NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

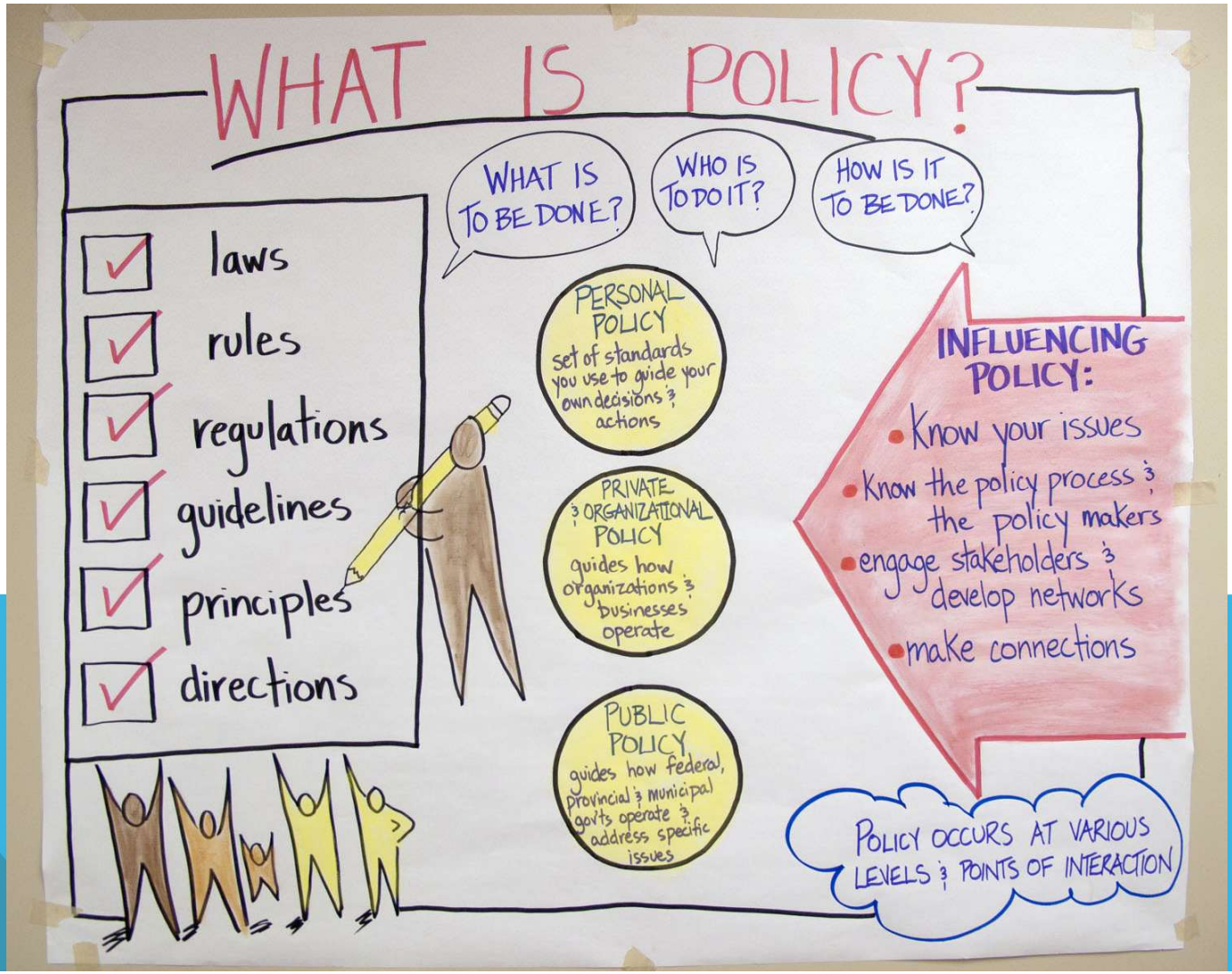
Political Science Today New Directions and Important Cognate Fields

NEW DIRECTIONS
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

I. New Directions in Political Science

NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

1. *Policy Studies* – the analysis of the policy process (procedural), or the ramifications of specific policy areas (substantive). The discipline has several subfields:



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

a. Environmental Policy

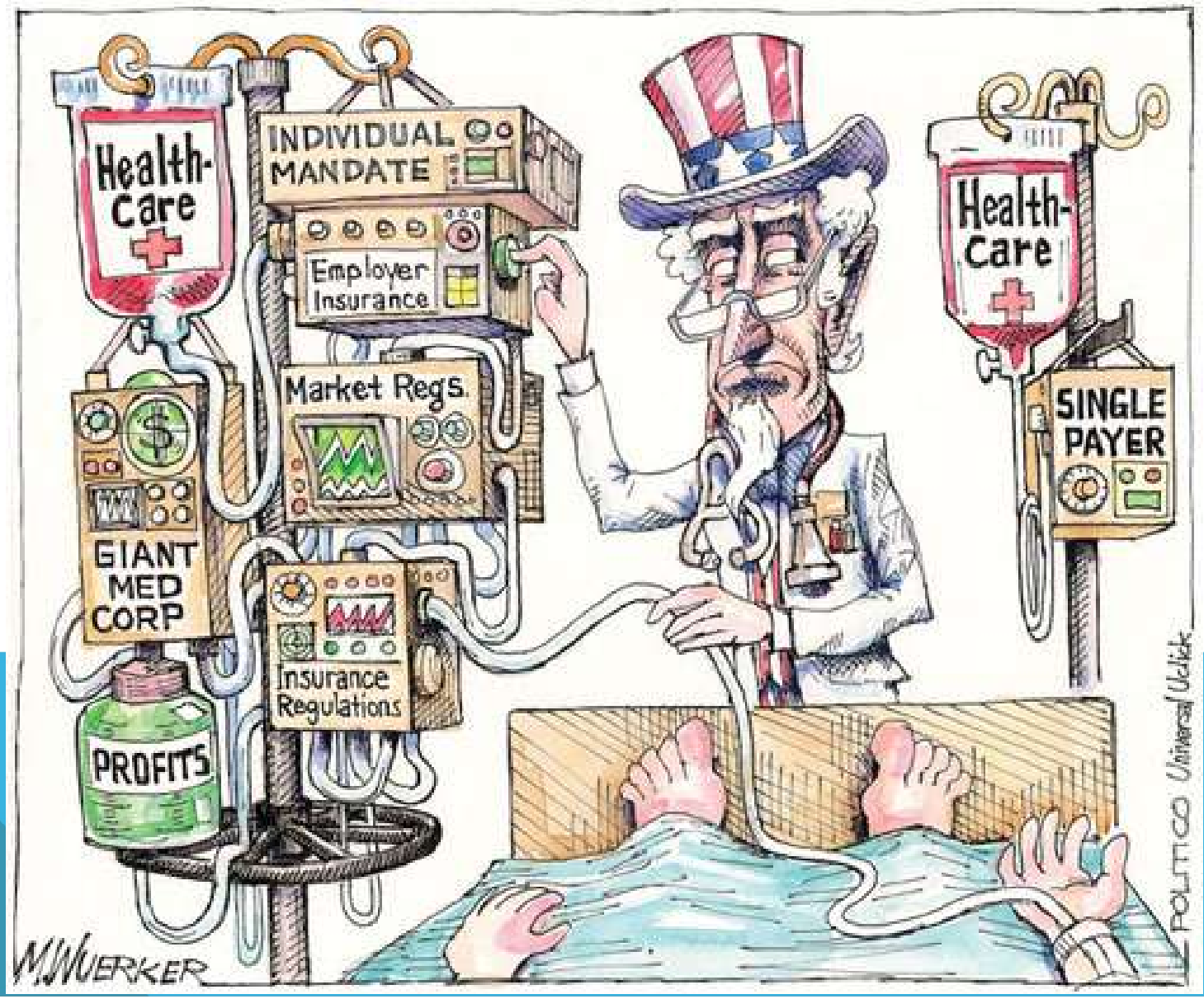
Environmental Policy

Environmental policy refers to the commitment of an organization to the laws, regulations, and other policy mechanisms concerning environmental issues.

These issues generally include air and water pollution, solid waste management, biodiversity, ecosystem management, maintenance of biodiversity, the protection of natural resources, wildlife and endangered species

NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

b. Health Policy



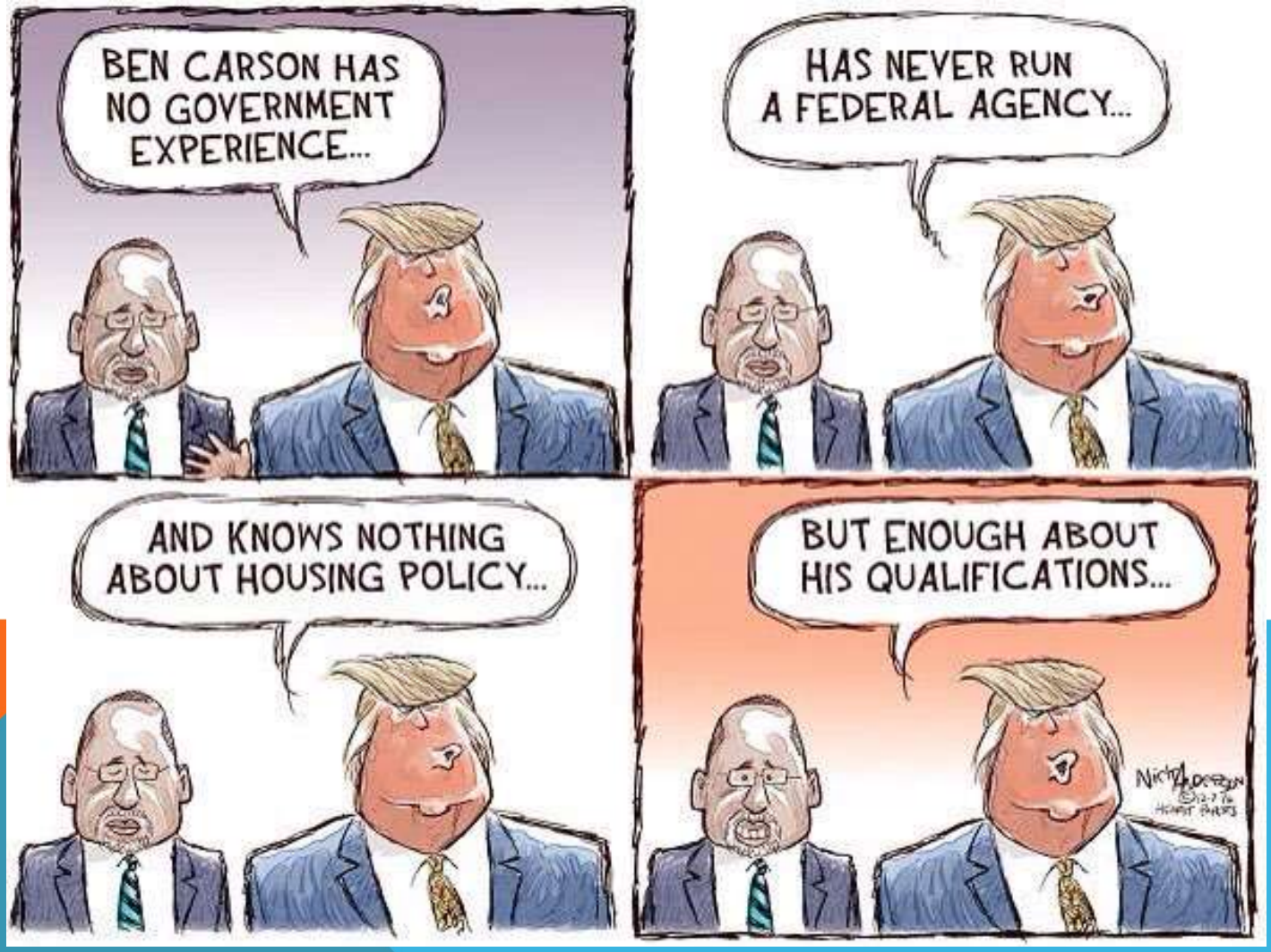
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

