



# Environmental Worldviews

Nido de Aguilas International  
School Science

Instructor: Ms. Darlene Oehlke  
[doehlke@nido.cl](mailto:doehlke@nido.cl)

# Communism and Capitalism in Germany, when the wall came down, 1989

- + Journalists found that the pollution in Eastern Berlin was much greater than in Western Berlin.
- + Although the industry of a capitalistic society pollutes, it seems that ex-soviet communism polluted much more..

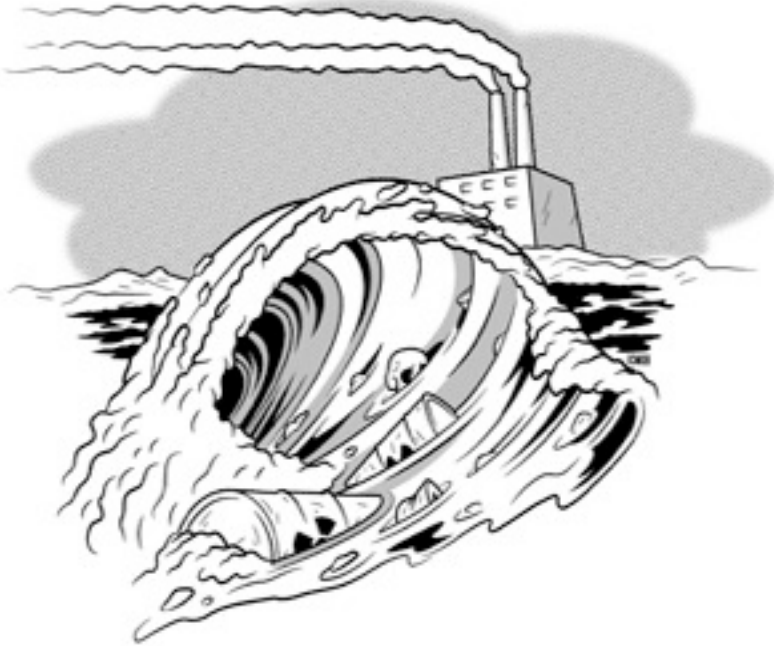


# Capitalism and the Environment

- + Economic growth is put above all other factors, and in many cases, this growth comes without regard to environmental values.
- + Private businesses in these societies are mostly to blame for the environmental degradation in these areas.



# Communism and the Environment



- + Even though communist societies are meant to distribute wealth evenly, most of these countries are victims of the term “tragedy of the commons”.
- + When no one owns the resource, no one takes care of it.

# Communism in China and the environment

- + More than 90% of the trees in the Sichuan province are died and/or severely damaged due to heavy air pollution.

In the Chinese city Chunking, one of the 4,500-acre forests has been reduced to half its size due to the same problem, as well as a problem with acid rain.





# Poland

- + Water pollution and air pollution have been a great concern in Poland, where no environmental standards existed in the Soviet Years



# The Soviet Union...

- + In 1965, waste and runoff from a chemical plant killed the majority of the fish in the Oka River.
- + Dumping of waste into bodies of water has been done frequently by mines, oil wells, and ships along with the chemical plants.



# Capitalism: USA

- + The Department of Defense (DOD), have been among the worst polluters.
- + DOD now generates more than 400,000 tons of hazardous waste a year — more than is produced by the five largest chemical companies combined.





# A quick summary of capitalistic and communistic societies.

- + They both have different economical principles that also tie back to their environmental values.
- + Capitalism is heavily based in private businesses, and socialism is based in government-owned businesses.
- + In terms of environmental values, capitalism allows for free speech and greater environmental awareness than communism in most cases.

# Similarities...

- + Communism and capitalism also find it difficult to restrict environmental abuse because both emphasize short-term efficiency and profits while ignoring long-term costs of environmental degradation.

# Native Americans and European Pioneers



# Native American Environmental Worldview

- + In general, property was held in common.
- + They bartered for goods rather than using money.
- + They used consensus when making decisions.
- + The laws were handed down in a oral tradition
- + The communities are organized via a matrilineal line.
- + They were polytheistic.
- + Animals and plants were viewed as having a spirituality
- + The technology used in living was generally low impact.



