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REVIEW

Globalizing Green Knowledge?

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Andrew Jamison has been a prolific and influential contributor in the complex and overlapping domain spanning the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK)/Science and Technology Studies (S&TS) environment nexus. He is perhaps best known for introducing the notion of 'cognitive praxis' (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991) as a means of examining the construction of knowledge claims by environmental actors, particularly Greenpeace. His latest book opens with an explanatory autobiographical account acknowledging this work as a 'progress report' [2] on the author's quest for an ecological society, a quest begun in 1970 with his migration from the USA to Sweden. This, then, is a book that reflects upon a lifelong concern with the development and impact of 'green knowledge' in the context of evolving social movement encounters with profoundly unecological social formations in Sweden, Denmark and the USA. It thus promises a considered evaluation of the relationship between science, environment, culture and politics through an engagement with social movement scholars (such as Touraine and Melucci) and social theorists (such as Beck) who prioritize the environment. In particular, there is an explicit commitment to a 'long-term time perspective' as a means of contextualizing the contemporary fortunes of environmentalism and the movement(s) defining and promoting 'green knowledge'.

Jamison argues that contemporary concerns must be engaged with utilizing an historical approach that takes a pluralist or comparative stance and pays attention to the 'underlying cognitive dimensions of societal interactions' [39] in order to identify the contribution of 'different members of the "public"' in the greening of societies through 'a kind of knowledge making' [42]. This imperative arises from an account of the milieu from the 1960s onwards, which produces a familiar anatomy that

notes the tendency for all formalized knowledge domains to fragment along disciplinary and sub-disciplinary lines, resulting in a 'diffusion' of analytical effort and a decline in integrative theorizing. These insights are applied to both the natural and social sciences, underlining the manner in which they engage with knowledge in the context of increasingly global, open systems. Confronted with this challenge, Jamison notes the paradox that 'the more expert knowledge we have, and the more "use" we make of it, the more calamitous the ensuing problems seem to be' [23]. The book begins to map the range of cognitive praxis for producing cross-disciplinary insights needed to realize the ambitions implicit in concepts such as sustainable development, and ecological and reflexive modernization. This is, then, an ambitious and avowedly eclectic [42] project adopting a diverse stance to 'greening' that is informed by attention to culture, gender, socialism, economics, business studies and politics, as well as science studies.

The general hypothesis pursued revolves around the idea that utopian and visionary thought and practices move from social margins to become the 'lifeblood' of societies. We are reminded of Yearley's (1988) point that science itself originated as a social movement challenging established social orthodoxies, an argument applicable to the rise of other movements. The key point here is that during the 20th century, scientific movements have been engaged in a relatively sustained manner by wider commentators and the public only twice: once in the 1920s and 30s, and again in the 1960s and 70s. Significant gains were made during the second engagement, with the increasing respectability within formal institutions and representative fora of green brokers, such as Greenpeace.

Jamison presents the advance of 'green knowledge' as the outcome of a dialectical fusion of three competing meta-theories – conservation, preservation and human ecology [79–80] – each with a distinctive approach towards nature, knowledge, investigative methods and preferred politics. These meta-theories are organized on a thematic timeline: 'awakening' in the 1960s; the 'age of ecology' in the 1970s; becoming 'politicized' by 1979; 'differentiated' in the early 1980s and 'internationalized' by 1993; undergoing 'integration' from 1994 onwards [80–82]. In this manner, a comparatively unified and integrated environmental movement, which consolidated in the 1970s through 'conflictual engagement', assumes steadily more 'constructive' forms through institutional interactions and the extension of 'green knowledge' claims to spheres including social justice and more participatory democratic forms. This transition intensifies the importance of national differences in political structures, political and institutional cultures, and orientation towards public participation. For Jamison, this constellation of historically sedimented biases and practices influence the ways in which conservation, preservation and human ecology combine to influence existing institutions and structures. The key institutions and structures identified are science and technology policy, state regulatory structures, and entrepreneurial institutions. The cases of

Sweden, Denmark and the USA illustrate how different national conceptions of 'nature', political opportunity structures and movement milieus produce different orientations towards the environment and the relevance of a 'green knowledge' that acknowledges 'lay knowledge' [122] and promotes cyclical rather than linear analyses of environmental impacts.

The impact and potential of these synergies are addressed through the 'greening of business' and the important shift from environmental movements to 'networks' operating in a regulatory and business environment dominated by a neo-liberalism, which emphasizes markets and profits while denying the existence of a social collective. While Jamison addresses the critique that this shift marked the co-option of the established environmentalist agenda and core movement actors, his treatment is predominantly positive, with an emphasis on the development of network players advancing green knowledge by promoting innovative practices, such as total product life-cycle environmental impact assessments. Evidence offered in support of this shift includes 'the environmental activities of the World Bank' [127]. Neo-liberalism produces new challenges for 'green knowledge' and its advocates. Jamison addresses these challenges through a consideration of the 'dilemmas of activism' based on ideal-typical categories of community, professional, militant and personal environmentalism [147–75].

This is an engaging and perceptive book, offering many insights and examples. It is, however, written at a level of abstraction that sheds little light on the inter-discursive process of knowledge formation underpinning the potency of 'green knowledge'. Unfortunately, it also lacks the theoretical rigour to advance the green case beyond 'public consultation followed by business as usual', something that could have been achieved through a more sustained engagement with the work of Touraine and Melucci. Analytically, the book is burdened by the assumption that the environmental movement of the 1970s was a unified actor organized around a clearly defined set of knowledge claims. This milieu was never fully coherent and the fragmentation attributed to the 1990s was already under way in the 70s. For this reviewer, what was needed was a more serious consideration of the 'global environmentalism' that has engaged simultaneously with environmental degradation and social and economic justice, in the knowledge that exploitative and expansionist economic relations degrade both human and natural environments. The 'dominant culture' addressed by Jamison is a capitalist one structured around key relations, including the power that resides within all knowledge claims. The writings of self-sufficient communards, anti-vivisectionists and a host of other 'environmentalists' from the 19th century and earlier were clear about these relations. Having the cognitive praxis necessary to 'declare the stakes' is important, but without the necessary social force knowledge can simply gather dust. Jamison closes by citing the 17th-century Diggers' vision of exchange relations unmediated by money as a radical environmental stance that has 'come a bit closer to realization' [181]. Nevertheless, he dismisses the 'anti-globalization movement' as 'splinter organizations' [165] derived

from 'residual cultural formations' [167] harmful to the advance of green knowledge. Part of this movement's rationale has been to question the environmental and social implications of neo-liberal doctrine through the media. Jamison's subsequent engagement with the prominent Danish critic of environmentalism, Bjorn Lomburg, leads him to conclude that 'We can no longer assume that knowledge and qualified scientific argument will win out in the end' (Jamison, 2002). The way is now clear for further work on the relationship between cognitive praxis, green knowledge, and movement as media – an area in which Melucci was particularly strong.

References

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