

# **The Possibility of an Anti-Humanist Anarchism**

Joff

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## Introduction

My writing not only contributes to environmental philosophy for it is a work of environmental philosophy. Such a work unashamedly operates out of a radical philosophical tradition. The tradition is Enlightenment bound and humanist in emphasis.

This tradition begins, for the purposes of this thesis, with Feuerbach and Marx. Yet, the fetters of the tradition of “critical criticism” are free enough not to lead to a constriction of ideas. Thus, the position of my work is at once experimental and yet “rooted” in the Enlightenment tradition.

It is this curious in-between or interstitial zone that will be explored. The equivocation nestles in-between two apparently irreconcilable structures of thought, namely, the philosophy of the “totality” and the philosophy of otherness or “difference”.

In questioning the in-between of the totality and poststructuralism’s (PS) emphasis upon positive difference and the confrontation between a defence of Enlightenment humanism and its contemporary erstwhile detractors, an experimental and “monstrous” thinking emerges. In the juxtaposition of the “totality” and the “different”, what is sought after is not a forced synthesis or reconciliation of difference, but a possibilising and a playfulness. In chartering unknown seas, new territories uncover generous spaces of experimentation and thought. This is perhaps the dangerous task of post-human philosophy: “the manufacture of materials to harness forces, to think the unthinkable”.

In thinking this peculiar in-between, the metaphor of a “force-field” of ideas is employed. A force field of ideas abandons the search for an “extorted” reconciliation of oppositions (Hegel’s will-to-system) but instead brings into the foreground the relationality of ideas which at once both attract and repel. Such a structure is dynamic, fluid and less rigid than a staid system which demands the unification of opposites “at any cost”.

A defence of Enlightenment ideals that is historically situated requires the examination of the concepts of humanism and naturalism, in order to demonstrate that the “gay” abandonment of such principles by “postmodern nihilism” is never fully extricable from the tradition that is rebelled against.

The following points hope to illuminate the possibility of a “transhuman(t)” anarchism which is ecologically sensitive, tolerant of diversity, yet which sees the role of stewardship as essential for guiding the planet away from imminent collapse. Deleuze, Guattari, and Foucault are taken as representatives of the canon of PS and Bookchin’s thinking is taken as representative of green (anarchist) political philosophy which roots itself in the humanist and naturalist tradition of the Enlightenment.

First and foremost, by demonstrating the interrelationship between PS and Bookchin’s social ecology, it will be shown that the incommensurability argument Bookchin employs is unwarranted and ungenerous. The incommensurability Bookchin sees between classical and dialectical logic renders Bookchin’s own observations contradictory. Incommensurability implies that rational standards are relative or internal to a tradition or culture or paradigm in which they are articulated. In this sense incommensurability implies relativism. Thus, Bookchin is on slippery ground when he contends that: Brute facts “are distortions of reality in dialectical reason because for dialectical reason Being is not an agglomeration of fixed entities and phenomena”.

His defensive claim that analytic logic has no validity in testing the rationality of dialectical logic can be turned on his own conjectures and therefore his argument warrants further reflection. It is arguable whether such a defensive claim is a serious defect of social ecology. Furthermore,

this form of argument is now disintegrating given the fact that the once opposed traditions of “continental” and “analytical” philosophy are engaging with and merging into one another. Derrida and Rorty are thinkers who attempt to bridge the gap between these two approaches to philosophy.

Therefore, notwithstanding Bookchin’s protests, the question of rational dialogue, for those who have ears to listen, between PS, social and deep ecology and anarchism ought to be posed. In order to disclose the interconnections and affinities between PS, anarchist political philosophy and the possible fruitful co-optation of them by ecological thought demands that several centripetal concepts receive close attention. The concepts of the rhizome and arborescence, hierarchy, dualism, and becoming will be assessed in order to think the possibility for a commensurable discourse between two “apparently” intransigent rivals.

At first glance, it is surprising that anarchism has demonstrated such a lack of tolerance towards PS theory. PS explores indeterminacy, the realm of appearances, freakish becomings, fragmentation, and positive otherness. In summa: the celebration of chaos. Anarchism, etymologically, is a state without order, a stateless and chaotic state without the State. In celebrating the social order that emerges in the absence of the ordering principle of the State, anarchism thus emphasises creativity and spontaneity.

## **The Concept of Naturalism**

Naturalism is a philosophical position which is open to a multiplicity of possible variations. From a general perspective a naturalist contends that whatever exists exists as natural phenomena. Naturalism thus rejects seeking explanation at the level of the super-natural. Yet, naturalism is not necessarily synonymous with materialism. Materialism is logically distinct from naturalism because naturalism is compatible with varying ontological positions. The chief tenets of naturalism are as follows:

1. Knowledge of the universe is gained by analysis of “natural objects” which are conditioned by the impact of natural causes. The universe of natural objects is knowable since it is governed by a causal and spatio-temporal order.
2. Changes in the nature of natural objects are primarily explained through the operations and impacts of natural causes.
3. A natural cause or system of natural causes which impacts upon a natural object is explainable as a natural process.
4. The natural order is grasped as a system of natural processes. “Nature is in principle intelligible in all its parts, but it cannot be explained as whole”.
5. A natural methodology discloses the workings of the natural world in terms of natural causes and is testable through examination of the consequences of natural causes.
6. The natural is intelligible, if and only if, natural processes are regular. As a consequence a natural methodology seeks to disclose natural laws which govern the universe of natural objects. Human beings as natural objects are in principle governed by the same natural

processes which account for the change of vegetation and animals. The natural method is thus applicable to the domain of social and mental life. Humans, on this account, are immanent, they are natural objects.

7. Recourse to nonnatural methodology occurs only in moments of despair. For the most part, all humans naturally apply the natural method since they intrinsically possess natural properties as natural objects.
8. The practice of reason is consistent with the applicability of the natural method and science is the paradigm of reason's application.
9. Scientific rationality is not infallible and theories as such are subject to revisions and even abandonment if better theories (more true?) manifest themselves. Science's fallibility implies that there can be no ultimate certitude for any scientific theory. Theories are rigorously tested against rival theories and there is nothing contradictory in believing a theory to be true and recognising that it may well be false by future standards.
10. Mathematics and geometry do not point toward a transcendent Platonic ontology in which timeless numerical essences reside as distinct from the natural order. As such, numerical entities, according to naturalism, do not necessarily imply nonnatural objects.
11. Naturalism recognises that there are other ways of experiencing the natural world but contends that the only cognitive mode of experience fitting for rigorous explanation is the scientific mode.
12. Naturalism defends an ontological pluralism which rejects the claim that all natural objects are reducible to one form of natural object. All natural objects share a fixed level of reality. No exceptional natural object is more real than another.
13. Naturalism recognises that humans are unique in their capacity to hold and pursue values but instead of elevating the species above the rest of nature's inhabitants, naturalism perceives the human species as a natural phenomenon subject to natural laws which can be uncovered by a natural methodology. Naturalism contends that moral disputes are resolvable through the rigorous practice of the natural method. Contra a morally irrefragable intuitionism, naturalism defends the testing of moral arguments and scientific theories alike through the examination of testable consequences. And lastly,
14. Naturalism is adamantly this-worldly to the extent that it considers philosophical problems as natural problems. Philosophy thus enquires after the human, natural object and speculation concerning transcendent entities is rigorously avoided.

## **Dialectical Naturalism**

Central to the project of dialectical naturalism is the transcendence of the dualism subject/object. Such a project thinks that each conjunct is not immune to the residue of the other. The philosophy of social ecology thus incorporates an ontology of nature which is at once material and subjective.

Subjectivity resides in nature in various degrees and is not exclusive to the mental processes humans possess. If we concede that subjectivity inheres within every element of nature then the hierarchically structured subject/object dualism is rendered questionable by a way of thinking that examines the relationship between entities in terms of what is held in common rather than what is radically other.

The question arises however: from a humanist viewpoint, how can we maintain the uniqueness of the human subject?

Traditionally, the subject is considered as unique precisely because of its capacity to transcend nature through its capacity for self-consciousness. If the transcendence of nature into the realm of culture is rejected as dualistic then it is difficult not to fall into the trap of creating an egalitarian biosphere in which every entity deserves equal respect. Furthermore, is not the introduction of subjectivity within nonhuman nature itself an anthropomorphic gesture?

But a more interesting question is to inquire as to whether one can ever fully extricate a perspective from an anthropomorphic position. Is an other-regarding perspective irredeemably contaminated with anthropomorphic remains? However, Bookchin is guilty more than most on this point in the sense that he is blind to his own anthropomorphizing and yet excessively critical of deep ecology's "biocentric" conception of nature. Dialectical (naturalistic) reason opposes itself to intuitionism and mysticism precisely because of the unreasoned, cloudy and arbitrary nature of visceral feelings. Bookchin is an ardent defender of Enlightenment reason (in the form of Hegel's philosophy of optimism) and thinks that deviation from a commitment to reason is one step nearer to National Socialism whose perverted "ecologism" was based upon intuition and anti-rationalism. Dialectical reason as well as opposing itself to mysticism also critically questions instrumental (conventional) reason which it perceives as one-dimensional and "coldly analytical".

