

Reforming Law and Economy for a Sustainable Earth: Critical Thought for Turbulent Times by Paul Anderson, London: Routledge, 2015, Pp. xviii + 270; indices. £ 95.00. ISBN 978-1-138-01386-5.

This is an interdisciplinary book, and arguably interdisciplinarity is *the key* ingredient necessary for the achievement of sustainability, or sustainable human culture, in Anderson's own words. Bringing together insights from law, social theory, philosophy and political economy, the anthropogenic case is clear – the problems were made by humans, it is human practices, and in particular economic practices that require reform. But in addition, time is of the essence, and motivations for how speedy reform might come about need to be identified, in other words – the 'what' the 'how' and the 'why' of sustainability (p. 24).

The book identifies a conundrum - that at the same time as international and domestic environmental regulations have abounded, human induced climate change has intensified as a result of our economic practices. In short, there is a massive gap between human induced environmental changes and our capacity to deal with them. Anderson identifies the lack of joined up interdisciplinary thinking as being an important element of this failure, particularly the failures within international environmental law.

A key question that follows this initial conundrum is the question about capitalism, the dominant economic system within which the world operates: Can we resolve global environmental problems within the system of capitalism, as those who view environmental degradation as a market failure would have it, in which case the solution is a fairly simple, technocratic rectification of market failure? Or do we need to reform capitalism? On this latter side, there is a

diverse and interdisciplinary range of perspectives, highlighting for example social justice and deliberative democratic practice. What they all have in common, Anderson argues, is ‘a shared preference for locating the basis for collective action not in economic efficiency but in distributive justice, and not in the privatisation of the “invisible hand” of markets but in decentralised, deliberative democratic decision-making and common control of key resources’ (p. 2).

In perusing this debate, the book seeks to make several contributions to the literature: firstly, it employs an interdisciplinary analysis that synthesizes different strands of analysis across a range of disciplines in an attempt to find some ‘common conceptual space’ (p.3). Beyond this, though, there is also a clear normative agenda coming down on the side of the ‘capitalism requires reformation’ side of the argument, which critiques the dominant economic model as both unsustainable and obscuring questions of power and justice. The book then argues that a revised, democratised and decentralised but globally coordinated model of governance might help in rendering economic practice sustainable.

The book reviews a wealth of thought across different disciplines, which in itself is no mean feat. The challenge with interdisciplinarity is always doing equal justice to all the various disciplines, and Anderson manages this well. It appears that international environmental law is the home discipline, but the debates around international regimes in International Relations, for example, are comprehensively reviewed, including critical perspectives. Economics is also reviewed, notably the neo-classical orthodoxy that sees environmental problems as market failures, and is rejected in favour of more critical accounts. A lot of the common ground is found in the red thread of philosophical enquiry that runs through the analysis. Anderson also acknowledges critical political economy perspectives that highlight the link between dominant institutions,

including law, and capitalism. An exogenously and endogenously reformed international environmental law, he argues, can still be used to help set the economy onto a sustainable path, However, economics cannot be the foundation of a reformed international law. Rather, Anderson proposes that a critical justice-based approach is the answer to the global allocation problem through what he calls radical ecological democracy, which will reverse the devastation wrought by capitalism and eclipse it.

This book provides a rich interdisciplinary analysis of the current unsustainable organisation of human life on this planet, as well as pointing to ways to resolving this global crisis that will provide interesting reading for an interdisciplinary audience from international lawyers, to economists, philosophers and political scientists. A paperback version is soon to come out which will make this all the more accessible.

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