

## **CAPITALISM, COMMUNISM, ENVIRONMENTALISM, AND THE IDEOLOGY OF FREEDOM**

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It has been common in some cultural contexts to distinguish sharply between capitalism and communism, assuming conflicting concepts of freedom. The dichotomy has influenced some philosophy, real-world contests in politics, and popular discourse. In the West, often capitalism and markets have been associated, however questionably, with freedom and democracy. Different notions of freedom have circulated as part of another ideological complex opposed to that of the West. However, environmentalisms of various sorts have increasing importance in suggesting newer types of freedom, previously less salient due to the overpowering capitalism-communism dichotomy. Abstract concepts of freedom influenced by the older capitalism-communism dichotomy need critique. Different environmentalisms, less centered on the old dichotomy, increasingly can be progressively connected with different freedoms-in-environments frameworks. New perceptions about freedom can emerge.

**Keywords:** Capitalism – Communism – Environmentalism – Ideology – Freedom

### **Introduction**

In much of the twentieth century one major dichotomy about societal organization and freedom was (and still is, in 2023, though to a lesser and more garbled extent) presented as a conflict between capitalism and communism. This was often depicted as a fundamental conflict between societies emphasizing free markets and those emphasizing planned economies, though that is a confused account. Variants of this account are still maintained at the present time. Typically, in the West or the so-called free world there was and is a widely circulated view that free markets were reliably conjoined with liberal democracy (Fukuyama 1992). It would typically be allowed by reasonable people that actual societies were much more complex than the earlier picture suggests. It would often be understood that some societies escaped classification altogether as falling under either category (capitalist/communist). But it was nonetheless notably often insisted (after Marx

but particularly between the Russian Revolution and 1989, and especially in Russia in the early 1990s) that this was the pre-eminent international conflict meriting political attention.

Take, for example Isaiah Berlin's influential "Two Concepts of Freedom" (1969), which was written and delivered originally in 1958 in the period of the Cold War. There is in the essay a wealth of historical material referring to a long stretch of Western history (with Russian references included). To judge by some later philosophical discussion, it might seem to the historically uninformed contemporary reader as if the essay's Cold War emergence is only marginally relevant, if at all, to its main philosophical message about freedom. But the Cold War context is relevant, and very significantly so, not only to Berlin's motivations, but to the function of later philosophical discussions of "positive and negative liberty" that have omitted reference to its Cold War origins.

Berlin was born in Russian territory, had sympathies with liberals in the history of Russian culture, and was a critic of what was called, in a later collection, *The Soviet Mind* (Berlin 2011). He expressed views about the Soviet Union that were applauded by US anti-communist diplomats. His account of positive and negative freedom has continued to incline some readers to an anti-governmental, pro-negative-freedom/anti-positive-freedom account of social freedom. This inclination has encouraged some readers in their continuing skepticism about government, sometimes even democratic government. Berlin-inspired fears of rational governmental planning are arguably among the factors that inhibit the sorts of political measures which are now necessary to cope with outstanding environmental threats.

Power within domestic society and globally, property, wealth generally, and money were (and are) up for potential basic changes in distribution. The language of freedom is routinely deployed in communications about rightful power arrangements. So not only anxieties, but strategic and tactical action (often aggressive, all too often murderous) to protect or pursue one's (and one's group's) interests were (and still are) widespread. That has contributed to the major wars pursued by capitalist-dominated countries against communist or potentially communist societies (e.g. Vietnam). But after changes in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in 1989, and then in Russia in the early 1990's, the triumph of capitalism and free markets (and with the changes, the supposed triumph of liberal democracy) was proclaimed by some commentators, such as Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama 1992). Fukuyama has since modified his views. Recently, he has been polemicizing against identity politics, and more significantly, he has criticized neoliberalism (Fukuyama 2022). His shift of focus may suggest the obsolescence of, or loss of interest in the old dichotomy. Most pertinent is the way that he has modified his position, partly with a view now affirming a critique of neoliberalism (a type of free market capitalism) (Fukuyama 2022).

