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Breaking Down the Battle Lines:

A Reconstruction of Deep Ecology and Social Ecology

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Breaking Down the Battle Lines: A Reconstruction of Deep Ecology and Social Ecology" submitted by Michelle Honkanen in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is a comparative analysis of deep ecology and social ecology, which are two branches within the broader field of environmental thought. I argue that neither gives full credence to the realities of our relationship with nature. Social ecology attempts to construct a subject position for nature in order to include it as an equal subject within the context of inter-human relationships. Deep ecology, in contrast, views nature as an entity that can be defined only in the absence of the social. I argue that our current systems of political representation, because they rely upon a world view that does not consider the possibility of a mutualistic or cooperative relationship with nature, are inadequate in enabling environmental interests to be met. I suggest means through which such a world view can be cultivated.

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We had grown so tall we thought we could afford to cut the roots that held us down, only to discover that the tallest trees need the most elaborate roots of all.

Paul L. Wachtel

The debate between deep ecology and social ecology is well documented. The deep ecology approach, having been pioneered in the 70s, was for many years (and occasionally is) commonly thought to encompass the entire radical ecology movement. In this view, deep ecology is contrasted with "shallow" ecology, so- named because it does not share deep ecology's commitment to alter underlying value systems, our relationship to the natural environment and prevailing patterns of production and consumption. According to Steve Chase (1990, 8), it was a matter of some controversy when Murray Bookchin, previously considered to be in firm alliance with the deep ecology movement, publically denounced deep ecology - perhaps because of its association with the radical movement Earth First! - as being "deeply flawed and potentially dangerous." As Chase writes, this event marked the emergence of a significant cleavage within the radical ecology movement. Deep ecology lost its genericism and became better known as a particular set of ideas within the radical ecology movement, itself. Bookchin's ideas, classified under the rubric "social ecology," were posited in contrast to this more narrow understanding of deep ecology.

According to Chase, the cleavage within the radical ecology movement is representative of a longstanding debate within the environmental movement, broadly understood, a debate that can be dated as far back as the 1800s, focusing upon the question of the human place within nature. Roderick Nash (1982, 379-388), himself a deep ecologist, identifies two contrasting "visions" which inform the debate - the "wilderness" vision (the deep ecology perspective) and the "garden" vision (the social ecology perspective). Although this dichotomy is somewhat unflattering to the social ecology perspective, it does draw attention to the primary distinction between these views, which centres around the desirability of preserving wild nature - even the actual existence of such untrammelled wilderness. Social ecology theorists, because their primary focus is upon the re-creation of the human community along lines of greater sustainability with the surrounding environment, are considered insensitive to the needs of the remainder of beings within the ecosphere. Chase contends that such theorists do not address the question of wilderness areas - they do not enable the preservation of tracts of the earth from human encroachment, nor do they address the environmental crisis from beyond a human perspective (1990, 14).

"Wilderness" theorists, in contrast, profess a "radical wilderness commitment," which encompasses a "sweeping vision for preserving wilderness ... containing and rolling back an environmentally destructive industrial civilization" (Chase 1990, 18). This vision - a radically nonanthropocentric (non-human centred) view - draws strength from the principles of the deep ecology movement, which argue that the value of non-human life forms is "intrinsic," or inherent independently of the value of these beings to humans. Social ecologists are critical principally of the potential, or perhaps the tendency, within deep ecology to stretch the wilderness vision to anti-human, or misanthropic extremes. Whereas deep ecology does make provisions for the fostering of bioregionally embedded human communities, and in particular for the development of healthy human-environment relationships, these goals tend to carry a secondary priority to their work in preserving wilderness areas and in propounding an anti-anthropocentric ethic (Chase 1990,18-19).

The thesis that follows attempts to examine the deep ecology/social ecology debate from a different angle. That is, rather than further indulging the dichotomy between deep ecology and social ecology, it explores the commonalities between these theories of radical ecology. Specifically, it casts doubt on the potential of *either* approach in attaining a goal that they share: the consideration and representation of environmental goods within the context of human society. It is argued that neither deep ecology nor social ecology escapes from the imperative within scientism, and hence modern representative politics, to classify and thereby to establish an identity for nature that is tenable within the context of human society. Rather, both fail to recognize the unique dualism that characterizes our relationship with the natural environment - it is both "wild otherness" and at the same time the basis of our existence. Thus, nature (as a whole) defies subjectification, and must be understood from an altogether alternative perspective.

The alternative perspective to which this thesis defers is drawn from the philosophical method of phenomenology. Phenomenology points us to a world view that is cooperative and integrative - that enables us to examine the world in terms of its interdependence and inter-relationships rather than through a classified and labelled partitioning of the beings within it. The phenomenological experience of the world induces us to protect nature as a result of an emotional bond that we forge with it, rather than attempting to force nature to fit into our current systems of representation. Ultimately, this perspective should enable us both to rediscover a place for humanity within the natural world and to reassess the wisdom of our current anthropocentrism.

The thesis begins, in chapters one and two, with an expository view of deep ecology and social ecology. The view of deep ecology solicited for this chapter is drawn primarily from the work of Arne Naess, supplemented principally from the work of Bill Devall, George Sessions, and Warwick Fox. Chapter one focuses upon Naess' derivational system, deep ecology platform, and ecosophy, concluding that the significance of deep ecology lies in its efforts to undermine our current value systems, and to enable our actions and decisions to fall in line with such a renewed set of values. Chapter two explores Bookchin's social ecology perspective through an examination of the three themes that are primary to his work: evolutionary dialectic, social hierarchy, and evolutionary stewardship. The chapter draws attention to Bookchin's steadfast faith in the human potential, and his theories that, though at times carrying human-centredness to uncomfortable extremes, compel us to take seriously the significance of humanity within the natural world.

In chapter three the thesis begins its deconstruction of the deep ecology perspective. This chapter argues that deep ecology, despite its professed aim of engendering greater harmony between humans and nature, ultimately fails in this goal. Rather, deep ecology fosters the increased alienation of humans from the natural world through downplaying or negating those characteristics that distinguish us as a species. Essentially, deep ecologists attempt to eliminate the dichotomy between humans and nature through eradicating those characteristics that forged the original cleavage. Moreover, deep ecologists attempt the representation of nature from the vantage point of a consequential "consciousness" of the interests and needs of nature - the view of "human *as* nature." While this approach merits some credit for its attempts to escape the anthropocentric bias that riddles social ecology, the natural world cannot ultimately be "known" as a singular entity, and hence its subject position cannot be constructed. Social ecology, sharing deep ecology's reliance upon subject representation, but ultimately failing to distinguish between nature and humanity, similarly falls short in its attempts to enable a proficient representation of nature.

If nature cannot effectively be represented within our current system of identity politics, then, how are we to enable the representation of environmental concerns within human constructs? Chapter four examines one possibility to this end, proposing that we dispense with the subject position - or, more accurately, the imposition of artificial constructs upon reality - altogether. It is argued that allowing ourselves to return to a "primordial" experience of reality will enable the development of a holistic, alternative world view. This world view shifts our focus principally toward the interrelationships between various beings and entities within the ecosphere, rather than in our current primary valuation of autonomous individuals within this system. In removing the false barriers between ourselves and nature, this approach has the potential to re-energize both our relationship with the natural world and our relations with one another.

CHAPTER ONE

As we and our land are part of one another, so all who are living as neighbors here, human and plant and animal, are part of one another, and so cannot possibly flourish alone.

\- Wendell Berry

Deep ecologists argue that the fundamental distinction between deep ecology and other approaches to the environmental crisis is a willingness to examine the norms and values that underlie our collective thought and actions. In this way, these writers often include *all* ecophilosophical approaches - such as ecofeminism and social ecology - within the rubric of deep ecology. However, as Eckersley notes, deep ecology is most accurately a distinctive approach within a broader framework of ecological perspectives (1992, 27). It is true, nonetheless, that deep ecologists not only strive to delve more "deeply" into the roots of environmental problems, but also demand that changes be made on this deeper level (Naess 1995a, 211). Hence, most supporters of deep ecology agree that the long-term protection of environmental integrity requires a fundamental realignment of our economic, social, political and ideological systems.

To this end, deep ecology is able to offer a comprehensive world view comprised of "intuitions" about the character of our relationship with the natural world (Devall and Sessions 1985, 65). In most cases, these intuitions are drawn from the systemic perspective offered by the science of ecology.[1] Among the central tenets of deep ecology, for example, is the view that all life is interconnected and interrelated (Drengson 1980, 232). In consideration of this, deep ecologists argue that a fundamental part of our identity is derived from our context within the natural world. Moreover, they posit, we cannot adequately realize ourselves in the absence of some amount of immersion within this "manifold," which enables us to find our bearings as members of the planetary community (Devall 1988b, 11).

Deep ecology, then, suggests a way of looking at and experiencing the world; it is a holistic ontological framework (Rothenberg 1989, 2). Deep ecologists strive to develop this holistic perspective within the context of the natural environment. The resulting world view is known as *ecological consciousness* - an awareness that in "the actuality of rocks, wolves, trees, and rivers ... there is no bifurcation in reality between the human and the non-human realms" (Devall and Sessions 1985, 8; Fox quoted in Devall and Sessions 1985, 66).

The "real work" of deep ecology lies in the independent cultivation of ecological consciousness - a multifaceted and highly personal venture. It involves taking responsibility for our actions and beginning to live our lives deliberately, carefully, and from a basis of clearly articulated principles (Devall and Sessions 1985, 8). Moreover, ecological consciousness is best nurtured from a so-called "feminine" approach; "it is learning how to be more receptive, trusting, holistic in perception"

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[1]. There is a good deal of literature that both supports and criticizes the usage of ecology in theoretical pursuits such as ecophilosophy ("ecologism"). See, for example, Evernden 1978, 1985; Eckersley 1992, 156-157; Naess 1989, 39-40 and Dobson 1995, 24-29 provide a comprehensive analysis of the issue.

(Devall and Sessions 1985, 8). Deep ecology, write Devall and Sessions, is "the search for a more objective consciousness and state of being through an active deep questioning and meditative process and way of life" (1985, 66).

