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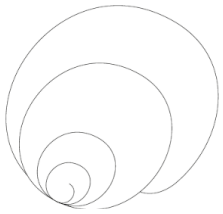

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Saving Agrafa: A rooted defense of wildness in the age of climate change

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Abstract
Today, the environmental movement seems riven by divergent commitments to climate justice, on the one hand, and to wilderness conservation, on the other. In an essay titled "In Wildness Is the Liberation of the World," historian Andreas Malm (2018) suggests that these commitments might be reconciled through the recognition of common social justice values and liberatory aspirations in the protection of what he calls "wildness." This article responds to that essay, challenging that, due to insufficient attention to contemporary environmental struggles and the question of land, Malm fails to precisely diagnose and, therefore, address the cause of the movement's internal rift. In service of an alternative analysis, this article turns to an ongoing struggle that aims to defend the "wildness" of the Agrafa Mountains of central Greece by opposing the local installation of industrial-scale 'renewable' energy infrastructures. Through a review of activists' self-published literature, this article attends to their objections to these popular, techno-scientific climate fixes and traces how these objections shape their refusal to subordinate the earthly defense of wildness to the planetary cause of climate change. It suggests that activists' counterproposal to instead get to the "root" of the socioecological crisis presents an alternative path to the reconciliation of the environmental movement's factions, one which parallels the recommendations of degrowth scholars in its demands for systemic social and economic transformation. Therefore, this article concludes by urging degrowthers to recognize as co-theorists and co-practitioners the communities that are directly challenging growth as they struggle to defend relatively "wild" lands.

1. Introduction: A more fundamental problem than climate change

On International Mountain Day, 11th December 2023, over two thousand people from across Greece convened in downtown Athens to protest the plundering of mountain and island ecosystems by the energy industry. They filled the bustling commercial center of Monastiraki Square before embarking into the street, marching in loose blocs behind the painted banners

of their associations and assemblies. Protesters also held aloft, above the surging crowd, sheets of poster board emblazoned with the names of imperiled regions. One of those posters named Kalohori, Ioannina, a site of exploratory oil drilling in the country's northwest. However, most posters, slogans, and banners referenced sites impacted not by black oil, but by the generation of ostensibly 'green' energy from renewable sources.

First among these was Agrafa, a mountainous region of mainland Greece, a biodiversity hotspot famed for its rebellious history, which today hosts plans for the installation of 133 wind turbines, 98 small hydropower plants, and 9 km^2 of on- and offshore photovoltaics.[1] Agrafa became the target of hundreds of proposals for 'renewable' energy projects following its designation in 2008 as a priority zone for wind energy development. In the late 2010s, indignation about the rapidly multiplying proposals motivated the creation of several grassroots organizations that have since brought significant public attention to the plight of Agrafa and other mountains of Greece. One of these organizations spearheaded the coordination of this protest. Its members led the procession toward Syntagma Square with a banner reading "Agrafa, forever untrodden."

When the protesters arrived at Syntagma, they briefly chanted their slogans up at Parliament's darkened windows before dissolving into a jubilant swarm. Mountaineers greeted nature-lovers; anti-authoritarians convened with their comrades; and collectives took turns posing for triumphal photographs in front of this monumental site of state power. Gradually, they dispersed. In small groups, several hundred protesters headed to a migrant solidarity space in Exarcheia for an impromptu assembly. There, the members of dispersed grassroots organizations exploited their rare convergence in Athens to take stock of the rapid expansion of energy infrastructures across islands and mountain ranges nationwide. Over

[1] To quantify the wind, hydroelectric, and photovoltaic infrastructures already existing or planned for construction within Agrafa, on May 21, 2025, I exported the complete dataset of 'renewable' energy projects at all permission stages (evaluation, production, construction, and operation) from the geospatial database of the Greek Regulatory Authority for Energy (RAE, 2025). Then, with the help of Maria Papazekou, we isolated the subset of projects that intersected with or fell within the boundaries of the Agrafa mountain range as delimited by a geometry shapefile created by the Hellenic Mountaineering Association of Karditsa with reference to the 1967 regional map of Serafeim K. Tsitsas (2023, p. 10). Importantly, these numbers represent a single moment within a years-long process of development during which projects are continually planned, reviewed, approved, constructed, and sometimes cancelled. At other moments, the number of wind turbines under consideration has reportedly exceeded 500 (Betavatzi, 2022).

several hours, they pooled their knowledge of the technological, bureaucratic, and legal systems that collaborate in the transformation of their lands, and they workshopped strategies for how those systems might be obstructed and the installations averted.

It was nearly midnight when Orestes,[2] a prominent climate activist, rose from the back corner of the room and began to address the assembly. He identified himself as an ally to the movement and a friend of the protest's organizers, but his conciliatory tone abruptly shifted to one of censure when he observed that climate change had not been mentioned even once that entire evening. Citing numerous measurements and projections, Orestes emphasized the threat that climate change poses to mountain and island ecosystems. Without concerted effort to mitigate it, he warned, these ecosystems would be irremediably transformed and rendered hostile to life. In his estimation, their struggles could not afford to ignore climate change except at the risk of their very credibility.

At that, the audience broke into discontented whispers. To appease the chorus, Orestes clarified that explicit acknowledgement of climate change need not redound to the benefit of energy companies and their investors. Instead, he proposed that activists could strengthen their own position by emphasizing the atmospheric effects and planetary implications of deforestation and ecosystem fragmentation caused by the installation of wind turbines in mountainous areas. By framing their local struggles within a planetary context, he suggested, they could make their cause more comprehensible to international movements for environmental justice. They might even find allies in the advocates of rewilding and degrowth.

When Orestes concluded, everyone seemed to speak at once. Some speakers rejected his advice, wary that any overt reference to climate change could be interpreted as an endorsement of green growth. Others tentatively offered ways to leverage climate science within their campaigns. Then, a soft voice cut through the din. Penelope, an activist involved in the defense of Agrafa, countered that the projections of climate science were far from unfamiliar to them. Nevertheless, they had long decided to approach the environmental crisis

[2] All interlocutors have been given pseudonyms.

from its "root." Her somewhat cryptic assertion brought the debate to its close. The meeting ended some 10 or 15 minutes later.

This tense exchange dramatized the contradictions that frequently plague efforts to defend 'wild' places at this moment in which their conservation has been parochialized within the wider environmental movement. In this article, I propose that the unresolved tension generated by Orestes' interjection was a manifestation of the difficulty of reconciling the incommensurable orientations to the Earth present within the environmental movement: the orientation to Earth as earth, an inhabited place with regions worth conserving, or as planet, a geological body to be comprehensively known and regulated. These differing orientations create intransigent contradictions when they are translated into irreconcilable land uses—such as protesters insist is the case with efforts to develop industrial renewable energy sources (IRES)[3] in the mountain and island ecosystems that they would rather conserve. In cases like these, the imperative to address climate change may seem wedded to the endorsement of policies that, to save the planet, demand further sacrifice of the earth. This article pursues the possibility that Penelope's obstinance discloses another way in which these contradictions may be productively navigated.

Before returning to this specific case, however, the article begins with a discussion of Andreas Malm's (2018) essay "In Wildness Is the Liberation of the World," a recent scholarly attempt to mend the split between climate justice and wilderness conservation. This article contends that, although acutely appreciative of the values of "wildness," Malm's essay misdiagnoses the cause of the split it would mend because it is insufficiently attentive to contemporary environmental struggles and the problem of land. Then, by contrast, this article shows how activists involved in the defense of the Agrafa mountains make this problem explicit as they expose the contradiction between the wildness they would defend and IRES developments championed as climate solutions. Finally, the article approaches their proposal to get to the

[3] Scholars who have disputed the renewability of what are commonly called "renewable energies" have proposed terminological substitutions like "fossil fuel+" (A. Dunlap, 2021), "low carbon" (Temper et al., 2020), or "ore-fuels" (Mulrow et al., 2019). Although informed by their critiques, this paper instead adopts language used by interlocutors in Greece. The term "Industrial Renewable Energy Sources" [Viomihanikés Ananeósimes Pigés Enérgeias], abbreviated as IRES [VAPE], was popularized by Cretan activists through their persistent, public critique of the form of domestic wind energy infrastructures (Kouki & Vasilakis, 2024).

"root" of the ecological crisis, which it interprets as an alternative approach to environmentalism that might reconcile commitments to wildness and climate justice without subsuming the former to the latter. Finding ready parallels between their vision and the conclusions of degrowth scholarship, the paper concludes with encouragement for degrowthers to approach the struggles proliferating across expanding resource frontiers as sites from which to collaboratively theorize and act toward the limitation of endless growth.

2. Methodology

The research presented in this article is part of a larger ethnographic project that focuses on the contested materialization of a renewable energy transition in the mountains of central Greece. In furtherance of that project, I conducted 11 non-consecutive months of preliminary fieldwork between the spring of 2022 and the fall of 2024. While in the field, I participated in the Protovoulía tis Athínas gia tin Prostasía ton Agráfon [Initiative of Athens for the Protection of Agrafa] , including during the preparation and realization of the International Mountain Day protest and assembly in 2023. I thrice attended the annual summer school hosted in Agrafa by Eutopia, a social ecological publishing collective, once as a student and twice as a speaker. I regularly attended events hosted by land defenders, mountaineering associations, and members of a wider community of nature-lovers both in Agrafa and in other mountain ranges. As a supplement to detailed field notes, I conducted several semi-structured interviews.