The dichotomy between capitalism and communism (while not repudiated as part of widely received rhetoric and doctrine) is now less enthusiastically insisted upon. But it is still very much a phenomenon in political-economic discourse, including propaganda and political mudslinging. Moreover, a sense of urgency about the conflict is still liable to re-emerge in periods of instability. We are in such a period now, in 2023, as US anxieties among some in the population about the development of China as a global power are increasing. China is a power with a nominally communist ideology and a powerful communist party, though now avowed internally to be a country governed under market ideology, and also as “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” About contemporary China’s officially pronounced political commitments to “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” as well as Marxism and communism, markets, and sustainable development, see a volume of statements by Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China* (Xi Jinping 2014); also see many recent statements attributable to Xi Jinping’s influence.<sup>1</sup>

Added to anxieties about communism in the West are concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and racial divisions. But the old fears about the Russian and Chinese *others* do re-emerge repeatedly among some members of the ruling elite, e.g., in the US. Interestingly, political economists such as Branko Milanović proclaim China an exemplar of political capitalism. For Milanović, there is only “Capitalism, Alone” now in the world (Milanović 2019). But adopting such a conceptual scheme may have a high cost, namely, oversimplifying an account of Chinese society, and tending to evacuate the idea of capitalism of a definite meaning, as it loses any contrast with possible non-capitalist systems. Moreover, even if some generic type of capitalism dominated everywhere, or distinguishable variants reigned everywhere, there would be no re-assurance that a locally favored type of capitalism (say the US variety) would come out on top globally. The anxieties and maneuvering would and do persist, even when badly interpreted.

Milanović’s viewpoint, while not anti-capitalist, recognizes some negative features of capitalism. Indeed, his view may imply that critical attention should now be focused on real-world capitalism, rather than marginalized or merely hypothetically threatening communism. On this sort of viewpoint, although a conceptual distinction may still apply to capitalism versus communism, the threat of communism as a rival to capitalism has subsided.

This paper maintains that a new language and conceptual scheme is needed. Less should be assumed to be useful in talk about a conflict about freedom in capitalism and/or communism. There should be greater interest expressed in forging discourse more useful in designating and analyzing a variety of major contemporary issues about

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, publicity about a new volume of “Xi Jinping Thought”: [http://www.china.org.cn/china/2023-10/23/content\\_116766438.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/china/2023-10/23/content_116766438.htm) (accessed October 29, 2023).

political economy and culture; also, new pragmatically framed stances for activism are needed. This is particularly important about many environmental issues, which are urgent in both capitalist and supposedly communist societies, e.g., the US and China respectively.

The preceding does not imply that a new dichotomy is needed to replace capitalism versus communism. Nor does it imply that the dyad of capitalism versus communism has lost all significance. One illustration of this is Slavoj Žižek's tendency to want to affirm a non-Stalinist communism (though he is sometimes attacked as a Stalinist, and he jokes about Stalin), to be distinguished from the twentieth-century varieties of communism. Žižek insists on a distinction, but increasingly asserts the centrality of environmental catastrophe in political philosophy and makes efforts to extend Hegelian-Marxist thought into environmentalist philosophizing. It will be enough if we displace old dogmas and formulae, and encourage constructive, thoughtful activism. Environmentalist movements may supply some of the needed intellectual and political energy to protect and advance freedoms of more intuitively pluralistic sorts.

We will next offer some reflections about older social and political thought that stresses environments. John Dewey was a philosopher dedicated to study and activism about using environments in education. Nonetheless, Dewey also recognized the importance of biological factors about humans in societal relations. And notably, even after the Russian Revolution and the formation of the USSR, Dewey did not allow himself to be distracted by focusing excessively on a supposed freedom-centered dichotomy between capitalism and communism; he did not opt for either one as vastly preferable to the other. He was capable of criticizing existing versions of both, and capable of seeing other, then-contemporary problematic practices apart from capitalist or communist aspects as in need of attention and correction, in the interests of freedom.