These approaches lend themselves to the realization of the "organic self" - shifting into the "natural rhythms and the flow of time and place" that form an essential element of spiritual growth (Devall and Sessions 1985, 68). Through realizing our organic selves we are able to slip into our "place" within the earth's ecosystem, to engage in both the grounding of being-in-the world and an identification with all other entities within the system (Devall 1988b, 41-42, 52).

Arne Naess' Deep Ecology

The comprehensive nature of the deep-ecological approach, briefly sketched above, indicates a consensus of sorts among the collective of persons who nourish ecological consciousness - the deep-ecological movement. This is partially due to the fact that Arne Naess, widely considered the "father" of deep ecology, holds a position of some authority within deep ecological circles. Having conceived of the term "deep ecology," his extensive scholarship also has provided substantial conceptual clarity to the deep ecological movement. The majority of Naess' work has consisted in the formulation of a complex philosophical matrix within that deep ecology can be couched. Despite the fact that his conceptualization draws heavily upon the deep ecological tenet of diversity, however, surprisingly it has not been fractionalizing. This is due in part to the fact that Naess also developed (with George Sessions) an 8-point platform to guide the ordinary member of the deep ecology movement, a platform that has substantially consolidated the movement (Rothenberg 1989, 4-5).

Deep ecology, according to Naess, can be illustrated as a derivational system pyramidal in shape. The deepest level of the pyramid is Level I, at which is found the normative and philosophical systems that inform deep ecological action. Level I represents the "ultimate" premises of our thinking - those premises which cannot be proven or disproven, but from which all of our action is derived (Naess 1993, 205-206). For example, "all beings should strive for self-realization" is a Level I norm.

The 8-point platform, at Level II, consists of principles that can be derived from the various philosophical systems at Level I. For example, at Level II can be found the principle, "humans should attempt to minimize their impact upon the natural environment." Naess argues that *all* supporters of deep ecology will agree on the principles at Level II, regardless of their normative premises. Level III is derived from the principles at Level II, and consists of practical policies and lifestyle considerations that are to be undertaken in light of these principles (Fox 1990, 100). For example, at Level III are found environmental policies such as organic farming and recycling. Finally, Level IV consists of practical steps which are to be taken in concrete situations as they present themselves. An example of a Level IV formulation is "I should ride my bike to work today."

Table 1

The Deep Ecology Platform

(1) The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
(2) Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
(3) Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
(4) The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantially smaller human population. The flourishing of non-human life *requires* a smaller human population.
(5) Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
(6) Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
(7) The ideological change will be mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between bigness and greatness.
(8) Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.

Source: Arne Naess, "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects." In *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, ed. Michael Zimmerman (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993).

The "popular" understanding of deep ecology stems from the platform developed by Naess and Sessions in 1984, outlined in Table 1 (Naess 1993, 197). This platform is an articulation of basic principles that "the great majority of supporters accept, implicitly or explicitly, at a high level of generality" (Naess 1993, 197). The first of these principles is that "the well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life have value in themselves" regardless of the usefulness of these organisms to human beings (Naess 1993, 197). The term "life" is quite broadly applied in this context, and includes individual organisms as well as species, and their habitat ranging from rivers to the ecosphere, broadly understood. Second, the flourishing of life forms is contingent, in part, upon the level of diversity and richness within the ecosphere. Hence, the third principle of the deep ecology platform is that humans may reduce this richness and diversity only in the satisfaction of their vital needs.

The fourth and most controversial principle of the deep ecology platform is that the "flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with ... [and] the flourishing of non-human life *requires* a smaller human population" (Naess 1993, 197). Most deep ecologists contend that this principle is not misanthropic, arguing that it is merely a call to increase the dissemination of birth control (Devall 1989, 49-50).[2] The debate, however, is far from resolved.[3] Nevertheless, there is, at the least, some validity in the deep ecologists' contention that excessive human population reduces the overall diversity of non-human life, which is in contravention of the first principle of deep ecology. Humans presently interfere immoderately with the natural world, they argue, and policies should be formulated to address this fact.

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2. Dave Foreman and other members of the more radical branch of the deep ecology movement, *Earth First!*, instigated the imagery of deep ecologists as misanthropes, with statements lauding starvation in Ethiopia and the work of the AIDS virus in population reduction.

3. See for example, the article by Tokar (1988) and responses by Devall, Kaulbars and McCormick, and a rebuttal by Tokar (1989); also Skolimowski (1987) and a response by Fox (1987).

The fifth and sixth principles of the platform, respectively, speak to deep ecology's willingness to question societal economic, political and ideological foundations. They seek to promote ideological change, as a seventh principle, toward a greater appreciation of "life quality." Finally, the means toward such societal change is delineated in the eighth principle of the deep ecology platform, which states that "those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes" (Naess 1993, 197).

The platform of deep ecology, then, is a concrete expression of the principles of the movement, and serves as a fieldguide for the deep ecologist. Despite this, in Naess' view, the platform represents merely the convergence of a variety of philosophic paths; it is meant to serve as a "resting point for agreement" within the movement (Rothenberg 1989, 4). As a result, Naess' work is centred primarily upon *ecosophy*, a term coined by him to mean "one's personal code of values and a view of the world that guides one's own decisions ... [w]hen applied to questions involving ourselves and nature" (Naess 1989, 36). A good deal of Naess' work, in other words, consists in the elaboration of Ecosophy T,[4] his personal ecosophy. Despite the fact that Ecosophy T is Naess' personal philosophical position, however, many, if not most deep ecologists accept and have assimilated Ecosophy T into their views.

According to Naess, ecosophy consists in "chains of reasoning" that ultimately lead to the 8-point platform delineated above. Ecosophy is

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[4]. The "T" is essentially arbitrary. It stands for *Tvergastein*, the name of Naess' hut in the mountains.

Table 2

Arne Naess' Ecosophy T

N1:	Self-realisation!
H1:	The higher the Self-realisation attained by anyone, the broader and deeper the identification with others.
H2:	The higher the level of Self-realisation attained by anyone, the more its further increase depends upon the Self-realisation of others.
H3:	Complete Self-realisation of anyone depends on that of all.
N2:	Self-realisation for all living beings!
H4:	Diversity of life increases Self-realisation potentials.
N3:	Diversity of life!
H5:	Complexity of life increases Self-realisation potentials.
N4:	Complexity!
H6:	Life resources of the Earth are limited.
H7:	Symbiosis maximises Self-realisation potentials under conditions of limited resources.
N5:	Symbiosis!

Source: Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, trans. and ed. David Rothenberg (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 197-199.

composed of "ultimate premises" that are derived from religious or philosophical systems, such as Buddhism and Spinozism. This level of deep ecology, which provides the rationalization for deep ecological action, consists of normative statements, and hypotheses that are derived from these norms (Naess 1989, 42). Within ecosophy, the most vaguely defined norms are gradually clarified through a system, precisation, that enables a more precise meaning of the term to emerge. A portion of Naess' ecosophy, Ecosophy T, is outlined in Table 2. The norms and hypotheses are labelled "N" and "H" respectively, and are placed in the order of increased precisation.

At the apex of Naess' ecosophy is the norm, Self-realization. Naess capitalizes this term in order to differentiate his definition of "self" from the typically understood narrow and egoical notion of self. Here, Naess is referring to the *ecological self*, a definition that comprises our context within Nature, and which speaks to an uncelebrated richness of self beyond our relationships within the human community. The ecological notion of self lends itself to broadened identification with other elements of our natural context. That is, we can "see ourselves" - for example, in the commonality of being alive - in other beings and as such empathize with and feel compassion for them (Naess 1987, 35).

According to Naess, from this process of identification stems a type of "unity." That is, the deepened ecological self will feel a sense of solidarity with other life forms, and ultimately will be unable to distinguish its interests from those of other natural beings (Naess 1989, 172). We feel ourselves to be a *part* of the manifold of life. Hence, ecosophical maturity entails the realization that our best interests are served in conservation, which ultimately is the preservation of a part of *ourselves*. The deep ecological "unity" of self and other has what Naess refers to as a *gestalt* character. A gestalt, simply, is an understanding of something as a *whole*; a gestalt comprehends the forest as a whole as opposed to its individual trees. Gestalts, according to Naess, "bind the I and the not-I together in a whole. Joy becomes not *my* joy, but something *joyful* of which the I and something else are interdependent, non-isolatable fragments" (1989, 60-61). Moreover, Naess writes, our spontaneous comprehension of reality is in gestalts, which cross "boundaries between what is conventionally classed as thinking as separated from emotion" (1995b, 244; 1989, 63).

Naess' gestalt framework suggests a way of being in the world that promotes the cultivation of self-realization. He writes that it is through participating in reality as unity, by identifying with a whole greater than ourselves and sensing ourselves to have an integral connection with all life, that we self-realize. In this sense, our self-realization is hindered if the self-realization of those with whom we identify is somehow hampered. Self-realization, literally being the realization of our potentialities, in this context "implies broadening and deepening of self" (Naess 1987, 35). Self-realization promotes, to employ Kantian terminology, "beautiful actions" - benevolence as a result of inclination, not ethics or morals (Naess 1989, 85). As Naess writes, "through the wider Self every living being is connected intimately, and from this intimacy follows the capacity of *identification* and as a natural consequences, the practice of non-violence. No moralizing is needed, just as we need not morals to make us breathe" (1987, 39).

Self-realization, then, is Naess' ultimate norm, and the basis of his philosophical system. A second glance at Table 2 reveals that Naess extends this norm to all living beings. He explains that "the self realization we experience when we identify with the universe is heightened by an increase in the number of ways in which individuals, societies, and even species and life forms realize themselves" (Bodian 1995, 29). Thus, he argues, the mature or expanded self will not prevent the blossoming of other beings without sufficient reason. Naess' norm, "biospherical egalitarianism - in principle" is derived from this concept. The principle, he argues, is built upon the intuition that "the right to live is one and the same for all individuals, whatever the species" (Naess 1995c, 222).[5]

From the same logic, and derived from the norm of Self-realization, are three of Naess' central norms: diversity!, complexity!, and symbiosis!. Naess posits, first, that a maximal *overall* level of self-realization is attained if there is an increase in the number of self-realization "potentialities" that are fulfilled. In Naess' view, diversity is a necessary condition in order for this to occur, and complexity generally accompanies diversity (1989, 201-202). Symbiosis, Naess argues, is necessary in order to balance these two factors. Hence, it is evident that the three norms of diversity!, complexity! and symbiosis! are precisations of Naess' central norm, Self-realization! Naess' entire Ecosophy T follows a similar pattern. Moreover, these norms ultimately lead to the second-level principles outlined above, and to the practical guidelines for action that follow from them.

