets of the current attack on the democratic process, it will have the opposite effect. In addition to providing the Constitutional basis for overturning *Roe v. Wade*, as well as other civil rights legislation, the Federalist legal philosophy would support one of the primary market-liberal goals of the Bush administration—which is to dismantle the governmental regulatory agencies that are perceived as limiting the potential profits of an unrestrained market economy. As the Constitution makes no explicit provisions for the existence of governmental regulation of industry, or for federal agencies that attempt to alleviate the many sources of poverty, they could all be judged as unconstitutional. The ultimate goal of the Federalist legal theorists,

which has its roots in the classical liberal ideas that the neoconservatives have mislabeled as conservative, is to limit the role of government so that a totally free market economy can emerge.

If one checks out the website of the American Enterprise or the libertarian CATO Institutes, both of which have close links to the growing network of Federalists Societies and their chief ideologues, they will find a list of guiding liberal ideas that can be traced back to the writings of John Locke and to a selective reading of Adam Smith. The silences of these early liberal theorists, which were reproduced in the thinking of the men who wrote the Constitution, are also present in the guiding principles of these market liberal institutes. That is, the history of liberal theory has not taken account of how the industrial culture degrades the environment and the health of the people who are affected by toxic waste. And as the Constitution fails to provide guidelines for governing human/Nature relationships, the proponents of “original intent” would be able to eliminate environmental legislation on that grounds that it is unconstitutional. Given the growing take-over of the federal court system by Federalist-oriented judges, and the free-market and libertarian ideology that is shared by most members of Congress and the Bush administration, the widespread public acceptance of the linguistic duplicity involved in referring to their market-liberal agenda as conservatives appears to bear out that Strauss’ advice may have been correct: the general public is too indifferent and too lacking in knowledge to recognize when the words “democracy” and “freedom” are being used to hide how previous social justice achievements are being systematically undermined.

Undermining Democracy Through the Use of Disinformation and Dirty Tricks

One of the assumptions that proponents of a democratic society have held is that it will succeed or fail depending upon whether the electorate is informed about the issues. Public education and a free press were supported in the past on the grounds that they were essential to an intelligent and informed citizenry. As I will argue in the next chapter, the public schools and universities have largely failed in fostering an informed public about the most important issues of the day--such as the cultural roots of the environmental crisis and the role that the world’s diverse cultural commons can play in mitigating the damaging effects of globalizing the West’s industrial culture. Added to this lack of widespread understanding are the current efforts of the Bush administration to overwhelm what remains of the political opposition through the use of misinformation and dirty tricks. Critics of the current efforts to reverse

environmental legislation as well as other social justice achievements still have forums to express their ideas, such as The New York Times, the Washington Post, and journals such as Mother Jones. But whether the strategy of claiming that all media outlets that carry criticism of the Bush administration, and its supporters in the court system and in Congress, are sources of “liberal”, left-wing biased information will prevail is still uncertain. Given the continuing widespread support of the Bush administration’s foreign and domestic policies, even as the forces of opposition have increased their efforts to explain the long-term implications of these policies, it would appear that labeling critics as liberals, and suggesting that liberals are unpatriotic, is a politically effective combination.

That the public will reach informed decisions on whether to support or oppose the undermining of such long standing democratic traditions as the separation of church and state, and a Congress that has responsibilities that are not always identical with the interests of the executive branch, is being further undermined by the government’s systematic attempts to manipulate what is reported as news. There is already the problem of the media being largely controlled by corporations that support the market-liberal ideology of the Bush administration. But even for local newspapers and television news staff, the problem of determining what represents independent coverage of events and policy debates is being made more difficult by the government’s use of hundreds of millions of dollars to produce fake news reports that are scripted by government writers and that use fake reporters who either are government employees or hired by a government department. This practice of releasing “news” videos to local television stations without indicating that they are the creation of a government agency that wants to present its policies in the best possible light was started in the Clinton administration, but has been carried to the extreme where now hundreds of prepackaged news (propaganda?) segments are being integrated in the local television stations newscasts. Examples include the news videos created by the Departments of Health and Human Services to promote what were later found to be contain omissions and nonfactual representations of President Bush’s new Medicare reforms, and which involved the fake reporter saying “in Washington, I’m Karen Ryan reporting”. The news segment created by the Transportation Security Administration involved the use of a employee of a public relations firm that was hired by the TSA to impersonate being a reporter and who signed off with “this is Jennifer Morrow reporting,”

As few local stations have the resources to determine which are government produced news segments and which represent independent reporting (which also contains a bias) most news segments are run without giving the public background information on their source. Even if the public cared about the accuracy of the news sandwiched between commercials, their efforts to become informed would lead to being misinformed in ways that serves the government's interests—which, as Daniel Shorr has observed, is not too dissimilar to how totalitarian governments manage the news in order to stay in power.

For the members of the public that have not already committed themselves to supporting the market-liberal and imperialistic policies of the Bush administration, there is yet another obstacle to making informed judgments about which candidates to support in a federal election. The practice of spreading rumors and questioning some aspect of the opposing candidate's life and beliefs, which puts the accused on the defense in a way where it is impossible to entirely eliminate the suspicion of guilt, has been promoted by a number of Republican strategists. George McGovern, a World War II B-24 pilot, was portrayed as a left-wing peacenik, while Ed Muskie's 1972 presidential campaign was undermined by stories planted by Donald Segretti. Other targets of Republican dirty tricks included Shirley Chisholm and Tom Eagleton. This tradition of influencing the outcome of elections by spreading lies that get reported in the media as facts has been further refined by Carl Rove who was mentored by both Segretti and Lee Atwater.

The most egregious example of Rove's ability to successfully defeat an opposition candidate by spreading lies is in how John McCain's surprising success in New Hampshire was later derailed by rumors that he collaborated with his North Vietnamese captors, and that he had fathered a black daughter out of wedlock. Other Republican candidates that shared many of the market-liberal and libertarian ideas held by the Bush administration, but had serious doubts about certain policies and made the mistake of sharing their doubts publicly, have also been eliminated by Rove's tactic of spreading lies. Georgia Representative Cynthia McKinney was targeted because she was the first nationally known politician to question what Bush may have known before 9-11; and Georgia Representative Bob Barr was defeated in his re-election bid because of the story being circulated that he was soft on terrorism.

Even though the so-called liberal press (which was actually acting to conserve what remains of the integrity of the political process) disclosed the misrepresentations, the Carl

Rove inspired tactics of the Swiftboat Veterans for Truth were successful in representing John Kerry as undeserving of his combat medals and as unpatriotic in his criticisms of the Vietnam War. More recently, the same Swiftboat network of supporters have attacked AARP for challenging Bush's proposal for reforming Social Security. One of the charges against this organization, whose members largely voted for Bush in both elections, was that it supported gay marriage—an issue that has become a particularly divisive political issue. When President Bush announced that in the world of politics “you're either for us or against us” he meant that any wavering or publicly expressed criticism would be interpreted as being “against us.” That the Carl Rove style tactics have no place in a democratic society seems not to be understood by many groups—including the neoconservatives, members of the Federalist Society, corporate elites, wealthy and powerful Republican supporters at the community, state, and federal level of politics. And it must be stressed again that the majority of these supporters are college and university graduates who approve of the many ways in which our democratic institutions are being weakened by the use of these smear tactics.

“...demonstrably at odds...for the governance of a free people”

Judge Stanley F. Birch Jr., the 11th Circuit Court Judge who acted on an appeal in the Terri Schiavo case, wrote as part of his decision that the efforts of President Bush and the Republican dominated Congress to intervene were “acting in a manner demonstrably at odds with our founding father's blueprint for the governance of a free people.” Judge Birch, it is important to note, identifies himself as a Republican—and his appointment was made by the first President Bush. His rebuke of the efforts of the White House reflected his deep concern that the long-standing tradition of separation of powers that was the original intent of the founding fathers was being undermined. It is important to note a consistent pattern: in the face of yet another effort to weaken a key feature of our democratic process the large number of Bush supporters seems not to have diminished. And the current attempt of Republicans in Congress to eliminate the minority party's use of the filibuster is likely to cause less concern among Bush's supporters than the higher gas prices they must pay in order to fill up their huge, inefficient and government subsidized SUVs and pickups. The question that needs to be asked in determining how far the American public is willing to go down the path to a one party system of government is “What would the Bush administration have to do in order for the nearly 35 to 50 percent (depending on whether his domestic or foreign policies are the focus of

the survey) of the voting population to recognize that the democratic process is being undermined in order to create an authoritarian one-party system that no longer has a system of checks and balances for limiting the use of power?

Perhaps the question needs to be framed more broadly: “What is there about the public school and university education that has led so many voters and Republic party insiders, including the President and his closest advisors, to support policies, legislation, and the use of political tactics that both undermine the moral foundations of a democracy while at the same time expanding the wealth and political power of the already wealthy class? In reflecting on the following policies of the Bush administration and his wide base of support, it is important to keep in mind that a democratic society depends upon the following values: truthfulness, fair play in all phases of the political process, an ethic where “the strong have a responsibility to protect the weak” (to quote President Bush as his administration was cutting the budget for poverty programs), vigorous debate among a diverse and informed public, a concern with achieving greater social justice for all members of society, ensuring that the institutions that a democratic society depends upon for protecting the civil rights of the present and future generations are strengthened, and the need to conserve the vitality of the cultural and environmental commons. The following list takes account of the diversity of groups—cultural, economic, religious, regional—that are unwavering in their support of policies and practices that undermine these values and traditions:

1. A preemptive war that has led to the death and injury of thousands of Americans as well as many more thousands of innocent people in Iraq. The need to go to war was justified by deliberate misrepresentations that played on the fears of Americans about weapons of mass destruction and the spread of terrorism. The lies began with representing Iraq as a base of support of Al Quida, then as a potential nuclear threat, and then as an opportunity to spread freedom and democracy through the oil-rich Middle East. As the recently released Downing Street Memos reveal, President Bush had decided to invade Iraq some 8 months before what appeared to be the final decision was made public, and during these 8 months the intelligence about weapons of mass destruction and the danger that Iraq posed for the Middle East and America was being manipulated in ways that justified the invasion. Now the public is being fed another line of propaganda, which is that the errors in judgment were a result of faulty

intelligence by agencies that have budgets in the billions of dollars. One of the consequences of these lies and the war they helped to justify is that Iraq has become a source of recruitment for and training of terrorists.

2. The use of Terrorism to Create a Nation-Under-Siege Mentality. The constant reference to the danger of terrorism created a condition of hyper-patriotism among the public, which has enabled the Bush administration to claim the status of a war president—and to take the nation down a path that involved disregarding the Geneva Convention, initiating the practice of “rendition” where suspected terrorists could be picked up anywhere in the world by American agents and flown to Middle East countries where torture could be used to extract information, and passing the Patriot Act. The latter allows the government to obtain data on individuals from libraries, medical offices, businesses, etc.. Federal agents are also allowed to conduct searches of people’s houses and businesses without telling them that a search has been conducted. In the face of growing public criticism that the Patriot Act undermines basic freedoms, the President and the Republican controlled Congress are fighting to renew the provisions of the Act that most threaten America’s traditions of civil liberty.

The treat of terrorism, which has replaced the fear of communism, has led a huge segment of the American voters to turn a blind eye to what should have led to deep soul-searching about what some members of our society are capable of when wearing a military uniform. The torture and killing of detainees in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the capturing “suspected” terrorists by “Special Removal” agents that carry out the “renditions” seem now to cause less concern than a cell phone that is malfunctioning. For these voters, practices that were previously condemned as the tactics of fascist regimes now seem to be part of the American way.

3. Massive Tax Cuts for the Already Wealthy Americans. The combined efforts of the President and the Republican dominated Congress to approve massive tax cuts for the wealthy has put the federal budget in a state of free-fall and thus under the potential control of foreign governments that are using the trade imbalance dollars to purchase US Treasury notes. This policy is yet another example of a fundamental change in the values that have led past administrations to provide programs designed to help people escape a life of impoverishment and limited opportunity. The massive tax cuts serve a

number of ideologically driven purposes, such as shifting the financial burden to future generations that are powerless to hold the current administration accountable. More importantly and strategically, the huge federal deficit which also reflects the cost of conducting wars and establishing military bases in Afghanistan and Iraq makes it possible to achieve the a major goal of the market-liberal Republicans— which is to privatize poverty by reducing the federal budget to the point where funds are less available for housing the poor, community block grants, educational retraining and food supplement programs.

The irony of continuing to refer to President Bush and his Republican base of support as conservatives when their policies are based on the much older tradition of liberalism, which held that the role of government should be limited to enforcing contracts, and protecting the country from foreign threat, can be seen in the current effort to privatize social security. Following the advice that using the word “personalizing” would make the public more accepting of the government’s withdrawal from participating in a system of intergenerational responsibility for meeting the financial uncertainties of old age, the word “privatizing” has been dropped. But according to Daniel Shorr, as he reported on a National Public Radio program, the ideology that led President Bush to take on what had been regarded as the “third rail” of American politics was clearly spelled out in a memorandum circulated to White House insiders by Peter Wehner, then the Director of the White House Office of Strategic Initiatives. According to Shorr who was given a copy of the memo, Wehner wrote that the overhaul of Social Security “will rank as one of the most significant conservative governing achievements ever.” The debate over Social Security, he continued, “is going to be a monumental clash of ideas” but winning the debate is essential “to move away from dependency upon government.” There could be no shorter description of the classical liberal view of the role of government.

4. Acceptance of a Pentagon Budget that is No Longer Limited by the Electorate.

The industrial/military complex that President Eisenhower warned the nation about has used the fear of communism and, now, foreign terrorism in highly self-serving ways. To question the rapid increase in the military’s budget is to appear unpatriotic—and which politician can afford to be labeled as unpatriotic? Yet the size of the budget is

increasing the federal debt and thus imperils the country's economic future in ways that far exceed what foreign terrorists could achieve. The 70 weapons systems now under contract are estimated (and estimates are always on the low side by a significant percent) to cost 1.3 trillion dollars. The proposal to modernize the army, which is being called the Future Combat Systems, requires the development of 53 new technologies that combine the use of robots, computer systems, and new light weight and highly mobile weapons. The first phase of this program is estimated to cost \$145 billion, with another \$25 billion need for the development of the communications systems that will make it all work. These estimates are for the first phase of development, with 52 of the 53 systems requiring technologies that remain unproven.

Why the Pentagon needs a 2 billion dollar submarine to protect the coastlines of American from foreign terrorists, and a new jet fighter (the F-22) that will cost 356 million a plane, goes unquestioned by large segments of the American public. The only question that most of the Republican members of Congress are concerned about is whether the economies of the states they represent will benefit from the military contracts. The out-of-control military budget is yet another sign of how weakened the democratic process has become. The combination of hyper-patriotism with local economies that are dependent upon military contracts is a fatal mix—with no other center of power that can bring it under control. The indifference to the corruption that is an inevitable consequence of this fatal mix can be seen in the lack of public reaction to the practice of Halliburton and its subsidiaries to overcharge the government hundreds of millions of dollars on its Iraq contracts.

5. Privatizing Poverty.

Other examples of how university educated supporters of President Bush's policies that are undermining the standard of living for many of America's middle class, and expanding the size of the underclass, can be seen in the recently enacted Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act. The government represented the Act as benefiting the disadvantaged segments of American society, but the real beneficiary is the pharmaceutical industry that does not have to negotiate lower prices for its drugs. The Act also continues the restriction on purchasing the lower cost medications in Canada. Other examples of the White House's special alliance with

corporations can be seen in how corporate lobbyists and former employees have been given powerful positions in the federal agencies that were established for the purpose of regulating industry abuses. They have been given the task of rewriting regulatory rules in ways that restore the corporations' legal right to pollute and exploit the environment. This practice of allowing corporations to police themselves is yet another example of a liberal ideology that has as its goal the scaling back of the role of government in protecting the interests and well-being of the public.

6. The Bush Agenda of Global Imperialism.

The neoconservative claim that the old paradigm no longer has credibility is simply their way of legitimating the use of economic and military force to bring about “regime change” in countries that continue to act independently of the Bush administration’s interests. Following Leo Strauss’s recommendation of how to control an already indifferent public, the American agenda is framed in terms of spreading “democracy” and “freedom” –political metaphors that are part of the Orwellian language that President Bush uses to mask the use of military force as well as economic sanctions and rewards—depending upon the foreign governments level of compliance. The overall goal of Bush’s foreign policy is to globalize a free-market system that will benefit American corporations. But this policy is failing in several critical ways: the ascendancy of China as a dominant economic power that now challenges the economies of the West—including the United States; the loss of credibility and respect in most parts of the world; and the massive debt that is resulting from the imperialistic policy of the current Bush administration. Withdrawing from international treaties, refusing to sign the Kyoto Accords, threatening to by-pass the United Nations when it fits our national interest, categorizing other countries as part of the axis of evil—which sends the message that the President views his country as morally superior-- are all fast contributing to the perception of the United States as a pariah nation within the world community. But the increasingly low opinion that people in other countries now have of America seems not to phase President Bush, his inner circle, and the vast number of voters that turn out to wave the American flag wherever he appears.

7. Alliance with Religious Extremists.

A question that needs to be examined more closely is why university graduates who have been through a four year, largely secular education would align themselves politically with extremist religious groups that take a friend/enemy approach to politics that further weakens our democratic institutions. There are parallels between the authoritarianism that their religious beliefs lead them to adopt and the role of similar religious extremists groups that supported the rise of fascism in Italy, Chile, and Spain—with the latter now witnessing along with Germany and France of revival of support for fascism. It is doubtful that any of President Bush supporters have considered the implications of aligning themselves with religious extremists that will chain themselves to fences in order to close down abortion clinics while at the same time supporting the killing of thousands of women and children in Iraq and Afghanistan, that rely upon Western science and technology (particularly computers) to strengthen their political networks and thus their influence on the White House and members of Congress while at the same time denying the theory of evolution, and that consider gays and Jews (which will either be converted or destroyed at the time of the Rapture) the embodiment of the devil. That the ultimate goal of these religious extremists, which Carl Rove and other more secular minded Bush supporters are willing to ally with, is the creation of a theocracy where the literal word of the Bible will be the guide to everyday political life seems not to be a matter of concern. That the goal of these religious extremists is to turn Leo Strauss's guideline on its head for who should rule and be ruled also seems to go unnoticed. What is missing are the uniforms that these extremists will wear in order to identify themselves as God's agents on this earth, and thus to separate themselves from the those whose fallen nature requires the same policing that we now see in extremist Islamic cultures. A democracy requires tolerance of differing ideas, values, lifestyles, and a legal system that protects the rights of the minority from being oppressed by the majority—including protection from the group that has gained control over the levers of political power. The supporters of President Bush that align themselves with the extremist religious groups that have been essential to his winning the presidency need to keep in mind that they are also supporting the groups that are willing to use the democratic process to gain the power necessary to replace the Constitution with their interpretation of the Bible.

8. University Graduates Working to Promote President Bush's Anti-Environmental Policies.

If Alexis de Tocqueville were to return today (in a kind of reverse Rapture) he would be amazed that powerful university graduates are supporting Bush's efforts to reverse the environmental protection legacy that was cobbled together through bi-partisan efforts that go back to the Nixon administration. A person educated in an American university (some, in the most elite universities) and who is also an anti-environmentalist would seem to be too much of a contradiction to even consider. Yet, the following record of reversing the gains made in protecting the environment from exploiters who have no sense of responsibility for the well-being of future generations, and no understanding of the connections between a healthy environment and a healthy culture, has not been achieved by President Bush acting alone. He has been able to rely upon the support of a vast number of collaborators in government, corporations, and among the public to achieve the following:

- Vast areas of public lands in the West and Southwest have been opened to exploration for oil, petroleum, and coal. The fragile nature of these ecosystems has not been a factor in determining what would be opened for drilling. Nor has the world-class population of wildlife (the Serengeti of America) limited the drive to find the gas that is used in such wasteful ways by Americans whose giant cars are matched to the size of their egos.
- Inventories of lands suitable for Wilderness protection, as well as critical habitats for endangered species, have been halted.
- Funding for the National Park System has been reduced, while efforts are underway to privatize 70 percent of the workforce.
- The "Healthy Forest" legislation promotes logging of old growth trees deep within the national forest—a policy that benefits the logging industry but does little to reduce the hazard of wildfires facing rural communities
- The oil and gas industry has been exempted from provisions of the Clean Water Act, and a redefinition of "waters of the United States" threatens to remove 40 to 60 percent of the nation's streams and lakes from protection under the Act.
- The "Clear Skies" policy will allow more sulfur, nitrogen, and mercury emissions to be spilled into the environment over a longer period.

- The efforts of the federal government to side with Detroit in preventing California from enacting its own emissions standards on cars and other vehicles.

In addition to withholding America's support from the Kyoto Protocol, President Bush has claimed that "humans have nothing to do with" global warming—which he prefers to be called "climate change". He also suggested that "It'll bring benefits." While pressuring Congress to turn the pristine environment of ANWAR over to the petroleum industry, his administration refuses to pressure the auto industry to raise the gas efficiency standards for cars and trucks in any significant way.

Finding an explanation for why university educated people would support with such fervor President Bush's community and environmentally destructive market liberal agenda for the country and the world may appear as an especially daunting task. If we avoid the misconceptions that are reproduced in how we use in such a non-reflective manner the political language that most university professors rely upon, as well as the equally misleading language used by Bush and his supporters, it will be possible to obtain part of the answer. Understanding the misuse of language will, in turn, lead to a deeper understanding of how universities, in spite of their diversity in quality and disciplines, are complicit in educating students who are unable to recognize how a market-liberal agenda is putting our democratic traditions and an ecologically

Chapter Three: How Liberal Faculty are Complicit in the Education of President George W. Bush's Political Base

Humanity is entering a phase of development that it has never faced before. The world's population is now predicted to stabilize at 9 billion, and prosperity is spreading to countries such as India and China—which will enable hundreds of millions of people to live an increasingly consumer dependent lifestyle. Given that the level of consumerism in the United States and other Western countries is already stressing the ability of natural systems to renew themselves (with the renewing capacity of fossil fuel systems being beyond the human scale of time) the future is unlikely to correspond to the Western myth of progress as an unending expansion in material well-being. The market-liberal ideology of the Bush administration is based on a basic misunderstanding of the how dependent we are on the self-renewing capacity of natural systems—though there is a

growing awareness that the interests of other countries in gaining control of resources vital their newly adopted market-liberal approach to economic development now increases the possibility of armed conflict. There is, however, another possibility that the world's cultures might pursue. That is, if they are able to free themselves of the cultural assumptions that underlie the Western approach to modernization. This possibility is also one that we need to pursue if we are to leave our progeny an environment that will support a more community-centered quality of material well-being.

Whether we continue on the same pathway that President Bush and his supporters view as so essential to America's future that it requires the dismantling of our democratic institutions and traditions, or wake up to the realization that the model of how to live less ecologically destructive lives has been present since the beginning of human history depends upon our ability to recognize how our formal educational processes limit many peoples' ability to understand that there are alternatives to a market-liberal approach to development. Some years ago, Herman Daly (an economist and author of Steady-State Economics, 1991), warned of the dangers associated with unlimited economic growth, and suggested that unlimited growth in the symbolic areas of culture would greatly enhance the quality of peoples' lives—while not destroying the environment they depend upon.

We now need to consider how public schools and universities perpetuate many of the same cultural assumptions that our industrial and consumer dependent culture is based upon, and that prevent us from taking seriously the wisdom in Daly's statement. In understanding how these assumptions become the basis of our taken-for-granted patterns of thinking we may begin to understand how they limit our ability to recognize that the assumptions cannot be reconciled with a degraded environment. Understanding how the cultural assumptions of previous generation are reinforced in university classrooms, even while the professor and students are focused on the explicit knowledge that the student will be tested on, will also help to understand why so many students graduate with a bias toward the importance of the intergenerational knowledge and skills that represent the community-centered alternatives to being dependent upon industrially produced goods and services. It may be that the fear of poverty associated with not having a job that is part of the cycle of work, consumerism, debt, and work to keep from being overwhelmed

be debt, translates into the deeply held fear that helps to perpetuate the drive to expand the market economy even though it is rapidly degrading the environment—and even though it has become increasingly unreliable in terms of future job security.

While there is wide agreement about the failure of previous educational reforms to address the structural sources of inequality and basic cultural misconceptions that are being passed on from generation to generation, there is evidence that educational reforms can succeed if they are widely supported by the educational community and by important groups in the community. The gains society has made in the areas of gender and racial equality are two examples of how formal education can make a difference. What is especially important about these two examples is that there was an awareness of how the language used in the classroom carried forward the misconceptions and prejudices of previous generations—and that this process of intergenerational indoctrination took place largely at the taken-for-granted level of awareness. Language, as will be explained more fully, both illuminates and hides. And it is this process that we need to understand if the educational reforms are going to reverse the current trend of hiding (that is, marginalizing) the importance of the non-monetized characteristics of the cultural commons that have a smaller ecological impact, and that strengthen local democracy.

Patterns of Thinking Reinforced in Public Schools and Universities that Underlie the Market-Liberalism of the George W. Bush Administration

The diversity of courses, including the diversity in how professors may teach the same course in economics, philosophy, sociology, and so forth, contributes to overlooking the common set of taken-for-granted cultural assumptions that are reinforced-- and continue to influence the thinking of students long after they have forgotten the facts and theories (even the name of their professor) that were so important when the course was being taken. One of the chief reasons the nature of cultural assumptions such as the autonomous individual, the progressive nature of change, a mechanistic way of thinking of nature and cultural processes is overlooked is that they were learned at a taken-for-granted level of understanding as part of the professor's own education (which accounts for why they so often do not recognize them). These assumptions become the basis of thinking by the students who enter the class in economics, philosophy, or whatever. Many students have already learned them at the

same taken-for-granted level from their public schools teachers who had them reinforced again in their university education (again, another example of intergenerational influence that is not recognized). The aspects of the built culture, economic system and other cultural activities based on these same assumptions further reinforce these patterns in how general public thinks and communicates—thus further reinforcing their taken-for-granted status as the normal thought patterns of speakers of the English language. In effect, the so-called higher level of education simply reinforces with only minor intergenerational variations the cultural assumptions that are learned as part of becoming a member of a language community.

The cultural assumptions, in effect, frame how the members of the language community understand relationships, the attributes of the participants in the relationships, nature of cause and effect, what aspects of experience and the external world can be categorized together—and even how human/nature relationships are to be understood. Learning the patterns reproduced in the metaphorically layered language of the culture also involves learning the moral values that are to govern relationships—which is largely dictated by how the culture represents the attributes of the participants in the relationships. Plants that are not seen as having aesthetic or economic value are often categorized as “weeds”—which means they should be eradicated. Similarly, women in the West were understood as not possessing the attributes suited to engineering, mathematics, theology, or to being intellectually assertive. It was thus moral to ignore or to punish women who did not fit the attributes the culture had wrongly assigned to them. For example, the importance of Marie Curie’s research on understanding the nature of radioactivity was downplayed in the awarding of the Nobel Prize, with the greater praise being given to her husband, Pierre Curie and her assistant, Henri Becquerel. Becoming a member of a language community also involves acquiring the shared silences which very much influence what is considered to be moral and immoral.

So what are the cultural assumptions that are, with few exceptions, acquired in the students’ earliest stages of socialization, and that continue to be reinforced and even given higher status by the awarding of a university degree—and that make the transition from being a university student to being a supporter of President George W. Bush’s market-liberal domestic and foreign policy agenda so smooth and seemingly natural?

And how do these cultural assumptions relate to the current efforts to globalize a consumer, technology dependent culture, and to the silence about the need to revitalize the diversity of the world's cultural commons that are so vital to conserving the environmental commons? Again, it needs to be acknowledged that not all the students who have been reinforced for thinking in the patterns dictated by these cultural assumptions end up as supporters of market-liberalism; but it also needs to be pointed out that many of the critics of the faux conservatives nevertheless continue in the liberal tradition of thinking. Instead of emphasizing the stream of liberalism that justifies the winners in the competitive market place, they focus on those who have been marginalized and exploited, and their mission is to overcome the limitations so that these groups can have access to the same material, social, and political benefits that match the vision of a liberal, upwardly mobile, and democratic society. The argument that the faux conservatives and the social justice liberals share many of the same cultural assumptions will be examined later when I take up the complaint being made by self-labeled conservative students that they are being indoctrinated by their “libera” professors.

In considering the nature of these assumptions it is necessary to make another qualification. Namely, while many of the same cultural assumptions are reinforced in a wide range of university courses, there are several fields of inquiry where Western assumptions are understood as not being shared by all cultures. For example the cultural assumption that the Western approach to knowledge is more advanced than in non-Western cultures, which is central to the thinking of such scientists as E. O. Wilson—and to most professors of philosophy, psychology, economics, and so forth, is less likely to be reinforced in a cultural anthropology or cultural linguistic class. But even these more culturally informed classes reinforce other unexamined cultural assumptions, such as thinking of the individual as an autonomous thinker. And again, it needs to be kept in mind that there are always a few intellectual mavericks in every field of inquiry (including university teaching) who make explicit what other professors are willing to leave at the implicit level of teaching and research.

The example of representing the West's approach to knowledge as more advanced than what is found in non-Western cultures can more accurately be understood as the as the taken-for-granted status of ethnocentrism among professors and textbook authors.

The long history of Westerners encountering the knowledge systems and practices of other cultures should have brought home the folly of ethnocentric thinking. These early encounters, however, were influenced by the ethnocentric lenses that lead to viewing the non-Western cultures as inferior, as uncivilized and pagan, and in need of being transformed through the efforts of Christian missionaries. More recently, their backwardness is to be overcome by adopting Western technological and approaches to economic development. It is interesting to note that the ethnocentric thinking of the early liberal thinkers such as John Locke, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill continue to be a chief characteristic of the self-labeled conservatives such as Rush Limbaugh, the men and women connected with such think tanks as the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation, and the voters and inner circle of the Republican party. As I will later explain more fully, the social justice liberal professors also carry forward this centuries-old misconception. Now that our pharmaceutical industry has discovered the economic potential of patenting indigenous knowledge of plants, and the environmentalists are discovering the complexity of indigenous knowledge of local ecosystems, ethnocentrism is beginning to be questioned in a few classes.

The current emphasis on multi-cultural education that is sweeping through the nation's public schools and is beginning to be taken more seriously at the university level is really a phenomenon that can be attributed to the pressures to be politically correct—which means learning about the political and economic concerns of different ethnic groups, and how they understand the changes necessary for achieving social justice. However, multi-culturalism does not address the taken-for-granted cultural assumptions that underlie the industrial culture that is further degrading the environment, nor does it lead to an examination of the deep cultural assumptions that underlie the knowledge systems of other cultures. When I give talks at universities in different parts of the country about the characteristics of more-ecologically centered cultures, I am constantly reminded that we cannot go back to a more primitive stage of existence. The other expression of ethnocentrism is to refer to any discussion of non-industrialized cultures as a Quixotic journey into romanticism. The most extreme reaction occurred when a widely published liberal academic charged that I was attempting to revive the Noble Savage as the model for educational reform.

The question of the university's complicity in reinforcing the values and patterns of thinking of the politicians, pundits, and voters that returned George W. Bush to office after four years of deliberate deceptions in the area of foreign policies, tax cuts that took the nation from a surplus to a state of massive indebtedness while favoring the super-rich supporters of the Republican party, and the undermining of environmental legislation and the programs for helping people rise above the poverty level, can only be answered by examining the cultural assumptions that reinforce the ideas that we are autonomous individuals and that abstract knowledge is a more reliable basis for making political decisions. And when we examine more closely the cultural assumptions that contribute to these two characteristics of the American politician and voter, we find that there are a number of other taken-for-granted assumptions that play a supporting role—such as the assumption that change is inherently progressive in nature, that this is a human-centered universe, and that language functions like a conduit through which ideas and data are passed along to others. For students whose family and religious backgrounds, as well as personal tendencies, lead them to accept reductionist and authoritarian patterns of thinking, encountering the cultural assumptions that influence how the content of various courses will be interpreted has a deep and long lasting influence on both their self-identify and way of thinking. The silences that are a characteristic of most university classes, regardless of the discipline, may have an even more formative influence.

Perhaps the greatest influence on the way of thinking of oneself as an autonomous and objective observer whose reductionist-based ideas and values are beyond self-doubt is the idea that language is a conduit through which ideas, data, and conceptual models are passed from one person to the next—or from the expert to the person who reads it on a page or computer monitor. The sender/receiver model of communication is reinforced in nearly every class in the university and, by virtue of the mis-education that occurs in teacher education programs, in public schools generally. This view of language supports several other myths that are essential to how knowledge is represented as objective and thus as having a universal status. These myths include the idea that individuals are autonomous thinkers who depend upon objective facts and information in order to form their own ideas. Ideas that are not the result of the student's own thinking are to be attributed to authors from which they were taken through the use of quotation marks and

footnotes. The conduit view of language is also essential to maintaining that it is possible to have data, information, accounts of events and ideas that have not been influenced by human observation and interpretation—which is always influenced by the culture’s taken-for-granted assumptions.

