

A Critical Feminist Reading of the Green New Deal

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In response to the global climate crisis and the breakdown of international financial institutions, green new deals are being touted in local, national, regional, and international settings. But the word 'deal' gives the lie to 'new'; for these are mostly trade-off packages designed to hold together the narrow political arena of business-as-usual. This paper will draw on aspects of the *Transatlantic Green New Deal*, the *Global Green New Deal*, as well as British and Australian versions, to argue that they signify a revved-up Hobbesian agreement among men (and a handful of men-identified women) who have come to see that life under global capitalism is more nasty, brutish, and short than ever. The outline of a new 'social contract' is on the table, but only one voice is represented as the masculinist economic hegemony of the global North dictates its future scenarios. Class is reduced to an employment statistic and the systematic exploitations by race and sex-gender that undergird capitalism are ignored. The economic subsumption of a neocolonial South, domestic North, and material nature at large, is subliminal in the green new deal discourse.

The geographic periphery of capitalism, called 'the global South' today, was recognised by Rosa Luxemburg as an indispensable source of labour and markets for the accumulation process. Subsequently, feminists in the North would identify a 'domestic' periphery of capital in women's freely given re-productive labour time. A parallel subsumption of 'the ecosystem' is marked by concepts like the ecological footprint and ecological debt. Each of these (in principle autonomous) fields of life is colonised and milked by the productivist economy resulting in multiple crises.² However, the historically constructed dualism of centre and periphery, subject and object, gives rise to an alternative approach for responding to capital; one based on a re-productive logic, countering the exploitive and unhinged excess of the productivist system.³ The logic of re-production is fully operational and visible in the peripheries of capital, but it is not yet articulated as an economic mode in its own right, since the power of the hegemon keeps it subliminal to public and academic awareness. Instead, the material economy is mystified "as if" it were three distinct discursive spheres - biology; economics 'proper'; the re-productive or 'meta-industrial' sector remaining unacknowledged.

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² Among these, I would contend that the worldwide epidemic of violence on women is equally as significant as the climate and financial crises.

³ The logic of re-production here refers to transhistorical organic processes and should not be confused with the specific Marxist focus on reproduction of the CMP.

I Ecological Economy

'Nature': thermodynamic discourse

Agency Logic	matter/energy trans via plants, animals cyclic flows, relational, regenerative
Benefit Cost	metabolic value, organic re-production nil
Political action	commoning, fit, and eco-sufficiency

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II Productive Industrial Economy

'Man': economic discourse

Historical Agents Logic	entrepreneurs, wage labour reductionist, stock focus, linear
Benefit Cost = entropy x 3 social debt embodied debt ecological debt	exchange and use value exploitation of worker's surplus exhaustion of re-productive labour degradation of natural metabolism
Political action	building reflexivity, structural change

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III Re-productive Meta-industrial Economy

'Woman/Native': no discourse

Historical Agents Logic	meta-industrial carers, peasant, indigenes cyclic flows, relational, regenerative
Benefit Cost	use and metabolic value minimal
Political action	cultural autonomy, sex-gender justice

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The economic practices and self-narrative of the global North and its green new deals proceed by a linear more of the same reasoning, making piecemeal adjustments to the existing productivist model.⁴ This economy is organised around the principle of efficiency - a formula by which dead matter (extracted from life giving metabolic relations) is transformed by dead labour (alienated or technologised), and distributed for consumption as dead product. An alternative economic approach is found in the peripheries of the global South and among domestic care giving labour in the North. It is a re-productive economy, embedded in the cyclic logic of self-sustaining material and energy flows that preserve the metabolism of society with nature. Re-productive provisioning is organised around the principle of eco-sufficiency.⁵ Productive and re-productive economic models co-exist, because capital accumulation cannot occur without re-production. But only a re-productive economy is ecologically and socially viable in the longer term, and this must become the focal point of socio-ecological conversion. This is the domain premise of a materialist ecological feminist analysis,⁶ but it is also illustrated in the following passage from the international peasant movement Via Campesina.