The form of reason Bookchin subscribes to then is a dialectical reason which is organic, critical, developmental yet analytical and ethical. Dialectical reason conceives the interrelationships between particular entities as mediated through the "totality". Entities within the totality are forever unfolding in a perpetual process of coming into being and passing away. This process is a process of becoming which Bookchin derives from Heraclitus and later in Hegel. Nature is then in a process of continual development and each entity has boundaries which are continually being redefined. Bookchin's philosophy of nature then perceives the working of dialectics in the sphere of nature, society and consciousness.

It is at this point that we begin to see the questionable omnipresence of dialectics. It is here that he draws out those contradictory aspects of a thing and thus renders them explicit. In this way, implicit potentiality is given its full actuality or realisation. Bookchin is aware that one of the assumptions necessary for this perception is that there is teleological development towards greater complexity or differentiation within the universe. Dialectical naturalism celebrates the process of "natural" becoming and advances a "vision of wholeness, fullness, and richness of differentiation and subjectivity." Reason is defended here as the means through which latent potentialities are identified. Thus, the unleashing of latent potentialities by the articulation of reason, for Bookchin, is the means through which social development occurs. A "rational society" emerges out of the unfolding process of reason's development.

In a clear sense then, the abandonment of reason which Bookchin perceives in several areas of social life signals the combined obsolescence of social development and the excrescence of the irrational. A social ecology is thus considered ethical given the prescriptive ethical import in

the statement that being “must ripen into the fullness of its being”. The political question which arises is: who is to decide what constitutes the fullness of a being’s being? Who is to decide what a being is to become? And furthermore, what are the means for disclosing the constitution of a being’s being?

It is also legitimate to ask whether the warping of the development of an entity within nature by another entity constitutes an unethical act? If this were so, then animals, plant and insects, would be humorously considered to live unethically. In the human sphere, the political implications would necessarily encourage passivity in a global agreement to let all being be in order for them to fulfil their latent potentiality.

But perhaps these questions are unwarranted. Perhaps we are trying to extract a confession from Bookchin under duress. Bookchin replies to the question concerning ethical acts by maintaining a strict incommensurability between process-orientated dialectical philosophy and “analytical” philosophy which directs its attentions to “brute facts.” Bookchin considers that answers to dialectical questions can only be answered by dialectics and hence dialectical reason. A logic premised on the principle of identity  $A = A$ , can hardly be used to test the validity of a logic premised on  $A = A$  and  $\text{not-}A$ .

It is here that the dispute with antihumanism, mysticism and “postmodernism” appears in bold relief. Bookchin is contesting the dominance of other forms of nondialectical reason. Other forms of consciousness and different ways of conceiving the workings of things are considered as a betrayal of social development, a betrayal of Enlightenment ideals and their overt quest for liberation. In more ordinary terms one could say that this is sheer intolerance (of diversity, of other voices) on Bookchin’s part. Professor Kovel in examining the invective in Bookchin’s prose contends: “Dialectic, instead of unfolding, becomes static, frozen in an endless series of vendettas”. In less personalistic terms, we could argue that the reconstructed Hegelian logic Bookchin employs renders the existence of positive differences problematic.

## **Rhizomatic Naturalism**

The potential incommensurability between the naturalist ontologies of Deleuze and Bookchin will now be assessed. But firstly the organic metaphor or “image” of the rhizome will receive attention.

## **Rhizome, dualism and supersession**

We shall concern ourselves here with an alternative image of thought whose alternative perspective is anarchistic (for it essentially opposes itself to an image of thought which is State-orientated). One possible objection is that the reading here is too literal.

The objection is taken on board but what is significant is the tracing of potential affinities between the perception of thought as nomadic and experimental and the traditional political philosophy of anarchism. Deleuze and Guattari are principally interested in lines of flight and moments of deterritorialisation that escape the binary coding of the State apparatus. Deleuze and Guattari think becomings, multiplicities, and proliferation as a form of counter-praxis to binary oppositions. They are interested in what escapes from social cleavages. Instead of East-West they

look for the ruptures and breakthroughs that are occurring elsewhere. Thinking otherwise than molarity (the molar), they seek to disclose rebellions in the North and the South.

Molecularity is discerned as a potential site of creativity and refusal. Normal identities, binary-molar apparatuses (male/female, culture/nature) are contrasted with provisional identities of becoming. The rhizome is an image of thought which attempts to account for thought's trajectory and speed. It is contrasted to the traditional image of Occidental thought, the tree and the root. The rhizome is different from roots and radicles. Rats which swarm over each other are invoked as an instance of a rhizome. Rhizome contains both lines of segmentarity (recuperation) and lines of deterritorialisation (escape). Rhizomes are compared with arborescent structures. The rhizome contains elements which resist the sedentary structures of hierarchy and centralised organs.

Deleuze and Guattari do not merely affirm one component of the dualism in favour of the other. This point is argued by Tomlinson: "All Deleuze's "systems" can be regarded as temporary strategic constructions, as the transitory fortifications of an advancing nomadic war machine". For Deleuze and Guattari, there are knots of arborescence in rhizomes and rhizomatic offshoots in roots. In summa: rhizomes are acentred, nonhierarchical and are best defined as permitting the circulation of evasive states of intensity.

The model of the rhizome examines what flees and what is produced by fleeing. Couchgrass is a wonderful image Deleuze and Guattari provide in order to distinguish the growth of grass as distinct from the growth of trees. Couchgrass grows between paving stones, it springs up everywhere. Couchgrass is a weed, it is rhizomatic.

The production of desire, for Deleuze and Guattari, is looked upon as a rhizomatic process. The rhizome is above all a way of grasping connection and coupling, a way of understanding extra-textual relationships (the effect of a book on the reader's intensity "outside" of a book). In the case of writing, Deleuze and Guattari maintain: "Writing webs a war machine and lines of flight, abandoning the strata, segmentarities, sedentarity, the State apparatus".

The question arises: to what extent are the concepts of the rhizome and horizontality useful as tools for social ecology and anarchism? Kropotkin elaborated, contra Darwin, a conception of evolution that emphasised the role of mutual aid in social evolution. The rhizome shares similar features with Kropotkin's notion of the affinity group which is a collectivity that spontaneously emerges for specific needs or ends.

In thinking the relationship between Deleuzian PS and ecological politics, Patrick Hayden contends that Deleuze expounds a naturalistic ontology. Hayden reworks the concept of naturalism in order to account for Deleuze's critique of the "verticality" of Occidental thought.

Two troubling lacunas are present in Hayden's analysis. The first is that Hayden fails to expose Deleuze's employment of "machinic" metaphors which are the bedrock of Deleuze's rhizomatic philosophy. The second is that there is dearth of analysis concerning the impact of Nietzsche's lebensphilosophie upon Deleuze's philosophical trajectory.

On Hayden's interpretation, Deleuze's naturalism celebrates the interrelationships between human and nonhuman life without recourse to metaphysically static binary oppositions (essence/appearance). The pragmatics of Deleuzian naturalism asks for the "effects" a way of thinking have upon us. Thus, Hayden is right to note the search for different ways of living and thinking by Deleuze and Guattari which are sensitive to and in tune with the environment.

Hayden fails to note the effect of Nietzsche's philosophy of innocent becoming and this-worldly atheism upon Deleuze's own thinking. In looking for a way of thinking which escapes Platonism's positing of pure transcendent Being (the real of Ideas), Deleuze seeks to re-unite



the (bio)-diversity of the natural world with the natural world's "real conditions of material difference and process of becoming".

Deleuze develops a pluralistic naturalism through a reading of Lucretius and Spinoza. In thinking through the concept of nature, Deleuze reads Lucretius as refusing to succumb to the temptation to totalise. In refusing to seek a final unification of the different elements of nature, what is celebrated is precisely the diversity and difference which inheres within nature. This refusal connects up with tenet (naturalism) 4 outlined above. The realm of Ideas is jettisoned for it supports the idea that nature is an imperfect copy of transcendent Being. Individuals, species, environments are considered as non-totalisable sums. The multiple is celebrated over the One. Deleuze reads nature distributively, that is to say, as an open ended interplay of the various plurality of elements which compose it. Nature is a continuous process of becoming, a process of formation and deformation.

Deleuze searches for a way of thinking that can align itself with the fluctuations of "reality". If nature fluctuates because it is continually becoming then a rigid dichotomy (humanity and nature) is an unsuitable tool for describing such a reality. This is precisely the point that needs to be underscored.