What only a few students learn in their university classes is that language carries forward from one generation to the next the earlier ways of thinking that were influenced by the prevailing root metaphors of the times. The root metaphors, such as patriarchy, anthropocentrism (found in the metanarratives of the Book of Genesis), mechanism, individualism, progress, economism (all basic to the Industrial Revolution and the rise of modern science and technology), serve as powerful and largely taken-for-granted interpretative frameworks for understanding moral relationships, causal connections, events, and ideas. That is, when individuals are born into the language community, they learn to think and communicate in accordance with the interpretative frameworks reproduced by the taken-for-granted nature of the language. The root metaphors influence ways of thinking and acting across a wide range of cultural activities—and over hundreds, even thousands of years. The root metaphor of patriarchy influenced how a whole range of culture activities—from ownership of property and voting, to should be allowed to become scientists and engineers. The root metaphors are also the basis of understanding new technologies and ideas, which can be seen in how the root metaphor of a mechanistic world leads to thinking of the properties of a cell as having machine-like parts and functions, of agriculture, education, and medicine as like an industrial process. The process of understanding the new in terms of the familiar (taken-for-granted root metaphors and analogies) is an inescapable aspect of thinking; but the problem is that the individuals who are ignorant of their membership in the larger language community (especially when they have been awarded a university degree) are likely to ignore how their pattern of thinking can reproduce the conceptual and moral mistakes of earlier generations. This can be seen in how the self-identified conservatives of today are largely ignorant of the conceptual errors, including the ethnocentrism, of the early classical liberal thinkers whose ideas they now take for granted.

Words have a history, as we can see in how the word “data” carries forward the analogies worked out by sociologists at the turn of the last century who wanted to

establish their field of inquiry as having the same status as the sciences—which meant that data had to be understood as gathered through an objective observation or process of measurement. Similarly, the word “individual” has carried forward different meanings that changed as the dominant root metaphor changed. For example, during the feudal era the individual was understood as a subject; later, with the rise of literacy and the growth of a middle class that demanded a role in the political process, the individual was understood as a citizen. Today, the root metaphor of change (which is understood as the expression of progress) has given rise to understanding the individual as engaged in self-creation.

Other examples of how over many generations words carry forward the analogy that prevailed over others, and that was framed by the prevailing root metaphor, include the word “tradition” (as a source of constraint on progress and the expression of backwardness), and the word “intelligence” (which carried forward a combination of analogies such as intelligence can be counted and thus measured, that the process of measurement is objective and scientific, and that the measure of intelligence is a predictor of the individual’s future prospects in life). The process of analogic thinking, which is always political in that it involves a competition with other potential analogies, is influenced by the prevailing root metaphors. Over time, as subsequent generations are no longer aware of the earlier debates and the political and economic forces that prevailed, the analogy become an iconic metaphor—that is, a word that has a taken-for-granted meaning or image. Today, we can see this process in how we first tried to understand the earliest computing machines as a special form of intelligence—that is artificial intelligence. And over time the analogy has shifted so that human intelligence is being understood as functioning like a computer in storing information, retrieving it, and carrying out a process of analysis or model building.

The layered nature of our metaphorical language/thinking process is not entirely determined by earlier ways of thinking encoded the prevailing root and iconic metaphors. Thus, it is important to recognize that when root metaphors lose their explanatory power they may be made explicit and, over time, disappear except for marginal traditionalist-oriented social groups. The same holds true for the explanatory power of iconic metaphors. The continuing power of root metaphors to influence thought is in their

taken-for-granted status, as can be seen in President George W. Bush's taken-for-granted assumption that economism (that is, expanding market forces on a global basis—and into every aspect of daily life) is inherently progressive. His assumption that all individuals want freedom (by which he means the ability to be a consumer until overtaken by poverty) is another example of a culturally specific assumption. Examples of root metaphors that have been made explicit and challenged by some people include patriarchy and anthropocentrism. It's interesting to note that in terms of these two root metaphors, the followers of President Bush want to retain them as the basis of social relationships and economic development.

Many critics of his administration, and of his flag-waving followers, want to abandon patriarchy in all of its cultural manifestations. And they want to substitute ecology as the root metaphor for the prevailing anthropocentric way of understanding human/nature relationships. Anthropocentrism underlies the thinking of humans as superior to and in control of natural systems, while ecology as a root metaphor leads to recognizing the many forms of interdependence within human communities and between humans and natural systems. The former accepts exploitation of the environment as moral, while the root metaphor of ecology leads to recognizing that humans have a moral responsibility to avoid degrading the viability and self-renewing capacity of natural systems. Anthropocentrism, within the context of our Cartesian tradition of thinking, also leads to thinking of the individual as looking out on an eternal world. The root metaphor of ecology, on the other hand, foregrounds the patterns and relationships of which the individual is a member—and toward which she/he has a moral responsibility as a citizen of the larger cultural and natural ecology.

The point here is to understand that the individual who does not think in terms of abstractions (that is, who assesses the explanatory and legitimating power of language in terms of how it affects human and environmental relationships) is more likely to recognize what needs to be conserved and what needs to be changed—as well as being oriented toward addressing eco-justice issues. And it is this type of individual that is less likely to be fooled by President Bush's Orwellian use of language where the legislation allowing the further release of mercury into the atmosphere is called the "Clean Air Act" and the giving of the green light to the lumber industry to exploit what remains of the old

growth forests is called the “Forest Renewal Act” . Another example of how root metaphors undergo change, with some being abandoned while other root metaphors are extended in terms of their explanatory power, can be seen in how evolution now serves as a metaphor being used to explain how all aspects of culture (that is, the “memes” that are the basic units of culture) are subject to the process of natural selection.

This all-to-brief overview of the layered nature of our metaphorical language has important implications for understanding the failure of public schools and universities to enable students to understand how the language used within different disciplines carries forward a common set of deep cultural assumptions that are reproduced in the students’ pattern of thinking and in their value judgments. The kind of individual discussed earlier as making political decisions on the basis of abstract information and ideas, and assumes that her/his perspective on ongoing events is an accurate and objective representation, is unaware of the formative influence of the language they think in and speak with. In not being aware of the conceptual mistakes encoded in the root metaphors, in the process of analogic thinking, and in the subsequently established iconic or image metaphors, they are likely to ignore aspects of experience (including their dependence upon the environment) that previous generations also ignored—such as the ethnocentric pattern of thinking that contributes to the current expression of hubris that is such a prominent feature of the government’s foreign policy. In short, the individual that assumes the correctness of her/his immediate judgment (the type of individual found in both major political parties as well as in the extremist groups on the right and left of the political spectrum) will ignore how their use of language reproduces the conceptual errors of the past. This becomes a serious problem when the language they use encodes ways of thinking that were intended to address the problems of an earlier era but is now used to think about current issues. And even more important, they are even more likely to ignore that other cultures have their own root metaphors—that can also be understood as their mythopoetic narratives and creation stories.

To make this point more directly, the failure of public schools and universities to educate students about the layered metaphorical nature of language leaves them in a state of ignorance about the economic and political interests served when different root metaphors are the taken-for-granted basis of thinking and policy making. By ignoring the

root metaphors that are reinforced across the university curriculum, with the few exceptions I have mentioned, students are certified as having a university level of education even though they are unaware of how their thinking has been influenced by the cultural assumptions that were also the basis of the Industrial Revolution that began in the Midlands of Great Britain—and that is now being globalized.

The root metaphors that were especially important to giving conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the Industrial Revolution, and that are now a major contributor to global warming, include thinking of change as a linear form of progress, mechanism as the basis of understanding how to organize activities from education to agriculture—and for understanding organic processes, and anthropocentrism—which is the basis for thinking of the environment as an exploitable resource and as in need of human control. An example of metaphorical thinking that has reduced our ability to question whether a new technology is an expression of progress or the basis of a new exploitable market is thinking of technology as like a neutral tool—that is, as a tool that becomes a positive or destructive force depending upon the intent of the person using it. Until recently, people could only think of computers as a tool that enhanced our ability in a wide variety of cultural activities, and only in the last few years have some people come to realize that this technology leads to a loss of privacy and security of economic well-being as jobs are outsourced. There is also a growing awareness that computers are essential to the development of a panoptican society—which can also be called a police state or fascist society.

By reinforcing the deep cultural assumptions that were and continue to be the basis of an industrial, consumer oriented culture that President George W. Bush and his many university educated followers are now promoting as the standard for the reform of other countries, the universities are complicit in the promotion of economic globalization and the further exploitation of the environment. What is not understood by the voting public, and probably not by President Bush and his immediate advisors, is that the industrial, consumer form of culture requires the type of individual that thinks of her/himself as autonomous and fully knowledgeable of issues, events and ideas—yet is uninformed about how she/he is dependent upon the reciprocal and interdependent networks within the human and environmental communities. It is also unlikely that the

supporters of President Bush understand that these networks and patterns of interdependencies within communities and between the community and the environmental systems it depends upon vary from culture to culture—and that forcing them to fit the Western model of technological and economic development undermines what remains of their capacity to be relatively self-reliant and thus less dependent upon a monetized lifestyle.

In addition to the cultural assumptions that are reinforced in a wide range of university courses, the influence of universities in creating the legions of Bush supporters can be seen in the silences within the university curriculum that are dictated by the social justice-liberalism found in sociology, political science, philosophy, and other social sciences, as well as the market-liberalism promoted by faculty in schools of business. The silences are also the result of how the metaphorical nature of language illuminates and hides. The root metaphors that represent change as progressive, and the individual as autonomous, enable members of the language community to recognize the many expressions of change, as well as the many expressions of what appears to be autonomous ideas and behavior. At the same time, these root metaphors serve to create silences in those areas of experience where there is a lack of language—and where the metaphorical language represents the area of experience as problematic or as a low status experience that is not worthy of attention.

The emphasis on change, for example, has led to ignoring the aspects of culture that are slow to change—and even to viewing these traditions as obstacles to change. When the educational process leaves the student without the vocabulary and theory (which explains relationships) for thinking and communicating about certain areas of individual/cultural experience, the experience is likely to be further marginalized by the collective silence of the community. And the areas of silence, as well as the forms of knowledge and relationships that have been accorded low-status by virtue of what has been accorded high-status in university classes, will very much affect what will be given priority in terms of domestic and foreign policies. That is, the silences and areas of low-status knowledge (and thus the groups that base their lives on low-status knowledge) will be further marginalized. In effect, what has been relegated to the areas of silence and low-status by the educational process indicates yet another way in which what has been

learned in a university contributes to the thinking and values of the voters that supported George W. Bush's election—and to the inability of many of his opponents to articulate alternatives to the process of globalizing the market-liberal agenda. The following areas of silence in the university curriculum are especially important contributors to putting the nation on the slippery slope leading to an authoritarian society.

History of Political Thought in the West.

The earlier discussion of the misuse of the two primary political labels of liberal and conservative is particularly relevant here to understanding the consequences of students graduating without an accurate knowledge of the history of modern ideologies. As these students become politicians, lawyers, journalists, teachers, and just members of the voting public, they are vulnerable to the way in which the misconceptions of earlier generations of university professors and their graduates that are encoded in the language appearing in newspapers, on television, and in reputable journals. The examples cited earlier of how the libertarian and market-liberal think tanks such as the CATO and American Enterprise Institutes are labeled as conservative, and corporations and the advocates of economic globalization are similarly mislabeled, are important as this process of mislabeling is part of the on-going process of education—and of reinforcing the misconceptions learned in earlier formal educational experiences. The problem is that it is a form of mis-education that undermines the ability to ask the most fundamental question of our technology and consumer driven era—which is “What do we need to conserve in order to live less environmentally destructive lives and to ensure that the prospects of future generations are not diminished.?”

In many universities, students may elect to take a political theory or sociology course that may introduce them to the ideas of such French social theorists as Michel Foucault and Jean-Francois Lyotard, as well as the ideas of Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci. A course in political theory may also include the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill. Too often the course will be heavy on the ancient political theorists that have little relevance in today's world because of their ethnocentric biases that led to ignoring the multiple forms of knowledge that are the basis of other cultures. Or they will encounter a wide range of political theorists that might range from Thomas Hobbes and John Locke to Hannah Arendt, critical theory

Marxists, and John Rawls. These theorists, as well as most feminist and environmental writings that may appear on the reading list, fail to address what is most problematic about the Western cultural assumptions that underlie the globalization of the West's industrial, consumer-dependent form of culture. Even when these assumptions are questioned, the widespread failure to address the continuing problem of ethnocentrism in the prescriptions for reform, as well as the failure to help students understand how the revitalization of the commons represents an important form of resistance to economic globalization, will have little influence on the current misuse of our political language. As pointed out earlier, the specific ideas of Locke and Marx may fade from memory, but the underlying cultural assumptions that served as the conceptual template for understanding the nature of change, social justice, and the form that development should take in non-Western cultures, will continue to frame how current political issues are understood.

In looking at the extensive list of political theorists that students might elect to read in their political theory course at a prominent Northwest university, what stands out is that the only philosophical conservative on the list is James Madison. Absent are such important conservative theorists as Edmund Burke, Samuel Coleridge, T. S. Eliot, Michael Oakshott, Clinton Rossiter, and Russell Kirk (whom I find more problematic). This omission is important as it contributes to the further marginalization in consciousness of an important aspect of the students' life world: namely, how they are dependent upon the intergenerational knowledge that is the basis of the cultural commons students unknowingly depend upon in so many ways. Even the sub-set of readings of environmental theorists is influenced by the bias toward framing environmental/cultural problems in terms of the taken-for-granted liberal assumptions. For example, the writings of Wendell Berry, Aldo Leopold, Thomas Berry, and Vandana Shiva are noticeably absent. Particularly problematic is the approach of introducing students, in smorgasbord fashion, to a wide range of political theorists without, at the same time, identifying such fundamental issues as global warming, the loss of linguistic/cultural diversity, and demographic changes in different regions of the world that will affect the spread of poverty and further environmental devastation. These are the fundamental issues that need to be brought into the discussion as part of the process of assessing the significance

of these environmental writers. Unfortunately, the effort of the political science faculty (that I took the reading list from) to expose students to a wide range of theorists, thus achieving a surface knowledge that lacks cultural contexts and relevance in terms of addressing the global problems we now face, is typical of the way students are introduced to the major political theorists across the country. The pattern that is occurring in this example is that the professors are reproducing what they learned from their professors—with minor changes that occur because of the frequent shifts in who the fashionable theorists are. To make this point more directly, the silences in the education of their professors are reproduced in what the current faculty expose their students to. Again, the two main silences include the ethnocentric pattern of thinking and the indifference to the importance of conserving what remains of the cultural commons.

The failure of students to relate their reading of classical and contemporary political theory to their own lives can be seen in the current widespread complaint by self-labeled conservative students that they are being indoctrinated by liberal faculty. As we consider their social agenda, as well as the cultural assumptions that underlie this agenda, we find that they are market-liberals—with a strong libertarian orientation. They want free market capitalism to be freed of all government regulation, and they want to reduce the role of government's role in providing support for the economically marginalized. They exhibit another worrisome proclivity, and that is to argue that exposure to ideas and values that differ from their own assumptions and social agenda is a form of indoctrination. In effect, their expectation that the classroom, as well as the media, should reinforce their way of thinking is yet another expression of the anti-democratic and anti-pluralistic mood that is sweeping across the country.

If these self-labeled conservative students had been exposed to the political theorists that laid the conceptual foundations of contemporary market-liberalism, as well as the ideas of British and American conservative thinkers, including environmental conservatives such as Wendell Berry and Gary Snyder, they might have been able to recognize that what they want to conserve—the free market system and the individual's right to pursue self-interest in ways that are not constrained by environmental or social justice concerns cannot be reconciled with the conservative's concern with ensuring that the genuine achievements of the past that strengthen the well-being of communities and

the prospects of future generations should be conserved. Conservatives in the tradition of Burke and, now, Berry also caution about accepting innovations on the assumption that they are inherently progressive in nature. The genuine conservatives want to weight the losses that result from the new technology against the gains—and in effect, to be cautious about embracing changes that undermine the well-being of the community. The conservative's list of past achievements that the present generation of self-labeled conservatives students want to overturn include the system of check and balances among the three branches of government, the separation of church and state, and independent judiciary, the gains in the labor movement and civil rights, and the protections in the Constitution, as well as the intergenerational knowledge and patterns of moral reciprocity that are essential to sustaining the cultural commons as sites that have not yet been enclosed by the various expression of a money-based economy. On the other hand, the social agenda of the faux conservative students, the market-liberal ideological agenda of the Federalist Society that is hidden behind the doctrine of "original intent," the corporations that now buy the legislation that serves their interests, and the religious fundamentalists and evangelical Christians that want to replace what remains of our democracy with a theocracy that will be as intolerant as what is now found in fundamentalist Islamic societies, represent the opposite of what Burke and the other philosophical and environmental conservatives consider as a worthy political agenda for our times. As both the philosophical and environmental conservatives emphasize the role of individuals within an intergenerationally connected and relatively self-sufficient communities, rather than as autonomous individuals, they are better able to recognize that different cultures have adapted in their own ways to the limits and possibilities of the environments they depend upon. Thus, they do not share the ethnocentrism found in the mainstream of Western philosophy, in the ideas of liberal theorists (including most university faculty), in the imperialism that is an inherent aspect of Western capitalism, and in the missionary efforts of various Christian groups.

The source of conflict that is not recognized by the self-labeled conservative students and the majority of faculty that reinforce a number of deep cultural assumptions that are central to the market-liberalism of the students is that many of the faculty are social justice liberals. They want to achieve greater equality among social groups, ensure

that individuals have the opportunity to advance on the basis of personal merit, participate equally in the political process, and to participate in the material culture by having a living wage. These social justice-liberal faculty also want to ensure the continuation of a system of checks and balances, and all the other institutions and traditions necessary for the continuation of a democratic and pluralistic society. — which are basically the concerns of genuine conservatives. Unfortunatley, what few students will learn from their social justice faculty is how to understand the ways in which the institutions and practices connected with market-liberalism are undermining the cultural commons. They may learn about Marx's critique of capitalism, and the revisionist interpretations that now represent Marx as an early environmental thinker (both of which will anger the faux conservative students), but they will not encounter an in-depth and extended discussion of the nature of the world's diverse cultural commons, why the daily practices that sustain the local cultural commons represent examples of how to resist the relentless expansion of economic globalization, and the many ways in which the cultural commons in different regions of the world are being monetized, commodified, and taken over by corporations.

In short, the students will not encounter, except in a few isolated instances, professors that have made the cultural roots of the ecological crisis the central focus of what is being learned in the classroom. They may learn about the economic and political forces behind economic globalization, and the role that the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund play in advancing the market-liberals agenda, but they will not learn about the cultural commons that the members of their own communities help to sustain. Nor are they likely to learn about how different forms of technology help to undermine what remains of the cultural commons—or the forms of technology that contribute to the self-reliance of the community. Both the market-liberal students and the social justice-liberal faculty maintain a shared silence about the ways in which different technologies contribute to the enclosure of the cultural and environmental commons, which range from replacing skills with automated machines to the patenting of gene lines that enable corporations to transform living systems into products that must now be purchased. And neither group is likely to discuss the ethnocentrism that underlies the efforts of Western experts (including academics) to promote the use of Western

technologies in non-Western cultures—the assumption being that the introduction of the technology will enable the non-Western culture to escape from the trap of cultural backwardness.

Mixed Messages About the Dominant Issue Facing the World's Cultures: The Nature and Extent of the Ecological Crisis.

Although environmental writers such as Rolf Jucker makes a strong case in his recent book, *Our Common Illiteracy* (2002) that environmental issues should be at the central focus of all university courses, departments in the sciences as well as schools of architecture appear to have taken the lead in addressing environmental issues. Another development that needs to be noted is that most universities now have degree programs in environmental studies. But these programs are largely scientific in orientation. Most universities now take seriously the need to retrofit buildings with energy saving technologies, and to ensure that the design of new buildings have a smaller ecological impact. When it comes to the social sciences and the humanities, as well as such professional schools as business, journalism, and education, less progress has been made. Indeed, in such professional schools as journalism and education the curriculum reinforces that liberal pattern of thinking that was constituted well before there was an awareness of environmental limits. Environmental issues have made minor inroads in the social sciences, and even less in the humanities. The usual pattern is that departments such as anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, economic, literature, and so forth will have a faculty member or two that have organized their courses in such a way as to make environmental issues their main focus.

The faculty in the social sciences and humanities that address environmental issues have made some progress in gaining the approval of their colleagues who continue to focus on the conceptual orthodoxies of their respective disciplines. The main point is that the growing number of scientific studies of the nature and extent of changes in the sustaining capacity of natural systems have not resulted in faculty from the various departments of the university to call for a moratorium on pursuing the existing research and teaching priorities in order to consider the educational reforms that should be undertaken. Perhaps, there is an assumption that the one or two members in the

department that are addressing environmental issues represent an adequate response, thus leaving the rest of the faculty in the department free to find the balance between their own personal intellectual interests and the orthodoxies within the discipline that still must be carried forward. The marginal status accorded to an environmental focus outside of the sciences and departments of architecture has had another affect; namely, that the faculty who stay true to the orthodoxies of their discipline have not given serious consideration to whether the deep cultural assumptions that they reinforce in their courses and in their publications contribute to perpetuating a culture that demands more than natural systems can sustain.

In my interactions with faculty from a variety of disciplines in universities spread across North America, and in a number of foreign countries, I have found few faculty that seem to have a grasp of the big picture. By this I mean how the culturally specific patterns of thinking that were formed at an earlier stage of pre-ecological awareness in the culture's development are reproduced in today's patterns of thinking about how to respond to the ecological crisis. Nor were many of them able to conceptualize the crisis we face in ways that do not reproduce the ethnocentric patterns of thinking that lead to discounting the importance of sustaining the diversity of the world's cultural commons. Indeed, few seem to understand what all the cultural commons encompasses, and that there is a connection between the viability of the cultural commons and the viability of the natural systems. A more common trait of environmentally oriented faculty that are not in the sciences is to have a very narrow focus that is of personal interest—which is a trait that is common among most non-environmentally oriented faculty.

An example of this trait was clearly present at a major environment and literature conference held in the Northwest. Hundreds of papers were presented by academics from across North America, and most dealt with issues, ideas, and environmental thinkers that were of personal interest to the presenter. The title of papers included “Complex Environmentalism in Ken Kesey's Sometimes a Great Notion,” “Deep Space and Deep Ecology: Biocentric Societies in Science Fiction”, “The Meaning of Water in Hemingway and Snyder”, and “Seven Ways of Imagining a Landscape.” The point is not that these are uninteresting topics, and that they do not expand our understanding of environmental issues and perspectives. Rather, the more important point is that none of

these topics, as well as the hundreds of other papers presented at the conference, provide the larger overview of the cultural forces that are major contributors to the ecological crisis that needs to be understood in order to assess whether reforms are part of the solution—or simply continue to perpetuate the cultural patterns that are at the root of the crisis.

Again, it might appear that I have made another unsupportable generalization. However, if the reader can resist the knee-jerk reaction that may appear appropriate when encountering a sweeping generalization, it might be possible to ask how many of the people (keeping in mind that a third of the voting public—even in the face of the disclosure of Downing Street Memos—continue to support President George W. Bush) would have their thinking changed by listening to the presentation of the above papers—or by listening to the hundreds of papers presented at the conference. Having listened to the papers, how many of the President's Fundamentalist and evangelical supporters would alter their view that the devastation of the environment is a positive sign that Armageddon is near, and that by accepting Jesus into their lives they will be taken up in the Rapture?

The questions that are generally raised by audience members attending environmental conferences brings home the limitations of faculty who lack the larger theoretical understanding of the economic, political, industrial, colonizing forces that marginalize the importance of sustaining the local cultural commons, the demographic changes occurring in different regions of the world, and the interconnections between economic globalization and global warming. The questions are as fragmented and specialized in focus as the papers mentioned above. And like the conference papers, there is a total lack of understanding of how the language that is used to formulate the questions, or the answers that are given, reproduce the cultural assumptions that also underlie the industrial culture that is the unrecognized elephant in the room.

My criticism that universities are failing to educate students about the seriousness of the ecological crisis—which includes the rapid rate of global warming, the decline in the availability of potable water, the over-fishing and toxic contamination of the world's oceans, and the loss of species and habitats—can be checked out by doing a survey of recent university graduate, many of whom are now supporters of President Bush's

market- liberalism. I suspect that what the survey will reveal is that the overwhelming majority of university graduates would repeat what Jared Diamond refers to in his recent book, Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed (2005) as the “one-liners” that are widely used to dismiss the seriousness of the ecological crisis.

Following his analysis of cultures that collapsed out of ignorance of the limits of the bioregions they were dependent upon, he lists the conventional ways among the general public for dismissing that importance of understanding the sustainable limits of natural systems. Although these one-liners are such a common turn-off to an in-depth discussion of environmental issues, the moment of surprise occurs when we do not encounter them. According to Diamond, and my own experience in reading and listening to mainstream Americans—including university graduates—the simple formulaic explanations include: “The environment has to be balanced against the economy,” “Technology will solve our problems,” “If we exhaust one resource, we can always switch to some other resource for meeting our needs,” “As measured by common sense indicators such as human lifespan, health, and wealth...conditions have actually been better for many decades,” “Look at how many times in the past the gloom-and-doom prediction of fear-mongering environmentalists have proved wrong,” “The population crisis is already solving itself, because the rate of increase in the world’s population is decreasing, such the world population will level off at less than double its present level,” “The world can accommodate human population growth indefinitely,” “The more people the better, because more people means more inventions and ultimately more wealth,” “Environmental concerns are a luxury affordable only by affluent First World yuppies who have no business telling Third World citizens what they should be doing,” “If those environmental problems become desperate, it will be at some time far off in the future, after I die, and I can’t take them seriously.” I strongly suspect that a survey would reveal that the just over a third of the voting public that supports President Bush’s anti-environmental policies, as well as the faux conservative students, would find a great deal of truth in these one-liners; and I further suspect that many of President Bush’s critics would also feel at home with them.

Like so many scientific reports and warning by environmental writers, Diamond’s book is not likely to be read by the market-liberals in the Bush administration, by the

liberal/libertarian ideologues supported by think tanks such as the CATO Institute and the American Heritage Foundation—or by the well dressed flag-waving crowds that always appear as a back drop to the President’s appearances in small towns and military bases across the country. Any one of the one-liners would serve to sum up their way of dismissing the conservative’s environmental concerns. Indeed, they have found other ways to communicate their disregard of the scientific reports that life as we now know it will undergo rapid and fundamental changes as the natural systems become further degraded. Their oversized SUVs, pickups, and cars, as well as the oversized house that is also a huge drain on our diminishing sources of energy, make it unnecessary to reduce their attitude toward the environment in a one-liner.

When environmental issues are addressed in university classes it is largely in terms of analyzing the changes occurring in natural systems, and the various impacts that these changes have on different human populations. As mentioned earlier, departments such as architecture give considerable attention to how to design more energy efficient buildings, and to helping students understand the principles of ecological design. However, what is largely overlooked, even in environmental philosophy, environmental history, and nature writing classes is the nature of ecologically-centered cultures. That is, most students who take environmentally oriented courses still graduate from universities without an understanding of the existing community-based cultural practices that have a smaller ecological footprint, and how to contribute to sustaining them. And in not being able to recognize which traditions within different communities and ethnic groups that need to be revitalized as alternatives to being dependent upon consumerism, they are unable to resist being drawn further into the hyper-consumer lifestyle that they know intellectually to be environmentally destructive.

Learning about the intergenerational traditions that are passed on face-to-face, and how to rely upon the skills possessed by different members within the community rather than on the new technologies and expert knowledge that are part of the consumer dependent culture, represent the low-status knowledge that universities have largely excluded from the curriculum—except for the folklore classes that has low status in English departments. But it needs to be stated again, the number of students that graduate from universities with an in-depth knowledge of an environmental science, of

environmental policy issues, or of environmental history-- to cite a few of the specializations that have recently come into being--is very small compared to the number of university graduates that have been further reinforced for basing their thinking on the same deep cultural assumptions that underlie the industrial culture that is being promoted by the market-liberal/libertarian think tanks and the Bush administration. If their future prospects in a professional career has not been terminated by the efforts of corporations to have more of their intellectual work done in India, China, Russia, and other low wage regions of the world, and if the Bank of China has not decided to terminate the economic life-support system that keeps the American economy afloat by buying US Treasury notes with the huge trade surplus they have with us, many of these students can look forward to taking their place in the cycle of generations that return to their alma mater and that fill the parking lot of the sports stadium with their huge recreational and sports utility vehicles, and expensive cars. This ritual conveys the message to the next generation of students that their university education will indeed paid off. The American flag that will be attached to many of these energy inefficient vehicles is a further political sign that criticism of the country's imperialistic policies, which are necessary to provide the fuel these university graduates so thoughtlessly waste, will be viewed as unpatriotic.

More Evidence of Mis-education.

Learning continues after much of what is learned in public schools and university classrooms recedes from memory. This learning takes place in contexts where the person is learning something for the first time—such as in new work situations, in solving other problems that arise in the course of everyday life, in listening to news commentators, in reading the paper, and so forth. In addition to the politics of the local community, there is a constant stream of media accounts of national and international events. In addition to the educative role of others who share the different contexts where learning occurs, the journalists, media pundits, talk show hosts, and fundamentalist churches play an especially significant role in providing accounts of political issues, events, and ideas—and how they should be interpreted. In effect, these are the current gatekeepers that exert a powerful influence on the general education of a public that still retains as

part of a collective linguistically-based memory the cultural assumptions that were so systematically reinforced in public schools and universities.

Let me be more specific about the conceptual errors, silences, and formulaic thinking that characterize the current dumbing-down of the American public by these gatekeepers. In using the phrase “dumbing-down” I am referring to how the political discourse has become so formulaic and contradictory that a significant percentage of Americans are waving the flag and cheering for an administration that is reversing past gains in the areas of economic and social justice. That is, while these voters identify themselves as conservatives, they are supporting an administration that gives tax breaks to the super-rich while reducing federal support of Medicaid, college tuition assistance, veteran’s benefits, housing for the poor—and protects the interests of corporations in ways that make the economic prospects of the middle and working class even more precarious. The restriction on purchasing less expensive drugs from Canadian sources is just one of many examples that could be cited.

The dumbing-down of a huge number of American voters can be seen in the continuing support for a foreign policy that has alienated our former allies, that has cost the lives of over 1700 (and still counting) service women and men, and over 40,000 that have been wounded, as well as over 100,000 Iraqi men, women, and children that have been killed in a war that was justified with the a series of lies about weapons of mass destruction and links to terrorist organizations. The Downing Street Memos document a massive political deception that have consequences that will reach far into the future. Especially noteworthy is that over a third of American voters either want to censor the journalistic sources that are critical of this deception, or to ignore it entirely. In effect, their patriotism and formulaic embrace of the deceptions that underlie the Bush administration’s faux conservatism makes them complicit in the deaths, injuries, and material destruction caused by the invasion of Iraq.

The massive national debt that will be a burden on future generations now makes us more economically vulnerable to control by the foreign countries that are funding federal budget. If this were the only crisis created by the Bush administration, the question that any intelligent person would ask of his policies is “What is being conserved by his administration, and what is being undermined and even lost that will diminish the

quality of life and the prospects of a pluralistic, democratic society?” The formal education of this segment of the voting public seems to have atrophied their ability to recognize the many ways in which our democratic institutions are being systematically weakened. In effect, the deep cultural assumptions reinforced at all levels of their educational experience appears to have provided the moral and conceptual framework that relieves them of taking personal responsibility for their political decisions. Just as not questioning the assumptions of being an autonomous individual, of change leading to social progress, of a human-centered world, and of the power and authority of abstract thought—as well as the ethnocentrism that leads to viewing one’s own culture as the most advanced, and the silences about what needs to be conserved in terms of the environmental/cultural commons and civil liberties—got them successfully through public schools and university classes, these assumptions now provide a way of interpreting the Bush administration’s market-liberal and imperialistic foreign policies as what patriotic Americans should support. The misconceptions of the past now serve as the conceptual rails that will take us into the future where there are no guarantees of social progress, and where the current signs of the times suggest that we should adhere to Edmund Burke’s injunction to be cautious. And if Burke is too much in the past to take seriously today, it is important to note that what a small group of scientists are now calling the “precautionary principal” should be the guide in how we think about social and technological innovations—including our foreign policies.