Sustainable local food production uses less energy, eliminates dependence on imported animal feedstuffs and retains carbon in the soil while increasing biodiversity. Native seeds are more adaptable to the changes in climate which are already affecting us. Family farming does not only contribute positively to the carbon balance of the planet, it also gives employment to 2.8 billion of people ... the false solutions proposed in the climate talks, such as the REDD initiative (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation), the carbon offsetting mechanisms and geo-engineering projects are as threatening as the droughts, tornadoes and new climate patterns themselves. Other proposals such as the biochar initiative, no till agriculture and climate resistant GMOs are the proposals of agribusinesses ... It is unfair to use the benefits that small farmers provide to the environment as an excuse to keep polluting as usual.⁷

⁴ Argument adapted from the essay 'Ecological Debt: Embodied Debt' in Ariel Salleh (ed.), *Eco-Sufficiency & Global Justice* (London: Pluto Press / New York: Macmillan, 2009).

⁵ On 'eco-sufficiency': Sustainable Europe Research Institute, UN University, and Finland Futures Research Centre, *Environment and Innovation*, Vienna: SERI, 2006. And for the Friibergh position: <www.earthethics.com/sustainability%20science.htm> (accessed 21 January 2007). For practical applications at the periphery: Planet Diversity Manifesto, Bonn, 16 May 2008, Women and Life on Earth: <www.wloe.org> (accessed 3 August 2009) and the Manifesto: First Continental Summit of Indigenous Women, *Lucha Indigena*, 2009, No. 34. Also Ariel Salleh, 'Is Our Sustainability Science Racist?', Ockham's Razor Program, ABC Radio National, 4 October 2009: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/ockhamsrazor/stories/2009/2702106.htm>

⁶ Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, London: Zed Books, 1986; Shiva, *Staying Alive*; Bennholdt-Thomsen, *There is an Alternative*. On an embodied materialism: Ariel Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, London: Zed Books, 1997, pp. 164-66, 175-78.

⁷ Via Campesina, 'Media Release: Call to Mobilise for a Cool Planet - Copenhagen December 2009': <http://www.viacampesina.org> (accessed 23 July 2009).

Not all areas of the globe are evenly developed or integrated within the capitalist economy, and many strive to remain free of it. Those who do, already understand what a green job really is - one that regenerates ecosystems and bodies through the creation of metabolic value.

The first requirement of any green new deal proposition should be to help people recognise how the historical (eurocentric and sex-gendered) contradiction of humanity versus nature, structures and rationalises practices like economics and science. Such a proposition will identify the political agents of productivism or efficiency rhetoric, on the one hand, and the hands-on practitioners of eco-sufficiency, on the other. It will give people the confidence to reject unsound and unaccountable institutions and to re-examine alternative modes of provisioning - re-productive ones. So far, however, there is little socio-cultural analysis or political reflexivity in the various green new deal programs. The crises - ecological and financial - tend to be addressed in Keynesian fashion as a failure of governments to manage markets. The deals reinstate an overly optimistic 1990s ecological modernisation strategy - calling for marketable technological solutions applied as green welfare in a context of social democratic renewal. Each of these objectives is directed towards saving capitalism without a deeper engagement with its ecological, that is to say, material base.

To be specific: *The Transatlantic Green New Deal* prepared by Worldwatch Institute for the Boell Foundation in 2009 sketches the dimensions of the climate crisis as follows.⁸ It concedes that in industrialised economies, the main emission sectors are - buildings 35 percent, steel manufacture 27 percent, transport 23 percent, with cement and paper production close behind. The paradigmatic measure is that 1 ton of steel will result in 2 tons of CO₂. Meanwhile, Worldwatch cites an International Energy Agency (IAE) estimate that it will cost US\$45 trillion to transition out of oil, a figure put forward by the IAE in support of the nuclear option. World Watch calculates that the US and EU as leaders in world trade, together consume approximately a third of global energy resources and emit approximately a third of greenhouse emissions.⁹ This figure contrasts sharply with estimates from the global South which claim that its own 60 percent of humanity, produces only 1 percent of global emissions.

Worldwatch cautions against 'restarting the engine of consumption' in favour of 'fundamental green transformation'; but it also resorts to the Brundtland doublespeak of 'a new paradigm of sustainable economic progress'. To quote:

⁸ World Watch Institute, *Toward a Transatlantic Green New Deal: Tackling the Climate and Economic* (Brussels: Heinrich-Boell-Stiftung, 2009).

⁹ *Transatlantic*, p. 10.

