Love Is a Burning Thing: A Review of
Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the
Earth, Edited by Steven Best and Anthony
J. Nocella II

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Love is a burning thing
And it makes a fiery ring.
—Johnny Cash, Ring of Fire¹
Welcome to the struggle of all species to be free.
We are the burning rage of this dying planet.
—Earth Liberation Front, Beltane communique²

I. INTRODUCTION

On May 18, 2005, the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment
and Public Works held a hearing³ on what the FBI considers the

¹ J.D. Stanford Law School; B.A. University of Texas at Austin.
² JOHNNY CASH, Ring of Fire, on Ring of Fire: The Best of Johnny Cash
Columbia Records 1965).
³ Earth Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front Communiqués, in Igniting A
Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth/app., at 498 (Steven Best & Anthony J.
§22 (paper).
4 Oversight on Eco-Terrorism Specifically Examining the Earth Liberation Front ("ELF")
and the Animal Liberation Front ("ALF"): Hearing Before the Senate Comm. on Environment
country's number one domestic terrorist threat: the "converging movement" of "terrorists" attempting "to force their opinions of proper environmental and animal rights policy upon this society." Although some committee members argued for focusing on the domestic terrorist threat posed by anti-abortion bombers, white supremacists, or militia terrorists, Committee Chair James Inhofe (R-Okl.) kept the spotlight on the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). The two-hour

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4. Id. (statement of John Lewis, Deputy Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation).

5. Id. (statement of Sen. James Inhofe, Chairman, Senate Comm. on Environment & Public Works).

6. "All of these cases [abortion bomber Eric Rudolph, Al Qaeda, and Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh] involved the loss of human life. To date, not a single incident of so-called environmental terrorism has killed anyone. It's wrong to destroy property and intimidate people who are doing their jobs—and those who commit these crimes must be brought to justice. But let us not allow ourselves to be blinded to the more serious threats posed by those who have taken innocent lives." Id. (statement of Sen. Frank Lautenberg) also available at http://epw.senate.gov/hearing statements.cfm?id=238235. [I am concerned] that the Department of Homeland Security... should not focus on eco-terrorism at the expense of other domestic terrorist groups, such as the KKK, right wing militias, abortion bombers and skin heads." Press Release, Sen. Jim Jeffords, Hearing Statement on Eco-Terrorism (May 18, 2005) available at http://epw.senate.gov/pressitem.cfm?party=dem&id=237813.

7. For a (very) critical evaluation of Senator Inhofe's career, see Steven Best, Senator James Inhofe: Top Terrorist Threat to Planet Earth, IMPACT PRESS, Winter 2006, available at http://www.impactpress.com/articles/winter06/bestwinter06.html. The hyperbole of the article's title and the acerbic tone of its content (which is not to impugn its accuracy) is likely a response to Senator Inhofe's repeated threats to subpoena Best to appear before the committee and his claim that Best serves as "a conduit for terrorists to the mainstream." ELFF/ALF Hearing, supra note 3. Senator Inhofe also claimed that "Dr. Best, through his writings, speeches, and the ALF website, advocates ALF and their practices, crossing the line between first amendment speech and criminal behavior inciting violence." Id. Of course, the legal standard for incitement is far greater than Inhofe suggests. See Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444, 447-48 (1969) ("[T]he constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press do not permit a State to forbid or proscribe advocacy of the use of force or of law violation except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action. [T]he mere abstract teaching... of the moral propriety or even moral necessity for a resort to force and violence, is not the same as preparing a group for violent action and steering it to such action.") (citation omitted); see also Steven Best, Shawntellis and Scarecrowns: "Ecoterrorism" and the War on Dissent, IMPACT PRESS, Summer 2005, available at http://www.impactpress.com/articles/summer05/bestsummer05.html (analyzing the Senate committee's May hearing).

8. See generally INGRID NEWKIRK, FREE THE ANIMALS: THE AMAZING TRUE STORY OF
hearing featured a deputy assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a lobbyist for the food and beverage industries, a large real estate developer, and an animal testing advocate, all deploring the increasing intensity of radical environmental and animal rights activism.\(^9\)

While the U.S. Senate has been talking, law enforcement has been acting. In January 2006, a federal grand jury indicted 11 activists on 65 counts, mostly arson, for crimes dating back to the earliest days of the North American Earth Liberation Front.\(^1\) The indictment linked the eleven activists to seventeen separate ELF actions totaling $80 million in property destruction, including a 1998 arson at the Vail Ski Resort in Colorado, a 1999 sabotage of a Bonneville Power Administration power line tower in Oregon, and the 1997, 1998, and 2001 arsons at U.S. Bureau of Land Management wild horse facilities in Oregon, Wyoming, and California, respectively. The FBI’s “Operation Backfire,” an “intensive investigation” of radical environmental activism, helped

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secure these indictments. 12

In February 2006, longtime ALF and ELF activist Rod Coronado was indicted for a speech he gave in San Diego in 2003, in which he explained how to build an incendiary device similar to the one used in an arson attack at a mink-farming research facility at the University of Michigan. Coronado was ultimately convicted of this crime. 13 The speech took place a day after the largest ELF action in history, a $50 million arson against urban sprawl at an apartment complex under construction near San Diego. 14 Last December, Coronado was convicted for disrupting a mountain lion hunt in Arizona in 2004. 15 Just a few days later, Christopher McIntosh was sentenced to eight years in prison for an ELF/ALF


arson set at a Seattle McDonald's in 2003.\textsuperscript{16} In January 2006, three Northern California activists were arrested on allegations of plotting ELF bombings against cell phone towers and power generation facilities.\textsuperscript{17} In March 2006, three other Northern California activists were sentenced to six-year and two-year sentences for ELF arsons.\textsuperscript{18}

The FBI considers this string of arrests and convictions a crackdown on eco-terrorism, but many environmental activists are calling it the "Green Scare." Explicitly referencing the McCarthyist Red Scare of the 1940s and 50s, these activists argue that "legislators, property rights advocates and industry spokespeople are using threats and propaganda to crush any public support of underground resistance."\textsuperscript{19} Indeed, when the Senate considers a member of the Center for Consumer Freedom, an unabashed industry front group,\textsuperscript{20} to be an expert on terrorism,\textsuperscript{21} it becomes