A major source of the miseducation that contributes to today’s confusion and mindless dogmatism that characterizes much of American politics can be traced to the journalists and media pundits who continue to refer to market liberals as conservatives, and conservative groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union as liberal. Whether its over the radio (including National Public Radio), television, or in such prestigious newspapers as The New York Times, not a day goes by that a market liberal politician or organization is referred to as conservative. Religious groups working to transform the America into a theocracy are labeled in formulaic fashion as conservative, when “reactionary,” “extremist,” and “anti-democratic” would be the more accurate label. The ability of journalists and political pundits to further dumb-down a public that seemingly wants only labels and pre-interpreted facts (without an explanation of their human

authorship-and the economic interests that the interpretations serve) can be seen in how they represent technology as both culturally neutral (the myth of the tool) and as the latest expression of progress.

For example, news accounts of the use of computers in various educational settings are always represented as a progressive development. That computers, as well as other technologies, alter human relationships, contribute to the loss of certain forms of knowledge and skills, advantages some groups over others, and are responsible for fundamental cultural changes, are represented by journalists and others that mediate how the public should think as the inevitable nature of progress. The traditions that computers and other technologies displace—privacy, patterns of moral reciprocity that are part of face to face communication, civil liberties, intergenerational knowledge, among others,, are simply represented as the price that must be paid for progress. In effect, the ignorance of the journalists and pundits who mediate between the innovation and the existing level of public understanding is misrepresented to the public as expert knowledge. As few public school or university classroom introduces students to the ways in which computers, as well as other technologies, reinforce certain cultural patterns while marginalizing others, most members of the public will accept the explanation of the journalists and pundits as factual—and as an explanation that reflects the insights of experts. Ignorance simply reinforces ignorance, which means that the important issues that will profoundly affect everyday life go un-discussed. In effect, ignorance distorts the political process—and the charade of journalists and other cultural mediators goes unchallenged except in forums that are regarded as left-learning and thus unpatriotic.

The question has been raised about the failure of journalists to question what has recently been revealed (by the Downing Street Memos and authors who were close to administration decision-making) as the fabrication of evidence that would justify invading Iraq. Other failures of journalists include not providing a full account of the economic and ecological implications of the economic globalization. As we are now beginning to realize, simply reporting on how various members of the President's administration justify economic and political policies, such as the role of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, represents a level of journalistic malpractice that contributes to the deepening cycle of problems we face as a

nation. A partial explanation, which goes beyond the current emphasis on presenting the kind of tabloid news that sells papers, is that the journalists and pundits share many of the same deep cultural assumptions that underlie President Bush's domestic and foreign policies. One of the characteristics of a shared set of cultural assumptions is that they go largely unnoticed. And if they are unnoticed, what is there to write about?

In addition to how taken-for-granted cultural assumptions influence journalists to reinforce the idea that technology is culturally neutral and to use language in a way that diminishes the importance of context and historical accuracy, another prominent characteristic shared by journalists, politicians, and most members of the general public is the ethnocentrism that was reinforced in public schools and university classrooms. A strong case can be made that the reporting on the Bush administration's efforts to export democracy to Islamic cultures is an example of how the journalist's ethnocentrism led them to ignore the imperialistic nature of Bush's seemingly social justice foreign agenda. The ethnocentrism of the journalists and politicians led to viewing the imposition of the West's individually based democracy on cultures that do not share the same understanding, as well as forcing the local economies of other cultures to adopt the logic of the West's market-liberalism, as inevitable developments in the world-wide process of modern development.

If a single unit of the university were to be identified as having the power to change the level of political discourse, and to contribute to a better educated and, hopefully, more accountable public, it would be the schools of journalism. The major reform that needs to be undertaken is not in developing better apprenticeships with newspapers and other news organizations. Rather, the most needed reforms are in the area of the future journalist's conceptual development. As language is their primary medium, they need to understand how the assumptions of different cultures lead to words having different meanings. This would include understanding the metaphorical nature of language: how a culture's mythopoetic narratives (root metaphors) provide the taken-for-granted ways of interpreting relationships, the attributes of the participants in the relationships, and the moral values that the culture assigns to the attributes. It would also require understanding how words (iconic metaphors) encode earlier ways of understanding, and how these earlier understandings may prevent people from

recognizing important aspects of daily experience. For example, the basic assumptions underlying market liberalism, which can be traced back to Locke, Smith, and other early liberal thinkers, did not take account of environmental limits and the possibility that other cultures have developed complex knowledge systems that enabled them to achieve a better balance between market related activities and patterns mutual support. If journalists understood that words have a history, and that they often encode the misconceptions formed in the past, they might then be able to use our current political vocabulary in a more historically accurate and currently accountable way. The widespread practice of referring to market-liberal politicians as conservatives is an example of the professional malpractice that results from a lack of historical knowledge.

Schools of journalism also need to provide an in-depth understanding of other aspects of culture that are ignored in most social science and humanities departments. This would include understanding how different technologies mediate human relationships, including which forms of knowledge and skills will be reinforced and which will be lost. The public's ability to democratize the use of technology (that is, engage in a discussion of the gains and losses for the community and individuals that will result from the adoption of a new technology) is undermined when journalists continue to reinforce the current cultural myth that technologies are both culturally neutral and the expression of progress. One of the more crucial issues today, in terms of Western and non-Western cultures, is the rapid enclosure of the cultural and environmental commons by the further expansion of the West's industrial, consumer-oriented culture. The revitalization of the world's diverse cultural commons represents the best hope of limiting the further expansion of a money-based economy which, when jobs disappear under the pressure of outsourcing and automation, leads to the spread of poverty for the many who have no access to the socially useful employment. If journalists understood the nature of the cultural commons and the modern forms of enclosure (monetizing what was previously shared in common), they might be able to inform the public about what is being gained and lost when various economic treaties are adopted, and about the impact on the cultural commons when laws allow corporations to privatize and monetize different aspects of the cultural and environmental commons. For example, the consequences for the community of laws that allow the patenting of the gene lines of

plants so that the public must now purchase what previously was shared in common. Instead of a short account of yet another scientific breakthrough, the journalist needs to be able to explain how the privatizing of gene lines undermines the intergenerational knowledge of the medicinal characteristics of plants—which enabled the community to meet certain of its health needs without creating the level of debt that now characterizes a health system based on a market economy and expert knowledge that further undermine the community’s traditions of self-sufficiency. To cite another example of journalistic responsibility for informing the public, the many forms of intergenerational knowledge and responsibility that are being displaced by the farmer’s dependency upon buying genetically altered seeds from Monsanto needs to be part of the newspaper article.

In effect, the influence that journalists and other interpreters of cultural development have on the lifelong learning of the public needs to take account of the silences in the university curriculum. To cite another example that is especially critical as we become increasingly dependent upon the new technologies that accompany new scientific discoveries, journalists need to have a working criteria for understanding when statements by scientists drift into the area of scientism—that is when the scientist is making recommendation or extrapolations that have no basis in terms of scientific evidence. The recent example of reporting that genes predispose people to hold different ideological orientations needed more than the journalist’s use of the qualifier in the article’s heading, “Political Leanings May Be Written in the Genes.” The account of this new scientific discovery, as reported in the June 21st issue of The New York Times, should have included a discussion of whether the scientists were knowledgeable about the ideas and values that have been rooted in the Anglo-American tradition of thinking about conservatism—or were simply relying upon the current misconceptions where market-liberals and libertarians have been identified as conservatives. What if the scientists were basing their research findings on the popular misconceptions of what a liberal and conservative stand for? Would that have made a difference in how they explained the influence of genetic heritability—and what can be explained by integrating an explanation of ideological orientations within the interpretative framework of evolution? One criteria that should be applied to reporting on how a scientist predict the cultural implications of their scientific research, and whether the scientist has set foot on the

slippery slope of scientism, is to assess whether the prediction assumes a scientific knowledge of the symbolic world that we know as culture.

Recent predictions by scientists that computers will replace human in the evolutionary process (Hans Moravec, Ray Kurzweil), that the cultures of the world should abandon their religious cosmologies in order to adopt the story of evolution as their master narrative for guiding daily life—and that scientists are best prepared to determine which values peoples of the world should live by (E.O. Wilson, Carl Sagan, George Dyson), and that science will shortly be able to explain the workings of human consciousness (Francis Crick), are clear examples of scientists straying into scientism—and journalists have a responsibility for informing the public of when this critically important line is being crossed. Earlier examples of the failure of scientists to recognize the dangers of straying into the symbolic and value areas of culture can be seen in the efforts to scientifically measure human intelligence (based on taking a series of exams written in English), and the eugenics movement promoted by scientists in North America, Great Britain, and Germany. And until recently, the scientist's failure to recognize that research based on men did not always apply to understanding women is another example of the failure of scientists to understand how their own research is influenced by cultural assumptions they are not aware of. Thus, the special need for journalists to be particularly sensitive to the cultural influence on the thinking of scientists as well as to how scientists attempt to reduce the symbolic systems of different cultures to a problem that has a scientifically-based solution. Unlike the short period of influence that universities have in the education of citizens who should be participants in the process of democratic decision making about changes that need to be made, and the traditions that need to be intergenerationally renewed, journalists are involved in the education and mis-education that takes place over a lifetime.

The overuse of anonymous sources may be a problem that undermines the credibility of journalists, but the lack of knowledge of the different aspects of culture that are being transformed without an informed public debate is even more critical—especially when what is being transformed contributes to a lifestyle that is further mired in poverty or, for those who are gaining from the globalization of the industrial/consumer dependent culture, further degrades the environment. The challenge

is that the professors in schools of journalism will have to overcome the misrepresentations and silences in their own education—which is the same challenge that faculty in other departments of the university will have to overcome if they are to contribute to the fundamental cultural changes that we now need to undertake. The rate of environmental change resulting from global warming, as well as the rate of cultural changes resulting from economic and technologically-based globalization indicate that the cultural/educational changes that we must now undertake cannot mirror that length of time that it took for educators in public schools and universities to become aware of how the cultural assumption of patriarchy was distorting the culture’s understanding of social justice.

Chapter 4 The Role of Education in the Anti-Democratic End-Game of the Christian Right

The question of why university educated voters can so easily align themselves with President George W. Bush’s fundamentalist religious base is as disturbing as their support of his market-liberal domestic and foreign policies. Their unquestioning embrace of the core cultural assumptions reinforced in most university classes and that underlie the President’s market liberalism helps to explain their support of the President’s efforts to replace the New Deal (that has served as an intergenerational contract for the last 70 years) with an “ownership society,” where it is assumed that market forces will determine the winners and losers. These core cultural assumptions—autonomous individualism, progressive nature of change, anthropocentrism (which represents the environment as an exploitable resources), along with the ethnocentrism that makes it unnecessary to reflect on these taken-for-granted assumptions, also help to explain why so many university educated voters support the administration’s effort to free corporations from the constraints of governmental regulation. The re-emergence of the theory of evolution that explains how natural selection determines the forms of culture (that is, memes) that are better adapted to a rapidly changing environment also strengthens the belief that market-liberalism is aligned with Nature’s process of natural selection. Allowing representatives from various industries (utilities, resource extraction, pharmaceutical) to participate in the writing of energy policies and federal legislation

thus appears as a logical extrapolation on the cultural assumptions reinforced in university classrooms. Indeed, the law of natural selection and the cultural assumptions that represent competition as the engine of progress both could be interpreted to mean that survival requires that the stronger memes (including international corporations and governments that subscribe to the doctrine of laissez-faire economics while providing generous economic support for these corporations) must never help the weak.

Why university educated voters that are largely secular in their values and lifestyle would align themselves with the President's fundamentalist religious base is less easily explained. Perhaps it's the end-game of the Christian Right that many people want to ignore. Or perhaps it's the confusion that surrounds the misuse of our political language that leads to ignoring the contradiction of so-called conservative fundamentalist Christians who argue for the restoration of the family values while at the same time supporting an economic system that promotes a materialistic form of individualism that is addicted to a technologically driven consumerism. One would think that the anti-democratic nature of the fundamentalist Christian's end-game—which could not be made more explicit given their friend/enemy, make-no-compromises-with-the-devil approach to politics—would result in voter support of President Bush dropping well below the nearly 40 percent that now exists. However, the steadfastness of this number of voters, given the policies that privilege the already rich over the middle and under classes, that have put our country's economic-well being in the hands of foreign banks such as the Bank of China, that have led to the death of service women and men in the preemptive war in Iraq, and that have reduced our stature and creditability within the world community, suggests an even more serious problem than their support of the end-of-history scenario that is preached in fundamentalist Christian churches.

In suggesting that universities are complicit in educating a major segment of the voting public that continues to align itself with the extremist and anti-democratic values of the Christian Right, it is important to identify more specifically the religious groups that are working to undermine our democratic institutions, as well as the values and beliefs that lead them to be opponents of democracy. Lumping together all fundamentalist and evangelical Christians would be a mistake, as some evangelical Christians find the Bible supporting a profoundly different moral and political agenda for

social reform. For example, while Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson both claimed that the election of George W. Bush is part of God's plan for America and the world, Jim Wallis (the author of God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It) claimed that to identify God's will with the political agenda of the Bush Administration represents a basic misunderstanding of the Bible. As Wallis points out in God's Politics (2005), aligning Christianity with a pro-war, pro-rich, pro-American agenda misrepresents the moral values reiterated in different sections of the Bible. Wallis and his group of Sojourners, which includes a wide range of Christians as well as members of other religions, understand that the primary purpose of a person living a religious-centered life is to work in the public sphere for social justice. And for Wallis, and the evangelicals that support his interpretation of social justice, it means working for peace, for social reforms that address issues of poverty and inequality, and for environmental stewardship. In addition to Wallis' criticism of fundamentalists in the mold of Falwell and Robertson for ignoring the social reform implications of the Social Gospel, he is equally critical of their efforts to gain control of the levers of government, from local school boards to Congress and the White House, for the purpose of establishing a fundamentalist Christian theocracy. Even within the evangelical churches, however, there is a mixture of hubris that comes with the certainty of being God's representatives on this earth in the fight for human rights.—which are often defined very narrowly. For example, evangelical Christians groups, such as the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Southern Baptist Convention have urged the Bush administration to block trade with Sudan and North Korea until they improve their record on human rights—that is, until they stop persecuting the small number of people who have taken up the Christian faith.

Evangelical Christians, as well as the fundamentalists that will be focused on here, carry on the Protestant tradition of splintering off from whatever is the current mainstream of belief and dogma, thus creating a seemingly unlimited number of Christian churches. The variety of storefront churches in the west end of Berkeley and other inner cities, as well as the expensive campus-like churches that have thousands of followers, reflect both the minor and basic differences in how the central messages of the Bible are interpreted. The range of denominations include, among others, Presbyterians,

Baptist, Methodist, Four Square, Lutheran, Episcopal, Assembly of God, Church of Christ, Unitarian, Catholic—and within each of these denominations there is an equally wide range of interpretations of basic beliefs and daily practices.

The theological certainties shared by different denominations are important to understanding the non-compromising position that fundamentalist and many evangelical Christians take on such publicly divisive issues as abortion, gay rights, prayer in the classroom, rejection of so-called “activist judges”, and a friend/enemy approach to gaining control of the different levels of government. This core body of certainties on which there can be no compromise—or even debate, include: that the Bible contains the actual word of God (many Baptist churches even claim that God’s word was exactly maintained in the transition from the oral tradition through the many translations of the printed text), that man was born in sin and can only be saved by accepting Jesus as personal savior and source of repentance, that those who do not accept Jesus Christ as their guide to eternal life will experience everlasting punishment, that there will be a Second Coming that will be followed by the bodily resurrection of the saved—with the undeserving being thrown into the fires of hell.

This sense of absolute certainty, which is buttressed by the high-stakes promise of gaining either eternal life or punishment, is what is particularly important to understanding the anti-democratic and anti-modern positions that fundamentalist and many evangelical Christians take on issues affecting local, state, and national politics. Examples of these absolute certainties are clearly present in the speeches of such fundamentalists as Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and James Dobson. Even more succinct statements of the “” can be found on the websites of fundamentalist churches and colleges. For example, the promotional statement of Fairhaven Baptist College includes the following certainties:

We believe in THE HOLY SCRIPTURE: accepting the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the very WORD OF GOD, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore wholly without error and altogether sufficient in themselves as our only infallible and authoritative rule of faith and practice. We believe that God has preserved HIS WORD in the King James Version.”... We believe in the plenary, Divine inspiration of the Bible. We believe all Scripture was given by inspiration of God and that God also promised to preserve his Word. The Bible says, ‘Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever.’ (Psalm

119:154) and, ‘The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in the furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.’ (Psalm 12: 6-7). God not only inspired Scripture in the original languages but also preserved it in accurate translations. www.fairhavenbaptist.org/college/

In addition to announcing that only the King James Bible will be permitted on campus, the website of the Golden State Baptist College states its guiding anti-democratic certainties in a way that rejects any form of individual interpretation—or the possibility that the narratives of the tribal and agrarian cultures that existed several thousand years ago in what we now call the Middle East may no longer serve as the source of wisdom in addressing the interconnections between the world-wide environmental and social justice issues that we face today.

The Holy Scriptures—we believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and they compose the entire Word of God. Scriptures are inerrant, infallible, and God-breathed; and therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. www.gsbc.edu

From these Bible colleges come the ministers who not only reinforce these certainties about the man’s sinful nature, but also the need to evangelize the non-believing peoples of the world. What is especially important today is that these theological certainties are being increasingly translated into political certainties. Many people embrace moral and spiritual certainties, but they do not always impose them on others. By way of contrast, it is the messianic drive to impose their certainties upon others that makes the fundamentalist Christians such a threat to the democratic process. Their efforts to universalize their certainties and to destroy whatever appears to bring them into question can be seen in their efforts to infiltrate the social justice oriented churches where individual thought on how Christian values can be used in addressing current social issues is encouraged. In effect, as these churches are seen as having yielded to the modern values and ways of thinking, and thus are enemies of the absolute Truths held by the fundamentalist Christians, they must be evangelized and converted. Encouraged by President George W. Bush’s personal communication with God about invading Iraq, as well as his early efforts to undermine the tradition of separation of church and state, the fundamentalists have carried their evangelism into the departments of the federal government,

corporate offices, the shop floor of industries and small businesses, and into the military. They have now set their sights on the strongholds of secular learning—the universities, including the elite ivy league universities.

A highly-publicized example of an evangelical effort to further convert the military to fundamentalist Christian beliefs, even as the military is at war with fundamentalist Islamic groups in the Middle East, was the practice of army general William G. Boykin giving speeches while in uniform at fundamentalist churches—speeches that were often critical of Islam. Particularly noteworthy is how religious fundamentalism has gained a foothold in the culture of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs as well as in the corp of military chaplains. With the encouragement of the commanding officers at the Air Force Academy, Jewish and other non-fundamentalist cadets were harassed, while cadets that had already declared Jesus as their personal savior were given preferential treatment. As reported in the New York Times (June 22, 2005) the e-mail sent to all cadets by the Academy commandant, Brigadier General Johnny A. Weida set the tone for such practices as having the cadets that had declined to attend chapel services marched back to their dorms in a ritual called the “heathen flight,” and for fundamentalist cadets to accuse Jewish cadets “of killing Christ.” As reported in the January, 2005 publication of Church & State, the e-mail sent out by the commandant urged all cadets to ask “the Lord to give us wisdom to discover the right, the courage to choose it, and the strength to make it endure.” The e-mail concluded with the statement that “the Lord is in control. He has a plan...for everyone of us.”

The fundamentalist Christian’s efforts to complete the take-over of the Republican Party, which is occurring across the country, was given special attention in an issue of Church & State, which is the publication of citizens (including “liberal” ministers) concerned about conserving the separation of church and state. I put liberal in quotes to indicate the absurdity of referring to a group that is attempting to conserve a long-standing tradition of separation of church and state as “liberal,” a term that traditionally has been associated with assumptions about the progressive nature of constant change, individualism, free-markets, and so forth. The friend/enemy approach to politics is clearly evident in what the journal refers to as the “Ohio Restoration Project” where the pastor of a rapidly growing fundamentalist congregation in Lancaster, Ohio called for 2000 “Patriot Pastors” to spread the word that society is in an advanced stage of moral decay. In the face of the battle “between the forces of righteousness

and the hordes of hell' the task of the Patriot Pastors is to register 300,000 new voters. The Patriot Pastors were also urged to put pressure on the Republican Party Central Committee in the state to fill precinct vacancies with fundamentalist Christians. This effort to further solidify the Religious Right's control over the Republican Party is not an isolated incident, as the leading fundamentalist Christians note when they claim credit for providing the margin of victory in George W. Bush's successful re-election to the presidency.

References to the conflict between the forces of "righteousness and the hordes of hell", between the saved and those condemned to eternal hell, between those who have accepted Jesus as their personal savior and the humanists, secularists and atheists, are clear examples of how fundamentalist Christians and other evangelicals are promoting a friend/enemy approach to politics that is endangering the very basis of a democratic society. Individual reflection and public debate, in effect, have no place in a fundamentalist Christian society that is to be guided by the Word of God. Given their intolerance of debate as well as people who do live by other values it is ironic that the political commentators on the growing power of the Religious Right to elect politicians that support their Biblically-based agenda continue down-play their authoritarian intentions. By representing fundamentalist Christians' no-compromise stance on such important issues as abortion, gay rights, prayer in the classroom, appointments to the judicial system, and so forth, as just another example of partisan democratic politics, journalists and political commentators are basically misleading the public into thinking that specific moral issues are being contested.

What is not being mentioned is that the fundamentalist Christians' political agenda, based as it is on the authority of God's word as revealed in the Old and New Testaments, is incompatible with the democratic process that relies upon debate and a willingness to change views as new evidence is considered. A key characteristic of the democratic process is that it requires the ability of different groups to make compromises. As the fundamentalist Christians continually point out, there is no compromising the Word of God on the reproductive rights of women, same sex-marriages, and the appointment of judges who interpret the law in light of current, widely-accepted standards of social justice. People who do not embrace the moral certainties derived from a literal interpretation of certain passages in the Bible, which may range from people who accept the scientific evidence that supports the theory of evolution to people of other faith, or no faith at all, are the enemy. They represent the anti-Christ and thus

must be dealt with as the enemy of those who live by the Word of God. To put it another way, there is only one basis of authority for the fundamentalist Christians, and thus to compromise on the moral issues where God has spoken is to enter into a pact with the devil.

As in other anti-modernist movements where authoritarian governments have emerged as a result of a weakened democracy, the goal of the Christian Right's friend/enemy approach to politics is to weaken the foundations of a democratic society. To achieve the theocracy that they interpret as God's will requires undermining the institutions that protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority, that protect free speech (including criticism and other expressions of dissent from established orthodoxies), that provide for equality before the law, and that nurtures cultural diversity as one of the expressions of a socially just society. The strategy of the fundamentalist Christians, like the strategy that led to the establishment of authoritarian systems of government in recent history, is to dismantle the separation of church and state—which the Bush Administration is encouraging. Their strategy also includes working for the election of Congressmen and women as well as a president that embraces the imperialistic agenda of the fundamentalist Christians. Their other political goals include eliminating the traditional system of checks and balances between the three branches of government, and the use of fear of an enemy in order to weaken Constitutional guarantees of free expression and privacy rights.

In addition, individuals and social groups that do not rely upon the Bible as the final word of God, and who may risk eternal damnation by pointing out the contradictions and silences in the fundamentalist Christian agenda for the rest of us, will have no place in the political culture fundamentalists are working to create. Just as their understanding of the Second Coming, and the final cleansing brought about by the Rapture, will separate the saved from the "hordes of hell", their understanding of a pre-Rapture Christian society will require the elimination of a pluralistic society. If conversion fails, then stronger measures will have to be taken to limit free expression, to eliminate the traditions that are the basis of ethnic identities and systems of moral reciprocity, and to rid society of every thing that stands in the way of the Second Coming and the final judgment. The end-game of fundamentalist Christians presents them with the ultimate challenge, and if meeting this challenge requires the dismantling of the institutions that are the basis of a democratic, pluralistic society, so be it. The loss of democracy cannot be compared with the loss of eternal salvation. Given this no-compromise

with the non-believers (or with those who believe differently) what is particularly surprising is the fundamentalist Christian's embrace of technologies that are now becoming the basis of a total surveillance network that further centralizes political power. Perhaps they not only recognize its current usefulness in networking with other fundamentalist Christians in gaining political power, but also recognize its importance for identifying sources of dissent when they finally take control of the different branches of government.

It is also important to note that the fundamentalist Christians are not above using the tactics of the devil if those tactics advance their cause. That is, they give their support to politicians that take from the poor in order to further enrich the already wealthy, that spread rumors and lies about the patriotism of their opponents, and that weaken environmental legislation that is intended to protect the environment (which to some Christians is viewed as God's creation). Other political deviations from the Word of God include support for a President that used fear and lies to justify a pre-emptive war in Iraq. Apparently, the fundamentalist Christians consider the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians as a non-moral issue, but the potential death of a human fetus as sufficient justification for criminalizing women who exercise their reproductive rights. Stopping stem cell research and defeating politicians who do not support their Biblical inspired political agenda are also more important than stopping governmental policies that make hundreds of billions of dollars available to the military establishment that needs more wars to justify its further expansion. The list of contradictions can easily be expanded. But the question remains, given the anti-democratic agenda of the fundamentalist Christians as well as their support of the Presidents' domestic and foreign policies that are endangering our collective future, why do so many university educated voters continue to align themselves with the President's religious base?

Regardless of whether these university supporters share the fundamentalist Christian's theology and political extrapolations, or simply consider themselves to be supporters of the Republican Party, it is unimaginable that they are not aware of the ultimate goal of the fundamentalist Christians — which may, like many revolutionary movements, find it necessary to destroy its earliest supporters. Many of the President's supporters take pride in not reading newspapers such as the Washington Post and the New York Times, and in not watching television programs that question the President's policies. However, it is hard to believe that nearly 40 percent of the American voters still in support President Bush's handling of the

economy (including the national debt), the war in Iraq that has become a recruiting and training camp for a new generation of terrorists, and in keeping the fear of terrorism as the dominant political issue in this country, are not aware of how he is also undermining the institutional foundations of our democratic society. Their claim, which they are likely to repeat in the future, that they were unaware of how the separation of church and state, the system of checks and balances between the three main branches of government, and an independent judiciary were undermined by the President and Congress willing to do the bidding of corporations and fundamentalist Christians, will have as much credibility as the Germans' claim that they were unaware of the death camps into which their enemy (Jews, Romany, and political dissidents) were disappearing.

When we consider the nature of the university education received by what can be called the Republican "fellow travelers" of the Religious Right, as well as the education provided by Christian-based home schooling and by fundamentalist colleges, it becomes easier to understand why nearly forty percent of American voters accept the take-over of the Republican Party. As mentioned in the earlier discussion of the power of taken-for-granted ways of thinking, when different groups share the same taken-for-granted assumptions and explanatory frameworks there is seemingly little need for critical reflection. Critical reflection is often a response to an awareness of differences. It is shared assumptions and silences in the university education of the Bush supporters, of the students exposed to the Christian home schooled curriculum, and Bible college graduates that reduce the awareness of differences. Outside cultural forces also need to be taken into account in understanding the seeming inability of all three groups to think critically about the problematic nature of the cultural assumptions underlie their complimentary economic and religious agendas. It is difficult to dismiss the possibility that the ecology of lies and false expectations that characterizes the advertising industry, which inserts itself into nearly every aspect of daily life, conditions people (including many of the voters not included in the 40 percent of the true believers in the Bush agenda and in the fundamentalist Christians' "Truths") to accept spin (lies) and other forms of misrepresentations as a necessary feature of a market-driven economy. agenda that is an inherent part of the educational process they go through.

As the business of secular America is business (as a former head of General Motors put it), it is nearly impossible to escape the visual images of products, and the clever way in

which their benefits are tied to the suggestion of a personal deficiency in social status, appearance, sense of happiness, and so forth. The hundreds of visual images of products the average American encounters in a single day, which are communicated through television, on-line computer services, the display of products in stores, and in what people drive and wear, desensitizes people to the point where deception is accepted as normal. This willingness to accept half-truths and other forms of misrepresentation, which are always couched in the name of progress and the exercise of individual freedom, carries over into the political realm where disinformation and distortions are couched in the even more potent language of patriotism and freedom. The impact is to reinforce a taken-for-granted attitude that accepts deceptions and half-truths as normal. And this sense of what constitutes the norms to which business and politicians should be held accountable means, in effect, that there will be no accountability for the disinformation and distortions that lead to deaths in pre-emptive wars, unemployment, loss of retirement programs, and unemployment. It is against the background of this informal society-wide educational process that the shared cultural assumptions and silences in a university education, in Christian home schooling, in a Bible college education, must be considered.

Ethnocentrism in the Thinking of Fundamentalist Christians

The curriculum that fundamentalist Christian groups (such as Bob Jones University) make available to the nearly million and a half parents that are now home-schooling their children, as well as the curriculum in most departments of secular universities and in Bible colleges and universities, is based on the ethnocentric pattern of thinking that is characteristic of so much of American life. This ethnocentric pattern of thinking underlies the messianic approach to spreading the American model of democracy and consumerism even in cultures that are based on profoundly different assumptions about individualism and the importance of materialistic goals. Ethnocentrism also underlies the fundamentalist Christian's messianic drive to convert the peoples of the world to accepting Jesus Christ as their personal savior. The ethnocentrism in fundamentalist Christian thinking is clearly visible in the language of their theology. For example, a typical statement found in their literature is that "All human beings, created in the image of God, have become alienated from themselves, from others, and from God." The language of ethnocentrism is also present in yet another typical statement, such as "God commissions the church to witness to its faith both individually and corporately to all

people.” Just as the metaphor of the “individual” and a conduit view of language play such an important role in reproducing the ethnocentric pattern of thinking in secular university classes, statements such as “As all human beings” and “to all people” serve to hide the reality that these abstractions misrepresent the diversity of the world’s cultural knowledge systems.

Ethnocentrism is also the basis of the thinking of eminent scientists and philosophers who have strayed onto the slippery slope of cultural colonization by advocating that there is only one metanarrative (evolution for E. O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, and Gregory Stock) that should guide all the world’s cultures, and that the Western tradition of rationalism and critical reflection should be the only approach of cultures that aspire to become progressive and modern (themes promoted by most Western philosophers past and present). Ironically, while E.O. Wilson, Richard Rorty, and Paulo Freire (to cite examples from the fields of science, philosophy, and emancipatory educational theory) would reject any suggestion that they share anything in common with fundamentalist Christians, their ethnocentrism unites them even though they have different colonizing agendas. And when cultural differences are ignored, the destructive nature of economic, epistemological, and theological colonization is also ignored.

In considering the commonalities between what is learned in most departments within secular universities, Christian home-schooling, and fundamentalist Bible colleges and universities, the shared silences and taken-for-granted cultural assumptions need to be given special attention. And the commonalities can be identified most effectively by considering the curriculum of what is regarded as one of the most elite and influential fundamentalist religious colleges in the country. Located in Purcellville, Virginia, and perceived by market liberal and fundamentalist Christian members of Congress as the “Harvard University of the religious faithful,” Patrick Henry College has achieved a degree of influence that is quite remarkable. One measure of influence can be seen in the fact that out of the total of a hundred interns that are chosen by the White House three times a year, the number of Patrick Henry College students placed in the three month internships equals the number of students from Georgetown University. The other measure of their influence as political operatives carrying forward the market-liberal, fundamentalist Christian banner of the Republican Party will be determined in the years ahead, as many of the internships are with the most powerful members of the Republican Party—including Carl Rove, Vice President Richard Cheney, and Senator Rich Santorum.

During their first two years at Patrick Henry College, students read from a Christian perspective many of the writings of the great thinkers of Western civilization. This includes Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Machiavelli, Locke, Shakespeare, Milton, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Beckett. They also study biology from a standard textbook, but also learn how to reconcile basic biological processes with the fundamentalist's belief that the earth was created in seven days. This two year encounter with a classical curriculum is followed by a two year program that can best be described as internships in the halls of Congress and the White House where market liberal and fundamentalist Christian beliefs are translated into Congressional legislation and White House policy. The internships include learning how to pass legislation, how to network various groups within the Republican Party (as well as its supporters), and how to raise money from industries that want their interests translated into legislation. According to the students who operate in these high-pressure situations, they continue to read the Bible daily for personal inspiration and for moral and political direction.