... properly designed carbon-markets can be effective instruments for meeting a societal goal while tapping into *the discipline and efficiencies of markets* ... But markets for ecosystem protection, whether to conserve the atmosphere, waterways, or species, are not silver-bullet solutions; *the economic logic of markets may not match the scientific necessities of ecosystems*.¹⁰

Unfortunately, the clarity of this last sentence is not maintained throughout the *Transatlantic* blueprint for intercontinental cooperation. If '*the economic logic of markets may not match the scientific necessities of ecosystems*', equally the mathematically derived logic of human engineering also 'may not match the scientific necessities of eco-systems'. This insight should limit the heavy reliance on technological efficiencies in the *Transatlantic Green New Deal*, for as things stand, the text is buoyed up with much scientific rhetoric and management hubris. Take for instance, the line that

... the annual costs of reducing gas emissions to manageable levels would be around 1 percent of global GDP.¹¹

While the motive behind the claim is sound, what is its empirical basis? Reliable data on aviation and agro-industrial generation of greenhouse gases is still hard to get hold of; estimates of the volume of global emissions rely on informed guesswork; and the methodology of translating emissions into dollars is as arbitrary as the GDP construct itself. In any event, the present focus is not so much the accuracy of facts and figures, as on an holistic interrogation of the ecological and social integrity of solutions on offer.

In terms of innovative responses to climate change, the *Transatlantic Green New Deal* puts the EU ahead of the US. The EU's Kyoto target is reported as being based on reducing emissions by 20 percent from 1990 levels by 2020, or by 30 percent if other rich nations will commit to the same level. The EU is pioneering energy efficient renewable technologies, directives to internalise environmental costs into prices, and a cap-and-trade system supporting both labour and natural resources. Looking at across the globe expenditure on economic stimulus packages, incentives and tax cuts, including Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009, only 16 percent has green potential. China, Japan, India and particularly, South Korea, are said to take the lead. Worldwatch recommends gearing up education for scientists, engineers, and technicians; welfare through green jobs; a 'leapfrog' into sounder production methods; energy renewables, water harvesting, smart grids, efficient refrigerants, plug in vehicles, fast rail and bike paths, recycled scrap, and leasing in preference to purchase.¹² There is a faith in energy

¹⁰ *Transatlantic*, p. 21, italics added.

¹¹ *Transatlantic*, p. 5.

¹² *Transatlantic*, p. 11.

savings through dematerialisation, such as nano-broadband and teleconferencing, but at the same time, it is acknowledged by Worldwatch that computers are both 'voracious users of energy' and made of toxic materials.¹³ In other words, the technology has a so far uncounted ecological and possibly embodied debt.¹⁴ Worldwatch recommends that carbon markets and water banks be encouraged where there is no political will to fund ecosystem protection programs directly. The Center for American Progress says that green moves could bring 2 million new jobs into the US economy. But at the same time, Worldwatch warns that competitive 'domestic first' policies are to be avoided, and here, it seeks a coordinating role for UNEP's *Global Green New Deal* and agencies like the ILO. The *Transatlantic New Green Deal* refers to the Millennium Environmental Assessment (MEA) observation that 60 percent of ecosystem services have been destroyed since World War II and its authors conclude that

... in a crowded world whose ecosystems are already in many cases taxed beyond capacity, the continuation of conventional economic activity spells an accelerating deterioration of the natural systems that underpin environmental, human, and economic well-being.¹⁵

However, the reductive instrumental rationality of the Worldwatch approach reappears in the statement that

Eco-systems are 'natural infrastructures' [and that] ... Given their value, investment in protecting ecosystems merit attention in any Green New Deal.¹⁶

Overall, this green new deal statement is heavily infused with psychological denial

If the ecological conceptualisation of the *Transatlantic Green New Deal* is weak, so too, is its sociological framing. The new 'social contract' is on the table, but plainly the masculinist economic hegemony of the global North dictates its terms. Thus, a number of EU states are experimenting with environmental tax revenues, yet as the authors point out, it is important that governments do not create exemptions or worse, subsidise bad practices.

¹³ According to a recycling pamphlet, circulated by the Environment Department of Pittwater Council in June 2009, the toxic materials involved in computer production are - lead, mercury, cadmium, beryllium, polyvinyl chloride, chromium, arsenic, antimony, and brominated flame retardants. They can cause cancer, brain damage, ulceration, dermatitis, kidney, liver and nerve damage.

¹⁴ South Peoples' Historical, Social-Ecological Debt Creditors' Alliance, Quito Statement, 22 August 2007: Online Posting <ieetm@accionecologica.org> (accessed 5 November 2007).