\textsuperscript{18} Crystal Carcone, \textit{3 sentenced in ELF terror case: Man, sisters pleaded guilty to arson and attempts to torch buildings}, \textit{Sacramento Bee}, Mar. 18, 2006.


harder to dismiss the “Green Scare” rhetoric as mere hyperbole.27

Entering the fray to help make sense of the “Eco-Terrorism”/“Green Scare” debate is Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth.28 In this voluminous and diverse book, Steven Best, Associate Professor of Humanities and Philosophy at the University of Texas, El Paso, and Anthony Nocella, a social science doctoral student at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, have collected essays by over forty “revolutionary environmentalists” from a wide variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Igniting a Revolution is an ambitious book, attempting to give voice to those outside the mainstream of environmental advocacy, be they anarchists,29 environmental justice advocates,30 Native Americans,31 EarthFirsters and “Elves,”32 direct activists,33 primitivists,34 Black

blocking efforts to help America’s children.”).

21. ELF/ALF Hearing, supra note 3, (statement of David Martosko, Director of Research, The Center for Consumer Freedom) also available at http://epw.senate.gov/109th/MARTOSKO_TESTIMONY.pdf. Martosko asserted that “[t]hose who engage in ‘direct action’ crimes, such as setting fires, detonating bombs, threatening lives, and stalking innocent people, receive demonstrable cooperation and assistance—both rhetorical and financial—from an above-ground support system.” Id. at 1. He mentioned by name People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, the Fund for Animals, and the Humane Society of the United States, and called on Congress to revoke these groups’ tax-exempt status. Id. at 5.

22. Martosko’s claims seems to have gotten through to Senator Inhofe, who at the hearing explicitly linked PETA with the ALF, stating, “Just like Al Qaeda and other terrorist movements, ELF and ALF cannot accomplish their goals without money, membership, and the media. ELF and ALF have received support from mainstream activists in each of these categories. We will learn today of a growing network of support for extremists like ELF and ALF, for example People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.” ELF/ALF Hearing, supra note 3.

23. IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2.


28. Craig “Gritter” Marshall, Attack the System, in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra
Panthers, Jains, ecofeminists, animal liberationists, vegans, freegans, and even Martin Heidegger.

**Igniting a Revolution** follows Best and Nocella’s 2004 book *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?: Reflections on the Liberation of Animals,* which examined the theory and practice of militant activism on behalf of animal rights. **Igniting a Revolution** brings the same approach to tactically similar forms of radical environmental activism, including the actions of EarthFirst!, ELF, and others.

In bringing together these alternative perspectives, the book hopes not only to rescue the environment from the “omnicidal assault... waged by... transnational corporations,” but also to rescue environmentalism from what the editors consider an increasingly ineffective and professionalized environmentalist establishment. Although some of the authors collapse into the tired and simplistic dualism between reform and revolution (which most lawyers reading this review will find inaccurate and condescending), the book succeeds overall in articulating a
challenge to environmentalists to be more inclusive, more passionate, and more challenging to the forces destroying the earth and its inhabitants. Igniting a Revolution makes no attempt to hide the fact that it is a "rebel yell," "a manifesto," "a political intervention to help spread resistance and change." Readers accustomed to the dispassionate rhetoric of environmentalism based on economics, resource management, administrative regulations, and hard science are likely to find the book to be either a breath of fresh air (as this reviewer did) or, alternatively, a diatribe incommensurable with the basic assumptions they hold about environmentalism. But hopefully many readers will also find something in between: a pluralistic respect for not only the diversity of the environment but also the diversity of environmentalisms.

This review will begin by discussing some of the main themes of the book. It will then trace the book’s layout and examine some of its essays in more detail. Finally, it will conclude with a few thoughts about the book’s relevance to this Journal’s audience: legal professionals.

II. GENERAL THEMES

Due to the sprawling subject matter of Igniting a Revolution’s forty-plus essays, it is worth noting some of the book’s overarching themes. Thankfully, Best and Nocella’s introduction does a superb job of framing the discussion of “revolutionary environmentalism” by tracing the historical development of Western environmentalism and articulating the ideologies underpinning a

39. Id. at 9, 24.
40. See Scott Slovic, There’s Something About Your Voice I Cannot Hear: Environmental Literature, Public Policy, and Ecocriticism, SOUTHERLY, Winter 2005 (exploring the different rhetorics of environmental policy and environmental literature). Slovic quotes Charles Wilkinson: “[L]egal language … is bloodless. It seems that attorneys are imbued with an absolute compulsion to wring every last drop of emotion, passion, love, and grief out of every single sentence.” Id. (quoting CHARLES WILKINSON, THE EAGLE BIRD: MAPPING A NEW WEST 10 (1992)). Each section of Best and Nocella’s book begins with a poem. For a discussion of how “poetic tension” may help us mediate our relationship to animals and nature, see homefries, Identity Politics and Poetic Solidarity: Roots of Alliance Between Feminism and Animal/Earth Liberation, in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2, at 387, 391.
41. For another analysis of radical environmentalism and the law, see Keith Hirokawa, Some Pragmatic Observations About Radical Critique in Environmental Law, 21 STAN. ENVTL. L.J. 226 (2002).
new, more radical defense of the Earth. These ideological commitments include leftist politics, social justice struggles, biocentric ethics, skepticism towards reformism, and a tactical interest in direct action and sabotage.

First, revolutionary environmentalism is strongly rooted in leftist politics. Many, if not most, of the authors attribute the ecological crisis to the rapacious appetite of capitalism and the imperatives of a growth economy. Best and Nocella argue, “[R]evolutionary environmentalists] repudiate the logics of marketization, economic growth, and industrialization as inherently violent, exploitative, and destructive, and seek ecological, democratic, and egalitarian alternatives.” For these reasons, they see “green capitalism” as not only an oxymoron, but also a deceptive way of legitimating a system that mandates ecological collapse.