The curriculum offered at more mainline fundamentalist Christian institutions of higher learning, which range from the Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon to Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, include many of the same courses found in secular universities. The main differences, aside from the research mission of many secular universities and the unending quest for new ideas and values, is that the courses in ethics, economics, communication, teacher education, and so forth are taught in ways that do not contradict the fundamental teachings of the sponsoring fundamentalist denomination or churches. Anthropology, for example, would not be taught from the perspective of the evolutionary development of cultures; nor would it be taught from the perspective that represents cultures as possessing different knowledge systems. Rather, it is taught from the perspective of what missionaries need to know that will increase their effectiveness in bringing about conversions to a fundamentalist interpretation of Christianity.

In addition to the cultural assumptions that underlie President George W. Bush's market-liberal domestic and foreign policies, as well as the ethnocentrism mentioned before, what is perhaps an equally important commonality between the university education of Bush's supporters (as well as many of his non-supporters) and the education received in fundamentalists' home schooling and colleges are the silences. With the recent exception of how it was discovered that the languaging processes of the dominant culture reproduced the

gender biases that had prevailed for thousands of years, few graduates of the country's secular universities learn how language reproduces the other deep cultural assumptions of their language community, and this silence is shared in fundamentalist colleges—even in their linguistic programs that are designed to facilitate the missionary's ability to communicate with non-English speaking cultural groups. The problem is not being able to recognize that our taken-for-granted metaphors, such as individualism, freedom, science, data, sin, evil, God, salvation, and so forth, are derived from a combination of earlier reifications, communal experiences and analogies that were influenced by the prevailing cultural assumptions—and that these metaphors may have a different meaning in other cultures, if they have any meaning at all. Even within the English language speaking community, these metaphors may have profoundly different meanings, depending upon the lack of shared assumptions and experiences.

For example, some environmentalist are just beginning to recognize that the politicians working to undermine the Endangered Species Act in order to open the door for the extraction industries are not conservatives, but are in the market-liberal tradition of thinking, and that their own efforts to conserve habitats and species are the more genuine expression of conservatism. And for people who have different interpretations of Christianity-- one that is not based on man's sinful nature and in a constant state of being judged--the metaphor of "prayer" may not represent an appeal for help. Rather, it may mean a way of knowing how the ongoing reflection of spiritual qualities heals the limitations that are part of the culture's taken-for-granted beliefs and fears. The failure to understand that words (iconic metaphors) may have profoundly different meanings in different cultures can be seen in the President's constant reference to all humans wanting freedom, democracy—and by extension, the American way of life. And the language of the fundamentalist Christians equally carries the seeds of colonization when they are introduced into non-Christian cultures. I recall learning that the Quechua (called the "Incas" at the time of the Spanish conquest) did not have the concept and thus the word for "sin" until the Catholic priests set out to convert them.

Another area of commonality shared by the university graduates that continue to support President Bush is a total indifference to the cultural roots of the ecological crisis. Indeed, the Bush supporters that drive environmentally destructive SUVs and macho pickups, while decorating them with the American flag and support-our-troops decals, are in many

instances unaware that there is an environmental crisis. This segment of the American public has, on a number of occasions, expressed the view that the environmental crisis is a fabrication of “liberals” who benefit economically from perpetuating the big lie. As mentioned earlier, the graduates of secular universities who possess an in-depth knowledge of the different ecosystems that are in decline, and that are aware of the cultural ways of knowing and practices that are contributing to the decline, are a distinct minority. President George W. Bush, as well as his university educated advisors, have continued to reverse environmental legislation in ways that open up vast areas of the environment for exploitation by the various extraction industries—and to claim that “global warming” should really be understood as part of the ongoing natural cycle of global change. An examination of the curriculum used in home schooling that is supplied by fundamentalist Christian organizations, as well as the curriculum offered in their colleges and universities will reveal a similar silence.

This shared silence is a dominant feature of today’s political discourse. With the exception of a few Republican politicians such as Christine Todd Whitman who is asking how the party was hijacked by the religious fundamentalists, and evangelicals such as Jim Wallis, the forty or so percent of the voters that constitute Bush’s political base continue to remain silent as the President’s anti-environmental policies are reported even in local newspapers. Just as sexism went largely unnoticed even by male academics until a language was constituted for naming and thus recognizing the patterns of discrimination, the same problem exists for people whose education failed to provide the language for naming and recognizing environmentally destructive cultural beliefs and activities. As pointed out earlier, the cultural assumptions that gave conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the development of an industrial approach to production and consumption, and that are also the basis of many of the high-status courses offered in secular universities, at once illuminate and legitimate-- and hide.

What is hidden by a lack of language that is necessary to name and thus make visible what would otherwise not be recognized are the many ways in which the modern forms of progress are adversely impacting the natural systems we depend upon. For example, how many university graduates that support President Bush are aware that the growing use of bottled water is a sign that our rivers and aquifers are heavily contaminated with the chemicals that are used in a variety of seemingly useful contexts-- and not just as another market opportunity? The shared silence that I shall address more fully in the following chapter has to do with the

inability of university graduates across the political spectrum, as well as the graduates of fundamentalist colleges and universities, to recognize the importance of conserving the intergenerational knowledge that is the basis of the cultural commons. Some students may have heard of the “tragedy of the commons” but few would be aware of the cultural biases that led to Garrett Hardin’s understanding of what constituted the tragedy. But finding university graduates who understand the nature of the cultural commons, and how revitalizing them as alternatives to the spread of economic globalization, with all the uncertainties that it introduces, is a nearly impossible task.

If university graduates do not recognize the many ways they are dependent upon the cultural commons, and how what remains of the cultural commons are being transformed into new market opportunities, they will lack the communicative competence necessary for conserving them. Similarly, if the fundamentalist Christians are unaware of the nature and importance of the cultural commons, they might misinterpret the social unrest that will accompany the further breakdown of what remains of the cultural commons as a sign of Armageddon and the second coming. With the exception of Christians concerned with poverty issues and world peace, the fundamentalist followers of Falwell, Roberston, and Pat Haggerty, to cite just a few of the fundamentalist voices that now exert a powerful influence on the thinking of the President’s supporters, seem too overly concerned with ensuring people’s eternal life than with alleviating the wretchedness of their current state of poverty and hopelessness.

Another area of a shared silence in the secular university education as well as in the religious-based education of President Bush’s political base has to do with how maintaining the world’s cultural diversity is critical to maintaining habitats and species. As pointed out earlier, the language of different cultures is built up over generations of experience living in a specific bioregion—with its distinctive plants and animals, weather patterns, and cycles that govern the renewing of life within the bioregion. In many instances, the language over the generations carries forward the accumulated knowledge of where to find plants and when they can be harvested without major disruptions to their cycle of renewal. The same holds for the harvesting of fish and other sources of food. Local knowledge of soil conditions, when the aquifers are running dangerously low, and where to place dwellings in order to avoid potential flooding or fires is also passed along both through the vocabulary of the culture’s language as

well as through its stories. This intergenerational knowledge, which is essential to sustaining the local ecosystems, is utilized by the rancher in Colorado, the herder in Mongolia, and the city dweller who keeps track of the snow pack and whether it will be adequate for filling the city's reservoirs.

The secular university educated supporters of Bush, as well as his religious fundamentalist base, pursue the same end-- but for different reasons. For the non-religious supporters the goal is the globalization of the West's industrial, consumer-based culture. That is, integrating local economies into the West's network of free trade, which allows the translational corporations to further expand their markets, represents the crowning achievement of imposing 18th century market liberalism on the rest of the world through 21st century technology. The global agenda, as previously noted, of the fundamentalists Christians is to convert and thus to save all of humankind for eternal life. But the impact on local cultures is the same: the loss of local economies that are often scaled to the sustaining capacity of the bioregion, the loss of intergenerational knowledge that accompanies an increased dependence upon consumerism, the redefinition of a subsistence existence so that it becomes understood as a state of impoverishment, an increasing reliance upon industrial produced goods that requires participating in a money economy when the opportunity for earning a wage is becoming increasingly limited. And as real poverty spreads, the members of the culture have a greater adverse impact upon the local ecosystems, such as stripping the land of firewood and making increasing demands on the soil and aquifers—thus furthering the cycle of poverty.

Similarly, as the missionaries attempt to convert the members of non-Western cultures to accepting Jesus as their personal savior, the mythopoetic narratives that were the basis of non-Western systems of moral reciprocity are increasingly seen as pagan and thus in need of rejection. And as the members of the culture come more under the influence of the Christian missionaries, their focus shifts from what, in many instances, involved understanding humans and the natural world as part of the same spiritual universe to the anthropocentric perspective that is so central to fundamentalist Christianity. It would not be unfair to say that the fundamentalist Christians view economic globalization, and the loss of cultural diversity that accompanies it, as clearing away the different forms of intergenerational knowledge that would otherwise remain as sources of resistance to their message of eternal salvation.

President George W. Bush's foreign policy of expanding world trade, including the transfer of Western technologies to countries such as India and China, thus serves the interests both of his secular and religious followers. But the age-old connections between cultures and natural systems they depended upon, which contributed to the diversity of cultures, is now being undermined. It is important to recognize, as Jared Diamond documents in his book, Collapse, that not all cultures were able to adapt their economies and other cultural practices to what could be sustained by the natural systems they depended upon. While the beliefs and practices of a number of indigenous cultures led to stripping the land of the forests that influenced weather patterns—and thus the productiveness of the land-- other cultures that exported their excess population to new territories failed to adapt their guiding ideas and practices in ways that took account of the local ecologies. Diamond's warning about the danger of assuming that ideas, values, and technologies are appropriate to all ecosystems has particular relevance to any assessment of the education that lies behind President Bush's policies of economic colonization. And the same warning can be extended to the fundamentalist Christian's efforts to transform the world's diverse cultures into a Christian monoculture—which is now being resisted by a major proportion of the world's population, which is Muslim.

The Uses and Implications of Technology

In spite of growing resistance to globalization, Western technologies such as computers and cell phones are being adopted worldwide and are contributing to the loss of linguistic diversity that is so essential to conserving the diversity of species and habitats. But again, the education received in secular and religious colleges and universities perpetuates the silences about the cultural transforming characteristics of these technologies. Nearly 20 years ago I wrote an article that argued that since Western technologies are based on liberal assumptions, they could only be criticized from a conservative perspective that asks about the value of the traditions that are being overturned by the adoption of the new technology. This question is even more relevant today as the global spread of new technologies undermine traditions that represented alternatives to being dependent upon consumerism. As the education of President Bush and his supporters did not expose them to genuine conservative thinkers such as Edmund Burke and Michael Oakeshott, they continue to promote the spread of Western technologies;

and the only potential crisis that now concerns them is whether India and China might become the world's dominant economic powers.

The introduction of new technologies is perhaps one of the most important issues that should occupy the attention of people in a democratic society. The gains and losses associated with new technologies, whether it is a technology that locates the schools of fish and thus increases the fisherman's ability to gain personally while over-fishing the local fish stock or a technology that makes instantaneous communication possible between continents, are poorly understood. Who gains and who loses? How does the technology, particularly the computer, alter human relationships and influence the forms of knowledge that will be lost as well as those that will be privileged?

The Christian Right has entered the discussion about the uses of technologies in the areas of human reproduction and on the issue of a near-death individual's right to choose when to end life. Their interest is not so much in understanding the cultural-- transforming nature of technologies, particularly as a particular technology may contribute to deepening the ecological crisis. Rather, the central concern is with saving the soul of a human being, with the debate turning on when the combination of DNA and the electro-chemical processes that lead from a cell to an organism can be understood as the beginning of human life. The latter issue is an important one, as is the problem of children being exposed to people who use the computer to lure them into dangerous relationships. These two primary concerns, however, hardly represent an educated understanding of how the introduction of new technologies create new forms of dependency, contribute to a smaller or larger ecological footprint, undermine craft knowledge as well as our civil liberties, and can be the Trojan Horse of cultural colonization. Aside from the issues of the relationship of medical technologies to saving the soul of the unborn child, and exposure of children to pornography, fundamentalist Christians view technologies in terms of how they can be used to increase their ability to win elections and to obtain financial support from the faithful. In effect, they view computers as a powerful tool for achieving their political/theological agenda.

The irony is that these so-called religious conservatives, as well as the mis-named conservatives that continue to support President Bush's market-liberal policies have no interest in developing a critique of technology that takes account of social and eco-justice issues. Another irony is that the development of Western technologies, and thus the cultural form of

intelligence that is encoded in the design and use of a technology, is based on the core assumptions that underlie both market and social justice liberalism. As the so-called conservatives that support President Bush's policies are largely uninformed about the issues and view of community that have concerned conservative thinkers such as Edmund Burke, Vandana Shiva, and Wendell Berry (to cite three different traditions of conservative thinking) they promote the introduction of new technologies regardless of their adverse impact on the traditions that different cultural groups rely upon. The lack of knowledge about one of the most dominant features of American life, which is our increasing reliance on technology, is leading both Bush supporters, as well as many of his critics, to expand the use of technologies that collect and store information on nearly every aspect of our daily life. While it is done in the name of increasing national security, as well as providing corporations information on which individuals to target as potential customers, it does not represent a form of progress that a mindful conservative would support.

There is another characteristic of higher education that contributes to the secular university graduates' indifference to how the fundamentalist Christian's political agenda requires the destruction of our democratic institutions. Unless the students attending a secular university elect to take a course in the sociology of religion, they are unlikely to recognize the friend/enemy form of politics that is dictated when a group justifies its political agenda as based on the Word of God. And even then, it is unlikely that there will be a discussion of whether the politics dictated by the Word of God can be reconciled with the democratic process—which requires negotiation, dialogue, compromises, and an ability to accept, at least temporarily, the decision of the majority. A few graduates of secular universities, including the market-liberal supporters of President Bush, may be vaguely aware that the fundamentalist Christians exhibit an authoritarian mentality when it comes to achieving their political agenda. But it's doubtful that there will be a discussion of the full implications of how the politics supposedly dictated by the Word of God cannot include negotiation and compromise with the values and traditions that do not conform to what God has dictated in the Old and New Testaments. It is also doubtful that students attending fundamentalist colleges and universities discuss the issue of whether carrying out the politics of the Word of God requires, over the long-run, the destruction of democratic traditions and the replacement of a pluralistic society with a theocracy—much like what Islamic extremists are attempting to achieve. Given the

large number of fundamentalist Christians that can be rallied in support of various domestic and foreign policy decisions, it would seem important that their fellow-traveling secular supporters understand the political change that they are helping to bring about.

The current efforts of the Religious Right (which includes elements of the Catholic Church) to undermine the tradition of separation of church and state reflects another omission in their education, as well as that of the general public. There appears to be widespread indifference in most sectors of society to President Bush's "faith based initiatives" that have opened the door of governmental agencies, including access to federal money, for religious groups to promote their message of how to achieve eternal salvation. This development, as well as the other efforts to align our legal decisions with the Biblical Word of God, is taking society down the same road of state-sponsored religion that resulted in the carnage of the Hundred Years War (1337-1453), the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), and more recently the sectarian violence in North Ireland, and that is now taking place in Iraq. Mindful conservatives bring a historical perspective to their understanding of current social trends, such as the efforts to turn America's pluralistic society into a fundamentalist Christian nation. And they are likely to remind us to consider whether there are any examples of state-sponsored religions, other than Great Britain where there is a highly ritualized support of the Anglican Church, that have avoided repressing the non-believers.

Again, we find that the curriculum of both secular and religiously-based higher education has failed to provide students with the background knowledge necessary for avoiding the slippery slope leading to an authoritarian society. The dominant place that the coming of Armageddon has in how the Religious Right understands the end of human history has the unfortunate effect of leading them to view civil war as a positive development, just as many fundamentalist Christians view the war between the Israeli and Palestinians as a sign that the Second Coming is nearing. Indeed, fundamentalist Christians have moved to Jerusalem in order to witness the end of history, and to be taken first in the Rapture that will leave all human strife behind. In order to speed up the coming of the Rapture, many of them continue to support the right-wing Israeli policies that further oppress the Palestinians. Just as their authoritarianism is leading to a friend/enemy form of politics in our own country, they see their ultimate agenda being furthered by promoting the same form of politics in other countries.

There is another aspect of the politics of carrying out the Word of God that brings into question the mindless way in which fundamentalist Christians are referred to as conservatives. As the fundamentalist Christians rely exclusively on the Old and New Testament for the prescriptions and prohibitions for living a Christian life, what is not mentioned in these texts becomes an important factor in what is left out of their political agenda. Past social achievements in the areas of social justice, which the fundamentalist Christians do not find mentioned in the Bible as the expression of God's will—but are taken seriously by many evangelical churches--thus get ignored or openly resisted . These social justice achievements include providing workers a living wage and safe working conditions, the extension of civil rights to all social groups, Constitutional guarantees of free speech and assembly, an independent judiciary, and so forth. And the recent gains made in the area of environmental protection, which the Bush administration is systematically reversing in ways that serve the interests of corporations, have little importance to these fundamentalists. Perhaps their understanding of the immanence of the Second Coming makes them view the environmentalists' concern with leaving a healthy environment for future generations as based on a false hope that scripture does not support: namely, that Armageddon will not occur and that there will be future generations whose survival will depend upon the self-renewing capacity of ecosystems to provide the necessities of human life.

Evolution versus Intelligent Design

One of the best examples of how human advances not anticipated in the Biblical narratives must be rejected by fundamentalist Christians includes the method and achievements of modern science—particularly, the theory of evolution. The teaching of the role of evolution in the formation of life on this planet over the last 15 billion years is now one of the flash points in the politics of some state boards of education, and in many biology classes across the country. Darwin's discovery of how species evolve through the process of natural selection, as well as the time frame of how long this process has been going on, directly challenges the Book of Genesis account of how God created the world in seven days. Whether the men who passed this narrative on as part of an oral tradition, and whether the men who translated this narrative into print (where it underwent numerous translations by men from different cultural ways of knowing) understood a “day” to be a twenty-four hour period of time, or used the metaphor for different epochs of time, has not been the issue. Rather, the twenty-four hour day

is taken as the unit of time in which God's creation took place, and the theory of evolution presented in high school biology classes represents yet another challenge that has been reduced to the category of friend/enemy politics where there can be no compromise. This time the friend is faith, and the enemy is the empirical evidence of modern science.

Instead of accepting the overwhelming evidence that species of plants and animals evolved through natural selection, the fundamentalist Christians (and many evangelicals) want to ban the teaching of evolution entirely. And short of that, they want students to be informed about a counter explanation; namely, the theory of "intelligent design" which restores God's role in creating life in seven days. The attack on the theory of evolution represents yet another expression of the fundamentalist Christian's anti-modernist orientation where the present must be revised in order to fit the reactionary and extremist interpretation of the Word of God that has been passed on for thousands of years: first as an oral tradition and then into a print tradition that has undergone many translations. It is particularly noteworthy that this widely publicized characteristic of fundamentalist Christian thinking has not led the fellow-traveling secular supporters of President Bush to question their alliance with the Christian Right.

While the fundamentalist Christians are attempting to replace a scientifically-based explanation of the origins and development of life on this planet with a theological explanation that is based on faith, the important questions that are raised by the theory of evolution go unnoticed—and thus un-debated. Prominent scientists such as E. O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, and lesser known scientists such as Gregory Stock and Ray Kurzweil, are attempting to extend the explanatory power of evolution in ways that explain cultural patterns (what they refer to as "memes") as subject to the same process of natural selection—which means that the fittest or better adapted are selected to pass on their memes to future generations. For example, the memes (values, business plan, etc.) that enable Wal-Mart to drive local small-scale stores out of business because they lack the technologies and resources to force producers to supply Wal-Mart products at the price dictated by Wal-Mart are, according to the theory of natural selection, better adapted and thus the most deserving to survive and evolve in new directions. While the current representation of evolution carefully avoids the phrase "survival of the fittest", the phrases of "Darwinian fitness", and "better adapted" mean essentially the same thing—that is, that the environment selects which memes (and genes) have survived in the competition that determines which will be passed on to future generations.

The failure of these scientists to recognize the limits of what can be empirically established represents the slippery slope that these evolutionary fundamentalists are now on. Instead of rejecting the overwhelming body of evidence that supports the process of natural selection in the biological realm, the fundamentalist Christians should address the moral issues that are raised by the explanation that the better adapted cultural patterns are selected to survive—which in the theories of Wilson, Stock, and Kurzweil is interpreted to mean that cultures not based on the achievements of Western science are destined to become extinct. That is, the moral values of most cultures are rooted in their mythopoetic accounts of origins and how fundamental relationships are to be understood. Even the mainstream approach to moral values reinforced in secular universities is based on mythopoetic narratives such as the notion of the autonomous individual and the progressive nature of change—which are part of the basis for a pragmatic approach to values. Fundamentalist Christians should help initiate a dialogue on what is problematic about the evolutionary fundamentalist's attempt to argue that moral values are hardwired in our genetic makeup, as Wilson claims, and that the politics and moral values of a culture count for little in the face of the Darwinian process that separates the winners from the losers. But this recommendation should be taken seriously only if the fundamentalists can take a reflective and critical approach instead of closing off the discussion with the certainties derived from their interpretation of the Bible.

Assuming for a moment that this impossibility could be transformed into a possibility, the question becomes: What should they be asking about the efforts of the evolutionary fundamentalists' to extend the theory of evolution in a way that represents cultures as subject to the process of natural selection? And by extension, what should fundamentalist Christian students in a biology class be asked to consider about the limits of what can be explained by the theory of evolution—and the moral and political limits of scientific authority? Unfortunately, the education received in both secular and bible-based colleges and universities fails to provide their graduates with the essential background knowledge necessary for understanding how the values and other aspects of a culture's symbolic world are carried forward over many generations at a taken-for-granted level of awareness, and how the process of understanding new phenomenon is often the outcome of a process of analogic thinking that has been influenced by the prevailing cultural root metaphors. In short, the cultural ecology of ideas, values, and meanings communicated through the many languaging processes of a culture

are too complex to be objectively (if that were possible) observed and measured in ways that meet what is required by the scientific method.

The problem of explaining cultural beliefs, patterns, and values in terms of natural selection is further compounded by the inability of scientists to think independently of the cultural assumptions encoded in the language of their cultural group. The taken-for-granted assumptions carried forward over thousands of years that represented women as intellectually inferior to men, and led to accepting the research studies of men as the basis for understanding women, are just two examples of how scientists have been unconsciously influenced by the assumptions of their culture. The cultural assumption about the progressive nature of new scientific discoveries, which led to thousands of new chemical compounds being introduced into the environment without any understanding of how they would impact natural systems is yet another example. Given the high status that science has within certain segments of American society it is important to remind ourselves of the examples where the hubris of scientists led them down the slippery slope of scientism. As mentioned earlier, their misunderstanding of the limits of scientific inquiry include their efforts to “scientifically” measure intelligence (which has now shifted to explaining intelligence in terms of genetic heritability) and the eugenics movement of the twenties and thirties—and which is now being revived in the scientific efforts to perfect animals and plants through genetic engineering. Some scientists, such as Lee Silver, are even proposing that a “Gene Rich” strand of humans should be created that will provide intellectual and moral direction for the “Normals” (people who have not been genetically designed to perform certain creative and intellectual tasks).

The moral and social justice issues (which cannot be separated) that Jim Wallis and Rabbi Micheal Lerner are raising suggest that religion has an essential place in any discussion of the moral values that we should live by. The case can also be made that mythopoetic narratives or cosmologies, which can also be understood as religions in the broadest sense, have been developed by many cultures in ways that represent humans and nature as participants in the same spiritual universe—which has led to codes of moral reciprocity between humans and the natural systems they are dependent upon. But the efforts of these religious spokespersons, as well as many others who share a non-dogmatic approach to addressing the moral issues surrounding poverty, discrimination, unjust relationships, and environmental degradation, have not turned against the findings of science. And they have not

taken a friend/enemy approach to finding solutions to the unresolved social and eco-justice issues. In short, their approach to including more groups in the dialogue of how to understand what constitutes social and eco-justice strengthens the practice of democracy—while extending it to other voices that represent different cultural ways of knowing that enabled their members to live within the limits and possibility of the natural systems they depended upon. They are also interested in the crisis being brought on by economic globalization, but their interest is not in colonizing other cultures by converting them to yet another authoritarian way of thinking—even if it promises to lead to eternal salvation.

Unfortunately, their efforts are labeled as liberal when, in reality, they are practicing the politics of mindful conservatism. That is, they are working to conserve the traditions of mutual support and social justice that are essential to viable communities—including the institutional protections that ensure that the minority will not be oppressed by an authoritarian group that wishes to impose its certainties on the rest of society. A similar mistake is made when the group is interested in either turning more aspects of daily life and the environment into what can be industrially made and consumed, or in turning what remains of our democracy into a theocracy where the agents of God’s Word will become the moral police, are called the conservatives. As pointed out earlier this confusion about how to use political language in a way that more accurately represents what individuals, politicians, and religious spokespersons really stand for represents the ongoing failure of both secular and religious universities and colleges.

There is yet another area of silence in what is learned in both sets of universities and colleges, and it has to do with the “this-worldly” challenge of how to live within the sustainable limits of the environment, and in a world where the industrial, consumer- dependent culture that is the outcome of market-liberal thinking has reached a level of destructiveness of communities, cultures, and environment that can no longer be hidden by the myth of progress. In short, we need to consider how the revitalization of the cultural and environmental commons can be understood as part of the transition to a post-industrial existence. And we also need to consider the implications of strengthening the cultural commons for reforming universities—and religious based approaches to higher education.

Chapter 5 Re-Conceptualizing the Mission of the University

The efforts to address the challenge of reforming the university curricula in ways that contribute to a more sustainable future are taking many forms. Perhaps the most successful is the “greening” of the physical plants and the recycling of tons of waste paper. New buildings increasingly incorporate the latest energy saving technologies. Unfortunately, the greening of the campus buildings and recycling bins spotted around offices and hallways have little influence on how students think—especially when their classes continue to be based on the liberal assumptions about the individual autonomy, the progressive nature of change, and an increasingly mechanistic interpretation of organic processes-- such as how the brain “functions” and plant cell descriptions in the industrial vocabulary that include “recycling center,” “a powerhouse,” and “storage sacs.”

There are efforts being made at universities across the country to address the more difficult challenge of getting faculty in different disciplines to include environmental issues in their courses. Most of these efforts take the form of networking with other faculty that take seriously the ecological crisis, and who want to discuss with others how to adapt their courses in ways that expand the students’ understanding of the environmental issues. In some instances, such as the Ponderosa Project at Northern Arizona University, considerable success has been achieved in getting faculty from a wide range of departments to include environmental issues in their courses. Other universities have established both undergraduate and graduate programs in environmental studies. While most of these programs have a strong science orientation, some provide students with in-depth understanding of environmental issues in such areas as environmental ethics, ecocriticism, environmental law, environmental history, and so forth. But they still fall short of providing a conceptually coherent way of understanding the cultural alternatives to a lifestyle that is dependent upon the cultural assumptions that were constituted before there was an awareness of environmental limits. These various specialized foci on environmental issues, even when they address the nature of more environmentally friendly technologies, differences in economic impacts, how place is understood by the writers of the past, the politics of environmental legislation, and so

forth, represent important steps in the right direction. But they are only first steps, with the next phase of reform being the more daunting challenge.

As I pointed out in [The Culture of Denial: Why the Environmental Movement Needs a Strategy for Reforming Universities and Public Schools](#) (1997), environmentally- oriented faculty outside of the sciences mostly have only a marginal standing in terms of how the majority of members in the department view what constitutes the legitimate areas of inquiry. Even if they have the support of the non-environmentally oriented faculty, and are able to make environmental issues the central focus in their courses, the conceptual orthodoxies that students encounter in other courses will reinforce the idea that environmental issues are just one of many legitimate areas of inquiry—and not necessarily the most important one. This relativizing of the seriousness of the ecological crises is further strengthened by the modernizing cultural assumptions that continue to serve as the taken-for granted interpretative framework in courses ranging from philosophy, political science, economics, sociology, business, and so forth. These cultural assumptions are also reinforced in many environmentally oriented courses. The accuracy of this generalization can be determined by asking professors whether they consider themselves to be in the liberal/progressive tradition of thinking or in the conservative tradition. As suggested earlier, most environmentally oriented faculty will share the same ethnocentrism and progressive values that students will encounter in their non-environmentally oriented classes. They will also share the bias against the importance of face-to-face intergenerational knowledge as well as the silence about the nature and importance of the cultural commons that will be found in other academic departments.

Assessing the double bind thinking among students-- even students majoring in environmental studies-- can be determined by the extent they identify themselves as liberals, and continue to label market-liberal politicians, corporate spokespersons, and judges with links to the Federalist Society, as conservatives. To restate the double bind in thinking: when students who are learning to conserve habitats and species continue to identify with a political label that traditionally has been associate with possessive individualism, and the need for continual change—primarily through the expansion of the industrial model of development--they give further legitimacy to the cultural trends that

are further degrading the environmental systems. They have also cut themselves off from the vocabulary that is essential for naming and thus making explicit the many mutual support systems and activities within communities that have not been entirely monetized. As mentioned earlier, language illuminates and hides. And what it hides is influenced by the silences in the thinking of earlier generations that were obsessed with replacing the intergenerational knowledge of the commons with the intergenerational knowledge that merged science, technology, and the market system into a system of global domination.

The most important challenge we face is in initiating university reforms that provide students with an understanding of how to live less money-dependent and thus more community-centered lives as the world enters the post-industrial era. The degradation of natural systems, as well as major economic stresses and dislocations, are accelerating this process. This makes more urgent the need to address how universities can change their mission from that of providing the knowledge workers in an increasingly technologically dependent global economy to providing the forms of knowledge that contribute to long-term sustainability in a post-industrial world. However, before explaining more fully the nature of the university reforms that will support this transition, it is necessary to understand why we are nearing the tipping point where we could move either in the direction of a more authoritarian and environmentally destructive society or in the direction of recovering the traditions of local democracy and mutual self-reliance. Unless we take seriously the latter possibility, the market mentality will continue to be dominant characteristic of everyday life—even as an increasingly degraded environment undermines our collective well-being.

In addition to promoting the globalization of the free enterprise system, as well as pursuing a domestic agenda that is undermining institutions and traditions essential to a democratic society, the Bush administration continues to treat the environmental crisis as a fabrication of “liberal” environmentalists. His efforts to have scientific reports altered to fit his ideological agenda, as well as his arguments that the free enterprise system will correct any imbalances between human demands and the sustaining capacity of natural systems, continue to be supported by the nearly forty percent of the voting public. Indeed, the president’s anti-environmental policies are likely to have more of a long-term adverse impact on the health of American citizens, as well as on the capacity of natural

systems to renew themselves, than his Middle East policies that were based on blatant deceptions. His supporters willingly absolve him of responsibility for the number of dead and wounded Americans that are casualties of his decision to invade a country that was not a threat to us. They also are willing to continue waving the flag in support of his turning more of the environment over to the extraction industries that have donated so heavily to his political campaigns.

The strongest evidence that the industrial, hyper-consumer dependent culture is coming to an end can be seen in the diverging trend lines between the rising human demands on the environment and the downward trend line that represents the ability of natural systems to remain viable in the face of increasing human demands. Some segments of the petroleum industry have finally recognized that the current levels of consumption, which are expected to rise in coming years, are not sustainable. One of the chief sources of protein in many parts of the world is also in decline. Scientists have discovered that the number of large species of fish have declined by 50 percent in the last 60 years, and in some areas the fish stocks that were previously thought to be inexhaustible have declined to the point where their ability to recover is in doubt. While President Bush's lack of understanding of what our priorities should be is reflected in his recommendation that humans should travel to Mars, scientists have recently discovered that the world's oceans, which have long been understood as a major sink for capturing the CO₂ resulting from human activity, are becoming increasingly acidic. This change in the oceans' chemistry is having a negative impact on shell and coral formation, as well as a negative impact on the zooplankton—which occupy a critically important position as the base of the ocean's food chain.

Other evidence that the downward trend line in the sustaining capacity of natural systems is nearing collapse include the growing scarcity of potable water, the loss of topsoil (now estimated world-wide at 34 percent) that is vital to feeding a still expanding world population, and the loss of forest cover that is accompanied by a number of negative consequences—including the further release of CO₂ into the atmosphere that is contributing to global warming. And as global warming accelerates, glaciers and the ice cover on both poles are melting—and these changes are especially threatening to plants

and animals that are adapted to habitats that are undergoing rapid change. For species that are unable to adapt, extinction looms as a real possibility.