# Nature had a spiritual value

- + **According to David Landis**  
**“Nature is something we live within and as a part of it.”**



# Land use by Native Americans

+ “You say that I use the land, and I reply, yes, it is true; but it is not the first truth. The first truth is that I love the land; I see that it is beautiful; I delight in it; I am alive in it.”

~N. Scott Momaday, a native American writer



# But not everything was so ecocentric

- + **Paleo-Indians** probably helped cause the extinction of large mammals in North America.
- + **Resource management:** Native Americans were not always passive in the wilderness since they used fire to burn prairies in order to increase productivity.

# The European Pioneer..

- + Discovery of America meant an opportunity for the European pioneers to restore the “Eden of Genesis” in a new, unspoiled world.
- + “A new life in a fresh green landscape...” Leo Marx
- + Native Americans already inhabited this land, but the European mind saw an empty land that offered, “to create a quiet, fruitful, bucolic life free of poverty, turmoil, complexity, and decadence of England and the continent.”
- + They viewed America as a land of “incredible abundance”.



# European pioneers – conquerers

- + As they settled in America, European pioneers began to expand and to create more labor to make profit and provide housing.
- + Reports that went back to Europe were intended to create incentives for people to come to the new land.
- + In the beginning, survival for the European pioneers meant conquering the wilderness. This was done by clearing out forests to make living space and provide wood for shelters and fires.
- + The space from the forests also opened land for crops and cattle.
- + Killing of wild animals provided food for the settlers.
- + The buffalo were nearly wiped out by overhunting.

# More about European pioneers

- + European pioneers were often cornucopian.
- + A cornucopian is a futurist who believes that continued progress and provision of material items for mankind can be met by similarly continued in technological, political or scientific advances.
- + This is because they found the New World to be the world of abundance and they took full advantage of all the resources, without thinking about the consequences.

# Similarities and Differences...

# Judeo-Christianity and Buddhism

- + Environmentalism preached from the pulpit
- + “Our ancestors viewed the earth as rich and bountiful, which it is. Many people in the past also saw nature as inexhaustibly sustainable, which we know is the case only if we care for it. It is not difficult to forgive destruction in the past that resulted from ignorance. Today, however, we have access to more information, and it is essential that we re-examine ethically what we have inherited, what we are responsible for, and what we will pass on to coming generations.” – The Dalai Lama



# Christian, Islamic, Jewish beliefs

- + These religions share a belief in the separation of the body and soul.
- + God is the creator of the world and universe.
- + “Replenish the Earth , and subdue it, and have dominion over it”
  - Genesis

# Jews and Christians – God takes care of nature

+ “Not only does God own everything and know every creature, but He cares for and provides for the physical needs of His creatures.”

+ Genesis



# Humans rule over the animals

“God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the Earth.”” (Genesis 1:28)

# Buddist views

- + To live in harmony with nature is a crucial Buddhist practice.
- + Every living thing in the world is co-dependent.
- + Humans are not more important than other living things.





# Budda

- + The Buddha manifested a complete compassion and is respectfully seen as the compassionate protector of all beings.
- + He taught that for those who wishes to follow his Path should practice loving-kindness, not to harm the life of all beings – not only to protect mankind, but also to protect animals and vegetation.
- + With his perfect wisdom, He saw all beings in the universe were equal in nature, and in this phenomenal world, lives of all human and animals were inter-related, mutually developing, and inseparable.

# Similarities

- + Both religions have a respect towards nature.
- + Christianity states that one must have a proper relationship with the Creator and the rest of the Creation (nature).
- + Christians are taught to be stewards of the land.
- + Buddhist society states that a person needs to be in harmony with nature in order to be in harmony with himself.
- + They recognize it is not theirs to ruin and that the nature and earth was there before humans. It is all about respect and appropriate use.

# Differences

- + In Christianity, God created nature, therefore we as humans, have the obligation to respect, protect, and not harm the nature.
- + In Buddhism, one has to be responsible for one's actions. What we do to nature, it will reflect to ourselves.
- + The origins and reasons are different. Christians aim to please God and Buddhists respect and follow the teachings of Buddha.

# Resources

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