c. Poverty Policy



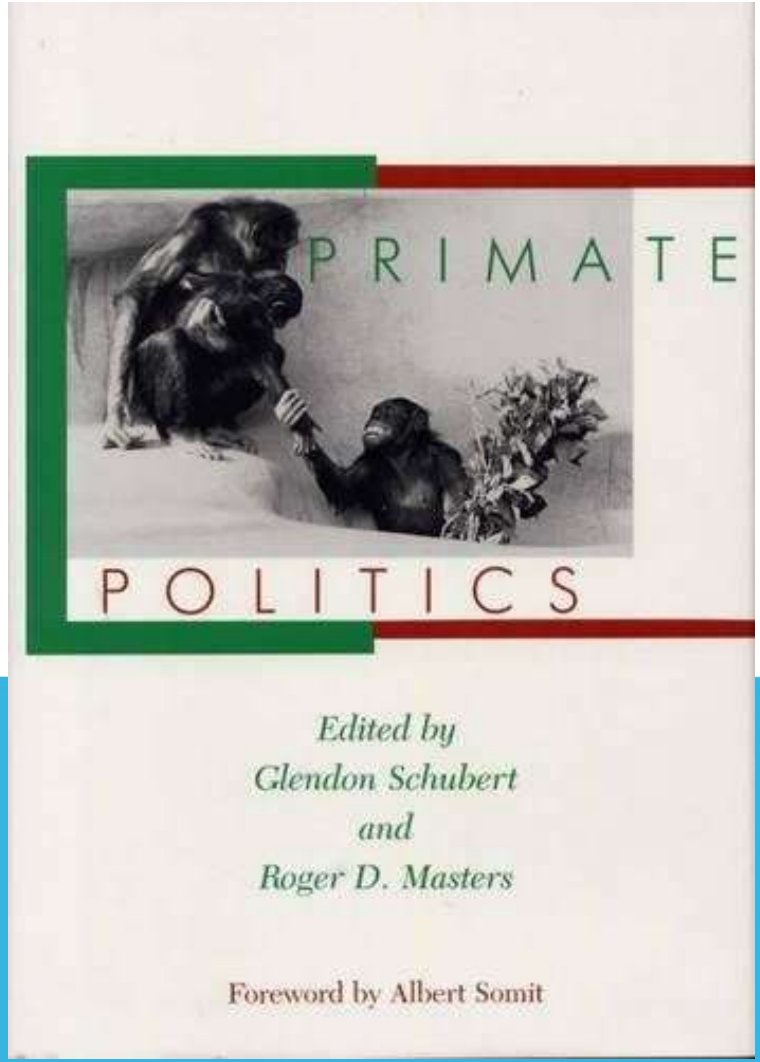
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

d. Housing Policy



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

2. *Biopolitics* – formulated on the notion that all human activity is ultimately biologically based. One well-known analyst, Roger Masters, suggests that political science is the point where the social and natural sciences meet.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

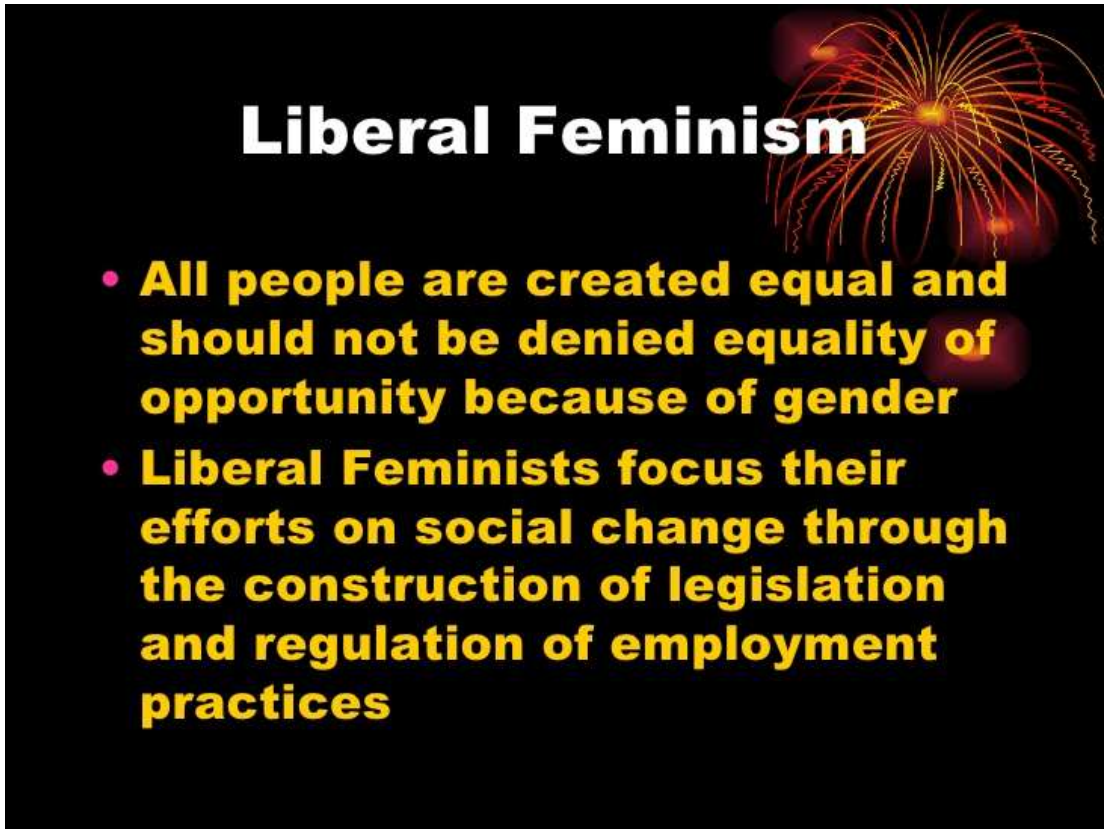
3. *The Feminist Perspective* – has affected political science through the women's movement. There are basically three interpretive stances:

Feminism Noun \ fem-i-nism

A BELIEF IN THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY OF THE SEXES

NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

a. *Liberal Feminists* – seek the abolishment of gender discrimination such as legal, social, cultural.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE



b. *Marxist Feminists* – argue women's progress must be tied to economic change (from capitalism to socialism).

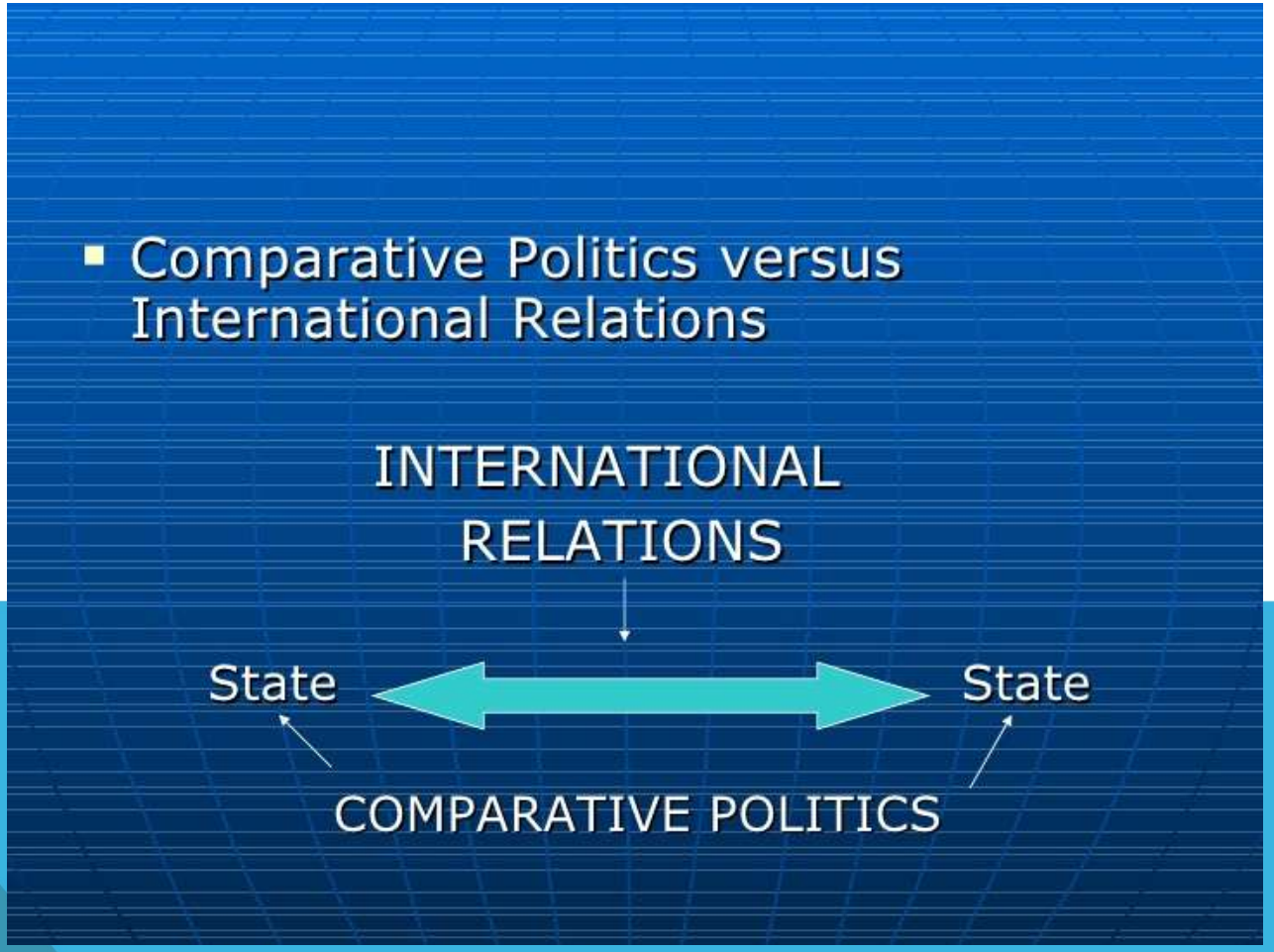
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

c. *Radical Feminists* – advocate the elimination of all distinctions based on gender.