Whether these trend lines can be reversed is problematic, especially with hundreds of millions of people in China, India, and other non-Western countries adopting the Western consumer-dependent lifestyle. The shift of America's manufacturing and knowledge industries to China and India, as well as to other low-wage regions of the world, will result in higher levels of pollution being released into the atmosphere, a faster depletion of resources that results from the global spread of the industrial mode of production and consumption, and an acceleration in the loss of the world's intergenerational knowledge of how to live less consumer dependent lives. By setting up competition between the low-wage areas of the world in order to outsource work while increasing profits, the market liberals in corporate offices and in the White House succeeded in achieving another long-sought goal: namely, reductions in the high wage work force as well as in commitments to pay pensions and health care benefits. In many instances, outsourcing and changes in corporate ownership has led to the loss of retirement benefits that had been accumulated over a lifetime of employment.

The growing economic insecurity faced by an increasing number of Americans, which is hitting the working class the hardest, represent another trend line that is being experienced more directly than the environmental trend line whose consequences are being experienced more gradually and indirectly—such as the higher price of gasoline, the increasing dependence upon bottled water, and the number of illnesses that can be traced to various forms of environmental pollution. Perhaps it's the way the economic well-being of the market-liberal supporters of President Bush, as well as most university faculty, that insulates them from the insecurities experienced by a growing segment of the American population. The insecurities are not just imaginary, but real—such as facing a reduction in health benefits and pensions, and the loss of employment at an age when finding alternative work is nearly impossible. Ironically, both the experience of economic-well being among the President's supporters and the experience of an uncertain economic future may contribute to the current wide-spread sense of indifference to making a sustainable environment a higher national priority. Affluence has a way of

reinforcing the myth of unending progress, while poverty leads to focusing on immediate needs.

With tenure and generous salaries that will not disappear through outsourcing, many university faculty continue to advance the knowledge of their discipline without regard for how the cultural assumptions it is based upon contributes to overshooting the sustaining capacity of the environment. The social justice-minded professors continue to argue for greater equality among social groups for participating in a consumer-dependent lifestyle. At the same time, traditionalist professors continue to introduce students to the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and other ethnocentric philosophers who laid the conceptual foundations for marginalizing the importance of the cultural and environmental commons. Self-styled radical professors are equally messianic in their efforts to convert students into becoming followers of Marx and other emancipatory thinkers—especially now that Marx and Freire are being represented as newly-discovered environmental thinkers.

Even with the networking of environmentally oriented faculty across disciplinary boundaries, the same silences and prejudices that prevent the awareness of the characteristics of ecologically sustainable post-industrial communities continue to persist. That is, the specialized focus on environmental issues that are largely dictated by the faculty member's disciplined-based knowledge and career path largely prevents them from asking questions that go against the grain of the taken-for-granted assumptions within their discipline. The ethnocentrism they share with the majority of their colleagues across the disciplines also influences the questions they are able to ask as well as the silences they leave undisturbed. Two collections of essays by leaders in the field of environmental ethics and the fledgling movement to make sustainability a central focus of university reforms provide the evidence that supports my criticism of the continuing role that ethnocentrism continues to play in thinking about educational reform. For example, *Environmental Ethics* (2005) edited by Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston III, contains forty essays on the various issues being addressed in the field of environmental ethics by leading thinkers. What is especially noteworthy are the silences in this collection of essays that is supposed to represent the ideas of leading environmental thinkers. Non-Western cultures such as the Quechua of the Peruvian

Andes and the Apache of the American Southwest, both of which developed an environmental ethic especially attuned to their bioregions, are not mentioned. Nor are there any essays by Third World environmental thinkers that have led environmental movements that have translated an environmental ethic into social action.

Forty essays on environmental ethics that still fails to provide students with a comparative understanding of the difference between a rational approach to environmental ethics and the ways in which many indigenous cultures encode their environmental ethic in their narratives, ceremonies, use of technologies, and other daily practices, is deeply problematic for a number of reasons. Chief among them is that students are left without an understanding of how environmentally-centered cultures are able to sustain their environmental ethic over many generations. The rational process, as engaged in by academics across the disciplines, is based on a conflict model where the winner is often the one with the more elaborated language code, and that relies upon abstractions that are often treated as universals. Another characteristic of the rational approach to environmental ethics modeled by the contributors to Environmental Ethics is that there is nothing that cannot be questioned—while at the same time there is scant evidence that the conflict model of the rational process ever leads to lasting agreements.

The second noteworthy collection of essays titled Sustainability on Campus: Stories and Strategies (2002), edited by Peggy F. Barlett and Geoffrey W. Chase, contains essays by faculty who have pioneered curriculum reforms that focus on introducing environmental issues into courses in disciplines ranging from economics, philosophy, to English and geography. Unfortunately, this collection of essays also omits any references to indigenous cultures and other non-mainstream approaches to educational reform. In addition to personal stories and strategies for networking and conducting seminars on how to introduce environmental issues into different courses, which are undeniably helpful, the same silences and conceptual mis-directions are also present. That is, Sustainability on the Campus presents examples of piece-meal, add-on approaches to educational reform, which too often are based on the same silences that prevent students from obtaining an understanding of the cultural changes that will be required in making the transition to an ecologically sustainable post-industrial culture.

For example, the following questions are not raised in any of the essays: What forms of knowledge contribute to a post-industrial lifestyle that are necessary to averting ecological collapse, and how can they be introduced through an educational process (can they be learned in a university setting)? What educational reforms will help to conserve the world's linguistic/cultural diversity? What educational reforms must be undertaken in order to reverse the market-liberal's success in promoting economic and technological globalization? What are the traditions still existing in communities that represent examples of the cultural commons that students can learn from—as well as use as examples for learning how the cultural commons are being undermined by the spread of industrial culture? Ironically, the values, ways of thinking, and community-centered practices that students need to learn about as supporting the transition to a post-industrial culture are not going to come from the fields of brain research, computer technology, or from, as E. O. Wilson suggests, abandoning the world's religions in favor of adopting Darwin's theory of evolution as their guiding epic narrative.

Rather, the way to a sustainable future has its roots in the earliest human experience of relying upon the environmentally informed intergenerational knowledge and patterns of cooperation that existed prior to the monetization of the commons—and that still exist today. This suggestion is likely to be met by most university faculty, as well as by their mis-educated students, with the criticism that we cannot go back to an earlier and more primitive stage of development. They would be partly correct except for the fact that many of the earliest cultural practices, which we now refer to as the cultural and environmental commons, still exist today in every community spread across the country—and in every culture of the world. That most university graduates, while unconsciously relying upon what remains of the cultural and environmental commons in their communities, are not explicitly aware of their complex and interdependent nature, as well as how the commons are being undermined by the spread of market forces they identify with progress, represents one of the major failures of our public schools and universities.

Revitalizing the Cultural Commons as an Alternative to the Growth of Economic Insecurity.

From the beginning of human history, the commons were understood as the natural environment. That is, the streams, oceans, forests, soil, plants, animals, and so forth. While the status systems of different cultures have dictated who could have access of the commons, there was in many cultures a general agreement that what was understood as the commons was freely available—and that its use was controlled by community decision making. In effect, the “commons” literally meant what was freely available (and thus common) to all members of the community. Restrictions on access and use of the commons in the West began well before the 13th century when we find the first written document that covers the sale of land. The shift from understanding “work as returned” to “work that is paid” represented a later development in the process of “enclosure” where what was once freely shared becomes monetized, transformed into a product, and privately owned.

Karl Polanyi’s The Great Transformation (1944) documents how the industrial mode of production transformed labor from being part of the commons into a commodity that was part of the cost of production—thus requiring that it be paid at the lowest possible level. And as the liberal ideology that supported the expansion of industrial culture also promoted the idea of the autonomous, possessive individual that would be dependent upon consumerism to meet daily needs, other aspects of the cultural commons became enclosed. The environmental commons became enclosed as the resources needed by the industrial culture, and the cultural commons was progressively enclosed as schools and universities began to create the categories of low and high knowledge—with high-status knowledge being what was required for participating in the growing monetized sectors of the culture, while the low-status knowledge encompassed the face-to-face intergenerational knowledge that sustained the non-monetized cultural commons. The increasing educational emphasis on the importance of individual freedom (from the traditional forms of intergenerational intergenerational knowledge and responsibility) contributed to what the emerging industrial culture required: namely, individuals that were dependent upon consumerism to meet daily needs that were previously met on a largely non-monetary basis within the cultural commons. This culturally complex process of enclosure further undermined the importance of the face-to-face learning that is one of the sustaining characteristics of the cultural commons. This process of enclosing the

natural commons now has progressed to the point where the gene lines of plants and animals are now owned by corporations and individuals for the purpose of creating new products for global markets.

One of the forms of resistance to the further enclosure of the environmental commons was the establishment of national parks and federally owned land. The recent emergence of land conservation trusts also represents an effort to limit the further enclosure of the environmental commons. But these efforts to conserve specific environmental commons for future generations represent a fundamental difference. In the more traditional understanding of the environmental commons, the use by the local community involved the practice of local democracy. The national parks, federally owned land—both of which are now under pressure from the extraction industries—as well as the environmental commons now protected by conservation trusts, often restrict local decision making about who has free access and use of the resources of the commons. On a different scale, the revival of community gardens and public spaces in urban areas represent yet another important example of community efforts to recover the environmental commons that contribute to self-sufficiency and local decision making.

Just as Aristotle set the West back for centuries in understanding the metaphorical nature of thinking, Garrett Hardin's "The Tragedy of the Commons" has similarly set back by a few decades the way people have understood the nature of the commons. For Hardin, the commons represented the pastures, woodlands, streams, soil, and so forth. What he overlooked was the nature of the cultural commons—even though his explanation of the nature of the "tragedy" was based on misconceptions that were part of the liberal tradition of thinking passed on as part of the Western cultural commons. The cultural commons is as complex and varied as the world's different cultural knowledge systems and practices. The languaging systems of different cultures, including their narratives, development of technologies, traditions of growing and preparing food, knowledge of the medicinal properties of plants, and so forth, are all aspects of the cultural commons that can be traced back to the earliest stages of human development.

Other aspects of the cultural commons, which vary from culture to culture, include how decisions are reached in the community, methods of settling disputes, mentoring in craft knowledge and the expressive arts, rules governing the playing of

games, ceremonies at the time of births, weddings and death, and the moral norms that govern relationships—including human/nature relationships. The ideology that gave conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the spread of the industrial, consumer-dependent culture, as well as the scientific method that has led to the development of the technologies that made the industrial revolution possible on the scale that is now on the verge of overwhelming us, are also part of the cultural commons. Other characteristics of the cultural commons vary from culture to culture. Some culturally-specific examples of the cultural commons are clearly problematic in a moral sense. Beliefs and values that led to the oppression of groups in the community judged to be inferior or exploitable for economic reasons are all too familiar. Thus, it is important to recognize that the nature of the cultural commons needs to be assessed in terms of more complex criteria than whether they represent alternatives to consumer-dependent and environmentally destructive lives. The main focus here, however, will be on those aspects of the cultural commons that represent alternatives to the level of consumerism that undermine the community-centered traditions of self reliance and that further degrade the environment.

Just as the Industrial Revolution accelerated the enclosure of the environmental commons, it has also contributed to the enclosure of the cultural commons—which can be understood as bringing more of the cultural life of the community into a money economy. From the perspective of corporations, enclosure is seen as discovering and exploiting new markets. As pointed out earlier, the transition from the face-to-face sharing of intergenerational knowledge of how to plant a garden to being dependent upon industrially processed food, and from playing a musical instrument to needing to purchase a music CD, represents the transition from a communal-based non-monetized support system to a form of individualism where an income is required to participate in a commodity oriented lifestyle. The goal of the industrial culture is to enclose as much of the cultural commons of different cultures as possible, which is deemed as necessary to keeping the manufacturing process operating at maximum efficiency and profitability. As more of the cultural commons are transformed into commodities and the services of experts, the more the individual becomes dependent upon a money economy.

The loss of employment that provided a living wage, the low-wage jobs that force many Americans to hold down a second low-wage job, as well as the reduction or loss of medical coverage and a pension, leaves the individual in the double bind where the money needed to meet the increasing dependence upon consumerism created by the industrial culture is less and less available. The current practice of outsourcing jobs and downsizing now made possible by the new technologies have resulted in another double bind where the production capacity of the industrial culture is expanding while the number of people who are able to purchase what can be produced is shrinking. One way to measure the problem is to consider the level of credit card debt of the average American, which is somewhere between seven and eight thousand dollars per person. Yet the ability of people to reduce their dependence upon a money economy by participating in the cultural commons continues largely to be ignored—especially by our educational institutions.

The process of enclosing (monetizing) more of the cultural and environmental commons also contributes to the further degradation of the Earth's interdependent ecosystems. In the name of economic and technological progress, more of the oceans are becoming contaminated with the chemical by-products of the industrial culture that the market liberals are promoting as the model for global development. The market liberals also overlook the radical decline in the world's fisheries, the growing shortage of potable water, and the spread of diseases that follows global warming. Resistance to America's process of economic colonization should not be confused with "the enemy's hatred of America's freedom", as President Bush put it. Rather, it has more to do with how the spread of market liberalism, with its emphasis on the profits that come from enclosing the commons of different cultures.

Science and technology have already enclosed such areas of the cultural commons as individual privacy, as well as thought and communication which must now be mediated, according to the expectations of many people, through a computer. This dependency, in turn, makes it necessary to continually pay for technological upgrades. Information about the most private parts of our lives is now being collected and sold as a commodity to corporations that want to target more directly their potential customers. Enclosure is even reaching deeper into the mental world of the individual, as scientists

now working for the drug industry are attempting to develop new niche markets for controlling memory, while other scientists are working to develop new reproductive technologies that will bring yet another area of human biology into the industrial system of production and consumption. Shortly, it may become impossible to think of our personal identity as separate from the industrial products that are designed and consumed on the basis of overcoming our biological limitations. As we encounter the “shock and awe” of new technologies emerging from research in the areas of stem cells and wireless communication, it is going to be even more difficult for the promoters of high-status knowledge to acknowledge that the reduction of poverty will lie more in the recovery of the cultural and environmental commons than in the current search for new technologies.

One of the ironies today is that our public schools and universities, with few exceptions, fail to help students to recognize what remains of the cultural commons—and how the cultural commons provides alternatives to the increasing dependency upon a money economy that is becoming both less available and less predictable for more and more people. The other irony is that our educational institutions are failing to help students to recognize the informal efforts within communities across the country to strengthen what remains of the cultural commons as sites of community participation and empowerment outside of the pressures of a money economy. These efforts range from local theatre, community gardens, what is now referred to as the “slow food” movement, mentoring in the arts and crafts (working with wood, glass, ceramics, weaving, etc.), support systems for the elderly, children’s sports, chess, discussion groups, and so forth. Participating in the activities of the cultural commons fills times with meaningful relationships, enables people from different backgrounds to interact in ways that strengthens patterns of moral reciprocity, and develops personal interests and talents. In many instances, it helps to revive the ancient tradition of work that is returned—which is profoundly different from the delayed gratification model of the industrial approach to work where it is reduced to a wage or salary.

While participation with others is one of the dominant characteristics of the cultural commons, the chief characteristic of a consumer dependent lifestyle involves increasingly isolated experiences. These isolating experiences, which involve the illusion of being technologically connected to others, include using computers for work and

entertainment, watching television, playing video games, going to a shopping mall or fast food restaurant, and so forth. To make the point in another way, participating with others in the activities of the cultural commons reduces the need for money and thus the need to work the long hours that too often leave the individual exhausted to the point where watching television is the only escape. Unfortunately, it's also a form of escapism into the world of advertising illusions that represent new consumer possibilities that will lead to further happiness. Some people, on the other hand, are purposely reducing the time they spend working, and finding that living less money dependent lives actually enriches their lives. While they are choosing voluntary simplicity as a personal lifestyle, others who are losing their sources of employment to "downsizing", "outsourcing" and the drive of many corporations to reduce their "overhead" costs (higher salaries paid to older workers, previous retirement and health care agreements) are facing both a reduction in or loss of income, and a deeper sense of personal isolation and loss of meaning.

The Connections Between Market Liberalism and the Enclosure of the Commons

The problem is not that the West has relied upon the development of scientific inquiry and new technologies. Both have contributed too many benefits to list here. Rather, the problem is that the merging of science, technology, and the free market ideology has led to equating the enclosure of both the cultural and environmental commons with progress. There is no self-limiting principle in scientific inquiry. The current example of this combination of hubris and a lack of understanding of what the real priorities should be, which would be to further study the oceans and other natural systems that life depends upon, is the idea being promoted by a segment of the scientific community and President George W. Bush, who wants to establish himself as a profound visionary, that humans should travel to Mars, with settlements to follow. The development of new technology is guided by a self-limiting principle; and that is that the technology will be judged a success only if it helps to create new markets and produce a profit. Given the basic assumptions of market-liberalism which hold that "man's" essential nature is to "truck, barter, and trade", and that there is an "invisible hand" that ensures that the more efficient the market the more the entire society will benefit, there are no moral restraints on how far a market economy can expand. The early social

extrapolations on Darwin's theory of natural selection, as well as its current re-emergence as a scientific account of why some cultural memes (ideologies, technologies, corporations, etc.) survive, while others do not, has added further to the assumption that a industrial, consumer dependent culture that expands by enclosing further what remains of the commons expresses what is being guided by Nature's process of natural selection.

Until recently, the environmental commons was viewed by Westerners as wild, as a source of danger, and as an exploitable resource. Its wildness and threatening nature could only be overcome, so the assumption held, by bringing it under scientific and technological control. Its complete domestication required that it be exploited in ways that expanded the industrial culture. Now some scientists and technologists, and even a few heads of corporations, are recognizing that this earlier (and still widely held)assumption is undermining the self-renewing capacity of natural systems. While the market liberal ideology has been criticized by Marxists, socialists, and social justice liberals, it seems to be gaining wider acceptance by the general public. As pointed out earlier, the drum beat of misrepresentation that characterizes how market-liberalism is being renamed by journalists, politicians, radio talks show hosts, and the average uneducated citizen as conservatism has broadened its appeal—even among social groups that are being further economically impoverished by its logic of survival of the fittest. That the majority of the public accepts that the “fittest” is determined by having the ability to buy the votes of the members of Congress and the White House indicates just how far a money-obsessed culture has fallen away from a concern for the welfare of others—as well as the future prospects of their own progeny.

The monetization of so much of the cultural and environmental commons seems to have fundamentally have changed the people's moral compass that previously would have led to a sense of outrage over what today wins voter approval. This lack of moral outrage over how the public was deliberately manipulated into supporting the invasion of Iraq, and the incompetent assessment of how Muslims would react to the presence of Western military forces, suggests the real possibility that a majority of the public would accept in the name of patriotism the further undermining of our democratic institutions—as envisioned by the fundamentalist Christians who want to impose their interpretation of God's word on the rest of society, by other groups that want to eliminate any restrictions on the expansion of the free enterprise system. These observations anticipate the main concerns that will be explored in the next chapter.

It is more important here to mention another major reason that there is so little resistance to the spread of market liberalism, even though its promise of continued material progress is being undermined by India, China, and other non-Western countries that have the advantage of a low-wage work force. Another reason that the enclosure of the cultural and environmental commons is widely viewed as the expression of progress is that our educational institutions have, for the most part, reinforced the idea that intergenerational knowledge passed on face-to-face is a source of backwardness—especially when compared to the high-status knowledge encoded in print, and other abstract systems of representations--and continually revised through critical reflection and the constant search for new ideas and values that can be monetized. The intergenerational knowledge that is at the heart of the cultural commons is also known as traditions. As has been pointed out earlier, traditions have had a pejorative meaning for most academics, as they have been associated with sources of oppression, backwardness, ignorance, and superstitions that cannot meet the test of critical rationality.

Edward Shils, the author of Traditions (1981), noted that the Enlightenment view of tradition is so widely held that there now powerful anti-tradition traditions that have as their main purpose the overturning of traditions, which is interpreted as clearing the way for more progress. He identified these anti-tradition traditions as modern science, critical inquiry, and the constant quest for new technologies. That these aspects of modern culture have gone unrecognized as traditions because of a highly reductionist and abstract way of understanding traditions are less important than the fact that the widespread misunderstanding of traditions has created a barrier to recognizing the nature of the cultural commons. The cultural commons—the language we cannot escape using, recipes, healing practices, moral norms governing everything from democratic practices and regal procedures, patterns of narratives and other expressive arts, etc.—are traditions. And as mentioned before, not all the traditions are sources of social justice and sustainable living. It is vitally important, therefore, that we need to be able to recognize the community-centered traditions (cultural commons) that represent alternatives to exploitive relationships, further dependency upon a money economy, and a growing list of daily practices that degrade the environment. If traditions are not recognized, even as

we re-enact them in daily life, they can be lost as new technologies and expert knowledge are embraced by a public that has been conditioned to ignore what is being overturned.

The market-liberal ideology underlying President George W. Bush's domestic and foreign policies reproduces the same misconceptions about the nature of traditions that were required by the Industrial Revolution—and that are still reinforced in most university classes where change is represented as a linear form of progress. The metaphors that the President relies upon to give moral legitimacy to his support of an unrestrained market economy—change, privatization, individual freedom, ownership society, progress—indicates how the liberal interpretative framework he takes-for-granted does not lead to asking what aspects of the cultural commons (traditions) should not be enclosed by market forces. That is, he does not ask what should be conserved that enables people to be less reliant upon a market economy. Journalists and media pundits also fail to raise questions about the importance of sustaining (conserving) the cultural commons, and thus limiting what should be enclosed by the efforts of market-liberals in government and in industry. Yet they persist in referring to President Bush, his advisors, and the large number of his supporters as conservatives.

The fundamentalist Christians also misunderstand the nature of tradition—and thus the nature and importance of the cultural commons. Their anti-democratic agenda, which is to overturn traditions such as the separation of church and state, the system of checks and balances, and the civil liberties guaranteed in the Constitution, is also based on a different misunderstanding of the nature of tradition. Their attempt to impose on the rest of society what they claim to be the Word of God is based on the assumption that the early traditions of belief and practice recorded in the Bible should not be changed. That is, today's moral norms, diverse cultural knowledge systems, civil liberties, and so forth, are to be replaced with the traditions that the fundamentalist Christians regard as unchanging. Shils makes a strong case for viewing traditions as undergoing a constant process of change, with some traditions changing too slowly while others change more rapidly. Racial and gender discrimination would be examples of the former, while the loss of privacy caused by the many misuses of computers would be examples of the latter. Shils also notes that one of the basic misunderstandings about the nature of traditions is the view that holds that traditions should not change. He refers to people

who hold this view as “traditionalists.” Given the way fundamentalist Christians think about tradition, it would be more correct to refer to them as traditionalists and thus as reactionary thinkers rather than as conservatives. As reactionaries they want to go back in time to an earlier period of moral absolutes that they view as dictated by the Word of God—a knowledge claim that they represent as free of human interpretation. That they are not satisfied to make this the basis of their own cultural practices, but are driven to impose their traditionalism on the rest of society—indeed the entire world—makes them one of the most powerful anti-democratic and subversive forces in our society. And their agenda is that while waiting for the end-time promised in the Bible they will work to subvert the traditions of negotiation and compromise that are essential in a pluralistic society.

That the end-time of human history, which will be marked by social chaos as the rapture separates the saved from the those being consigned to the fires of hell, is what dominates the fundamentalist Christians’ effort to impose their moral absolutes on the rest of society, they have no interest in strengthening the traditions of the cultural commons that reduce the human impact on natural systems. Nor do they see the cultural commons as mutual support systems that both provide for participating in individually meaningful and socially useful community activities, and for reducing the level of poverty that comes from living a more solitary life. The ameliorative effects of the cultural commons are simply irrelevant to their God-driven agenda of creating a theocracy on earth. The importance of the commons has for them the same standing that poverty has for the market-liberals that now control Congress, the White House, and many levels of government across the country. It would not be too inaccurate to say that fundamentalist Christians view the separation of the economically successful from the unsuccessful as a prelude for the final separation that is coming. But this does not appear to be as visible in their thinking as what they regard as the moral issues—and the need to defend their creation story from being undermined by the scientific evidence that supports Darwin’s theory of evolution.

One of the ironies today is that social justice liberals within universities share with the fundamentalist Christians the bias against tradition that is part of the legacy of the Enlightenment era. That they have profoundly different reasons for the silences and

misrepresentations that have contributed to the general level of ignorance about the importance of the cultural commons is less important than the fact that the widespread level of ignorance and indifference plays into the hands of the market-liberals. When the modern forms of the commons, such as the municipal water system, are privatized and thus becomes part of corporate culture where the emphasis is on profits rather than service, there are few voices of protest. For example, how many protests were raised as the public health care system was taken over recently by a market system? Enclosure of this part of the cultural commons can be seen in the change in language where the patient is now referred to as a consumer, and the doctor is now called a provider. The word “patient” carried with it the taken-for-granted attitude toward a hierarchical relationship, but it also suggested that healing (rather than consumerism and profits) was the main focus of the relationship. The point that is unrecognized here is that not only do words have a history, but that they are symbolically connected with traditions that are re-enacted in everyday life. The loss of language is thus contributing to the loss of tradition.

Re-conceptualizing the Mission of the University

There are a variety of reasons that individuals are being forced into poverty—or to accept a lower standard of living, even as the ubiquitous gas-guzzling SUVs and super-sized new houses suggest that the era of hyper-consumerism is still on the rise. For those who have lost their job or encounter the reality of a reduced pension as a result of corporate outsourcing and automation, the prospects of providing food and shelter often seem hopeless. When they possess a highly developed and previously valued skill that has been made obsolete by the ability of a corporation to place a computer driven machine in a low-wage region of the world, the sense of injustice and hopelessness are further magnified. Too often the response to this sense of hopelessness is to retreat into a bitter loneliness that is only mitigated by spending hours watching television—whose program content is largely secondary to the presentation of hundreds of commercials that promote even more consumerism. Unfortunately, the community-centered alternatives to the sense of hopelessness, loss of membership in a consumer-driven society, and the marginalization of personal skills and interests, go largely unrecognized. That the environmental and personal benefits of participating in the cultural commons go largely

unrecognized can be attributed to the way in which public schools and universities continue to promote the high-status knowledge that contribute to the further expansion of the industrial, consumer-dependent culture.

To reiterate a point made earlier, the deep cultural assumptions that underlie most university courses are the same assumptions that are the basis of the industrial culture that is being globalized. And these assumptions about the autonomous/possessive individual, the progressive nature of change, the culturally neutral yet progressive nature of technology—including abstract encoding systems, the commodification of knowledge and everyday activities and relationships, and an anthropocentric view of nature, further marginalize the language that would enable people to name and thus recognize the cultural commons they still depend upon as part of their taken-for-granted world. To reiterate another important point: as many of the environmental faculty share many of these liberal/progressive assumptions, their specialized interest in some aspect of the environmental crisis generally does not lead to any direct challenge to the thinking and values of their colleagues who are promoting the conceptual and moral foundations of the culture that is degrading the environment at such a rapid rate.

The rate of environmental change is now occurring so rapidly and is now so visible—in terms of the melting of glaciers, changes in habitats and loss of species, the levels of contamination in every aspect of the environment—including our bodies, that we should now begin to ask whether the current mission of the university must be radically reconsidered. The spread of poverty and deaths resulting from degraded environments, which result in part from changes in weather patterns as well as corruption of local governments and corporate exploitation (the oil rich delta in Nigeria being a prime example of the latter) suggest that the era of both market and social justice liberalism may be coming to an end. Both have contributed to the expansion of a consumer driven form of culture—with the latter combining the message of overcoming poverty and political marginalization with the need to enable people to become consumers. Both market and social justice liberals, and the genuinely reactionary professors I have encountered at universities where I have taught and lectured, are unable to use the word conservatism in a way that is relevant to addressing the loss of the cultural and environmental commons. The incessant quest for new ideas, values, and

technologies continue to be a dominant characteristic of American higher education—and higher education in other English speaking countries. Even the reactionary thinking of university professors that want people to return to the ideas and values of the West’s great thinkers (Leo Strauss being an example) represents an experiment that will likely overturn the hard-won traditions of civil liberties—if they were to succeed in dictating the direction of future university reforms. For example, if the judicial system were to come further under the influence of judges that embrace the principle of adhering to the original intent of the men who wrote the Constitution, their decisions will likely lead to reversing previous decisions on the rights of privacy, affirmative action, and governmental regulation of corporate behavior. These reactionary judges, like the reactionary university professors, will be experimenting with the very foundations of society. And like other social experiments, there are no guarantees that these reactionary changes will not lead to even more widespread poverty and social unrest.

Although experimentation without a concern for the unintended consequences is one of the hall-marks of modernization, the depth of the environmental crisis suggests that we need to change directions. That is, we need to recover the proven traditions of the cultural commons that enabled communities in different bioregions to live more self-sufficient and morally coherent lives. “Morally coherent” is mentioned here as it is important that the commons within world’s diverse cultures should not include the traditions that stratify, marginalize, and in other ways exploit different groups of people. Thus, the ideology of market-liberalism, with its context-free vocabulary that equates freedom and progress with the further monetization and commodification of very aspect of life, can be understood as an example of the cultural intergenerationally connected commons that fits the definition of an exploitive way of thinking.

In suggesting that the market-liberal ideology subverts the cultural and environmental commons even as it is perpetuated as part of the cultural commons, it should be understood that market relationships cannot nor should not be entirely eliminated. To make this point in another way, the revitalizing of the cultural commons as a proven alternative to the environmentally and culturally destructive trend line that governments and corporations are now pursuing does not create an either/or situation in terms of our continued reliance on the genuine achievements of Western science,

technology, and industrial production. We cannot reverse our reliance on electricity, but we can pursue more efficient, less environmentally destructive sources of energy—and more equitable ways of providing access. Similarly, we cannot get rid of our system of roads, but we can work to re-design the relationships between where people live and work, the systems of transportation, and the ability of people to walk or ride bicycles to where they need to go. In short, one of the primary purposes of revitalizing the cultural and environmental commons is to bring about a better balance between what people can do in mutually supportive and non-monetized ways and the elements of the industrial culture that they will continue to rely upon—and, hopefully, exercise more democratic control over.

The suggestion here is that university reform should not continue to be based on creating an even further collaboration with the corporate culture that is accelerating the degradation of both natural systems and the intergenerational knowledge of self-sufficiency within our own and other cultures. Furthermore, university reformers should not ignore why so many university graduates are working to advance President George W. Bush's market-liberal policies—which they also misinterpret as being conservative in nature. There is no other way to describe the hyper-consumerism, the government subsidized free-market system (a contradiction that seems to escape attention), and environmentally disruptive policies of the Bush administration other than as a great experiment that is likely to lead to the social chaos that the fundamentalist Christians will read as a sign that the Rapture is near.

If these are not the directions that university reforms should take, what are the alternatives? The current trend lines marked by the increasing levels of poverty, overshooting of the sustaining capacity of natural systems, the spread of the West's industrial, consumer dependent culture to the billions of people in Southeast Asia, and the further automation of work, suggest that we are on the cusp of radical changes that few of us are prepared for. It would be prudent, therefore, to consider how to make the proven traditions of self-sufficiency and mutual support, that is the cultural commons, the focus of reforming the curricula of universities. This will be an especially challenging task, as what is being suggested here will require thinking against the grain of the modern orthodoxies that underlie the education of most university professors. Several decades

ago people were concerned that university faculty would never become fully aware of their patriarchal assumptions. Opposition from groups outside the university as well as students from within, plus lawsuits, led to basic changes in the ability of professors to think in ways that were seemingly impossible in the past. Changes in natural systems may also force the faculty to recognize what their previous education conditioned them to ignore—namely, that the intergenerational face-to-face knowledge, relationships, and activities they have relegated to low-status represent a more ecologically sustainable and eco-justice way of existence.

It may prove correct that the tradition of thinking that a significant change in the students' way of understanding can be affected by taking a new course that addresses issues considered to be overlooked in the past—but in only a few instances. As I have found, little is gained from the students' encounter with a single course on the nature and importance of the cultural commons. This is especially the case when the focus of the course is on the cultural commons that students interact with on a daily basis. The chief difficulty is that the different aspects of the cultural commons, such as knowledge of how to prepare a meal, to speak their language and to use the patterns of meta-communication, to plant a garden, to recognize the changing zones of private and public space, and so forth, are largely taken for granted. Similarly, the many forms of enclosure, such as when the meal is purchased at the local fast food outlet, taking a course that requires the payment of tuition, and the use of an industrially produced drug, go unnoticed as distinctive cultural transformations—from the world of what is shared and largely non-monetized to the world where access and use are dependent upon being able to pay for it. Even though the differences between the non-monetized and monetized aspects of daily experience were discussed in class the students had difficulty in recognizing the difference in their own experience. They also found it difficult to keep a daily ethnographic record of activities and relationships that fit the two categories of experience. The difficulty may be due to the taken-for-granted nature of daily experience, and to the student's lack of practice of participating in relationships while at the same time giving special attention to the cultural patterns that are being re-enacted. Another possible explanation are the years of education that condition students to treat

the words and concepts encountered in the classroom as abstractions that do not have to be assessed in terms of daily experience.

