



Assignment Undergraduate ~~Dissertation~~ coversheet & feedback form

PLEASE COMPLETE THE TOP SECTION OF THIS FORM AND SUBMIT ONE COPY WITH YOUR DISSERTATION

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I confirm that this is my original work and that I have adhered to the University policy on plagiarism.

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Comments:

This essay contains many plausible ideas & objections that reveal a good understanding of the topic. To improve the essay, try to develop arguments a little more; but present you tend to jump to the objection(s) without providing a full argument.

That said, it's clear that you've engaged with the topic & in places reveal quite a perceptive understanding.

Don't forget to include a conclusion that thoroughly renews the issues in the essay

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Can free market ideology effectively protect the environment?

With the biodiversity and climate crisis increasing to exceedingly dangerous levels with every day that passes, it has become vital that something drastic is done as soon as possible to rectify issue. The Free Market Environmentalism (FME) and the ideology surrounding it is the key aspect that this essay will focus heavily on. I will be looking at what FME is, the criticisms ^{positions} ~~revived~~ surrounding it and some alternative ideology. This essay delves into and backs up the ideas of Eckersley, Proops, Sagoff and other scholars that state FME is mediocre at best in protecting the environment. The notion of judging and putting a price on land is already to be accredited to those who sought out colonialism. In order for the environment to be truly protected, current right-leaning policy and the mindset attached to it, needs to be reconfigured or scrapped as a whole, as this kind of ideology is the type that advocates for those who are already the ones with power and wealth. The idea to equate nature to economics simply can't be done and the need for ecocentrism has never been so important in our current dire environmental situation. It is an ignorant view to not realise that money and capital gain is not the incentive needed here as it will only benefit those individuals who already poses these riches.

Reward
'Equate nature to...'

Will you argue for this stance?

✓ "At the heart of free market environmentalism is a system of well-specified property rights to natural and environmental resources"¹ according to Anderson and Leal, two of the leading experts of Free Market Environmentalism (FME) and publishers of the book with the same name. One of the strongest arguments to back FME, shown by the above quote, is the creation of an overwhelming incentive to care for these lands which are being profited from. But what benefits them to care for these lands, what gain does this provide to them? The proposed introduction of property rights "enables individuals and organisations to pursue environmental goals in the marketplace"². The obvious answer is profit; through adding a monetary value, the property rights, to these natural and environmental "resources", it means that large corporations (arguably the most significant in instigating real change) are subsequently more likely to contribute to sustaining these Commons. If profit can be produced from these new lands, as a result it becomes more likely for these grounds to be regulated and kept with care. This brings an important viewpoint on making land a valuable asset and makes for an interesting case, as it indicates that in order for something to be protected, it should be owned and therefore tended to by a handful of people to sustain it, claiming the benefits where they can. To reduce the land to something that is owned and belonging to only a few people strengthens this idea of individualism which is rampant in Western thoughts and ideologies. However, this cosmopolitan approach does not necessarily guarantee the safekeeping of these lands and therefore creates an anthropocentric ideology which is not only discriminatory of animals and nature but also to a large portion of humans as in this theory it focuses largely on Western land and resource issues.

Insert
supposedly
according
to FME?

Explain

¹ Terry L. Anderson, *Free Market Environmentalism* (New York: Routledge, 2019)
1<<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429033773>>.p.4.

² Anderson. p.21.

Ref.

In addition, our modern society is facing a huge issue with greenwashing from large companies. An interesting example of this includes the paper straw adopted by many fast food and restaurant establishments most notably McDonalds. The understanding fed to society is that paper straws are better for the environment, which is not incorrect as they can be burnt in special conditions as not to release carbon dioxide, but the general public was led to believe they can be recycled. However, the paper straws are as inefficient as their predecessor's plastic straws due to their sizing and shape. Greenwashing relies heavily on surface level changes targeted at economic gain. The fact that this was the best outcome they found in reducing pollution and waste is a sorry attempt at even trying to convince the people that they want to make change, this highlights their disregard for the public outcry for improvements in favour of surface level changes to protect revenue. This could be the same people who end up investing – because to them their number one priority is all about what is to be gained – in the property rights of the commons. Evident from these attempts of greenwashing, companies who make contracts with money being their main priority cannot be trusted to act in ways that are not determined by self-interest. This could exponentially worsen an already distinctive wealth gap and degrade incentives for the average working-class person as the issues of the individual becomes increasingly more difficult to have any influence, as the problems raised by individuals are largely overlooked. *Good.*

