Somewhere between Center and Territory

Exploring a Nodal Site in the Struggle against Vertical Authority and Horizontal Flows

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> The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.
>
> **Karl Marx**

When I was a teenager, my father and I used to go fishing a lot, weekends usually, exploring different rivers, lakes, and inlets of southern and central British Columbia. On one trip, in the mid-1960s, we were trolling for salmon off Vancouver Island, well north of Clayoquot Sound. As we puttered along in our small rented boat, a large ship appeared on the horizon, looming ever larger as it approached us. It was an unusual vessel for, as it approached, we could see that it was towing something very big. Soon we found ourselves face-to-face with a whaling ship returning home to the last commercial whaling station on Canada's west coast. It was towing a large cluster of sperm whales, recently killed in the North Pacific. To us both, the sight was profoundly disturbing, so much so that we gave up our own quest at harvesting the bounty of the local inlet, and put in to the dock—right next to the station's flensing deck. By now, of course, the whales were being hauled up. One at a time, a heavy hook was sunk into each whale's flesh and, as it was pulled in, several people sliced away on each side, winching off long fat strips of whale meat from the bloody and fast diminishing carcass. The sound of pulling, tearing, and ripping was more than either of us could bear. We left quickly, but the sights, and the sounds, linger in the memory still.

Two decades later, my own young family and I were living in the province's interior. We had returned home to British Columbia after many years living in the United States, where, not coincidentally, I had been working on

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international environmental issues including whaling (and finishing my graduate work). On one visit home during that period, I was car-camping and, accidentally happened upon a river valley near Vancouver that I had never heard of, but that had somehow avoided the logging road and the chain saw, and was still "undeveloped." Within a year, my new work involved a local wilderness campaign to "save the Stein." One day, a Native friend and I were driving up Fraser Canyon on our way back from Vancouver to Lytton, the town near the mouth of the Stein. This was, and is, a busy highway, not the least reason being that it is in the middle of major forestry operations. As one particularly heavy truck bore down on us, my friend looked up and watched wistfully as a full deck of freshly cut, old-growth Douglas fir logs swooshed by. "There goes some more of our friends," she said softly, with a pain in her voice that was eerily familiar.

In such situations, it is easy to "understand the world," and to judge it. In British Columbia, commercial whaling is now a thing of the past. The whaling station at Coal Harbour is closed, and a global commercial moratorium is in place. But the struggle to get a global commercial moratorium on the industry was achieved only after many of the world's populations of large whales had been reduced to near extinction (M'Gonigle 1980). Meanwhile, despite decades of growing controversy, the destruction of rare forest ecosystems continues in every corner of the planet today and is, in fact, a mainstay of many economies. In British Columbia, official government policy is explicitly based on the liquidation of the province's remaining old-growth forests as the foundation for provincial economic growth. The result has been a huge economic and social dependency on the destruction of forest ecosystems that are literally thousands of years old, that are, in the words of conservation biologist Reed Noss, the oldest living things on the planet.

For many of us, academics and activists alike, it is important to try to understand this world and, more important still, to try to change it. Since my first brush with the Stein in 1980, my own work has been in this provincial movement, first, as a campaigner for wilderness preservation (M'Gonigle and Wickwire 1988) and, second, as an advocate for a restructured forest industry (M'Gonigle and Parfitt 1994). Clayoquot Sound has been a lead focus for this movement but, despite its prominence today, it has been only one place among many. Although it is informative to assess the specifics of the Clayoquot Sound controversy, it is also useful to approach that controversy from the perspective of the larger provincial movement to which Clayoquot Sound has made a singular contribution.

This, at least, is the experience that I bring. It is the experience of a

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movement that, however haphazardly, is trying to bridge many gaps that seem so frustratingly unbridgeable—gaps between theory and practice, between environment and economy, between local and global. So great are these voids, and especially that between theory and practice, that the field most appropriate for making the bridge—ecological political economy—remains both seriously underdeveloped within the academic world and virtually inaccessible within the environmental movement. Instead, critical ecological thinking remains on the fringes, marginalized in the corridors of power, even in British Columbia, where an avowedly social-democratic government held the reins for almost a decade. The politics of Clayoquot Sound is an excellent manifestation of this seeming contradiction.