Although this paper is informed by this ethnographic research, it refuses to turn its analysis upon the activists themselves in the form of a detailed description of their organizational structures and activities. This ethical refusal is informed by activists' warnings about the risks presented by the production of anthropological knowledge about their movements (Gelderloos, 2009) and is inspired by anthropologists who have navigated those risks in order to produce knowledge that might be useful to and not against communities engaged in struggle and facing state repression (A. Dunlap, 2024, p. 45; Lamphere, 2018; Simpson, 2014). Shifting away from the divulgence of insider knowledge, this article instead applies ethnographic insights toward a situated review of the literature produced for public consumption by the individuals and collectives involved in the defense of Agrafa.

These texts are diverse with respect to genre, form, and message, ranging from strident communiqués to whimsical folk tales to data-heavy pamphlets and Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.s). They circulate through vast networks of digital and physical spaces, overlapping often with those that comprise the Greek anarchist and anti-authoritarian chóros [scene].[4] Most of these texts are published digitally on dedicated websites, blogs, and social media accounts, conforming with scholars' emphasis on the increasing centrality of digital communications within the scene (Milioni, 2009; Vatikiotis & Milioni, 2019). Yet, breaking with scholars' emphasis on the transformative impact of digital communications (Kornetis, 2010), this article focuses on a subset of texts that also circulate as physical media. It thus seeks to emphasize formal continuities in the development and communication of anti-authoritarian thought over the past five decades. Self-published newspapers, journals, booklets, and pamphlets make evident the continued significance of the underground press, which, by publishing works of anti-capitalist and anti-statist theory, had spurred the formation of the anti-authoritarian scene during the post-dictatorial Metapolítefsi period (Kitis, 2015, p. 11). Today, the print publications of activists involved in the defense of Agrafa circulate within a larger milieu of missives, pamphlets, and magazines that disseminate the perspectives of recalcitrant individuals and communities in struggle.[5]

The focus on print media also serves to bring a specific geography into view: a constellation of spaces in which ideas are made material and exchange hands. Many contentions voiced and perspectives espoused within these media are shaped in the assemblies and forums in which information about IRES infrastructures and their impacts is collectively digested and debated. Texts are then produced through processes of individual or collective authorship, revision, formatting, and design. Print shops and presses in Exarcheia and elsewhere help to materialize these files, operating a "material circuit" that parallels, in some respects, the

[4] As glossed by E. Dimitris Kitis, the "chóros", as used by anarchists and anti-authoritarians in Greece, "replaces the notion of a specific social movement or subculture with one of a more fluid assortment of people and ideas, including one that is not even constant in nature and time" (2015, p. 2).

[5] Notable examples include the 2010 booklet by the Avtónomi Synántisi Agóna enántia sta frágmata kai tin ektropí tou Achelóou [Autonomous Meeting of the Struggle against the damming and diversion of Achelous]; the 2016 brochure against goldmining in Northeastern Greece written by Krakatoa and produced by the print collective Druck!; and the 2023 brochure "Enérgeia gia ti kai gia poión? Mýthoi kai alítheies gia tis exoríxeis stin Ípeiro stin epochí tis 'prásinis' metávasis" ["Energy for what and for whom? Myths and truths about extraction in Epirus in the age of the 'green' transition"] by the Anoichtí Synélevsi sta Giánnena Enántia stin Energeiakí Leilasía [Open Assembly in Ioannina Against Energy Looting].

assemblages that Kathy Ferguson describes as the basis for the "reproduction of the classical anarchist movement from the Paris Commune to the Second World War" (2014, pp. 391–392). Upon printing, some of these texts are distributed through the self-managed spaces of the anarchist and anti-authoritarian scene. The periodical *Erastés ton Agráfon* [Lovers of Agrafa], for instance, is stocked by squats, community centers, cooperative stores and radical bookshops in cities and towns across Greece. Other texts like F.A.Q.s and communiqués change hands almost exclusively at more ephemeral sites like protest meeting points and campgrounds.

During fieldwork, I encountered these texts as they moved through these multiple stages and sites of production and distribution. It was through those encounters that I came to recognize activists' literature as the product of collaborative processes of continuous and applied study. The methodological decision to substitute ethnographic description with a literature review of activists' texts is, therefore, also a choice to engage rather than abstract away from interlocutors' own processes of knowledge production. Doing so, this paper brings interlocutors' conclusions into conversation with those of the academic publications and agency reports that present institutionally legitimate perspectives on the problems facing their locales.

3. Wilderness conservation and horizons of liberation

A passionate concern for wilderness areas, like mountain ranges and ancient forests, has long animated the environmental movement of North America and Western Europe. Yet, in recent decades, that passion has faded, and that concern has been supplanted. To some degree, dwindling interest in wilderness is attributable to the naïveté of its initial conception as untouched, "virginal" nature. This conception reproduced a "Cartesian dualism" by which society and nature stand as opposites (Moore, 2017). It informed the pernicious conviction that nature could only thrive where humans are absent, and it provided an alibi for settler-colonial efforts to displace Indigenous peoples from their lands for the establishment of recreational parks and preserves (Binnema & Niemi, 2006; Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997). In the 1980s and '90s, critics increasingly characterized wilderness conservation as a preoccupation of the cosmopolitan bourgeois subject, frequently satisfied at the expense of

peasants and the working class, as in the case of campaigns to conserve the wild organisms that prey upon livestock and people (see Bookchin, 1988; Williams, 1982/1995).

Throughout the wilderness debates of that period, some wilderness advocates attempted to accommodate the critiques by revising the concept (see Callicott & Nelson, 1998; Nelson & Callicott, 2008). William Cronon's (1996b) controversial essay "The Trouble with Wilderness" is one paradigmatic case, which contributes to the critique of wilderness while also proposing a means for its recuperation. In it, Cronon locates the genesis of the (American) wilderness idea in the convergence between the Romantic sense of the sublime and the peculiarly American idea of the frontier (1996b, pp. 9–10). This convergence, he contends, produced in the wilderness idea an ahistoricism that obscures the (violent) processes by which 'natural' landscapes and protected areas were ideologically and materially invented. This wilderness idea, he argues, further confounds the development of an environmental ethics for everyday life, as it redirects concern from one's immediate environs toward an always distant 'nature.' Cronon attempts to remedy these shortcomings of the concept with the suggestion that environmentalists might reconcile their passion for striking 'natural' landscapes with concerns for environmental justice close to home by coming to understand "*wild*ness" not as an exclusive property of remote places, but as "the autonomy and otherness of the things and creatures around us" (1996b, p. 24). However, as evidenced by the responses to Cronon's essay, at that moment of increasing hostility toward environmentalism, there was little appetite for such public self-critique or faith that it might strengthen the movement by guiding the rehabilitation of one of its foundational concepts (Cohen, 1996; Cronon, 1996a; Hays, 1996; T. R. Dunlap, 1996). It was into these same conceptual floodwaters that Andreas Malm (2018) waded with his essay "In Wildness Is the Liberation of the World: On Maroon Ecology and Partisan Nature." The piece begins with a review of the aforementioned debates, which it claims fomented not the rehabilitation of the wilderness concept, but its abandonment to reactionaries and chauvinists. As evidence, Malm references both Paul Kingsnorth, in whose hands "classical wilderness ideology is formulated in explicit opposition to the environmental movement" (2018, p. 6), and Dave Foreman, whose anti-immigrant tract *Man Swarm* Malm locates within "a long-standing American tradition of the crudest animosity to non-whites derived from compassion for the wild" (2018, p. 7). By acknowledging these two figures, Malm anticipates critiques of wilderness "as a

quintessentially bourgeois preoccupation, white and male and antagonistic to the interests of working people" (2018, p. 5). Nonetheless, he proceeds to question whether there was not a value in wilderness that had been too hastily discarded by justice-oriented environmentalists.

In answer to this question, the essay consists in an attempt to demonstrate that the appreciation of wilderness is not inherently linked with exclusionary impulses but instead is both historically and potentially valuable to the pursuit of liberation. Malm (2018) differentiates this liberatory space from the object of Kingsnorth's and Foreman's activism by substituting their absolute concept of "wilderness," which is realized through the ideological and material erasure of human presence in nature, with a relative concept of "wildness," meaning "the quality of being untamed [and] unsubsumed" (2018, p. 9). Echoing William Cronon, Malm borrows this term from American naturalist Henry David Thoreau, who in the essay *Walking* declared that "in Wildness is the preservation of the World" (1862/1914, p. 46). Notably, Thoreau (1862/1914) uses the term "Wild" interchangeably with "West" to describe America from the perspective of the Old World—as comparatively undeveloped and therefore replete with a vitality and freedom that might be encountered on *any* walk. This conception of wildness is retained by Cronon, for whom "wildness" names a quality of alterity and autonomy that suffuses the living world, permeating (and thus subverting) the perceived divide between home and a nature that is always "out there," temporally and physically removed from human settlements. Malm (2018) borrows the term, but reverses the operation, proposing to revalorize places "out there" and far from home. He therefore specifies that the relative quality of "wildness" is more readily encountered in places that are neither constructed nor widely manipulated by humans, places where non-human forces and beings dominate.

Following this partial reformulation of the wilderness idea, Malm (2018) describes a series of ethnographically and archivally informed case studies, through which he demonstrates that wildness has been a vital resource to the survival and resistance of exploited and hunted peoples across diverse periods and climes. Within this narrative, Malm centers the maroons who found refuge in forested, difficult-to-access locations in the mountains of Dominica, Jamaica, and Haiti. In a series of vignettes, he links the wildness of these places in which "trees

and plants jostled for space and stretched toward the sun" with the possibility of escape and of armed struggle against colonizing enslavers. He reads these cases as evidence that "wilderness was a premise for emancipation" (2018, p. 21). Malm also provides an abbreviated account of the militant resistance to Nazi forces staged by Jewish Communist partisans in the Belorussian forest Naliboki, which was, due to its ancient trees and multitudinous streams, "impenetrable to tanks and heavily armed troops" (2018, p. 25). In the memoirs of survivors, Malm purports to find evidence of a philosophy according to which deep communion with wilderness is available only to the hunted, not to the recreating elite (2018, p. 26).