### **I. Elaborating on and Amplifying Dewey's Pragmatist Environmentalism**

There are signs in John Dewey's writings of some embryonic features of the outlook of this paper. In *Democracy and Education*, for example, Dewey stresses the importance of distinguishable environments for communication and societal education (Dewey 1916). His remarks there are not focused on explicitly green concerns about damage to nature (Dewey 1916, chapter II, 12 – 27). But Dewey frames his views on environments in a way at least consistent with possible activism to protect and improve nature. His remarks about environments are suggestive, though limited and general. One especially interesting point is that he views references to the environment as consistent with interpreting humans as free and active in relation to their environment, not as mere passive products.

In *Freedom and Culture*, published in 1939, when some response to Marxism and communism seemed necessary, Dewey gave an account of freedom far from the abstract

over-simplifications of formulae currently proposed by some English-speaking philosophers, such as negative freedom, positive freedom, non-domination (and perhaps freedom as authenticity or self-fulfillment, in the style of one phase of Charles Taylor's thinking in the early 1990s), etc. (Dewey 1939). Dewey's discussion intentionally ranged over many issues of then-contemporary concern, including events in the USSR, and complex (mainly Western) historical background, incorporating US history (such as Thomas Jefferson's political outlook) among other topics. There was no attempt by Dewey to co-ordinate his topics with green environmentalisms, but there was also no obsession with highlighting any capitalism-communism conflict. He was rather careful to be critical but also respectful in his discussion of Marx, at times even complimenting Lenin, but critical about Stalinist trends. However, his overall position was not focused on any supposed capitalism-communism conflict about freedom. We conclude that while Dewey's approach to giving an account of freedom does not robustly and in detail anticipate this paper, its overall tenor is consistent with some central features of this essay and might be furthered in going on as this essay advocates. Preferably, we need to recall Dewey's overarching interest in learning environments, retain his stress on group activities, and emulate his willingness to be complex in his acknowledgment of various then-contemporary pragmatic demands in the name of freedom. Pragmatism in this sense is emphatically not a middle-of-the-road compromise, nor is it at work primarily in a commitment to "a pragmatic theory of truth" (passim). Pragmatism in this sense is among other things the analysis of meanings of language uses and similar meaningful social phenomena in terms of actions.

## **II. Environmentalisms, Continued**

We propose that differences about environmentalisms are more helpful for understanding differences about freedom in society and its needs at the present time than the capitalism/communism dichotomy. In fact, after the supposed demise of communism in much of Europe, not only did that domain (Europe) fade as a place for communism to reign (or threaten) anywhere within its boundaries. What capitalism amounted to, also, has undergone major changes, and raised new questions, resulting in social formations with very different tendencies from those prior to 1989. Both then-existing communism and then-existing capitalism faded, though in the case of capitalism, the fading process has been taking longer, with more diffuse developments, not focally dramatized events such as the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. There are major continuities between the older capitalism and the newer capitalisms. But there are notable differences too between the older capitalist systems and the newer capitalist systems. One can say that capitalism in the older sense faded, though there are major continuities between the older capitalism-1 and the newer capitalisms-n. (Eventually, we would see, do see, and will

see, “capitalism-n” ... and so on, using the “natural numbers”).<sup>2</sup> Exploitation still reigns, though it should not be construed solely as the capitalist appropriation of surplus value in Marx’s sense. This is a point noted by Žižek.<sup>3</sup> Another feature of contemporary exploitation in capitalism is its damage to the living conditions of the working class or economically excluded persons, damage which can in many cases be labelled without strain as environmental.

