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**The Dark Side of Modernity: Environmental Injustice,  
International Relations Theory, and the Practice of  
International Politics.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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## **Dedication**

To my dearest friend Jeffrey White.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the application of Habermasian and Coxian critical theory to the problem of environmental injustice. Environmental injustice is a perspective that uncovers significant inequalities with regard to the responsibility for environmental degradation such as climate change, the ability to mitigate environmental degradation, and marginalisation from environmental decision making. In order to overcome environmental injustice a significant revision of the current status quo is required, and at the forefront of maintaining the status quo at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the theory of neoliberalism. Tapping into the underlying desire for progress in the Anglo-American world, neoliberalism has achieved a degree of success in meeting its goal of the legal institutionalisation of individual liberty and the free market at both the national and international levels. Through contrasting practice with Habermasian discourse ethics and investigating how the clash between environmental justice movements and neoliberalism is likely to affect cooperation on issues such as climate change; it is argued here that the industrialised countries of the North will need to provide significant policy space and resources in order to overcome the dynamics introduced by climate change.

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