Malm (2018) leverages these historical instances into a series of conclusions meant to guide the reintegration of wildness into leftist environmental politics. The series begins with the assertion that wilderness is ultimately valuable not as a site for bourgeois recreation, but as a *refuge* from bourgeois society that may provide a material and imaginative resource for its dismantlement. As an object of political concern, wildness, he suggests, finds a natural affinity with feminist and immigrant causes, as it is beleaguered by the same systems of exploitation and is stifled by the same border regimes. In Malm's account, the cause of wilderness conservation even inevitably converges with that of environmental justice, insofar as dense forests and mountains, like those that he experienced in the Caribbean, are especially vulnerable to natural disasters caused or exacerbated by climate change.

This last assertion, the fourth of Malm's (2018) conclusions, is of greatest interest to this article. In support of the claim, Malm contends that the very landscapes once thought to be free of human influence, like ice-encrusted mountaintops, are now those where the effects of fossil capital[6] are most clearly visible, as in glacial retreat (2018, p. 31). Thus, he entertains the idea that, through climate change, capital is finally subsuming "even the wildest mountains" (2018, p. 31). However, he immediately revises this interpretation. Rather than subsuming these landscapes, or integrating them within processes of accumulation, capital is annihilating them instead, he concludes (2018, p. 32). This reflection terminates in a thinly

[6] This phrase is citational of his fossil capital thesis, which links the combustion of fossil fuels to the growth of capital in its explanation of how capitalism drives ecological degradation on a planetary scale (Malm, 2013).

veiled call to sabotage fossil fuel infrastructures: a reference to a book review in which John Lanchester (2007) questions the notable lack of eco-terrorism in the climate movement. Years later, Malm (2021) would famously endorse such tactics in *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*.

This conclusion addresses the very problem that surfaced in Penelope and Orestes's exchange: the problem of advocating for the conservation of mountains and islands at a moment in which climate change presents a planetary crisis that the environmental movement prioritizes as its primary concern. Malm (2018) assumes that once wildness is disassociated with chauvinists and reassociated with the exploited, its conservation could be readily championed by leftist environmentalists, who would recognize it to be a haven for vulnerable populations on the frontlines of climate change. Yet, this recognition did little for Penelope and Orestes, whose exchange, although unfolding in an explicitly anti-fascist and pro-migrant setting, quickly arrived at an impasse. With their conversation in mind, I propose that Malm only appears to resolve the problem because he fails to engage with contemporary leftist and anarchist struggles in defense of wilderness and is consequently insensitive to the contradictions that often impede the reconciliation of their efforts with the broader environmental movement. It is therefore toward activists like Penelope, for whom those contradictions are material, that we must turn for proposals that, unlike the mere sabotage of fossil fuel infrastructures, might repair the wilderness divide.

4. Reframing the problem

"In Wildness Is the Liberation of the World" is perceptive in its evaluation of wilderness as a historic site of refuge and militancy with enduring relevance to contemporary anti-capitalist and social justice struggles. Yet, the essay over- and misstates its case regarding the need to recuperate wilderness when it claims that it has become an exclusive interest of the reactionary, anti-immigrant right. Malm (2018) justifies this claim with a review of the 1980s and 90s wilderness debates and of the more recent statements of wilderness celebrants who peddle in anti-immigrant sentiment. However, this textual analysis fails to reflect contemporary efforts to conserve wildness, so it furnishes an incomplete assessment of the enduring rift between wilderness advocates and the wider environmental movement and

leads to an oversimplified coalition-building strategy that rests on the assumption that the common threat of climate change makes for easy allies.

The distortions of Malm's (2018) textual critique are best exhibited in his discussion of Dave Foreman and elision of Earth First! (EF!), the environmental advocacy group that Foreman helped found. Malm presents Foreman as the "[f]ounder of EarthFirst! and pioneer of rewilding" (2018, p. 7), whose 2015 text *Man Swarm: How Overpopulation is Killing the Wild World* represents a racist strain running through American wilderness environmentalism. Framing Foreman as (sole) founder of EF! and author of reprehensible, anti-immigrant positions in the name of wilderness protection, Malm implicitly justifies his decision not to engage EF! more broadly. Yet, Earth First!ers themselves have repeatedly confronted Foreman and the supremacist inclinations that he represents, including through "forcible confrontation with fascist tendencies within [EF!s] ranks during the 1980s" (ffitch, 2022), and by transitioning the *EF! Journal* from Foreman's control to that of an editorial collective with the rise of EF!'s anarchist contingent in the 1990s (Tsolkas, 2015, p. 4). As Earth First!er Madeline ffitch (2022) advises in a critique of Malm's (2021) *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*, the mainstream climate movement ought to learn from the processes of internal critique and confrontation that have reformed EF! into a group that "emphasizes its rejection of fascism, racism and colonialism." I propose that if Malm had done so in this earlier essay, he might have approached the more intractable issues that inhibit the championing of wilderness conservation within the climate-oriented environmental movement.

Malm's (2018) failure to contemplate the strategies by which activists defending wildness have confronted fascism, racism, and colonialism within their ranks leads him to focus on theoretically resolving the same problems with wilderness that were identified in the debates of the 1980s and 90s. Thus, to combat the critique that wilderness is a preoccupation of the white, male, bourgeois subject, he offers evidence that persecuted people have historically recognized the value of relatively wild places. This point, however, is obvious to the working class, racialized, and colonized peoples who have continued, since the 1980s and 90s, to defend the places once called "wilderness." In the "rural and sparsely populated places where people must defend their homes and lifeways from being sacrificed to industrialization," activists have long recognized the connection between wildness and the struggle of exploited

peoples for justice, dignity, and autonomy (ffitch, 2022). Despite this recognition on the part of wildness's defenders, fault lines still separate them from the mainstream environmental movement, as was evident in Athens on the International Mountain Day of 2023.

That evening, the activists who marched in defense of mountains and islands reconvened in the Migrants Social Center in Exarcheia. The group that manages that space had afforded them access on the basis of their familiarity with and trust in members of the Initiative of Athens for the Protection of Agrafa, which coordinated the protest and subsequent assembly. I propose that it would have been laughable to suggest to the plurality of avowed anti-fascists assembled in that room that their efforts to defend mountains and islands might win the support of mainstream environmentalists, if only they would reject racism or fascism. Indeed, their very protest identified a separate, more intractable, source of contention with those mainstream environmentalists: that the domestic development of 'renewable' energy—widely promoted as a clean, environmentally-friendly alternative to fossil fuels—frequently came at the expense of people and places across the country's hinterlands. Penelope's refusal to adopt the analytic framework of climate change despite Orestes's conciliatory appeal further indicates that the rift between their positions would take more than good intentions and shared positions on social justice to mend.

Surprisingly, as it is afforded no weight in his account of the rift within the environmental movement, Malm (2018) acknowledges that some wilderness conservationists perceive their goals to be at odds with the prevailing focus on climate change and 'renewable' energy development. Specifically, he sardonically voices Paul Kingsnorth's claim to have left the environmental movement because it "exchanged the wild for a 'single-minded obsession with climate change' and the promotion of renewable energy" (2018, p. 6). If Malm had afforded this explanation as much credence as the claim that Kingsnorth abandoned the movement out of exasperation with social justice and class analysis (2018, p. 6), I suspect that his essay might have arrived at the difficulty in reconciling "the wild" and "climate change" as objects of concern. Engaging with this difficulty might have led to a more precise discussion of how less-subsumed spaces might be conserved even as climate change provides cause for the adoption of land-intensive mitigation strategies. These are the difficulties being negotiated by activists like Orestes and Penelope.

5. Land: Where the earthly and the planetary reside

The environmental movement's shift in focus from wilderness conservation to climate change has been accompanied by a shift in its perspective on and conception of the Earth. Hikes in national parks and pilgrimages to far off "wilderness" have ceased to provide a common frame of reference for what environmentalists aim to conserve. Instead, these embodied experiences have been substituted with intellectual abstractions, the astronomical and geological breakthroughs of Earth Systems Science have made it possible to understand environmental phenomena that unfold across vast spatial and temporal scales inaccessible to human experience (Chakrabarty, 2019, p. 3). The Romantic view of the Earth as seen from within, as from a mountain summit, has been substituted with a view from without, most iconically captured in the "Blue Marble" photograph produced by crew members on the Apollo 17 spacecraft. Historians Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz argue that this image, made iconic by the Western environmental movement, portrays a shift from perceiving the Earth as a place of alterity and autonomy to imagining it as a transparent and pliable object of knowledge and governance (2013/2016, pp. 62–63). In this conceptual shift from the "earth" to the "planet" (Chakrabarty, 2019), land, once the basis of the environmentalist's perspective and the object of his gaze, recedes into the distance.[7] As atmospheric measurements proliferate as indices of risk, it becomes possible for the environmentalist to formulate his aims and policy interventions such that land no longer represents their necessary context. Yet, land returns into the frame when planetary solutions are invariably[8] implemented within earthly contexts. It is in such emplaced encounters between the planet and the earth that the mitigation of climate change comes into conflict with the conservation of wildness.