An Ironic Litany of Last Places Left

For years, no one outside Tofino talked much about Clayoquot Sound. In the late 1960s, when numerous people began to take the long drive over that twisty gravel road to the pounding surf of the open Pacific, it was to go to Long Beach, and then maybe into town (Tofino or Ucluelet) to get supplies. Few people went to visit Clayoquot Sound. Tourists were interested in the new national park (Pacific Rim) that runs between the two towns. The attractions were surfing and hanging out on the beaches that were occupied in those days by dozens of hippie driftwood shacks. Ocean kayaking did not even exist, and Gore-Tex was not even a gleam in anyone's eye. Even when logging in the area emerged as an issue, it was not Clayoquot Sound, but Meares Island that was in the news.

Like so many other wilderness controversies that emerged in British Columbia in the 1980s, Clayoquot Sound began as a local issue that got a lot of support from a trickle of new arrivals. Many of the hippies on the beach—some of them Canadians, many of them American war resisters—stayed on, as they did in other places in British Columbia, such as the Queen Charlotte Islands, the Kootenays, the Gulf Islands, and the Bulkley River Valley. Intent on turning their backs on a power politics running amok in Vietnam and Chicago, and getting "back to the land," many of these people brought a new sensibility to numerous local places, and a new politics to British Columbia. As they looked around, they saw a swath of clearcuts ranging over the landscape in the wake of the marauding forest industry. The number of valleys that still worked in anything like the "natural" manner was fast diminishing. For those who had sought a spiritual refuge in the wilder world, there was no place to hide. In Gary Snyder's memorable phrase at the time, "We're all on the front lines now."

The protest to stop logging on Meares Island followed a pattern that

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was soon to be familiar. Environmental activists (some from the Sound, some from Vancouver and Victoria) and First Nations worked together to articulate the critical significance of noneconomic concerns such as clean water, habitat for wildlife, an aesthetic environment, and traditional land rights. The opposition to these concerns was local, particularly affected forest workers, but also involved powerful nonlocal economic powers such as MacMillan Bloedel, the International Woodworkers of America (IWA), and the Ministry of Forests. Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, the goal of the provincial government was to contain these local resistances. The technique for doing so involved the creation of a series of planning processes, processes that were all founded on several unchallengeable and very problematic premises. As multi-stakeholder processes, the idea was not to create a cooperative vision of transformation but to hammer out some trade-offs and compromise. Opponents of industrial forestry development were allowed only a very subsidiary position in the planning process among many other interests, muting the potential impact of their vision. Similarly, the terms of reference were never to consider whether to log or not, but just when and where logging would take place. Anxious to avoid economic impacts, the government gave no serious consideration to reductions in the level of cut. Getting the cut out was the unassailable need. Meanwhile, those opposed to that premise had the burden of proof in every way—proving that clearcutting did not "mimic natural disturbances," proving that the planning system did not work or was not fair, proving that there was an alternative. In the process, environmental proponents found themselves needing to demonstrate that there could be new sources of employment. This invariably meant embracing a tourism strategy.

Above all, the basic assumption guiding these processes was that the provincial government must maintain unfettered, final decision-making authority over the outcome of any negotiations. The Sound and the Stein and the Stikine and the Slocan were, after all, Crown lands and provincial (not local) resources. As is the history of environmental decision making throughout the world, impact assessment and planning processes were treated as just a prelude, possibly a source of new information for the government to consider as it deemed fit when it made "its" decision. To those opposed to development, these processes offered some hope that maybe there would be a substantive change, but, in large measure, everyone saw them as a procedural opportunity to stall logging while they built more popular support for their cause. The dramatic aspect of the Meares Island court case of 1985 was that the two Nuu-chah-nulth bands actually obtained a substantive outcome: a temporary injunction that blocked logging.