Deleuze and his collaborator, Guattari, call for a way of thinking that celebrates the different and the singular which counters the urge to totalise or unify. The plane of immanence is the concept employed to celebrate difference and singularities. Deleuze and Guattari's model of evolution rejects the arborescent image of thought based upon descent (genealogy) in favour of a rhizomatic conception of species development in which the "traversality" of species combined with a continuous interaction with the external environment is given greater weight.

The political dimension to Deleuze's naturalism takes the form, according to Hayden, of a creativity of concepts, practices, and values which "best promote the collective life and interests of diverse modes of existence inhabiting the planet". Deleuze's micropolitical analysis thus examines local, often temporary ecological situations. In doing so, ecological activism, as one struggle amongst many, steers clear of "universal abstractions" (the ideal of equality for all) and thus concentrates on the particular and the singular.

Furthermore, Guattari stresses micropolitical processes with respect to the workings of molecular revolutions. Thus spoke Guattari: For the last decade [1970s] battle lines widely different from those which previously characterised the traditional workers movement have not ceased to multiply (immigrant workers, skilled workers unhappy with the kind of work imposed on them, the unemployed, over exploited women, ecologists, nationalists, mental patients, homosexuals, the elderly, the young etc.). But will their objectives become just another "demand acceptable to the system" or will vectors of molecular revolution begin to proliferate behind them.

The rejection of universal abstractions does not necessarily entail the outright refusal to examine macropolitical phenomena. As Deleuze says: "every politics is simultaneously a macropolitics and a micropolitics". Deleuze perceives ecological problems in terms of the translation between local and global ecosystems. Deleuze analyses the construction of the planetary ecosystem beginning with the combination and intersection of local phenomena which together compose the global ecosystem.

For the purposes of the central contention of this thesis, we ought to make a comparison between the rhizomatic-thinking of Deleuze and the social ecology of Bookchin. Bookchin's social ecology argues that the domination of nature stems from a deeply entrenched historical domination of human by human. Reason and domination, on this account, are mutually exclusive.

Integrated World Capitalism infects “reason” with a contaminated conception of reason which desires production for the sake of production (instrumental means/end reason).

The message is clear: it is only by reconfiguring a radical (uprooting) revolutionary politics that reason’s struggle will be victorious. Bookchin defends such an uprooting of thought, praxis and values by enunciating the value of decentralised communities which practice locally based democracy. Furthermore, Bookchin’s dialectical naturalism re-situates human and nonhuman life within bioregions which are sensitive to complex evolutionary phenomena. Human and non-human are intertwined and function according to the ecological principle of mutualism or symbiosis. Other noteworthy precepts of social ecology include the implementation of environmentally friendly (alternative) technologies (solar power, wind power and so on) and the celebration of cultural (ethnic, local) and biophysical diversity.

Hayden claims that there are points of intersection here between social ecology and rhizomatic thinking. However, Bookchin has attacked Deleuze regarding the explicit anti-humanism which pervades his work. PS, in general, is rejected given its decentring of “Man”. On the other hand, Deleuze wishes to transcend what he sees as a one-dimensional Enlightenment rationality and more particularly the unchallenged march toward a rational society by Marxist theoreticians. The presuppositions underlying the idea of progress and the teleological belief in the messianic ending of history with the arrival of heaven on earth is further attacked by Deleuze who wishes to think free from systems of closure. Deleuze’s philosophy seeks to leap over the “deterministic presuppositions of traditional essentialism and humanism” which are evident in Bookchin’s paeon to Hegelian dialectics.

Hayden’s point is that Bookchin examines only one surface of ecological phenomena namely its “inner” dialectical development without seeing phenomena as entwined with an “outside”. Hayden’s analysis is fundamentally weakened given the fact that one of Deleuze’s main influences was Nietzsche who inaugurated a “deconstructive” practice that sought to chiefly expose the hidden motivations lurking in Occidental thought, namely philosophy’s hidden desire or will-to-power. The concept of becoming is centripetal to Nietzsche’s philosophy of the eternal recurrence and the Will-to-Power. Yet, a grasping of the critique of the transcendent world of essences, the beyond or Nirvana by an immanent rhizomatic naturalism is blunted without recourse to the becoming-Nietzsche of Deleuze.

Nietzsche set in train one of the most hostile critiques of Christianity and of Occidental culture and Nietzsche was one of the main spurs for Deleuze’s philosophy of affirmation. To grasp the meaning of Deleuze’s plane of immanence thus requires foregrounding Spinoza’s and Nietzsche’s philosophies of power and affectivity. Hayden fails to provide such an analysis.

In contrast to Hayden, Gare notes the impacts of Nietzsche and Bergson upon Deleuze’s thinking and contends that Deleuze constructs a Nietzschean philosophy of nature out of philosophy, mathematics and scientific advances. More importantly, several of Deleuze’s chief concepts are omitted from Hayden’s otherwise thought-provoking essay. The machinic assemblage, the Body-without-Organs (BwO), and the mechanosphere receive no mention whatsoever. Such a selective reading cannot but give the impression that Deleuze and Guattari enunciated a soft and woolly passivity. On the contrary, Guattari calls for ever greater control and manipulation of the “mechanosphere” given the constant human abuse of fragile ecosystems.

Furthermore, it can be argued that Deleuze and Guattari’s collaborative *Anti-Oedipus* enterprise was directed toward a rethinking and reconstruction of ontology itself. The a naturalistic ontology ought to be put into parentheses here. The traditional tools of ontology (being, object,

qualities, pairs) are replaced by Deleuze and Guattari with the concepts of planes, intensities, flows, becomings, and couplings. Rigid binary oppositions (a chief example is the man/woman dualism) are avoided and in their place we find “a continuum of interacting embodied subjectivities”.

Yet, it is legitimate to inquire as to whether a machinic ontology is necessarily gender neutral or nature oppressive. Grosz and others have been quick off the mark to note the potentially sexist metaphors employed by Deleuze and Guattari. The use of machinic metaphors may well express a phallic drive whose obvious desire is to plug into, couple up and oppressively connect up with everything it can dominate.

## C(ha)osmos

Guattari’s later work unequivocally aligns itself with thinking of a green hue. Guattari’s *Les Trois Ecologies* will receive examination here.

A triadic ecology problematises the subject/object dualism. The subject is decentralised and configured from an exteriority of components (the unconscious, the body). Guattari names these as components of subjectification. The hermetic self-certain interiority articulated by Descartes is questioned by Guattari for its one-dimensional emphasis. There are other “ways of existing” which would seem to be irreducible to the “realm of consciousness”.

Guattari is principally interested in the possible emergence of new paradigms of ethico-aesthetic thinking and praxis. Such paradigms rethink the relationship between human subjectivity and the context (environment) within which it engages. Subjectivity seems to imply the role of the unconscious in relation to the human and natural environment. In comparison, Bookchin’s analysis of the unconscious is conspicuously absent in his philosophy.

With emphasis upon the creative potentiality of subjectivity or new ways of existing, Guattari looks toward the future. He is in effect offering a “futurist agenda”. Such a futurist agenda attempts to think the intersection of the human with cybernetics and more particularly with computer-aided subjectivity. In schizoanalysing the ecological, a cartography of subjectivity transcends predefined territorial limits (the orthodoxy of Oedipus for example) with the formation of new perspectives “without prior recourse to assured theoretical foundations or the authority of a group, school, conservatory, or academy”.

New perspectives emerge from the intersection of social, mental, and environmental ecologies. The triadic intersection of the socius, the psyche, and “nature”, Guattari believes, is an essential nodal point for decoding the general degradation of social relationships, the mind, and the environment. Guattari refuses to separate the elements of the triad. In schizoanalytic language, they form an assemblage. Schizoanalytical social ecology challenges the dualism between nature and culture with the perception that nature and culture are inseparable. Neither “human work” or the “natural habitat” are legitimate either/or choices. A “transversal” understanding of the interactions between ecosystems, the “mechanosphere” and social and individual universes of reference is encouraged by Guattari in order to rethink the possible detrimental effects of isolated social, psychological and environmental ecologies.

It should be noted Guattari is arguing from an anthropocentric as opposed to biocentric viewpoint. Guattari and Negri claim that communism’s “call to life” celebrates the slender hope of a reconfigured human solidarity. However, this observation needs to be balanced for the argument

presupposes the very dualism which is brought into question. Guattari does not wish to rehearse traditional debates. In a very important sense he is calling for a new eco-logic.

This eco-logic is a “logic of intensities” which examines “the movement and intensity of evolutive processes”. What Guattari is seeking to describe are “processual lines of flight” that are secreted from entrenched totalities and identities. In other words Guattari is attempting to think of one-off events which once combined with subjective assemblages provide examples of new existential configurations in which social, psychic and natural elements function in a nondestructive milieu. The political project of triadic ecological praxes is the affirmation of new forms of subjectivity (new forms of knowledge, culture, sensibility, and sociability).

