Nemo’s Dead: Green-Cultural Criminology and the Treadmill of Production

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Using the Marine Aquarium Fish Trade as a case study, I propose an integrated theoretical framework in green criminology that strengthens the political economic ‘treadmill of production’ theory (see Lynch et al., 2013) by incorporating an analysis of the ‘cultural grease’ that ensures the treadmill’s smooth operation. Starting with the cultural grease, I outline the ideological work of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and how, through its public aquariums and organizational behavior, it facilitates cultural narratives and silences that are conducive to anthropocentric capitalism and the trade in marine fish. Then I outline the specific instances and macro-patterns of environmental destruction these narratives facilitate along the entire treadmill of production: from the widespread destruction of coral reef habitats, to harm induced by transportation, to global warming, resulting, ultimately, in mass marine-theriocide. I explicitly chose the Marine Aquarium Fish Trade to challenge the ‘thoroughgoing speciesism’ (Beirne, 1999) inherent in the mammalian-centric animal abuse literature.

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