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At one level, what is at stake here is not difficult to understand: the province and the region need wood to fuel the forestry economy. But this situation characterizes renewable resource industries worldwide because of a simple fact: at the very time when the corporatist economic and political system has achieved global hegemony, it has begun to encounter natural limits that result from its own success. The stage for conflict is thus clear. With the high growth rates of the 1950s and 1960s, industrial corporations, organized labor, and public bureaucracies became attached to the unfettered flow of resources from local ecosystems such as Clayoquot Sound. Meanwhile, with growth rates compounding, pressures continuously mounted on the resource base, exhausting one ecosystem and then moving to the next as a target for development. The myriad resistances that began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s in British Columbia were a response to this universal phenomenon, as people began to see their environment flowing away, and to become committed to protecting the few "last places left." In response, governments that were already concerned about how to deal with the fast diminishing resource base—with the impact of what in British Columbia is called "falldown"—became alarmed about this rising opposition that promised to move the falldown forward. Anxious to keep the wheels of the economy turning, planners strongly opposed a further diminution in the resource base to accommodate disruptive environmentalists, and worried about the higher costs associated with trying to gain access to more remote and less desirable forests and fish stocks. Forestalling these trends has been a major motivation for the free-trade regimes that seek to guarantee unconstrained access to the exploitation of the planet's remaining sources of wealth by limiting the ability of anyone to block such access on nontariff (i.e., regulatory) grounds.

Caught in this tension between insatiable global consumptive systems and deteriorating local productive places, Clayoquot Sound encapsulates the ecological problematic. This is a new problematic in theory as well as in practice. As Edward Soja (1989) has demonstrated, social theory has historically emphasized the temporal, that is, the historical, axis as determinative of human relations to the detriment of the spatial. In contrast, understanding how our institutions fit within the spatial dimension (or don't) is the signal characteristic of an ecological political economy. That such new thinking is happening now is, of course, not surprising given present trajectories. Any attempt to situate social systems within an ecological framework must be attentive to the historical dangers of such "natural" approaches (from social Darwinism to eugenics). Still, many of the problems of twentieth-century ideologies—from liberal individualism to

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communist statism—have stemmed in turn from their lack of recognition of the reverse—that is, of the socially constitutive character of natural and communal spatial contexts. By drawing on the experiences of Clayoquot Sound, and of other wild places in British Columbia, one can begin to appreciate the process of social self-constitution, and to envision the foundation for a new "constitution" for the future. This is, indeed, the task of ecological political economy: "to achieve a consciously self-regulating society in the face of the ecological abyss, to climb off the roller-coaster of run-away social evolution and actively take responsibility for social organization into our own hands" (Atkinson 1991, 180).

The Flow Economy, and Beyond

In light of the headlines of the 1990s, it is difficult to believe that, for the small handful of environmental activists who were active in British Columbia in the 1970s, the forest industry was not yet seen as a problem. In those days, public enemy number one was the province's energy producer, BC Hydro. The forest industry was the prime economic generator for the province back then, but there were still woods to be had. The biggest threats in those years came from the new dams that the power utility was planning or constructing on the Columbia and Peace Rivers (e.g., WAC Bennett, Revelstoke, Site C), and even from plans for coal-fired thermal plants (e.g., Hat Creek). Cheap energy was the province's competitive advantage to attract energy gluttons such as pulp mills. "Build it and they will come" was the philosophy that worked. Today, BC Hydro is almost invisible as an environmental target. The major reason is that the utility changed as a result of these protracted conflicts. Instead of seeking ever more supplies of power, the utility's strategy has shifted to becoming more efficient with the supplies that it already has. Conservation has replaced production as the source of investment. The adoption of a "demand management" approach is also central to any solution to forest industry conflicts today.

In the 1970s, more and more forested regions of the province began to run low of new areas to log. When I first happened on the Stein Valley northeast of Vancouver in 1980, for example, it was the last large unlogged watershed within one hundred miles of that city. Every other low-elevation valley had been roaded and cut to varying degrees. Any trip to Clayoquot Sound today demonstrates this same pattern. Driving into Port Alberni, one passes through Cathedral Grove, a small postage stamp of a park where a few relics of an ancient Douglas fir forest still stand. All around that grove are clearcut hillsides. This contrast with the denuded "working forest" is almost as dramatic for the tourist as are the beleaguered giants on show in

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the natural museum. Driving farther on, one passes through the infamous Black Hole where the landscape has been shaved from valley bottom to mountaintop, and burned. Once at the coast, one enters Pacific Rim National Park. As one follows the coast road along the ocean to Tofino, one can see that the band of old-growth forest is again very narrow, hugging the seashore in a pattern that has led locals to call this "leave strip park."