[7] Dipesh Chakrabarty (2019) explains that the "earth," "world," and "globe" are three conceptual categories that have each served to think about Earth as it is known through specific experiential contexts, like dwelling or international trade. By contrast, the "planet" is the Earth known intellectually, as it is revealed by astronomical and geological studies that attain spatial and temporal scales inaccessible to human experience (2019, p. 3). Chakrabarty is interested in the potential of this new category to reorient political thought beyond human time horizons and notions of morality and, thus, create space for the nonhuman. Here, however, I am interested in the "planet" as a conceptualization of the Earth that abstracts from human contexts to create an intellectual object compatible with technoscientific modes of governance and intervention.

[8] Admittedly, atmospheric geoengineering aims to avoid the complexity of social and ecological contexts on Earth's surface altogether. However, even these interventions extract their necessary material bases from Earth and produce effects that would be felt by its inhabitants, including potential wars (Fleming, 2012; Scheffran, 2019).

Simone Abram's (2024) ethnographic study of energy researchers offers a glimpse into the engineering practices by means of which knowledge of climate change is translated into policies of renewable energy development. Abram's interlocutors contribute to efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through energy use by seeking to integrate an increasing supply of electricity generated from 'renewable' sources within the existing energy system. Engineers' approach to solving this problem entails what Abram theorizes as a practice of "selective blindness," "a willingness not to see the problem that would make the rest of the exercise untenable or reveal its partiality" (2024, p. 271) that both enables and limits their ability to envision different futures. "Selective blindness" names engineers' practice of not only isolating a finite set of variables for use within their models but also ignoring the assumptions that undergird this process and the context that it externalizes. While engineers were frequently aware of the limitations of their models, Abram found that these limitations—the underlying assumptions and elision of context—are naturalized when the models are used to shape policy (2024, p. 270). Thus, when these policies are implemented within real, complex social and ecological contexts, their manifold implications—unforeseen because externalized—come to be treated as political problems, separate from, rather than integrally related to, the technical problem that the policies aim to solve. This distinction is untenable, as the implementation of energy transition robustly demonstrates.

From a planetary perspective, the transition from fossil fuels to non-carbon-based energy sources appears to be an unambiguously good solution to the climate crisis in the Earth system as exacerbated by the energy system. Yet, the partiality of this representation of the problem both obscures the manifold complications that would attend its realization and limits our imagination of alternatives. For instance, the focus on fuel sources, judged by their carbon content, leaves uninterrogated the energetic and material costs of the infrastructures that are needed to translate fossil fuel-alternatives, like solar radiation or wind, into usable electricity. Critical energy scholars have detailed the extent of nonrenewable resource consumption required for the materialization of 'renewable' energy. They have highlighted the need for ores and minerals, connecting the global expansion of 'renewables' to the proliferation of new mines (Andreucci et al., 2023; Del Mármol & Vaccaro, 2020; A. Dunlap & Marin, 2022; Mulrow et al., 2019). They have also illuminated the continued necessity of fossil fuels at every stage of 'renewable' energy development, from the manufacture of

infrastructure components to their transport, installation, and even operation (A. Dunlap, 2021). The global development of industrial renewable energy sources (IRES), moreover, creates a new and voracious appetite for land, especially in rural areas, as scholars and industry consultants both recognize (Bampinioti et al., 2023; McCarthy, 2015).

As the problem-solving approach to planetary crises obscures (as it externalizes) these earthly impacts, so too does it inhibit the imagination of alternative solutions in the form of systemic transformations more fundamental than mere input substitution. For instance, the idea of a transition from one fuel source to another leaves the question of the purpose of energy generation uninterrogated, and so it preserves the growth paradigm already structuring our energy systems (Abram, 2024, p. 263). It therefore seems hardly coincidental that increased generation of energy from 'renewable' sources has tended to add to the overall energy mix without effecting a definitive transition away from fossil fuels (York & Bell, 2019).

Thus, fixes to planetary environmental problems, like the energy transition, tend to encounter manifold complications when they are implemented on land or at sea within the complex social and ecological contexts that were radically simplified and largely externalized in their modeling and design. It is in these contexts, often characterized as "wilderness," where what Bonneuil and Fressoz describe as the planetary imaginary's tendency to dominate other imaginaries (2013/2016, pp. 62–63) is actually expressed in the "friction" (Tsing, 2005) produced when the forces that would save the planet meet the resistance produced by the earth and its inhabitants. Practically, this domination proceeds through the production of wilderness as a frontier, which is forcibly subjected to new regimes of knowledge and ownership in its passage into property (Blomley, 2003). This production of space often makes use of new methods of inscription, like cadasters and property registers, that serve as tools for the supersession of inhabitants' experiential knowledge and informal appropriations by capital-mediated accumulation and management of land from a distance (Li, 2014).

Jaume Franquesa (2018) describes such a process of frontier making in his ethnographic account of wind energy in southern Catalonia, where the social world of peasants was systematically devalued so as to be disposed of as waste and superseded by a social world mediated by capital, valorized by the market, and amenable to the flow of (wind) power. His

account of local resistance provides evidence that wind energy infrastructures, like other large-scale infrastructures, can prove irreconcilable with preexisting modes of living in the land, as it produces contradictions that drive inhabitants toward the existential dilemma: either for the infrastructure and the world it creates, or against it (Ross, 2024, p. 44). Refusal of wind energy, in such contexts, becomes an affirmation of the earth that one inhabits and of the social relations that populate it. States and companies, therefore, actively seek to mitigate the risk of resistance, whether through consultation, financial inducement, or overt force (A. Dunlap, 2018, 2024; Zografos & Robbins, 2020). These strategies undermine communities' abilities to imagine and realize alternative futures on their land. In so doing, they bring the real context of energy generation closer into line with the models.

In Greece, the transformation of earthly contexts and collective imaginaries is ongoing in the energy frontiers that have extended throughout the archipelago, across the plains, and into the mountains. The next section briefly covers this history of expansion, tracing the consolidation of the particular form of domestic 'renewables' installations and following its proliferation across private and public lands. Subsequent sections turn to the efforts of diverse actors to resist these installations and conserve spaces of relative wildness.

6. Inscribing Greek mountains into green deals

When modern wind energy arrived in Greece, it was promoted as a solution not only to the planetary problem of climate change, but also to the local problem of powering a sprawling archipelago. In 1982, the Public Power Corporation developed its first wind power plant to supply the isolated power system of Kythnos. There, wind power seemed poised to increase self-sufficiency by reducing dependence on imported fuels. These expectations echoed the historical association of wind-generated electricity with self-sufficiency in the off-grid energy frontier of the interwar American West (Tympas, 2023). However, in both cases, this decentralized energy imaginary was quickly and forcibly supplanted.

By 1998, mountain ridges in verdant southern Evia were being leveled into foundations for wind turbines that would supplement the grid of nearby Athens. Those first 40 turbines installed near Andia portended the transfiguration of the island into an extensive zone of

electricity generation. It was a sign that the domestic model of 'renewable' energy generation was transforming into one powered by foreign investment and designed around the exportation of electricity from peripheral sites of generation to core sites of consumption (Argenti & Knight, 2015). This is the model that Cretan activists would come to refer to as "Industrial Renewable Energy Sources" (IRES), a play on the state's official language of "Renewable Energy Sources" (Kouki & Vasilakis, 2024). Taking shape through legal structures and programs developed in a tumultuous political context, this model of IRES development has transformed relationships to land and energy across the plains, islands, and mountains of Greece over the first decades of the 21st century. It has triggered the displacement of rural communities from private lands and facilitated the private acquisition of public lands, narrowing local capacities for self-sufficiency while simultaneously generating energy for export.

Beginning in 2006, an initiative supported by the European Union encouraged agriculturalists to convert their unprofitable fields into photovoltaic installations for 25 to 50 years in exchange for income from feed-in tariffs (Knight, 2015, p. 57). This initiative anticipated incentives and efforts that would, during the 2009 sovereign debt crisis, attempt to attract foreign (European) capital into the Greek countryside while encouraging impoverished landowners to relinquish the use of their land. From the start of this crisis, the state courted investment by granting capital investors almost absolute powers within the nascent 'renewable' industry (Siamanta, 2019, p. 290). For instance, Law 3851/2010 provided tax exemptions, simplified the licensing procedure, and reduced local barriers to IRES development.[9] As transformations to the energy sector created a beneficial environment for investment, other policies facilitated the appropriation of privately and publicly held land across the national territory.

In May of 2010, the Kallikratis Program became one of the most far-reaching administrative reforms in the history of the modern Greek state.[10] As it reorganized hundreds of administrative units, it also simplified the state geographically by dramatically understating

[9] Law 3851/2010, ΦΕΚ Α΄85/4.6.2010
[10] Law 3852/2010, ΦΕΚ Α' 87/7.6.2010

its predominantly mountainous character and classifying almost 90% of the national territory as flat (Markaki 2023). In her study of extended urbanization in Arcadia, Metaxia Markaki (2023) contends that, as an administrative act, this flattening erased the complexity of mountainous regions to facilitate a generalized approach to rural administration that was often incompatible with topographical reality. The result, she claims, were "dispossessions, relocations, and concentrations, eventually generating an actual geography of flatness" (2023, p. 221). At the same time as this administrative simplification, the state, under pressure from the Troika of monetary lenders, made progress on the production of its perennially delayed national cadaster, which progress promises to finally delimit landholdings and facilitate the large-scale acquisition of even public lands (Siamanta, 2019). These new inscriptions of Greek geographies provided the conditions for a land rush that scholars have characterized as "green-grabbing," a looting of (primarily) public lands by private capital for ostensibly environmental causes (Hadjimichalis, 2014; Siamanta, 2019). In that moment of generalized hardship, this private acquisition of public goods was encouraged by politicians who appealed to "an ethical responsibility to put aside personal interests to permit expansion of private RES works, for the 'national interest' and the greater good" (Siamanta, 2017, p. 264).

