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perceptive reading of the domain of consumer choice builds on a line of thought he has developed over many years about how people actively objectify themselves into social categories and cultural stances (see his Modernity book and his 1987 volume, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* [Basil Blackwell]).

Trinidad underwent a very rapid boom caused by the advent of extensive oil revenue and then an equally drastic depression caused by neo-liberal so-called "structural adjustment." One of the very smart aspects of this book is Miller's distinctive critique of this process. "Pure capitalism," according to Miller, is the coercive application to vulnerable nations of abstract neoclassical economics, done in an ideological fashion oblivious to local relations. By contrast, local capitalism is richly and profoundly impure, bound up in compromises and reciprocities with society and culture, as the ethnography of Trinidadian businesses shows. This polar contrast is inadequately contextualized, since the island's active consumer capitalism developed with the income from a state-capitalist oil industry that produced a simple commodity for the global market; in this Trinidad resembles nations whose import substitution industrialization has had similar characteristics (i.e., local-transnational hybrids premised on consumer income from export sectors). The idea of "pure capitalism" is promising, however. Neo-liberal restructuring is not just global financial policing, though it certainly is that; it is the academic, unquestioned, almost theological application of neoclassical economic tautologies unbidden into people's lives. In this fanatical sense, the purity of the model has great causal force. In political ecology we are aware of the power of sacred models through the work of Roy Rappaport. Miller's arguments about "pure" versus local capitalism thus ought to interest us, if suitably contextualized in historical political economy; it is one of those fertile ideas that will stimulate research and analysis for years to come.

Capitalism reads well, conveys a lively ethnographic feel for Trinidad, grapples with important issues in original ways, and will stimulate thinking about business and consumption long into the future.

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**The National Environmental Policy Act: An Agenda for the Future, by Lynton Keith Caldwell, Indiana University; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. xx, 209 pp.**

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Professor Lynton Caldwell has a long and distinguished career in environmental policy making and evaluation, and in this book he endeavors to rectify what he perceives has been the misrepresentation of the National Environmental Policy Act and its applicability in both national

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and international contexts. The topic is timely and relevant as we approach the 21st century with a human population of unprecedented size having the capacity to act and interact on a global scale.

In his book, Professor Caldwell aims to clarify the intent of NEPA and demonstrate how, years after its passage, it still offers a sound national strategy for protecting both the U.S. and the global environment. His central thesis is that "NEPA represents a long-term reconfiguration of assumptions and values in American society and government and is representative of a trend emerging throughout the world" (p. 142) and that NEPA has made a "major strategic contribution" toward the 21st century challenge of finding a "viable, reliable institutional structure through which global issues can be safely and effectively addressed" (p. 143). He brings together his personal experience with the formulation of NEPA and his more recent efforts to design international environmental policy to describe how NEPA has influenced public policy in the U.S. and abroad and how it can be better applied and administered. The core chapter titles, "Environmental Impact Assessment," "Integrating Environmental Policy," "International Environmental Policy," and "NEPA and the Global Environment," summarize the areas to which Professor Caldwell devotes attention. In the latter two chapters, Caldwell distinguishes between international policies between and among individual nations and multinational regional issues affecting all or most nations.

The book is dedicated to U.S. Senator Henry M. Jackson, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs who introduced NEPA and helped guide its passage in the Senate in 1969, and it provides valuable information about the process by which the Act came into being. It is an effort to renew the original intent of NEPA as a statement of environmental policy that provides guidance in making decisions where environmental values are in conflict with other values. Throughout the book, Caldwell bemoans the extent to which NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality that the Act created have been treated as symbolic rather than substantive entities. He laments that the purpose of NEPA has been interpreted as merely to direct the preparation of environmental impact assessments without recognition that the Act's precepts have the status of legal principles which can be implemented by executive acts or the courts. He argues that NEPA legislates values "by giving them national visibility and assisting in their implementation" (p. xviii). Caldwell then argues for a broad interpretation of NEPA in international as well as domestic affairs.