These patterns are global ones driven by international market demands. Although the forest industry in British Columbia is more than one hundred years old, the level of liquidation has increased dramatically over recent decades. Beginning in the mid-1940s, planning was intended to maintain the sustainability of the resource, and calculations were made of the "long run sustained yield." But these calculations were ignored as the actual level of cut went up year after year. Beyond the obvious pursuit of profits, the process was driven by international pressures that require any successful competitor to become ever more "productive," that is, to produce each unit of output ever more cheaply. In British Columbia, this is done by cutting more and more wood each year with the same, or shrinking, labor force. Thus are both corporate and organized labor caught in a perceived law of economic life, as is the provincial government, which benefits from the revenues generated by a competitive industry. Indeed, as one study concluded, the revenue outputs of the forest are allocated to these three interests in the following proportions: labor, 67 percent; business, 10 percent; and government, 6 percent (Schwindt and Heaps 1996).

At stake, therefore, is not big, bad business versus good, old labor, with a neutral government standing by. It is the whole system—and the dynamics that drive it. And the future is thought to mirror the past. For example, after the NDP came to power in 1991, a new round of planning processes was instituted to avoid the valley-by-valley conflicts over logging, by establishing a network of new protected areas. But these stakeholder exercises were beset with the same unassailable assumptions as in the past, and were thus oriented to ensuring that valuable, old-growth forests were excluded from protection as much as possible, with new parks skewed to high alpine "rock and ice." On Vancouver Island (where Clayoquot Sound is located), despite a target of 13 percent protection of the land base, less than 7 percent of the region's old-growth forests were so designated. Meanwhile, a Forest Practices Code was introduced to make industrial forestry more environmentally benign on the rest of the land base where logging continues. Yet, here too, a 6 percent ceiling was put on the allowable impacts that any new standards could have on the cut level. These limits, and the predictable reluctance to implement those provisions that might even affect this level

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fiber flow, has led to the code's inevitable failure (M'Gonigle 1999). As a result, rather than these processes leading to conflict resolution, they have been roundly condemned (Greenpeace 1997).

Critical explanations of the nature of wealth creation under capitalism have historically concentrated on the social sources of value, in particular, on the exploitation of labor (through the appropriation of surplus value). More recently, the alienation of consumers has also been brought into the equation. An ecological analysis builds on this social critique by pointing to the inevitable social and natural erosion associated with providing the economic flows necessary to support overbuilt institutions of all types. Large-scale institutions can, of course, be sustained by such flows over long periods of time, but they can only be so when they have a proportionally larger territorial base from which to draw. In other words, the sustainability of our modern institutions decreases with increases in scale; present growth inevitably creates the conditions for future decline. This is the ecological contradiction faced by industrial logging in Clayoquot Sound.

The advent of the field of ecological economics in the 1970s provided an important explanation of this contradiction by showing how material production is inherently an entropic process. Situating his analysis in the field of thermodynamics, the early leader of this new field, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, noted that "matter-energy enters the economic process in a state of *low entropy* (i.e., energy that is available to do work) and comes out of it in a state of *high energy* (i.e., waste energy)" (1973, 39). Any economy dependent on continuous flows of material or energy (throughput) is therefore inherently running contrary to the laws of the physical world—its very functioning is running it down. By drawing attention to the thermodynamic costs inflicted on the natural world by any economic system based on high levels of continuous production, ecological economics points to the inevitable need to reorganize the factors of production on some form of steady-state basis.

A number of unsettling implications follow from this analysis. For one thing, the economist's fascination with the benefits of substitution does not fare well unless the substituted good also embodies *less* entropy-generating activity. Substituting old-growth timbers with beams made of wood chips and glue may solve one problem, and cause a huge raft of others in the process. More broadly, from an ecological viewpoint, it is not capitalism per se that is the problem, but any form of high throughput economy. With their highly centralized modes of social organization, reworking the world to maintain a disconnected flow to the center is what the economism of *both capitalism and socialism* have been about. Production-

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ism per se is the problem—and the high-energy/high-capital/resource-intensive industrial processes that make this productionism so productive.

