

# INTL 101

## A05 & A06

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# Announcements

- Short essay due on March 4th (Monday)!
- Office Hours. Fridays: 1 – 3 pm. RBC 3131 (GPS Complex).

# 03/01/2019

- Short paper: some tips.
- Key concepts general review of *Part II. Politics and Culture: Conceptions and Ideology of Environment and Nature*.
- Reading review:

Andreas Malm, “The Anthropocene Myth: Blaming Humanity for Climate Change Lets Capitalism off the Hook” *The Jacobin* (2015).

# Short Essay: Prompt

- 3-4 pages. 12 font. Double spaced.
- Write about a topic of your choice related to the environment.
- Answer the questions of the prompt.
- **Use at least one outside academic source.** This outside source needs to deal directly with or relate to your environmental problem
- You should refer to the readings and the key concepts discussed in lecture as they relate to your topic.

# Short Essay: Some tips

- Start your paper writing an **introduction (one paragraph)**. The introduction should cover:
  - Your argument [VERY IMPORTANT!]
  - The focus of your paper. That is, what are you going to explore?
  - Example: *“In this paper I analyze how Madrid restricted traffic in the city center to clean air pollution. I argue that as a result of this measure, the air quality in the city improved exponentially”.*

# Short Essay: Some tips (II)

- **Try to make comparisons** between your case and the readings we had in this course. It could be on any topic: air pollution, sacrifice zones, the commodification of nature, neoliberalism, etc.
- When you use your outside source, give information to your reader about the main argument of the author, as you did in the response paper (in a summarized way if possible).
- **Don't forget to cite!**

# Short essay: Some tips (III):

- In the last paragraph of the paper, **make a final conclusion** to summarize your points.
- Add a bibliography (Chicago Style) with all the works you cited, including websites.
- If you have any doubts, please read the prompt again or send me an e-mail. You can also come to visit me during my office hours.

# Key Concept Review

1. The Organic Conception of Earth and the Rise of the Conquest Mentality.
2. Scientific Progress
3. The Age of Affluence.
4. Sustainability
5. Intellectual origins of sustainability
6. Evolution of Sustainability
7. Neoliberalism vs Social Democracy/Welfare State
8. Consequences of Neoliberalism



# **1. The Organic Conception of Earth and the Rise of the Conquest Mentality.**

# Organic Conception of Earth:

- Before the Industrial/Scientific Revolution there was a organic conception of nature.
- Belief that humans and nature were connected, and that we have to live in harmony with our environment.
- Gendered vision of the Earth. Idea of Mother Earth that has to be protected.
- The scientific revolution and the rise of the conquest mentality changes this view of nature and the Earth.

# Scientific Revolution and the Rise of the Conquest Mentality

- After the Industrial/Scientific Revolution.
- Scientific knowledge of nature's workings □ give us power and dominion over it.
- Conquest Mentality: Earth at the service of man. We are superior to other living things. Utilitarian view of nature.
- Occurring at same time commercial capitalism spreading around world via Euro colonialism.

## **2. Scientific Progress**

# Scientific Progress:

- Idea that scientific expertise would lead to universal human welfare.
- Anti-political. No need for politics, politicians could simply let scientific experts and technicians solve social problems. (The technological fix).
- The technological/scientist Messiah will save us.
- Technocracy: Rule of the experts/scientist. Bacon's "New Atlantis".

## **3. The Age of Affluence**

# Age of Affluence/Ecological Innocence

- After World War II scenario: Rapid economic growth and industrialization.
- General belief in the promise of modernity to create a good prosperous life based on science and technology.
- Shared worldwide. Widespread industrialization everywhere.
- Communist countries also relied on technology and progress to create paradises on Earth.

# Consequences of the Age of Affluence:

- New industries and automobiles contributed to an increase in air pollution worldwide.
- Development of heavier pesticides that remained in the food. Case of DDT.
- Fear of nuclear fallout and radiation. The danger of chemical weapons.
- Protests by the middle class: Environmental Movement.



# **4. Sustainability**

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- 1987 Brundtland Commission Report
- **Definition:** “The ability to meet present needs of people without compromising needs of future generations”.
- **Goal:** Improve quality of human life by understanding limits and constraints of living and non-living resource bases.