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[5]. Naess qualifies this statement at many points in his writings. He acknowledges the fundamental need to kill in order to live, and further admits that we have a deeper obligation to those with whom there is a "felt nearness." Naess argues that the principle is intended merely to suggest "a guideline of limited killing, and more generally limiting obstruction of the unfolding of potentialities in others" (1989, 167). Naess bemoans the common misinterpretation of the term "biospherical egalitarianism" as suggestive of some sort of an eco-doctrine. He states that this phrase is merely a principle, whose strength lies in its "capacity to counteract, perhaps only momentarily, the self-congratulatory and lordly attitude towards those beings which may seem, to some people, to be less developed, less complex, less beautiful, less miraculous" (Naess 1995c, 223).

Transpersonal Ecology

Naess' work falls within the bounds of a relatively new field of deep ecology known as transpersonal ecology. Built upon the premises of transpersonal psychology,[6] transpersonal ecology explores the psychological connection that exists between human behaviour and the awareness of our embeddedness within the surrounding context (Fox 1990, 246-247). The term "transpersonal" refers to "a sense of self that extends beyond one's egoic, biographic, or personal sense of self" (Abraham Maslow, quoted in Fox 1990, 198). Like Naess, transpersonal ecologists argue that this broadened conception of self will induce greater benevolence vis-à-vis that which is included within the definition of self (Fox 1990, 217). The issuance of moral injunctions, it is argued, is a superfluous approach toward environmental protection. Transpersonal ecologists are inclined to encourage, instead, the experience of self "as intimately bound up with the [surrounding] world, bound up to such an extent that it becomes more or less impossible to *refrain* from wider identification" (Fox 1990, 244-245).

In line with Naess' thought, transpersonal ecologists posit that the realization of the widened self is attained through identification. To this end, Fox distinguishes three varieties of identification. Personal identification, first, involves the experience of commonality with entities with whom we have personal contact. We identify, for example, with ourselves in a personal way, as we do with our family, our pets, and

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[6]. Warwick Fox provides an excellent overview of transpersonal psychology in Appendix B of his work *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology* (1990, 290-299).

our country. Personal identification, with the exception of the first variety, is transpersonal in that it involves moving beyond the interests of one's egoic self. The second and third varieties, however, are truly *trans*personal in the sense that they are not a function of one's personal relationships (Fox 1990, 250). Ontologically-based identification, for example, is the experience of unity with "all that *is*," and is based upon an engendered sense of awe that things *are*, that "there is something rather than nothing," Fox writes (1990, 251).

Cosmologically-based identification is also the "experience of commonality with all that *is*." However, this experience is based in a specific cosmology which views all of reality as "unity in process" - "a single, unfolding process" (Fox 1990, 252). Cosmologically-based identification invites the subject to view itself as a single aspect within this unified reality. Fox writes that this form of identification "means having a lived sense of an overall scheme of things such that one comes to feel a commonality with all other entities ... in much the same way as, for example, leaves on the same tree would feel a sense of commonality with each and every other leaf if [they knew that] that they all belonged to the same tree" (1990, 257-258).

Transpersonal ecologists advocate primarily the latter two forms of identification, arguing that these should provide the context for personally-based identification. In this way, they argue, the potentially negative ramifications of egoic identification - such as greed, war, and exploitation - can be circumvented (Fox 1990, 266-267). Naess, whose work incorporates both personal and cosmologically-based identification, would agree with this basic tenet.

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Deep ecology claims to distinguish itself as the only approach in environmentalism to address the inequity of the current power relationship between humans and the earth. It does so through nourishing an *eco*centric perspective - one which considers the interests of the non-human world as meritous of standing, or "rights," within the human moral community. Thus, deep ecologists call for what Fox calls a "decentering of humankind" - greater humility on the part of humans in their approach to and interventions within the natural world (Eckersley 1992, 28; Manes 1990, 140-142). What is compelling about this approach is that, while eminently theoretical, it stubbornly adheres to the search for practical means of implementation. Writes Devall, for example, "Deep ecology is not a sect or an ideology. More than anything, it is a process of returning to our roots, which is the real meaning of `radical ecology'" (1988a, 56).

Naess' work is truly representative of the deep ecological attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Writes Glasser, Naess' deep ecology "focuses upon eliminating the perception of fundamental human/environment and spiritual/physical cleavages. It weaves descriptive and prescriptive premises into a normative framework for melding a value system with a world view" (1995, 140). The significance of deep ecology, thus, lies in its efforts to engender greater consonance between our decision-making and our value systems (Glasser 1995, 141).

CHAPTER TWO

Our reentry into natural evolution is no less a humanization of nature than a naturalization of humanity.

- Murray Bookchin

Deep ecology often has been compared and contrasted with another prominent environmental theory, social ecology. Social ecology, the conception of the well-known theorist, Murray Bookchin, also focuses upon the practical implementation of theory. However, as might be deduced from its namesake, social ecology concentrates primarily upon the alteration of societal structures and institutions as opposed to examining the role that individuals can play in implementing an alternative world view. It is interesting to note that the dialectic between deep and social ecology parallels the ideological tension between "right" and "left" in contemporary political debate. That is, if the difference between right and left is understood to lie in their respective focuses as to the rights and responsibilities of the individual and those of society, deep ecology would certainly parallel the contemporary right wing, and social ecology the left.

A closer examination of social ecology reveals the source of its rancour with deep ecology. Far from emulating deep ecology's attempts to integrate human beings within the matrix of wild nature, social ecology carries a distinct anthropocentric bias, encouraging humans to fulfil their true nature as the consummation of evolutionary processes. Despite this, Bookchin's work does, unlike deep ecology, make an attempt to deal with the fact that humans, as a species, are fundamentally *different* from other living beings - if only by the fact that we are in the process of systematically destroying the natural context which enables us to live. The primary value of Bookchin's work lies in its positive view of the human capacity, encouraging us in the fulfilment of our potential.

Bookchin's Evolutionary Dialectic

Bookchin's social ecology provides a compelling interpretation of the role of humans within the matrix of the ecosphere. He envisions the natural world as consisting of an evolutionary process wherein all life forms are characterized by *subjectivity* - a "*striving* activity ... that ultimately yields mind, will, and the capacity for freedom" (1987, 29). This evolutionary process is dialectical, involving the movement from homogeneity to increased differentia, and consists in the actualization of latent potentialities. The dialectic is comparable to the process of education in the sense that the matured "whole" embodies its many intermediary phases (1987, 24-25).

According to Bookchin, evolution is participatory - an active process undertaken by all life forms as an inherent part of their being. Further, Bookchin argues, as life forms become more complex, and as their social matrices conjointly mature, their evolutionary potentialities increase (1986, 31). Modern humans emerged from within this evolutionary process, and hence belong in the ecologic continuum. Humans, according to Bookchin, are "a product of a significant evolutionary trend toward intellectuality, self-awareness, will, intentionality, and expressiveness"

(1993, 367). We are the culmination of our evolutionary past, which includes the development of complex neurological systems, and the formation of ecocommunities (Bookchin 1986, 32).

Central to Bookchin's thesis, then, is the notion that humans beings are immersed within and rooted in biologic nature, or *first nature*, as he calls it. Moreover, Bookchin contends that humans have created a uniquely human, "social nature," or *second nature*, of their own. Second nature, simply, is the way in which humans inhabit the world (Bookchin 1993, 360). "Far from being `unnatural,'" Bookchin continues, "second nature is eminently a creation of organic evolution's first nature" (1993, 358). Humanity's advanced neurological and sensory development represent the realization of our evolutionary process within first nature. Thus, second nature - the social matrices which have formed as a result of these advanced capabilities - are also culminations of our evolutionary continuum.

The fact that human beings have an impact upon nature, Bookchin argues, is not only natural, but "is a product of first nature's own inherent evolutionary process" (1987, 32). Moreover, he argues, human rationality represents the actualization of this natural continuum of development. We have the potential, then, to create societies which enable first nature to be "rendered self-reflexive, a thinking nature that knows itself and that can guide its own evolution" (Bookchin 1987, 35-36). In other words, due to our advanced neurological capacities, humans have a responsibility to enable, and even to enhance nature's evolutionary process (Bookchin 1986, 34).

Bookchin notes, nevertheless, that humanity has not thus far lived up to the ideal that he sets out. It can hardly be argued that our currently denigrative attitude toward the natural world represents the ultimate fulfilment of the nature's potential. Rather, it is a trite observation that humans have effected the most destructive attack on the natural world that it has ever witnessed. Bookchin resolves this incongruity by noting that the problem does not lie in human social development, *per se*, but rather in the fact that the direction of this development has been dissolute. He writes, "far from marking the fulfilment of human potentialities, [second nature] is riddled by contradictions, antagonisms, and conflicting interests that have distorted humanity's unique capacities for development" (1993, 361).

Bookchin's Social Hierarchy Thesis

Where, then, did we go wrong? Bookchin's answer to this question is complex. He is, however, resolute in the contention that our ecological problems are derived from social structures and institutions that do not enable the realization of the full human potential. It is in his work *The Ecology of Freedom* that Bookchin elucidates the thesis that our modern condition of human dominion over nature stems from social systems characterized by hierarchy and domination. Hierarchy, he argues, is not merely found within our economic and political systems, but rather is expressed also in "cultural, tradition, and psychological systems of obedience and command" (1991, 4). These systems of hierarchy provide "the conceptual apparatus of domination ... the repressive sensibility of command and obedience" (Eckersley 1992, 148), which we have carried into our relationship with external nature. Bookchin notes that in this process of self-induced alienation from our organic roots we have concocted a decidedly simplistic community that is merely a composite of ego-gratifying individuals (1991, 350). To this end, Bookchin uses the example of preliterate, organic society as a benchmark against which to assess our modern condition of alienation within our communities and from external nature.