Despite initial acquiescence, the actual experience of IRES infrastructures in the countryside has now given cause to uncompromising critique. Nicolas Argenti and Daniel Knight (2015) relate the experiences of farmers who took out loans to fill their fields with photovoltaic panels and found themselves suspended in new conditions of precarity. Now, they were not only poor in pocket but were divorced from the earth and from the productive relations to it that had sustained their families for generations. The energy that their land produced would not even satisfy local demand, but would be exported (2015, p. 788). They narrated their experiences as historically continuous with past occupations and placed German investors in the position of the Ottoman and Axis occupiers of Greece's past.

This invocation of colonial occupation suggests that the expansion of IRES infrastructures across the Greek countryside has been experienced as the production of "green sacrifice zones," "places and populations that will be affected by the sourcing, transportation, and operation of solutions for powering low-carbon transitions, as well as end-of-life treatment

of related material waste" (Zografos & Robbins, 2020, p. 543). "Green sacrifice" describes the wasting of earthly worlds for the salvation of planetary futures. In this process, human populations are not exclusively impacted. As IRES infrastructures extend from the plains into forests and mountains in Greece, ecologists warn that the implications for these ecosystems and their non-human inhabitants could be profound.

Researchers at the Biodiversity Conservation Lab at the University of Ioannina have found that, as a consequence of their frequent siting on mountainous terrain, wind power stations in Greece consume an average of 3.5 times as much land as global estimates suggest is commonly necessary to generate a given amount of electricity (Kati et al., 2023, p. 7). For their erection along mountain ridges, wind turbines require the construction of wide transport and access roads and the flattening of sites of installation, which are then excavated for the installation of steel and concrete foundations (Kati et al., 2021, 2023). This construction poses risks to regional biodiversity, as it not only creates obstructions with which endangered birds are prone to collide, but also fragments ecosystems, making them less viable long term (Kati et al., 2021). For this reason, the researchers at the Ioannina lab have argued that the construction of IRES in biodiverse and roadless regions of Greece raises a "green vs green" dilemma: a contradiction defined by the conflicting objectives of "maintaining biodiversity on one hand and achieving climate goals on the other" (2021, p. 2).

The potential for conflict between technological solutions to climate change and other environmental goals, like biodiversity and ecosystem conservation or land use change, is occasionally acknowledged in the land-specific climate reports of intergovernmental agencies (see Shukla et al., 2020). However, these acknowledgements are yet to be consolidated into a binding regulatory framework. Ecologists and environmental NGOs in Greece have, therefore, offered their own recommendations for the proper siting of renewable energy infrastructures. For instance, the Hellenic Ornithological Society produced a brochure that highlights the existential threat that wind turbines installed in Natura 2000 zones frequently pose to the very species for the preservation of which those zones have been designated (Koutsis et al., 2020). In an appeal to the state to cease permitting wind turbines in Natura 2000 zones altogether, the brochure demonstrates that Greece might still meet its targets for energy generation from IRES if those projects were relocated to regions less valuable from

the perspective of conservation (Koutsis et al., 2020). In response to growing resistance, and citing the research of the Ioannina-based conservationists, the Ministry of Environment and Energy announced its “Untrodden Mountains” program in 2022, which designated six mountains for protection against the building of roads and other infrastructure (Ellinikí Dimokratía: Kyvérnisi, 2022). However, regulatory action that might categorically limit land take for IRES has not been forthcoming, so environmentalists continue to appeal specific projects to the Council of State and to raise the problem to the European Commission.

The activists who struggle in defense of mountains and islands across Greece, however, are rarely limited in their demands to the preservation of regions of remarkable biodiversity, nor do they offer designations of better and worse regions for IRES development. Instead, attending to the wildness of the earthly places in which IRES are set to be installed, they confront the manifold conflicts that this infrastructure produces with existing social worlds, and they propose to overcome them by rejecting the very framing of the problem to which IRES appears as a compelling solution. Refusing to abstract to the level of the planet, they propose an alternative approach to socioecological crisis: getting to the root. The next sections return to the coalition of activists that defend the Agrafa mountains, in search of the path that they might chart out of environmentalism’s internal rift.

7. Harnessing wind (resistance) in Agrafa

For years now, it has been impossible to attend any major protest or visit any mountain refuge in Greece without encountering a sticker, tee-shirt, or sweater emblazoned with the hashtag #Save_Agrafa or the slogan “Elέfthera Vouná Horís Aioliká” [Free Mountains without Wind [Parks]]. In their wide circulation, these slogans spread awareness of the plight of the Agrafa mountain range far beyond the regions of Evrytania and Karditsa where it is located. Although frequently thought to name an organization, these phrases in fact voice the call of multiple collectives that assembled to defend Agrafa and the mountains at large in response to distinct moments in the regional development of IRES. Tracing the history of their emergence reveals the diversity of motivations and the multiplicity of positions that shape the struggle behind the slogan.

In 2013, the Díktyo Foréon kai Politón gia tin Prostasía ton Agráfon [Network of Stakeholders and Citizens for the Protection of Agrafa] was formed when residents of Karditsa and members of the local Hellenic Mountaineering Association learned of dozens of permits granted for the installation of wind and hydropower plants in the mountains to their immediate west. Collaborating with the Movement for the Protection of the Environment of Evrytania, established in 2007, the Díktyo became the first group to systematically contest IRES across both Thessalian and Evrytanian Agrafa. As it did, its members amassed information about the approval and construction of IRES infrastructures and developed strategies for opposing them institutionally, within official forums for public consultation and legal contestation. Despite its accumulated experience, the Díktyo was soon overwhelmed when, five years after its formation, the slow trickle of permits became a veritable flood.

When the Ministry of Environment and Energy approved the final installation permits for wind power plants at Niala and Viodolivdo—the former being a famous battle site of the Greek Civil War—the Díktyo found support from a public that until that moment was either ignorant of the existence of such projects or else was incapable of believing that they could materialize on such rugged terrain (Zygogianni, 2025, p. 45). In the wake of that revelation, people of Agrafiot ancestry and nature-lovers partial to the region held a meeting at the clubhouse of the Athenian Mountaineering Association. There, they formed Protovoulía tis Athínas gia tin Prostasía ton Agráfon [the Initiative of Athens for the Protection of Agrafa], which redoubled the Díktyo's efforts to draw attention to the accumulating permits. They quickly won the support of environmental NGOs, including the Hellenic Ornithological Society and Kallisto, both of which readily perceived the risks that IRES development within Agrafa and other mountainous regions would pose to their respective efforts to conserve populations of wild birds and large mammals. Then, to reach broader audiences, the Díktyo and the Protovoulia coordinated a series of camps on the grounds of the recently reopened Agrafa Mountain Refuge.

In June 2019, the Díktyo and the Hellenic Mountaineering Association of Karditsa held a three-day camp that increased local awareness and concern for the plight of mountains. Several weeks later, the Protovoulía coordinated the self-organized "Free Mountains without Wind [Parks]" camp, which had a national reach and significantly broadened the base of the

struggle. Participants in this camp included not only Agrafiots, mountaineers, and environmentalists, but also anarchists and anti-authoritarians, many of whom were affiliated with squats and participated in contemporaneous struggles against the enclosure of the urban commons. On the third—and would-be final—day of the camp, this diverse public held a closing assembly to discuss their common path forward. They decided to continue occupying the campground until the end of summer. Over those 45 days, hundreds of people from across the country converged in that clearing beneath Templa peak. In casual discussions and coordinated assemblies, they shared information about the local impacts of IRES, developed an analysis of the mountains' inscription into these projects, and pooled strategies for resisting new enclosures. Hiking, they oriented themselves to the region and reached villages where they shared their growing store of information with the people to whose lives it most immediately pertained.

The camp was an inflection point in the development of the struggle. It occasioned the expansion and diversification of its base of participants and provided them with a common, yet ephemeral space within which to share knowledge, dispute perspectives, take decisions, and act. When that space dissipated, many campers sought to continue the struggle from within the towns and cities to which they returned. They joined the Díktyo or the Protovoulía or created new structures that more closely conformed to their preferences in organization and action. In Karditsa, activists desiring a structure more directly antagonistic to the state formed the Anoichtí Synélevsi Enántia sta Aioliká kai stin Prásini Anáptyxi sta Ágrafa [Open Assembly against Wind [Parks] and Green Growth in Agrafa] . In Athens, some campers temporarily joined the Protovoulía before forming, some months later, the Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón [Assembly for the Defense of the Mountains] , the only anti-authoritarian assembly in Greece to address the plight of mountains without focusing on a specific region.

These new assemblies accommodated the influx of anarchists and anti-authoritarians into the struggle. However, the distinctions between the organizations involved in the defense of Agrafa should not be overstated. They collaborate on actions, co-organize events, and support one another in instances of repression. For this reason, land defenders frequently insist that the multiplicity of organizations, or the polymorphism of their struggle, serves to

increase their agility, rather than diffuse their energies (see Zygogianni, 2025, p. 45). The proliferation of organizations that share an aim but act independently has enabled the realization of actions for which wide participation is unnecessary, and broad consensus may be difficult to reach.

This polymorphism has also fostered a multiplicity of testimonies to the value of Agrafa and a surfeit of analyses as to how IRES infrastructures are poised to degrade it. The following sections present this diversity of perspectives as it appears in the literature that activists have authored, both individually and collectively. This review reveals parallels between their representation of the value of Agrafa and Andreas Malm's representation of the value of Caribbean or East European wildness. It also shows how activists' efforts to defend Agrafan wildness by averting IRES construction inform more acute and practically useful assessments of the difficulty in reconciling the wilderness and climate factions of contemporary environmentalism. These assessments help to explain why Penelope and others have concluded that any possible reconciliation of these factions must be achieved not by adopting the view from outer space, but by getting to the root.