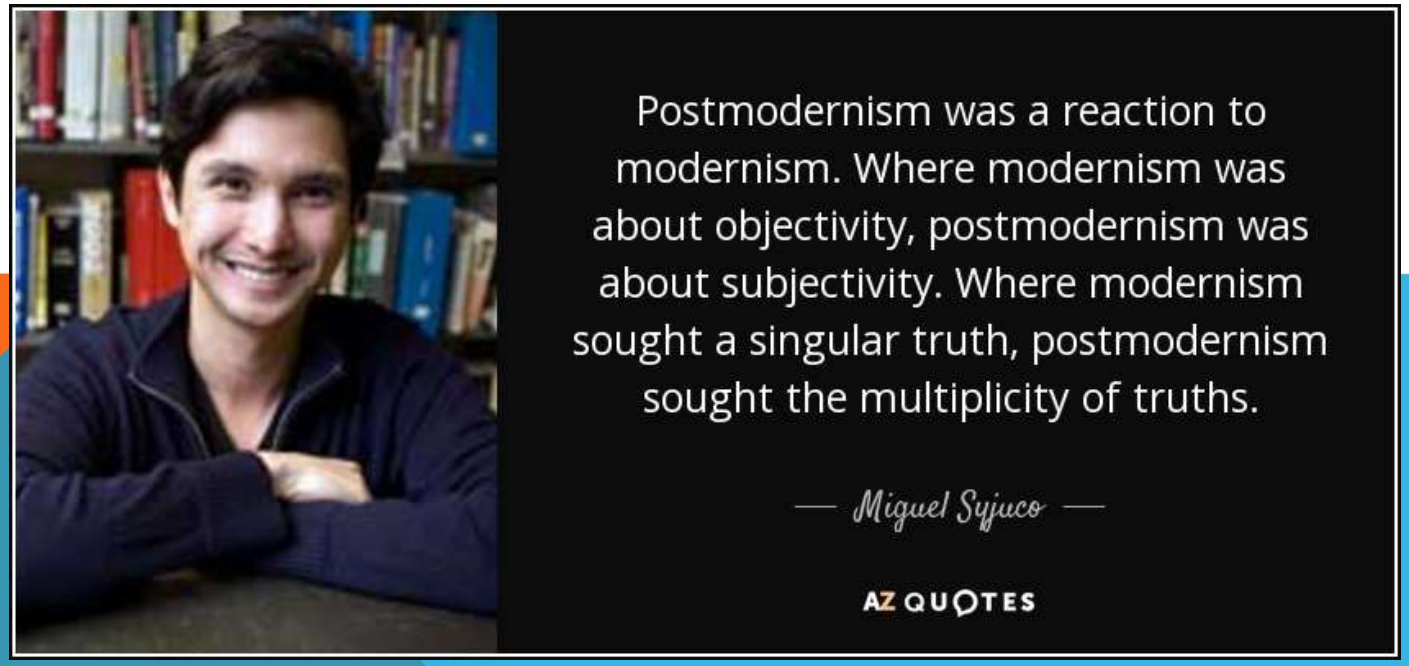
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

4. *International and Comparative Politics* – being driven by the many political changes going on in the world.



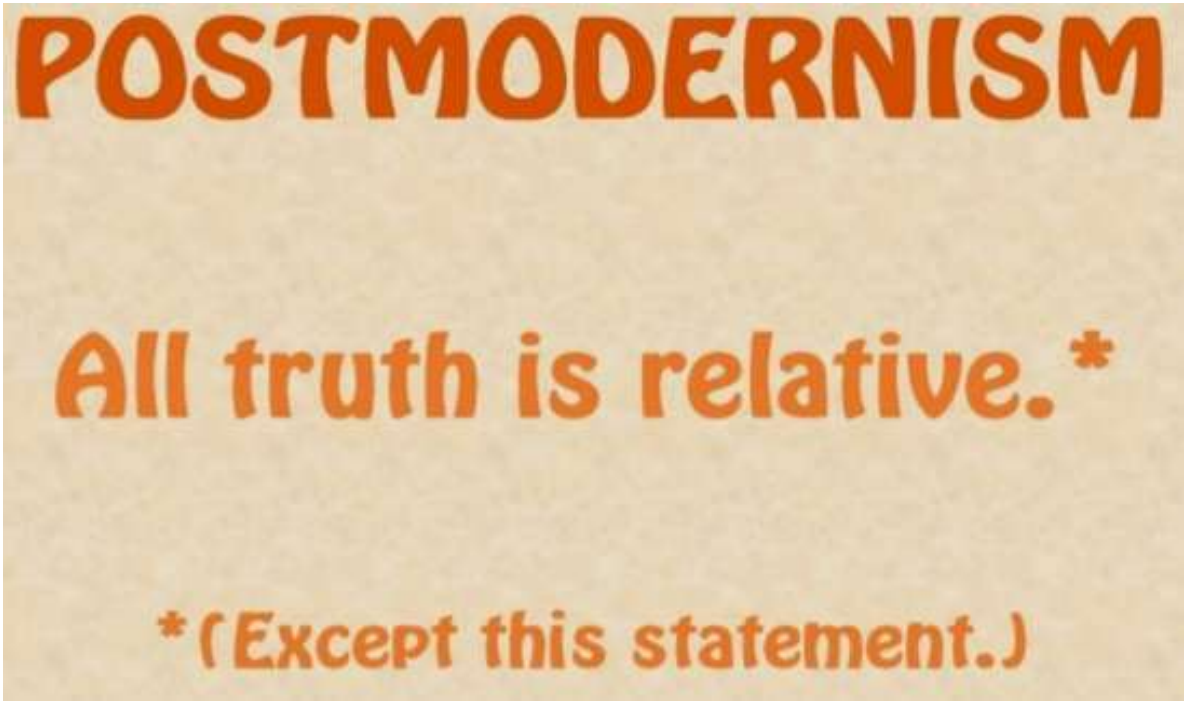
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

5. *The Postmodern Alternative* – rejects the assumptions of rational order and analytical objectivity that formed the basis for much of social science. Postmodernists attack the idea that there is any correct method for discovering or finding objective truth or values that will be seen as good by everyone.

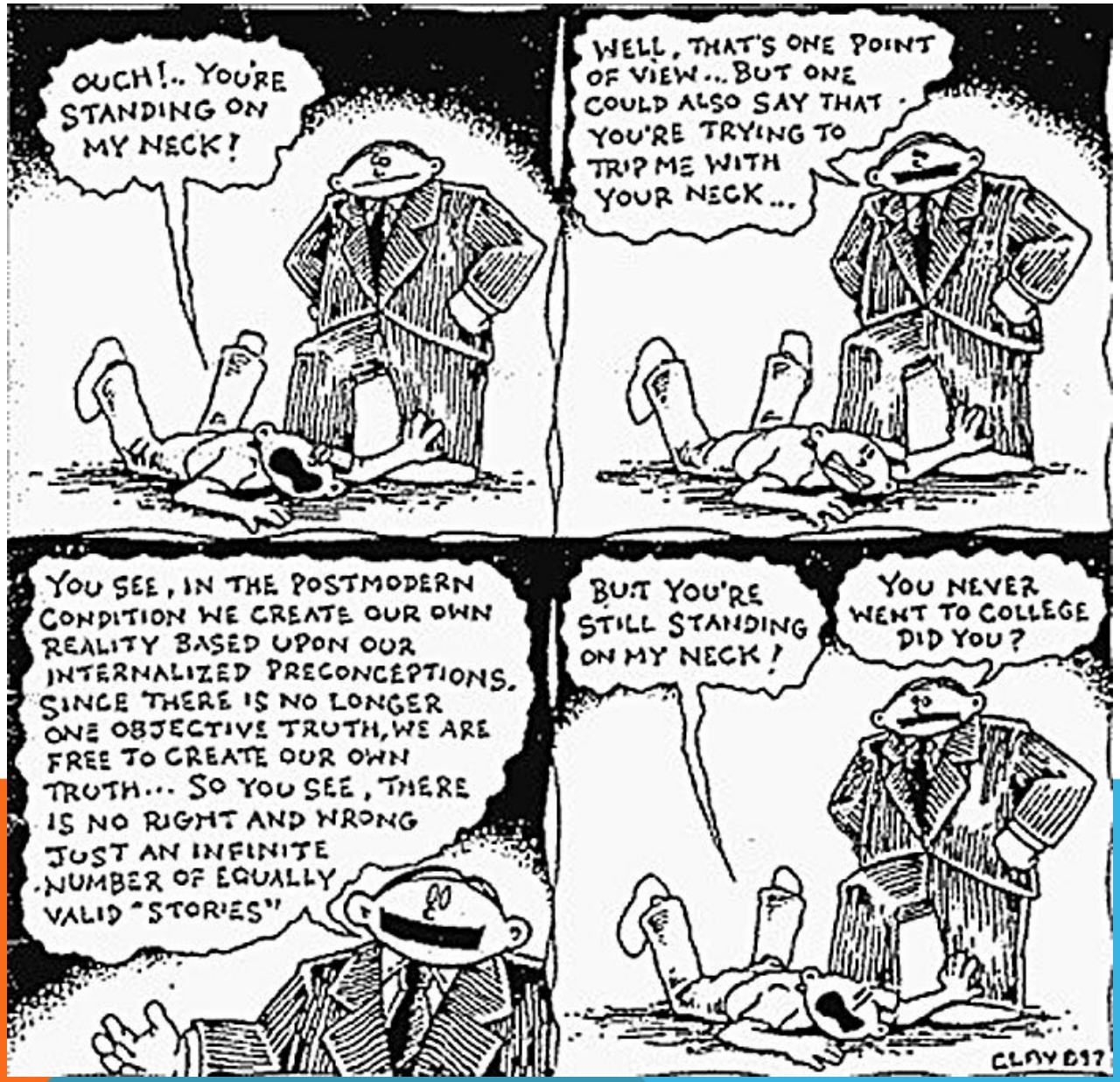


NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

a. *Skeptical Post Moderns* – challenge any starting point for analysis and any claims to value primacy.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE



b. *Affirmative Post Moderns* – more numerous and more optimistic but still want to avoid general conclusions about anything in the social sciences.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Defining Modernism and Postmodernism

Defining	**Premodernism**	**Modernism**	**Postmodernism**
What is real? (Metaphysics)	Realism: Super-naturalism	Realism: Naturalism	Antirealism
How do I know? (Epistemology)	Mysticism and/or faith	Objectivism: experience & reason	Social subjectivism
What/who am I? (Human Nature)	Original Sin Subject to God's will Dualism	*Tabula rasa*; nature/ nurture/choice combo Autonomy Integration	Social determinism Group conflict Reductionism
How should I live? (Ethics)	Collectivism: altruism	Individualism	Collectivism: egalitarianism
How should we live? (Politics and Economics)	Feudalism	Liberal capitalism	Socialism
When & Where	Medieval	Enlightenment; current sciences, business, technical fields	Current humanities and related professions

Source: Stephen R.C. Hicks, 2004/2011. *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault.*

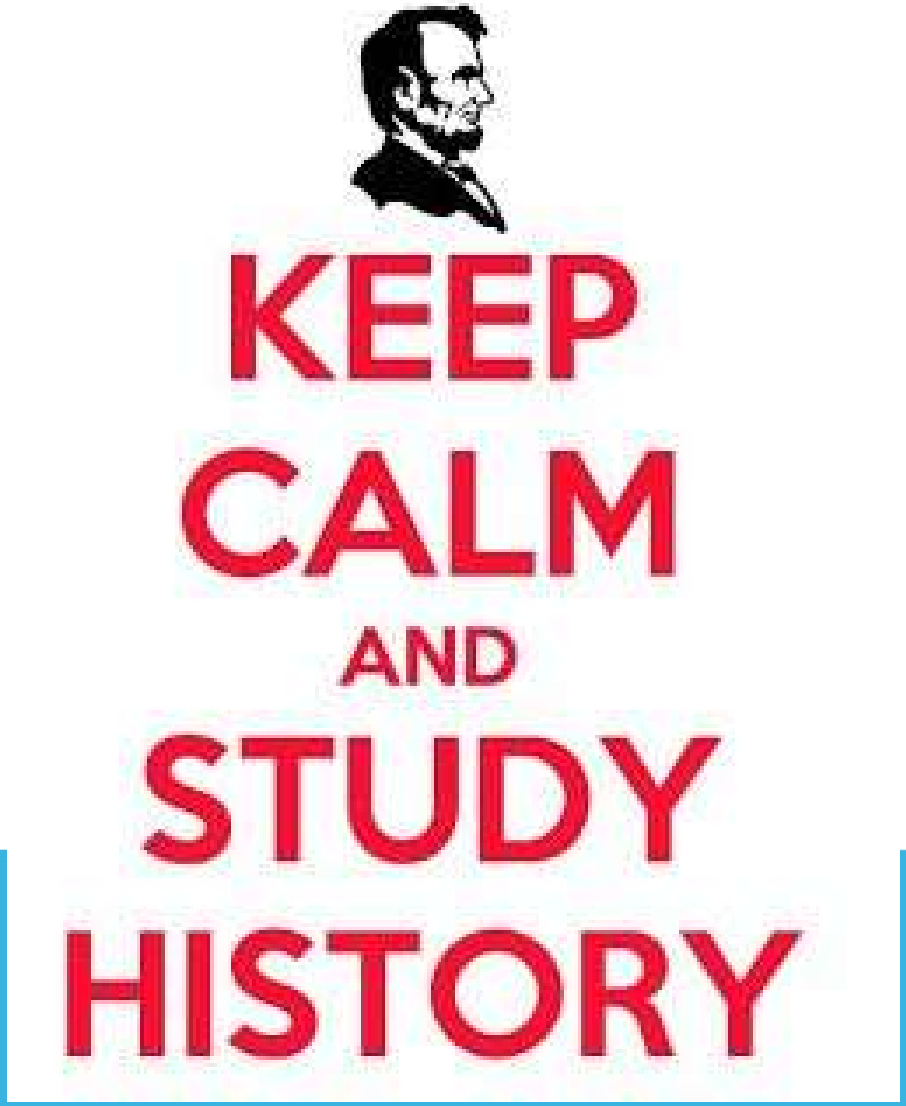
NEW DIRECTIONS
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