¹⁵ *Transatlantic*, p. 14.

¹⁶ *Transatlantic*, pp. 13-14.

... more can be done to rationalise current tax systems, which tend to make natural resource use too cheap and labor too expensive. Using eco-tax revenues to lighten the tax burden on labor (by funding national health or social security programs through eco-taxes rather than pay-roll taxes) would help lower indirect labor costs and boost job creation without hurting workers' interests.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the political perspective implied in the document is potentially exclusive. Alliances are observed in the EU between the Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and environmental NGOs. And indeed, these can do important work in skills training and support for displaced workers. In the US, the Sierra Club, United Steelworkers Union, National Resources Defence Council, Communications Workers, and Service Employees are talking. But according to Worldwatch, the only other constituencies needing to be brought to the table are 'consumers and business'. Given that entrepreneurial interests shape the entire deal, it is perhaps no surprise to see business getting in a second time round as a 'special interest group'. This is exactly what occurred at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 when Agenda 21 was composed as a new compact among men.

There is no attention to structural differences in opportunity or in skill by class, race, or sex-gender. The unmeasured economic input of the domestic labour sector, and in parallel vein, ongoing accumulation based on cheap resourcing of the global South, are each bracketed out. This is tantamount to leaving the voices of 80 percent of humanity out of consideration. The only moment when Worldwatch's intercontinental brief comes close to acknowledging the existence of these meta-industrial labour groupings at the periphery of capitalism is when ethanol is rejected as an energy alternative because such crops take food growing land away from peasant farmers. The positive climate mitigating effects of self-sufficient provisioning in the global South is not registered, even though it is noted that

... environmentally friendly activities ... are often more labor-intensive than 'brown' capital intensive industries ...¹⁸

Unfortunately, this statement - compatible with a re-productive economy - is made merely in passing. From the eye view of the regular professional consultant, the meta-industrial sector is simply 'other' - and no active economic or political agent is identified at the periphery. Is it any surprise that new deal debates take place again and again; or that new deals end up exacerbating existing social contradictions?

In 2009, the *Joint Statement: Towards a Green New Deal* was issued by the Australian Conservation Foundation, Council of Social

¹⁷ *Transatlantic*, p. 19.

¹⁸ *Transatlantic*, p. 22.

Services, Climate Institute, Property Council, Australian Council of Trade Unions, Australian Green Infrastructure Council, and Institute of Superannuation Trustees.¹⁹ These are familiar political personae, although the Australian Green Infrastructure Council (AGIC) is fairly new.

AGIC is a company formed by a group of industry professionals from engineering, environmental, planning, legal, financial, and construction backgrounds, working in both private and public organisations related to infrastructure ... Its members aim to deliver more sustainable infrastructure by driving market transformation through education, training, advocacy and a sustainable rating scheme for infrastructure projects.²⁰

Prominent AGIC members include the environmental consulting firm GDH and expert tunnel builders Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC). The nation's single most powerful corporate lobby, The Minerals Council is noticeably absent from among the *Joint Statement* signatories. But so also is the Women's Electoral Lobby or similar, as well as any Indigenous Australian organisations.

Omission of the latter political voices skew the *Joint Statement* in a particular way, its focal points being thoroughly productivist, thus:

--- *retrofitted buildings* to enhance energy and water efficiency carried out nationwide in residential, commercial, and public sectors; assistance for low income people as the first to undertake household efficiency audits.

--- *sustainable infrastructure* like public transport and freight rail and small renewable-energy installations - solar, wind, geothermal - to reduce the carbon footprint; special attention to the construction industry and materials sector.

--- *green industries* for the manufacture of internationally competitive new products and services, projecting 500,000 green jobs, with an 'immediate effort invested in green skills for Australia's trades men and women'.²¹

Meanwhile, Australian state Labor governments are permitting the expansion of new coal mines and the mining lobby pressures Labor ministers in the Federal Government to dilute its Carbon Emissions Reduction Scheme (CPRS).

¹⁹ *Joint Statement: Towards a Green New Deal: Economic Stimulus and Policy Action for the Double Crunch*, see: www.acfonline.au.org.

²⁰ For AGIC see: www.agic.net.au. Also: *The Financial Review*, National Infrastructure Conference: Building and Investing in the Future, Hilton Hotel, Sydney 1-2 April 2009.

