

## Modern environmentalism: an introduction / David Pepper

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### Abstrak

I must confess that I know nothing whatever about true underlying reality, having never met any. For my own part I am pleased enough with surfaces? in fact they alone seem to me to be of much importance. Such things, for example, as the grasp of a child?s hand in your own, the flavor of an apple, the embrace of a friend or lover, the silk of a girl?s thigh, the sunlight on rock and leaves, the bark of a tree, the abrasion of granite and sand, the plunge of clear water into a pool, the face of the wind?what else is there? What else do we need?

These lines were written by that leading light of modern green romanticism, Edward Abbey, in his novel *Desert Solitaire*. They were quoted with obvious approval in the mainstream green magazine *Real World* (1994, issue 8), the ?voice of ecopolitics?. They represent what tends to be an abiding green sentiment: an impatience with arguments that political, economic and social processes that operate below the surface of society must be understood and confronted if the green call for fundamental social change is to have any chance of success. After all, isn?t it obvious that there is an environmental crisis, that greed and arrogance are causing humans to try as never before to exceed physical limits to growth, and that the consequent destruction of the natural world cannot go on? Scientific evidence surely shows that this is objectively so, and provided that enough people can see the evidence then they must and will act differently. While many greens now acknowledge that it is not as simple as this, because environmental degradation goes on even though people know the consequences, the fact is that the more simplistic, impatient note still strikes a chord with the movement.