Second, and related, revolutionary environmentalists argue passionately for linking environmental advocacy with social justice movements that challenge the exploitation of the poor, people of color, the global South, indigenous cultures, and women. Because these thinkers recognize the common dynamics of exploitation based on “otherness” and the drive to control that which is different, they argue for a common, unified resistance, both for theoretical and practical reasons. As Best and Nocella argue, “[E]nvironmentalism cannot succeed without social justice and social justice cannot be realized without environmentalism.” The environmental justice movement undoubtedly links these struggles by pointing out the ways that ecological destruction disproportionately impacts poor communities, usually those of color.

Third, revolutionary environmentalists adopt a biocentric worldview that recognizes that natural entities have intrinsic value outside of their utility to human beings. Adopting the principles of

42 For the authors in Igniting a Revolution, revolutionary environmentalism includes, but is by no means limited to, the Earth Liberation Front. Because of the ELF’s high profile within the environmental movement, its controversial media attention, its extensive activism, and its articulate guidelines and philosophy, it plays a central role in the revolutionary environmentalist movement, and hence in this book.
43 Best & Nocella, supra note 58, at 21.
44 Id.
45 Id. at 20.
46 Id. at 13; Toure, supra note 25, at 872-73.
deep ecology, these authors critique the anthropocentrism and dominionism to which they attribute much of our alienation from the natural world. An environmentalism that sees the Earth as nothing more than a set of extractable resources to be managed is incapable of protecting the inherent dignity of the natural world. At the same time, however, revolutionary environmentalists adopt aspects of social ecology, eschewing some of the antisocial and misanthropic tendencies of some deep ecologists.

Fourth, revolutionary environmentalists are skeptical of reform-minded, “mainstream” environmentalism, which they see as incomplete and largely ineffective. Many see the twin institutions of the Market and the State as irrefutably implicated in the Earth’s destruction and therefore conclude that working within these systems cannot solve the environmental crisis. Best and Nocella argue, “Increasingly, calls for moderation, compromise, and the slow march through institutions can be seen as treacherous and grotesquely inadequate. . . . Politics as usual just won’t cut it anymore.”

Fifth, and a consequence of the previous theme, revolutionary environmentalists advocate more radical tactics, such as economic sabotage, monkeywrenching, civil disobedience, arson, and other forms of direct action. Recognizing that environmentalists must

47. See generally, BILLY DEVAL & GEORGE SESSIONS, DEEP ECOLOGY 1985; DEEP ECOLOGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (George Sessions ed., 1995). Deep ecology argues that the environmental crisis is rooted in the anthropocentric worldview that places human beings apart from and above the natural world. Id.


49. Social ecology argues, contrary to deep ecology, that the environmental crisis is rooted in the social and political hierarchies created by capitalism and the nation-state. Adopting the humanism of the Enlightenment, social ecology does not reject anthropocentrism per se. See generally, MURRAY BOOKCHIN, THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL ECOLOGY (2nd ed. 1994); MURRAY BOOKCHIN, REMAKING SOCIETY (1990).

50. Best & Nocella, supra note 38, at 18. For another attempt to bridge the gap between social ecology and deep ecology, see DEFENDING THE EARTH, supra note 12.


52. ECODEFENSE: A FIELD GUIDE TO MONKEYWRENCHING (Dave Foreman & Bill Haywood eds., 2d ed. 1987) (how-to instructions for sabotaging industrial machinery and other inanimate objects).

53. “Direct action” can be broadly defined as acts individuals or groups themselves initiate against a political target, without maneuvering within the legal system, in order to prevent or stop an objectionable practice. This is as opposed to indirect actions, such as electing a representative to work on one’s behalf. Direct action may be extra-legal, involving destruction of property or trespassing, but it also often takes legal forms such as demonstrations and boycotts.” Matthew Walton & Jessica Widay, SHADIES OF GREEN: EXAMINING COOPERATION BETWEEN RADICAL AND MAINSTREAM.
take out the profit motive for destroying the Earth, these radical tactics aim to cause as much economic damage as possible while simultaneously saving real places, animals, and environments from destruction. As Best and Nocella argue, “Direct action is not just a tactic, but rather a process whereby activists develop decentralized and egalitarian politics based on cells... and use civil disobedience and/or sabotage tactics to empower themselves against corporate-state structures and facilitate social change impossible to achieve through pre-approved political channels.” Revolutionary environmentalists defend these tactics as both ethical and effective.

III. STRUCTURE AND TOPICS

Best and Nocella divide Igniting a Revolution into seven sections: the History and Nature of Revolutionary Environmentalism; Sustainability and the Politics of Consumption; Religion and Spirituality; Primitivism and the Critique of Civilization; Repression and Resistance; Direct Action and Beyond; and Social Movements and Alliance Politics. This review will discuss each of these sections briefly, with reference to some of the most exceptional essays.

Igniting a Revolution’s first section, The History and Nature of Revolutionary Environmentalism, traces the movement through its early days with EarthFirst!, through the formation of the Earth Liberation Front, and into a potential “newstream” paradigm that combines the passion of revolutionary environmentalism with the pragmatism of the mainstream. This section also punctuates this historical narrative with reference to the underlying philosophical

54. Best & Nocella, supra note 38, at 331 n.7.
55. Id. at 20-21.
frameworks of radical ecology.

Noel Molland and Davey Garland both provide detailed and engaging histories of the rise of the revolutionary environmental movement in England, beginning with the arrival of the American direct action group EarthFirst! in the UK in 1991. After an attack on peat cutting machinery in Yorkshire in 1992, British EarthFirst! decided to splinter. The EarthFirst! organization would continue to organize public protests and civil disobedience, but those activists who wanted to conduct clandestine “ecotage” (ecological sabotage), property damage, and monkeywrenching would henceforth call themselves the Earth Liberation Front, consciously patterned after the Animal Liberation Front, established sixteen years earlier. The ELF quickly sprung into action. In addition to attacks in defense of peat bogs in England, the ELF spread internationally with actions in Holland, Germany, Russia, Scandinavia, New Zealand, Australia, Spain, Ireland, Sweden, Poland, and, of course, the United States.