8. In praise of Agrafan wildness

The organizations and individuals who defend the Agrafa mountains publicize their motivations and draw attention to their cause through diverse media, including podcasts, films, protests, speeches, and written text. Their printed output constitutes a robust archive replete with communiqués, pamphlets, F.A.Q.s, fiction, creative nonfiction, research articles, and longform journalism. Counter to the map that strips places down to render them immediately knowable, these texts pile on details. They accrete a multi-dimensional representation that must be perceived from numerous angles to be fully apprehended. Taken cumulatively, they show an Agrafa that is inhabited, historic, and wild.

Writing about the Agrafa mountains is often suffused with exhilarated descriptions of their aesthetic charm. A characteristic example is the children's book *Psilá, St' Apátita Vouná* [High, on the Untrodden Mountains], which Stefanos Ganotis (2023) authored as a means of fundraising for the Open Assembly and other organizations. Illustrated with photographs and

cartoons, it tells of a fictionalized community in the mountains of Greece that resolved to remain on their land, withstanding all social and economic pressures. They weathered years of outmigration that left their village depopulated, and even still celebrated the land by clearing trails to picturesque overlooks and sites of cultural heritage. Their efforts attracted the attention of distant hiking clubs, which then visited to trek along these trails, observe the flora and fauna, and spend an evening in the newly constructed refuge, all the while enthralled with the beauty of the land. When representatives of the "Company" arrive, selling promises of civilization through the development of wind power stations, they are decisively repelled by a united village reinforced by its urban diaspora and by sympathetic hikers. Following their triumph and the Company's withdrawal, the victors hike together into the sunset, serenaded by traditional music.

Ganotis's (2023) tale exhibits the blunt dualism typical of a children's story in need of obvious heroes, villains, and victories. But the simplicity of its narrative voice is periodically interrupted with qualifications and substantiations more typical of activists' deliberations and discourse. When the Company's men promote their proposal, they are met with incisive questions that evidence more than superficial knowledge of the impacts of wind turbines in mountain ecosystems. The narrators' assertions of the aesthetic value of the village are complemented by scientific-sounding references to species prioritized for conservation.

Although exceptional in that it takes the form of a children's book, this story is one of many that represent Agrafa (and its fictionalized stand-ins) in terms of the aesthetic qualities of its landscape and the importance of its non-human inhabitants. As a matter of fact, members of the Greek mountaineering community make this same kind of representation when they refer to Agrafa as "the Greek Alps," rhetorically elevating the region, little-known outside of Greece, by analogy to the world-famous ranges of Western Europe. Activists and ecologists also make this kind of representation when they emphasize the designation of Agrafa as a Natura 2000 site for the preservation of several ecosystems and species, which designation further recognized the region's unusual abundance of endemic flora and fauna (Ministry of Environment and Energy, 2020).

These accounts reproduce central tropes of the tradition that William Cronon (1996b) sought to recuperate. They tend to present Agrafa as a wilderness: a space of alterity and autonomy that humans can experience with pleasure if only they limit their impulses to intervene and control. Many such portrayals of Agrafa can be found in the pages of *Erastés ton Agráfon* [Lovers of Agrafa], the self-managed and donation-funded biannual publication that, since 2020, has provided a reliable platform for texts of diverse genres that share a focus on the region and its defense. Many of these texts characterize Agrafa and other mountains as wilderness, including by underscoring their alterity as spaces of encounter with the non-human. Narrative essays communicate the grief of reaching the tree line, nursing Romantic expectations of the view from the summit, only to find oneself surrounded by 100-meter-tall wind turbines that dwarf all other features of the natural and built landscape (Ntasios, 2023). Pathos-laden editorials tell of the transformative spiritual potential of encounters with animals, perceived as bearers of primal innocence (Ilioudis, 2024). Short stories by fiction author Chrysostomos Tsapraïlis, a frequent contributor to the periodical, often resuscitate pagan myth, populating the mountains with forgotten spirits and gods (see Tsapraïlis, 2024).

This selection of works might raise suspicions that activists reproduce the perspective of nature as separate from but spiritually regenerative for humans, a tenet of the roundly criticized environmental philosophy Deep Ecology, which greatly influenced the American wilderness movement of the 1970s and 80s (see Bookchin, 1988; Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997). Yet, although *Erastés ton Agráfon* regularly features essays that emphasize the transformative spiritual potential of encounters with non-human forces and beings, only the very rare article expresses the view that human presence in general is a detriment to wilderness. The struggle's wider corpus confirms this to be a minority position that is altogether absent from the collectively authored publications in which assemblies state their official positions. Consulting this wider literature helps to clarify that the representation of Agrafa produced by members of this struggle is one in which the non-human features prominently, but not as existing in necessary separation from or opposition to human society. Instead, histories of human presence in the region are often recounted as further confirmation of the wildness of Agrafa, the alterity it fosters and autonomy it enables.

A folk etymology of "Agrafa" parses the name as "a-grapha" or "un-written," commonly understood to be an allusion to the Ottoman Empire's inability to subdue the people of the region's interior and enter them into its tax ledgers (Erastés ton Agráfon, 2020).[11] This etymology conjures the pre-Independence period, when Agrafa was populated by Greeks, Vlachs, and transhumant Sarakatsani, who summered in the mountains and traversed great distances to winter their flocks in the plains. At the same time, Agrafa was inhabited by a contemporaneously despised, but retroactively celebrated group: the klefts, bandits whose feats are still the stuff of legend. Contributing to the national cause during the Greek War of Independence, klefts came to represent the ideal of the irrepressible revolutionary, a symbolic association of enduring resonance, especially with anti-statist groups (Xenakis, 2021). The rebellious connotation of Agrafa was further sedimented during the 20th century, when the region became a primary theater of Communist partisan resistance against the Axis occupation. In the subsequent civil war, militants of the Communist Democratic Army returned to their posts in the mountains from which they fought the Hellenic Army, and Agrafa was again the scene of famous battles.

Activists' appeal to wildness is, like their appeal to freedom [eleftherία] in the phrase "free mountains without wind parks," often polysemous. It attributes qualities of alterity and autonomy to the mountains themselves, *and* to the more-than-human communities they have sheltered: communities which persisted in the margins of empire, fascism, and the liberal nation-state by evading and resisting their forcible subjugation to those projects. A theoretical elaboration of the polysemy of wildness appears in the booklet in which the Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón frames its positions and concerns regarding the "green energy conflagration" consuming the mountains:

> *There remain not more than a few places in all the world where life is able to exist according to terms other than those of the supermarket. It is of vital importance that*

[11] This popular etymology is widely contested, as in the annals of the 2008 conference "Agrafa in the Passage of History," where, for instance, the Agrafiot amateur historian Georgios Karageorgos (2009) describes "Agrafa" as a transformation of "Agraia," meaning the land of the hunters, dedicated to Artemis. In this piece, Karageorgos admits that the Ottomans did collect taxes from the region, making the literal interpretation of "Agrafa" nonsensical, but he nonetheless insists that the association of "Agrafa" with freedom is grounded in real, historic privileges, like the region's exception from the requirement of offering male offspring as janissaries (2009, p. 165).

> *we preserve them. For every forest that is uprooted, for every mountaintop that is flattened, our world, within and around us, becomes more impoverished. When the center of global trade and its factories swallow the last piece of wild life, our existence will be devoid of any potential beyond the production and consumption of products* (2022, p. 15).[12]

The conception of "wild life" in this passage bears immediate parallels to Andreas Malm's (2018) conception of "wildness." For Malm, the mall is the foil of wildness: it is a space that has been "ordered, designed and built from the ground up by humans" and is also "closely regulated by its private owners" (2018, p. 11). For the Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón (2022), the supermarket serves the same rhetorical function of revealing "wild life" through its opposite, but to markedly different effect. Rather than simply representing a space that is, because of its creation and regulation by humans, essentially different from wildness, the supermarket also represents a *logic* of capitalist commodity production that, through its proliferation, stands to transform the world of which "we" are an integral part. "Wild life," or the "wild natural world" [ágrios physikós kósmos] (2022, p. 15) thus becomes a category that incorporates non-humans, humans,[13] and geological formations that are either yet to be subsumed by or that stand in opposition to this logic. This world, the Synélevsi contends, is under threat of annihilation by the "narcissistic dictatorship of the Same," which is staging a frantic final assault through infrastructural ecocide (2022, p. 14).[14] Thus, the Synélevsi develops a notion of wildness that—like Cronon's (1996b) but unlike Malm's (2018)—is not primarily used to praise distant places, but names a quality of alterity and autonomy that is proximate to (literally "within and around") us.

This articulation of wildness shifts the relationship between humans and nature from one of difference to one of identification, creating an opportunity for action in the form, not of

[12] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

[13] In this same passage, the Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón references the "Yanomami and their jungle" in a list alongside "the mountains and their forests" and "the wolves and their mountain peaks" as instances of wildness the defense of which would ultimately be a defense of oneself as a part of the world (2022, p. 15). For a more substantive discussion of the complicated ways in which European anarchists analogize their struggles to those of Indigenous people within efforts to creatively renegotiate their own identities and relationship to the land, see Krøijer (2019).

[14] Importantly, the association of nature with diversity rather than purity has historically distinguished inclusive, Leftist environmental movements from chauvinistic ones (see Stephens, 2001).

paternalism, but of solidarity. Using the language of alterity ("Otherness") to claim that both the human and non-human are emptied of substance and potential by the continued growth of markets and infrastructure, the Synélevsi proposes that the only way to ensure their mutual survival is by asserting their autonomy in the struggle against that growth. In this articulation, alterity is not an exclusive quality of the non-human, to be preserved for revolutionary inspiration, but is instead a quality that one can cultivate by resisting incorporation into capitalism's stultifying Sameness.