The social ecologies of Bookchin and Guattari both see capitalism as a system of economics hostile to the life of ecosystems. Yet, Guattari is innovative from the viewpoint of capitalism’s tactic of “intension”, that is to say, the way capitalism nestles into “unconscious levels of subjectivity”. Guattari drives the point home:

It has become imperative to confront the effects of capitalist power on the mental ecology of daily life, whether individual, domestic, conjugal, neighbourly, creative, or personal-ethical”.

Processes of re-singularisation and the practice of the art of dissensus rather than a “mind-numbing” or levelling consensus are defended by Guattari as tactics to de-stabilise capitalist subjectivity. It must be borne in mind that Guattari is advancing a generalised ecology which incorporates the “whole of subjectivity and capitalist power formations”. A generalised ecology eschews a sole concern for the welfare of animals or trees. Yet, it also refuses to rigidly demarcate the three ecologies. The art of the eco endeavours to formulate this kind of “praxis openness”.

On the subject of mental ecology and the ambivalence of desire, Guattari makes the interesting point that violence is the consequence of complex subjective assemblages and not an essential attribute of the human species. Guattari maintains that violence is not “intrinsically inscribed in the essence of the human species”. This would seem to trouble Bookchin’s alignment of Deleuze and Guattari with an anti-humanism.

Bookchin is eager to denounce those he sees as condemning the human species (or what he calls humanity) for its apparently disastrous effects upon the environment. If capitalism or Integrated World Capitalism (Guattari’s concept) is to be challenged then new values, and new ecological praxes must be invented.

Guattari believes that an environmental ecology of the future ought to be much more than a “mere defence of nature”. It is worth quoting Guattari in full here:

Increasingly in future, the maintenance of natural equilibria will be dependent upon human intervention; the time will come, for example, when massive programmes will have to be set in train to regulate the relationship between oxygen, ozone, and carbon dioxide in the earth’s atmosphere. In this perspective, environmental ecology could equally be re-named “machinic ecology”, since both cosmic and human practice are nothing if not machinic – indeed they are machines of war, in so far as “Nature” has always been at war with life!”

What Guattari means by the comment that “Nature” has always been at war with life is far from clear. Furthermore, the meaning of Guattari’s demand for an ethics and politics fitting for

the technological developments which are under way in respect of the “general destiny of humanity” is even less clear. Yet, Guattari’s continual reference to humanity ought to repel the designation of Guattari as a vulgar anti-humanist. Moreover, Guattari’s open call for a return of the practice of resingularisation and his affirmation of the art of dissensus rather than “neo-liberal consensus” does not necessarily imply that Guattari was anti-universalist. Contra Ferry’s reading of differential thinking, resingularisation (process of becoming and mode of experimentation) does not necessarily imply universalism (legal rights for the whole of humanity). What Guattari points toward are the technological developments (data-processing, genetic engineering) which mean that the definitions of the human being are increasingly subject to forces of an alien and exterior nature. Such a subjection requires a rethinking of the human subject in relation to its environment and its future(s).

## **Postmodern Nihilism**

A hindered and bleak perspective regarding postmodernism inevitably reads postmodernism as nihilistic. Such an ungenerous perspective is evident in the work of Bookchin. Hardly alien to idiosyncrasy itself, anarchism ought to find it fruitful to listen openly to the (dark) theorists of the postmodern. Instead of outlawing the apparently idiosyncratic “philosophical tendencies” of Foucault, Deleuze et al, it is better to seek common ground than to secrete a theoretical xenophobia of sorts.

Bookchin is correct in noting the post-modern question mark next to an unreflective affirmation of economic, market-driven progress. Bookchin’s perspective is however myopic with respect to postmodernism’s disillusionment in progress (progress for the sake of progress) for a disillusionment is also convalescence, a time for reflection, and is preparatory for an affirmation of human identity and destiny upon albeit radically renewed lines.

For the purposes of this thesis, Foucault and Deleuze will be defended against Bookchin’s reading of “postmodern nihilism”, though Bookchin is obviously correct in noting Deleuze and Guattari’s questioning of grand narratives. Obviously if we reject all grand narratives then social ecology’s grand narrative of human liberation must also be rejected.

The May-June evenements of 1968 are of utmost importance if we are to understand the impetus behind “leftist” postmodernism. At times, Bookchin seems to echo Jameson’s conclusions concerning the phenomena of postmodernism. Bookchin in chartering the tendencies of postmodernism contends: Postmodern is not only a nihilistic reaction to the failures imputed to Enlightenment ideals of reason, science, and progress but more proximately a cultural reaction to the failures of various socialisms to achieve a rational society in France and elsewhere in our country.

From Bookchin’s Hegelian perspective, it is consistent to view a philosophy which reads otherness and difference to be positive, as hostile to Hegel’s grand narrative of the unfolding and omnivorous “Spirit”. One of the chief problems of Bookchin’s rejection of postmodernism is its failure to critique the very ideas which are densely articulated. Instead, a sociology of knowledge is provided which is blandly Marxist in the correlation of a fragmentary economic system and ideas which express that fragmentation. The content of postmodern ideas is not under the microscope of analysis. Bookchin instead connects the social function of philosophy with the prevailing economic system. Postmodernism from this perspective is merely an ideological sup-

port for the febrility of contemporary civilisation. But let us remember that Bookchin is writing from a political and anarchist point of view.

Basically, Bookchin's rejection of postmodernism is anchored in its questioning of the intellectual value of truth, objectivity (as opposed to relativism), rationality (as opposed to mysticism), progress (as opposed to romanticism), and universality (as opposed to the particular and irreducible). Such values ground anarchist philosophy in the Enlightenment tradition. Thus, from Bookchin evanescent, local and individual occurrences and thus fail to answer the wider social questions which explore the potentiality for liberation of populations and societies (free from domination and hierarchy).

This reading of desiring-machines as essentially insular and hermetic machinic assemblages is rejected by Massumi who contends that:

“Becomings are everywhere in capitalism, but they are always separated from their full potential, from the thing they need most to run their course: a population free for the mutating”.

Massumi demonstrates a concern for the destruction of nature when he makes the telling point that:

“The absolute limit of capitalism must be shifted back from planetary death to becoming-other”.

What is of significance for Massumi and others are the lines of flight rather than the lines of death that both equally are secreted out from the machinic workings of Capital.

To drive the point home: The equilibrium of the physical environment must be established, so that cultures may go on living and learn to live more intensely at a state far from equilibrium. Depletion must end, that we may devote ourselves to our true destiny: dissipation. The value, celebration and examination of local upsurges and ephemeral confrontations is precisely a lacuna which dilutes the impact Bookchin's analysis.

Bookchin is also inconsistent in two significant places. Firstly, in order to affirm the fertility of Deleuze's affirmative philosophy we will look at the relationship between PS and anarchism more closely. It will be argued that Bookchin's social ecology was pre-programmed to forsake a potential ally primarily because of the presuppositions derived from a Hegelian heritage. Secondly, the “nomadological politics” of Deleuze and Guattari and the “insurrectionary” politics of Foucault offer a tactical and political methodology for confronting congealed power relations and for understanding the cancerous birth of micro-fascism.

Bookchin fails to assess the possible productive relationship between the affinity group (classical anarchism's model of social organisation) and the local and temporal coalitions of “nomadological” revolutionaries. If anarchism cannot function in the absence of overarching and transcendent principles then anarchism runs the risk of abandoning fruitful tactical coalitions along ecological, racial, class and gender lines. Ironically, Bookchin in his celebration of 1968 endorses the very molecular revolutions Deleuze and Guattari sought to theorise concretely. Bookchin spoke thus: It is clear that a molecular process was going on in France, completely invisible to the most conscious revolutionaries, a process that the barricades precipitated into revolutionary action.

## Poststructuralist Anarchism

Todd May formulates the relationship between anarchism and PS political philosophy in terms of PS thought forming a framework for thinking the concrete and particular without recourse to universal transcendent ideals. May constructs a “triadic” ethical schema which distinguishes formal, strategic and tactical political philosophies. Formal political philosophy would include the abstract formulations of Rawls or Nozick. Formal philosophy would thus defend one pole of the is-ought dichotomy. A strategic political philosophy approaches the is-ought dichotomy in terms of the tension in-between the two. The in-between neither supports one nor the other disjunct but thinks the relationship in terms of application and real political programmes. Thus, Lenin in asking “what is to be done?” is exploring the abstract formalism of political philosophy in connection with the pragmatic utilitarian sphere of politics. A strategic analysis is therefore encompassing and unitary in the sense that it tends toward single goals, for example, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Tactical political philosophy is more akin to the uprisings of 1968. Rejecting representation in the form of a vanguard party whose goal is the articulation of worker’s interests (for the “people” cannot formulate their own interests!), a tactical analysis is bound to the particular and the multiple. Concern with universal interests emanating from a particular group or class are absent from tactical PS philosophy.