III. Important Cognate Fields

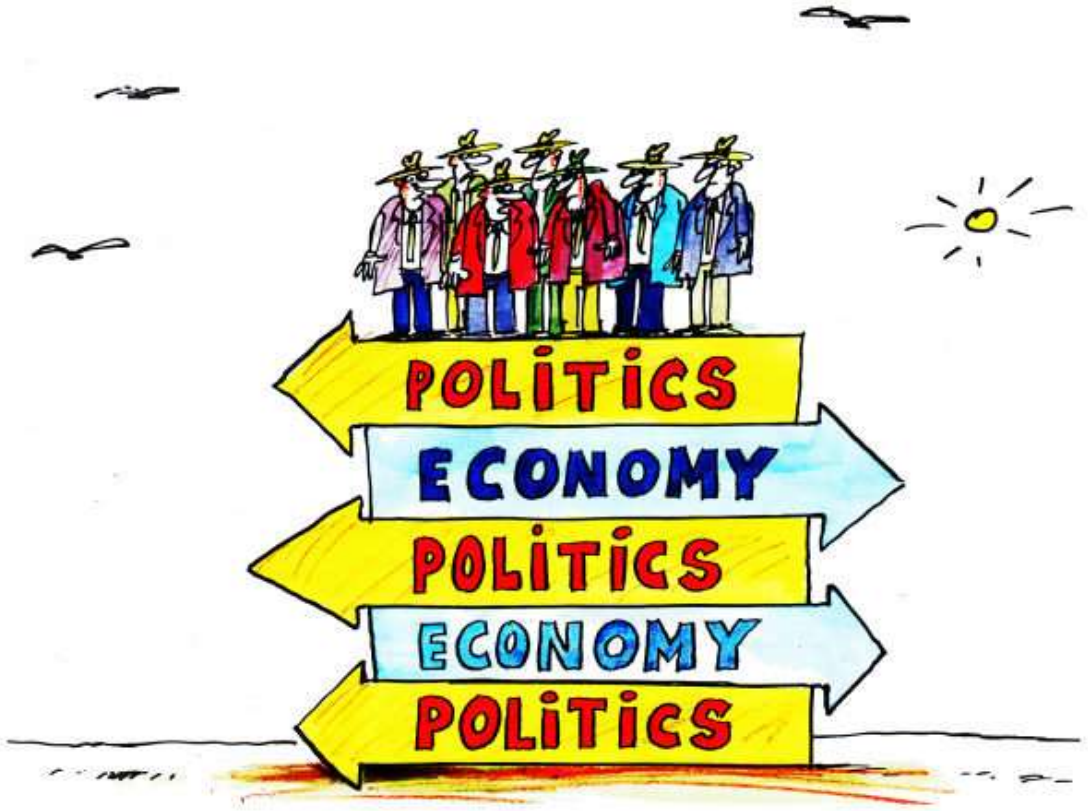
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

1. *History* – especially the history of political theory.





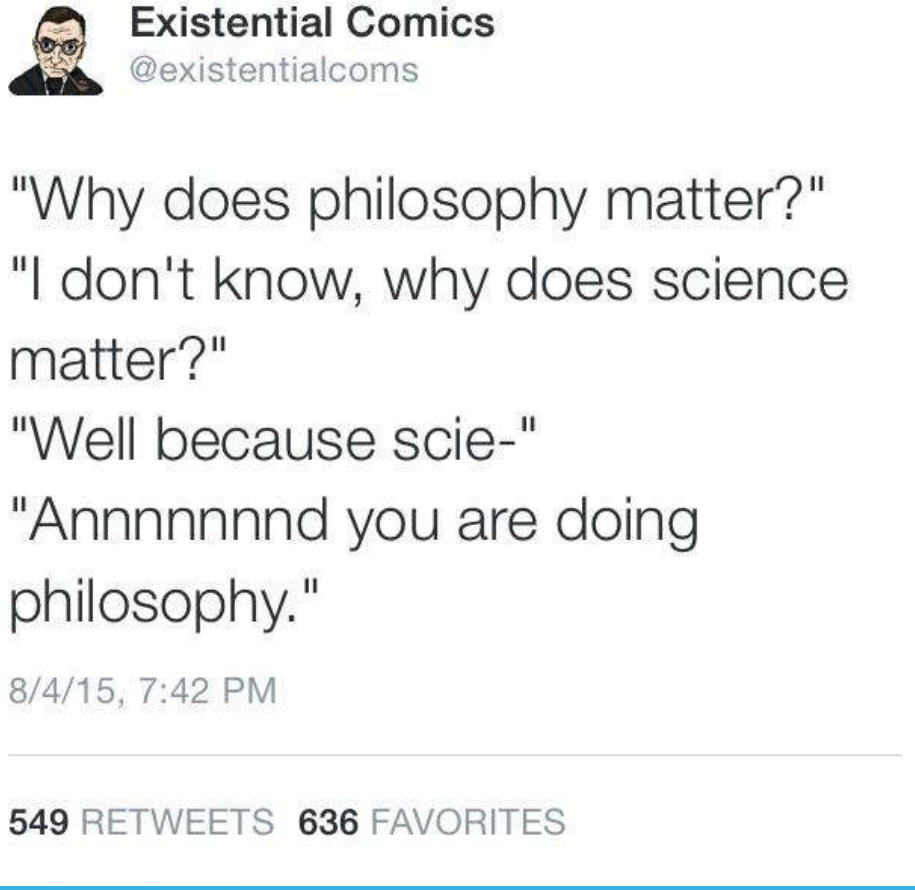
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE



2. *Economics* – the traditionally close relationship between these two disciplines have made understanding economics essential to understanding politics.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

3. *Philosophy* – the great thinkers in the Western tradition have been first and foremost philosophers.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE



4. *Sociology* – which covers the range of human relationships.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

5. *Anthropology* – closely related to sociology; uses a methodology known as "ethnographic study," in which a researcher lives within the community being studied and tries to understand the community's values and behavior from the perspective of its members.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

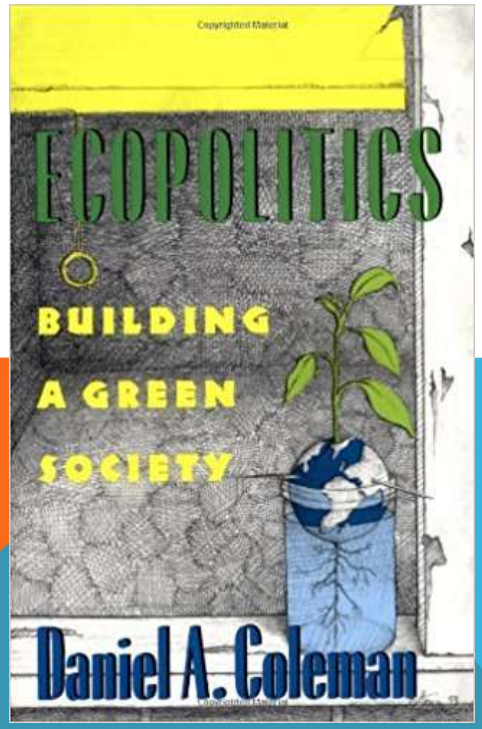
Ecopolitics



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Ecopolitics Defined:

An approach to politics that has developed in the last 3 decades in response to the global environmental crisis and popular environmental concerns. Has led to the formation of “Green” parties.





NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

I. The 3 Major Ecopolitical Themes

NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

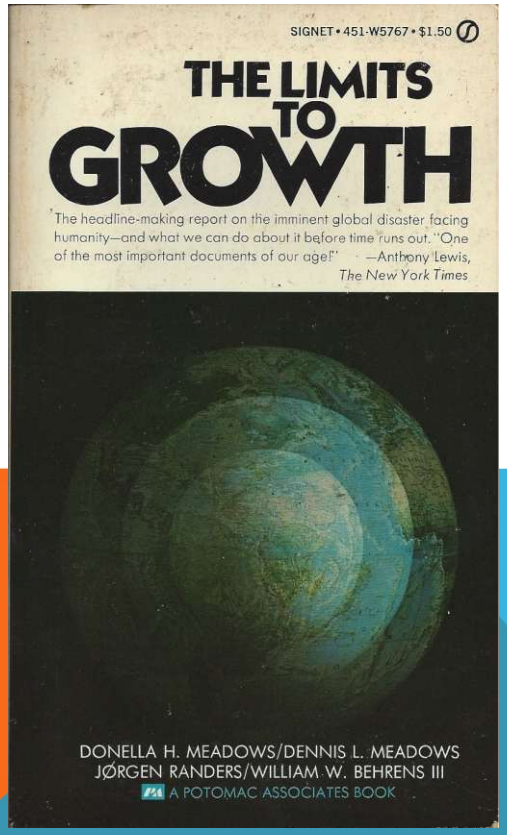
1. *A Crisis of Participation* – the growth of public concern being centered around participatory and distributional issues ("who decides who gets what").



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

2. *A Crisis of Survival*

a. Gained prominence in the early 1970s following the publication of *The Limits to Growth* and *A Blueprint for Survival*.







NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

2a. Hardin's influential essay *The Tragedy of the Commons* (1968).