²¹ *Joint Statement*, p. 3. Compare the thoughts of NSW Green Party MP Lee Rhiannon (private communication): '... it has to mean a lot more than jobs in renewables and a lot more than jobs with an enviro link ... we need to be talking about how work is structured, democracy in the workplace, and global wealth redistribution. The poverty-environmental degradation link and reasons for it being buried in the present debate ...'

The *Joint Statement* is understood as a 'job stimulus package' to build prosperity and insulate the Australian economy from future shocks, but if the economy itself is anthropomorphised as an actor, the moral and historical agency of banks and share traders is not identified. And while the economy may need to be insulated from shocks, the authors do not acknowledge that the ecosystem might also need such protection, particularly since human bodies are in continuous metabolic exchange with it. Just as in the *Transatlantic Green Deal* where social justice becomes an employment ratio, so here, the environment translates as 'energy efficiency'. Nature is conceptualised as a resource, reduced to a numeral, and objectified as 'out there'. Moreover, energy efficiency is said to have 'value' because it will 'reduce the \$ cost' of the CPRS'. This plan is described as generating 'both technology push and market pull' - which is to say that, the business sector will be rewarded from both the turnover in green construction and new profits from emissions trading. The Australian *Joint Statement* considers the simultaneous decrease of carbon pollution and increase of healthy green industries to be a 'double dividend' of 'natural and social capital'.

Capitalist, indeed neoliberal reasoning and 'domestic competitiveness' also marks the ACF (conservationist) and ACTU (trade union) assertion that:

Australia's ambition should be to capture a quarter of a trillion dollars of industry share in what will be a global industry [in green jobs!] worth almost US\$2.9 trillion dollars.²²

This is a clear commitment to export led growth and international free trade in efficient technologies. The priorities are urban consumerism, manufacture, and exchange value.²³ There is no attention to employment options in landscape restoration projects, despite the regenerative or metabolic value of such work. Agriculture is passed over - despite the fact that agro-industry has massive emissions; and despite the fact that sustainable small scale farm employment and local food sovereignty is highly desirable. Green Party researcher Louise Crossley has suggested that a Green New Deal index is needed for Australia, but as she also remarks, even the steady-state Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) or measures like the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) rest on the irrational GDP construct.²⁴ Beyond this, ecological feminists point to

²² *Joint Statement*, p. 2.

²³ Australian Council of Trade Unions, *Green Gold Rush: The Future of Australia's Green Collar Economy* (Melbourne: ACTU, 2008); and for a core Australian Green Party statement: Christine Milne, *Re-Energising Australia* (Canberra: AGP, 2007).

²⁴ Louise Crossley, 'Discussion paper: Green New Deal: Ecology, Economy, Democracy', Green Institute, Melbourne, May 2009.

systemic errors introduced by sex-gender illiteracy in indices like the UNSNA, ISEW, HDI and GPI.²⁵

The implosion of global finance is sometimes put down to 'human greed', but this formulation essentialises humanity, overlooking key structural differences inside of societies. In parallel vein, the environmental crisis is a case of 'unsecured ecological credit', but not everyone everywhere has abused this line of credit or mortgaged the earth. The key drivers of this mortgage are the masters of global finance - a very specific class - along with their advisers, and even unionists and conservationists who appear to believe that capitalism can be made sustainable. But if activists and policy makers are seeking effective strategies for socio-ecological reconstruction, then it is critical to keep social differences upfront. Structural variables like class, race, and sex-gender denote sites of discrimination and deprivation; but they also denote specific capacities and skill-sets, which may be relevant to the preservation of life-support-systems - the mode of re-production. To illustrate the case, if 60 percent of global greenhouse emissions are generated by industry, another 20 percent by transport, and a fair proportion by agro-industrial enterprises, why target housewives about saving energy in the home? This is precisely what British Petroleum and other corporates have been doing in Australia with a One Million Women Campaign. Meanwhile, the Rudd Labor Government gives away pollution permits to coal mining companies, instead of taxing coal to fund the transition to a clean economy. The Federal Government also supports forest logging, 80 percent of which cut is exported to Japan for computer paper. Meanwhile, the same government pays the Indonesians through a Kyoto style REDD scheme to preserve trees on farmland as carbon sinks for Australian coal exports. This Labor Party is thoroughly incoherent when it comes to addressing the humanity-nature metabolism.