Bookchin describes preliterate, organic society as consisting in a primal "unity between human and human, between humanity and nature" (1991, 80). In the preliterate world view, individual components are seen in terms of their interdependence within the greater whole. Relations within human communities, then, are governed by the needs of the collective. Central to Bookchin's thesis is the notion that, *as an expression of* this unity within the human community is a sense of communion with the natural world. He writes, the "organic community is conceived to be part of the balance of nature ... a truly ecological community or *ecocommunity* peculiar to its ecosystem, with an active sense of participation in the overall environment and cycles of nature" (1991, 46). The preliterate bond with the natural world, then, is an extension of the social ties within the human community, and, moreover, it is a similarly socialized relationship based upon ties of kinship.

According to Bookchin, the rise of hierarchical social relations can be directly linked to the "ascent to civilization" from our former preliterate state. The reasons for this so-called ascent are related to the development of more complex technology, which enabled greater material security and therefore yielded the creation of more complex political and economic structures such as the nation state and capitalism (Bookchin 1991, 63-64). However, Bookchin argues, the denigration of the egalitarian societal relations seen in preliterate societies was evident long before this juncture. He argues that the invariable consequence of social elaboration, or *ecological differentiation*, as he calls it, is the development of age- and sex-linked roles within the community. These roles, precursory to the development of hierarchies and social classes, "fracture" the primal unity of organic society (Bookchin 1991, 80).

Bookchin argues that hierarchical and class society was able to emerge as a result of the rending of pre-existing fractures within organic society - those originating in age-based or sex-based differences, for example.[1] The breakdown of organic society meant the dissolution of its matrix within nature which had provided social limitations. In the place of this matrix was substituted *epistemologies of rule* - "various ways of mentalizing the entire realm of experience along lines of command and obedience" (Bookchin 1991, 89). These new epistemologies fostered an "egoistic morality" among rulers, and a "psychic apparatus rooted in guilt and renunciation" among the ruled (Bookchin 1991, 89). In other words, the populace was psychologically equipped to accept the notion of

[1]. Bookchin argues that this often occurred through the manipulation of the institutions of primordial society. The animistic tradition of the preliterate peoples, for example, is based in a view of unity with the "other" which at the same time is cognizant of the individuality of the "other." This institution was manipulated through the abstraction of the individual "other" into a generalized "spirit." This generalization consequently enabled the objectification of the various elements in the external world; the particular could be subsumed to the general and hence cease to be of relevance (Bookchin 1991, 98-100).

domination long before the coercive power of the state was actually established.

The state emerged as an incarnation of the patriarch, effectively serving to maintain the epistemologies of rule among humans and of humans over nature. Moreover, the state developed an epistemology of its own as it rearranged social existence to coincide with the framework of the state (Bookchin 1991, 120, 127). Cumulatively, these factors resulted in stunted social development. Because the statist machinery enabled us to deny the natural matrix in which our lives are embedded, we "brutally destroy[ed] its organic attributes ...[replacing] the sinews that held community and personality together [with] an all-encompassing, coldly depersonalizing bureaucracy" (Bookchin 1991, 138). "With the hollowing out of the community," Bookchin writes, "we witness the concomitant hollowing out of personality itself ... the sinews that make for subjectivity, character, and self definition, are divested of form and meaning" (1991, 137). What emerges is "a new type of individual: a resourceful, comparatively self-sufficient, and self-reliant ego that could readily adapt itself to ... a society that was losing its human scale" (1991, 153). However, as a result of the dissolution of the community framework, this radical ego "acquires highly privatized, often neurotic traits that center around the problems of a new inwardness ... [it] must fall back on itself ... to find a sense of meaning in the universe" (1991, 157).

Bookchin is critical of the variant of "freedom" that emerges from the modern framework. He notes that preliterate societies, lacking any experience of the idea of domination, had no need to define a concept so intrinsic to their existence (Bookchin 1991, 140). Freedom, in the preliterate world, was "a freely given, unreflective form of social behaviour and distribution" (1991, 144), which, moreover, was constrained by the surrounding social and natural environments. In contrast, our modern definition of freedom is more closely linked to the contemporary notion of justice, which is a utilitarian calculus based upon the satisfaction of personal needs. This understanding of freedom is a derivative of the credo of radical individualism which emerged upon the dissolution of the community and natural matrices.

Bookchin writes that capitalism, in particular, was effective in subverting the preliterate ideal of freedom through its "economization" of life and enmeshing freedom with the economic system (1991, 217). As it facilitated the decline of the human community, as such, the capitalist system acquired an unprecedented level of influence and momentum to the extent that it ceased to be restricted by social or religious mores. Capitalist growth, writes Bookchin, "stems above all from harshly objective factors churned up by the expansion of the market itself, factors that are largely impervious to moral considerations and efforts at ethical persuasion" (1993, 367). Perhaps more dangerously, however, the development of technology was no longer constrained within the communal matrix which had ensured its organicism and adaptability and, hence, had subverted its latent exploitative power (Bookchin 1991, 259-260). Bookchin maintains that modern capitalism, with its handmaid instrumental technology, "is structurally immoral and hence impervious to any moral appeals"(1993, 368), and thus will necessarily have a deleterious ecological impact unless fundamentally altered.

Bookchin's Evolutionary Stewardship Thesis

Bookchin writes that an *ecology of freedom* "expresses the reconciliation of nature and human society in a new ecological sensibility ... a reharmonization of nature and humanity through a reharmonization of human and human" (1991, 11). At the heart of Bookchin's social ecology, then, is the idea that the solution to the ecologic crisis lies in a realignment of the hierarchical mentality within the human community. Epistemologies of rule, embodied in systems of hierarchy such as the state, "warp the creative powers of humanity [through placing humanity's ecological creativity] in the service of power and privilege" (Bookchin 1989, 72).

Humanity, it must be remembered, has, according to Bookchin, the potential to embody nature's creative process, to be the ultimate expression of its subjectivity. In Bookchin's view, humankind represents the actualization of nature's evolutionary trend toward greater self-consciousness, self-direction, and, ultimately, freedom (1989, 201). This unique position enables us to act in and to alter the natural world both as the "voice" and as a product of natural evolution (Bookchin 1989, 203). However, because these creative powers have been deformed through our systems of hierarchy and rule, nature as a whole has suffered. That is, the human capacity to intervene in natural evolution has meant its destruction instead of its enhancement.

Social ecology, writes Bookchin, seeks to engender an "ethics of complementarity in which humans must play a supportive role in perpetuating the integrity of the biosphere, as potentially, at least, the most conscious products of natural evolution" (1993, 369). In essence, this project is about re-integrating ourselves within first nature, and allowing our unique abilities as humans to influence nature as another dimension within it. Moreover, social ecology speaks to the regeneration of first nature, *itself*, as the inclusion of humans within its matrix "would add the dimension of freedom, reason and ethics to first nature and raise evolution to a level of self-reflexivity that has always been latent in the very emergence of the natural world" (1987, 36). Bookchin refers to this renewed relationship between first and second nature as a "radical integration" of the two which ultimately goes beyond the boundaries of each and forms a "creative, self-conscious, and therefore `free' nature" (1993, 370).

Bookchin's Ecological Society

An ecological society, writes Bookchin, is one wherein conflict no longer exists between first and second natures, such that hierarchy is eradicated, and a harmonious relationship is established between humanity and non-human nature (1990, 259). Bookchin proposes that the integration of first and second natures can occur through the development of social institutions which fall in line with this vision of "wholeness" in the relationship between humankind and nature. He draws his model, to this end, from ecology, which he argues "advances a broader conception of nature and of humanity's relationship with the natural world" (1980, 59). This model, which emphasizes the principles of unity-in-diversity, spontaneity, and complementarity, challenges us to apply these concepts within our modern social context. Nature, in short, provides us with a source of "objective ethics" from which we can derive a value system and around which we can design our future (Bookchin 1991, 274).

Bookchin's thesis requires that humanity develop a second nature which coincides with evolutionary principles in order that our connection with the natural world may once again be established and the epistemologies that support hierarchy can be eradicated. In other words, he expects the dissolution of hierarchial systems to occur through the creation, or rather the *re*creation of an effective social matrix that will enable a non-coercive means of intra-societal regulation. To this end, Bookchin looks to nature's example of decentralized communities that emphasize the principles of unity-in-diversity and local autonomy. He calls, then, for libertarian, participatory, political institutions that are *peopled* - "structured around direct, face-to-face protoplasmic relationships" (1991, 336). Moreover, Bookchin argues, such a framework ensures that communities work within the limitations imposed by their surrounding ecosphere, and, in securing an equilibrium with nature, aids in the maintenance of harmonious social relations (1989, 185-187).

Bookchin argues that an ecological society must confront the social problems engendered through hierarchical systems. He looks to the ecological models of interdependence, usufruct ("each according to their own needs") and complementarity in order to envision an ethic which includes the care and compassion for a "shared *humanitas* - the human community." Individuals, in Bookchin's model, will feel solidarity within and a sense of belonging to their community, or social group (1991, 265). Included within this social project is the re-personalization of our economic system, arresting modern capitalism from its "economization" of the totality life and (importantly) of our conception of freedom (Bookchin 1991, 217). Moreover, writes Bookchin, our modern version of industry and technology which has "ravaged" and "simplified" the human spirit, needs to be couched within and to reflect the organicism of our renewed social matrix (Bookchin 1991, 223, 314).

Bookchin's "revolutionary project" entails not merely the elimination of oppressive societal institutions, but also the removal of the chains that epistemologies of rule impose upon our psyche. The ethic which Bookchin expects to replace our current epistemology of coercive rule is a "quantitatively new" version of freedom described as a "free-flowing realm of ethics ... a *creative* realm in which the growth of mind and spirit is possible" (1991, 322-323). This freedom is built upon the human will, and a conception of the individual as autonomous, self-governing, and competent, *willing* to make rational decisions concerning him- or herself (Bookchin 1991, 323). Writes Bookchin, the formation of an effective body politic with a strong sense of citizenship aids in the re-empowerment of the individual and hence helps to loosen the grip of the submissive consciousness within hierarchical society.

Bookchin's model, then, seeks to realign human institutions along the model provided by ecology in order that humanity can renew its social, political, and economic institutions to reflect the congruity within nature and thereby recover its sense of place within the natural world. The ends that Bookchin seeks, however, are far more ambitious than these. He argues that ultimately, a realignment of human matrices along ecological lines will enable us to discover a symbiosis with nature wherein humanity will ally "itself with its natural environment in a *creatively reproductive form* [and] actually participate with nature in creating new levels of diversity and form that are part of a more heightened sense of humanness and naturalness" (1991, 277). Humankind will remain "incomplete" until such a symbiosis is achieved, Bookchin contends, wherein a new sphere will emerge which will constitute a realm of freedom, of "uninhibited volition and self-consciousness ... a complete state" (1991, 36). Only then, he writes, will we be able to "reenter natural evolution ... to recover our own fecundity in the world of life" (1991, 315).