This situation poses intellectual and strategic problems. In Clayoquot Sound, maintaining high levels of cut—what might be called linear throughput or flow—was all important for the government to maintain its tax base, as it was for MacMillan Bloedel to keep its shareholders happy and for the IWA to maintain its wage level. But, from an ecological viewpoint, the key to the problem of economic sustainability is to shift away from these linear flows by creating new, alternative structures that demand less throughput. The objective is necessarily to create economies and institutions that are more efficient, less consumptive, and more durable. This is not the incremental, reformist path of sustainable development, but the radical, reconstructive path of developing sustainability:

> To sustain our social organization, which is addicted to this linear growth, the volume economy achieves its wealth by sapping communities and environments of theirs. The value economy, in contrast, assumes that ecological and community processes are circular. That is, to be sustainable, these processes must maintain themselves, living on the stock of natural and social capital with which they have been endowed, so that they can return long-term stability to the forest and long-term value to the local community. (M'Gonigle and Parfitt 1994, 54)

Because a conservationist ethic to do "more with less" has to pervade all activities, these are precisely the sorts of proposals that environmentalists promote for Clayoquot Sound—preserving large areas intact where no economic flows are extracted, dramatically reducing the overall level of the cut, diversifying the economy into nonconsumptive uses of the environment (e.g., ecotourism), and developing new forest industries (in local woodlots, community-forestry initiatives, and value-added secondary manufacturing). But this low-throughput prescription challenges the prevailing institutions, the modus operandi of which is exactly the opposite. Instead of a transformative ecological strategy, the most recent stage for land-use planning for Vancouver Island is oriented to turning almost the whole forest land base outside the 13 percent protected areas into fiber farms. This is the goal of the controversial "Vancouver Island Resource Targets" plan completed in 2000 under the Ministry of Forests where some 30 percent of the land base is to be irrevocably zoned for intensive production (including accelerated old-growth liquidation) and another 30 percent for business-as-usual industrial forestry.

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In contrast, the great innovation of the Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel was to point forestry planning in the opposite direction by suggesting the need to limit economic activity to what was contained within the limits of ecosystem carrying capacity. This approach—widely known as "ecosystem-based management" (Grumbine 1994)—takes as its starting point the need both to maintain ecosystem integrity (its "composition, structure, and function") and to constrain human activity within that context. Simple enough in concept, and reasonable enough in intent, its implications are to replace an economically driven level of cut (and industry) by one that carefully draws what physical surplus the forest can yield without unsettling its ecological integrity. The issue thus becomes not so much *forest* management as it is *forestry* management: controlling human activities and impacts within the limits of ecosystem sustainability, rather than attempting to contain the consequences of this activity once the damage is done. And, necessarily, the new focus of such management is on sustaining the local community, equitably defined, not feeding the consumptive demands of distant powers.

This is the essential economic challenge of Clayoquot Sound, the shift from a linear centrist economy to a circular territorial one, and it is a prescription that applies very broadly. Despite its ruralness, Clayoquot Sound is sometimes characterized as a center of urban conflict. (See Magnusson's commentary in this volume.) The forest companies that work there are based in Vancouver, and they send their products and profits to Toronto and Los Angeles. The Ministry of Forests that regulates these companies is situated in Victoria, and the environmental activists pitch their messages to New York and Hamburg through a media that is overwhelmingly controlled by urban businesses. All these processes that control the future of the Sound are linear ones of extraction and dissemination. In contrast, the path for *urban* sustainability is the same as for rural, a circular path that lies not in ever more gasoline and wood and food and cash coming in from afar, and more CO_2 and garbage and effluent going out. Instead, a sustainable future entails these centers being progressively cut off from the ability to exploit remote resource regions at will. Were this to happen, greater reliance would necessarily be placed on the city's own circular processes—resource efficiency, materials recycling, industrial ecology, demand management, and so on. In the process, the city would demand less from Clayoquot Sound. Indeed, a shift to limited-input circularity applies to a vast range of sectors, from organic agriculture to preventive health, from energy conservation to participatory governance. It is central to the prescriptions inherent in an ecological political economy.