Another aspect vital in solidifying FME, according to Anderson and Leal, is transaction costs³. They draw on the argument stated by economist Ronald Coase, who claims it is usually more efficient, time and money wise, to direct tasks by decree, opposed to the organisation of each contract individually⁴. This makes sense due to organisations already having current similar economic agreements such as the World Trade Organisation. However, this has received several criticisms regarding, favouring to assist already developed countries as opposed to countries that may perhaps need it more⁵. This is a classic example of the sort of empty gestures that are offered set up by institutions who seek to gain even more money than they already have. *Good - say a bit more here.*

Explain. How does it do this?

Through the introduction of one standard contract between all those who interact with the commons, in theory, it creates a sense of equity, as one can't take more than one should which results in enough for everyone. The aim is based in creating equal opportunities which means a certain group of people can't use up all the resources by themselves alone. Unfortunately, this seems to be the real method of survival when in situations like this. Look at the Toilet Paper Crisis of 2020 that happened over covid; when there were rumours of scarcity of toilet paper, the majority of people began to overconsume and stockpiling in fear of the shortage happening to them which in turn perpetuated the shortage, only for it to become cyclical. This is an example of the Tragedy of the Commons. This term will discuss further in this essay. The

³ Anderson.

⁴ 'Transaction Costs Theory - an Overview | ScienceDirect Topics'
<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/transaction-costs-theory>> [accessed 19 March 2023].

⁵ Tejvan Pettinger, 'Criticisms of WTO', *Economics Help*, 2020
<<https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/4/trade/criticisms-of-wto/>> [accessed 19 March 2023].

Western societies are acting as those scrabbling for the toilet paper, while the rest of the shoppers struggle to get any whatsoever.

Immediate action is needed in balancing these scales of inequity back; this action is called justice. It is no longer fair and just to simply treat everyone the same, if what they start with is not the same. The high and costly living standards of the West is no longer sustainable with the current excessive use of non-renewable sources such as fossil fuels used in the generation of energy which consequently ended into the energy crisis of 2021. The current cost of living crisis is a good example of how this using up of the natural resources is now becoming extremely dangerous and again we see the benefits being reaped by the same people and organisations who are the main contributors of it. Equality now means adjusting the positions of these people and giving back to the rest of the world to balance back the scales of equity. This requires the Western world to take a back seat and begin to share their resources with the rest of the world.

Could you relate to leading on Sustainable development here?

The reasoning behind why such areas as the commons need protection can be demonstrated by the Tragedy of the Commons, written by Hardin. For this can argue for the regulation of access to resources such as fishing in order to allow the regeneration of populus. Without this, it could result in a depletion of resources due to overconsumption because when given the chance, humans tend to take more than required of themselves⁶. There begs the question as to why this happens; is it an inherent selfishness or rather an anxiety surrounding the running out of resources which ironically leads to its own demise. It highlights the anthropocentric nature (no pun intended) of this argument. This is by no means a compliment; Callicott's *Triangular Affair*⁷ is evident that when one of the points suffer, the triangle can no longer be sustained and will collapse. Again, this links to idea of the Western world flourishing whilst third world countries are having their resources exported and production unnecessarily increased. This is due to the exploitation of underdeveloped countries to use the land and resources as the enforcement of the environmental regulations in such countries is less effective. This in turn leads to further damage to free trade and free movement of capital as there become fewer resources as the depletion rate increases.

Good-Discuss more human nature - liberalism & social contract position relevant here.

Good point - make it clear that this is your point (not Callicott's).

⁶ Garrett Hardin, 'The Tragedy of the Commons', *Science*, 162.3859 (1968), 1243-48 <<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.162.3859.1243>>.

⁷ Jean-Daniel Collomb, 'J. Baird Callicott, Science, and the Unstable Foundation of Environmental Ethics', *Angles: New Perspectives on the Anglophone World*, 4, 2017 <<https://doi.org/10.4000/angles.1390>>.

Add a concluding paragraph

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