Molland thoroughly catalogs the early days of ELF activism in the U.S. starting in 1996. These attacks included basic vandalism of gas stations and McDonalds, sabotage of logging equipment, an arson against the U.S. Forest Service (which the ELF views as complicit with the timber industry), liberations of animals from fur farms, tree spikes in clearcut areas, a firebombing at an animal research lab, a liberation and arson at a BLM wild horse containment facility, vandalism at the Mexican Consulate in solidarity with the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, and an arson at a ski resort that threatened the lynx population in Vail, Colorado. This last action caused $14 million in damage, and put the ELF

56. Molland, supra note 27.
57. Garland, supra note 27.
58. Molland, supra note 27, at 47. The book would have benefited greatly from another chapter in this section starting about ten years earlier with the formation of EarthFirst! in 1989 in the U.S. Although Best and Nocella’s introduction addresses the history of environmentalism in the United States, it does not give the sustained attention to the founding of EarthFirst! in America the way Molland and Garland give sustained attention to the founding of the ELF in the UK.
60. Molland, supra note 27, at 49. For the history of the Animal Liberation Front, see Noel Molland, Thirty Years of Direct Action, in TERRORISTS OR FREEDOM FIGHTERS?, supra note 8, at 67.
61. Molland, supra note 27, at 52-55.
62. Id. at 55-57.
63. Id.
firmly on the radar of the FBI. 64

Mainstream environmental organizations quickly distanced themselves from such actions. In keeping with a long-standing tension, to this day both mainstream and radical groups hurl insults at each other: the radicals dismiss the mainstreakers as “namby-pamby,” and the mainstreamers dismiss the radicals as counter-productive and unrealistic. 65 Most of this Journal’s readers will probably fall on the mainstream side of the split, while most of the book’s readers will fall on the radical side of the split. But Matthew Walton and Jessica Widay’s excellent essay Shades of Green offers hope for bridging or at least blurring that divide. In it they argue for what they term the “newstream.”66 Newstream organizations “utilize traditional activists tactics such as litigation, media coverage, and public demonstrations,” while simultaneously adopting a more radical “no compromise” philosophy. 67 Walton and Widday use the Headwater Forest campaign as a case study in newstream collaboration. Although EPIC and the local EarthFirst! activists did not work together in this campaign, they did work complementarily, with EPIC using litigation and EarthFirst! using tree-sits and demonstrations. 68 In fact, lawsuits have the potential to cause far more economic damage to corporations than a few isolated acts of ecotage. 69 Eschewing some radicals’ absolutist rejection of the legal system as well as some mainstreakers myopic reliance on it, the newstream views “[l]egal tactics [as] simply one strategy at their disposal.” 70

It is unclear how many organizations would fall into Walton and Widday’s newstream, or whether such cooperation would work in the context of the ELF (their article focuses on the less radical EarthFirst!). But if environmentalists can cooperate and bridge the outdated, artificial barrier between the “mainstream” and the “radicals,” the Earth and its inhabitants are that much more likely to survive.

64. Id. at 57.
65. Walton & Widay, supra note 58, at 94-95.
66. Id. at 97.
67. Id.
68. Id. at 96.
69. Id. at 98. Of course, Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure prohibits lawsuits brought “to harass or to cause... needless increase in the cost of litigation.” FED. R. CIV. P. 11(b)(1). This does not mean that legitimate lawsuits cannot work a significant economic detriment to corporations despoiling the Earth.
70. Walton & Widay, supra note 55, at 98.
Much of Walton and Widday’s essay relies on the existence of a radical environmentalist philosophy in addition to radical environmentalist tactics. This section’s essays also probe these philosophical underpinnings of the revolutionary environmentalist movement.

Mark Somma argues, “The political message [of revolutionary environmentalism], obviously derived from its deep ecology base, states that nature matters for its own sake, that non-human life has inalienable rights, and that biodiversity trumps consumerism.” Davey Garland adds that revolutionary environmentalists modified their deep ecological foundations with the political philosophy of social ecology. Although philosophers often see deep ecology and social ecology as mutually exclusive, revolutionary environmentalists, such as the late Judi Bari and the black radicals of the MOVE organization, represent the practical union of the two, fighting simultaneously against speciesism, capitalism, social hierarchy, and ecological destruction.

This section also features one of the book’s most interesting essays: Michael Becker’s defense of the Earth Liberation Front using the philosophy of German thinker Martin Heidegger. It is almost impossible to write about Heidegger without using his dense phrases, and Becker’s essay is no exception. This is not to say that the essay is mere jargon, though. Quite to the contrary, the essay will reward those readers willing to patiently engage the substance of this remarkably challenging and provocative piece. Perhaps more importantly, this essay demolishes the common

71. Id. at 97-98.
72. Mark Somma, Revolutionary Environmentalism: An Introduction, in Igniting A Revolution, supra note 2, at 41.
73. Garland, supra note 27, at 50-60; see also Earth Liberation Front Communiqué, supra note 2, at 408 (“We embrace social and deep ecology as a practical resistance movement.”).
75. Garland, supra note 27, at 60-61.
charge (from both the media and parts of the environmental movement) that the ELF and its defenders are crazy, unsophisticated delinquents or pyromaniacs who just want to break things and start fires.

Employing themes from Heidegger's *The Question Concerning Technology* and *Discourse on Thinking*, and from Native American spirituality, Becker argues that Western society has reduced nature to mere "standing reserve," an "inventory" of resources set aside for human use, "a gigantic gasoline station." By so "challenging forth" nature to reveal itself as a manipulable object of technological control, we "enframe" nature, forcing it to conceal the more mysterious, incaulcable facets of being. Focusing solely on efficiency, using nothing other than calculative thinking, we reduce our environment and its inhabitants to a sort of grid, in which every space is reduced to its usefulness for human ends. In the end (if there ever is one), this process of framing and resource-thinking ultimately reduces each of us to resources, units in a bureaucratic system of control and management.