In this sense, May contends, anarchism, at least in the classical anarchism of Kropotkin and Proudhon, is a precursor of French PS. Contra the coercion endemic in the coldest of all cold monsters, classical anarchism desires maximum freedom beyond the realm of domination. PS’s denunciation of the domination of marginal groups (homosexuals, ethnic) clearly has principles compatible with an orthodox anarchist position.

The differences and similarities between classical anarchism and PS political philosophy are identifiable with respect to the constitution of power. Tactical thinking perceives power as dispersed throughout the socius whereas traditional conceptions of power consider power as emanating from a central source (the State). Kropotkin believes that power stifles chaotic-order and voluntary mutual aid organisations such as the lifeboat association (one could call this self-organisation or autopoiesis in modern terms). And this is precisely the point that philosophers like Deleuze and Foucault contest.

Deleuze disputes the a priori assumption that power necessarily suppresses and as such power is not necessarily the negation of humanity. There is nothing lurking primordially or existing pre-formed behind the alienated worker and no true knowledge waiting to be appear from the veil of ideological manipulation. In anarchist terms, there is a definite, albeit ahistorical and abstract, human essence waiting to emerge from the inhumanity of life under Capital. The paradox, of course, of the anarchist view of the human animal is as follows: if the human animal is naturally social then why is the State’s existence such a widespread phenomena? If the State presumably acts contrary to humanity’s “true” nature then why have humans implemented the most ruthless and predatory economic system human history has ever seen? Thus, anarchism from the perspective of PS philosophy is staid if it retains the assumptions of a benign human essence and the suppression assumption regarding the effects of power.

The negation of humanist naturalism affirms instead the creativity of power as a process of constitution-constituted between the subject and object of power. The subject is simultaneously a produced-producer rather than merely a producer from forces of an altogether alien nature.

It ought to be noted that classical anarchism is not a homogeneous “movement”. Emma Goldman’s thinking is difficult to incorporate into a humanist naturalism mould, for she adopted a Nietzschean philosophy of affirmation which in principle is prospective, that is to say, it concerns itself with the future as a possibilising of experimental (inhuman) becomings and practices.

Furthermore, a more contemporary anarchist, Colin Ward explicitly abandons humanist essentialism which perceives human consciousness as the centre of the universe and the ordering principle which orders everything around it. Ward in his discussion of the interaction of complexity, order, and harmony maintains that: Anarchy is a function, not of a society’s simplicity and lack of social organisation, but of its complexity and multiplicity of social organisations.

Cybernetics, the science of control and communication throws valuable light on the anarchist conception of the complex self-organising process... The anarchist alternative is that of fragmentation, fission rather than fusion, diversity rather than unity, a mass of societies rather than a mass society. If consciousness is both product and producer then a theoretical resistance to a de-centring of consciousness is in danger of producing its own anthropocentric arrogance. A PS anarchism thus examines the positivity of power and also must search for a paradigm of thought which transcends a narrow humanist essentialism.

## **The Concept of Humanism and the Promise of Enlightenment**

What is humanism? As a philosophical worldview humanism celebrates what it claims to be the highest and most distinct qualities of the human being. Several standard interpretations of humanism argue axiologically that human beings possess superior value over other entities. Humans are seen as dignified creatures worthy of the highest consideration. The rational, autonomous self free from the dictates of unconscious animality is cherished as the site of humanity’s unique potentiality. The “soul” or “mind” is a centripetal concept. The universe, in a sense, revolves around the “soul” or “mind”.

The Renaissance humanist Vico supports this point when he says:

[it is] a truth beyond all question that the world of civil society has certainly been made by man and that its principles are therefore to be rediscovered within the modifications of our own human mind”.

Humanism in the Renaissance returns to Greece and Rome to re-birth the concept of paideia. Humanism in this sense celebrates education in the humanities. From another perspective pleasure and toleration are foregrounded as responses to a debilitating religious dogmatism, zealotry and asceticism of the Medieval Age. To add a further distinction we ought to note the role the concept of God plays in humanist formulations. Humanism is by no means inconsistent with nor is it incompatible with a religious point-of-view. In fact, humanism, on the whole, defends and is tolerant of the right to express religious convictions.

Yet, the twentieth century has witnessed the growth in what we could call a godless humanism. The latter is a much stronger form of humanism for it jettisons the concept of God as the overarching valuer. The human subject, for example, in Sartre’s aggressive existential humanism, is unique with regard to its capacity for self-determination and is the source and creator of all (moral) value. Renaissance humanism compared with its twentieth century form stutters as an inchoate adventure to openly express atheistic tendencies. In summa: humanism once traced to a



truly human setting in which God is expelled from the universe, confers human beings with the responsibility as the ultimate demiurge and sole intrinsic value bearer and bestower. Man left to himself fulfils his potentialities as a free, creative and rational social being.

Bookchin's insights into the predicament of modernity are illuminating. If Enlightenment is the bursting asunder of humanity's "self-imposed tutelage" (Kant) then anti-Enlightenment is the return of the cultural dark ages of superstition, mysticism, and the irrational. Bookchin's search for a re-enchantment of humanity traces the tendencies which desired the cold and manipulating instrumentalism that led to the gas chambers. What Bookchin's thesis, in effect, boils down to is a defence of ecological subjectivity and the role it plays in the unfolding of self-consciousness. Malthusianism, sociobiology and deep ecology are chastised for their apparent antihumanism.

Yet, Bookchin criticises the employment of an abstract conception of "Man" or "Humanity" but baulks at a way of thinking that decentres subjectivity such as sociobiology which notes the impact genetics and the environment have on the constitution of human beings. "Man" is more than a white-male-middle-class entity. "Man" unifies the composite of ethnic, gendered, sexual differences. Bookchin is cautious to invoke a one-sided biological emphasis which exists at the expense of underemphasising the role consciousness plays in human affairs. Similarly he attacks deep ecology for its anti-anthropocentric impulses which Bookchin contorts into misanthropic statements. Contra biocentrism, Bookchin defends what is "essentially" unique in the human species. From a social ecological perspective, humanity registers a unique potentiality for rationality. At its best, a socio-ecological awareness is a lived rationality which fosters cooperation, empathy, a sense of responsibility for the biosphere, together with new ideas of community and consociation. Bookchin's Hegelian social ecology claims that it is a transcendence of philanthropos and misanthropos. The quintessence of the nature of each conjunct is preserved in a more complex whole. Social ecology thus aims to transcend the anthropo-centric and the bio-centric for Bookchin's organic dialectic implies no centrality. Bookchin conceives "first nature" and "second nature" in terms of organic flow from one to the next which contravenes classical logic's demand for stable identities. Bookchin re-configured humanism is thus an "ethics of complementarity". The culmination of an "ethics of complementarity" is located in the utopos of a "free", nonhierarchical, nature. "Free" nature is thus the synthesis of "first" and "second" nature.

The Enlightenment is read by Bookchin largely in terms of a liberation movement away from superstition and domination. Historically, anarchism is derived from the Enlightenment belief in the powers of reason to rationally re-order society (revolution) and its placing of value in humanity as a unique species with unique capacities. Classical humanism is perceived by Bookchin as a largely regressive movement looking backwards historically towards ancient Greek society and their positive values concerning education and civilisation. Enlightenment humanism, on other hand, moved away from the classical viewpoint towards a more prospective position. It is here that anarchism and the Enlightenment share a common thread. Liberation from superstition also meant the prospective reconstruction of society along communistic lines. Thus spoke Bookchin: "Enlightened humanism is a hopeful message that society can be rendered not only rational but wise and not only ethical but passionately visionary".

## Transhuman(t)ism

In thinking the “outside” of Hegel’s confinement of reason, Deleuze avoids the necessity of firmly establishing identities and concluding the resolution of opposites. Resistance to the “infernal machine” can thus entertain practices which are not subsumed under the banners of grand “Ideals” and class antagonisms crying out for supersession. Nodal points of opposition in the form of desires, experiences and events thus assume an autonomy that is not easily recuperable in terms of the System. Temporary autonomous zones (TAZ) of experimentation are thus perceived as troublesome for they as such go uncoded.

Dialectical reason in a sense therefore sacrifices difference for the sake of unity and codification. PS political philosophy, as enunciated by Deleuze and Guattari, moves away from conventional political strategies and thinks instead that revolution is possible when particular configurations of desires are allowed to freely congregate. A nomadic politics is thus tactical, experimental and exploratory. New aesthetic, moral, political and ecological codes are engendered by such tactical praxes.