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The challenges posed here are enormous, implying a basic sociocultural reinvention. Indeed, to be pro-wilderness is not to be naively anti-production. One should not minimize the very real destruction of ecological values associated with industrial logging, especially compared with ecotourism. To equate in any substantive way wilderness tourism with logging as a part of the global capitalist economy is, on ecological grounds, simply inaccurate. Indeed, the major environmental problem associated with ecotourism is the high level of energy resources associated with getting the tourist to Clayoquot Sound, not the tourist's impact once there. Moreover, attempting to stop the destruction of functioning nature is so enormously difficult *in practice* that quibbling over the activists' imperfections *in theory* can easily become self-indulgent and counterproductive. Even though many forest workers share the desire for a different mode of production, many continue to embrace the high-flow ethic that is inherent to the multinational forest industry. It is not easy when it is that industry, and that workforce, that must be phased out not just in Clayoquot Sound, but everywhere.

Steadying an Unsteady State

If an ecological (or, what I would call a territorialist) analysis illuminates the problematic nature of the productivist flow economy, so too is a territorial critique of the centralist state uniquely informative. This is especially so to the extent to which the issue of ecological sustainability is a constitutional one that concerns the structures of economy and politics by which we self-constitute as a social and cultural collective. A territorial approach poses a particular challenge for a left that remains dangerously entranced by a false belief in the possibilities of state control and management. Historically, critical theorists have demonstrated how the activist state has, at best, worked to ameliorate some of the most egregious effects of private economic power (for example, through social welfare or environmental legislation) without challenging the overall momentum of its growth. A territorial perspective adds new depth to this critique by reconsidering the state's past and future character in light of the limits of centralism in all its forms.

Economically, we have characterized local places such as Clayoquot Sound as sources of raw material for the central flow economy. Politically, a parallel characterization applies to these places within the state system. In the face of continued demands for their resources, they have long been denied the political power to resist this exploitation, and have encountered huge obstacles in trying to create anything new that might be taken as precedent applicable more broadly. Historically, political theorists have

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sought to restrain the excesses of centralized public power primarily by dividing it *vertically* between centralized hierarchies (Montesquieu's three branches of legislative/executive/judicial authority) without a comparable awareness that the nature of hierarchical power requires that it be distributed *horizontally* by retaining certain powers at the local level. Despite the philosophical reference to popular sovereignty and the existence of federal systems and local governments, in practice, private and public power has freely accrued within centralized institutions that exercise control over large landmasses. Indeed, the history of the state has been about the gradual displacement of local sovereignty—local customs, local economies, local common property regimes—with new arrangements controlled from the top by a resource- and money-hungry state. From fourteenth-century enclosure legislation in England, to the seventeenth-century rage for beaver hats in colonial France, to twentieth-century "stakeholder" processes in Clayoquot Sound, antiterritorial impulses dominate state action. The motto of the state is clear: Enclose territory; secure the flow; control the community.

The operation of these impulses is nowhere more apparent than in the response to Native claims to authority over traditional lands. This movement is predicated on the very thing that centralist powers cannot tolerate: the recognition of an other territorially based source of legitimacy different from that of the centralist state. The history of land-claims settlements in Canada has foundered on just this point—on the bottom-line objective that First Nations (such as the Nuu-chah-nulth) must relinquish their claim to title in exchange for a grant of limited powers and limited territory from the Crown. For example, the official bargaining stance in land-claims negotiations of the British Columbia government is set by a land-selection model whereby First Nations will not be granted ownership over any more than 5 percent of their traditional territory. In the process, the transformative potential of Native title as an instrument to foster more self-sustaining regional territories for Native and non-Native alike within a reoriented ecological state is not understood, let alone given a moment's consideration.