Notoriously, as neoliberalism intensified after 1980 in some influential parts of the world, such as the US (Reagan) and UK (Thatcher), capitalism and markets seemed less and less about its prior pre-dominant ideology, or co-existence with liberal democracy, or democracy in any genuine sense. This non-democratic democracy includes its supposed but too often, though not always, ersatz free multi-party elections with significant alternatives represented in political programs; where on earth is that now? Not in the US, where elections are more and more problematic, recently ferociously so. Disputes about rigged elections abound. Many involved in the disputes (including self-styled liberals) have overlooked or de-emphasized the serious defects about elections long before the 2020s.

Lately, fears have been more and more voiced about capitalism blending into authoritarianism or fascism. Jason Stanley’s writings about propaganda and fascism are one example. Then too, real-life centralized authoritarian social organization came to dominate (in real social effects) over libertarian rhetoric which we are accustomed to hearing, propaganda publicly claiming to affirm a minimal state (notably in the US).

We do not fully agree with the self-avowed communist Slavoj Žižek (who confesses to his lack of an alternative vision to that of global capitalism) that taking the environment seriously somehow favorably represents the idea of what is common, the commons, etc., and hence potentially re-evokes a transformed interest in a new incarnation of Communism (minus Stalin, et al.).<sup>4</sup>

But in a charitable re-interpretation of Žižek, he may be seen as maintaining a position rather like that of the much more conventional and respectable Dewey. Both Dewey and Žižek are deeply indebted, as it happens, to Hegel. The Žižek position says that the capitalism/communism conflict is still a factor in interpreting societal phenomena, and seeking progress, but that environmental (or ecological) issues have come to have a legitimately regarded far greater prominence than they once had, in order to think about and act on major political problems about freedom, including those attributable primarily to contemporary capitalism. Žižek, paradoxically like many

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<sup>2</sup> Cf., for example, Ther (2016).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., “Eco-proletarians and the Limits of Valorization,” in Žižek (2022, 44 – 52).

<sup>4</sup> See Žižek (2017), especially “What Is to be Done?” (105 – 118), and more recently, Žižek (2022).

a capitalist fond of free markets, cannot yet pivot adequately to a new conceptual scheme beyond the capitalist-communist divide.

In contemporary Anglo-American analytic social and political philosophy, to shift academic cultural contexts, we have the odd language of Elizabeth Anderson, the US based distinguished academic who (perhaps jokingly?) claimed that capitalist firms are communist dictatorships (Anderson 2017, 37 – 41). In actuality, while capitalist firms are typically authoritarian, they are hardly communist in any meaningful sense. It may be that Anderson is banking on traditional anti-communism in her language.

### **III. Environmentalisms, Tentatively Listed**

There is no finite number of environmentalisms. It might be constructive, however, to start with enumerating six. These overlap to some extent: There is, first, the environmentalism that we hear so much about today, and understandably so, about the atmosphere, and often particularly about global warming. It is to Amartya Sen's credit that he stresses the multiplicity of environmental challenges, beyond global warming: see his article, "Global Warming is Just One of Many Environmental Threats that Demand Our Attention" (Sen 2014).

We move beyond Sen, however, when we identify, second, land use environmentalism as a different stance, though often connected with concerns about global warming. Land use environmentalism rapidly becomes entangled with numerous strongly felt attitudes and acts about territoriality, often with ethno-nationalist or other political aspects. Examples abound: Israel-Palestine, Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula, indeed, Central and Eastern Europe generally, with their worries about the potential for renewed Russian expansionism, South Africa, with its need for anti-racist land reform, China-Taiwan, China-Tibet.

But land use environmentalism need not be limited to discussions of, or activism about areas in which there are major international or inter-ethnic political disputes. It may concern more local issues about the built environment, or monuments (as we see in continuing US controversies about Spanish conquistador anti-indigenous or pro-slavery confederate monuments, and counterpart controversies internationally). Concerns about urbanization, the rural/urban relationship, etc. are in part within land use environmentalism.

