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Gregg Easterbrook, A Moment on the Earth

possibilities, offers his suggestions. What must occur, according to Carle, is a change in the development mindset. Instead of developing water for projected populations, as has occurred throughout California's history, California must place a moratorium on water development and stabilize its population. This solution can be achieved by following four suggestions. First, California must visualize stability and attain a state of CALMBY: Cherish and Love My Back Yard. Second, California must live within water limits in drought years. Third, California must stop converting farm and environment water to urban use. Finally, California must support local and global efforts toward population stabilization.

Carle believes California has a choice regarding its water future. In the new millennium, the state can continue along its historic path or it can make changes to stop drowning the California dream.

Sara Wagers

GREGG EASTERBROOK, *A MOMENT ON THE EARTH*, Penguin Books

Publishing, New York, New York (1995); 745pp; \$14.95; ISBN 0-14-015451-5, softcover.

A Moment on the Earth challenges the traditional pessimistic conceptions of how to address environmental conditions. Gregg Easterbrook, a contributing editor to *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine, recalls his experiences covering environmental issues and the progress that has been made over time, especially in the western world. Easterbrook rejects the "doomsday" prognosticating of many environmental activists and commentators, and suggests we adopt a new philosophy of environmental optimism as a society.

A Moment on the Earth opens with an introduction discussing modern attitudes about environmental conditions and an explanation of how the book will progress. First, Easterbrook looks critically at the way man views his image in nature and how nature views its image with man. Next, after establishing the symbiosis between nature and man, Easterbrook analyzes a number of environmental conditions (water in particular) and assesses the impact of man. Finally, Easterbrook introduces an environmental philosophy where actions consider the needs of both man and nature, instead of pitting the demands of either interest against one another.

In the first section, *The Long View: Thinking Like Nature*, Easterbrook criticizes the relationship that traditional environmental advocates have created between man and nature. Easterbrook argues that man is not separate from nature, nor is man a special threat to nature. Easterbrook sees the intellect of man as nature's greatest ally, and refutes the notion that the so-called "natural condition" of the world was better without the human fingerprint. Easterbrook contends the natural world has no problem with a dam, factory, or urban sprawl. A bird, fox, or deer will adapt to the new condition, but man condemns

his own presence. Easterbrook maintains the natural world fears not a doomsday, but the gradual effect of a growing problem. Thus, if man can recognize his own place in nature and make decisions in light of his own gradual influence, both man and nature benefit. Easterbrook concludes nature will persist after man is gone. Therefore, Easterbrook argues our focus should be on how we can prolong our time with nature.

In the second section, *The Short View: Thinking Like People*, Easterbrook addresses a number of the most pressing environmental concerns, and provides a brief history of each. Easterbrook looks specifically at pollution and the measures man has taken to remedy this problem. Easterbrook notes that the quality of water throughout the United States improved in the nineties. In addition, the quality of the nation's water should continue to improve with increasing governmental regulation. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, less than two percent of all American river miles contain harmful contaminants. Plus, contaminated rivers show fewer levels of particulates than ever before. Easterbrook argues the current political climate rejects any news of environmental progress in favor of focusing on negativity. Easterbrook attributes the state of environmental negativism to modern liberalism's refusal to acknowledge that environmental problems can be fixed, and modern conservatism's refusal to acknowledge the degree to which environmental problems exist.

In the third section, *The Green Future: People and Nature Learning to Think Together*, Easterbrook introduces a philosophy of ecorealism. Ecorealism is a system of decision-making that assesses the impacts of man's actions on nature, and the impact of natural conditions on man. Easterbrook argues man's intellect can prepare a programmatic system of action that benefits man in the short term, and man and nature together in the long run. Ecorealism frowns upon the pessimism of the past in favor of focusing on assessing the gradual affects of man's actions to predict future harm. Easterbrook denounces modern environmentalists as another interest group fighting for a piece of the pie. Easterbrook advocates incorporating issues such as water management into mainstream decision-making. Instead of looking for the correct state of nature, man should be looking for the best possible state for man and nature at that moment in time.

Easterbrook's commentary is thought provoking and well prepared. Unfortunately, concerning some issues, Easterbrook does not see the trees for the forest. Easterbrook ignores the state of American political culture and attributes problems to environmental politics that are apparent throughout the political system. Easterbrook also focuses on the aggregate success in the area of water quality, which ignores micro issues that affect thousands of people. Easterbrook does not address problems with water quantity.

In sum, Easterbrook writes an insightful, easy to read book about the fundamental tenants behind the environmental movement, and how these beliefs shape the way our society addresses environmental

concerns. Easterbrook makes a convincing argument that the doomsday predictions and pessimism of the past may be the Achilles' heel of the environmental movement. In addition, Easterbrook provides thoughtful suggestions on how man and nature can interact and progress into the twenty-first century.

Patrick Nackley

SHARIF S. ELMUSA, WATER CONFLICT: ECONOMICS, POLITICS, LAW AND PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI WATER RESOURCES, Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington, D.C. (1997); 362pp; \$29.95; ISBN 0-88728-268-7, hardcover.

Disputes over scarce water resources rage in the arid Middle East. However, there are no systematic assessments of these conflicts that address water quality and quantity, the ability to develop available resources, water related economic policies, and future need. *Water Conflict* attempts to provide this type of assessment for the Palestinian-Israeli water dispute. In this book, Sharif Elmusa, a Palestinian, analyzes the political economy of the water conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, and suggests how it may be resolved on the basis of equity and mutuality. *Water Conflict* also provides a comprehensive source of information on the water sector of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Chapter One discusses in detail the available water resources of geographic Palestine-Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, and examines the topographic, climatic, and hydrologic factors that determine them. The resources are divided into two categories: groundwater aquifers and surface water. The author examines all the components of the resource categories, including individual streams, wadis, and aquifers.

Chapter Two examines the control, supply, and distribution of municipal water resources. The book focuses on the sub-standard conditions Palestinians face (such as an insufficient, polluted water supply and the unavailability of piped water to nearly one-fifth of the population) as a result of severe restrictions imposed by Israelis. Also, the author discusses developments in the water infrastructure since the signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993, and efforts at improvement by international "donors."

Chapter Three consists of three parts: the economics of water use in households and agriculture, "extended" water use balance, and demand projections. The author's primary argument is that the low-income level of Palestinians cannot explain their low level of water use. Thus, a latent, unsatisfied water demand in both the municipal and agricultural sectors exists. Data presented in the economic section supports this contention. In the second part of Chapter Three, the author proposes that the standard water balance, which includes only