This has long been a problem in Clayoquot Sound. For example, in March 1994, the provincial government and the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council announced the conclusion of an Interim Measures Agreement (IMA) pending the completion of full treaty talks. This announcement was marred by an immediate disagreement over who had final decision-making authority: the First Nations' chiefs believing that the agreement gave them a formal veto, the provincial premier insisting that the Crown retained the final word. After so many weeks of intense negotiations, and

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a ceremonial announcement, the discovery of this fundamental disagreement would have been laughable if its import were not so significant.

In subsequent years, the Crown has sought to keep the Clayoquot virus from spreading, for example, by insisting that the ecological forestry advocated by the Scientific Panel did not apply to similar forest types elsewhere on the BC coast. The potential of innovative authorities such as the Clayoquot Sound Central Region Board (created under the IMA after the 1993 protests) was continuously constrained by government agencies concerned about the potential loss of control should the Board be successful. My own proposal that the Board be entitled to a first claim on all stumpage payments from forest licensees (in priority to the provincial government) was dismissed by a senior government official as potentially the most dangerous precedent he had seen in his public career. It was only the high international profile of the Clayoquot issue, combined with the sophisticated level of local organization, that was able to achieve specific innovations such as the Central Region Board, the reduction in cut levels, the rise in ecotourism alternatives, and so on. More generally, a deep antipathy continues against any form of public participation and environmental regulation that might seriously restrict natural resource development, and thus reduce economic flows to the center.

While social movements and academic theorists embrace new participatory approaches to environmental management (such as comanagement) and common property approaches for renewable resource ownership, governments of all political stripes resist such structural innovations. For example, mainstream social democrats remain psychologically attached to economic productivism and philosophically attached to instrumental state/Crown management. They are positively repelled by communitarian alternatives. The British Columbia NDP government's Forest Practices Code is a good example of the naive optimism that corporate economics can somehow be made environmentally acceptable, and that this can be achieved through sophisticated public interventionism like the staggeringly bureaucratic, 1,800-page code. Many people were surprised when then premier Glen Clark denounced Greenpeace activists as "enemies of the people" after they denounced the Code. They should not have been, for the Greenpeace critique went to the heart of the NDP's belief that it could "manage" from the top. In the case of more geographically localized social movements such as the Friends of Clayoquot Sound, or the activists in the Slocan Valley who seek greater local power to initiate a program of ecosystem-based transition, the NDP's reaction was intensely negative,

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bringing in the police to enforce continued forest liquidation. For the state-centralist social democrats, their antipathy to preservationist groups is heightened by their equally strong commitment to the forests as Crown, not community, resources.

Why the legitimacy of the state is now in question is, despite two decades of neoconservative assault, not understood. Yet, when the experience of Clayoquot Sound is understood through the lens of ecological political economy, one can begin to envision not only why the state must be deconstructed, but how a postmodern state might be constructed in its place. The key to such a state is that it would recognize, facilitate, and protect both the diverse experiences of ecological/territorial integrity and the community powers to maintain it. In light of the current problematic of sustainability, this is the basis for the state's claim to ecological legitimacy.

In a recent study, a group of us proposed such a solution to BC's forest controversies by allowing local communities to opt into a process of ecosystem-based economic transition (Burda et al. 1997). For those that do, the forest surrounding that community would be moved into a special trust status to be comanaged with the province according to ecosystem- and community-based principles. Beyond the specifics of the proposal is the fact that the very existence of such a tangible new arrangement would create the political space for all interests at the local level—from the logger to the environmentalist to the Native person to the small businessman—to begin to discuss, and create, their common future. New local tenures, new local businesses, and a new stewardship in relation to local forests all would become possible. Although the eventual outcome would be transformative in the approach to the forest land base, the transformation would only occur as communities look at their futures, and decide to take the plunge. Indeed, if the government passed our proposed Community Forest Trust Act tomorrow, nothing would change—until a community put up its collective hand and said, "Me first." The proposal does not merely tinker with the status quo, nor does it pose a radical change overnight. Instead, it proposes a radical change, but it proposes getting there incrementally. This is just the sort of instrument policy makers need. Instead, under the political compulsion to preserve centralism intact, instruments to provide the space in which to create alternatives are not permitted.

The Dialectic of Sustainability

The struggles in Clayoquot Sound can thus be seen as a manifestation of two opposing tendencies that exist as a dialectical tension in human relations: the tension between central and territorial forms of social organization.