Whatever the reasons for the limited success of a single course, the traditions of the cultural and environmental commons need to be understood in the greater depth that comes from an historical and cross-cultural perspective. If students could be given the language that enables them to name and thus to recognize what would be documented in a self-directed ethnography of the relationships that have been monetized, as well as those that are shared as part of the commons, there would be a definite gain. That is, this would be a solid starting place for beginning to understand the basic differences between what is shared and what is monetized, how the differences play out in terms of strengthening community and self-development, as well as how unrestrained enclosure impacts the environment and contributes to the spread of poverty. The basic distinction, which is not always so clear cut in daily life, between the commons and the process of enclosure leads to other areas of understanding that are generally ignored in the formal educational process we call a university education. These include examining the politics and economics of enclosure in various contexts—including the forms of enclosure in colonizing other cultures, the differences between technologies that are controlled by local decision making that takes the values of the community into account, as well as the technologies that contribute to new forms of enclosure that generally go unnoticed.

Universities are capable of providing the interdisciplinary approach to an understanding of the complex nature of the cultural practices that sustains the cultural and environmental commons, as well as the multiple ways in which the process of enclosure occurs. It takes a person who is basically disconnected from daily life, or possibly too self-absorbed, not to notice how the process of enclosure is being extended into new areas of life. The genetic basis of different forms of life, from viruses, animals and plants, to humans—including the basis of human consciousness--are now being enclosed. That is, the gene lines are being privatized, and this ownership is enabling the industrial process to further encroach on what remains of the cultural and environmental commons. Making the interdisciplinary study of the interconnections between the many forms of enclosure, the diversity of the world's cultural and environmental commons—and how they have been sustained, and the impact of enclosure and its legitimating liberal

ideology on the viability of natural systems, must surely be as important as such other areas of emphasis as ethnic studies, American studies, and a Great Books program of study.

Instead of courses ranging across the disciplines, from history, philosophy, economics, sociology, and so forth, that reproduce the Western narrative in a somewhat diverse vocabulary of how traditions of ignorance and backwardness had to be overcome in order to arrive at our current state of enlightened and progressive thinking, we need to consider the possibility of making the current state of the cultural and environmental commons the central focus of study. That is, we need to make the reasons for the cultural and environmental crises that the world now faces the main focus. The forms of knowledge that contribute to scientific, technological, and industrial progress have reached the tipping point where they now threaten the basis of life on this planet. If this sounds excessively alarmist, then the rate of global warming, the degree of chemical contamination of the oceans which is reducing the sources of protein we depend upon, the loss of species and habitats, the shortage of potable water, and the number of people who are living on one dollar a day or are in the last stages of starvation, need to be taken into account. When compared to these global changes, the article or book that the faculty member wants to pursue as a personal intellectual quest may be seen in a different light. And perhaps the course that the faculty member wants to teach on the basis of personal interest, which may require reaching an agreement with other faculty who have similar individualized interests that their courses may also be listed as required for earning a university degree, must now be reconsidered. This is the time for recognizing that we are on the cusp of radical changes that will make previous revolutions, or descents into the modern forms of authoritarianism that are more properly called fascism, look mild by comparison.

Even though the odds are against faculty making the radical shift that is required in order to slow the further degradation of natural systems and the further spread of poverty and death, it will nevertheless be useful to identify what should be included in an interdisciplinary approach to the nature and importance of sustaining the world's diverse cultural and environmental commons. As the different areas of study are identified, we might even be able to recognize what has been missing in the education of students who

now make up the hard-core of President George W. Bush's supporters who assume the chief goal of life is to pursue a hyper-consumer lifestyle and to colonize other people to their way of thinking. If nothing else is achieved beyond that of learning that the environmentalists and that the people working to limit the spread of enclosure by strengthening the local cultural commons are the genuine conservatives, and that the people working to undermine our system of government on the assumption that it will liberate the free enterprise system from all forms of restraint that have been created by the weaker and less productive members of society are the market-liberals, then a genuine gains has been made. The recent survey that led the American Bar Association to establish a civic education commission (with Sandra Day O'Connor and Bill Bradley acting as honorary co-chairpersons) found that barely half of the adults in American society could identify the three branches of government. This, along with the previously mentioned survey that found that nearly half of high schools students thought that government must first approve criticisms of its actions before they are made public, suggest a real failure on the assembly line we call higher education.

As a starting point in the process of reforming higher education and, by extension, public schools, often begins with networking among faculty that take the environmental crisis seriously, but moves beyond this to more substantive issues, the following may serve to give the discussion of reform a more specific focus. My personal experience with faculty getting together who have not thought about the commons as a proven tradition of having a smaller ecological footprint is that the proposals generated by the narrow disciplinary perspective of the different faculty usually leads to a dead end. That is, there is little or no consensus beyond that of agreeing to incorporate environmental issues into courses that are largely based on the deep cultural assumptions that have been major contributors to the ecological crisis and to the ethnocentrism that underlies our efforts to modernize the "undeveloped" parts of the world. To reiterate a another basic point: the cultural and environmental commons have a proven record of success in contributing to greater self-sufficiency within communities, and in sustaining the world's diverse knowledge systems that are so critical to sustaining biodiversity. We should therefore start the discussion of educational reform by using the cultural and environmental commons as a proven alternative to the further expansion of the industrial, consumer

dependent model of development. The following represent just a few of the ways in which a degree program of study that contributes to the revitalization of the cultural and environmental commons can be strengthened by an interdisciplinary approach.

Making the cultural and environmental commons the central focus of a degree program would not require abandoning the traditional disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Rather, these disciplines would be essential if a different series of questions were to be made the main focus of study in each of the disciplines. A course or two on the history of Western philosophy would help clarify how the traditional epistemological concerns of influential philosophers contributed to the ethnocentrism that is so widespread in other university courses—and in society generally. They could also further the students' understanding of how different philosophers contributed to the marginalization of the intergenerational knowledge essential to sustaining the cultural commons. Furthermore, it would be useful for students in a philosophy course to learn if there were any Western philosophers that argued for a land ethic and for the importance of the cultural commons. A further question that might be explored would be why writers such as Aldo Leopold and Wendell Berry would not be included in a philosophy course. Most importantly, the above questions would help students understand the role that Western philosophers played in the establishment of what constitutes high and low-status knowledge. The students might also have a better understanding of how philosophers helped to lay the conceptual foundations of both market and social justice liberalism—and why the ideas of conservative thinkers such as Edmund Burke, William Morris (labeled at the time as a socialist), Samuel Coleridge, and Michael Oakeshott are not discussed in a philosophy class.

The history of political theory also needs to be part of a program of study that is centered on the cultural and environmental commons. Again, the focus would be on which political theorists wrote about the importance of the cultural and environmental commons, and which laid the conceptual basis for its progressive enclosure. Also important would be learning how political theorists contributed to the framing of the individual as autonomous, of property as privately owned, and of political leadership as based on who wins the most votes, of the nation state, and of the conflict model of decision making. Again, the question of which political theorists took seriously the

importance of the intergenerational knowledge that underlies the everyday practices of the cultural commons should also be examined. The issue of ethnocentrism should also be addressed by examining why the community decision making processes of other cultures, such as the cargo system that is still carried on by many cultures in Central and South America, are not included in political theory courses.

The fields of economics, literature, religious studies and the creative arts could also make an important contribution to understanding the cultural forces that have added to the current degraded status of the world's diverse cultural commons. As there are many voices within these fields, it would be useful for students to learn about those that have made a case for conserving the cultural and environmental commons—and to consider why their ideas have been marginalized. A course that examines the history of enclosure would be a necessary part of this field of study, as well as an environmental studies course that focuses on how the diversity and health of the cultural commons influences the self-renewing capacity of natural systems. Of special importance to students would be to learn how the languages of different cultures encodes and thus carries forward the knowledge of how the cycles of regeneration take place within the different bioregions. This would set the stage for examining whether the English language makes it difficult to encode the intergenerational knowledge of the life-cycles of local plants and animals—as well as other characteristics of the local environmental commons. The root metaphors that underlie the patterns of thinking of English speaking communities could also be considered in terms of whether they serve to marginalize the importance of the local knowledge of the ecosystems the community depends upon or helps to ensure that it is passed on to future generations.

An anthropology course would be highly useful if it provided students with the opportunity to study how different cultures have achieved a balance between the values of the market and the patterns of daily life that are based on non-monetary values and relationships. The study of how the cultural commons were enclosed in Ladakh culture by the introduction of Western technologies and consumerism, as well as how the indigenous cultures of Mesoamerica are actively resisting the forces of enclosure that are part of the Western model of development would add to the students' understanding of the widespread efforts to conserve the cultural commons. More specifically, it would

provide concrete examples of how globalizing the Western industrial, consumer-dependent culture contributes to transforming relatively self-sufficient communities into sites of generational alienation, poverty, and crime. A sociology course that examined the range of mutual support systems within the students' own community, as well as the ways in which the governments of other countries such as England, France, Brazil, and Japan financially support volunteerism within local communities, would provide students a clearer sense of what is possible if local and national politics made the revitalization of the cultural commons a higher priority than is now the case. Courses in the sciences, architecture (with a focus on ecological principles of design), and even business (especially a course that focused on small-scale businesses and banking practices that strengthen the local economy) are also essential to understanding the local alternatives to being controlled by transnational corporations.

In short, a degree program that highlights the central tensions between the mutual support systems that sustain the commons and the market-liberal based efforts to enclose the commons will provide future citizens with an understanding of why the market-liberal agenda of enclosing the world's cultural and environmental commons is ecologically unsustainable. In addition, they will then better understand the connections between the growing hostility toward our foreign policies and the perception that Western corporations and the American military are threatening the cultural commons in other regions of the world, and that this process of economic and military globalization is further enriching the elites that support American policies. It will also help to overcome the problem of ethnocentrism that has led to so many recent foreign policy mistakes. A knowledge of what is essential to sustaining the local cultural and environmental commons will also contribute to the rejuvenation of local democracy in America--leading more people to be aware of how mega-stores such as Wal-Mart undermine the face-to-face interactions, as well as the economic viability of local producers. Both are essential for strengthening the bonds of mutual support when political decisions are being voted on at the local level. Such a program of study has other benefits, such as overcoming the misconceptions that are now the cornerstones of the market-liberal policies. One of these misconceptions that would be challenged by an interdisciplinary course of study is that "man's" primary purpose in life is driven by the need to "truck, barter, and trade" --as

Adam Smith put it in one of his writings. It is important to note here that today's market liberals have ignored Smith's other writings where he makes the point that a community-centered free market system would be restrained by the patterns of moral reciprocity that exists within a face-to-face and interdependent community.

For readers who want to go beyond thinking of university reform in terms of adding a special field of study that focuses on how the different traditions of Western thought has contributed to the marginalization and silences (ignorance?) that allows the market system to further erode what remains of the cultural and environmental commons, I suggest that they read Marcus Ford's more radical proposal for reforming universities. In *Beyond the Modern University: Toward a Constructive Postmodern University* (2002), he outlines a three year program of study that is both problem and place-based, and oriented toward understanding the world-wide cultural sources of the ecological crises as well as how different cultures are attempting to live more sustainable lives. Instead of the traditional disciplines that represent themselves as the latest expression of Western progress and value neutrality, Ford makes a strong case for how courses ranging from the history of Western civilization, economics, to the creative arts can be altered in ways that enable students to understand how global forces contribute to local problems while, in some instances, providing local solutions.

Genuine reforms that address today's crises, according to Ford, requires transforming the focus of traditional university courses in ways that highlight the ideas, forms of leadership, and social movements that have contributed to more sustainable and morally coherent communities. This will require a radical shift in consciousness on the part of most faculty—from that of reinforcing the deep, largely taken-for-granted cultural assumptions that underlie the industrial/consumer-oriented culture to the forms of consciousness and values required in order to make the transition to a postmodern future. This will mean an emphasis on interdependence and mutual support rather than the acquisitive and autonomous individual, moral reciprocity and a land ethic rather than the value neutrality that assumes the progressive nature of change, differences in cultural ways of knowing rather than the representation of knowledge as objective and universally valid, rootedness in intergenerational traditions and place-based knowledge rather than the rootless and upward mobile individual, local democracy rather than the politics of

special interests and universal ideologies, and a knowledge of local traditions that need to be intergenerationally renewed as well as what needs to be reformed, an ecological way of thinking rather than cause/effect, linear, and individualized perspective that can be traced back to Rene Descartes, and so on. Because of the bureaucratic nature of large universities and the difficulty of meaningful discussions across disciplinary boundaries (as well as the problem of individual hubris) Ford's proposals are more likely to be taken seriously by faculty in small colleges where there is a tradition of cross-disciplinary discussions about how to focus on social and environmental justice issues. My proposal, which is compatible with the more radical and comprehensive reforms proposed by Ford, is more likely to be taken seriously and possibly implemented in large universities where reaching consensus requires fewer faculty.

Transforming Liberal Assumptions in Ways that Prepare for Citizenship in a Post-Industrial World.

An understanding of the diversity of the world's cultural commons, how they represent a moderating influence on the spread of an industrial, consumer dependent culture, and how students can learn to participate in the revitalization of the cultural commons of their communities, would be undermined if the key cultural assumptions that underlie both market and social justice liberals are left unchanged. The cultural assumption that individuals are autonomous decision makers, the source of values, and encounter an external world as objective observers, supports the university's approach to promoting high-status knowledge. This particular assumption is also essential to achieving the dependency on consumerism that the industrial system requires. The myth that has been translated into the educational goal of fostering autonomous individuals who create their own knowledge and values also represents all forms of intergenerational knowledge as constraints on the freedom of the individual. The supporting myth, as pointed out earlier, is that constant change is the highest expression of progress. Change, in effect, becomes the code word that legitimates ignoring and, in other ways, overturning traditions. This, of course, is an impossibility. Nevertheless, the myth remains the basis of a widely held interpretative framework that makes changes visible and makes traditions (except for holidays and birthdays) largely invisible.

The many ways in which public schools and universities reinforce the myth that intelligence is an attribute of individuals who are, through further education, moving toward a greater degree of autonomous decision making needs to be challenged by introducing students to the many ways in which they are participants in the larger ecology of cultural intelligence—which includes the flow of information exchanges between humans and other living systems, as well as the metaphorical mapping that is carried forward in the vocabulary inherited from previous environmentally uninformed generations. As mentioned before, a powerful influence on intelligence is the ecology of the languaging patterns that the individual learns to think within, and to use as the basis of interacting with others. Nearly every aspect of the vocabulary the individual learns to think in illuminates and hides—depending upon the analogies that were worked out by earlier generations and by current efforts to find new ways of understanding. Thus, the form of intelligence (which may be based on misunderstandings and other forms of inherited ignorance) of earlier generations is passed along. We can see this process of cultural reproduction in how many contemporary individuals continue to rely upon the mechanistic root metaphor that was constituted by Western scientists over three hundred years ago. These earlier patterns of thinking—that is, the analogies that were recognized as an advance over previously accepted analogies—greatly influence current ways of thinking. That some individuals may question the appropriateness of the analogies and even the root metaphors themselves indicates that language does not determine thinking; rather, it become formulaic when people become lazy and when they benefit from what is taken for granted by others.

People who deviate too far from the accepted analogies are less likely to be understood by others—a situation I have personally encountered when suggesting that language is not the culturally neutral conduit that most people assume it to be. And the general response to my arguments that President George W. Bush and his many supporters are market-liberals, and that their claim to be conservatives is an expression both of self and public deception that is based on ignorance, either draws a blank stare or a change in conversation. Few individuals know what questions to ask or how to comment further—which suggests just how powerful a tradition of formulaic thinking sets the boundaries of what can be understood. As Gregory Bateson pointed out, the

metaphorical basis of thinking serves as a map that illuminates and hides—and the introduction of new analogies that illuminates what has been hidden by the taken-for-granted analogies are often ignored or regarded as a threat.

Earlier forms of culturally-influenced intelligence are also embodied in the different forms of material culture that we interact with—the design of houses, SUVs, the layout of roads, and so forth. The material culture is also part of the ecology of communication that influences individual intelligence. The ways of thinking and values that influence the design of the oversized SUV or pickup, and the engineering that leads it to get 12 miles per gallon, communicates to others that successful people do not have to consider environmental issues as relevant. The building that has plants growing on its roof, or is covered with solar panels communicates a different message. Both reflect and reinforce different forms of cultural intelligence. The new consumer-oriented technologies such as the iPod and the digital camera also communicate a culturally specific ways of thinking and set of values. Similarly, the thousands of video cameras that now monitor people in buildings and on the streets communicate what is to be taken as normal behavior—which to be visually documented as different from what terrorist behavior is thought to be.

The point here is that everything that communicates (what Gregory Bateson referred to as “a difference which makes a difference”), which may be between plants, animals, humans, as well as other aspects of the environment, contributes to what we refer to as information. But the critical issue is how different ideologies influence the vocabulary that will be used to interpret the information that circulates within the cultural and natural systems—and between them. In effect, the vocabulary privileged by the ideology will influence what will be seen and what will be ignored. These differences in vocabulary and the deep cultural assumptions that gave rise to them also influence, as was pointed out earlier, the formulaic interpretations that people rely upon. The vocabulary of market-liberalism, and its underlying assumptions, will lead in formulaic fashion to interpreting the expansion of markets and the discovery of a technology that will be the next big thing as progress—and the adverse impact they have on the environment and human relationships will be largely ignored. The connection between language and intelligence can also be seen when the former lacks the vocabulary for

identifying both what should be conserved, and why. Other cultural languages also illuminate and hide, and carry forward powerful interpretative frameworks of understanding that lead to formulaic thinking.

In short, post-industrial individuals need to become aware that they are participants in a larger cultural ecology of intelligence—and that they need to become aware of how the language they rely upon may lead them to misread what other participants in the ecology of relationships are communicating. They also need to learn how to integrate an ecological form of intelligence (one that is oriented toward sustainable relationships) into the material culture they help to create (the design of building, cars, clothes, and so forth). The material culture thus needs to communicate how interdependent we are with other participants in the larger ecology of cultural and natural systems. Unfortunately, this way of understanding the nature of intelligence will not be learned in a psychology class. However, the foundations of this ecological way of understanding intelligence might be learned if an environmental ecologist and a cultural linguist were to co-teach a course. Most psychology classes simply reproduce the mechanistic way of thinking of the mind as like a computer and, more recently, as the product of what is encoded in the genes that regulate the electro-chemical processes occurring in different areas of the brain.

Other fundamental changes that must be introduced if we are to avoid expecting the market-liberal form of consciousness to make a successful transition to a post-industrial and ecologically sustainable lifestyle include a different understanding of tradition, and a shift from thinking of progressive politics as promoting a modern form of economic and technological development. The courses discussed earlier should provide the conceptual basis for clarifying how much of daily life is dependent upon the re-enactment of traditions that have survived over four generations. Once students become aware that the word “tradition” is as broad and complex as the word “culture” (a metaphor that is currently understood in highly reductionist ways), and that traditions are largely unrecognized because of the taken-for-granted way most of them are experienced, the next educational challenge will be to help them to recognize, given the extensive nature of modernizing traditions, that there is always the question of which traditions contribute to morally coherent and mutually supportive communities and sustainable

ecosystems—and which traditions need to be radically modified or abandoned entirely. This more complex understanding of tradition makes political decision making an ongoing process, but unlike the market and social justice way of thinking the question of what needs to be conserved becomes as important as what needs to be changed. Again, it needs to be emphasized that an ecological form of intelligence, rather than the mythic individual-centered intelligence, needs to guide this process of affirming what is sustainable and what needs to undergo change.

Another shift in thinking will also be required, and again the refocusing of traditional courses in ways that help to expand the students' understanding of the commons will provide the necessary background knowledge. That is, students need to understand how different technologies transform the cultures they are introduced into—including the transformations that have been brought about in our culture as new technologies, ranging from computers to automated machines, have been introduced. Too often a technology such as a computer has overturned traditions—with few people recognizing the importance of what has been lost until it is too late. The loss of privacy is a prime example. But computers, while enabling us to do many useful things more quickly and effectively, have also undermined even further the traditions based on face-to-face communication. Unfortunately, the computer has been so effective in socializing its users to accept computer-mediated communication as what is normal that many young people are unable to recognize the importance of face-to-face communication. The key point is that a post-industrial form of consciousness must be able to understand what a technology amplifies in terms of cultural patterns and relationships, and what it marginalizes or eliminates entirely. And this holds for members of non-Western cultures that may have been indoctrinated with the Western myth that technology is both culturally neutral and, at the same time, the expression of progress. Thus, the need is for the non-culturally neutral nature of technology to be a theme that is explored in all of the courses in the cultural and environmental commons degree program. Hearing a single explanation of how to understand the non-neutrality of technology, even a well developed one, is not enough—as students have already encountered thousands of examples and explanations that reinforce the cultural myth that a technology is simply a tool—and a progressive one at that.

Strategies for Initiating Reforms Centered on the Cultural and Environmental Commons

While a healthy cultural commons has a proven record of success in enabling cultures in different parts of the world, and at different times in history, to live less consumer dependent lives, current strategies for affecting the fundamental curricular reforms within universities do not yet have a record of success. The networking of environmentally oriented faculty has been useful in helping to establish degree programs in environmental studies and sub-specializations within other disciplines. Networking has also led to faculty in many disciplines to adding environmental issues to their established courses. But these successes are partly undermined by the way the students' education is segmented into a number of distinct areas of inquiry that are governed more by the shifting priorities within the disciplines than by an effort to help students develop a broad understanding of how and why it is important to live less consumer dependent lives.

What conceptual coherence there is between courses is largely a matter of the deep cultural assumptions that most of them share in common. Unfortunately, as pointed out before, these assumptions about the individual as an autonomous thinker (who must cite the source of borrowed ideas), change as the linear expression of progress, an anthropocentric world, a hubris driven ethnocentrism, and a conduit view of language, make it unnecessary to recognize the cultural nature of intelligence. While the explicit course content may differ, the underlying deep cultural assumptions that the professors take-for-granted continue to reinforce among students a taken-for-granted way of thinking of the industrial culture that has now reached a critical tipping point. What can be said for certain is that the networking of environmentally oriented faculty has not succeeded in developing an undergraduate or graduate program of study that provides an interdisciplinary understanding of the complex forces that historically and are currently undermining both the cultural and environmental commons, as well as an understanding of how the cultural commons represents a sustainable alternative to the unsustainable industrial culture that market-iberals are promoting in the name of progress.

In the Culture of Denial, I suggest that because of the hierarchical organization of universities that determines the allocation of resources, university presidents need to

provide leadership by allocating extra resources in ways that will encourage the development of programs of study that address the cultural roots of the ecological crisis. At that time the evidence of global warming was less visible than it is now, and corporations were actively funding scientists who were willing to dispute the evidence that the early scientific warnings were based upon. Many corporations are now taking global warming seriously by promoting research in alternative sources of energy. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that university presidents are willing to go much beyond signing their names to documents that commit universities to address environmental issues—which is little more than a ritualized gesture in the direction of political correctness. Urging faculty to declare a moratorium on teaching courses that reinforce the same deep cultural assumptions that underlie the industrial culture that is a major contributor to global warming, and to use the moratorium to rethink the university's responsibility for promoting a more ecologically responsible citizen, appears to be beyond the current ability of university presidents and deans of departments to recognize that we have reached a tipping point that other cultures have ignored—with the results that Diamond documents in his recent book, Collapse. The difference between cultures such as the Anasazi, Mayan, and the Norse outposts in Greenland that could not develop the form of intelligence that would enable them to live within the limits and possibilities of their habit, and our current situation, is that the further degradation of the world's cultural and environmental commons will be an all-encompassing form of collapse.

It seems, however, that fund-raising and ensuring that the alumni can take pride in a winning team as they arrive at the university's sports venues in oversize SUVs and cars that communicate that their university education paid off big-time, now consume most of the time and energy of university presidents. They seem indifferent to making the hard decisions by asking which programs and departments should be eliminated, thus freeing up funds for a degree program that addresses the cultural changes that contribute to our prospects of reversing the trend line that indicate that modern cultures are exceeding the sustaining capacity of natural systems. Their lack of leadership can also be seen in their failure to educate the alumni that spending millions of dollars on the salaries of winning

coaches and the building of new stadiums represent a gross misplacement of what should be the highest university priority in this era of global warming.

Given the lack of leadership at the top, as well as the market and social justice liberalism that characterize the thinking of most academic deans (both of which foster the myopia with regard to the environmental crises that is so widespread among the university graduates that support President George W. Bush), faculty networking seems to be the only approach that might lead to the curricular reforms suggested here. But unlike the networking I have participated in at several universities, and observed at a number of other universities, a more successful approach requires a systematic approach to educating the faculty about how the cultural commons represent a proven alternative to the further expansion of the industrial, consumer-dependent culture that is increasing the rate of environmental degradation and the spread of poverty. That is, instead of the networking being based on faculty who integrate environmental issues into their traditional disciplinary concerns, which creates a patchwork of perspectives and degrees of emphasis that still reinforce the deep cultural assumptions that are the basis of modernity, it would be more effective to start with educating the faculty about the nature, importance, and threats to the cultural and environmental commons. My experience is that few faculty, even environmentally oriented faculty, understand the cultural commons—and their understanding of the environmental commons too often has been influenced by the misconceptions that Garrett Hardin reproduced in his famous article, “The Tragedy of the Commons.”

A possible approach to expanding the faculty’s understanding of the interconnections between the cultural and environmental commons, and how the modern cultural assumptions that are reinforced at a taken-for-granted level contribute to the further enclosure of both commons—and to the deepening ecological crises, would be for a department to sponsor a seminar for faculty that addresses the complex nature of the commons and how they are being enclosed. With this shared background of understanding the faculty discussions can then move to the next stage of reform, and that would be to identify how existing courses can be reconceptualized in ways that were suggested in the earlier discussion of a degree program based on an interdisciplinary approach to revitalizing the cultural and environmental commons. As faculty begin to

recognize that their discipline, when framed by a different set of questions, has a great deal to offer to an understanding of the history and current importance of the cultural commons, they are more likely to give their support to a degree program of study. When faculty do not have a shared understanding of the cultural and environmental commons, the exchange of ideas at the networking sessions seldom go much beyond ideas being bounced around that reflect an add-on way of thinking about introducing students to environmental issues. As I suggested before, the minority of university graduates that have taken a course or two that address environmental issues, or have pursued an entire degree in environmental studies that has a heavy emphasis on a scientific perspective, seldom have any understanding of the nature and importance of the cultural commons.

Many colleges already have programs that place students in community renewal projects. These programs need to be incorporated as part of a degree program of study that is focused on the renewal of the cultural commons. The special contribution of involving students in community renewal projects is that it would help to ensure that what is learned in the interdisciplinary courses does not become abstract and thus irrelevant to learning how to participate in revitalizing the cultural commons. At the same time, the interdisciplinary knowledge would help students to engage in community action projects with a broader understanding of the economics and politics of enclosure, as well as how strengthening the mutual support systems in the community contribute to long-term ecological sustainability.

Another approach to educational reform would be to obtain financial support from a foundation that understands the importance of establishing a model degree program that combines an interdisciplinary study of the cultural and environmental commons, community-based experiences for students in the degree program, curriculum development, and for mentoring faculty in how to recognize the cultural assumptions that continue to undermine the commons. Tens of millions of dollars are given to universities to establish new academic programs, to strengthen existing ones, and to build new sports facilities. Now that it is becoming more widely recognized that the world's natural systems are undergoing fundamental changes as a result of human activity, perhaps the administrators of a foundation will realize that reforming university education in a way that takes account of the proven alternatives to the environmentally destructive drive to

expand markets should be given the highest priority. They may also recognize that the slippery political slope that many past university graduates mistake as the road to progress requires the funding of educational reforms that strengthen the traditions of local democracy and cultural pluralism.

Chapter 6 The Slippery Slope: Will We Be Too Late In Recognizing Where It Leads?

Throughout the previous chapters examples have been given of how leading advocates of market-liberalism, as well as their fundamentalist Christian supporters, are attempting to gain control of all branches of government—at both the state and federal levels. Gaining a majority of judges on the Supreme Court who are adherents of the idea of “original intent” of the authors of the Constitution represents the keystone that will bring all three branches of government in line with the market-liberal ideology that will represent one of the strangest symbiotic political relationships in American history. That is, the further elimination of restraints on corporations to turn what remains of the cultural and environmental commons into the frenzied short-term life of commodities, along with the growing number of people being pushed below the poverty line (38 million at the last count), will create the social chaos that fundamentalist Christians will interpret as a sign that the time of judgment and salvation is near. As both the market-liberal and Christian fundamentalists ignore differences in cultures, and instead view them as at different stages in a linear process of modern development, their symbiotic ideologies serve as the guidelines for bringing the entire world under their rule. To achieve this goal, President George W. Bush, as well as advisors such as Carl Rove and Grover Norquist, must first eliminate what remains of political opposition in this country—which Norquist has called “the enemy.” However, as long as the three branches of the federal government are under the influence of market-liberal thinking and fundamentalist Christian theology, the existence of critics that have already been demonized and thus further marginalized by being labeled as “liberals” and “leftists” may be tolerated. For the time being at least, they serve as the internal threat that helps to strengthen the “resolve” of president and his supporters. But as the fundamentalist Christians continually remind us, there will be a time of judgment in the near future—when, to use President Bush’s political categories, the enemies will have to be separated from the friends.

The fundamentalist and many evangelical Christians not only share the political goal of a one-party system of government, but also share the idea with the majority of members of Congress, the President, and Supreme Court Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas that they are carrying out the will of God. Recall that President Bush was in “personal communication” with God about invading Iraq, and thus claimed to be carrying out the will of God. And it was an earlier message from God that led him to seek the Presidency. Fundamentalist Christians such as Pat Robertson have also invoked the will of God to justify a one-party system of government. In The Secret Kingdom (1982), Robertson wrote that “It is clear that God is saying, ‘I gave man dominion over the earth, but he lost it. Now I desire sons and daughters who will in My name exercise dominion over the earth and will subdue Satan, the unruly, and the rebellious. Take back My world from those who would loot it and abuse it. Rule as I would rule.” (p. 201) There is no ambiguity in this statement about the role that fundamentalist Christians are to play in eliminating the sins of moral relativism, secular humanism, and other social deviations that do not fit with the re-establishment of their interpretation of God’s government. As Robertson explained on the May 1st, 1986 700 television program, “He wants His people to reign and rule for Him... I’m (God) going to let you (His chosen people) redeem society.”

This vision of transforming the American society, including its political system, into an authoritarian theocracy shares many of the characteristics of the theocracy that many fundamentalists Muslims want to reestablish in the Islamic regions of the world. Unfortunately, the fundamentalist Christian version has now become more than a matter of Sunday sermons. The skilful use of electronic media and vast amounts of money have led to success in electing politicians that believe that the purpose of government is to carry out the economic prescriptions laid out in Deuteronomy 28 where those that adhere to God’s voice will experience unending abundance, while those that do not follow the will of God are destined to be cursed “in the city,” “in the field,” in “thy basket and store,” and in “thy body.”

The recent political successes in undermining a viable two-party system by the market and religious fundamentalists rests on more than the Biblical passages that represent, according to the fundamentalist Christians, the vengeful nature of God. The nearly 400 million dollars now spent yearly in support of market-liberal think tanks (e.g. the American Enterprise Institute, the CATO Institute, The Hoover Foundation, etc.), as well as the networking

organizations that link together political activists from local to national level organizations, are providing the ideas and tactics for achieving the goal of a one-party political system.

Corporate lobbyists that control the flow of money essential to the re-election of market-liberal and fundamentalist Christian oriented members of Congress are also an essential part of the winning political formula.

As the fundamentalist-controlled Republican Party has achieved the successes that now enable Congress and the White House to reverse the gains in social justice and environmental protection gained over recent years, and is now on the verge of erasing the other political gains that were unimagined by the men who wrote the Constitution, it is time to acknowledge that our political system is now exhibiting many of the characteristics of a theocracy where the name of God is being invoked to justify teaching “intelligent design” along with the theory of evolution, to justify overturning *Roe vs. Wade*, to prevent marriage among gay partners, to justify pre-emptive wars and the creation of a hyper-state of patriotism. Given the forms of authoritarianism being promoted by market and religious fundamentalists, the important question today is: “How does a theocracy today differ from a fascist society?” As the word “fascism” is often associated with the horrendous crimes of the National Socialists in Hitler’s Germany, and not with how it developed in such countries as Great Britain, Norway, Hungary, Spain, Italy, France, and Chile, it is necessary to reiterate observations made in earlier chapters about how far down the slippery slope we have traveled. It’s not that many of the anti-democratic practices are new to American politics. Rather, it is today’s scale of anti-democratic practices, and how they are justified by nearly 40 percent of the voters who are either market-liberal or religious fundamentalists (or a combination of both) that makes the question so urgent.