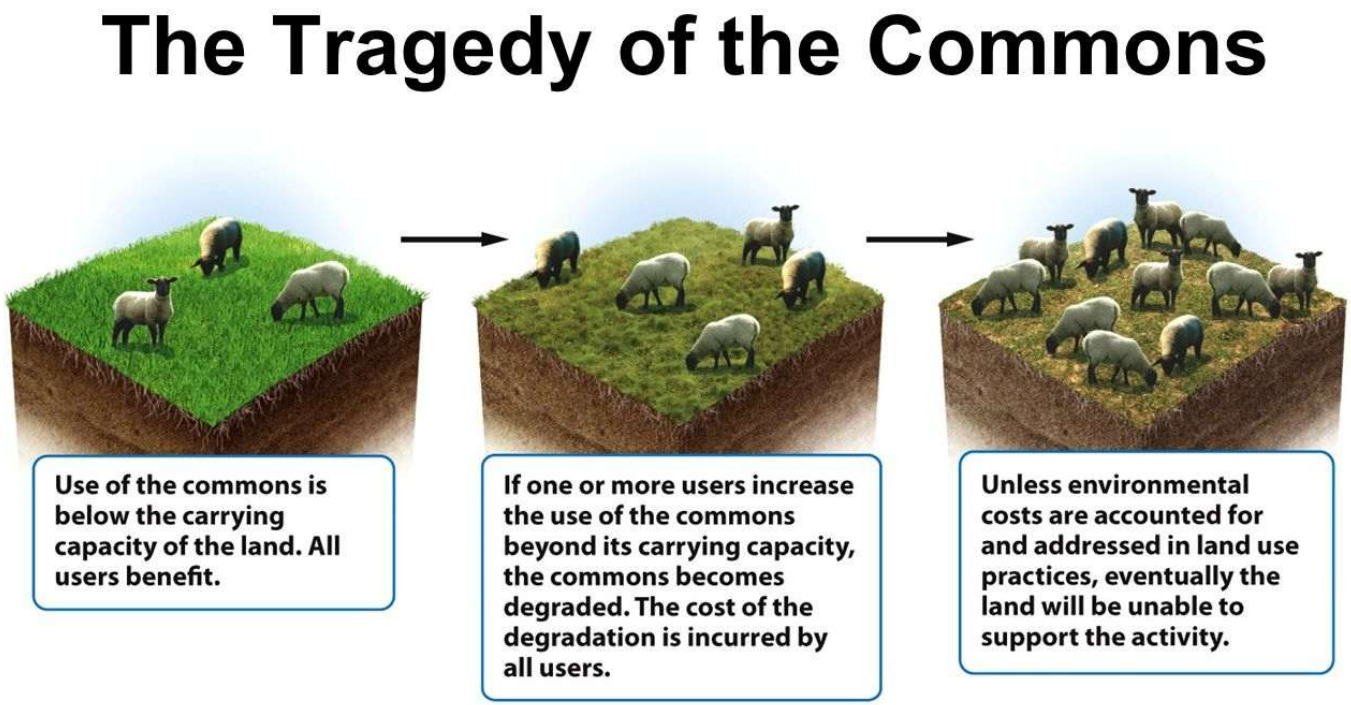
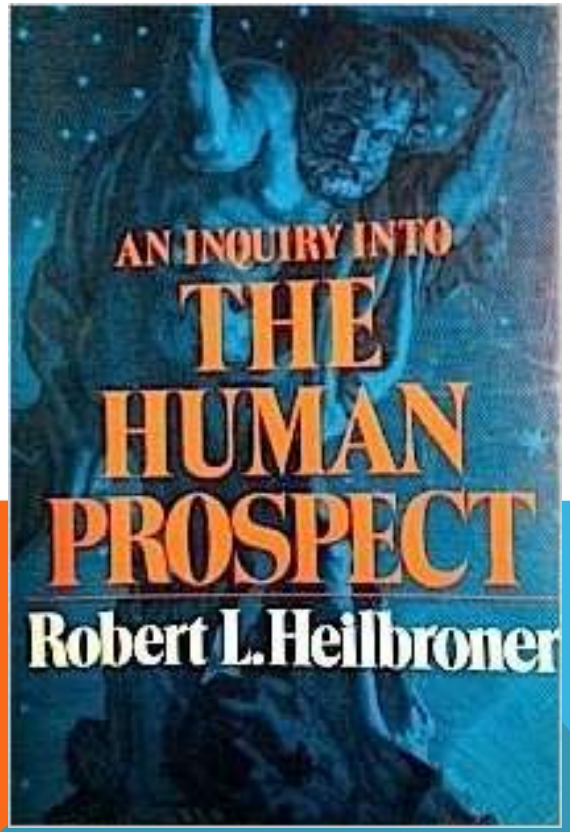


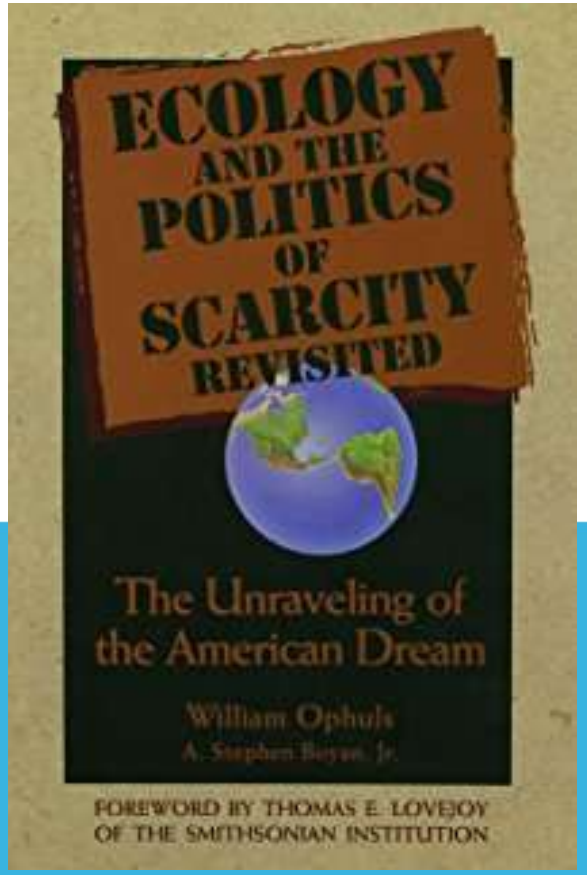
Figure 10.2
Environmental Science
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NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

2b. Authoritarian solutions by Heilbroner (*An Inquiry Into the Human Prospect*) and Ophuls (Leviathan or oblivion! From *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity*).

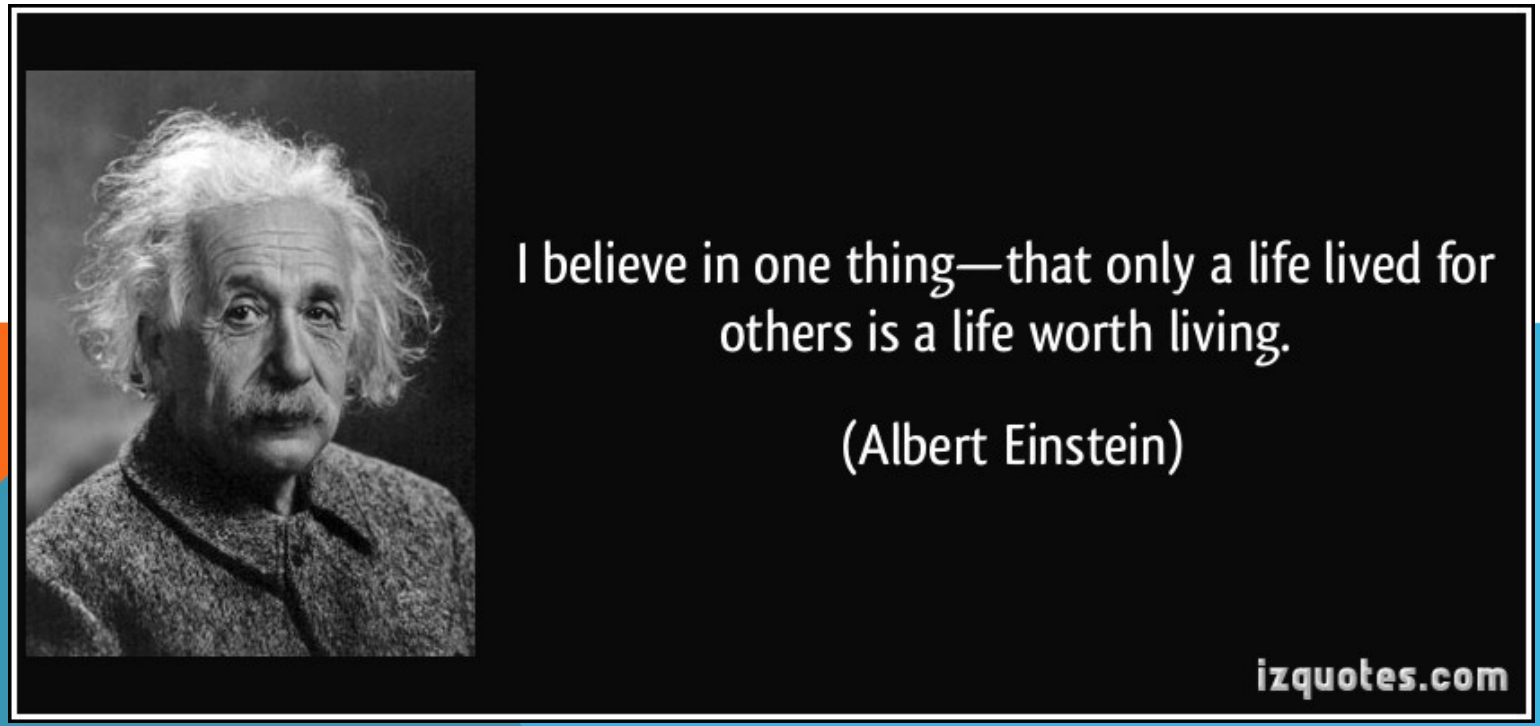






NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

3. *A Crisis of Culture and Character* – critique of the "survivalist school" which extended the ecopolitical debate beyond the realm of physical limits to growth to the point of questioning the very notion of material progress and "scientific" rationality.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

a. Alienation; loss of meaning; coexistence of extreme wealth and extreme poverty; welfare dependence; dislocation of tribal cultures; reduction of cultural diversity.