CHAPTER THREE

The highest that we can attain is not Knowledge, but Sympathy with Intelligence ... [T]here are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy.

- Henry David Thoreau

At the heart of environmental theory is the question of what is the relationship between humans and nature. To this end, deep ecology, as an approach within environmental theory, seeks to cultivate an "ecological self" wherein the definition of *self* includes the complex "web of life" - the biosphere, within which our lives are enmeshed. Deep ecology, in other words, argues for the inherently "organic" place of humans within the natural world. Our *inability* to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature, it is argued, is a result of our failure to cultivate a sense of connection or "place" within the natural world. Social ecologists, for the most part, agree that humankind forms an integral part of nature. In contrast with deep ecology, however, social ecologists argue that an abatement of the ecological crisis can be had through the realignment of human social institutions and frameworks to enable a greater congruency between humankind and the natural world.

Despite the fact, however, that both deep ecology and social ecology agree that humans are a fundamental part of nature, and that we need to realign our human communities - whether individually or collectively - toward increased consonance with the natural world, deep ecology is accused of misanthropy while social ecology is charged with anthropocentrism. Certainly, and as Bookchin argues, the logical conclusions reached from the premises of deep ecology may be interpreted in a misanthropic light. The deep-ecological "radical ecological commitment" tends to focus upon the protection of large tracts of wilderness *from* human intervention, carrying the implication that the human presence upon earth is some kind of "disease" that nature must be protected against (Chase 1990, 18-20). This implication is made more explicit in the fourth principle of the deep ecology platform, which states that "the flourishing of ... non-human life requires a smaller human population" (Naess 1993, 197).

It may well be that the majority of criticism directed against deep ecology is more properly meant for the radical movement Earth First! which claims a philosophical association with deep ecology. Dave Foreman, the (very) unofficial spokesperson for the movement has argued, for example, that "It is time for a warrior society to rise up out of the Earth and throw itself in front of the juggernaut of destruction, to be antibodies against the human pox that is raging this precious beautiful planet" (Quoted in Kanes 1990, 84). The Earth First! journal, moreover, is riddled with similarly misanthropic sentiments, having printed articles lauding AIDS and famine as nature's defence against the human blight to the planet (Tokar 1988, 33-34). The blatantly racist[1] and even genocidal conclusions that can be drawn from such statements, while drawing attention to deep ecology, have severely damaged its credibility as a social movement.

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[1]. Because, on a global scale, AIDS and famine are more prevalent in certain ethnic groups than in others.

Even in its most benign form deep ecology calls for humanity to embrace a world view that posits a dualism between humanity and nature which thereby minimizes, if not obliterates the "natural" place of the human race within the ecosphere. This is so, ironically, *despite* the fact that the professed aim of deep ecology is to minimize the dichotomy between humanity and nature. In their attempts to diminish the self-awarded, so-called "advanced" place within a hierarchically-conceived ecosphere historically held by humans, deep ecologists tend to downplay the differences between humans and the rest of nature. In doing so, however, they negate precisely those characteristics which distinguish us as a species and which, moreover, form a contingent element of our peculiar teleological "unfolding."

There are a number of assumptions made within the deep ecology perspective which merit exposure. Primarily, within deep ecology the understanding of "human" is generally a reference to the human as *animal*, as species. Deep ecology solicits a view of humans as "one species among many," in order both to minimize any reference to "special" human abilities or characteristics and to encourage understanding of the "self" as entwined within complex ecological processes. Moreover, for theoretical purposes differentiation is usually not made between humans, for example, between women and men, or between the poor and the rich.[2]

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[2]. I make reference to a lack of "theoretical" recognition of differentiation within the human species because it is usually only within the actual theory of deep ecology that such differentiation is not acknowledged. If questioned, most deep ecologists will recognize the fact of human differentiation, but will deny its theoretical importance with respect to the principle of biospherical egalitarianism (see Sale 1988). Also, and at odds somewhat with this characterization, deep ecologists often will speak of a celebration of diversity within the human community, and within the environmental movement (see Bodian 1995, 31; Naess 1986,

Such is the "biospheric perspective," which deep ecologists claim arrests the environmental "arrogance" inherent to our currently anthropocentric perspective.

The anti-anthropocentric element of deep ecology is designed to realign our focus toward the natural world - the biosphere - and away from strictly human-centred concerns (Spretnak 1988, 476). This view, which obscures reference to a special place for humans within the natural world, nevertheless conflicts with an obvious necessity to focus the blame for ecological problems squarely upon the shoulders of this species. Moreover, and as Kheel notes (1991, 69), although deep ecologists do not explicitly exclude individual identity while cultivating their holistic world view, there is a danger that the "widened identification" that they encourage potentially can reach into a obliteration of our identity as human beings. In this line of thought, since with respect to the principle of biospheric egalitarianism deep ecologists do not principally acknowledge differentiation within the human species, the environmental crisis must be seen to originate in some kind of flaw inherent to the species as a whole, rather than in particular social structures which enable a splintering of such blame among various groups of people. As Sale (1988, 674) writes,

> Deep ecologists would hardly deny the specialness of the human animal ... but they would probably argue that this specialness has tended to separate the human from nature in such a way as to allow the species' destructive characteristics to dominate

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1989; Fox 1989; Sessions 1995).

> ... it is hard not to feel a certain antipathy to them and a certain fear and suspicion of the species which has been endowed with them.

Deep ecologists, then, in waging their battle against anthropocentrism, tend to downplay or deny the generic cultural or constructed aspects of the human race in an attempt to subdue their most dangerous manifestations. Writes Sandilands (1991, 93-94) of the biocentric perspective,

> Given that connectedness to the Goddess [ie. Mother Nature] represents a knowledge which is superior to "man made culture," the distancing of the Self from that culture becomes a part of the process of connection. To put it another way, the "natural" aspects of the Self become privileged over the "social": "nature" represents a voice which can only be heard through distancing oneself from society and from individual subjectivity.

However, as Oelschlaeger is quick to point out, the fact of culture is definitive proof that the human project and, within this project, our best prospect for happiness, goes beyond that which is strictly or simply "natural:" "to be human is to be enframed by language and history" (1991, 316-317).

The deep ecological position effectively fosters the alienation of humanity from the natural matrix. In failing to recognize for humankind an identity apart from that which is accrued from membership within a "nature," broadly understood, deep ecology downplays the unique capabilities of the human race while emphasizing those attributes which humanity shares in common with other biologic entities. Many deep ecologists attempt to qualify such implications by writing, as Eckersley does, that deep ecology "is more oriented toward `letting things be,' that is, allowing all beings (human *and* nonhuman) to unfold in their own way" (1992, 156). However, it seems that within the deep ecological world view, humans are the *only* species that are *not* so privileged. Ironically, the biocentric viewpoint even trivializes the mechanisms by which we ascertain value in nature, which led to the very development of the biocentric outlook. Social ecologists voice scepticism at the deep ecological project of "self-oblivion." They argue that the resulting denial of human subjectivity - that is, the denial of the human being as a valid subject - is a dangerous theoretical prospect in terms of ensuring that the human species is not bulldozed in the process of attempting to redress inadequacies in environmental representation. Rather, writes Mathews (1994, 162), it is through the recognition that "our humanity is the well-spring not only of a consuming destructiveness *but also* of the precious compassion which counters it [that] will help to lead us out of the moral impasse created by the divorce between humanity and Nature." More importantly, however, as Biehl (1988, 22-25) argues, the groups that are in the most peril as a result of the deep ecology world view are those, such as women and minority groups, which previously have been denied the role of active subject. She writes (1988, 25), "To ask women, with this new subjectivity, to `think like a mountain' is a slap in the face. It asks women to return to the arena of their oppression - to their nonbeing and nothingness - indeed even to embrace it."

Of course, few deep ecologists will acknowledge that their perspective is built upon such an untenable theoretical foundation. Rather, practically all deep ecology theorists at some point in their writings submit a qualification to their theory which reads to the effect: "Ecocentrism is not against humans per se or the celebration of humanity's special forms of excellence; rather it is against the ideology of human chauvinism" (Eckersley 1992, 56). It is certainly true that deep ecology's reverence for ecological diversity theoretically should include a respect for the unique characteristics of and within humankind. The fact is, however, that in their eagerness to redress our lack of reverence for nature - to rebalance the scales, so to speak - deep ecologists tend to downplay, if not obliterate, the special place occupied by humans within this very matrix.

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Deep ecology, it was noted above, seeks to enable humans to rediscover their "natural" place within the web of life, the biosphere. Deep ecologists are explicit in their claim that anthropocentrism prevents humans from recognizing a more "naturalistic" perspective drawing upon the aphorism "nature knows best" (Manes 1990, 146). "Nature does not *need* ethics; there is no one to hear," argues Livingston (1981, 54). Deep ecology seeks to subvert the human system of ethics and values while concurrently enabling "the natural world to fulfil its own way of being" (Manes 1990, 147). From this can be drawn another assumption within the deep ecological perspective, namely, that the human system of ethics - and humanly conceived systems generally - are of subordinate value to the "natural" processes of wild nature.[3]

At the same time, the "nature" to which deep ecologists refer tends to be that of "wilderness ... a landscape or ecosystem that has been minimally disrupted by the intervention of humans" (Devall and Sessions 1985, 110). Writes Wittbecker (1986, 34), "Wilderness is wholly other, nonhuman, ultrahuman. And so, it is sacred, in a literal way." Thus, despite the fact that the ideal of deep ecology rejects the radical separation of humans from nature, their very definition of "nature" posits such a separation. "Far from dissolving the boundary between human and nonhuman nature," writes Biehl (1988, 27), the deep ecological definition of nature "basically validates it."