However, one must guard against the unthinking acceptance that a nomadic politics is a universal panacea for the maladies of what one is opposing. Plant rightly notes that codification and stability are valuable in countering the movements of the State apparatus, though generally, tactical politics shuns the urge to make dogmatic universal judgements. Tactical manoeuvres thus protect themselves against impulses that congeal a fluid tactical alliance into a prescriptive strategy applicable to every social, political, and ecological situation. Molecular revolutions are best considered as local, heterogenous and ephemeral phenomena capable of reflecting global issues, even though they function by subterranean (transversal) connections. In fact, it could be argued that local actions are effective if they thought about on a global level.

Rosi Braidotti in her book *Nomadic Subjects* has noted that a different kind of nonparty ecopolitics is possible if we think coalitions in terms of the temporary and mobile (nomadic). Ecological and feminist affinity groups, for example, synchronise and congregate for the purposes of limited and local upsurges. This point again affirms the possible coalitions or “mutant machines” to be made between anarchism and politically informed PS philosophy.

The issues are rendered even more complex by Perez. Perez sets out to demonstrate the conjunction between desiring-production, schizoanalysis and an an(archical) and nonhier(archical) way of life (a Nietzschean innocence of becoming). Brackets are employed by Perez to make a distinction between a specific and new kind of micro-politics and a relapse into old models of the party-vanguard.

Central to Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of desire is the perception that desire is both active and reactive. Desire offers the double possibility of desiring its own repression (fascism and Reich) and liberation (futural possibilities). What is of importance for ecopolitics is the claim by Deleuze and Guattari that Capital is itself propelled towards its own limit of collapse and exhaustion by an immanent logic of deterritorialisation-reterritorialisation.

According to this form of analysis, the unconscious of the employer/employee alike are both bound up with Capital’s schizophrenic desire to channel (recode) and experiment with the flows of the universe (capital, desire). It could be argued then that the wreaking of ecological destruction is desired by desiring-machines desiring-production given that hierarchical structures (the collusion between Oedipus and Capital) disseminate schizophrenic desire deep into the heart of the socius.

“The schizophrenic deliberately sets out the very limit of capitalism: he is its inherent tendency brought to its fulfilment; its surplus product, its proletariat, and its exterminating angel. He scrambles all the codes and is the transmitter of the decoded flows of desire”.

An(archical) machines are precisely those machines that experiment in confounding the codes and liberating the flux of revolutionary desire. The point to be made is that PS anarchism is constructed here by rethinking an(archism) as no longer definable as the abolition of the State. An(archism) and non(hierarchical) modes of organisation are then experimental ways of living, feeling and thinking. An(archy) is thus an ethics of nonfascist living.

One of the problems of Perez’s reading of PS and anarchism is that he reads an(archism) with rose coloured spectacles. Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of lines of flight and experimentation as emitting a danger of their own is underexplored by Perez. Too-rapid deterritorialisation engenders its own kind of despair. The outcome from lines of experimental flight are not necessarily positive. “You don’t reach the BwO, and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying”.

Yet, Deleuze and Guattari are ambivalent on the matter of an(archic) deterritorialisation for they also claim that “one can never go too far enough in the direction of deterritorialisation: you haven’t seen anything yet”. Hegel was the arch-enemy of Deleuze. In this respect, the PS of Deleuze clearly objects to the absolute demand for inclusiveness by Hegel. For Deleuze, there are forces and dynamics which are alien to the smooth functioning of the Hegelian totality.

The other qua otherness disrupts the “closure” of systems. The other is not necessarily “external” to the system for it is conceivable that alien beings reside in the interstices. A discordant otherness is not necessarily negative. Deleuze is not content to formulate a “negative” philosophy like the dissonant “atonal” thought of Adorno. The other does not oppose itself to the Same in order to affirm itself. It does not contradict contradiction in order to derive a positive moment. Above all, discordant otherness is potentially a creative and essentially positive enterprise.. Singularities or one off events are precisely those flashes which disrupt the smooth incorporation and workings of the system. Deleuze describes the flashes of intensity as singularities or lines of flight which have a “nomadic” trajectory.

What is celebrated by Deleuze is a process of creativity which exists in its own right and is thus not under the sway of the unfolding of negativity. The schizophrenic process is the model for the scrambling of the codes and the utterance of an alien language which confounds the system of Freudian psychoanalysis (a stuttering within one’s own language). Desire on this account is positive, it does not “lack” fulfilment for it is essentially productive.

## **The Domination of Nature and Marx’s Concept of Nature**

Utopia has no-place “now”, not even in our everyday lives, not even in our collective imaginations. Communism is the “now” anachronistic no-place of past adventures. Yet those adept in theoretical matters still say that communism is a humanism regardless of concrete evidence to the contrary. The young, bold, and more interesting Marx desired the revolution that would supersede all hitherto known revolutions. He desired the advent of a truly human society, a humanist society. What germinates under communism, for the Red Terrorist Doctor, is a “practical humanism” demanding the abolition of private property.

However, given that “practical humanism” limits itself to the mediation of private property, it cannot introduce a “positive humanism” for as such it concerns itself with a negative relation to private property. “Positive humanism” returns man’s alienated self to itself. Furthermore, such a positive moment inherent in humanism dialectically abolishes the alienation between man and nature, man and his species being, and man and his fellow comrades. Positive humanism, in essence, is thus the positive transcendence of private property (mediation) and self-estrangement. The proletarian once lost in the desert of unjust dessert returns to his unique (human) social essence.

It is difficult not to read the early Marx as propounding an anthropocentric standpoint regarding nature. Indeed, the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 in this sense can be read as a document of theoretical anthropology. Nature is examined as the stuff or material of human activity. A nonartefactual nature, for a disciple of Hegel, is strictly nothing for man.

Marx thus accepts the idealist’s view that the world is mediated through the Subject. Without this mediation nature is no thing. Nature’s value is posited if there is a valuer behind the valuation. Nature on this account is not intrinsically valuable. In Hegelian terminology, “first nature” lacks a concept. The first nature of natural evolution is contrasted with the second nature of human society (law, society, economy). On Marx’s account, pre-history (that is non-communist history) is subject to the blind dictates of natural evolution. Thus, Marx makes no absolute distinction between nature and human society. They constitute a differentiated unity and as such are dialectically intertwined.

Marx’s complex dialectical prose are often difficult to unpack. However, we can read the sentence

“Society is therefore the perfected unity in essence of man with nature, the true resurrection of nature, the realized naturalism of man and the realized humanism of nature”

as a refusal to divorce the human and nonhuman spheres into a rigid dualism. What is noted is nature’s blind and undomesticated residue that still remains within human society. Human self-consciousness is differentiated from cyclical natural history.

The revenge of nature: Adorno and Horkheimer offer insights into the effects of the dialectic of Enlightenment upon human society and nature. Nature (as internal psychological nature) seeks to exact revenge against those who reduced “her” to mere material for human purposes. Adorno and Horkheimer consider the phenomena of German fascism as a specific instance of the revenge of nature upon history, a “revolt of nature” against the domination it has suffered. The domination of nature at the heart of the Enlightenment project has a human cost which is that man purchases domination at the expense of their own natures. The nature of concrete humans must be suppressed in order that it may dominate others. “The suppression of nature for human ends is a mere natural relationship”. The consequence is a denial of pleasure and a warped psychological development.

Adorno makes the point better: “All the contrived machinery of modern industrial society is merely nature tearing itself to pieces”. Reason is in a sense still too natural. Thus, the Enlightenment spawns an antithesis deleterious to the nature of the human and the nonhuman. Barbarism is spawned by modernity’s drive for technological and social progress.

Adorno and Horkheimer follow Nietzsche in thinking the Enlightenment as a complex unity of reason and domination. By the use of modern techniques of control, barbarism nestles itself

deeper into modernity's social and psychological fabric. The domination of nature ensures that man's once primal station in nature is transcended and then forgotten. Thus modernity's radical humanism, which celebrates humans as unique and deserving especial consideration, carries with it the latent threat of species imperialism which ultimately returns to haunt human relations themselves. Thus, the domination of nature intertwines itself with social hierarchy and control. The resolution of the antagonistic predicament of civilisation and barbarism, Adorno maintains, does not lie in the domination of the object by the imperialising Cartesian subject. There is no final reconciliation of the dialectic of Enlightenment in a perfect unity of subject and object or in a return to an original, primordial state.

On a more positive reading of Adorno we can see the flight of man from nature as ultimately progressive though Adorno's Marxism would view the reconciliation of man and world in a future utopia as at best misguided and at worst pernicious. "Adorno steadfastly refused to succumb to any nostalgia for a prehistorical era of plenitude and harmony". For Adorno the problem must address the issue of remembrance. One of the preconditions of scientific control is the obliteration of the memory of a past, or of a nature that was free from instrumental reason. As Adorno and Horkheimer say: "All reification is a forgetting". In summary, the origin of the domination of nature is found as a contradiction within nature itself. The domination of nature is a consequence of nature in so far as it is the result of an inability of self-reflection on the part of human beings. On a rare positive note, the memory of suffering that results from the domination of nature may yet animate the project of liberation.