A third type of environmentalism is about the public health aspects of life. This is dramatically brought to our attention in the case of the pandemic that began probably in 2019. The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has made the proximity and interrelationships of human bodies as biological factors a major environmental concern. Vectors for transmission of the virus, ordinary behaviors such as hugging, kissing, shaking hands, etc. have, as many know, become problematic in some situations. Indeed, the social and

even the physical environment (so hard to distinguish) have become deeply problematic in very disturbing ways. Urban population density (a phenomenon of urbanization, e.g., in New York City) has had much to do with the worst of the pandemic. The effects of the pandemic are apparently worsened by air pollution (an atmospheric environmental issue), also an indoor environmental issue. The potential for mobility and travel has at times been much decreased by the pandemic, so one's environment has at times been experienced in diminished ways. Travel is increasing as the official position is broadcast that the pandemic emergency is past.

The pandemic, however traumatic, is only one dramatic illustration of the importance of more general issues concerning public health environmentalism. To some extent, the pandemic and responses to it could serve as novel contemporary examples of a crisis within global capitalism, but it has obviously also generated severe problems in nominally communist China.

A fourth type of environmentalism includes but is of broader scope than public health environmentalism. This is social environmentalism, which includes many issues that go beyond physical relationships. This includes all sorts of interpersonal relationships, or the absence of them, and further distinctions are possible within this category. Public health environmentalism is one sub-category. Racist and caste systems are another. These are particularly evident in the surge of racism and anti-racism in the US. Other related concepts and activist themes are referred to in what follows below.

A fifth type of environmentalism focuses on the "learning environment(s)" of persons. The phrase is entrenched in educational commentary, but less well-worked-out in contemporary discourse is the place of this environmentalism in the total scheme of environmentalisms. Dewey, however, is exemplary here.

A sixth type of environmentalism will perhaps be regarded by some readers as fanciful. Nonetheless, the topic should be mentioned. We might call this digital environmentalism. Given the increasing prevalence of digital technology in the lives of many persons, there are digital elements that form part of our living environments. Not only are the physical bases of information and communication technology part of our environment, and the real-world physically characterizable effects of information and communication technology, the metaphorical worlds projected by and made accessible by digital technology are part of our expanded environments. Many normative questions (including questions about freedom) arise about the quality of our digital environment(s). This has been reinforced by the reaction to the pandemic, which has relied heavily on increased use of information and communication technology. The nature of our digital environments has major implications for freedom undreamt of by many philosophical formulaic concepts of freedom.



Is there any essence of environmentalisms as such? Following some readings of the philosopher Wittgenstein, we might say that there is no essence, but there are family resemblances among the different categories that incline us to call them environmentalisms (Wittgenstein 1953, Part I, sections 65 – 67).

#### **IV. Environmentalisms as Subject-Object Relationships**

One issue that might be suggested is what limits there might be on the scope of “the environment,” as the categories abound. Possibly, there are no a priori limits, but there is a guiding question that recurs as new categories of environmentalism are proposed and modified. That is, what the contrast is or the contrasts are that are plausible between environments and human subjects confronting or intervening in or even partially constituting the environment. The contrast might be thought of as a distinction or as a relationship. Using the word “subject” to designate the varied individuals or groups that are thought to contrast with the relevant environment(s), we could refer to a variable subject-environment contrast. In this essay, we emphasize group subjects.

Both capitalism and communism (i.e., institutional elements in societies often placed in these categories) have been known to invoke notions of freedom that they supposedly address. Such elements claim some particular type of freedom achieved (or at least furthered) in their systems, and supposedly frustrated in the conflicting system, according to advocates of one or the other system.