Resisting this process of commodification and exploitation, the ELF challenges the reduction of nature to mere resources. Contrary to the metaphysics of will, the ELF "frees" nature and animals by literally and metaphorically releasing them to "come into being" in their essences. By letting beings be, the ELF participates in what Heidegger calls *gesehenheit*: releasement toward things, a non-managerial, open comportment towards the natural world. This releasement is a form of "saving" the Earth, which can be seen when "the masked ALF activist reclaim[s] a puppy from a research lab so that it can become a dog rather than a unit of research," or when "an ELF activist... stops the destruction of an aquifer or forest so that it can remain an aquifer or forest

80. Id. at 77-78 (quoting Heidegger).
81. Id. at 75-76, 79-80 (quoting Heidegger).
82. Id. at 75 (quoting Heidegger).
83. Id. at 82 (quoting Heidegger).
84. Id. at 80-81.
85. Id. at 73, 85.
86. Id. at 83 (quoting Heidegger)
rather than become a water or wood resource.”

Becker weaves the ELF’s communiqués throughout his essay, demonstrating the overlapping language and philosophies of the ELF, Heidegger, and indigenous spirituality. In doing so, he demonstrates that the ELF and its supporters, right or wrong, cannot be dismissed as violent thugs, but rather must be engaged as thoughtful individuals, intent on contesting the ideology of the Western will to mastery.

_Igniting a Revolution’s_ second section, Sustainability and the Politics of Consumption, begins with a poem by Rosalie Little Thunder, who observes that “Some people have gone too far/They think they ‘own’ everything.”

Tracing the political and ethical issue raised by Little Thunder, the section then features Robert Jensen’s personal meditation on First World consumption and our daily complicity in environmental destruction and international poverty.

Lauren Eastwood provides an insightful and sophisticated critique of the role that media and advertising play in co-opting resistance movements and greenwashing corporations. Eastwood explains how the corporate media channels revolutionary rhetoric away from social change and into more consumption. Advertising fabricates a mythical rebel consumer by utilizing the same themes, aesthetics, and rhetoric as the radical challenges to consumer society.

Those challenges which are too radical to be co-opted, such as that posed by the ELF, are instead demonized as aberrant and terrorist.

Adam Weissman’s essay provides creative and interesting tips on how to live ecological resistance in our daily lives through “waste recovery” (also known as dumpster diving), the Food Not Bombs movement (in which activists use otherwise wasted food to feed the hungry), wild foraging (in which people obtain their food from wild plants), “rewilding” (in which people adopt “a primal, wilderness-based existence”), gift-based economies like “freecycle” and “really really freemarkets,” squatting and guerrilla gardening.

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87. _Id_. at 84.
88. Little Thunder, _supra_ note 26 at 105.
89. Robert Jensen, _What Is a Morally Defensible Level of Consumption?_ in _IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2_, at 107.
90. Lauren E. Eastwood, _Conquering the Economic Order and Media Construction of Reality, in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2_, at 114.
91. _Id_. at 115-16.
92. _Id_. at 121-22.
on unused land, and holistic medicine. Weismann recognizes that these methods themselves will not save the Earth, but they do provide an opportunity to "immediately demonstrate practical approaches to satisfying our fundamental needs outside of the framework of the worker-consumer lifestyle."

Igniting a Revolution's third section, Religion and Spirituality, features essays that analyze revolutionary environmentalism from a religious perspective. Charlotte Laws analogizes the ALF and ELF's reverence for nonhuman life to that of Jainism, a 3000-year old Indian religion founded on a strict adherence to ahimsa (nonviolence). She also addresses the controversial question of whether direct action is violent. The ALF and ELF have long maintained that their actions are nonviolent because they damage only inanimate property, never human beings. In fact, in thirty years of ALF activism and almost fifteen years of ELF activism, activists have not physically injured anyone, although they have rescued thousands of animals and caused tens of millions of

93. Weismann, supra note 35, at 137.
94. Id. at 128.
95. Laws, supra note 19, at 143.
96. One of the ELF guidelines is "to take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and nonhuman." Earth Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front Guidelines, in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2, at 407. The ALF has an identical guideline. Animal Liberation Front, Animal Liberation Front Guidelines, in TERRORISTS OR FREEDOM FIGHTERS?, supra note 8, at 8; see also Earth Liberation Front, About the E.L.F., in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2, at 407 (referring to "strict nonviolence guidelines"); Earth Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front F.A.Q., in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2, at 407 ("[W]e condemn all forms of terrorism.... We are non-violent."); Earth Liberation Front Communiqués, supra note 2, at 408 ("[W]e do not hurt people, we never have in our long history, and we never will."); Id. at 410 ("Let there be no mistake that this was a non-violent action and the house was searched for any living thing before being set alight."); Id. at 412 ("All E.L.F. actions are non-violent towards humans and animals."); But see id. at 414.
97. Segments of this global revolutionary movement are no longer limiting their revolutionary potential by adhering to a flawed, inconsistent "non-violent" ideology. While innocent life will never be harmed in any action we undertake, where it is necessary, we will no longer hesitate to pick up the gun to implement justice, and provide the needed protection for our planet that decades of legal battles, pleading, protest, and economic sabotage have failed so drastically to achieve.

In a moment of supreme irony during the Senate hearings on the ALF and ELF, New Jersey Senator Frank Lautenberg, after seeing a video clip of Rod Coronado lecturing on direct action, said, "To see this guy here, if he was near me I'd punch him... and I still got a good fist." Only two minutes earlier, Lautenberg had said, "I deplore, as much as anybody here, these violent acts." Then, less than two minutes after threatening Coronado, he said, "I stand against violence." ELF/ALF Hearing, supra note 8. In the course of under four minutes, Lautenberg condemned violence, threatened violence, and then condemned violence again. Id.
dollars in damage to exploitative targets. However, because the Jain definition of violence includes harsh speech and ill will, they would consider much direct action violent. Nevertheless, Laws urges a political coalition between revolutionary environmentalists and Jains. Given the extremely marginal status of both groups in the mainstream political arena, however, it is far from clear that such a coalition would wield much political power.

