

**Concretizing Sustainable Worlds:
Environmentalism as a Politics
of Technological Transformation**

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Abstract

Andrew Feenberg, a philosopher of technology, argues for a democratic rationalization of technology, whereby subjugated actors intervene in the design process to achieve their interests. He claims that environmentalism represents one of the greatest opportunities for this kind of intervention. His suggestion seems viable; most if not all of the current environmental problems stem from maladaptive technologies. Transforming these technologies is therefore imperative if we are to move toward more sustainable societies. Feenberg, however, does not address the details of his proposal or offer more than a few brief examples of what he is advocating. I use Feenberg's Critical Theory of technology to analyze and assess various environmentalisms. Along the way I expose the deficiencies of his theory and attempt build on his work. One problem, however, is that environmentalism is by no means a homogenous entity; rather, it is composed of numerous strands with their own unique histories, aims, and strategies. I argue that of the various environmentalisms grassroots environmental justice resonates most with Feenberg's theory. To illustrate, I present a case study of the toxics movement that emerged out of the Love Canal incident. I conclude by showing how grassroots environmental justice could enhance their effectiveness by employing the suggested Critical Theory of technology.

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Tyler Veak
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