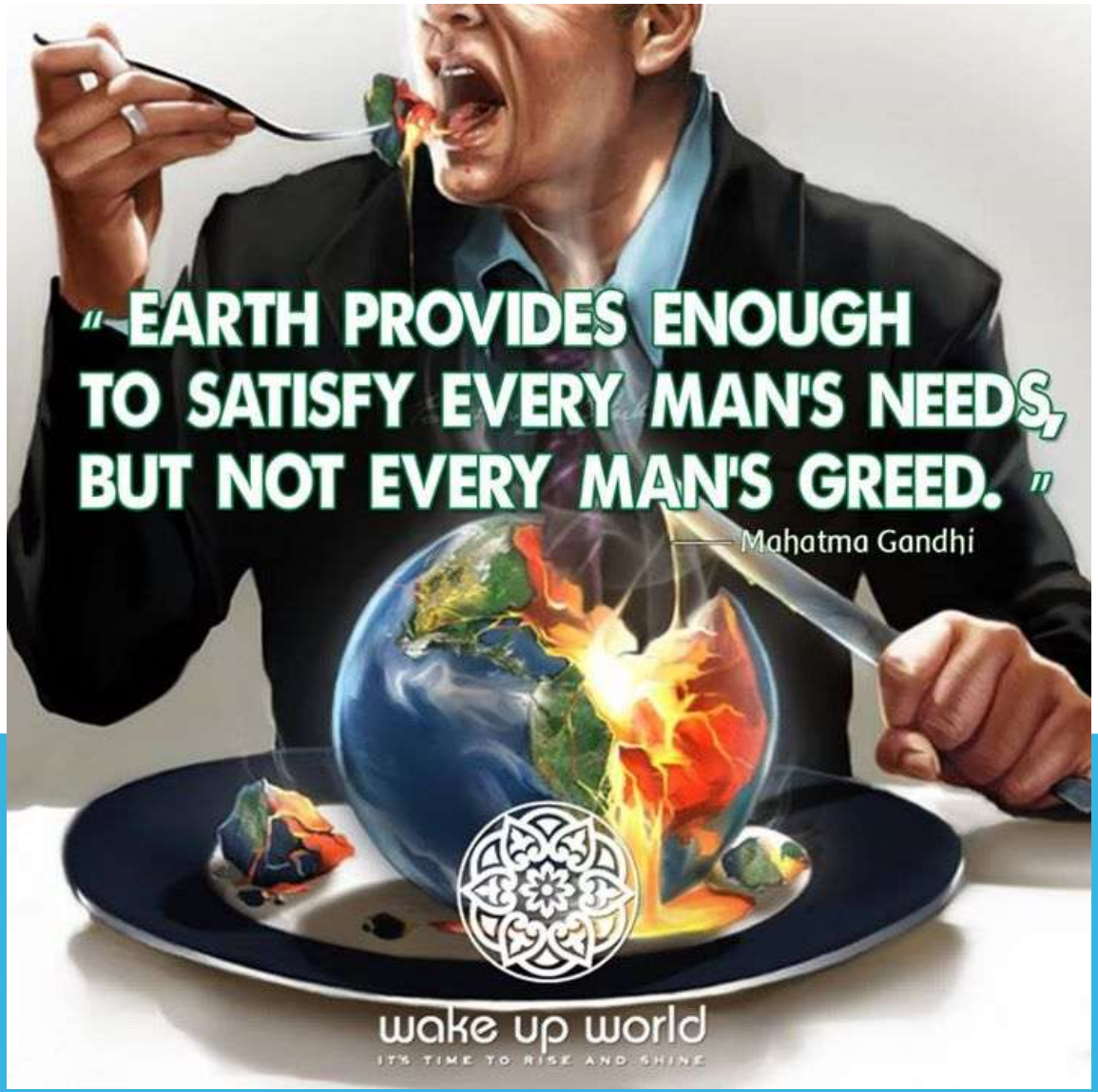


NEW DIRECTIONS
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

II. The Newest Ecophilosophical "Cleavage" Within Ecopolitical Thought

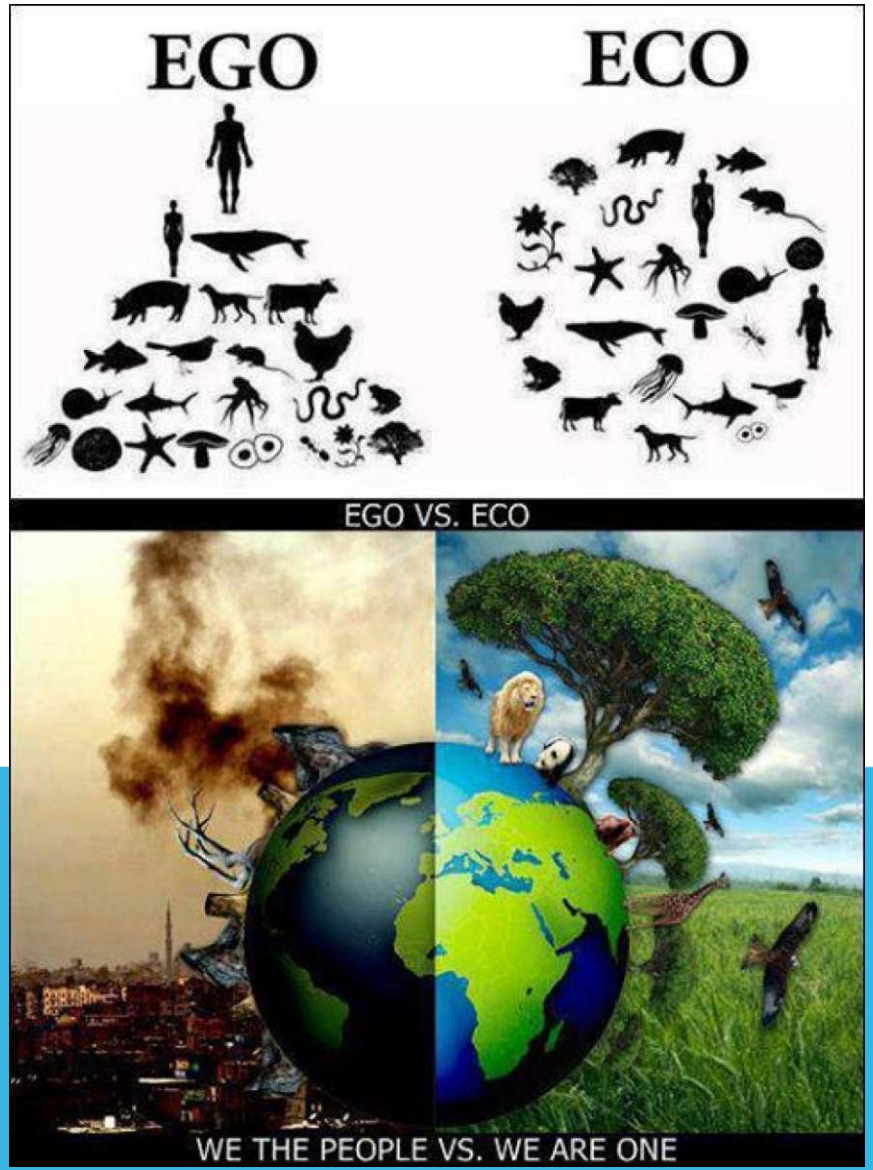
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

1. *Anthropocentric Perspective* – characterized by its concern to articulate an ecopolitical theory that offers opportunities for *human* emancipation and fulfillment in an ecologically sustainable society.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

2. *Ecocentric Perspective* – goals are much the same with the exception that the notion of emancipation is broader so that it recognizes the moral standing of the nonhuman world.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Ecocentrism

Nature Centered



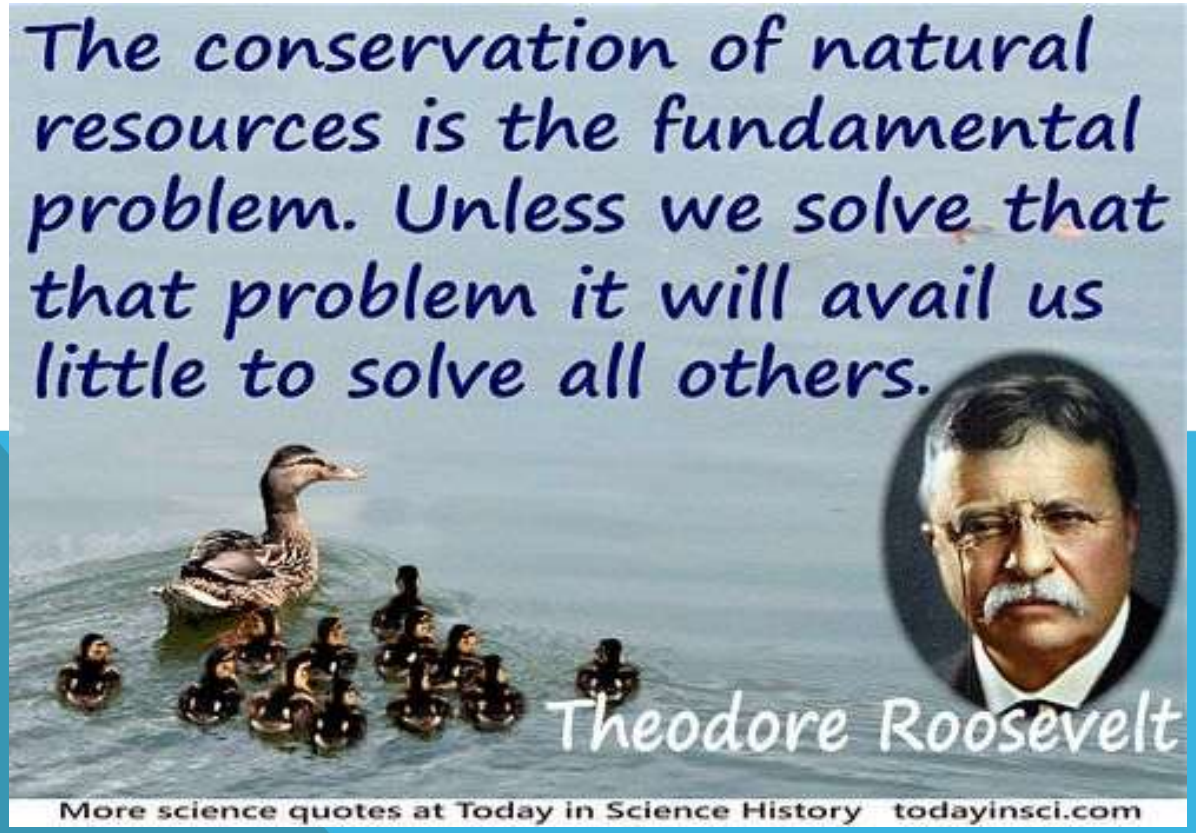
- **Nature**: environmental conservation is central to decision-making
- **Society**: humans are part of nature
- Individual responsibility and accountablility
- All life has inherent value
- We should not cause extinction of other species
- We should protect habitats and ecosystems
- Humans are not more important than other species
- Resources are limited
- We need the Earth more than it needs us

NEW DIRECTIONS
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

III. Major "Streams" of Environmentalism

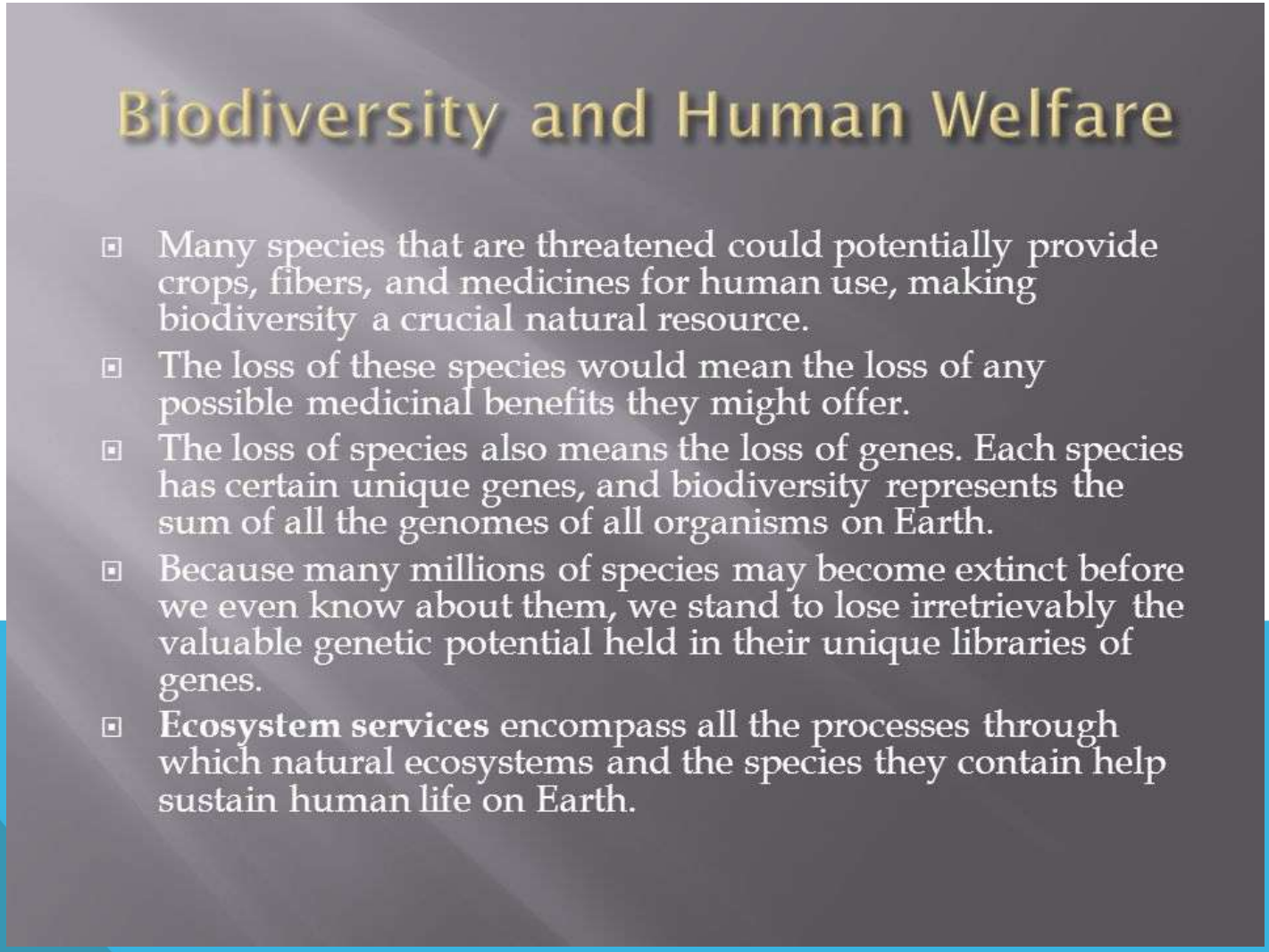
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