Activists' celebration of wildness does not equate to a rejection of civilization. In the same way that they do not insist that human presence is detrimental to nature, neither do they insist that organized settlements and agricultural production necessarily constitute structures of domination that must be overcome. Instead, their account of alterity and autonomy in Agrafa is shaped by sustained engagement with agrarian and pastoral communities throughout the region. In essays and communiques, Agrafiots, whether resident in the region or not, raise concerns about the potential for IRES infrastructures, whether placed along mountaintops or on the surfaces of lakes, to disrupt generational, often communal, uses of the land. In Evrytania, for instance, activists contend that extensive installations of photovoltaics would effect a "second uprooting," displacing communities in ways repetitive of the 1965 flooding of artificial Lake Kremasta for the generation of hydroelectricity (Kotsias, 2020).

Efforts to defend the Agrafa mountains are motivated by diverse evaluations of the region's significance to more-than-human pasts, presents, and futures. Taken collectively, activists' various accounts present Agrafa as an instance of wildness worth defending, not only for narrowly aesthetic or ecological reasons, but for more expansively social and political ones. Activists emphasize the significance of Agrafa and similar locales to the cultivation of alterity and autonomy, not at the exclusion of existing communities engaged in plant or animal agriculture, but in sustained dialogue with them. With a sense of history that inhibits any pretension to absolute wilderness, they insist on wildness as a relative quality descriptive of a region of sparse settlements and limited roads. As wildness, Agrafa represents a limit to the logics of an expansionist, capitalist, and statist order. Determined to hold (and extend) that

limit, activists formulate robust analyses of the trouble with IRES infrastructures and develop practical strategies for the defense of wildness in an age of climate change.

9. The case for conserving wildness from 'green' technologies

In 2020, the Hellenic Scientific Union for Wind Energy (ELETAEN, 2020)[15] published a brochure titled *Wind Energy Responds*, which promises to expose the "truth" behind 22 "myths" promulgated by the energy source's critics. In that same year, groups resisting the construction of energy infrastructures across Greece, including those acting in defense of Agrafa, formed the Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia [Panhellenic Network of Collectives about Energy]. This panhellenic network held three meetings before publishing, in October 2021, a second brochure that contests both the "myths" and the "truths" of the first, charging "that ELETAEN chose to avoid the critical issues that movements raise as matters of priority and to respond, instead, to hypothetical arguments that are not included in the movement's rhetoric" (Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia, 2021, p. 47). This 48-page document, in which the authors clearly define their matters of priority, contains the most comprehensive compilation of Greek activists' commonly held positions about the problems with wind energy.

The Panelladikó Díktyo's (2021) brochure exemplifies a genre of self-publications through which activists challenge the authority of scientific and industry experts and assert their own capacity to know and to shape energy systems. These texts perform activists' thesis that the energy question "is a political question that (should) concern human communities, and not a technical object that concerns only some specialized technocrats" (Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón, 2022, p. 8). These works therefore eschew technocratic abstractions as they reposition the energy question within the social and ecological context of energy infrastructures. For example, an un-signed, four-page *F.A.Q.* (2023), which has circulated in various iterations since 2020, justifies activists' opposition to industrial wind power plants by

[15] In January 2020, on the occasion of ELETAEN's annual celebration, the Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón distributed a text that denounced the organization as an industry lobby posing as a scientific body, constituted not of researchers, but of companies, entities, and individuals operating at all links of the wind energy supply chain. This same evaluation is made by the Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia (2021) which labeled its brochure a response to "the positions of ELETAEN and of the Wind Industry Lobby."

detailing the adverse impacts that these infrastructures have on the islets and mountains on which they are frequently sited. This attention to the land informs activists' criticism of not only IRES, but also the environmental policy paradigms that promote their development. Consulting these critiques, this section traces activists' rejection of mainstream environmentalism and their formulation of an alternative, "rooted" approach capable of sustaining coalitions that resist environmental harm caused by both 'black' fossil fuels and their 'green' substitutions.

In its promotional brochure, ELETAEN (2020) appeals to a Greek public still reeling from the Crisis by persuasively minimizing the social and ecological burden of IRES development and presenting wind as a *cheap* alternative to fossil fuels. Specifically, its authoritative (professedly "truthful") text represents industrial wind power plants as a means of generating electricity from an unlimited resource without emitting greenhouse gases or increasing the cost to consumer. ELETAEN supports this representation when it highlights the falling cost of energy generation from 'renewable' sources (2020, p. 7), predicts that a transition from lignite coal to wind and solar will lower the cost of electricity (2020, p. 10), and claims that consumers are no longer subsidizing wind power stations (2020, pp. 14–15). The activists who contest the development of IRES in Greek mountains and islands refute these representations of wind's cheapness by disputing the accuracy of ELETAEN's accounting and exposing the myriad costs that are externalized from such monetary calculations.

In its response, the Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia emphasizes the 'renewable' energy industry's privileged access to public land, which goes unacknowledged by ELETAEN (2021, p. 15).[16] It catalogues the hidden costs of the appropriation of this land and the transformation of its use as it details the impacts of IRES infrastructures to the sites of their installation, including the degradation of forested environments, the loss of productive activities, and the devaluation of private property (2021, p. 9). Activists raise

[16] As if in evidence of the importance of new forms of inscription to the establishment of new resource frontiers, the Panelladikó Díktyo traces the series of legal decisions and cartographic efforts that they believe to facilitate land grabs for IRES. It dates the industry's privileged ability to acquire land to the simplification of bureaucratic processes for the promotion of Renewable Energy Source projects in 2001; it claims that these privileges were expanded with the Special Spatial Planning Framework for Renewable Energy Sources and are being consolidated with the ratification of the Forest Maps (Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia, 2021, p. 15).

concerns about the implications (and legality) of Greece's exceptional tendency to site wind turbines in mountainous areas, many of which are also Natura 2000 zones (*F.A.Q.*, 2023, p. 4), where a few fatal collisions could decimate the populations of endangered birds that many of these zones were designated to conserve (*F.A.Q.*, 2023, p. 1; Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia, 2021, pp. 45–46). They also contend that the appropriation of land for IRES frequently undermines existing economic activities, like animal husbandry and beekeeping, which require accessible and thriving brush and forestlands (2021, pp. 18–19), as well as tourism, which is especially vulnerable to the aesthetic degradation of the landscape (2021, pp. 24–25). They dispel any illusion that lost occupations might be compensated with new employment opportunities by citing several instances in which millions of euros in investment in wind power led to the creation of zero to three new jobs (2021, pp. 20–21). With these and similar observations, activists demonstrate that IRES infrastructures frequently burden the sites of their installation while generating benefits enjoyed elsewhere.

Turning from budgetary to climatological arguments for IRES development, activists again invert ELETAEN's authoritative account by contending that 'renewables' are not a solution to climate change and are not replacing fossil fuels in an energy transition. With respect to the Greek case, activists highlight the state's plans to increase its reliance on natural gas, euphemistically named a "transition fuel," as part of its efforts to mitigate the instability that intermittent fuel sources, like wind and solar, introduce to the energy system (Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia, 2021, pp. 6–7).[17] With respect to global emissions targets, they argue that an energy transition based on the development of IRES would only reduce greenhouse gas emissions by ¼ the amount necessary to avert catastrophic warming (*F.A.Q.*, 2023, p. 4). These shortcomings shape activists' suspicion that IRES development is primarily motivated by economic, rather than environmental, ambitions.

Activists most clearly express this suspicion in their response to hegemonic representations of IRES as a necessary component of a morally obligatory effort to solve climate change. For

[17] Social scientists of 'renewable' energy have also repeatedly highlighted the problems that intermittency produces for the realization of an energy transition (Abram, 2024; Howe & Boyer, 2015; York & Bell, 2019).

instance, ELETAEN attempts to silence dissent with the "truth" that humanity is responsible for climate change (and so is obligated to develop wind energy) (2020, p. 30). Unconvinced of the efficacy of IRES development as a solution to climate change, the Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia argues that in these endorsements "climate change" does not name a genuine problem to be solved, but functions as a "basic legitimizing tool [of policy], the confrontation of which is presented as a planetary, superior goal, before which other environmental and social resistances and demands must be subordinated" (2021, p. 1). Refusing to subordinate their earthly resistance and demands to this planetary goal—or to shoulder myriad externalized costs, including the sacrifice of wildness, for the generation of 'renewable' energy—the activists participating in this panhellenic network consequently reject the invocation of "climate change" as an impetus for environmental action.

This rejection of "climate change" amounts not to a denial of climate science, but to a refusal of climate politics. For instance, in response to ELETAEN's aforementioned "truth," the Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia (2021) does not attempt to relitigate the scientific evidence for the anthropogenic origins of climate change. Instead, it specifies that states and companies, not "humanity," are primarily responsible for climate change[18] and defines climate change as but one manifestation of the ecological and environmental crisis produced by a 200-year-old logic of limitless growth (2021, p. 28). With this response, activists reveal the politics implicit in rhetoric that coerces public acceptance of unpopular policy by misattributing responsibility for climate change, obscuring the actors, systems, and logics that are truly to blame.

The activists rejecting IRES development in Greek mountains and islands argue that this obfuscating rhetoric serves not the resolution of the environmental crisis but the recuperation of the growth-oriented, capitalist economic system that caused it. James McCarthy (2015) describes such an intervention as a "socioecological 'fix,'" that functions by "enrolling new elements of nonhuman nature into circuits of capital" (McCarthy, 2015, p. 1).