Public debate in the antipodes has also seen a revival of old style environmentalist talk about global population as a key variable. This is a ruse whereby responsibility is deflected from consumption and pollution levels in capitalist economies and shifted on to women in the global South. As argued already, if 60 percent of humanity in the two-thirds world is responsible for only 1 percent of global warming - why talk about population? It's time to leave productivist reasoning behind and to discuss the metabolic value generated by re-productive economies. In a time when global interconnection and inclusivity is critical to political mobilisation, the analysis of eco-sufficient meta-industrial provisioning models makes good sense for ecological and social justice reasons.

The UK report *A Green New Deal: Joined Up Policies* was launched in 2008 by the New Economics Foundation (NEF). This is certainly a more

²⁵ Marilyn Waring, 'Policy and the Measure of Woman: UNSNA, ISEW, HDI, and GPI' in Salleh, *Eco-Sufficiency*.

thoughtful proposition than the Australian one, but like all such deals, it risks putting the economy back on a growth trajectory.²⁶ The NEF deal is squarely framed by productivist economics, with its emphasis on banking and securities regulation, low interest rates, controlled lending, a Tobin tax on capital movements, minimising tax evasion, and debt cancellation instead of bailouts. Like the Stern Review, it encompasses a managerial agenda of energy audits via renewables, technological efficiency, retrofits, forest protection, and zero waste. But unlike the *Transatlantic Green New Deal* and the Australian *Joint Statement*, the NEF brief considers social lifestyle and living density, community building, local economies and food miles - challenging costly transport distribution networks and refrigeration - an unquestioned norm in the global North. After all, in the words of Tim Jackson of the UK Sustainable Development Commission

... prosperity consists in our ability to flourish as human beings - within the ecological limits of a finite planet ... above a certain point - around US\$15,000 a head, GDP - more growth stops delivering more happiness.²⁷

In 2008, the Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) brought out its *Global Green New Deal*. The press release read: 'Green New Economy Initiative to Get the Global Markets Back to Work'. Designed as a tool kit for governments, it develops earlier work from the G8 study group for the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), the ILO, International Trade Union Confederation, and the International Organization of Employers. It is written with assistance from the European Commission, Deutsche Bank, the World Bank's Global Environment Facility all with an eye to Doha and the G8 summit. The stated goals of the *Global Green New Deal* are: valuing and mainstreaming nature's services into international accounts; generating employment through green jobs; developing policies and instruments for the economic transition. The initiative prioritises - Clean energy, clean technologies, and recycling - Rural energy, renewables, and biomass - Sustainable and organic agriculture - Ecosystem infrastructure - Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) - Sustainable cities, green building and transport. This is certainly a more comprehensive approach than the other proposals, although it is still hinged to the market. In fact, the speculative hyper-economy is offered as a further new deal option:

... US weather derivatives and other insurance linked products are being piloted and bundling numerous smaller projects including

²⁶ New Economics Foundation, *A Green New Deal: Joined Up Policies* (London: NEF, 2008).

²⁷ Tim Jackson, *The Politics of Happiness: A NEF Discussion Paper* (London: New Economics Foundation, 2003), cited in Crossley, 'Green New Deal', p. 6. See also: Tim Jackson, *Prosperity Without Growth? The Transition to A Sustainable Economy* (London: Sustainable Development Commission, 2009) described by one Australian activist as 'globalisation lite'.

cross border ones together, to make them more attractive to investors.²⁸

The UNEP *Global Green New Deal* is brimming with success stories. It notes that already nations in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America have set renewable energy targets; that in China, 600,000 people are employed in the solar-thermal industry; and in India over 100,000 homes are equipped with solar power. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is assisting a hydroelectricity program for Madagascar, and energy generation from sugarcane waste in Kenya. The document talks about 'securing livelihoods' and goes some way towards recognising differential benefits by class - though differential benefits by sex-gender are not registered.

The *Global Green New Deal* is more environmentally grounded than the other propositions, and this reflects its international framing, with attention to rural economies and natural habitat in the global South. It points to the remarkable fact that - 40 percent of the global workforce are farmers and it remarks on the highly destructive impact of agricultural subsidies - amounting to some US\$300 billion around the world annually. As FAO Reports confirm, an irrefutable body of research shows that organic agriculture and integrated pest management is not only more resistant to climate stress but improves soil fertility, biodiversity, water control, carbon sequestration, and crop yields. Further research indicates that organic farming could actually feed the current world population and even a larger one.²⁹ The benefits are doubled where perennial crops are used. Farmers not only receive higher prices for organic produce, especially after certification, but income is saved by not having to buy fertiliser, pesticides or GM seed. In terms of social benefits, organic production is knowledge intensive and enhances community bonding. Even more significant is the fact that the majority of world food producers are women.