L.A. Kemmerer uses Christianity to examine the ethics of revolutionary environmentalism. She uses familiar arguments about God’s creation, dominionism, and stewardship to defend environmentalism generally and the biblical story of Jesus upturning the tables of the money changers in the temple to defend direct action specifically. Although the comparison seems a bit forced at times, her essay makes an interesting Christian case for revolutionary environmentalism.

In an interesting convergence of spirituality and politics, Wanbli Watake and Paula Ostrovsky argue for Native American spirituality while highlighting the injustices of Native American activist Leonard Peltier’s incarceration. Upon first read, this political essay on Peltier seems out of place in a section on religion, but a more careful reading demonstrates the crucial insight of Native American spirituality: “Our lives and struggles are always connected to the land,” a land that has incredible spiritual significance for indigenous peoples.

The section closes with Jim Mason’s engaging essay on “the
animal question." Mason argues that environmentalists have tended to ignore how we treat animals in slaughterhouses and vivisection laboratories, preferring instead to focus instead on more abstract systems and processes. Mason argues that because animals have figured so prominently in the development of human consciousness, we need to return to this more primal human engagement with animals and nature. He traces our alienation to the dualism and dominionism inherent in modern Western religions. At the same time, however, consciously or not, Mason reiterates an ecological version of the Edenic myth: primal people once lived "in and with nature"; our Fall came with the advent of the agricultural worldview that "nudged people from seeing animals as spiritual powers to viewing them as commodities and tools"; and we can find redemption by recognizing "the awesome web of life in the world and the human place in it."

Igniting a Revolution's fourth section, Primitivism and the Critique of Civilization, presents essays critical of progress and civilization. Rob Los Ricos opens his essay with the provocatively strident language found in most of the section: "Progress is a lie used to justify the domination of the world by Europeans and their post-colonial bastard offspring." Unfortunately, this section is very short, and only one essay is longer than three pages. As a result, the theoretical foundations of this section are not well established, despite the contribution of John Zerzan, one of the leading theorists of anarcho-primitivism. Zerzan's essay is a short analysis of the ELF and ALF, praising their liberatory politics for breaking from leftist humanism. Though interesting and often exhilarating, these primitivist essays offer little ground for reconciliation with environmental lawyers, aside from criminal defense for activists like Craig "Critter" Marshall, currently serving time for burning SUVs. Marshall demands nothing less than a

104. Mason, supra note 35, at 178.
105. Id. at 182-83.
106. Id. at 179.
107. Id. at 180.
108. Id. at 178.
109. Id. at 180.
110. Id. at 184.
111. Thaxton, supra note 29, at 192.
112. Zerzan, supra note 29, at 294.
113. Id. at 205.
full critique of all of civilization all the time: "We must attack the totality of industrial society every single day."115 "Every moment that is not being spent on destroying industrial society is tantamount to condoning its destruction of us and every other life form."116 Terra Greenbrier similarly argues that reforms are "crumbs of inclusion thrown to us by the systems that maintain this ongoing fantasy."117 While their critique raises important questions about the roots of and solutions to our environmental crisis, they also seem to draw absolute lines in the sand and put any maneuvering within the system off-limits.

Igniting a Revolution's fifth section, Repression and Resistance, shows what is at stake for those revolutionary environmentalists who put theory into practice. In a compelling and captivating narrative, Jeffrey "Free" Luers traces his personal journey from Sierra Club canvasser to orange-mohawked EarthFirst!er to political prisoner.118 One of the most interesting parts of Free's story is his thoughtful commitment to "try every other method first [before direct action]. After all I'd be a hypocrite to resort to the sword before diplomacy had failed."119 However, after exhausting these alternatives and participating extensively in EarthFirst! forest defense, Free decided to set a fire at an SUV dealership in Eugene, Oregon in 2001. Free was caught, and is currently serving twenty-two years in prison for torching three SUVs.120

The section also features an excellent essay by Josh Harper, one of the SHAC7.121 Harper traces his interest in revolutionary environmentalism to 1986, when, as an 11 year old, he heard a news story on an ALF lab raid in Oregon ("I wasn't an animal liberationist, I was just a kid, but I knew right from wrong, and I knew I was on the side of the ALF.").122 Harper tells a personal and moving story of his years of activism, including numerous violent

115. Id. at 196.
116. Id. at 197. But see arnory starr, Grumpypawriored: What makes our movements white?, in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2, at 383 (noting that some anarchists find the focus on radicalism in "white [activist] culture [to be] an abstract, exclusive, either/or standard that is more distracting or divisive than it is galvanizing, empowering, or productive") (quoting Lunt).
117. Greenbrier, supra note 29, at 199.
118. Luers, supra note 28, at 211.
119. Id. 213.
120. Id. at 222.
121. Harper, supra note 34, at 232; see also note 2, supra, and accompanying discussion.
assaults against him by vivisectors, police officers, and prison guards. Harper also tells of his extensive experience with the legal system: his resistance to a grand jury subpoena, his surveillance by the FBI, and his criminal prosecution under the Animal Enterprise Protection Act.

Journalist Rik Scarce tells a similar tale of grand jury resistance in an essay that will be of special interest to First Amendment lawyers and scholars. Following an ALF raid at Washington State University, Scarce refused to answer questions or turn over notes relating to research he had done for his book on radical environmentalists, including Rod Coronado, the main suspect in the WSU raid. Although Scarce failed to convince the Ninth Circuit to recognize a "scholar's privilege" to grand jury subpoenas, his essay makes an interesting read of the legal process through the eyes of a non-lawyer.

In a stylistic and passionate essay, Ashanti Alston, a former member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army and a political prisoner for 12 years, tells the story of his exposure to the animal liberation movement. One of the most endearing parts of his essay is his recognition of the problems of the pejorative use of the word "pig" in the Black Power movement and his subsequent activism to save an actual pig from slaughter. Highlighting the presence of people of color in the revolutionary environmentalist movement, Alston encourages more recognition of "the connection between human AND nonhuman oppression and the LOUD, SCREAMING similarities between the treatment and maintenance of our oppressions."

