

I Speak for the Trees



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First published April 25, 2023

My favorite Dr. Seuss book is *The Lorax*, and I will be continuing his sermon today. If you don't know, the Lorax was a cute fuzzy little guy with a walrus mustache who popped out of a stump and spoke for the trees in 1971. You would think all environmentalists would love him, but that isn't true. See for example Emma Marris, who, like me, came out of UT Austin. In 2011, for the 40th anniversary of *The Lorax*, she trashed him as a gloomy little “parody of a misanthropic ecologist”. So we have her pegged already: a hire of the billionaires who hijacked the environmental movement back in 1970, when they started the misnamed Earth Day. They should have called it Cloaked Merchants Day. Marris gives TED talks and writes for *Nature*, so we know she isn't what she claims to be. *Nature* is also up for a name change: maybe *Anti-Nature*. *Denatured?* *Liars Monthly?*

People like Marris have been heavily promoted in the past couple of decades, with the idea being that the split in environmentalism is between traditional “gloomy” environmentalists who have become unpopular with their stale warnings, and a new breed of more inclusive environmentalists like Marris, who want to build alliances. All the usual slimy propaganda, since these new people aren't novel, inclusive, or anything else. They aren't even environmentalists. They are just cloaked invaders who have called themselves environmentalists, while being funded under the table by big business. Anyone with an ounce of penetration can tell that in about 30 seconds. I have more than an ounce of penetration, as you know, and it took me all of ten seconds to peg Marris. Her single quote about *The Lorax* did it, though I should tell you I looked into beyond that to confirm my initial reaction. I was right, as you will discover if you do your own research on her. As she falls, so fall all those saying the same things she is saying.

Anyway, I should tell you how I got into this paper. You will remember that I recently reminded my readers of the Mother of the Forest, a giant sequoia 2,500 years old that was murdered in 1853 by gold rushers and “scientists”. Her sad stump is about two hours from where I now live. She and the Discovery Tree, the two largest trees in the United States, were both wantonly murdered for an exhibition in the New York Crystal Palace. Both were taller and broader than the General Sherman

Tree—the largest tree still living.* So we killed the largest and oldest things alive. . . for no reason. Just because we could. They had been around since the time of Plato, and were literally killed for tourism. Or so that New York tourists didn't need to travel to California. Lazy tourism: bring the big murdered things to me, so that I can wonder at their massive corpses.



You would think we would have learned our lesson from that horrific action, but we didn't. Smaller instances of that are going on everyday, even now. When I lived in Austin, I personally witnessed it many times: one time they admitted it was a crime and other times they didn't. Treaty Oak, one of the largest and oldest oaks in the United States, famous for its perfect canopy, was poisoned on purpose by a crazy man as part of a warlock's spell in 1989. It survived but lost a large part of its canopy. The “vandal”, Paul Cullen, was sentenced to nine years. He served less than three. But Treaty Oak won that battle, since Cullen is now dead and she is still thriving and producing acorns.

Even worse in my opinion was the wanton murder of many very old cottonwoods at Deep Eddy pool in West Austin, since none of them survived it. This is a natural spring pool like Barton Springs, but smaller. I went there very often in the 1980s-90s. It was a magical place, and a large part of the magic was those giant cottonwoods. Around 2000 they were told by a city arborist that people on the ground were in danger from falling limbs, so rather than hire someone to prune dead branches, they cut them all down. I went there once afterwards and cried at the devastation. It was awful. Not only was all the shade gone, all the magic was gone. The place felt like a graveyard. No one was charged for that crime, but they should have been.

Before I moved, I lived in one of the oldest parts of Austin, called Tarrytown. There was an old lady who lived across the street from me named Jean Baldwin and I used to visit her and chat. She had known everyone and told me all the stories of the old days. In her front yard was a massive old tree, though I don't know the species. It wasn't an oak. I had two very old oaks in my yard, out by the street standing as twin sentinels, one on each side of the drive. But her tree was far larger, its canopy

covering her entire house and yard. We often commented how beautiful and healthy it was. She was very proud of it. But in about 2000 she died and the house had to be sold. No one in her family wanted it. The first thing the new owners did is cut down that tree, because they didn't like it dropping leaves on the roof. I couldn't believe the stupidity of that and I told them so before I left. That tree was hundreds of years old and had been there long before the house. It was there before Austin was there. But these creeps cut it down because it dropped leaves.

In 2000 I moved from Austin to Amherst, Massachusetts, but I wasn't able to get away from the idiotic people murdering old trees for no reason. The town hall and oldest buildings there flank "the green", meaning the town park. It contains many beautiful old maples. But the most amazing tree in that part of town was in front of the church: a massive old chestnut with a huge base and curling branches. I had climbed into its lowest seat many times, and even took one of [my young models](#) there for a shoot. While I was photographing her in the tree, one of the church elders came out and tried to shoo us off by threatening to call the cops but I told him to get stuffed. About a year later some dipshit arborist filed a report with the city, claiming falling limbs were a danger for those passing underneath on the sidewalk. So rather than prune dead branches, they wantonly murdered the old tree, removing the most beautiful thing in that area and leaving only a sad gap in the history of the place. I knew a guy who worked at the church as their organist and pointed out to him the tragedy of it, but he looked at me like I was crazy. The threat of a limb falling outweighed all the beauty and history of that tree for him. No one could speak for that tree, so it had no rights. 500-year-old things were not to be thought of. They demanded no respect.