The UNEP brief calculates that deforestation is currently responsible for 20 percent of greenhouse emissions and it expects that unless there is immediate intervention, by 2050 the accumulated loss of reefs, wetlands, and forests will be equivalent to an area the size of the Australian continent. It recommends protection for endangered species by 'smart instruments' like 'cap and trade'. It supports marine protection - and points out that reefs provide value in fisheries, tourism, and flood protection. Wetland deterioration is to be mitigated by bio-banking schemes as devised in New South Wales. Yet the local experience is that this scheme takes no account of climate impacts and basically legitimates

²⁸ UNEP, *Global Green New Deal*, London/Nairobi, 22 October 2008.

²⁹ Numerous studies affirm the superior productivity of organic cultivation: FAO, International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security, Rome May, 2007. See also Kirsten Lyons interview, Future Tense, ABC Radio National, 2 April. 2009; Bill Mollison, *Permaculture: A Designer's Manual*, Tyalgum, NSW: Tagari, 1988.

land clearing. Not surprisingly the Australian Minerals Council supports bio-banking and is said to be able to profit from the re-sale of permits.³⁰ In principle, conservation might well become a source of green jobs - yielding use value, exchange value, and 'metabolic value'. To quote UNEP:

The world's 100,000 National Parks and protected areas generate wealth via nature-based goods and services equal to around US\$5 trillion but only employ 1.5 million people.

UNEP puts the 'service value of nature' at a trillion dollars higher than profits generated by the international automobile industry - although it is not clear how this figure is arrived at. In Mexico and in Brazil, thousands of people are now paid to manage watersheds. If nature is 'natural capital', UNEP notes 'the flip side of the coin' will be the massive benefits to be had from 'the green technological revolution' and the 'huge untapped job potential' of managing 'nature based assets'. However, rather than explore the potential for a society-nature metabolism based on the logic of re-production, a thoroughly productivist economic model deepens the subsumption of nature here. In fact, UNEP envisages that the global market for securing environmental products and services can double by 2020. In the words of Executive Director Achim Steiner:

... natural 'utilities' that for a fraction of the cost of machines store water and carbon, stabilize soils; sustain indigenous and rural livelihoods and harbor genetic resources to the value of trillions of dollars a year...³¹

In principle, the *Global Green New Deal* recognises the need to avoid the impacts of a new deal falling on low income, ethnic and Aboriginal groups. For too often, economic rationalisation means the enclosure of indigenous lands, the creation of refugees, and absorption of self-sufficient local livelihoods and autonomous cultures into global capitalism.

So does the current selection of green new deal proposals offer hope for socio-ecological conversion? Conversion to what exactly? And what does it mean actually, to speak of 'a green job'? The one-size-fits-all thinking behind the new deal proposals is worrying, since not all areas of the globe are equally integrated into the capitalist economy, and some are even striving to be free of it. It surely behoves researchers, publics, and politicians to ask: How democratically inclusive are the green new deal proposals under discussion? Are some social groupings 'othered' by it into invisibility? Who is externalised by it? Who is colonised and subsumed? Would this particular deal generate new forms of ecological debt and embodied debt? Who is treated as a victim rather than as skilled re-

³⁰ New South Wales Department of Climate and Conservation: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatspec/publicconsult.htm> (accessed 3 August 2009).

³¹ UNEP, *Global Green New Deal*, media release.

productive labour? How will the deal support eco-sufficient provisioning based on regenerative or metabolic value?

While the *Global Green New Deal* has the advantage of being international in scope, its lens is blurred by the same parochial productivism as the other statements. The emphasis on equality is thus problematic for it is sociologically one-dimensional. There is one standard of emancipation and one criterion of excellence, that of the hegemon. This is a failure of both cross-cultural literacy and sex-gender literacy, and it results in confused policy, like REDD schemes or 'greenhouse development rights'.³² Where IMF funded projects or WTO mandated trade has disturbed the society-nature metabolism of the global South, people's resources are appropriated and their knowledge skills diminished. But in areas where women can feed their communities by means of low impact, self-sufficient farms, they are relatively buffered from the global crises. This is the difference between the quantitative notion of development as understood by the global North and a qualitative one based on an autonomous meta-industrial labour relation with nature. A dollar a day, has a different meaning for a Bangla Deshi farmer with access to common land, than it has for a bag lady sheltering in the New York subway. Too many well meaning professionals miss that profound difference.