[18] On this point, Greek anti-IRES activists echo the theorists of the Capitalocene, who also challenge the depoliticization of environmental crisis by parsing the accountability obscurely attributed to humanity (or Anthropos) and emphasizing the disproportionate impacts of state and corporate actors (see Malm, 2018; Moore, 2017, 2018; The Salvage Collective, 2021).

Activists make similar claims when they argue that the aim of IRES development in Greece is not to solve climate change, but to facilitate the privatization of public land (*F.A.Q.*, 2023, p. 4) and water (Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón, 2023). Thus, charging that hegemonic climate rhetoric disguises the true causes of environmental crisis as it is used to endorse policy that perpetuates and reinforces those very causes, Greek activists conclude that real solutions to the environmental crisis can only be sought through another discourse.

As Penelope disclosed in her response to Orestes, the activists involved in the defense of the Agrafa mountains expressed their dissatisfaction with climate rhetoric early in their struggle. In the January 2020 assembly at which the collectives that would form the Panelladikó Díktyo defined their "common ground," the Protovoulía tis Athínas gia tin Prostasía ton Agráfon declared that the "root of the ecological crisis and the effort to find sustainable solutions lies outside of the shallow ecological rhetoric of recent decades, which distracts public opinion from the root of the problem" (2020, p. 1). The Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia then developed this view into the argument that environmental movements ought to be grounded in a discourse both autonomous and distinct from that of official policy, which does not aim to tackle climate change, but merely to create the impression that it does (2021, p. 28). Echoing this perspective, the anti-authoritarian Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón writes that,

> *If we want to speak honestly about a way of life and of social organization that is more friendly to the natural world and the environment, we must challenge industrial society and its logic of growth from its very foundation. We would have to speak about a foundational change to the energy-heavy Western consumerist way of life and model of production* (2022, p. 48).

The distinct, autonomous discourse in which activists attempt to "speak honestly" about contemporary environmental crisis and its roots in the form and logic of capitalist society is marked not only by the displacement of climate change as a central object of concern, but also by the inversion of received categories of the environmentally beneficial and harmful.

Across their pamphlets and in their speeches, Greek anti-IRES activists, including those involved in the defense of the Agrafa mountains, collapse the categories of official rhetoric by equating “green” with “black.” For example, the Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón calls “green the new black” in its reading of the European Green Deal as a policy designed to resolve, not the environmental crisis afflicting the Earth, but various environmental and geopolitical crises of European capital (2022, p. 25). Drawing similar conclusions about the purpose of popular environmental policies, the Panelladikó Díktyo Syllogikotíton gia tin Enérgeia insists that “the fight to stem the effects of climate change cannot but be diametrically opposed to both the ‘black growth’ and the ‘green growth’ of the market” (2021, p. 28). By painting over symbolic chromatic distinctions, these activists insist on seeing beyond the apparent differences of energy sources to the shared logic of economic development structuring energy policy.

These activists thus defy the “substance fetishism” (Moore, 2025) that shapes prevalent expectations that the substitution of one energy source for another might itself transform social and ecological relations in historically significant ways. Whereas that fetishism frequently proceeds by abstracting energy sources to their carbon content, these land defenders insist on apprehending energy systems in their totality, as spatially extensive and materially intensive infrastructural networks that have as their basis real places. By calling “green” “black,” they draw attention to the ways in which these infrastructural networks facilitate capitalism’s penetration into new frontiers by reproducing relations, producing contradictions between environmental policy and social and ecological wellbeing that ecologists have called a “green vs green” paradox (Kati et al., 2021), geographers “green grabbing” (Hadjimichalis, 2014; Siamanta, 2019), and political ecologists “green sacrifice” (Zografos & Robbins, 2020).

Beyond its analytic value, the equation of black and green suggests the *strategic* value of activists’ rejection of official climate rhetoric and production of their own. By shifting their concern from the different substances of fuel sources to the common structure and logic of industrial energy generation, activists anticipate efforts to divide their coalitions. By refusing to elevate climate change as the singular and most urgent environmental crisis and to simplify climate change to a problem of fossil fuel usage, they sustain relationships of solidarity across

struggles to prevent fossil fuel extraction as well as IRES development. Their efforts might be read as an indirect response to Andreas Malm's attempt to incite direct action against fossil fuels with the claim that climate change does not subsume wildness but annihilates it (2018, p. 9). Activists positioned across the flooded fields, burned forests, and defaced mountains of Greece insist that the planetary politics of climate change, manifested in a single-minded focus on fossil fuels, would subsume whatever patches of wildness climate change itself does not annihilate.[19] Evading the false dilemmas shaped by "shallow ecological rhetoric" that demand they choose between fossil fuels and 'renewable' energy or between one mountain and another, these activists stand together in demanding the end not to a resource, but to a system of limitless growth predicated upon the exploitation of the earth.

In this demand, land defenders move beyond resistance toward the proposal of alternatives. The Synélevsi gia tin Yperáspisi ton Vounón, for instance, argues for the decommodification of energy and the reorientation of the economy toward the fulfillment of needs (2022, p. 57). The *F.A.Q.* concludes with calls for a new model of progress, one in which we "overcome the mistakes of the past, when we developed by destroying nature" (2023, p. 4). For the realization of such progress, its anonymous contributors recommend a "holistic" solution to the ecological crisis, addressing not only the production of energy, but also the reduction of energy waste by increasing efficiency and opting for more sustainable diets, forms of transport, and patterns of consumption. They propose the rehabilitation of natural ecosystems and the development of RES to the extent necessary to meet reduced energetic needs and with aims to reduce adverse social and ecological impacts. These diverse proposals, ranging from the schematic to the programmatic, find echoes in degrowth scholarship and suggest the common ground on which land defenders and degrowth advocates might themselves be reconciled.

[19] This language of annihilation is likely hyperbolic in either case, exemplifying what Lingít scholar Aandax̲joon Sabena Allen (2021) identifies as a tendency for Western climate narratives to assume the inevitability of catastrophe while underplaying the capacity of ecosystems and their inhabitants to adapt and persist. By repeating Malm's language, I mean not to endorse its fatalism, but merely to emphasize the contrast between his perspective and that of my interlocutors with respect to the subsumption of wilderness.

10. Conclusion: A place for degrowth

While writing this article, I met with Penelope to ask her what she meant by "getting to the root" of the environmental crisis. She rearticulated many of the proposals of activists' publications as she described the need to transform capitalist society through expansive struggles and prefigurative projects, including experiments in agroecology, direct democracy, and cooperative economies. She did not identify these proposals with degrowth, given that they exceed demands to "degrow" or reduce the scale of the economy. Yet, despite her ambivalence, many of her proposals—and even her skepticism about the suitability of "degrowth" as a label for them—are reproduced in the degrowth literature. Therefore, by way of conclusion, this section explores the possibility of bridging the degrowth 'movement' and ongoing struggles against the encroachment of 'green' growth into wildness.

This article has demonstrated that the struggle against IRES development in Greece constitutes a productive site of environmental theorizing. Ethnographic research methods reveal the collaborative processes and shared spaces through which activists develop theory for practical application within a continuously evolving struggle with existential stakes. Drawing upon ethnographic insights, this article has brought that theory, as articulated in activists' self-published literature, into conversation with scholarly debates about wilderness, climate change, and energy. Drawing upon Andreas Malm's (2018) essay "In Wildness Is the Liberation of the World," this article has demonstrated the greater utility of activists' diagnosis of the contradictions that divide their defense of wilderness from the broader environmental movement. It has also highlighted the rhetorical and practical strategies they have developed to prevent that division from fracturing their own coalitions. Specifically, Greek anti-IRES activists do not focus their campaigns on climate change or on the comparative 'greenness' of energy sources, but on the incoherence of a growth-oriented, industrial approach to the mitigation of environmental crisis. They ought to therefore be recognized as generators of degrowth theory and praxis.

Resemblances between these activists' texts and those of degrowth scholars are in no small part attributable to shared influences, including individuals, like Cornelius Castoriadis and Murray Bookchin, and contexts, like squats (see D'Alisa et al., 2013; Velotti et al., 2024). Greek

activists' analyses of the material and energetic costs of IRES, moreover, recall the ecological Marxist traditions that inform the degrowth critique of capitalist economies (Kallis, 2018). Their contention that the mountains are being sacrificed for Athenian and [Northern] European profits echoes Kōhei Saitō's analysis of the historical displacement of the social and ecological costs of capitalist production onto peripheries that get ever closer to Northern centers (Saitō, 2020/2024). Methodologically, activists' refusal of planetary abstractions resembles, too, Max Ajl's ability to cut through the Green New Deal's many misrepresentations and distortions by adhering to a land-centric, agrarian perspective (Ajl, 2021). Parallels to degrowth scholarship might also be found in land defenders' efforts to re-politicize energy by dislocating it from the realm of technocrats and resituating it within collective decision-making processes. These efforts are mirrored by the work of degrowth scholars imagining the forms that just, communal energy systems might take (Siamanta, 2021; Tsagkari et al., 2021).

On International Mountain Day, Orestes advised the assembled protestors to embrace climate rhetoric to make their struggle legible to potential allies in the degrowth 'movement.' This article's literature review suggests that these two publics might instead come together by acknowledging the common ground that they already occupy. As Greek anti-IRES activists have argued, common ground is not a space of homogeneity, but of diverse analyses and tactics channeled toward a shared purpose. Degrowthers might acknowledge this common ground by approaching land defenders as collaborators in the effort to justly downscale the global economy and reorient economic activity toward collective wellbeing. They might join these non-academics in the democratic processes of knowledge-production through which they sharpen their critique of growth-oriented economic systems into a tool for the preservation of the earth.

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