We suggest that acknowledging and addressing challenges posed by multiple environmentalisms can be interpreted as supporting disavowal of the idea that there is one type of freedom that is an overarching value by which to evaluate social organization. Among other ideologies, capitalism and communism seem to project such monistic views, each in their own way. Amartya Sen, however, differs. He concludes one well-known book (“A Final Remark,” in his *Development as Freedom*) by referring to the multifarious nature of freedom(s) (Sen 1999, 297-298). But his account, curiously, does not seem to address the matter we are addressing here. He seems to take seriously the very varying capabilities that are the freedoms that constitute and promote development or progress. But he accepts the idea of freedom as definable through capabilities, and by reference to what seems to be a relatively simplified combination of freedom-from and freedom to (Sen 1999, 18 – 19, 282 – 298).<sup>5</sup> Sen is a little attentive to environmental issues, but that is disappointingly limited in his overall outlook.

What we are proposing is that the existence of variable types of subject-environment relationships that are associated with different environmentalisms shows that frequent philosophical and political attempts to capture freedom in some unitary

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<sup>5</sup> What is “simplified” is the freedom-from and freedom-to division; Sen’s account of freedom is by contrast obviously complex.

account must fail. Both talk about subject and talk about environment can be parsed in multiple, possibly unlimited numbers of ways. This can generate a too-often neglected heuristic for investigating complex intuitions about freedoms or their corresponding un-freedoms. Many capitalisms and communisms have been unable to acknowledge the complexities and pragmatic context-dependence of freedom discourse and activism, particularly freedom as linked with environmentalisms.

To further clarify: rather than environmental studies or environmental activism having one content, we can distinguish different stances that can be called environmentalisms. The environmentalisms generate various subject-object relationships: individuals or more notably groups are subjects, while various types of environments or aspects of environments are the objects (objects of environmentalist interest).

We do not align ourselves in this essay with those who crave accounts of freedom such as freedom from, freedom to, or freedom as non-domination, nor freedom as self-realization/self-fulfillment/authenticity, or the like, as with Charles Taylor in some phases of his thought. These tend towards syntactic or idealized semantic accounts, whereas we want an account that investigates the (unpredictably exemplified) pragmatics of freedom discourse linked with environmentalisms, and related activism.

## **V. Some Ways to Examine and Act on Ideas of Freedom**

The type of environmentalism, plus the relevant subject-object relationship, could heuristically encourage us to suggest examples of freedom or un-freedom. The examples will not neatly reflect some distinctions suggested by certain influential accounts of freedom, such as the positive freedom, negative freedom account, mentioned earlier, influentially expressed by Isaiah Berlin. Key successor accounts of freedom subsequent to Berlin's proposals have continued to be influenced by a supposed capitalism-communism dichotomy ideologically basic to Berlin's thoughts about freedom.

Post-Berlin accounts of freedom that combine positive and negative elements in a unitary negative plus positive account (freedom from ... combined with freedom to...) perhaps somewhat soften or merely avoid the anti-communist fervor of Berlin himself. This may apply with accounts that focus on freedom as non-domination, as in work by Phillip Pettit. Vacillations about freedom in Charles Taylor's characteristic work have often been rooted in his ambivalence about capitalism and communism, even when capitalism is the overwhelming power system in Taylor's main territories of concern, such as Canada, the US, and Western Europe. All these accounts of freedom continue to convey in a veiled form the ideological commitments of their origins in Berlin's outlook.

The heuristic approach commended here is thus not limited to a third approach offered in some contemporary academic literature, notably by Philip Pettit. Pettit focuses on freedom as non-domination and defines his position in an account of a republican

politics as constructed in selected Western territories over history. Despite his interventions in Spanish socialism and his mild objections to the domineering effects of corporate capitalism, Pettit has not centrally challenged the political and cultural domination of capitalism, and his supposed departure from the positive/negative account of freedom is less definite than he implies (Pettit 2014).

Pettit is still a descendant of Isaiah Berlin in his account of freedom. This is evident, for example, in Pettit's comments in 2011 on the political defeat of the Spanish socialist movement that he endorsed in support of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero's government. In those comments, Pettit concedes that global financial markets must be acknowledged even though they set severe limits on the advance of democracy. An interesting further point is that in his comments there Pettit does refer significantly to environmental topics (Berlin 2011).