In order to roll back the causes of the current ecological and financial crises - both symptoms of capitalist over-production - new historical agents must join the political conversation. But as things stand, the deeply sex-gendered focus on engineering 'infrastructure' and the obsession with 'economic growth' invert the thermodynamic order of nature emptying out its metabolic value. Growth is disconnected from vital re-productive relations and turned into an index of man-to-man exchange. It is a form of social entropy, whereby sociologically complex relationships are reduced to a singular (masculinist) dimension of meaning. This social reductionism parallels the collapse and pulverisation of ecosystems under capitalism with its simplification of self-sustaining material flows as stocks, tradeable biota, or profitable services. Yet, while the causes of this crisis are embedded in long established economic structures, in everyday life, such structures inhabit individual self-concepts, attitudes, and behaviours - especially those of corporate entrepreneurs, high ranking professionals, and the waged elite of labour.³³ Rolling back the causes means contesting the power and legitimacy of this living hegemon; calling the bearers of mal-development to account for their ecological and embodied debts. 'The enemy' so called, is actually

³² P. Baer, T. Athanasiou, and S. Kartha, 'The Right to Development in a Climate Constrained World: The Greenhouse Development Rights Framework', Washington: Heinrich Boell Stiftung, 2007 <www.ecoequity.org/GDRs> (accessed 3 August 2009).

³³ Gerd Johnsson-Latham, *Initial Study of Lifestyles, Consumption Patterns, Sustainable Development and Gender*, Stockholm: Ministry of Sustainable Development, 2006, p. 6. See also Mathias Wackernagel and William Rees, *Our Ecological Footprint*, Gabriola Island, BC: New Society, 1996: <www.footprintnetwork.org> (accessed 20 April 2007).

inside of all who are beneficiaries of capital, so without self-reflexive engagement, the material subsumption will go on.

To resist the superficiality of the green new deal phenomenon, a globally inclusive 'social contract' will be critical, not least because the basis for a sustainable socio-ecological conversion is already prefigured in the unspoken meta-industrial provisioning of the South, of the domestic North, and of nature at large. In contrast to the green new deal, a new social contract must be premised on nothing less than the common sovereignty of energy, land, water, and air. The global justice movement certainly supports such a grounded alternative. It would leave fossil fuels in the earth; assert community control over production; reduce the North's over-consumption; localise food; hold up indigenous' rights; and reparate ecological and climate debts to the South.³⁴ Decolonising initiatives like these provide reality testing for political actors in a global North that is planning its own future structural adjustments. But workshops for sex-gender literacy are needed as well, to highlight the inbuilt discrimination of policies like MDGs, CDMs, GNDs, and indeed, monocultural residues in Left thinking. Capitalism and its crises are preserved by barriers between classes, races, and sex-genders, whereas an economy based on the logic of re-production favours diversity in reciprocity. Ideally, a new social contract will take the form of an earth democracy in which human bodies are understood as part of nature. The class of mothers, peasants, and indigenes, as a result of the labours they do, is acutely aware of this embodiment. But the metabolic value that they catalyse ought to have a place in political economy alongside use and exchange value, and become a guiding principle of the solidarity economy.³⁵ The Left is calling for political action to start from the here and now - and happily, a global majority skilled in ecologically sensitive provisioning is here, right now. Yes, the struggle for 'another globalisation' is more advanced than many realise.

³⁴ Patrick Bond, 'Climate Justice Action', *ZNet*, 24 October 2009. <www.zmag.org/zspace/commentaries/4023> (accessed 24 October 2009).

³⁵ For an application of this strategy, see: European Coordination Via Campesina, 'Reclaim the Fields: European Camp to Cultivate Alternatives, 30 September-4 October, Minerve, France': Online Posting <La Via Campesina <viacampesina@viacampesina.org> (accessed 3 August 2009). The intention is 'to gather people who wish to settle in agriculture, who are young peasants, landless peasants and/or want to recover food sovereignty ... [and to struggle] ... for access to land, for fair agricultural prices, for the social recognition of farmers, against the domination of the industrial farming model and for fair agricultural policies'.