Under the category of moral accountability, we find that the President and the majority of members in Congress have now linked the waving of the flag and using the language of patriotism in ways that make criticism of the government appear as a threat to national security. The media, for its part, has now made dissent largely invisible, just as it creates the image of a president as always surrounded by flag waving middle class supporters. Perhaps more important is the way in which President George W. Bush and his supporters have succeeded in reframing the public’s response to how moral and immoral political behavior are now understood by a large segment of Americans. Pre-emptive wars have been

enthusiastically accepted in the past by a large segment of the public, but in this era of fundamentalist Christian fervor and self-righteousness it is surprising that the lies and misrepresentations on the part of the government have been so widely overlooked. The transformation of information and facts into pro-government propaganda, which reporters and news commentators have been complicit in, is also not new to American political life. But again, the scale of the effort, and the world-wide consequences, make it an especially troubling development that has largely escaped criticism. Until recently, the majority of the public was indifferent to being lied to, even though the lies lead to the death of American and Iraqi women and men, and the distortion of what our national priorities should be. In the case of Iraq, the number of civilian deaths caused by our pre-emptive war, the loss of the rights of Iraqi women due to the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalists, the scale of corruption on the part of American corporations and Iraqi officials, the growing influence of Iran that threatens to turn Iraq into a client state, and the growing threat of civil war, seem to be a matter of indifference to the thirty to forty percent of the voters that continue to support President Bush's policies. Perhaps the strongest evidence that we have traveled well down the slippery slope of moral and political indifference is that neither the president nor his advisors have been held accountable for their hubris, their ignorance of Iraqi's many cultural groups, their incompetent handling of the war effort, and the lies that ignited such patriotic fervor for this pre-emptive war.

But there are other practices supported by the majority of Congress, the President, and his base of support among market-liberals and fundamentalist Christians, that are equally disturbing. The shipping of terrorist suspects (a term that can easily be expanded to include political dissidents) off to foreign countries where they will be tortured in order to extract information, does not seem to raise concerns among Bush supporters. In addition to the practice of "rendition," the extension of the Patriot Act, the justification for ignoring the Geneva Convention on the grounds that it is outdated, and the imprisonment of individuals that have not been charged with a specific crime now seem to be accepted by a frightening number of citizens and politicians as a necessary part of life in a patriotic America.

In considering how far down the slippery slope that leads away from a two or more party political system, it is necessary to recall that the last two elections were marked by widespread election fraud. Though this is not new to the history of American politics, the miscounting of votes, the use of electronic voting machines that do not leave a paper trail, and

the efforts to prevent minority groups from voting, made the difference in the last two presidential elections. To reiterate, the outcome of these two elections has resulted in reversing the gains made in the areas of environmental legislation, worker rights, health care, education, housing and other benefits for the poor—which have been matched (following the formula laid out in Deuteronomy 28) by giving massive tax relief to the wealthy and to corporations. A review of changes in the political landscape since the Clinton Presidency must also include the increasing prominence that the Federalist Society now enjoys within the legal community—and as the darling of fundamentalist Christians. As mentioned earlier, powerful members of the Federalist Society were students of Leo Strauss—the University of Chicago political theorists who argued that an elite should rule society, that the religion of the masses would fully occupy their attention, that the rulers of society should give only the appearance of acting in the public interest, and that the use of lies may be necessary to carrying out of government policies. Strauss, his students and his Federalist Society followers—John Ashcroft, Robert Bork, Clarence Thomas, and Antonin Scalia, among others—are reversing the main principle of a democracy when they maintain that the original intent of the men who wrote the constitution must take precedent over the consensus on social justice issues that the society has reached over the past two hundred years of political debate and decision making. In effect, the democratic process that has led to gains in the areas of privacy rights, affirmative action, and the regulatory role of government in curbing abuses in the work place and the environment is to be set aside.

A deeply disturbing example of anti-democratic thinking by a man that the market-liberals and Christian fundamentalists have elevated to one of the most powerful positions in American society can be found in the article that was adapted from the speech that Scalia gave at a conference on Religion and Public Life, held at the University of Chicago Divinity School and sponsored by the Pew Foundation. In “God’s Justice and Ours” Scalia explains the current relevance of St. Paul’s message on how the authority of government must be understood. To quote Scalia, “the core of his (St Paul’s) message is that government—however you want to limit the concept—derives its moral authority from God. It is the ‘minister of God’ with powers to ‘revenge,’ ‘to execute wrath.” There could be no broader justification for political decisions that further impoverish the already poor, that lead to the imprisonment of critics of the government, that give a free-hand to corporations to further

exploit the environment, and that broadens the definition of terrorism to include anyone that challenges the political system that [supposedly] represents the will of God. The problem, which should be obvious to even a person of average intelligence, is that the nature of God's wrath has to be interpreted by humans who will bring all of their prejudices, misconceptions, and will to power to their interpretation. In effect Scalia's interpretation of the source of the government's authority provides the ultimate justification for overturning our democratic institutions—and for abandoning the achievements in the area of social justice that have been made over the last two hundred years.

Ironically, the scientists that have crossed the line that divides science from scientism have inadvertently provided a seemingly scientific explanation for why the market-liberals are destined to succeed while their pro-democratic and social-justice critics become “extinct”—to stay with a metaphor derived from the theory of evolution. Scientists such as E. O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Hans Moravec, as well as the philosopher of science, Daniel C. Dennett, have turned the theory of evolution into an ideology that supposedly explains which cultural “memes” (e.g., ideas, values, corporations, indigenous cultures, weapon systems, etc.) will be selected for survival in a world of competing memes. This extension of the explanatory power of natural selection represents Nature as selecting which memes will pass their memes to future generations—just as Nature selects which genes will be passed on to future generations. That is, by extending the theory of natural selection to include which cultures will be selected for survival, as well as which institutions and practices within a culture, these scientists have provided an explanation for why the memes of such competitive giants as Wal-Mart and Halliburton are better adapted than the memes that constitute local economic practices and the values of a more socially-just society. In effect, these scientists who scoff at the theory of intelligent design end up providing a second basis of support that complements the fundamentalist Christian's argument that God selects the strongest believers to survive and prosper. The result is that both explanatory frameworks either represent the weak and poor as being eliminated either by God's will or by the process of natural selection.

Other parts of the infrastructure required for the establishment of a fundamentalist theocracy represent works-in-progress. The market-liberal students who mistakenly identify themselves as conservatives are being organized by market-liberal think tanks for the purpose of identifying and challenging the so-called liberal professors who are supposedly substituting

their ideology for education. A colleague at a Northwest university recently recounted his experience of a woman student in his business management class telling him at the end of the class that she was there for the purpose of documenting the liberal ideas that he was promoting. If she had even the most basic understanding of the ideas and values that are central to what is taught in a business management class, she might have realized that her “conservatism” is based on many of the same cultural assumptions that are taken-for-granted in a business class. The more important point is that the practice of having students monitor whether the professor’s presentations meet the politically correct standards of the market-liberal and Christian fundamentalists is a practice found in police states, and not in a democracy. And certainly not in a university where the exchange of ideas and the questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions are one of its central purposes. The other goal of these faux conservative students is to convert other students to their anti-democratic ideology.

The technological infrastructure for winning the hearts and minds of the older population is well-advanced in its development. There are 6 national television networks and nearly 2000 radio stations that project on a daily basis into millions of homes the fundamentalist Christian message. Fox Television, as well as a number of Bush-oriented political pundits provide the viewing public with the market-liberal interpretation of the news and commentary. Millions of Americans chose to be totally reliant on these media for their understanding of domestic and foreign policy issues. Other segments of society, such as the military, are also being infiltrated by fundamentalists. Recently it has been observed that there is an extraordinary large percentage of the fundamentalist and evangelical Christians in the Chaplain Corp of the armed services. Infiltrating the army is particularly important for the simple reason that if the fundamentalists achieve sufficient power to take the next step in establishing themselves as the regents of God’s government, they will need to have a military force that is aligned with their religious beliefs. This military/police force will be necessary for executing “God’s wrath” on gays, women who exercise their reproductive rights, people that think critically about the mal-distribution of wealth and power in society, workers in the environmental and revitalization of the cultural commons movements, and so forth. Already, the technological infrastructure is in place that will enable the police, working in hand with God’s regents on earth, to keep nearly every aspect of peoples’ behavior keep under constant surveillance —including the ideas and values they express. Even the suffering and dislocations

caused by the environmental impact of the industrial/consumer dependent culture serve to reinforce the certainties of the fundamentalist Christians about the chaos and destruction that must precede God's final intervention. The more widespread the suffering and chaos the sooner will come the Rapture and the triumph of the Godly over the un-Godly.

Are We Nearing the End of the Slippery Slope? Shared Characteristics Between a Theocracy and Fascism

Aside from the early Puritans and several other religious groups whose system of governance shared many of the characteristics of a theocracy, most Americans, if they think about it at all, associate a theocracy with the militant and reactionary Islamic countries—such as the Taliban of Afghanistan and the mullahs that now rule Iran. And if the word “fascism” should come up in a conversation, most Americans associate it with the anti-Semitism and other horrors of Hitler's regime in Germany. What is most often overlooked is that Hitler's National Socialism represented just one form of fascism, and that between the two world wars fascism took many forms in countries across Western Europe. Also overlooked is that fascism is re-emerging with varying degrees of strength in France, Germany, Norway, Austria, Netherlands, and Russia. The spread of poverty and economic dislocations caused by globalization, anti-immigration sentiment, and a spreading desire for the state to enforce law, order, and traditional morality are the issues that are leading people in these countries to support more authoritarian governments. The appeal of fascism in these countries varies—so far, with no fascist party gaining real political power. As an aside, it is interesting to note that the agenda of the fascist Austrian Freedom Party includes deregulating business, a flat tax of twenty-three percent, and a radical cut-back in the Austrian civil service. These reforms are very similar to what is being considered by the republican-controlled Congress and White House.

Given the efforts of market-liberal and religious fundamentalists to replace a multi-party democracy, an independent Supreme Court, and the system of checks and balances between the three main branches of government, with a system of government and guiding ideology that has many of the characteristics of an emerging theocracy, it is necessary to ask whether such a theocracy can also be understood as yet another expression of a fascist regime? The question is not as problematic as may seem at first glance. The fascist regimes that came

to power in Europe between the two world wars can be viewed as responses to the social crises of the times: economic collapse, failure of competing political parties to reach a consensus on a unifying and viable plan of action, concern that the forces of moral decadence were contributing to the decline of the nation, continuing struggle between modern, pro-democracy forces and reactionary religious institutions and traditions, and a rising sense of nationalism. These social problems seemed beyond what individuals and social institutions could successfully address. Thus the need to turn to an all-powerful central government.

A comparison with the emergence of fascism in European countries between the two wars and the slippery slope we now seem to be moving down illumines several parallel developments. While the authoritarian regimes overturned democratic institutions, including an independent judiciary, after coming to power, they all came to power through a weakened democratic process—a fact that is generally overlooked. A second characteristic of European fascist regimes that has an interesting parallel with the growing political climate in America is that they engaged in the friend/enemy politics that Schmitt described. To recall Schmitt's understanding of the Achilles Heel of democratic systems of government that face multiple crises: the unending debate between liberal politicians is unable to deal with national situations that require the friend/enemy distinctions essential to ensuring the survival of the nation. In defeating the enemy without, it is necessary to view the people who oppose the authority of the national government as the internal enemy. Only the elite that know the will of God, and grasp the true destiny and greatness of the nation, are capable of knowing the external enemy and the enemy within that challenges their authority to govern.

That the fundamentalist Christians, corporate interests, and President Bush (and his large base of supporters) want to dismantle our democratic institutions is now beyond question. Whether they, and the largely passive opposition to his domestic and foreign policies, are able to discern the system of government that lies at the end of the slippery slope is debatable. If the end of the slippery slope involves a system of government that has most of the characteristics of a fascist regime, it is unlikely to be given any of the political labels that were adopted in European countries—and in Chile. Indeed, if President Bush and his advisors give a label to their new God and market-directed system of government it is likely to mean the opposite of what the words suggest to the ordinary citizen. Just as the Austrian fascist party included the word freedom in its label, what emerges from our travel down a similar political

road is likely to involve the same Orwellian use of language. Perhaps the republican label will be dropped in favor of the “Moral Freedom Party” or the “Progressive Christian Party.”

We have not yet reached the end of the slippery slope. However, if we do reach it there are no guarantees that the opposition may be so worn down and exhausted that a fascist government is able to emerge. Perhaps the public will be more concerned with the price of gasoline than with the further centralization of governmental power. Given our state of political betwixt and between, it would be useful to consider the fourteen characteristics of fascism that Lawrence Britt identified as being shared by fascist regimes ranging from Germany, Italy, Chile, Spain, and Indonesia. As only the characteristics will be listed here, it is suggested that the reader go to Britt’s article, “Fascism Anyone?” (which can be found on Google) as he lists the policies of the Bush administration that fit under each of the fourteen characteristics of fascism. It is a very long list indeed! The other reason for listing the characteristics of fascism is that the low status that learning about contemporary ideologies has in political science departments leaves most students as uninformed about fascism as they are about the ideas and assumptions that underlie conservatism and liberalism. Without this knowledge they might actually believe that the agenda of the “Moral Freedom Party” is to ensure that individuals are free to chose their own moral values. Only the market and religious fundamentalists would know that it refers to the freedom of the government to impose its moral values on the people—and to be the agents that carry out God’s wrath on those who dissent.

Identifying Characteristics of Fascism

- 1). Powerful and Continuing Nationalism: Fascist regimes tend to make constant use of mottos, slogans, symbols, songs, and other paraphernalia. Flags are seen everywhere, as are flag symbols on clothing and in public displays.

- 2). Disdain for the Recognition of Human Rights: Because of fear of enemies and the need for security, the people in fascist regimes are persuaded that human rights can be ignored in certain cases because of “need.” THE PEOPLE tend to look the other way or even approve the torture, summary executions, assassinations, long incarcerations of prisoners, etc.

- 3). Identification of Enemies/Scapegoats as a Unifying Cause: The people are rallied into a patriotic frenzy over the need to eliminate a perceived common threat or foe: racial, ethnic or religious minorities; liberals; communists, socialists, terrorists, etc.

- 4). Supremacy of the Military: Even when there are widespread domestic problems, the military is given a disproportionate amount of government funding, and the domestic agenda is neglected. Soldiers and military services are glamorized.

- 5). Rampant Sexism: The governments of fascist nations tend to be almost exclusively male-dominated. Under fascism, traditional gender roles are made more rigid. Opposition to abortion is high, as is homophobia and anti-gay legislation and national policy.

- 6). Controlled Mass Media: Sometimes the media is directly controlled by the government, but in other cases, the media is indirectly controlled by government regulation, or sympathetic media spokespeople and executives. Censorship, especially in the time of war, is very common.

- 7). Obsession with National Security: Fear is used as a motivational tool by government over the masses.

- 8). Religion and Government are Intertwined: Governments in fascist nations tend to use the common religion within the nation as a tool to manipulate public opinion. Religious rhetoric and terminology are common from government leaders, even when the major tenets of the religion are diametrically opposed to the government's policies or actions.

- 9). Corporate Power is Protected: The industrial and business aristocracy of a fascist nation are often the ones who put government leaders into power, creating a mutually beneficial business/government relationship and power elite.

- 10) Labor Power is Suppressed: Because the organizing power of labor is the only real threat to a fascist government, labor unions are either eliminated entirely, or are severely suppressed.

11). Disdain for Intellectuals and the Arts: Fascist nations tend to promote and tolerate open hostility to higher education, and academia. It is not uncommon for professors and other academics to be censored or even arrested. Free expression in the arts is openly attacked, and governments often refuse to fund the arts.

12). Obsession with Crime and Punishment: Under fascist regimes, the police are given almost limitless power to enforce laws. The people are often willing to overlook police abuses and even forego civil liberties in the name of patriotism. There is often a national police force with virtually unlimited power.

13). Rampant Cronyism and Corruption: Fascist regimes always are governed by groups of friends and associates who appoint each other to government positions and use governmental power and authority to protect their friends from accountability. It is not uncommon in fascist regimes for national resources and even treasures to be appropriated or even outright stolen by government leaders.

14). Fraudulent Elections: Sometimes elections in fascist nations are a complete sham. Other times elections are manipulated by smear campaigns against or even assassinations of opposition candidates, use of legislation to control voting numbers or political boundaries, and manipulation of the media. Fascist nations also typically use their judiciaries to manipulate or control elections.

Britt ends the list of the characteristics of fascism with the question: “If Mussolini defines fascism as the merger of corporate and government power’ what does that make the Republican Party?”

Recent advances in the development and widespread use of surveillance technologies by the federal government should also be added to the list of fundamental changes that alters the traditional relationship between citizens and government. The data collected by the National Security Agency on millions of people’s phone calls, as well as the growing use of government data banks that hold information on people’s DNA, travel, medical records, and

other aspects of their daily lives, represent the increasing power that government has over its citizens that at one time it was supposed to represent. In both fascist regimes, and in a theocracy, total surveillance leads to two developments that increase control over people's lives. First, it fulfills the original intent of the earlier panoptican system of control proposed for use in prison systems by Jeremy Bentham. Individuals in this system, in knowing they are under constant observation, internalize the authority's standards of correct behavior as the basis of self-regulation. Secondly, constant surveillance of what meets the government's code of what constitutes correct behavior means a basic shift that leaves citizens without a voice in decisions about what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate social behavior. In this system, the government can criminalize behaviors and imprison people on the basis of what it defines as threatening the security of the government—which it will represent as acting in the interests of the people's freedom, security, and the preservation of morality.

Listing the characteristics of fascism was not done only out of personal concern about the recent consolidation of political power on the part of the market-liberals and the fundamentalist Christians. My personal views are not nearly as important as those of Fritz Stern, a prominent historian that fled Germany in the nineteen-thirties. Comparing the political developments that led to the National Socialists coming to power with recent political developments in this country, Professor Stern stated that "I worry about the immediate future of the United States." The basis of his concern is summed up in his account of how religion was interwoven as part of a mass movement that, as Friedrich von Weiszaecker (a German Nobel laureate in physics) recalled as like "the outpouring of the Holy Spirit." Writing in the May-June, 2005 issue of Foreign Affairs, Professor Stern describes the key features of how the fascists won mass support. His description brings out too many similarities with our current political situation to be dismissed on the grounds that it could not happen here. Looking back on the political developments that he just managed to escape, he notes that

People were enthralled by the Nazis' cunning transposition of politics into carefully stated pageantry, into a flag-waving martial Mass. At solemn moments, the National Socialists would shift from the pseudoreligious invocation of Providence to traditional Christian forms. In his first radio address to the German people, Hitler declared, "The national government will preserve and defend those basic principle on which our nation has been built up. They regard Christianity as the foundation of our national morality

and the family as the basis of national life.’ ...Churchmen, [Stern continues] especially Protestant clergy, shared his (Hitler’s) hostility toward the liberal-secular state and its defenders; they were also filled with anti-Semitic beliefs, although with some heroic exceptions.

If instead of anti-Semitism, the churchmen had been filled hatred for gays, secular humanists, and proponents of evolution, perhaps the comparison between the early stages of the German’s descent down the slippery slope and our own situation would be clearer, and a more compelling reminder of the forces that can only achieve their goals by overturning our democratic institutions. In actuality, the Nazi also targeted the gays for extermination. It’s also important to note that the fundamentalist Christian’s think that God’s plan for the Jews is that they will either be converted to Christianity or be destroyed at the time of the Rapture. Only they know what God has in mind for the gays; and they stand ready to carry out God’s wrath on those that live in a state of sin.

Britt’s list of characteristics of fascism, as well as Professor Stern’s summary of events in nineteen-thirty Germany, bring us back to the question that was raised in earlier chapters: namely, “What is there about an American university education that enables so many university graduates to make a seamless transition from the classroom to collaborating with fundamentalist Christians in supporting President George W. Bush’s administration—and to being part of the nearly forty percent of the voters that still support his policies? One observation that will hold up if sociologists were to use this question as the basis of a research project is that few university graduates are knowledgeable about the characteristics of fascist governments. And in not being knowledgeable, they are like the frog that does not jump to safety as the temperature of the water rises. In addition to a university education that fails to provide students with a comparative understanding of what separates a democratic from a fascist regime, as well as a knowledge of how fascist regimes come to power through a democratic process that they help to degrade, there are few Bush supporters that read the newspapers and magazines that provide an in-depth analysis of the political and economic forces that are influencing the formation of domestic and foreign policies.

The president’s hard core of supporters and advisors simply refuse to consider the ways in which the special relationship between the White House, the Pentagon, corporations such as Halliburton, Bechtel, and the Carlyle Group benefit from the war in Iraq. And they seem

equally indifferent to the way in which scientific studies of environmental changes are manipulated and censored for political purposes. Without an understanding of the characteristics of a genuine form of Burkean and environmental conservatism, the differences between market and social justice liberalism, and the ways in which the goal of the theocracy that the fundamentalist Christians are working to achieve corresponds to a home-grown form of fascism, the policies of the Bush administration will remain conceptually disconnected from the larger pattern of a progressively weakened democracy.

The Bush administration's record on human rights, as well as the fundamentalist Christians' categories for determining whose human rights are to be protected (those who declare Jesus as their savior) and those who are destined for everlasting punishment (who have no standing in terms of human rights) raise an important question about what lies ahead if the fundamentalist market-liberals and Christians gain control of all three branches of the federal government. What will be done with the people who fit into the second of Bush's categories of either "being for us or against us"? And what is to be done with the people that resist living by the fundamentalist Christians' interpretation of the word of God? The Bush record on protecting human rights suggests that Americans are capable again, as was demonstrated in the violence directed toward indigenous cultures, African Americans, and other ethnic groups in the past, of reverting to violence in treating people perceived as the enemy of society. We need to constantly remind ourselves that his record includes the outsourcing of torture through the practice of rendition, the cutting of aid to countries that support the World Criminal Court, tolerating the torture and the killing of detainees in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the use of a concentration camp for the indefinite holding of prisoners.

One can only wonder about the fate of the people that continue to live outside the new legal framework that will be put in place by a Supreme Court that adheres to the doctrine of "original intent." People that continue to promote a woman's right to an abortion, to work for affirmative action, to resist corporate abuse of the environment, to work for the rights of the poor and marginalized, will all be challenging the laws of those that claim to be God's regents until the Second Coming. And what is to be the fate of gays, feminists, and other people who challenge the policies of the government? The New English Bible version of Romans 13 is clear about the power that God's regents will have over the lives of all Americans—and the lives of people living in foreign countries.

Every person must submit to the supreme authorities. There is no authority but by act of God, and existing authorities are instituted by him; consequently anyone who rebels against authority is resisting a divine institution, and those who so resist have themselves to thank for the punishment they will receive. For government, a terror to crime, has no terror for good behavior. You wish to have no fear of authorities? Then continue to do right and you will have their approval, for they are God's agents working for your good. But if you do wrong, then you will have cause to fear them; it is not for nothing that they hold the power of the sword, for they are God's agents of punishment, for retribution of the offender. That is why you are obliged to submit. It is an obligation imposed not merely by fear of retribution but by conscience. That is also why you pay taxes. The authorities are in God's service and to these duties they devote their energies.

This is a statement about the foundations of government that both the Islamic and Christian religious fundamentalists now take for granted. And it can be used to justify either a theocracy or a fascist society—depending upon whether the fundamentalist Christians or market-liberals take the lead in establishing the new social order. Regardless of whether it's the fundamentalist Christians that fill the voting booths or the corporate money that ensures that the market-liberal fundamentalists will control all three branches of government, the Western tradition of individual rights and the democratic process will be reversed again—as happened in European countries following the First World War. With the world-wide ecological crisis having an increasingly direct impact on daily life, which was not part of the experience following the defeat of fascism during World War II, it may be even more difficult to reverse the current political path we now are moving down. The various dimensions of the ecological crisis—violent hurricanes, lack of rainfall and thus the withering of crops, disappearance of viable fisheries, rising oceans, and so forth—will be interpreted, as was the case of Katrina's impact on the gulf states, as a sign of God's revenge for the ungodly behavior of the people of the region. In effect, the ecological crisis will likely strengthen the resolve of both the market-liberal and Christian fundamentalists to continue working for the establishment of an authoritarian system of government—for differing yet complementary reasons. Profits for the corporation and their paid representatives in government, and eternal salvation for the regents of God—as well as the earthly profits they seem ever ready to accept as God's chosen people.

Will Universities Prove Carl Schmitt's Judgment About Liberals to be Wrong?

It is necessary here to recall a central part of Schmitt's justification of an authoritarian government that perceives itself as under threat from both external and internal enemies. His main criticism of a liberal system of decision-making is that it is too prone to endless debates and to moral relativism. With liberals raising and arguing different issues, decisive political action becomes nearly impossible. Compromise and negotiation, which are also key features of liberal democracies, further limit the government's ability to act quickly when under threat. A more decisive form of government, which for Schmitt was an authoritarian one, needs to reduce politics to the basic distinction between those who support the government's decisions (that is the "friends"), while those who engage in endless debate and criticize the government are to be categorized as the "enemy".

President George W. Bush proved that Schmitt was wrong about the ability of a liberal democracy to act decisively. By misrepresenting the Iraq government as possessing weapons of mass destruction as well as having ties with the perpetrators of the 9/11 attack, the president was able to create an atmosphere of fear, to foster a hyper-sense of patriotism that supported taking revenge on a country that had not attacked us, and to win the support of most members of Congress for going to war. Nearly seventy-five percent of the public also supported Bush's decisive action, as did most of the press—including the New York Times. The minority of Americans that opposed the reasons for going to war, and understood that it was being guided by a governing elite that was largely ignorant of the complex cultures they were invading, were largely silenced by the flag-waving, "support-our-troops" hysteria that swept over the country. Some Americans have only recently recovered their critical voice, and are now willing to stand up against the charge that questioning the war is un-American. Given the proven though somewhat delayed expression of political resilience among some social justice liberals, it would still be unwise to totally dismiss Schmitt's argument that the liberal's penchant for endless debate and criticism may be overwhelmed by the social forces promoting an authoritarian system of government. Indeed, the failure of liberal politicians to close ranks against the internal threat faced by Weimar government was one of the reasons that Hitler was able to come to power. Also, President Bush's tactics that proved successful in gaining wide support for a pre-emptive war do not stand out as a shining example of how a liberal democracy conducts the nation's foreign policy. A strong case can be made that Bush's

success relied on the same use of patriotic symbols, media propaganda, and suppression of dissent that have been used in fascist regimes. It is also important to recognize that President George W. Bush has not been the first American president to use tactics that largely marginalized the voices of anti-war liberals.

The issue that concerns us here is whether the individualism and penchant for endless debate among academics will prove to be ineffective in resisting the internal enemies of our democratic institutions and of the social and eco-justice gains that have been made over the years. That is, are they capable of setting aside their pet research and writing projects in order to assess how far down the slippery slope we have gone since the fundamentalist Christians have joined forces with the market liberal fundamentalists, and are now close to controlling all three branches of the federal government? The same question can be asked about the ability of social justice-oriented faculty to respond in a concerted effort to address the cultural roots of the ecological crises. Both Leo Strauss and Antonin Scalia share Schmitt's contempt for what they regard as the Achilles Heel of liberalism: that is, to regard the unit of the political as what is of moral interest to the individual. Strauss' contempt and thus rejection of a liberal democracy was stated in a collection of his essays titled Ten Essays of Leo Strauss (1989) in the following way: "The principle of democracy is therefore not virtue, but freedom as the right of every citizen to live as he likes. Democracy is rejected because it is as such the rule of the uneducated." To recall Scalia's way of dismissing the achievements of a liberal democracy: the Constitution "means today not what current society (much less the Court) thinks it out to mean, but what it meant when it was adopted."

Given how university faculty are fiercely independent intellectually while at the same time quick to follow the shifting trends of thinking within their respective disciplines, and given how they largely take-for-granted many of the same cultural assumptions that also underlie the early and current phase of the industrial revolution that is now being globalized, it might seem utterly fruitless to return to one of the main themes of this book. Accepting Strauss' advice that government must be led by an educated class of "gentlemen" (George W. Bush, Richard Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, and Carl Rove?), the continuing efforts of market-liberals to enclose what remains of the cultural and environmental commons, as well as the fundamentalist Christians' end-game of promoting the further destruction of the environment and what remains of our civil liberties in order to bring on Armageddon, seem the least viable

way to living within the sustaining limits of the Earth's natural systems and to resisting the temptation of colonizing other cultures. We need, instead, to take seriously the educational reform implications of the following question: Would an interdisciplinary understanding of the importance of sustaining the world's diverse cultural and environmental commons contribute to an understanding that a sustainable form of wealth is in renewing the intergenerational knowledge, skills, and mutual support systems that make up the cultural commons? Would it also contribute to a more community and ecologically-centered way of understanding progress, as well as a form of individualism that is defined in terms of mutually supportive relationships rather than in terms of consumerism and the pursuit of self-interest? In short, would an interdisciplinary understanding of the cultural and environmental commons, as practiced in local communities around the world, lead to recognizing and thus revising the cultural assumptions that underlie the consumer-oriented culture that promotes living beyond what the Earth's natural systems can sustain?

The cultural and environmental commons need to be taken seriously by educators, community mentors, and politicians for other reasons as well. The intergenerational knowledge that sustains the local cultural commons, as well as the bioregion that it is largely dependent upon, is always an expression of cultural traditions—which are increasingly varied as ethnic groups mix together. Unlike the industrial, consumer-dependent culture that promotes sameness, the cultural commons are sites of ethnic diversity and thus linguistic diversity—which encodes intergenerational knowledge of the characteristics of the local natural systems (which are continually under the pressure of enclosure by corporations that want to sell the same products to everyone—and if, possible, on a world-wide scale). In an era when wealth is being transferred to the already rich, and corporations are increasing their profits by reducing or eliminating health benefits and pensions, not to mention jobs themselves, the range of non-monetized activities and relationships within the cultural commons enable an economy of mutual exchange to emerge, thus reducing the level of people's dependence upon a money economy. This, in turn, reduces their impact on the natural environment. Time that is spent in being involved with others in mutually interesting and supportive activities is time not spent in the shopping mall. And skills that enable a person to be less dependent upon manufactured goods are more likely to lead to a personal sense of satisfaction than when increasing what is owed on the credit card. An economy of mutual exchange and self-

sufficiency cannot be taxed, it is not subject to inflationary pressures, and it cannot be outsourced to other countries. Its other advantage is that it enables people to engage in a different kind of work—work that is not segmented, dictated by a mechanical process day in and day out, and does not contribute to the products people consume as part of the process of impulse buying that the media equates with achieving freedom and happiness.

The cultural commons are important for another reason that Adam Smith explains in his overlooked book, Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759), and that Robert Putnam has more recently reminded us of: that is, the face-to-face community, unlike the strangers passing each other in the mega-shopping centers, strengthens as shared sense of community interests, ensures that moral reciprocity becomes a more central feature of interpersonal relationships rather than competitive and possessive individualism, and leads to political decision making that is more likely to take both the achievements of the past as well as a sense of responsibility for future generations into account. It is also more likely to deepen the experience of place—in terms of embodied experiences, narratives of past stewardship and expressions of ignorance and hubris, and, again, a desire that one's progeny are able to experience the beauty and regenerative powers of nature. Equally important is the way in which the local commons requires local decision making, which is the opposite of where the power of decision making is located when the commons is enclosed. Enclosure often means that decisions are dictated in far-away corporate offices, and that the decisions are dictated by the need to increase profits.