To continue with the approach suggested in this paper, take, for example, land use environmentalisms. We mentioned that these often implicate territorial disputes. We can think of examples of individuals or groups who act, but in situations in which they must act within alienated territory and land, which was once the agent's, but now is not. A positive/negative account might somewhat fit the act in context, suggesting that the act is free. Still, the act will be in some ways unfree. The unfree aspect can be interpreted and explained in terms of the environmentalism/subject-object pairing in the account we have suggested. The republican idea of freedom as non-domination might seem promising in such cases. However, what is the dominating agent in some cases? Characterizing the "dominus" (the dominating agent, to use Pettit's word) is preferably done, we suggest, by describing the subject-object relationship and the relevant environmentalism. (Pettit 2014, xiii – xxiii; 52 – 54) The heuristic approach suggested here in looking for examples of freedom and un-freedom, drawing on intuitions, is arguably more helpful than the republican approach. The republican approach, it seems to us, is offered in an account by Pettit that still takes negative or positive freedom as the main rival accounts of freedom, from which freedom as non-domination must distinguish itself. But any of these three conceptions of freedom, when offered in idealized forms, are too abstract and context-less to offer much traction in defining a pragmatic politics serious about freedom. Pettit is said to have interacted productively with some Spanish socialists, but it is unclear that this was an application of his theory of freedom.

Furthermore, there are signs that any of the three or four excessively and often wrongly abstract conceptions of freedom (positive, negative, republican, plus Tayloresque-self-realization/self-fulfillment/authenticity-focused freedom) are at times conjoined with some anxieties expressed in the perspectives that focus on capitalism

versus communism. We already commented on this as obvious with Berlin's classical essay, so linked with Cold War anxieties.

Charles Taylor, also, seems to say at times that the idea of positive freedom too readily can be associated with some types of totalitarianism (perhaps conclusions drawn from worries about Rousseau's *Social Contract*, with its endorsement of being "forced to be free," or Marxist or maybe rather "Marx-like" tendencies). (Yet early in his career, Taylor was attracted by some features of Marxism). No, he says, we need the counterbalance of "markets" (a code word in Taylor, apparently signifying capitalism in the text referred to here) to be added in along with rational central nation-state planning as societal tendencies in modernity (Taylor 1992).<sup>6</sup>

Taylor's very recent work, however, seems to return to anxieties about capitalism, but now with some hints about the possible centrality of something like a Green Deal model of environmentalism. We would interpret this as some movement toward an environmentalist orientation that could overtake the older capitalist-communist dichotomy and yet promote a sober critical evaluation of capitalism. Taylor, once attracted to Marxism, later shifting to advocacy of democratic state planning plus markets, is now very recently vexed about capitalism. But rather than reviving corresponding fears about communism, Taylor shows some signs of an environmentalist sensibility (Craig – Gaonkar Parameshwar – Taylor, 2022).<sup>7</sup>

To return to the way we framed the topic of this essay, we can be open to recognizing the main conflicts about freedom occurring at the present time, without seeking out one central dichotomy. Capitalism versus Communism, or other proposals that make abstracted freedom central, is no longer, and probably never was, a central dichotomy on which social and political philosophy should focus. At the present time, multiple environmentalisms are more promising in formulating our outstanding perceptions of and intuitions about freedom and un-freedom. Environmentalism(s), interpreted in light of current developments, is/are more fruitfully suggestive than some of the most academically influential abstract ideas or word-concepts about social and political freedom.

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<sup>6</sup> See especially the chapter "Against Fragmentation" (Taylor 1992, 109 – 121). "What our situation seems to call for is a complex, many-levelled struggle..." (Taylor 1992, 120 – 121).

<sup>7</sup> See especially the section "What Is to Be Done?" by Calhoun and Taylor (Craig – Gaonkar Parameshwar – Taylor 2022, 251 – 257). Note the resonance of the Lenin-style question in the title of the section.

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