In similar fashion, Kanahus Pellkey's essay on the Native Youth Movement Warriors Society articulates a powerful critique of land developers and the ways that Native American youth groups are fighting back. She explains the links between identity and land, while praising the proud indigenous women who "will give birth to

123. Id. at 234-35.
124. Id. at 236-38.
125. Rik Scarce, Speak the Truth, Go to Jail, in Igniting a Revolution, supra note 2, at 257.
126. Id. at 258.
127. Id. at 262
128. Alston, supra note 30, at 224.
129. Id. at 227, 230.
130. Id. at 228 (emphasis in original).
131. Pellkey, supra note 26 at 251.
the future warriors and teach them what is needed to uphold our instructions from the Creator.”

Igniting a Revolution’s sixth section, Direct Action and Beyond, analyzes the efficacy and ethics of the practice of revolutionary environmentalism. It begins with a trilogy of spectacular poems by Jesús Sepúlveda, meditating on human violence and the mysteries of the Earth (“The panther breathes and/ exudes something I can’t explain/ To see in darkness/ is not the same as seeing in darkness”); the politics and ecology of American imperialism (“The center of La Medusa will open an eternal grave/ that the rays of the gods will reach into/ so that the children of their own territory/ may destroy the war machine/ with their hearts in their hands/ and the intense sound of peace”); and the redemptive potential of utopian thinking (“Visualize there being no race rage remedy religion/ nor state/ that the crystals which separate you from art shatter and slowly blur away”).

In addition to the meditative and exploratory poetry that introduces it, the section features a humorous and reflective essay by Derrick Jensen on the ethics and mechanics of toppling cell phone towers. He begins with a challenging question that all environmentalists must consider: “Do you believe that our culture will undergo a voluntary transformation to a sane and sustainable way of living?” Of course, argues Jensen, the answer is no. Presumably even environmental lawyers and direct activists can agree on that. In essence, then, both defend the necessity of compulsion; they disagree over whether that compulsion should be legal (regulations, injunctions, economic incentives) or illegal (threats, violence, economic sabotage). Expressing skepticism towards the effectiveness of legal compulsion, Jensen reflects on

132. Id. at 254, 256.
133. Jesús Sepúlveda, Medusa Trilogy, in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2, at 273.
134. Id. at 274.
135. Id. at 279.
136. Id.
138. Id. at 284.
139. Id. at 286 (“Do we write letters and file lawsuits that we know in our hearts will ultimately not make much difference…? ’”). But presumably the lawyers filing the lawsuits think they will make some difference, as they often have. See Walton & Widday, supra note 53.
the question of violence and property destruction in the environmentalist movement by exploring his curiosity about how to blow up dams and take down the cell phone towers that mar landscapes and kill birds. While Jensen’s essay tries to work through the violence question through narrative exploration, Patrice Jones’s essay attempts a more systematic and ethical inquiry into the use of force, while simultaneously demonstrating the existence of trans-species direct action. Jones unequivocally condemns violence, but defines it in such a way that it does not include property destruction or the use of justified force. Consistent with feminist ethics, Jones argues that we should focus on context rather than abstractions, such that we look to the material justification for actions to determine their legitimacy. Under this framework, “force may be necessary, but violence is never okay.” Force is justified when it is likely to achieve its goals, is the only available option, and is in proportion to the harm it fights. Although Jones goes far in developing an ethics of direct action, she does not directly address the specifics of some of the most challenging questions facing revolutionary environmentalists: is causing physical pain or even death to another person ever a “legitimate use of force” or is it “violence, which is always illegitimate”? In addition to her discussion of violence, Jones argues

140. Unfortunately, Jensen pays little attention to the political dangers of violently forcing an ecological transformation on others. See, e.g., Janet Biehl & Peter Staudenmaier, ECOFASCISM: LESSONS FROM THE GERMAN EXPERIENCE (1995) (warning that certain strands of modern environmentalism, especially mysticism and anthropomorphism, bear frightening resemblances to the ecology of the Nazi regime). Although he uses the term “violence,” Jensen focuses on property destruction, which the ELF and many other radical environmentalists do not consider violence in the first place. Derrick Jensen, supra note 137, at 293.

141. Id.


143. Id. at 323, 324 (“In many instances, property rights are themselves violence” because they “involve[] a process wherein land or animals are forcibly enclosed or wherein people or animals are alienated from the products of their labor.”).

144. Id. at 323.

145. Id. at 324.

146. Id.

147. Id. at 325. Jones addresses this issue to some degree in her discussion of elephant violence against people. Id. at 329. But it is unclear whether such “justifiable force in self-defense” would apply to actions by revolutionary environmentalists on the elephants’ behalf.
compellingly that animals are themselves engaging in direct action on their own behalf. From press-conference-crashing monkeys to attacking sharks to crop-destroying elephants, Jones cites numerous examples of cases in which animals are defending themselves and their habitats against human incursions. Jones does not argue that these animals have a conscious political ideology comparable to that of the ELF or ALF, but she does argue that we owe these “animal rebels” our solidarity and support.

The section also contains a fascinating study in contrast between ecofeminist Marti Kheel and former ELF spokesperson Leslie James Pickering. Kheel’s essay argues against the heroic and militaristic image cultivated by many in the Earth and animal liberation movements. She argues that “the uncritical endorsement of heroic acts by some militant animal and environmental advocates... may inadvertently replicate the violent worldview that the protestors seek to supplant.” By placing nature or animals in the role of damsels in distress, Kheel argues, heroic direct action evokes a patriarchal narrative in which masculine warriors must protect a helpless feminine victim. Kheel also denounces as patriarchal home demonstrations, the means/ends justification for violence, and the common image of the masked ALF activist. She offers an alternative model of direct action based on principles of civil disobedience and strict nonviolence, including such actions as open rescues, literal tree-hugging, tree-sits, and missile-hugging.

