

Social and Environmental Commonalities:

Instabilities and Potentialities

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INTRODUCTION

The current American generation is living in a time of tremendous instability and uncertainty; since our first days, we younger Americans have been bombarded by news of the fragility of our society and our environment. The list of developments in the last twenty years is awesome. The civil rights movement, the eruption in and concerning Viet Nam, the counterculture, feminism, and environmentalism have been marked by equally incredible particulars: Presidential resignation and assassination, other assassinations, drug abuse, urban decay, urban riots, oil shortages, recessions, inflation, unemployment, nuclear accidents, water shortages, and an actor becomes President. And all this in the schizophrenic ambience of unprecedented affluence and potential nuclear war.

For convenience I have divided this mess into social and environmental instability. The gist of my effort has been the exploration for commonalities between these dual instabilities in the hope of not merely satisfying the intellect with an understanding of the current debacle, but provision of insights toward a stable, happier future.

I take as assumptions that environmental and social instability are actual, but just in case there are any doubters the first two short chapters attempt to demonstrate this claim. The third seeks linkages between environmental and social problems. The four looks at energy choices as a practical illustration of the connection between these two realms, and points to some of the political, cultural, and environmental implications of particular directions of energy decisions.