I see the same thing here in California, where you would think tree-huggers would rule. Nope. As elsewhere, only fools rule here. PG&E is not required to take into account the seniority or beauty of any tree when deciding what needs to be cut. If it may threaten a line, down it comes. There is a very large pine in my front yard here, providing much needed shade. But because it is within falling distance of a line, they marked it as "possible cut". Their young arborist told me it was dying or dead, because it was brown on the ends. I suggested to him it might have something to do with the drought and the fact we are on the top of a hill here. I was able to hypnotize him (this is not the tree you are looking for) and save the tree for now, but who knows what will happen when I leave.

In my opinion, this is all to do with our miseducation about our place in the world as humans. Natives don't teach their children that they are superior to all other life forms and that they may destroy them indiscriminately, but we do. We have created a hierarchy where we are way at the top, with all other animals being far below us and of no spiritual consequence. Trees and other plants are far far below that, and we hardly admit they are alive. We see this with vegans and vegetarians, most of whom seem to think there is something categorically different in killing an animal and killing a plant. I am not saying we shouldn't eat plants, of course, I am just pointing out the basic illogic of it. Plants are alive and shouldn't be wantonly killed anymore than animals. It is the wantonness I am complaining about, you see.

We think we are so important to God or Nature, but I suggest God and Nature may not see it that way. Here is something you may not have thought of, and something even the Lorax didn't say in defense of the trees. If we are looking at it from Nature's perspective, it would appear she likes trees even more than us, since she gave them longer lives. Meaning, in her eyes, *you* may be more expendable than the tree. If she were judging, and it came down to you or the tree, she would pick the tree. It seems obvious if you think about it: she only wants you here for about 80 years, at most, whereas she wants that tree here for 2000 years or more. If a tree meant for 2000 years gets chopped down at 1000, then 1000 years of recycling air and water are lost. If you die at 40, 40 years of poisoning the environment

with chemicals and plastics are lost. So you can see why Nature might choose the tree over you.

I admit, that is the “gloomiest” way of putting it; but to be honest, humans need a kick in the pants and sugar coating this isn't going to do anyone any good. You will say I am sounding like Greta Thunberg, but I'm not. She is selling you a fake environmentalism by which the rich can get richer by selling us more pretend mitigation schemes, but that doesn't mean there wasn't and isn't a real environmentalism that addresses real problems. The problem isn't global warming and it won't be solved by higher taxes. The problem is chemical and plastic pollution, environmental degradation, habitat destruction, and destructive farming. None of those will be solved by taxes, carbon credits, or any of that. They will be solved by completely overhauling our laws and customs. The government doesn't need to spend trillions, it just needs to pass sensible laws and enforce them. We are already full up with enforcers, we just need to re-assign them from harassing Christians, straight men, and poor people, having them harass rich polluters instead.

And just so you know, the number one polluter in the US isn't trees (remember Reagan said trees pollute more than cars). The number one polluter is the government itself, with the military being the worst of the worst.

I wrote this paper not only to speak for the trees, but to remind you of some of the things real environmentalism is about. The current green movement has been hijacked by industry and turned to crud on purpose, to blackwash the older movement and shield themselves from accountability. Environmentalism has been infiltrated for over fifty years, using thousands of operatives like Marris to spread confusion, torpedo legislation, and drown out all real environmentalism with this pretend environmentalism of global warming, carbon credits, massive spending, and suppression of the middle class. The new environmentalism isn't environmentalism at all, it is just another plank in the fullscale, all-points war of the upper class on the lower classes. So I can understand why you don't like it. But just remember, there is a real environmentalism that teaches a stewardship of the Earth, and you shouldn't be afraid to call yourself an environmentalist of that sort.

You may say we need to come up with new words for these things, since the old words have been stolen from us. But I don't agree. The words were fine the way they were, and we need to take them back. I know because I came across this first in art, where realists of my sort were saying back in the 1990s that the word “art” had been stolen from us and redefined, and that we needed to come up with a new word for what we did. The famous Norwegian realist Odd Nerdrum said we needed to embrace the word “kitsch” as a replacement for “art”, but that was the worst idea imaginable, since “kitsch” is a pejorative term. I said then—and I was right—that the word “art” was ours, since we were the real artists, and that it was the Moderns who needed to come up with a new term, not us. What they were doing was never art by the old definition, so it was their problem, not ours. I suggested to them some applicable terms, starting with “garbage”, and though they never accepted them, the greater public did. Most people are aware that Modern art isn't art, so what those phonies call themselves and their creations is neither here nor there.

It is the same with the words “liberalism” and “environmentalism”. The same group of people flipped the definitions of those words in the 20th century, and people like me were expected to become “conservatives” and “anti-environmentalists”. But as with everything else, I declined to go along. I don't change to suit the suits. The old definitions of those words were good, and I haven't changed one iota since the mid-70s, when I started thinking about these things. So it is not up to me to change clothes on the cue of the propagandists. They can stuff all their societal rocking and mindgames. I am against a rapacious ruling class, so I am a liberal and will remain one, as the ruling class gets ever more

rapacious. I am for protecting the Earth and its creatures from a rapacious ruling class, the greedy merchants, and a roughshod military, so I am an environmentalist. Why don't you join me?

*I am told that the General Sherman tree would like to be renamed, and not for a human that was a famous asshole and war criminal. I am also told that Tecumseh would like his name removed as Sherman's middle name, for the same reason. Sherman is the one who authorized Sheridan's massacre of innocent Natives at Washita, and also the rigged trials of Satanta and Big Tree. So Sherman being named after a Native chief is disgusting beyond words. If anyone deserves to have his statues removed and melted down it is Sherman.