Kheel’s ecofeminist critique, however, oversimplifies gender identity, especially given the extensive role played by women in direct action. One of the SHAC7, Lauren Gazzola, is a woman who is alleged to have played an active role in (constitutionally protected) home demonstrations. The main character of Ingrid Newkirk’s factual, often heroic, narrative of the ALF is a woman, known only as “Valerie,” who is depicted wearing the signature

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148. Id. at 328-29.
149. Id. at 330.
150. Kheel, supra note 32 at 306.
151. Leslie James Pickering, People Ain’t Feeling This Bullshit, in IGNITING A REVOLUTION, supra note 2, at 301.
152. Kheel, supra note 32 at 307.
153. Id. at 308-09.
154. Id. at 310-11.
155. Id. at 311-13.
156. See Ecoterrorism Hearing, supra note 10.
ALF balaclava on the book's cover.\textsuperscript{157} Further, Ann Hansen's essay in \textit{Igniting a Revolution} details her successful use of militant, destructive direct action against a distributor of violent rape pornography.\textsuperscript{158} Despite these complications, Kheel's critique is on-point for the underlying assumptions of many direct activists and provides a compelling case against masculinist posturing in the revolutionary environmentalist movement.

Leslie James Pickering's essay seems the quintessential example of what Kheel critiques, utilizing a macho lecture style and liberal use of the word "fuck."\textsuperscript{159} Pickering spins his wheels for five pages without saying much beyond simplistic rejections of "the law," whatever that might be.\textsuperscript{160} In the end, he mentions the interesting work he is doing with his group Arissa,\textsuperscript{161} but he has spent so much space literally cursing other people's work that he has little time left to offer advice on how to build a revolutionary movement that speaks to the mass of people in this country.

\textit{Igniting a Revolution}'s seventh section, Social Movements and Alliance Politics, addresses the possibilities for linking movements against oppression. This section features Maxwell Schnurter's \textit{They Took Ulrike Meinhof's Brain},\textsuperscript{162} an interesting comparison between the Earth Liberation Front and the European leftist militancy of the 1960s and 70s, focusing on Germany's Red Army Faction (RAF) (also known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang). Schnurter argues that just as the RAF used its privileged status from within the European/American system to strike violently against it, the ELF uses "the unearned benefits of anthropocentrism" to lash out at

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\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Newtree}, supra note 8.
\textsuperscript{158} Hansen, supra note 24 at 340, 344-45.
\textsuperscript{159} See, e.g., Pickering, supra note 151, at 302 ("You want to save the Earth? You want to break free? Then get the fuck off your knees.") The essay's tone reminded this reviewer more of his freshman high school track coach than of an ecological visionary. See, e.g., Coach Wolf (1994) ("Come on, Liebman! Get those knees up, you pussy! You expect to run hurdles like that?").
\textsuperscript{160} Id. at 301 ("Fuck the law, it wasn't written for us.").
\textsuperscript{161} Id. at 304-05.
\textsuperscript{162} Maxwell Schnurter, \textit{They Took Ulrike Meinhof's Brain: A Comparative Study of the Causes of and Justifications for Militant Direct Action}, in \textit{Igniting a Revolution}, supra note 2, at 348. The title of Schnurter's essay refers to the attempts made by German authorities to reduce Ulrike Meinhof's political rebellion to a biological deficiency. Lawyers in the U.S. have employed a similar narrative in the case of Billy Correll, an ELF activist with Asperger's Syndrome. Id. at 367 n.14. This is an interesting case of lawyers defending an activist at the expense of the movement, absolving their client of responsibility while casting environmental revolutionaries as biologically deviant. Id.
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human ecological destruction. He argues that by examining the tactics of the militants, their rationales, and the State’s response, we can better discern the political implications of labeling dissidents as terrorists and deviants.

This section also includes an informative essay by Amory Starr on the problems of exclusion within direct activist circles. Although the essay deals primarily with the anti-globalization movement, its critique of method is equally applicable to grassroots environmentalist movements. Starr explains how white attitudes and organizing methods often end up marginalizing people of color. Everything from sitting on the floor, to grumpy faces, to hyper-radical attitudes, to detached coolness, to security culture, inhibit these movements’ ability to make people of color feel welcomed and at home. Cognizing these subtle exclusions may help expand the revolutionary environmental and anti-globalization movements to be more inclusive of the communities they aim to help, and whose support they will need to succeed.

IV. CONCLUSION

As the institutional success of environmental law and policy in the 1960s and ’70s fades into memory, as environmental laws are narrowed by judicial interpretation, legislative retrenchment, or executive hostility, as ecological consciousness is captured by clever marketing and green-washed consumption, as temperatures and oceans rise, as some species teeter on the brink of extinction, and others are slaughtered by the billions, what can we expect besides an escalation in urgency and increasingly radical tactics?

Best and Nocella’s Igniting a Revolution begins to chart this course by providing broad access to the multitude of radical voices rising in defense of the Earth. Every environmentalist should read this book, especially the lawyers and policymakers.

“We have absolutely no faith in the legal system of the state when it comes to protecting life, as it has repeatedly shown itself to care far more for the protection of commerce and profits than for its people and the natural environment.”

163. Id. at 356.
164. Id. at 362-63.
165. Starr, supra note 116, at 375.
166. Id. at 377.
167. Id. at 380, 383, 384, 377.
168. Earth Liberation Front Communiqué, supra note 2, at 417.
The Earth Liberation Front has issued a challenge of sorts to those of us working to protect the Earth and her inhabitants through the legal system. We will either succeed in refuting their pessimism about that system, or we will have to accept a pluralistic view of the environmental movement: that we must use every tool available to halt this impending zoocide.\footnote{For the ancient Greeks, \textit{zoê} was the "multidimensional and multiplicious realm of indestructible being that pervaded both organic and inorganic matter.... [It]n instituting a transnational network of murderous profanity over the sacred..., capitalist life is zoôcidal in that it seeks to colonize any and all spaces in which cultures based on understandings and reverence for \textit{zoê} can thrive." Richard Kahn, \textit{Radical Ecology, Repressive Tolerance, and Zoocide}, in \textit{Igniting a Revolution}, supra note 2, at 394, 401.}