In tracing modernity's "ambiguous" transformation of reason into rationalism, "the cold logic for the sophisticated manipulation of human beings and nature", Bookchin rethinks the domination of nature with a renewed emphasis upon the structural social causes of domination, namely hierarchy. Contra the Frankfurt School, Bookchin's thesis perceives the domination of nature as emerging from the hierarchical domination of man by man. The conceived limited perspective of orthodox Marxism's analysis of the class composition of Capital is transcended by a philosophy which discloses the structural undergirdings of other pre-capitalist formations and possible formations yet to come (anarchist utopia).

Bookchin, to remind ourselves, is a defender of the uniqueness of human being's capacity for self-consciousness and hence rationality. Yet, reason's objective pursuit is transformed into an instrumental, subjective reason. What Bookchin is intent on demonstrating is the dissolution of objective reason (a reason that incorporates ends as well as means) through the practice of reason as instrumental reason. Whilst Adorno's Victorian reading of Enlightenment "progress" claims that progress necessitates increasing control over internal and external nature, Bookchin believes that the desire for control and domination stems in part from the unconscious of reason itself which retains a residue from pre-rational times. Subjectivity for Bookchin is not synonymous with reason. Reason, from a socio-ecological perspective, is subsumed under a much wider evolution of subjectivity within nature. The failure to incorporate rationality within the development of subjectivity, Bookchin contends, lies at the heart of Critical Theory. A resituated rationality would introduce nature within the compass of sensibility. This project, Bookchin contends, lies outside Critical Theory's intellectual tradition.

However one of the problems in thinking about an (objective) ethics in which nature is the matrix of ethical substance is found in Bookchin's reference to a requisite ecological wholeness of human beings which is founded upon unity in diversity. Presumably an ecological unity in diversity implies nonhierarchical relationships.

Yet Adorno contends that a reconciliation of opposites negates the preservation of difference in the quest for identity. Adorno shows that unity in the Hegelian system (identity-in-difference) implies domination: subject over the object, mind over matter, universal over particular, history over nature. Adorno claims that a negative philosophy is required which forsakes the final positive moment or reconciliation of identity. Negative philosophy is thus the philosophy of non-identity in which the reconciliation of difference evades domination. On this reading, identity thinking is animated by a hostility to the other. The domination of all that is deemed other is thus implicit in Hegelian positive-identity thinking.

Bookchin recognises that the other is never fully allowed to be other but finds no quarrels with the incorporation of otherness into his own anarcho-Hegelianism.

“Hegel’s concept of transcendence (*aufhebung*) never advances a notion of outright annihilation. Its negativity consists of annulling the “other” in order to absorb it into the movement toward a richly variegated completeness “.

But “variegated completeness” misses the point. The other qua other is not recognised as pure positive difference for the other’s alterity is reduced or transformed by the very act of incorporation. The other like Heidegger’s being is never let be. Thus, the complex expression unity-in-diversity conceals a potential structure of domination and hierarchy.

One of the central counter-arguments regarding the claim that evolution evolves towards ever greater degrees of subjectivity, differentiation and complexity is the conspicuous absence of historical evidence of linear social progress. By omitting a final teleological drive in evolution it is difficult to see how we are progressing towards greater ecological sensibility.

Bookchin’s anarchist “free-floating” (Mannheim) position apparently is able to decode or extrapolate potentialities that reside in the here and now and posit their actuality in the future. But lacking a teleological structure Bookchin’s analysis is substantially weakened. Bookchin simply cannot account for humanity’s warped development without positing transcendent ethical ideals. Nor for that matter is the eliciting of a “free nature” inhering objectively in first and second nature instantly discernible. Bookchin claims that a transcendent “free’ nature would “diminish the pain and suffering that now exists in “first” and “second” nature”. “Free nature, in effect, would be a conscious and moral nature, an ecological society”. But, to what extent is such objectivity a question of mere subjective preference and personal proclivity? How would Bookchin diminish the pain and suffering that exists on “first” nature if we mean by “first” nature the animal kingdom? Is it desirable that one should interfere in such a nature? After all, pain and suffering are necessary consequences from the perception of nature as “red in tooth and claw”. It seem that Bookchin does not have a mandate for such proclamations.

## **The Concept of Hierarchy**

Hierarchy is examined by Bookchin from a quasi-historical perspective. To repeat: the domination of nature stems from the domination of man by man. The domination of man by man precedes the domination of nature by man. The idea of dominating nature germinated historically through the implementation of rigid social hierarchies which congealed fluid social life into vertical command and obedience structures.

Of course, for Bookchin, the State is clearly the paragon nemesis of a free, sensitive and non-hierarchical ecological community. The State is an effect of authoritarian practices rather than their cause. Obedience breeds obeisance.

However, instead of thinking the State within the parameters of the base-superstructure model of economic development, Bookchin looks further into cultural forms of domination. Hierarchy on this account is not simply limited to class exploitation but incorporates also familial, gerontocratic, gendered, ethnic, political and social (organisational) forms of domination. One of Bookchin's strong theses is that nonhierarchical social formations form nonhierarchical images of relationships with nature. Bookchin gives the example of aboriginal ceremonies which express and situate humans as part of the larger cosmos in nonhierarchical terms.

The image of or relationships with nature in a future nonhierarchical anarchist society are as yet rendered negative. We can only say what they are not. An anarchist society is by definition free from structural (molar) hierarchies such as the State (police, bureaucracy). Furthermore, anarchism actively encourages noncoercive, nondominating everyday relationships which extend themselves to personal, family and workplace spheres. An ecological society works toward the dismantling of coercive relationships that exist in

“generations and genders, churches and schools, friendships and lovers, exploiters and exploited, and hierarchical sensibilities toward the entire world of life”.

Hierarchy and domination thus warp humanity's development.

The difference between Deleuze's “horizontalilty” of thought and Bookchin's anarchism comes into clear light when we grasp the centrality of the notion of the human. Hierarchical structures are opposed to the construction of a humanist and ecological society. The question arises: if we jettison the question of humanity how can we think nonhierarchical becomings? How can we advocate the praxis of deterritorialisation without implicitly supporting a teleological drive in history?

Bookchin writes in very much the same spirit as the Left Hegelians who rethought Hegel in 1840s Germany. Bookchin's militant atheism is inextricably linked to his defence of Enlightenment ideals of social progress, rationality and the negation of superstition. Contemporary irrationality/anti-humanism in the form of the quasi-theologic of deep ecological thinking and the post-humanism of neo-Heideggerians are instances of reversion to pre-modern times. Such phenomena articulate, according to Bookchin, a contemporary rejection of the “cold demands of secularity and intellectual clarity”.

According to Bookchin's observations, deep ecology, especially the deep ecology of Devall and Sessions, delights itself in “mythopoiesis and mystery”. Bookchin again shows his determination to uncover contemporary attempts to de-align the Enlightenment project. Deep ecology, on this account, re-introduces a religious essence with its concept of self-realisation. The self here seeks self-effacement or incorporation of an isolated ego into a larger totality namely the self-in-Self. Through the desire for organic wholeness the ideal of an autonomous rational self of the Enlightenment disappears in the mystical fog of being one with nature. Deep ecology, from this reading, debases hard won intellectual skills, tool-making capabilities and the capacity for symbolic language by humans. Deep ecology introduces an egalitarian ontology which perceives no ontological divide between human and nonhuman. Bookchin is suspicious of Devall and Sessions' keenness to promote “deep ecological” thinking. For Bookchin, deep ecology is a

symptom of social decay even more than it is one of its causes. Bookchin thinks that the Earth First movement is opposed to a “people first” movement. Deep ecology, Bookchin believes, has been seduced by the wild side of mysticism and as such it needs to return to a period of coldness, of “analytic sobriety”. In noting Devall and Sessions two ultimate norms for “true” deep ecological thinking (self-realisation and biocentric equality), Bookchin notes the sense of intuition as unreasoned reflection, not as self-evident truths but a “sense” or feeling.

Devall and Sessions maintain that the norms are beyond the reach of critical analysis and beyond reasoned argument and it is here that Bookchin mounts his diatribe. From where are they derivable? Bookchin defends the methodology of science as essential for “experiential proof”. Bookchin stands opposed to “divinations spun out by mystical gurus without or without Ph.D.s’.

Devall and Sessions retort that such intuitions cannot be challenged given that scientific methodology is too narrow. Self-realisation is a shedding of the narrow “modern Western self” which Devall and Sessions claim is isolated, hedonistic, and materially egoistic. Self-realisation is a process of self-effacement, effacement of the self in the Self (as totality). The human self (the traditional rational autonomous self) thus loses its hard won identity, its uniqueness, because it merges with the whole.