It is possible that this contradiction is rooted in the strongly felt desire on the part of deep ecologists to understand the natural world "on its own terms," independently of the filters which form a part of our culture as humans. Deep ecology fundamentally is about an experience of nature through "dwelling in ecosystems, bonded to place, having communion with wild animals and realizing that spirit and matter are not inherently separated" (Devall and Sessions 1985, 112). That is, deep ecology speaks to a relationship with nature wherein the boundaries of human nature,

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[3]. This valuation of natural processes is in itself the product of a humanly conceived value system.

human ego and personality and even of our physical bodies are minimized. Such barriers, it would seem, are most easily dispensed with in an environment which has been immune from human constructs.

Nevertheless, the deep ecological definition of nature, being explicitly asocial, speaks to another attempt on the part of deep ecology to deny that which is uniquely human. Specifically, deep ecologists downplay the extent to which nature forms a part of our being as humans. Whereas deep ecologists tend to venerate a mystical "nature" understood as "primeval wilderness" untouched by human hands, social ecology emphasizes the fact that human society and culture are fundamentally embedded within the context of natural history (Tokar 1988, 31). The deep ecological perspective often glosses over the fact that the concept of nature itself is a social construction, and that human attempts to make claims on behalf of nature (for example, in the deep ecological claim that nature is best "free" of human interference) are anthropomorphic (Skolimowski 1984, 284-285).

In contrast with deep ecology, social ecologists do not accept the premise that the natural world can or does exist independently of humanity's presence within it. Certainly, "natural" is an ambiguous concept, at best. Writes Sober (Quoted in Bradford 1993, 425), "Organisms do not passively reside in an environment whose properties are independently determined. Organisms transform their environments by physically interacting with them." From this perspective, humankind need not abandon its uniquely human qualities in order to (re)develop a relationship of kinship with the natural world. In other words, Bradford writes, identification with the planet need not constitute a rejection of humanity. Rather it is an *affirmation* of it (1993, 426).

Biehl (1988, 26-27) posits that the "wilderness" definition of nature advocated by deep ecologists does nothing to redress the mythology that served as a pretext to its domination. Although deep ecologists sanction our humble approach toward wild nature, they do nothing to rectify the very theoretical conditions which enabled it to be mastered. Biehl (and others, notably King 1987, 731) argues that deep ecologists perpetuate a "Daniel Boone" mentality which romanticizes wild, "chaotic" nature as some sort of final frontier to be conquered. She writes that in seeking to realign society's monotoned rationalization, deep ecologists advance a world view which fails not only to engender a complexity of relationships between human and nonhuman nature, but which rather sustains a false dichotomy between them. The fact that deep ecologists posit such a dichotomy between humanity and nature effectively prevents the development of a constructive consociation between the two. Moreover, when taken seriously, the wilderness commitment of deep ecologists "can lead to ... a needless opposition between wilderness and civilization" (Bookchin 1989, 153).

It is important to note, then, that deep ecology draws an implicit linkage between our failure to cultivate connections with the earth, and human culture or constructs - understood in the generic sense. In other words, within the deep ecology world view those characteristics which separate us, as humans, from other species within the ecosphere, being the same which enable us to construct human systems (economic, technological, political, social) that are antipathetic to the natural environment, must somehow be subverted. Moreover, deep ecology as a theoretical perspective attempts this subversion through *denying these very characteristics*, for example in subordinating human ethics to the "ethical system" of wild nature, and furthermore in holding the somewhat unrealistic expectation that humankind will adopt such a self-denying value structure.

The deep ecology perspective solicits a view of humankind as a species no different from other species of animals or plants which co-exist within the deep ecological view of "wild" nature. This perspective, ironically, posits a radical separation between humans and nature, and further, does not allow for the integration of the human species within nature *so understood* unless they are willing to shed those uniquely human garments which have been at the root of their alienation. In other words, deep ecology does not allow for a humankind *as* humankind, displaying those characteristics which have inspired Sale's "antipathy, fear and suspicion," to be a part of nature. Certainly, there is merit in the deep ecological desire to engender a holistic, connected and empathetic relationship with nature. However, it is misguided to dispense with human subjectivity in the process (Sandilands 1991, 94).

Cheney (1987, 120-129) writes that deep ecologists, despite attempts to overcome the atomistic and alienated relationship between humans and nature, ultimately fail to do so. He notes that the principle of "biospherical egalitarianism" is an attempt to downplay the differences between the two, to "fuse" the self with the larger whole, and in effect to eliminate the dualism between "self" and "other." Such a world view involves a "disappearance" of the self into the other so as to eradicate the unique identities of each, and also thereby to prevent an interdependent relationship between the two.

Cheney argues that deep ecologists offer us only two choices: we are "either atomistically defined selves who are strangers to one another, or one gigantic self" (1987, 127). Since both place primary ethical value in the individual (or the "gigantic individual") rather than in the relations between them, neither option displaces the dominant paradigm which does not principally acknowledge the interdependence of all life, and instead defines as in an atomistic relation with one another (Cheney 1987, 130). The introduction of ecological concepts into this framework only masks the atomism underlying the deep ecological world view. According to Cheney, this world view manifests itself by "either flatten[ing] all issues of value and obligation into a normative egalitarianism [which is impracticable, or by] shift[ing] the focus of ethical concern to the ecosystem as a whole, the result being a kind of ecological totalitarianism" (1987, 133).

According to Cheney, not only do deep ecologists tend to deny any substantive differences between ourselves and other organisms on earth, they also argue that ultimately our identity is inconsequential vis à vis the "ecosphere" broadly understood. Writes Biehl, "One wonders just what happens to the significance of species in nature when we can make no `ontological divide' between them. If all is the same in nature, then are all differences among species illusions? Is humanity's self-awareness as a species a delusion?" (1988, 22) Moreover, and of key importance, is the fact that the ecosystemic "whole" into which humanity's identity is subsumed is taken for granted by deep ecologists to consist in the mystical untamed, untouched wilderness revered by these theorists. This view of nature is one in which humanity, or more accurately, "civilization," *is an aberration* - human society as we understand it is not welcome within the wilderness vision.

Social ecologists argue that it is impossible to escape the alienation between "self" and "other," humanity and nature, through the elimination of the "self." Rather, as Bookchin notes, in order for us to develop self-consciousness and identity, a duality must necessarily be posited between ourselves and nature. He writes, "`Separation' and `otherness' are *human* facts of life, if only because natural evolution has produced a life-form - humanity - whose very specificity is premised on a *conscious* sense of separation that can increasingly distinguish human from nonhuman reality" (1991, xlvi). It is this very duality that enables us to feel empathy, respect and appreciation of the natural matrix in which we live.

Bookchin writes that because we cannot escape the fact of our dualistic relationship with nature, it remains in our hands to decide whether this duality should spell opposition and antagonism or differentiation and complementarity. The deep ecological attempt to collapse all of reality into an indefinable "Oneness," however, enables neither antagonism nor complementarity to emerge. As a result, it hinders the development of a truly complementary relationship between humanity and the organisms within nature. An effectual estrangement from nature, thus, emerges from the deep ecological world view.

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Such criticisms aside, however, it is questionable whether deep ecology even can attain a reasonable level of success in attempting ecological emancipation through the principle of biospherical egalitarianism. Sandilands (1994, 1995) argues that deep ecology seeks to construct an "ecological self" - the human *as* nature, speaking *for* nature - in an attempt to enable the representation of nature within democratic discourse. The phrase "think like a mountain" demonstrates the aspiration in deep ecology both to integrate the self within natural processes, and to enable this self to speak for nature within political dialogue. The problem with such efforts, she writes (1994, 168), is that "nature defies representation as discourse." Moreover,

> To suggest that there is an ecological *self* that can be tapped and translated into a political speech that represents nature is to suggest that language has the power to speak the truth of nature ... The moment when nature emerges into discourse is always already a moment of its social construction, a moment where it becomes something else.

The underlying aim of all environmental theory, generically understood, seems to be the construction of nature as a subject within the context of democratic discourse. The environmental movement, for example, generally aims to bring nature into the ring of interest group politics by attempting to represent and hence give a voice to its "interests." The environment thereby is placed in the company of other subjects, such as women, minority groups, and homosexuals, which articulate a liberatory agenda. In other words, environmentalists have no qualms about bringing nature's "battles" into the sphere of human discourse, pointedly within the social sphere of democratic struggles.

Sandilands argues (1995, 83-85) that the success of the environmental (or any other social) movement is dependent upon its identification with other struggles for social justice.[4] Inherent to such an articulation, however, is the establishment of an identity for nature which will enable it to find a place among other struggles in the arena of identity politics. "What the project overlooks," she notes "is the impossibility of finding a nature to be spoken democratically, unmeditated by processes of subjectivication" (1995, 85).[5] Nature does not exist as a singular or coherent entity that can be "spoken," and moreover, any

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[4]. Goodin (1992, 170) concurs, "if green parties are going to make any practical difference to public policies in the short term, then, they are simply going to have to compromise and form coalitions." Sandilands (1995, 84) notes that in the example of ecofeminism, both environmental and feminist forces are strengthened in the discovery of commonality as they struggle against a common foe - in this case androcentrism. Moreover, through ecofeminism, environmentalism can draw strength from the democratic concepts which condition the feminist movement, for example in the idea of enabling expression of repressed identity. However, as I have noted previously (Honkanen and Gibbins 1994) the building of such coalitions serves to dilute the ideological strength of the green message.

[5]. Sandilands further comments that the representation dilemma for environmentalism applies more broadly to other democratic struggles. She writes that not only is it impossible to realize an environmental subject position, but that the articulation of any subject position whatsoever is impossible, because these are always represented through the symbolic form of language which acts to filter certain elements and highlight others (1995, 85). Sandilands concludes that because political actors cannot rely upon the subject to produce truths about the experiences of its subject-group, that they must "shoulder the responsibility for constituting a society that validates plurality as permanently unfixed and that recognizes ambiguity" (1995, 88-89).

attempts to speak on behalf of nature will invariably produce merely a reflection and interpretation of the human experience (Sandilands 1995, 78; Evernden 1992, 109-110).

Kovel agrees with Sandilands' assessment. He writes that because human language mediates our relation to the universe, the "environment" is merely a humanly-created entity. He argues (1993, 408-409) that "the nature we apprehend - and act upon in ecological politics - is never homologous with nature-in-itself, but always includes the signification of nature, [which means that] the path of harmonization between humanity and nature has no endpoint." Nature is certainly an entity that exists independently of our relationship to it, even inasmuch as this relationship is constituted by our attempts to understand and impose theoretical constructs upon it.