## 4. Sustainability (II):

- **The three Es:** Ecology, Equality, Economy. They are linked. Interdependent.
- Understanding that the quest for endless growth depended on low wages, invasive technology, and the destruction of the environment.

## 5. Intellectual origins of Sustainability

# 5. Intellectual origins of Sustainability

- **Anti-colonial movements of 1960s and 70s.**
- **The spread of environmental movement (EJ included) around world:** Shows concern with invasive technologies that don't take into account natural limits, and the unbridled plunder of resources by corporations.
- **The population bomb (Paul Ehrlich) =** Controversial as it implied that poor people were to blame for the environmental crisis. It disregarded the role of the economic system in the process of environmental degradation.
- **UN Declaration of Human Rights, 1947.**
- **Ecological Economics as a field within Economics:** States that there are natural limits to economic growth. It is against the idea of endless growth.

6. Evolution of Sustainability  
(from “sustainable development”, to  
“sustainable growth”).

# 6. Evolution of Sustainability

- From “Sustainable development” to “sustainable growth”.
- Influenced by neoliberalism.
- Whereas development was more integrative and provided a general uplift of the population (considering social and environmental justice), sustainable growth was concerned with economic growth in the GDP.
- The responsibility is on the consumers. Corporations “go green”.

# **7. Neoliberalism vs Social Democracy/Welfare State**



## **Welfare State/Social Democracies (40-80s):**

- Government can improve the lives of peoples and the ecosystem.
- State intervene in the economy. Creates public companies.
- Supports welfare programs for the population: healthcare, education, better salaries, right to unionize, minimum wage, ban of child labor, land reform.
- Prevents people from becoming communist.

- **Neoliberalism:**

- Milton Friedman, School of Chicago (70s-Today).
- Belief that social democracy may lead to communism.
- The market knows best!
- Welfare state has hindered private corporation development and economic growth.
- US competition with Western Europe and Japan.
- As communism agonized, no reason to keep spending on welfare programs. No alternatives.

# **8. Consequences of Neoliberalism**

# 8. Consequences of Neoliberalism

- Privatization of public companies and goods (water, electricity).
- Reduction or elimination of social programs.
- Removal of regularizations.
- Increased inequality, precarious living due to loss of public services.
- Obdurate poverty.
- Ramped up exploitation of natural resources and thus ecological deterioration

# Reading Review

Andreas Malm, “The Anthropocene Myth: Blaming Humanity for Climate Change Lets Capitalism off the Hook” *The Jacobin* (2015).

# Andreas Malm: “The Anthropocene Myth”

1. What does the term “anthropocene” mean? Does Malm support this concept or not?
2. According to Malm, who is/are the responsible for the climate change? Why?
3. Do you agree or disagree with Malm’s arguments? Give specific reasons to back your opinion.

# Anthropocene:

- **The Epoch of Humanity**
- *“The Anthropocene concept suggests that humankind is the new geological force transforming the planet beyond recognition, chiefly by burning prodigious amounts of coal, oil, and natural gas”.*
- According to the Anthropocene theory, the environmental degradation is the result of humans acting out their innate predispositions.
- We are all responsible.

2. According to Malm, who is/are the responsible for the climate change?  
Why?



# Against Paul Kingsnorth

- Kingsnorth argues: *“Is a less palatable message than one which sees a brutal 1% screwing the planet and a noble 99% opposing them, but it is closer to reality.”*

# Malm's Refutation of Kingsnorth:

- 1. The substitution of water mills for steam engines was taken by a small elite in Britain, not by the majority of the planet.
- 2. The industrialization and extraction of natural resources was done through colonialism and imperialism. It was compulsory.
- 3. Workers all over the world are being weighed down by the threat of relocation by foreign capital (example of China).
- 4. Neoliberalism and the ideology of endless growth.
- 5. Advanced capitalist states continue to enlarge and deepen their fossil infrastructures.
- 6. People consume energy differently. Not everybody has the same ecological impact (or footprint).

# Malm's conclusion:

- Ours is the geological epoch not of humanity, but of capital.
- A person's imprint on the atmosphere varies tremendously depending on where he/she is born. Humanity, as a result, is far too slender an abstraction to carry the burden of culpability.
- The appeal to the general population of consumers to mend their ways only serves to conceal the driver.

3. Do you agree or disagree with Malm's arguments? Give specific reasons to back your opinion.