Bookchin’s objection to this form of reasoning is that the inscription of the “self” onto inorganic phenomena is in fact an anthropomorphic gesture. On this account the “Self” is construed as a human imperialising self. Devall and Session desire the transformation of an isolated self into an interrelated self-in-Self. But Devall and Session imputes an anthropomorphism inadvertently into nature. The earth is endowed with “wisdom”, wilderness equates with “freedom”, and life forms are said to emit “moral” qualities.

The desire for a biocentric democracy is questioned by Bookchin by the following argument: if humans are nothing but “plain citizens” in the ecosphere then humans may do as they please in fulfilling their (we could say primitive, natural) anthropocentric desires and natures. He would say what else could we do. In such a scenario we should be exclusively occupied with our own brute survival, comfort and safety since nature seems to exhibit the ingrained values of self-preservation and protection of one’s own. If man becomes a mere part of nature based on an egalitarian principle with every other species, then man’s actions are morally neutral. But what is (morally or ecologically?) wrong with extinguishing whole species in the interests of human survival?

## **Heidegger and Anti-Humanism**

Another significant attack upon the humanist tradition is located in Heidegger’s *Letter on Humanism*. Heidegger responds to Sartre’s *Existentialism is a Humanism* with a distinct anti-humanist accent.

An interesting perspective to address the reception of Sartre’s *Existentialism* by Heidegger is from the thought of Lacoue-Labarthe. The Heidegger of the 1930s, according to Lacoue-Labarthe, still operated within a metaphysical tradition. Humanism, from this point of view, is grounded in a metaphysics which emerges with Plato and ends (prematurely) with Nietzsche. Thus, the Dasein in Being and Time cannot fully decentre the traditional subject of philosophy for it is still entrenched within an anthropocentric tradition.



Heidegger's notorious Nazi affiliation is thus a consequence of retaining a trace of metaphysical humanism. Heidegger's Nazism is ironically a humanism of sorts: hence Lacoue-Labarthe's pronouncement that "Nazism is a Humanism".

The elimination of humanism from Heidegger's thought occurs by a rethinking of thinking itself (the praxis of poetising) after 1935 witnessed in the *Letter on Humanism*. Humanism leads to Nazism due to an excess of metaphysical philosophy. From this perspective "reason" for a French Heideggerian like Lacoue-Labarthe, retains a residue of nihilistic onto-theology and productivist metaphysics. What is implicit is the definition of humanism as a celebration of abstract "Man" as a self-conscious autonomous, self-legislating being.

The *Letter on Humanism* thus makes a plea not for the construction of yet another system of anthropocentric ethics but for a new ethos, a new way of dwelling. The critique of Sartre takes a similar form to that of Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche which questions the centripetal concept of value and its relationship to the Will to Power.

What Heidegger is trying to stress is that if we centralise the concept of value we run the risk of becoming oblivious to the meaning of Being. By making the distinction between thinking which is more sensitive to Being and philosophy which is homesick (for it has lost its way toward Being), Heidegger is making the point that a more primordial relationship towards Being must be sought. For Heidegger, ek-sistence is proper to Dasein (being-there). Human reality's ek-static existence which "stands out" in the truth of Being distinguishes human reality from other living creatures. To use Heidegger's words: In any case living creatures are as they are without standing outside their Being as such and within the truth of Being, preserving in such standing the essential nature of their Being.

Heidegger thinks that humans do not think their "essence" if they see themselves as animale rationale or as a spiritually-endowed being. The humanitas of human beings baulks at the true dignity of man which is not to assume lordship over Being but to shepherd Being in a more primordial and less technologically arrogant non-dominating relationship. To drive the point home thoroughly we need to read Heidegger as questioning the role of evaluation itself. Sartre is situated within a paradigm of value-positing connected to the Will to Power as domination. Heidegger says it better: Here as elsewhere thinking in values is the greatest blasphemy imaginable against Being.

Lest we revel in the animus to irrationality and mysticism we can sympathise with the general thrust of Bookchin's reception of Heidegger's soil science if we put into brackets the element of diatribe that inheres in Bookchin's prose. While bearing in mind the need to keep in check (Nietzsche would call him a rabid "anarchist dog" full of resentment and loathing) Bookchin's virulent and ungenerous reading of Heidegger's thought, it must be admitted that he does locate the parts in Heidegger's oeuvre which border on the quasi-mystical and the apocalyptic.

The question arises: if we become Heideggerian are we then forced to dispense with the achievements hard won in overcoming mysticism, superstition, and dogmatism during the Renaissance and the eighteenth century? Are we forced to return to a pre-conscious way of life in the vain hope of capturing a more profound and less ruthless relationship with Being or more concretely with voelkish culture? Are our choices between a postmodern nihilism or a reactionary belief in parochialism? Should we reject the concept of humanism altogether? And if we do what new concepts will be thought and what consequences will they have?

## Systematising the Fragments

In order to shed light on the possibility of a PS ecopolitics, the ramifications of the May-June events of 1968 that precipitated new directions for French philosophy will now be addressed. Baudrillard, Virilio, Deleuze and Guattari, Irigaray and others are thinkers which produced and are still producing “commanding changes” in the way we think about the world.

Verena Conley points out that poststructuralism is concerned with the construction of ecological subjectivities that are machined by differential processes. Levi-Strauss is evinced as a thinker who initiated to a degree the displacement of Cartesian metaphysics and Sartrean (humanist) existentialism which both emphasised the ontological priority of consciousness. Conley maintains that the shift to a structural logic encouraged the growth of ecological awareness. In attempting to decentre the universal (masculine) subject the rigid distinction between nature and culture is itself subject to critique. What is under the microscope of analysis is the abstract essentialising of “man” and “nature”. Conley elicits Guattari’s concept of mental ecology to demonstrate that the ecological awareness initiated by *la pensee 68* called for cultural as well as biological diversity. Poststructuralism’s illumination of processes of “difference” draws upon the human and “hard” sciences in order to demonstrate that such processes inhere within organic and inorganic realms. Deleuze and Guattari and Bookchin all share an interest in the findings of Prigogine and Stengers and seek to integrate Prigogine and Stengers into their work. Prigogine and Stengers’s thesis that nature is an open (chaotic) system is employed by Conley to show that a new empathetic alliance with nature is required.

Following on from the insights of Conley, it is instructive to view a PS ecopolitics as not simply delimited to a narrow research paradigm. A PS ecopolitics is inter-disciplinary or more anarchically trans-disciplinary. The seeds of rhizomatic thought sown by Deleuze and Guattari ought to be harvested by an anarchist tradition that has always been rooted to green politics. By redeploying the concepts of horizontality, deterritorialisation, lines of flight, machinic assemblages and desiring-machines as well as the concepts borrowed from chaos and complexity theory such as bifurcation, threshold, and disequilibrium, a PS eco-anarchism can develop a fruitful philosophy of nature and society. In a sense the ecosystem itself can be perceived as an assemblage.

The ecosystem, on this account, is an assemblage which rhizomatically connects a multiplicity of organisms in terms flows of matter and energy understood within a machinic paradigm of evolution. Furthermore, the body (partial organs such as the mouth, an eating machine ), the local ecosystem (the river), and the biosphere (a machinic Gaia) are coupled and connected together into one vast ecological machine. An experimental synthesis of Nietzsche’s *lebensphilosophie* and complex, overhuman. However, the transhuman(t) is not (necessarily) technologically optimistic (Extropian) nor necessarily Nietzschean in emphasis (*uebermensch*). Nietzsche’s idea of the transhuman *uebermensch* is itself a thought-experiment which calls for a radical rethinking of the human, all-too-human.

The question is whether a rootless wandering (the transhuman(t), which lacks an a priori human essence, the suppression assumption of power and a teleology of history), can sustain sustainable development without recourse to ecological practices which are deleterious to the environment? The point is recognised by Deleuze and Guattari regarding the problematic of deterritorialisation. There is always a danger that things will turn out badly in the end when one becomes-nomadological. The line of flight that experiments secretes its own sense of “strange despair”, “like an odor of death and immolation”. Furthermore, it is contestable that a whole-

sale rejection of the concepts of history, civilisation and progress will make anything really better. Chaos-centred, nonteleological (genealogical) histories are by their very nature open ended. Therefore, one may continue to think in-between humanism and anti-humanism, social and deep ecology, the dialectic and the different in a period of convalescence which is always preparing for a time of new health. The equivocation of reason may yet be an integral part of the Enlightenment project.

Yet, our eyes ought not to look askance or be averted from the plight of the planet by a runaway machine which seems to seduce “postmodern” technophiles into sacrificing human. all-too-human values at the altar of technological utopia. We shall let Bookchin have the last words: The continuing substitution of rationalism for reason, of scientism for science, and for technics for ethics threatens to remove the very sense of the problems that exist, not to speak of our ability to resolve them. A look at technics reveals that the car is racing at an increasing pace, with nobody in the driver’s seat. Accordingly, commitment and insight have never been more needed than they are today.

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