The book is filled with interesting and useful information and is thought-provoking. However, two significant weaknesses detract from its value. First, Chapter One is a somewhat confused discussion of environmental values and perceptions, included to provide background to Caldwell's claim that NEPA expresses a maturing of values "widely but not universally" held by Americans. Caldwell also argues that environmentalism is a growing movement with international character and indicates that NEPA will be fully implemented when the latent environmental values of the American public are finally realized by the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of the U.S. government. What he ignores, though, is the evidence that the environmental movement in America has lost both momentum and support (see, for example, Dowie 1995). Though he comments that there is no consensus on how the world works or humans' place in it and occasionally expresses pessimism about the American understanding of or commitment to the environment, he nevertheless argues that NEPA is sufficient to ensure a sustainable and positive future. This latter argument is my main criticism with the book.

Throughout the book, Caldwell vacillates between declaring that NEPA is adequate and demonstrating how its original intent has been thwarted. Though he argues that NEPA articulates core values in American society, he also admits it would not pass if it were proposed in 1997 and that the U.S. has failed to ratify international conventions when they conflict with our economic interests. While NEPA opens the possibility for environmental protection, it does not ensure it and instead relies on the president and the courts for implementation. As Caldwell asserts, some of the problems with the implementation of NEPA are problems of the U.S. political system, such as the move away from an institutional to a personal presidency where individual image is more

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important than carrying out the laws of the land and the continuing practice through which conservative courts limit policy through legal interpretation. However, I would argue that the way NEPA has been interpreted and implemented at home and has contributed to the movement of resource extraction, waste disposal, and similar noxious activities to other countries and U.S. territories reflects the tenuous nature of American environmental values.

Americans support policies and practices that allow us to continue under the illusion that we can have unlimited economic expansion and material consumption and still protect the environment. Like recycling (see Ackerman 1997), NEPA reflects a particular American style of environmental values in that it portrays a favorable image and lets us believe we are doing something, but does not interfere with our self-indulgent pursuit of material wealth. It is unclear what Caldwell means when he argues that NEPA should be fully implemented. Despite his efforts to clarify its intent and his implicit assumption that we can determine now what is sustainable and what is best for future generations, the Act does not specify what implementation would look like. Caldwell suggests that in the future we will be forced to deal with economic, population, and energy issues and that NEPA gives us the proper foundation to do so. I disagree. NEPA has persisted because it has allowed us to avoid the big issues, and any attempts to use it to force attention to those problems at a national level or the implications of our continued exploitation of the people, places, and resources outside the U.S. will fail. Caldwell acknowledges that we may choose not to address the big issues, but he continually returns to discuss NEPA's potential in both national and international contexts. I contend that the lack of political will to fully implement the policy in the U.S. precludes implementation in an international context. Rather, it is the international arena that serves to relieve much of the pressure of environmental protection laws at home. Without that pressure valve, I wonder how the existing U.S. policies would fare. Caldwell's concluding argument for a constitutional amendment for the environment is interesting, but the evidence presented in the book does not lead a reader to accept such a conclusion.

Though filled with insights and information on U.S. environmental policy development, Caldwell's book requires at least some background on NEPA and the policy debates it has engendered as it reads in places like a defense of the Act and the EIS process against specific criticisms, many of which are not discussed in detail and may not be readily apparent even to an educated reader. Certainly, NEPA stands as a model statement of environmental policy. Unfortunately, it can be argued that its continued existence rests as much on the extent to which legislators, presidents, and the courts in the U.S. have been able to support its rhetoric without embracing its purpose as it does on its position as a reflection of shared environmental values. Consequently, though in many respects the U.S. has been a leader in environmental policy, the U.S. example of passing the Act and then carefully constraining its implementation should not be held up as something to be emulated elsewhere in the world.

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