1. *Resource Conservation* – elimination of waste; efficient use of resources; development for the many, not merely the profit of the few. Least controversial stream of modern environmentalism.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

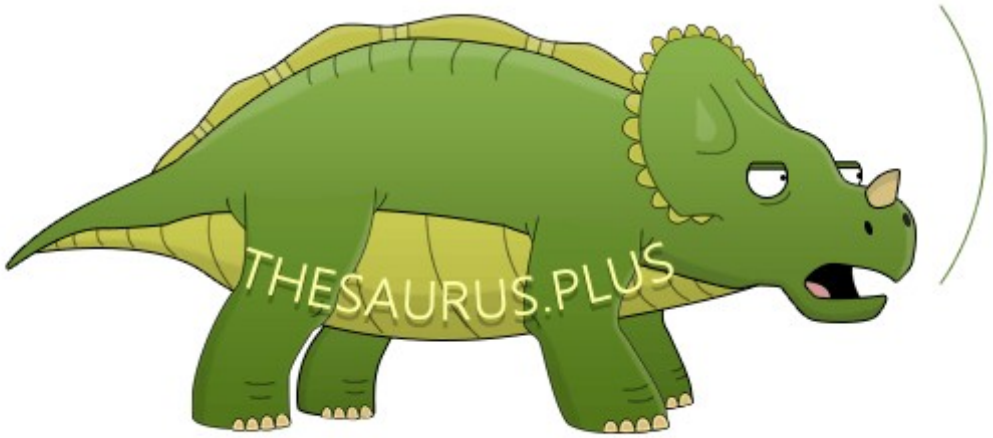
2. *Human Welfare Ecology* – creation of a cleaner, safer, and more pleasing human environment; primarily concerned with the *general degradation* of the physical and social environment.



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

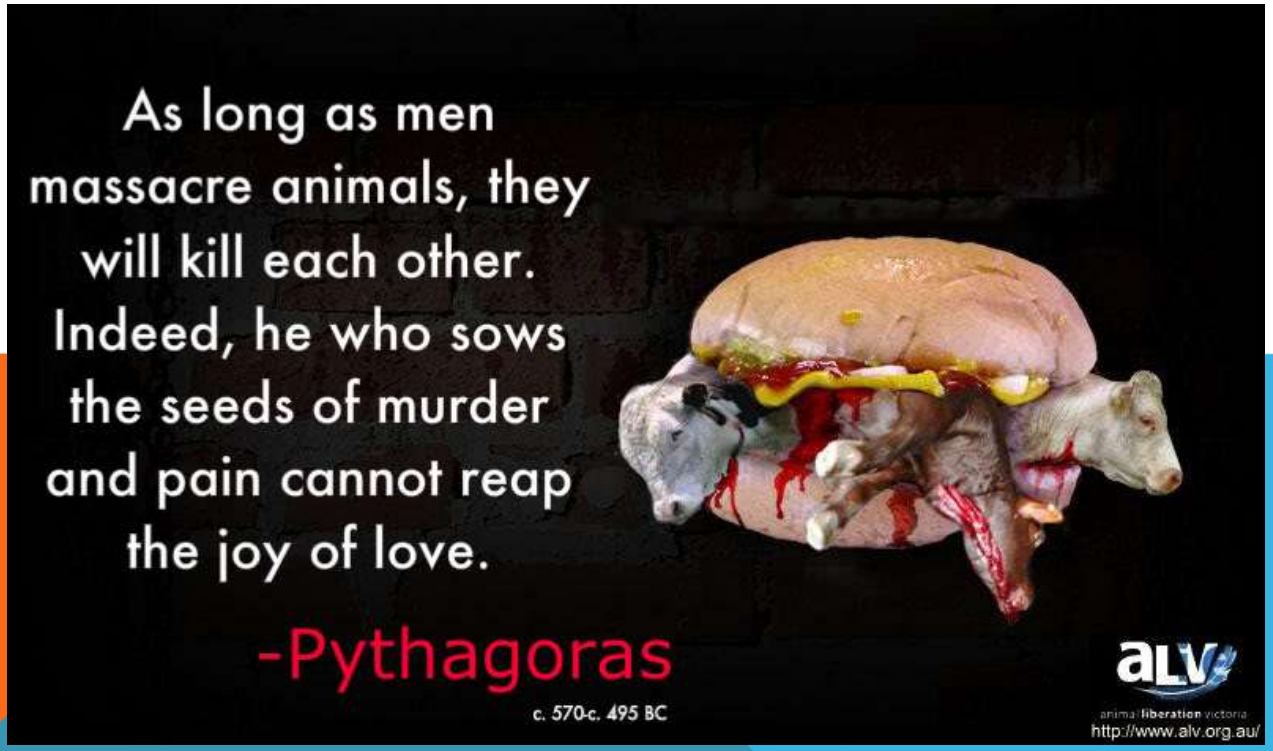
3. *Preservationism* – described as a reverence in the sense of the aesthetic and spiritual appreciation of wilderness (whereas Resource Conservationists are concerned to conserve nature *for* development, preservationists want to preserve nature *from* development). We should value nature not only for its instrumental value to *us* but also for its *own* sake.

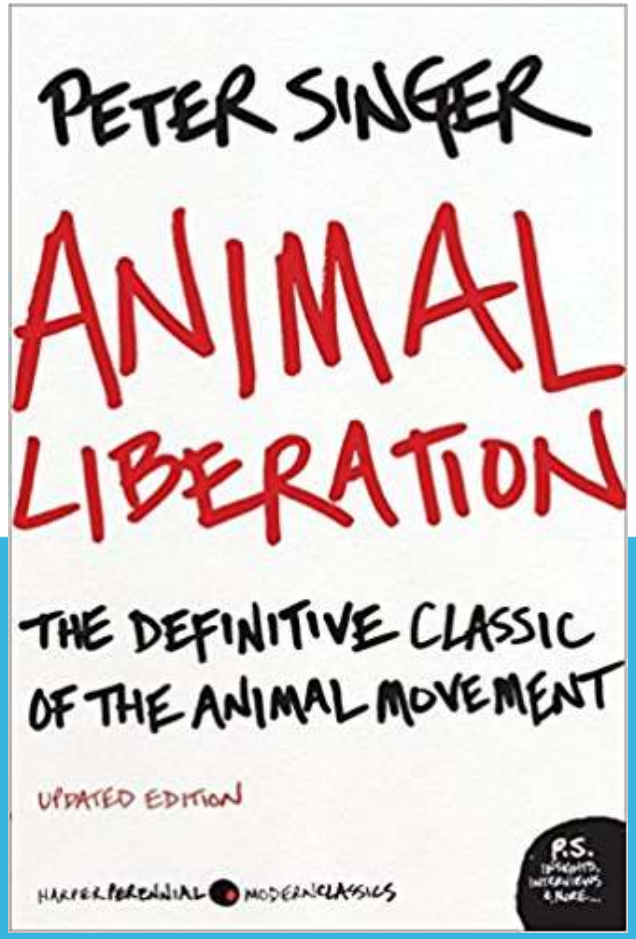
synonyms for preservationist:
conservationist, environmentalist, ecologist, green, naturalist, zoologist, biologist, botanist, tree hugger, greenie



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

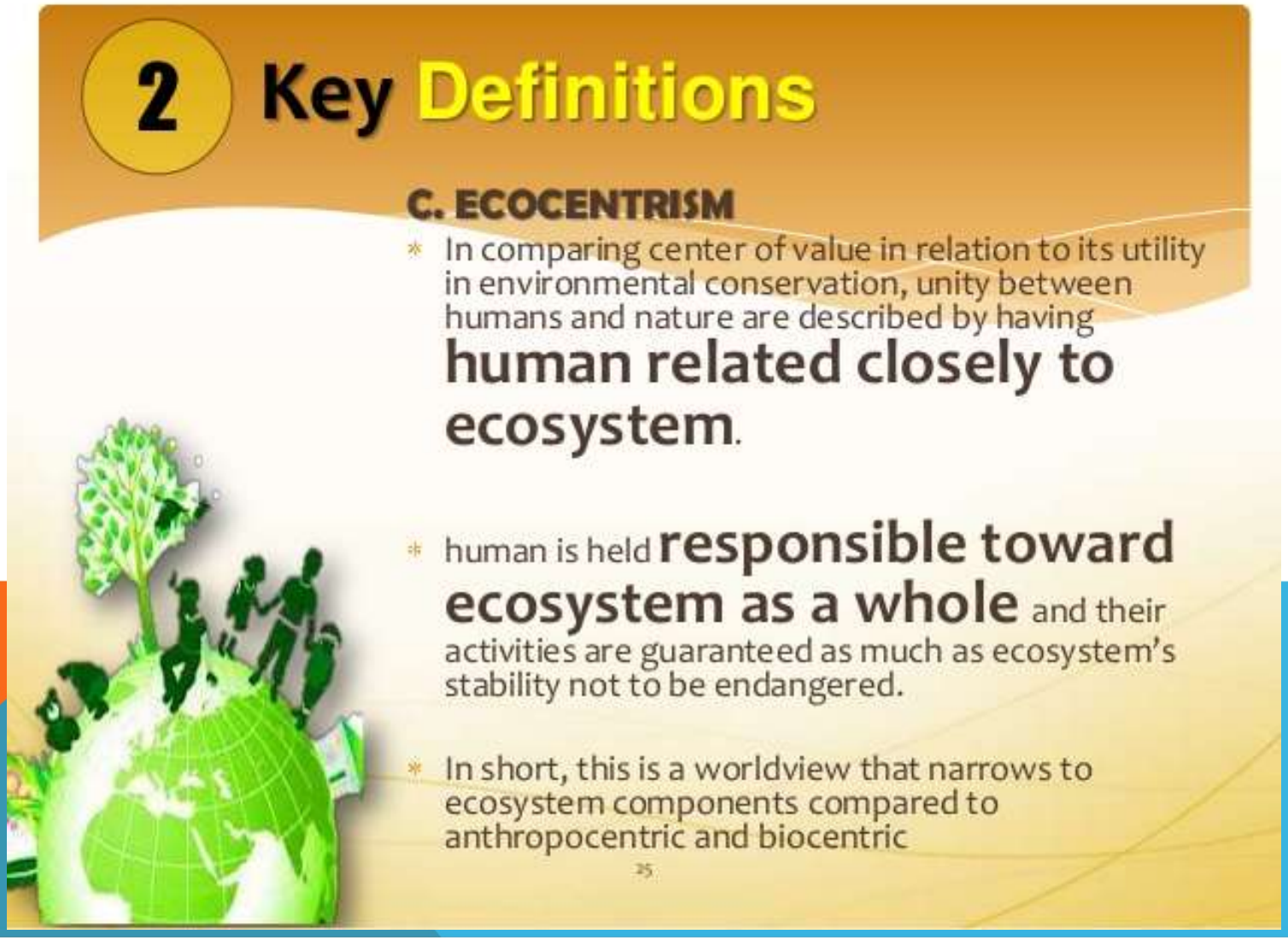
4. *Animal Liberation* – based largely on the work of Peter Singer, it suggests a moral principle of equal consideration of the interests of all sentient beings regardless of what kind of species they are.