As Kovel points out, however, we also live in a contiguous relationship with this entity by virtue of the fact that it constitutes our "basic situation," the source of our existence. As an absolute, the natural world enables the development of self through a dialectical process of attachment and separation, not unlike that which occurs between mother and child (Kovel 1993, 409-410). In essence, the natural world forms the most compelling aspect of our existence: it is intimately intertwined with every aspect of our lives, and yet it contains an element which is fundamentally mysterious and unknowable, and which cannot be accommodated within the context of our discourse. Essentially, Kovel's work points out a theoretical problem underlying both deep ecology and social ecology: neither is willing to recognize the double-edged nature of our relationship with nature.

Social ecology encounters limitations precisely because it attempts to *construct* a subject position for nature - a subject position which moreover cannot be differentiated from that of the human subject position, since in this view humanity is the embodiment of and therefore potentially the navigator of nature's evolutionary process.[6] Because Bookchin's solution to the ecologic crisis essentially is dependent upon the realignment of struggles within the arena of identity politics - the redressing of hierarchical interrelations - social ecology places nature as a subject within the context of these various battles to alter inter-human relationships. However, in doing so it thereby fails to look upon nature as an already complete subject and hence does not confront limitations engendered by the fact that the natural environment is more than merely human. Social ecology is not accepting of the "otherness" of

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[6]. It is true that Bookchin makes reference to "first nature" - which would be the equivalent of deep ecology's "wild nature," or nature as it exists barring human culture or constructs within it. In this sense he does acknowledge differentia between humanity and nature, moreover looking to "first nature" as a guide in the construction of his ecological society. However, it seems that with respect to Bookchin's goal of addressing the environmental crisis, his solutions do not enable nature to exist as an entity which is fundamentally separate from, and in ways unknowable to humanity. This is evident in his assertion that an alleviation of environmental problems is dependent upon an integration of first and second natures. Bookchin writes, for example, "We must go beyond both the natural and the social toward a new synthesis which contains the best of both. Such a synthesis will transcend them in the form of a creative, self-conscious, and therefore `free nature'..." (1993, 370). This view not only holds marked similarity with the deep ecological perspective of which Bookchin is so critical, but also conflicts with his basic premise which stresses the differentia between human and non-human nature (1991, xlvi).

nature, the fact that nature has a significance independent of the value assigned to it by humans.[7]

Deep ecology, while confronting this limitation, makes the assumption that nature can be understood only as an objective entity defined by the *absence* of the social. Such a definition suggests that nature (as subject) can *only* exist barring the presence of human culture or constructs, as such denying the relational aspect of our existence within the natural context. In theoretical confusion, moreover, deep ecologists attempt to provide representation for such an entity within the context of human society. This creates not only a highly problematic (and almost ludicrous) prospect for the subject representation of nature, but also is at the root of the significant theoretical problems inherent to deep ecology referred to earlier in this chapter.

Social ecology fails to recognize that there is an element of nature, and of our experience with nature, which cannot be articulated through dominant anthropocentric, and speech-reliant constructs. Sandilands (1995, 89) writes, "There always remains a fundamental core of nature that resists subjectivication ... [a]ny language of nature is destined to fail, and this failure requires recognition of a moment of

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[7]. This theoretical stumbling block encountered by social ecology is exemplified in the "rights" movement within environmental and animal-rights circles. This movement seeks to expand right-holding status to non-human entities such as animals, plants, or to the "biosphere" holistically understood, in order to enable the launching of class action suits on behalf of natural entities. The problem with such an approach is that a rights framework is only tenable within the context of human society, as it entails reciprocal obligation in a contractual model (Honkanen 1992; Livingston 1981, 52-54). The rights approach to wilderness preservation is an attempt to make human ethical systems applicable to entities which are fundamentally *non-human*, an attempt which inevitably will fail.

nature that overflows any attempt to capture its positivity." However, to conclude from these assumptions, as deep ecology does, that nature must be defined in the absence of the social, is patently false. Rather, any antagonism that exists between nature and society is strictly a social construction, a product of our dualistic science which removed all subjectivity from nature and which redefined it as a separate realm to be "objectively" observed and studied (Evernden 1992, 108-109).

Certainly, a curious theoretical problem presents itself: how do we provide representation within human society, for an entity whose subject position cannot be artificially constructed, but which neither can be effectively represented within the realm of identity politics without this construction? Working, then, with the assumption that nature cannot be included as a subject within human discourse, what are the options at hand for environmental theorists? Livingston suggests that the limitations of identity discourse inhere in the fact that our western cosmology and ethical system are based not so much in the assumption of a duality between humankind and nature, as with an inability to conceive of an egalitarian relationship between the two. He writes (1981, 49),

> I think that we cannot conceive of a society (a community of self-interest) that could extend beyond our species. Such a society would have an impossible prerequisite - an unequivocal acknowledgement of the *whole* inter-relationship between man and nature. Such an awareness, which would of necessity involve both intellect and intuition, does not exist to any discernable extent in humankind.

This author does not share Livingston's pessimism regarding humankind's ability to establish a mutualistic relationship with the natural world. However, his work does point to the fact that our difficulties in establishing a system of representation for environmental goods - our difficulties even in entertaining the idea of wilderness preservation - are related to our inability to conceive of ourselves as "an integrated, functioning species in a dynamic context" (Livingston 1981, 86).

Sandilands (1995, 90-91) suggests that the limit of identity discourse lends itself to an alternative form of political representation which surpasses the modern effort to uplift oppressed subject positions. Rather, solutions can be found through the development of alliances among a great variety of struggles that cut across and ultimately transcend the subject-group. What Sandilands suggests, in other words, is a consciousness-building exercise where we begin to think more integratively and co-operatively, wherein we identify ourselves as agents within the democratic process broadly understood, rather than simply in terms of our identity as speaking subjects.

The world view to which Sandilands refers dispenses with the splintering mechanism of subject positions, and involves the development of a more interdependent and relational way of understanding our inter- and intra-human relationships. The second half of this project is contingent upon the success of its first. That is, we cannot truly develop an ethic of interdependence while continuing to support the divisive mechanism of the subject-position, which is of an atomistic orientation. The question at hand, then, concerns how we dispense with subject-positions, and, in particular, how do we do so with respect to our relationship with the natural environment? The chapter that follows provides an analysis and critique of the attempt, particularly within social ecology, to impose artificial human constructs - essentially, subject positions - upon the wild otherness of nature. This critique points to an alternative ethic that nurtures an integrative relationship of bonding, or belonging, with the natural world. This approach suggests that the solution to the environmental crisis lies not in our creative attempts to accommodate nature as a subject within the context of human discourse. Rather, we need to learn to accommodate our structures and systems to the rhythms and patterns of nature.

CHAPTER FOUR

There is, though, something wrong when we use medicine to deaden our sensitivity, when we obliterate solitude with electronics and blind ourselves with the very lights we devised to help us see.

- Erazim Kohák

It could even be that nature, in the face she turns towards man's technological usurpation, is simply concealing her essence.

- Martin Heidegger

Thus far, this project has posited a theoretical difficulty into which both deep ecology and social ecology have become mired: the question of the subject representation of nature. Social ecology is blatant in its attempts to accommodate nature within human discourse. However, deep ecology stumbles in its efforts to avoid subject positions while nevertheless attempting to provide precicely this type of representation for nature, within the context of human society. As a step toward resolving this quandary, Sandilands' work points us toward an alternative world view that dispenses with the subject position altogether, and that enables the development of a genuine interdependence among beings.

Drawing principally from the work of Barry Cooper, this fourth chapter explores the roots of our modern reliance upon subject representation, and examines means toward the development of an alternative world view. The chapter is critical of our scientific metaphysic, which encourages the substitution of artificial "constructs" in the place of our "common-sense" understanding of, and participation in reality. It is argued that within this world view we construe meaning in the world through our action (such as the imposition of constructs) upon it; the ideas of "form" and "goodness" do not constrict us.

Philosophers such as Heidegger and Spinoza propose as a solution the "bracketing" of artificial constructs and a return to reality "as it is given," an exercise known as phenomenology. Our constructed reality, they argue, is built upon a solid foundation of experiential, or "primordial" reality. The phenomenological experience reveals that reality is a "unity" or "togetherness." We are obligated, in our role as "dweller," to cooperate within the unity of reality - to let things take care of themselves. Moreover, it is posited, this experience is primarily sensual: we must abandon our human control, "merge with surrounding objects," in order to gain a truly primordial experience of reality. It is through the bonds of our emotions - through love, for example - that we discover a sense of belonging in the world.

Action Into Nature

Barry Cooper, in his work *Action Into Nature*, outlines the philosophical origins of the problems approached through deep ecology and social ecology. Environmental theory, it can be argued, is in part reactionary to our scientifically-defined relationship with nature. Scientism is the metaphysic underlying our current societal construct, which Cooper labels as "technological society." It refers to "the substitution of the system of mathematicized physics, as an ontologically real account of the external world, for a concern for the substance or meaning of the cosmos" (Cooper 1991, 187). Scientism replaces reality, as it is presented to us, with an abstract model, which is then taken to be factual. Moreover, this claim, that science defines reality, transmutes into the belief that what is *not* definable by science is not *real*.

Cooper attributes this inversion primarily, but among other factors, to the discovery of the telescope in the sixteenth century. The telescope engendered a novel ability to observe objects imperceptible to the human eye alone. It could thereafter be concluded that "nature did not reveal itself to the human senses directly, that our senses were therefore untrustworthy means to perceive the universe, that everyday experience was a constant source of error and delusion" (Cooper 1991, 35). With this development, our ancient metaphysic, which assumed that truth could be apprehended in the contemplation of nature through direct, sensual experience, was thrown into question. Moreover, if truth was only as good as the scientific instruments used to measure it, then the existence of meaning in the world became highly questionable.