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Centrism is manifest in hierarchical organizations built around the imperatives of concentrated power and the exploitation of nonlocal resources, or flows of energy. In contrast, territorial forms of social organization are those that are rooted in forms of social power that are dispersed and on the ground, and can be maintained by local resources. Although a perfectly territorial society (i.e., locally self-sufficient, nonhierarchical, ecologically stable) may never have existed in the past, neither could a completely centralist society ever be created and sustained. Instead, the significance of the tension between center and territory is in the never-resolving dialectic itself.

In the pursuit of social sustainability—whether for Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia, or the planet—one must learn how, on the one hand, the universal tendencies to center power are held in check by territorial institutions and, on the other hand, how centralist institutions might be reconfigured to enforce, rather than erode, territorialist values at all levels. As André Gunder Frank argues, the system of economic transfer and accumulation that has been of so much concern to students of modern capitalism is not specific to capitalism but is, in fact, millennia old (Gills and Frank 1991). Public discourse must venture beyond accepted boundaries set by the market and the state to consider the costs of centrist growth itself. An awareness of the center–territory dialectic thus takes political ecology outside the state-centric and still-productivist focus of both market and traditional left analyses. It is to the generalized *dynamics* of these modes of organizing power that a territorialist analysis looks, rather than at simply the specific structures in which these dynamics may be embedded (including capitalism, the state, cities) at any time and place. In addition, as a prescriptive approach, traditional approaches to development take centrism as the model. In contrast, a territorialist political ecology points to the reverse: to the critical importance of maintaining, indeed strengthening, territorial forces as the counterbalance to centrist power and growth that alone can bring social and ecological sustainability.

In addition to a concern for the horizontal flows of resources from local places to centralized institutions, a territorial analysis points to the *vertical* nature of these flows—from grounded communities up into hierarchies of corporate or bureaucratic or urban power. As we have seen, in practical terms, the complex social dynamic that drives the development of Clayoquot Sound embodies a basic contradiction: the rise of central power is, and always has been, sustained by the territorial structures that precede that rise, and it cannot survive without them. Yet, driven to grow, centralist institutions consume the very territorial processes on which they depend. In doing so, they await their own demise. This is the story of

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countless civilizations past that have risen only to fall. And today, this is the character of the center-driven, entropy-creating consumer society spreading out into every Clayoquot Sound on the globe.

Today, the dominance of centrist forms of power is almost complete. The experience of globalization is a profoundly centrist experience—center power seeking unconstrained access to the most remote sources of potential sustenance—and it defines our experience in a totalistic way. To speak of Clayoquot Sound as an urban issue makes sense in this spatial context—controlled from the city over the region, driven by consumerist multinationals and their associated bureaucracies. Ironically, the recognition of the historical prevalence of this centrist power constrains future possibilities, relegating to the romantic fringes the thought that somehow a territorially defined reality can be reconstituted or, more accurately, constituted anew in the face of the existing trajectory. And yet, if the centrist structure is constructed against the "laws of nature," then there is no alternative but to understand and confront this contradiction, and then to create the impossible.

Conclusion

With so much at stake, it is easy to appreciate why the conflict at Clayoquot Sound, or other similar conflicts to date, remains unsolvable. The problems are structural in nature, and the solutions are transformative in design. To speak of solutions is, of course, problematic insofar as one attempts to lay out some fixed utopian outcome. And yet, to the extent one begins to identify the nature and limits of the centrist forces in which we are enmeshed, the direction for change becomes clearer. Ours is a constitutional crisis, in the largest sense of the word, and to begin to resolve it we must invigorate (and, where we can, reinvigorate) territorial forces at all levels. We can do so not with a program here, and a policy there, but by changing the *dynamics* of our whole social evolution. Many specific strategies for doing this exist: community-based economic development, communitarian devolution of state authority, balanced urban and regional planning, forest tenure and land reform, social movement activism, and so on. In all of these approaches, there is a common need, not to replace, but to rebalance, the relations between center and territory. Only then might we change the world and create a new synthesis to take us respectfully, and with justice, into the ecological age.

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