When the importance of the cultural and environmental commons is fully understood, and the potential for a more non-monetized daily life is actually experienced, we will find that a vital cultural and environmental commons represent sites of resistance to the anti-democratic, economically exploitive, environmentally destructive, and wrathful judgments that the fundamentalist Christians are looking forward to (and to exercising as God's agents). The vitality of the local cultural and environmental commons are also sites of resistance to the nationalism that is so easily manipulated by the leaders in the federal government—too often for the purpose of protecting the interests of international corporations. And the pluralistic nature of the cultural and environmental commons are also sites of resistance to the rise of fascism—which requires the centralization of political and economic power. If we were to consider how local decision making occurs in the more ecologically and intergenerationally centered communities, rather than in communities dependent upon a local military base and

industries that are part of large and unreliable corporations, or on attracting a Wal-Mart and other mega-stores, we would find the expression of an intergenerationally connected form of intelligence that Strauss, Scalia, Cheney, and the other proponents of an anti-democratic future refuse to recognize. The decisions about various community-centered interests and activities range from using technologies that enable the community to become more energy independent, which arts will be supported, how various community resources will be used in support of the poor and marginalized, where community gardens, biking and running/walking trails will be located, how to restore habitats and protect public spaces for use by future generations, and which technologies will be supported, and so forth. While it is also the case that intergenerational knowledge and skills may have been distorted in ways that support exploitive relationships, such as race, gender, and social class forms of injustice, the importance of revitalizing the cultural and environmental commons in this era of environmental degradation and the further centralization of political power by market-liberal elites and self-selected interpreters of God's will still remains our best hope for a sustainable and democratic future. Federal laws may be essential in some communities where the traditions of discrimination and economic exploitation are deeply embedded in daily practices—but these laws must be understood as strengthening the social and eco-justice activists working at the level of the local cultural and environmental commons.

Many adults learn about the importance of the cultural and environmental commons as they begin to participate in the activities of the community, which may make even more irrelevant much of the abstract theory and information they learned in their university classes. The above generalization was qualified because there are university classes that provide for the development of talents and ways of thinking that change some people's lives forever. Overall, the need for basic reform of the university curricula must be judged in terms of the ways in which many university graduates contribute to the environmentally destructive traditions of a market-liberal culture of consumerism and colonization. It must also be judged in terms of the question that has been raised several times in previous chapters: namely, what is there about a university education that enables so many graduates to make the seamless transition from the classroom to being supporters of the market-liberal politicians that are working hand-in-glove with religious fundamentalists to undermine our democratic institutions and reverse the democratic consensus on many social and eco-justice issues? Most university graduates leave

with little or no knowledge of the cultural commons and how the environmental commons are being enclosed by technology, market forces, legal decisions, and globalization. Nor will most graduates understand the different forms that fascism has taken in the past, and thus how vulnerable large segments of our society are to its appeal.

Whether university faculty wake up to the twin nature of the ecological and ideological crises, as well as to the importance of contributing to the revitalization of the cultural commons, is a major question that we may look back upon with the same sense of dismay that characterizes the question we now ask of other countries: How did the supposedly best educated segment of society allow their democracy to be undermined, and why did they ignore the early and widely documented signs of ecological collapse?

Chapter 7 Disillusionment and Resistance: Will It Make a Difference?

The recent decline in public support of President George W. Bush's performance, as well as the prospect of the Democrats gaining control of one of the branches of Congress, may suggest to some readers that America is about to change its political course—and thus stand for something more than the global quest of profits, power, and an indifference to international law and opinion. The list of major policy mistakes, as well as the evidence of placing the interests of corporations, religious fundamentalists, and the already wealthy over the well-being of the general public, should have led to a decline in public support long before the situation in Iraq deteriorated to the point where upbeat Presidential assurances could no longer hide the truth. In spite of the recent poll figures, the list of egregious policies that continued to have the support of the majority of American voters suggest that a basic change has occurred in the moral consensus that led to the nation's previous gains in the areas of social justice and environmental protection.

This list of egregious policies include the pre-emptive invasion of Iraq that was justified on deliberate misrepresentations, the practice of renditions and the use of foreign prisons where torture could be used to extract information, the violations of international law as well as the American Constitution, the budget deficit that puts both the present and future generations at risk, the efforts to undermine environmental legislation, the practice of Presidential signings that modified legislation in ways that reflected his own as well as his corporate supporters' market liberal ideology, the efforts to rewrite scientific reports

on the danger of global warming and other environmental changes, and the appointment of Supreme Court justices that support the moral agenda of the Christian fundamentalists.

These efforts to reverse the social justice achievements that can be traced back to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, as well as the gains in environmental protection that had bi-partisan support during Richard Nixon's presidency, have contributed to a more divided society and thus weakened democracy. Yet the New York Times reported that the poll conducted in May, 2006 found that among moderate and liberal Republicans President Bush's support had only declined from 81 percent in December 2004 to today's 51 percent. Support among the hard-core Christian evangelical and fundamentalists, while showing signs of disappointment that their political agenda is not yet the law of the land, continues to be much higher. Even after it was revealed that the National Security Agency was secretly collecting information on millions of citizens, the majority of Americans (64 percent according to one poll) approved of giving up their right to privacy in order to allow the government to extend its search for potential terrorists.

The basic questions are: Would taking back the House of Representatives by Democrats in the 2006 election divert the nation from the slippery slope it is now on? Would the replacement in 2008 with a Democratic or moderate Republican president really make a difference? Perhaps recent assessments of the state of American politics that focus too narrowly on George W. Bush and his inner circle of advisors miss the basic reasons that social justice and democratic safeguards are no longer a concern of the majority of Americans. As suggested earlier, American politics now seem to be based less on dialogue, negotiation, and compromise than on the friend/enemy distinction. The groups that want to make this the modus operandi are unyielding in holding that their Biblical and ideological Truths cannot be compromised. In being unable to even question whether the market liberal ideology formulated by John Locke, Adam Smith and more recent libertarian theorists is appropriate in today's world, or to compromise on such issues as abortion and gay marriage, the democratic process appears increasingly to these extremist groups as an impediment to achieving their ultimate goal of a society that lives by their Truths.

Rather than focus on the possibility that a Democratic or moderate Republican president would fundamentally alter the country's current authoritarian drift, it is

necessary to keep in mind the ideological and surveillance infrastructure that is now solidly in place. The Supreme Court only requires the appointment of a new member that shares the orientation that unites the corporate and religious fundamentalists in order to begin dismantling the legislation that limited the power of the police, gave government the authority to limit the abuses of corporations, and protected the rights of individuals. The ideological and technological infrastructure now in place also includes the Federalist Society that continues to promote a legal system that supports the market liberal system that is further encroaching on what remains of the cultural and environmental commons. The influence of this powerful and well funded organization reaches from the Supreme Court to laws schools spread across the country. The vast resources of American corporations, as well as their proven record of success in getting Congress to pass legislation that supports their economic interests, will continue to be a major influence on American politics—especially in the areas of worker protection, reversal of environmental legislation, and global economic policies. In addition to the widespread amnesia about our traditions of civil rights that are now under attack, which even old time republicans were concerned about, the majority of Americans now seem to be indifferent to their loss. Indeed they seem willing to accept anything that is labeled as the expression of social progress. The degree that the government and corporations now rely upon surveillance technologies seems less of a concern to the average citizen than the price of gasoline.

An aspect of the ideological infrastructure that should not be overlooked is the way in which the word “terrorist” has been so loosely used. It could easily be used to label any individual or group that questions or in other ways resists the policies of an increasingly authoritarian government. Unwarranted investigations by the FBI, as well as incarceration of anyone labeled as a terrorist would not likely to be questioned by a large segment of the American public. Another feature of the ideological and technological infrastructure that is not likely to be changed by a more moderate president includes a police force that has a proven history of following orders with a ferocity that has no place in a democratic society. Examples that come easily to mind include how marchers for civil rights, improved working conditions, and for peace have been physically brutalized and arrested. In addition, there are the militant groups in the back woods of American

that are constantly training for eventual combat with the Americans that do not share their extremist ideas and values. And not to be overlooked in assessing the prospects of our civil liberties and democratic institutions (at least what remains of them) are the 15 intelligence agencies that the government now funds to the tune of billions of dollars.

A common source of influence on every aspect of this anti-democratic infrastructure, from the market liberal politicians, corporate CEOs, Supreme Court judges, and members of the Federalist Society to the men and women who design and use the surveillance technologies that are now such a pervasive part of everyday life, is the system of public school and university education. Many graduates of these institutions work tirelessly to protect what remains of the cultural and environmental commons, including our civil liberties. However, what is too often overlooked is that the men and women that support market liberalism as the one true approach that everyone is to live by, including the people of other cultures were educated by professors who, on the whole, took for granted the cultural assumptions that were also the basis of the industrial culture that is now being globalized. Many of these graduates interpreted these cultural assumptions about individualism, progress, evolution, mechanism, anthropocentrism, and economism to be the bedrock of their market liberalism. What is less understood is why a smaller group of university graduates, while also taking many of these cultural assumptions for granted, began to question the assumptions about an anthropocentric world, and the evolution of cultures that represented Western cultures as the most advanced. They also took seriously the social justice message of voiced by some of their professors, which let them to become activists in support of social causes that are anathema to the market liberals and their Christian fundamentalist allies

It is also important to recognize that this conceptual infrastructure of taken-for-granted assumptions shared by both social justice and the market liberal graduates has resulted in few members of either group being able to recognize either the nature or importance of the cultural commons that they participate in on a daily basis. The problem is that in not being aware of the cultural and environmental commons that they are, in varying degrees, dependent upon, they are unable to resist the forces that are bent on turning these non-monetized aspects of daily life into market opportunities. For example, if people are unaware of their Constitutional rights, they are less likely to resist

the forces that are undermining them. A recent survey found that over 50 percent of the respondents were unable to name the three main branches of government. Given this level of ignorance about one of the more important aspects of the cultural commons that previous generations have fought for and relied upon, they would also be unaware of the importance of the separation of powers and thus the importance of our system of checks and balances. The loss (enclosure) of the separation of powers would thus not be a concern to them. Similarly, if people are unaware of other aspects of the cultural commons that they take-for-granted, their loss would also go unnoticed—especially if the loss was represented as the expression of progress.

Another characteristic of the conceptual infrastructure that will likely survive any changes in the political party that controls Congress or the White House is the widespread acceptance of Orwellian language where words mean the opposite of what common sense would dictate. This legacy of the educational process represents a combination of intellectual laziness, and the past miseducation of public school teachers and university professors who pass on to the next generation the misconceptions they failed to question. Journalists, media pundits, and academics continue to refer to politicians and religious fundamentalists as social conservatives even though these groups either want to turn more of the cultural and environmental commons into new market opportunities, and to replace what remains of our democratic institutions and pluralistic society with a monolithic system of beliefs and values that have all the essential characteristics of a theocracy. To refer to religious extremists who are working to elect politicians and to appoint Supreme Court judges that support their reactionary and anti-democratic agenda as social conservatives indicates just how conditioned the general public is to accepting the use of political labels without asking what is that so-called conservatives want to conserve—or what “progressive” Christians and politicians identify as the expression of progress. This widespread indifference to the Orwellian use of language suggests a willingness on the part of a large segment of society to be participants in the political culture of misrepresentation and propaganda that contributes to weakening our democracy to the point where it could easily slip into a fascist system where only the friend/enemy approach to politics prevails.

As a number of historians have observed, fascist governments emerged in Europe between the two world wars when economic and social chaos overwhelmed the ability of democratic governments to respond adequately. As many Americans are financially vulnerable, and with gas prices for their inefficient SUVs and interest payments on home mortgages putting them at greater risk of bankruptcy, there are a number of scenarios that might lead them to embrace the centralized power of an authoritarian government that represents itself as the savior of patriotic values and wraps itself in the American flag. If the Chinese government were to decide to use its huge budget surplus to raise the standard of living of its hundreds of millions of rural poor rather than buying our government's treasury notes that are essential to sustaining our economy, our country would undergo an economic shock that could lead to the widespread unemployment and social unrest that have, in the past, led to the emergence of fascist governments. A second scenario that could lead to the same political outcome would be for nationalist movements or action by foreign militants that limit our country's access to the oil that sustains our economy and consumer-dependent lifestyle. The turmoil in the Middle East and in other oil producing regions of the world, as well as the extreme weather systems that are wrecking havoc on off-shore production of oil, indicate that one of the most important sources of energy can no longer be taken for granted. The tar sands of Northern Alberta, which the Chinese have already laid partial claim to in terms of meeting the energy needs of their economy, could not be developed fast enough to avert the social crises that would increase the appeal of a fascist government. Global warming represents a third scenario that could lead to widespread economic disruptions, but the economic impact is not likely to reach a politically transforming stage until some 20 or so years in the future. This is the length of time that some scientists predict we have until the disappearance of the ice packs lead to a rapid rise in global warming. And when we reach that tipping point, the extreme weather patterns will be magnified many times over—along with droughts and the die-off of plants and animals that will be unable to adapt to the rapid changes in their environments. This is the one scenario that will be world-wide in its impact on peoples' lives and institutions.

While President George W. Bush is more of a symptom of the nation's lack of intelligence about how to live in ways that do not undermine the natural systems we

depend upon, we have to ask why a large segment of the public continues to be focused on sustaining their hedonistic lifestyle to the point where they have little interest in how the promoters of this lifestyle are dismantling our Constitutional rights and the core traditions of our democratic institutions. President Bush is not so much the war President as the President that looks after the interests of the corporations that are exploiting the environment and what remains of the commons. Again, the inability of most Americans to distinguish between sustainable and unsustainable daily cultural patterns, as well as their indifference to holding politicians accountable for being truthful and for pursuing priorities that contribute to a more socially just society, may be attributed to their early socialization in the home—and to the years they spend in public school and university classrooms.

In my conversations with seemingly educated members of the public as well as academic colleagues I find that few have a clue about what I am referring to when I respond to their question about what I do in my retirement with the statement that I write about the cultural roots of the environmental crisis. And if the words “cultural and environmental commons” come up in conversation they are clueless about what they mean, and thus how they refer to the community and intergenerational alternatives to an individualistic, consumer-dependent lifestyle. And if I mention that President George W. Bush is a market liberal and that Christian fundamentalists (including many evangelical Christians) are working to replace our democracy with a theocracy, they are unable to carry the conversation further.

The gaps in their education, including the cultural assumptions they are reinforced to take-for-granted, leave them without the conceptual basis needed for addressing the most critical political issues of the day. Indeed, it would not be too far off the mark to say that their education, which includes family, the media, and formal educational institutions, leaves them in a state of daily anxiety that requires massive reliance on drugs in order to face the pressures of daily life, and a sense of indifference about their level of ignorance of what is going on in the country and the world. Their willingness to follow the politicians and media pundits who are waving the American flag to guide them down the slippery slope to an authoritarian future is also another sign that the educational process, as all levels, has failed. To reiterate a point made earlier, the large percentage of

people that continue to support President Bush's domestic and foreign policies, even as they now have doubts about his personal competency to carry them through, are unlikely to wake up to the need to educate themselves by reading the critics of these policies and by learning about the extent that the world's ecosystems have been damaged in ways that are irreversible in terms of the human lifespan. Their hubris is their defense against recognizing the realities that are pressing in upon us from both domestic and international sources.

The twenty years that some scientists suggest that we have before the rate of global warming accelerates beyond where human actions can make a difference is also the twenty years that need to be used to bring about the educational reforms that may enable the next two generations to understand why an industrial, consumer-dependent culture is putting our collective futures at risk. If the educational reforms at both the public school and university level introduce students to the importance of renewing the cultural and environmental commons, they will at least understand the existing possibilities for making the transition to a post-industrial future that is more environmentally sustainable. They may also understand that living more fully within the possibilities and limitations of the local cultural and environmental commons represents the best hope of avoiding the scenarios connected with foreign countries no longer willing to underwrite our nation's massive debt and with the sources of our energy being cut-off by foreign developments over which we have no control. Whether these two generations can resist the allure of the new technologies that further privatize their supposedly connected world, and whether liberal academics can reach a consensus on the radical reforms that must be undertaken, are increasingly problematic. The current gatekeepers—journalists, academics, media pundits, editors, politicians, and religious leaders—may succeed in indoctrinating these two generations to accept the myths that nothing really needs to change. If the myth proves false that some of us will be taken in the rapture, the myth of unending progress will likely remain intact even as the evidence fails to support it.

Notes

Chapter 1

The issues and themes introduced in this chapter have been a concern for a number of years; thus the books that were most formative on my thinking about how language carries forward the misconceptions of earlier generations include Richard H. Brown, *A Poetic for Sociology: Toward a Logic of Discovery for the Human Sciences*, (Cambridge University Press, 1977); Andrew Ortony, (editor) *Metaphor and Thought*, (Cambridge, England, Cambridge University, 1979)—especially the essays by Michael Reddy and Donald Schon; Two books on the nature of the metaphorical basis of thought that are both useful and deeply problematic are by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980), and George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction, Vt., Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004). The former contains too many categories of metaphorical thinking while leaving out a discussion of the nature of root metaphors and how they carry forward over hundreds of years the conceptual templates that influence a wide range of cultural ways of thinking and practice. Lakoff's more recent book on language has important insights into how language frames thought—and thus its inherent political nature. But he does not follow his own advice about not letting the opposition frame how the metaphors are to be understood. That is, he allows the market-liberals to control how the public uses the word conservative—while also making the mistake of adopting the progressive-oriented language that market liberals have identified with for generations for thinking about social justice issues. This progressive language is just that: abstract and context free. The industrial culture, along with market capitalism, have given us concrete examples of progress, such as in the fields of computers, robots, SUVs, flat screen televisions, and so forth. Two points that Lakoff misses is that not all forms of technology and capitalist progress have been beneficial and, second, the word “progress” fits more accurately with the on-the-the ground record of technological innovations of the industrial culture. Books that address the way in which cultural languages encode generations of local knowledge of the life-cycles of plants and animals in the local bioregion include Peter Muhlhausler, *Linguistic Ecology: Language Change and Linguistic Imperialism in the Pacific Region* (New York: Routledge, 1996), and Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's*

Languages (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). My critique of how we are misusing our political vocabulary was influenced by Edmund Burke's book, Reflections on the Revolution in France (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co. 1962 printing), Michael Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1962.), Wendell Berry, Standing By Words (San Francisco, 1983), Vandana Shiva, Monocultures of the Mind (Penang, Malaysia, Third World Network, 1993). Listening to media journalists and reading The New York Times provided daily evidence of a widespread misunderstanding that politicians that were identified as conservatives were actually promoters of the free-market system, and who were working to undermine what genuine conservatives in the Burkean and Wendell Berry traditions of thinking wanted to preserve: the tradition of social justice and environmental protection achievements over the last decade, as well as the basis of our democratic institutions. Going to the websites of the CATO and the American Enterprise system provided further proof that what was being misnamed as conservative really had its conceptual roots in the classical liberal ideas of John Locke and a partial reading of the writings of Adam Smith. Thomas Frank's What's the Matter With Kansas: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America (New York: Metropolitan Press, 2004) is an example of how thoughtful writers have accepted the market-liberal's mislabeling of themselves as conservatives. Books by right-wing writers such as Ann Coulter and talk show hosts such as Rush Limbaugh continue to demonize the liberals and to represent themselves as thoughtful conservatives—when the labels should actually be reversed. I agree with Ann Coulter that talking to a liberal (that is, the market liberals that are her heroes) is a tedious and frustrating exercise in reductionist and self-interest thinking. Further evidence that equating conservatism with the change-oriented market-liberal political agenda is based on a basic misunderstanding that can be traced to a bias promoted by most professors can be found in Edward Shils exhaustive study of the nature of cultural traditions, which is titled Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Shils makes the point that every aspect of culture that is passed on over four generations should be understood as an example of tradition. Thus, the question is “What are the traditions that a mindful conservative wants to renew and what are the traditions that need to be revised or rejected entirely? The current misuse of the terms liberal and conservative fails to reflect the understanding that

liberalism lacks the vocabulary for engaging in this task, and that the faux conservatives want to undermine the traditions of self-sufficiency and social justice with the traditions that underlie the industrial culture that is now being globalized—and that are destroying the traditions that sustain the world’s diverse cultural commons.

My concern about the nature of the ecological crises is based on readings in scholarly journals that publish scientific articles on changes taking place in natural systems, as well as books that address how economic globalization is further degrading the self-regenerating capacity of natural systems. These books include Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (editors) The Case Against the Global Economy and for a Turn Toward the Local (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996), Joseph E. Stiglitz, Globalization and It’s Discontents, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), Herman J. Daly, Steady-State Economics (Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991), Maude Barlow, Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World’s Water (New York: New Press, 2002).

Chapter 2

The unarguable fact is that the men and women that have provided the theoretical framework for President George W. Bush’s domestic and foreign policies are graduates of American universities, including some of the most elite universities. Thus, the anti-democratic ideas they have proposed is quite surprising unless one reads the books that influenced their intellectual development. Two leading theorists that have been particularly influential are Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss. Schmitt is a somewhat shadowing political theorist as it is unclear whether his original purpose was to create a justification for a fascist political regime or, by reading the signs of the times, slanted his writings in ways that won him political favor. Over the last ten years, scholars have begun to take his writings seriously, and the most important studies include: John P. McCormick, Carl Schmitt’s Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics as Technology (Cambridge, Great Britain, Cambridge University Press, 1997), Renato Cristi, Carl Schmitt and Authoritarian Liberalism: Strong State, Free Economy (Cadiff, Great Britain; University Wales Press,1998), Gopal Balakrishnan,The Enemy: An Intellectual Portrait of Carl Schmitt (London: Verso. 2000). These authors place the development of Schmitt’s ideas within the context of the intellectual debates of the twenties and

thirties—and thus providing more of the context necessary for understanding Schmitt’s writings. The most influential of Schmitt’s own writings is The Concept of the Political (Rutgers, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1976). And the relationship between the ideas of Schmitt and those of Leo Strauss is discussed in Heinrich Meier, Carl Schmitt & Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Meier’s book also contains Strauss’ correspondence with Schmitt. Strauss’ critique of the mediocrity that he saw as the inevitable outcome of a populist democracy, as well as his suggestion for how an intellectual elite should govern, can be found in the collection of his essays that have been edited by Hilail Gildin, An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays by Leo Strauss (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989). Shadia Drury’s Leo Strauss and the American Right (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999) provides a fuller account of Strauss’s influence on the members of the Federalist Society, and on key decision-makers in the administration of President George W. Bush. The market-liberal orientation of the self-labeled neoconservatives, about which the press has not asked “What do they want to conserve?”, can be found in the earliest and still best account by Peter Steinfels of how they made the transition from being left-oriented liberals. His book is titled The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America’s Politics (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979). Neoconservative critiques of American politics and culture can be found in Irving Kristol, Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea (New York: Free Press, 1995), and Gertrude Himmelfarb, The Demoralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995). The more up-front arguments for market-liberalism by so-called conservatives can be found in George Gilder, Wealth and Poverty (New York: Basic Books, 1981) and Michael Novak, The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

The anti-democratic ideas of Chief Justice Antonin Scalia can be found in many of his Court decisions and public statements. But the most succinct statement on how he interprets the doctrine of “original intent” can be found in a speech he gave at the University of Chicago in 2002. It has been reprinted under the title of “God’s Justice and Our” and appears in First Things (May 2002, pp. 17-21). Also see Patricia Williams’ article in The Nation (October 7, 2002) “Infallible Justice.”

Chapter 3

The argument in this chapter is that universities are complicit in providing the form of education that enables students to move from the classroom to becoming part of the large block of voters for President George W. Bush, and to becoming advisors and workers in his administration. To a reader who has not thought about the cultural assumptions that underlie a wide range of university courses, and how many of these assumptions are shared by the market liberal supporters of the presidents policies, this may seem a totally unsupported claim. Readers only have to examine the course content in a variety of disciplines, as well as read books by leading scholars in a variety of fields, to see how widespread the cultural assumptions are that equate change with progress and as linear in nature, that represents technology as culturally neutral, that promote the idea of the autonomous individual, that rely upon a mechanistic model of thinking to explain organic as well as social processes, that represent the environment as a economic resource. The silences in these courses, as well as in the scholarly literature, include other cultural ways of knowing, the nature and importance of the cultural commons—including the importance of maintaining their diversity; a knowledge of the history of modern ideologies—including the nature of fascism. The following books by so-called leading thinkers include Daniel C. Dennett, Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life (New York: Touchstone Books, 1995). Cultural assumptions that Dennett takes-for-granted include the progressive nature of change, individualism, mechanism, and the validity of ethnocentric thinking. Francis Crick's The Astonishing Hypothesis: The scientific Search for the South (New York: Charles Scribner' Sons, 1994) relies upon the mechanistic root metaphor, as well as the assumptions about change being progressive in nature, a form of individualism that is free of cultural influences—which leads to the assumption that science is a culturally neutral form of inquiry. Ethnocentrism is also basic to his thinking. In philosophy, Richard Rorty's Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) is noteworthy for the cultural assumptions that it based upon: individualism, progress, anthropocentrism, and ethnocentrism. One of the few books by a philosopher that argues that there are other cultural ways of knowing is Alasdair MacIntyre's Whose Justice?

Which Rationality (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1988). By addressing the problem of ethnocentrism, MacIntyre avoids taking-for-granted the usual groups of cultural assumptions found in the writing and courses of other philosophers. In books by environmental writers such as Gary Snyder, Wendell Berry, Vandana Shiva, to cite just a few, the cultural assumptions about the autonomous individual, the progressive nature of change, an anthropocentric view of nature, and a mechanistic way of thinking and manipulating the environment are noticeable absent.

Steven Pinker's, The Language Instinct: How Our Minds Creates Language (New York: Harper Perennial, 1995) reinforces an ethnocentric pattern of thinking, as well as the assumptions about the progressive nature of change, an anthropocentric universe, individualism rather than culture as the source of language, and mechanism. The list of scholarly books that reinforce the same cultural assumptions that current market-liberals in the Bush administration take for granted could be extended indefinitely.

Another part of the argument about the complicity of universities in educating a steadfast groups of market-liberal supporters has to do with the failure of professors to help their students understand how the metaphorical nature of the language/thought process carries forward ways of thinking that were constituted before their was an awareness of environmental limits—which is one of the defining characteristics of university graduates that support market-liberal policies. The books on the nature of metaphorical thinking were listed above—but for a source that explains how metaphorical thinking carries forward earlier misunderstandings of how to locate the environmental movement within current ideological orientations, see C. A. Bowers, Mindful Conservatism: Rethinking the Ideological and Educational Basis of an Ecologically Sustainable Future (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

The discussion of how computers are now being promoted by academics as part of the evolutionary process was based on books by Hans Moravec, Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1988); Ray Kurzweil, The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence (New York: Viking, 1999); Gregory Stock, Metaman: The merging of Humans and Machines into a Global Organism (Toronto: Doubleday, 1993). All three of these writers reproduce their professor's assumptions that lead to an anthropocentric and

ethnocentric way of thinking—as well as to assuming that change is progressive even though it leads to the colonization of other cultures and then to their extinction as evolution finds them to be no longer possessing Darwinian fitness. The cultural assumptions about individualism and mechanism (including the brain as a machine/computer) are also a taken-for-granted part of their analysis and prescriptions for the future.

Chapter 4

The discussion of the difference between fundamentalist Christians, and other traditions within Christianity, was influenced by Marcus J. Borg *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering A Life of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco: 2004), and William O. Beeman's chapter, "Fighting the Good Fight: Fundamentalism and Religious Revival" in *Anthropology of the Real World*, edited by J. MacClancy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). The brief discussion of the differences between the teachings and the political agenda of fundamentalist Christians and some evangelical Christians was largely dependent upon Jim Wallis' *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2005). An earlier book arguing that it is God's will that fundamentalist Christians take control of the political system is Pat Robertson's *The Secret Kingdom* (Nashville, TN.: T. Nelson Publisher, 1982). Books critical of the politics of the fundamentalist and certain evangelical Christians groups include Martin Durham's *The Christian Right, the Far Right, and the Boundaries of American Conservatism* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2000), William Martin's *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Christian Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), Katharine Yurica, "The Dispoiling of America: How George W. Bush Became the Head of the New American Dominist Church/State" (www.informationclearinghouse.info/article/5646.htm). The websites of fundamentalist Christian colleges, as well as the promotional literature of a number of fundamentalist and evangelical colleges were also a useful sources of information about the theology to which students were exposed.

Comparisons between fundamentalist Christians and Islamic fundamentalism were based on Paul Berman's *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).

Chapter 5

There is now a huge literature on many aspects of the cultural and environmental commons that is available on the Digital Library of the Commons (Google). The classic study of how the Industrial Revolution led to the massive and multiple forms of enclosure of the environmental and cultural commons in England is Karl Polanyi's The Great Transformation (New York: Octagon Books, 1944). Kirkpatrick Sale provides an insightful discussion of how the Luddites resisted the enclosure of their intergenerationally-grounded approach to work that fit the rhythms of community life in Rebels Against the Future: The Luddites and Their War on the Industrial Revolution (Reading, MA.: Addison-Wesley, 1995). Examples of different cultural commons, and how they are being enclosed by Western approaches to development can be found in Helena Norberg-Hodge, Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1991). Frederique Apffel-Marglin (editor), The Spirit of Regeneration: Andean Culture Confronting Western Notions of Development (London: Zed Books, 1998), Keith Basso, Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996). How computers contribute to the enclosure of different aspects of the cultural commons, particularly the intergenerational knowledge that is passed on face-to-face and in different cultural contexts, can be found in C. A. Bowers, Let Them Eat Data: How Computers Affect Education, Cultural Diversity, and the Prospects of a Sustainable Future (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000). Many different perspectives on how strengthening the cultural commons serves to resist the many forms of environmental and cultural enclosure that result from the globalization of the West's industrial/consumer-oriented culture is in the Report of the International Forum on Globalization, Alternatives to Economic Globalization (San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002). Two Third World perspectives on how local knowledge, and thus the basis of community self-sufficiency, is being enclosed by different institutions that promote the capitalist agenda are G. Bonfil Batalla, Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996) and Vandana Shiva, Protecting Our Biological and Intellectual Heritage in the Age of Biopiracy. (New Delhi: The Research Foundation of Science,

Technology, and Natural Resource Policy, 1996). The book that makes the revitalization of the cultural and environmental commons the central focus of educational reform is C. A. Bowers, Revitalizing the Commons: Cultural and Educational Sites of Resistance and Affirmation (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2006). Mitchell Thomashow's Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1995) provides a short discussion of how to introduce public school students to the idea of the commons. Various approaches to encouraging faculty to cooperate across disciplinary boundaries for the purpose of introducing environmental issues into courses is discussed in Peggy Barlett and Geoffrey Chase (editors) Sustainability on Campus: Stories and Strategies (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2006). Proposals for a radical reform of universities, reforms that make environmental issues the central focus of all disciplines can be found in Rolf Jucker's Our Common Illiteracy: Education as If the Earth Mattered (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002). Jared Diamond's book, Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed (New York: Viking, 2005) is important for understanding how the intellectual leaders of different cultures continued to promote their traditional symbolic systems even as the ecosystems they depended upon were in a visible state of decline. The book has particular relevance for understanding how our keepers (university professors) of our traditional symbolic systems continue to socialize the younger generation to take-for-granted the ways of thinking that are overshooting the sustaining capacity of natural systems—and, now, to make the colonizing of other cultures to these same environmentally unsustainable patterns of thinking a central feature of our foreign policy. The most comprehensive set of proposals for reforming universities in ways that are essential for being able to make the transition to a postmodern and ecologically sustainable world is Marcus Ford's Beyond the Modern University: Toward a Constructivist Postmodern University (Praeger, 2002).

Chapter 6

In addition to the literature cited above that deals with the ideas of Carl Schmitt, the analysis developed in this chapter was influenced by the following books that address the varied forms that fascism took in different countries between the two world wars. The

most comprehensive study of the forces that contributed to the rise of fascism in European countries is Michael Mann, Fascists (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Mann also provides an analysis of other theories about the causes of fascism. A collection of essays edited by Julie V. Gottlieb and Thomas P. Linehan, The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) provides useful insights into the connections between popular culture, the ideology of the times, and the appeal of fascism in Great Britain. The influence of leading intellectuals on the rise of fascism in several European countries is the focus of Alastair Hamilton, The Appeal of Fascism: A Study of Intellectuals and Fascism 1919-1945 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1971). A study of the emotional, economic, ideological, and home-grown radical movements that gave rise to fascism in Italy and Germany can be found in Robert O. Paxton, The Anatomy of Fascism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004). Paxton explores in considerable depth the varied characteristics of fascism, which leaves open the question of the different forms it may take in different countries (and cultures). An in-depth study of the rise of fascism in France, Germany, and Italy is the main focus of Ernst Nolte, The Three Faces of Fascism: Action Francaise, Italian Fascism, National Socialism (New York: Hole, Rinehart and Winston. 1963). A focus on how fascism was a reaction to the problems associated with modernity is central to Anthony James Joes' Fascism in the Contemporary World: Ideology, Evolution, Resurgence (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1978). Laurence Britt's article "Fascism Anyone?" can be found at www.informationclearinghouse.info/article4113.htm. The essay of Fritz Stern, "Lesson from German History" appeared in the May/June (2005) issue of Foreign Affairs, pp.14-18. The best study of the role that German universities played in the rise of fascism in Germany is Frederic Lilge's The Abuse of Learning: The Failure of the German University (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948).