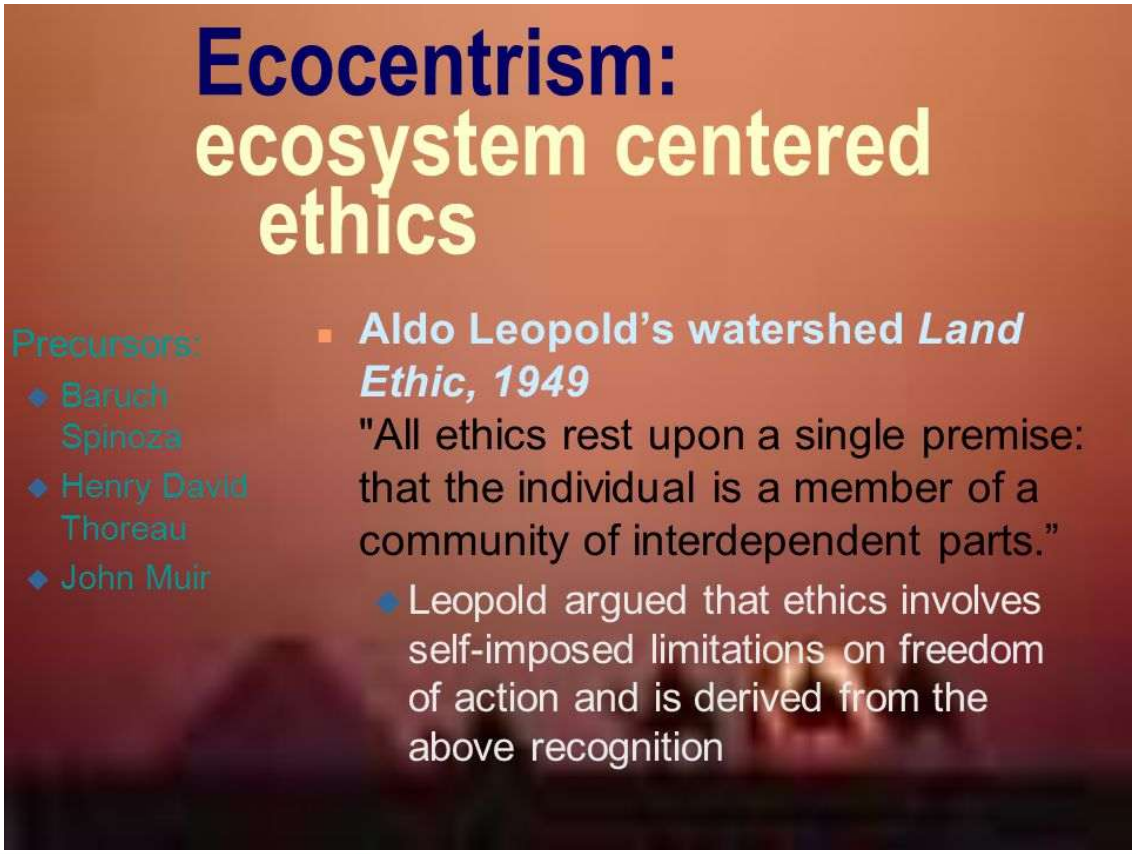
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

5. *Ecocentrism* – a more encompassing approach than the above 4 in that it:



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

5a. ...recognizes the full range of human interests in the nonhuman world (i.e. goes beyond RC and HWE perspectives).



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

5b. ....recognizes the interests of the nonhuman community;

CONCEPTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Environmental law is based on two main conceptions of environmental ethics – anthropocentrism and ecocentrism.

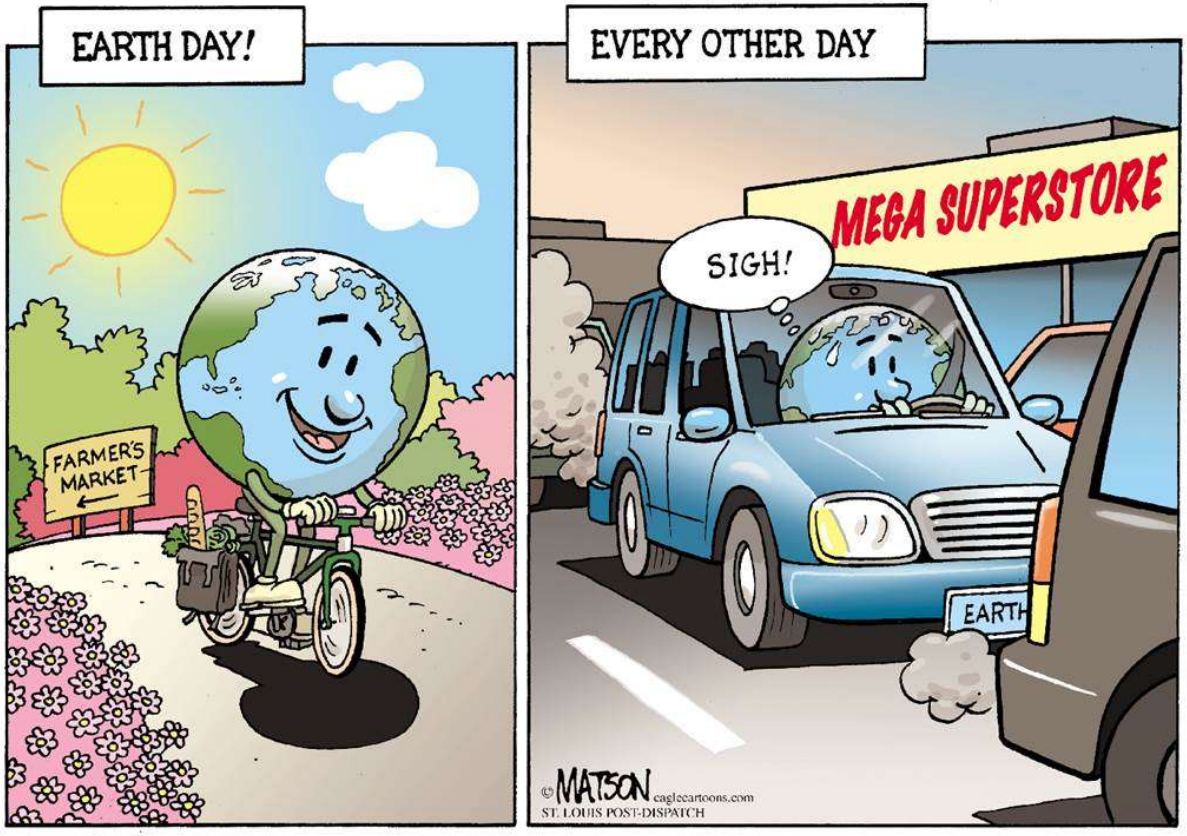
Anthropocentric approach: the environment should be protected in the interests of human welfare – today's environmental protection conserves environmental resources for future consumption.



Ecocentric approach: the environment (nature) has an intrinsic value in itself; therefore, the human responsibility is to protect it without regard to the benefits humans could obtain from it, and to provide for the possibility to exist not only for humans but also for other living beings.

Contemporary environmental law is primarily anthropocentric !

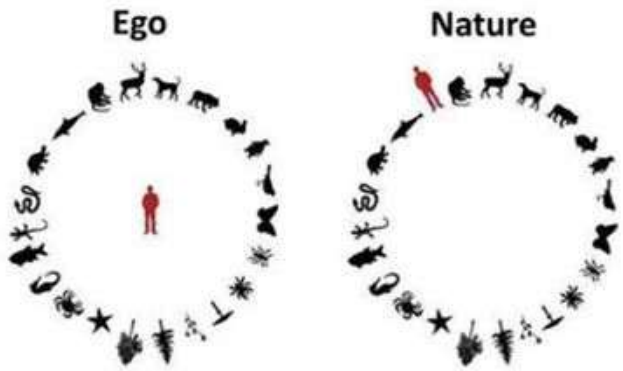
NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE



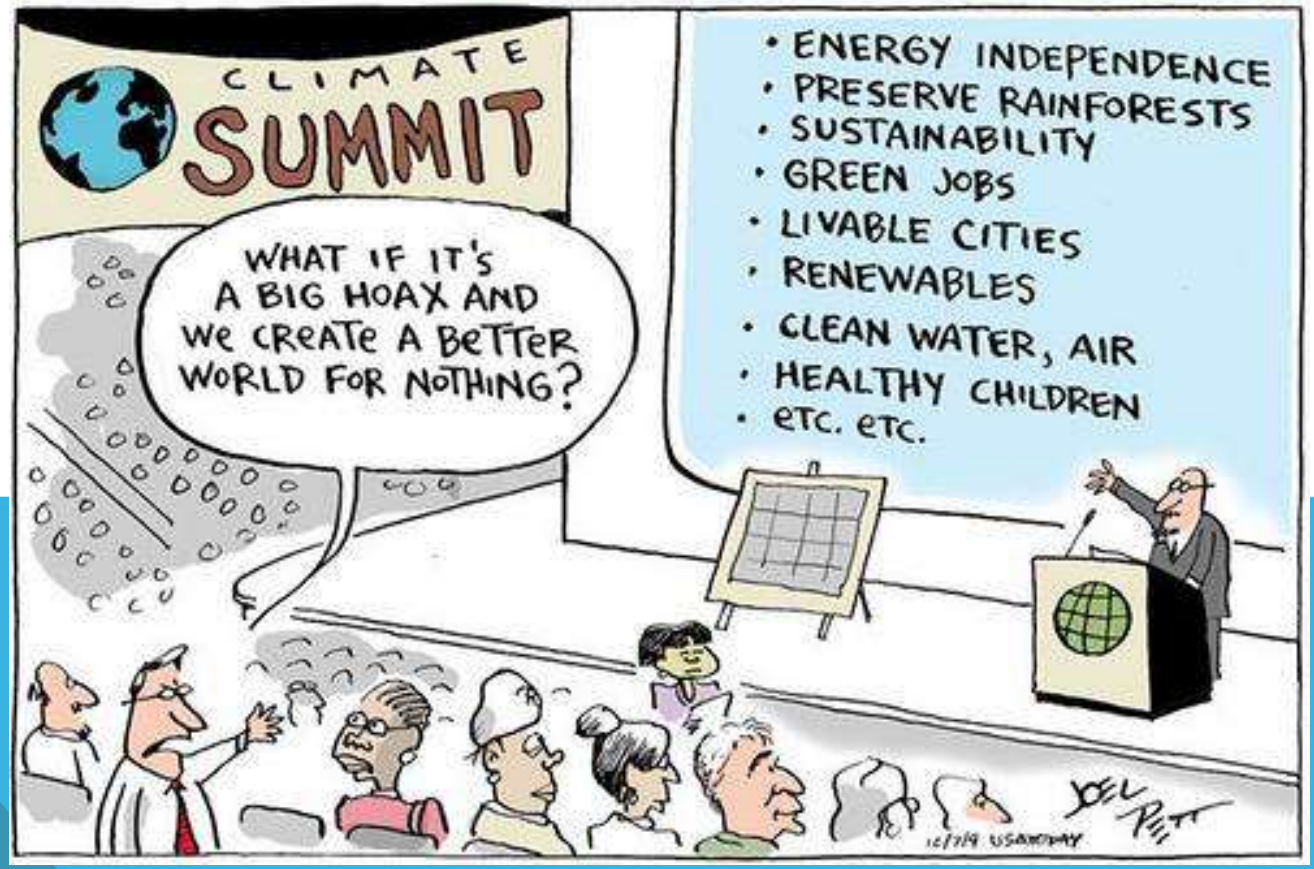
5c. ...recognizes the interests of future generations of humans and nonhumans;

NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

5d. ...adopts a holistic rather than atomistic perspective insofar as it values populations, species, ecosystems, and the ecosphere *as well as* individual organisms. The notion of *internal relatedness*.



"A lot of people have this ego need that makes them want to believe that Earth is the centre of the universe and humans are the most important species, the supreme expression of creation." - Ann Druyan



NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