The catalyst of this blight, scientific discovery, pointed to a new metaphysic which would renew the meaningfulness of human existence. If meaning could no longer be found in the world as it is given, then it must be found in human action into the world. Descartes undertook the project to imaginatively annihilate the "testimony of nature and of the senses", and to re-constitute it with an algebraic representation of space (Cooper 1991, 41). That is, Descartes substituted a human invention - an abstraction - for reality. In this way, scientism promulgated the perception that "the existence of meaning in the world owes its being to having been evoked by humans" (Cooper 1991, 78-79). Thus, it became accepted that human action (such as the discovery of the telescope and the development of mathematicized physics) and events which collectively form the course of history, were the loci of truth (Cooper 1991, 37-38). Contemplation, which previously had been the means toward such an apprehension, was hereafter subordinated to action. The meaning of the universe, in other words, was a product of human action.

That we have engaged in an imaginative re-configuration of our "world" speaks to the unique complexity of "mediations" that take place between humans and the external world. It is truly exceptional that humans possess the capacity to perceive external forms, mentally to retain and rework these perceptions, and further, to integrate this capacity with human will (Cooper 1991, 16-18). It is these human talents, moreover, that enable us to understand ourselves in "metaphysical isolation" from the world. Through the scientism's elevation of the mind above "mere" matter, we regard nature as something tangential, and certainly as something external to our lives. The goal, writes Cooper, is to "attain the experience of world-transcendent reality [and therefore] to free the mind from its predisposition to care for the world" (1991, 42).

The fact that, through science, we have been drawn into such a configuration should be taken as an unusual development on the part of the human species. Just as a fish is unable to discern the watery context of its life, throughout most of human history we have assumed an inextricable linkage with the natural world. In this ancient metaphysic, the cosmos was seen as a living being, with spirit (or God) diffused throughout. "In the beginning," writes Cooper, "was the natural cosmos `full of Gods.' The constancy of being was expressed by the omnipresence of life, and death was symbolized as the simple transformation of life" (1991, 45). Scientism transformed nature into a system of dead matter that behaves according to mathematical patterns. Whereas previously, man regarded himself as in a relationship with nature, science instigated a distinct separation between ourselves, as subjects, and nature, as object. Moreover, within this separation, we view the natural environment as a "thing" at the service of our will. As Evernden notes, the scientific world view "insulated us from concern with the world and made it next to impossible for us to regard the world as anything but a storehouse of material" (1985, 54).

A more significant ramification of scientism, however, lies in the fact that it led us to replace our "world," the elements of stability and meaning in our lives, with abstract scientific assumptions. The ancients conceived that there is, underlying all matter, a purpose, or "form," grasped through philosophical ("noetic") contemplation, which provides us with "a vision of the good or of justice or of truth" (1991, 32). However, as the pursuit to meditatively apprehend substantive (suprasensory) reality was undermined through scientific discovery, we consequently abrogated the very existence of such a reality. Nietzsche's Zarathustra thus comments, "God is dead."

Our modern thought, Cooper writes, is characterized by a "distinctive metaphysics of nature or of matter ... [wherein] the structure, or "thingness" of things is as changeable as things themselves." (1991, 31-32). As a result, we are inordinately preoccupied with the phenomenal (sensory) realities of the world. Further, upon this imaginative eradication of the substantive realm - the ground, or cause of phenomena - our purposes no longer are guided by substantive reality (Cooper 1991, 72, 76-78). Our extensive capacity for action in the modern world, in other words, is unregulated by a vision of the "good," or by wisdom in our purposes.

There is no "form" to ensure the meaningfulness of our projects, and therefore we assume that the things that are produced (by the human mind and action) give such meaning. Although these produced things are meaningless in the sense that their production is not guided by underlying "form," their very existence becomes the means to further projects. In fact, Cooper argues, "almost any hypothetical end can be declared meaningful and acted on in such a way that the sequence of results not only makes sense logically but in fact actually works" (1991, 151). He cites the example of the lunar landing: technological advances that enabled the event were celebrated as a "giant leap" in opening up possibilities attendant upon human action (1991, 151-152). Human will summarily becomes the "source of purpose in an otherwise purposeless universe," and thus serves as the grounds for our action (Cooper 1991, 45).

One does not need long to speculate the result of such autonomy of action, when combined with a view of nature as de-spiritualized, without purpose or final cause, and decidedly separate and tangential from human well-being. Evernden writes, "we are not *in* an environmental crisis, but *are* the environmental crisis. By the very stance we take we prohibit the possibility of being anything else. The situation in which we find ourselves is a consequence of our own choice of context..." (1985, 135-136). This context, Cooper continues, is one wherein the world is "an undefined field for action" (1991, 61) and the universe, the object of human will (1991, 45).

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Resultant from a lack of direction in our creating is a modern prioritization of the *process* of production over the *product*, itself. That is, we view the way in which we make things as of greater importance than that which is *made* (Cooper 1991, 147-148). This preeminence of method in modern thought is celebrated in our norm of efficiency, which, moreover, is the essential principle of technology. "Technology," writes Cooper, "is the quest for the one best way ... Efficient ordering, not fixed purpose, is its guiding image" (1991, 61-62). In essence, technology is a form of consciousness that defers to the ordering principle of efficiency. When technological consciousness is actively pursued as the ideal or norm for human society, as it is in ours, we are said to live in a "technological society."

Technological consciousness derives from the metaphysic of scientism, and is essentially a consequence of human will acting upon an abstractly-constructed world. Cooper writes that, like scientism, technology is a "*cosmion*, a little world of meaning ... [which is] beyond good and evil" (1991, 63). Substantive reality, or "form," it may be recalled, does not exist in technological consciousness. Hence, there is no standard against which "good" or "bad" technology can be judged. Moral considerations do not even factor into technological usage; rather, there are only more or less *efficient* technologies. Thus, problems caused by technology, are resolved through the generation of improved, more efficient technologies.

In this sense, technological consciousness is influenced by the scientific ideal of "progress." Truth, within scientism, is contingent upon the human ability to discern and measure it. Hence, the knowledge that is closest to "truth" is that which is most recently acquired. As Cooper comments, with scientism "the focus shifted from a care for justice in the present and existing society to one of making it in the future" (1991, 207). Cooper writes that technological or scientific "progress" is a utopian ideal in the sense that its "goodness" is never questioned; it stands as the "standard of justice." That those who actively pursue the ideal, therefore, are not held responsible for the consequences of their actions, is compounded by the fact that the threat posed by technology - to the future - is not real in the concrete sense (1991, 209-210, 215).

In our technological society we have embraced technology to the extent that we judge *ourselves* in light of the principle of efficiency. Thus, technological rationality has resulted in the covert "extinguishing" of human spontaneity and creativity, exemplified in the conversion of human beings into "technological components," such as "human resources" (Cooper 1991, 62, 68). Mass conformity is promoted through technological consciousness, which seeks the objective of "a well-adjusted population [consisting] of de-personalized individuals" (Cooper 1991, 126-127). Ultimately, Cooper writes, technological rationality promises to transform the vast diversity and multiplicity of cultures and nations across the globe "into temporary obstacles to a unity at the lowest common denominator" (Cooper 1991, 132).

The goal of this process, unquestionably, is universal societal contentment - affluence - an inevitable consequence of a societal credo which focuses exclusively upon the sensory realities of the world. Technology proved that universal wealth is indeed very possible, and, moreover, that it could be procured through human action. Thereafter, the meaning of politics shifted in order to serve the goal of affluence; the primary mechanism of political systems became the administrative bureaucracy designed to carry out projects that secure life in an affluent society (Cooper 1991, 123-125). Technological society, in other words, has transformed politics (like humans) into a process that secures an end, to be judged for its efficiency instead of its purposes. Cooper comments that the result of this process is "the affluent society characterized by the extensive consumption of an ever-growing range of commodities [with] the state ...indeed its executive committee" (1991, 129).

Our modern condition is characterized by a crisis centering around the question of the desirability of technological culture. Unquestionably, Cooper writes, (1991, 152) our human experience has been impoverished by the scientific world view. First, the "veritable avalanche" of consumer goods with which we are surrounded points to the increasingly familiar experience of artificiality in our lives. We strive to generate an existence wherein we are unable to survive in the absence of our gimmickry (consider the utopian, wholly man-made environment portrayed in "Star Trek"), yet we continue to pursue this goal. Second, the "*cosmion*"-like universality and autonomy of technology has "transformed the human artifice from a stable home for humanity into a kind of liquid movement" (Cooper 1991, 152). Third, as a result of our imaginative eradication of substantive reality, our lives are devoid of meaning. Yet we have substituted for the human faculty that is able to contemplate meaning (thought), "logical reckoning" and "cognition," the handmaids of science and technology.

The modern project is to actualize "the universal and homogeneous state" which aims at affluence, "the compassionate relief of humanity's estate" (Cooper 1991, 252). In the process, however, we have separated the notion of goodness from our thinking and, consequently, from our action. This, writes Cooper, is the origin of nihilism, a doctrine wherein everything and anything is possible and permitted (1991, 255). Moreover, our modern version of nihilism is self-perpetuating because our metaphysics conceives of nature as "dead," that is, devoid of moral significance. In the absence of the substantive reality to guide our actions, we look to human action into the world (ie., history) for meaning. However, along this route we become mired in the "paradoxes of progress according to which it makes sense to dispose of, or sacrifice, a real present for an ever-receding future" (Cooper 1991, 255). The result, invariably, is an "alienation from reality ... [from] man's deepest desire and therewith from the primary issues" (Cooper 1991, 262).

An Alternative Metaphysic

Cooper's work draws a line of connection between the modern condition of nihilism and our scientific metaphysic which hinders us from experiencing reality in a "common sense" manner - as it is given to us - and which also prevents our concern with substance or meaning in the cosmos. Of more significance than the question of "substance" underlying matter, however, the essential problem - it would seem - is that we have lost contact with our roots. Mander, for example, notes that our malaise stems from a disengagement from "home," an abandonment that occurred when we interposed boundaries between ourselves and the earth, and "moved en masse inside totally artificial, reconstructed, `mediated' worlds" (1991, 148-149). The previous discussion implies, in other words, that we need to regain a sense of place, of "home," within the natural world.

It is often suggested that this can be accomplished through encouraging greater contact with the natural world: certainly, there is a psychological benefit to be had from such experience. Neil Evernden (1992, 28), for example, posits that nature serves as an "absolute" from which we can gain authorization for our actions. This contextual placement provides a consistent pattern around which to structure one's life. Similarly, Robert Goodin (1992, 37-41) notes that an experience of natural processes, "untouched by human hands," enables us to place ourselves within a larger, and more meaningful context outside of our lives. This helps "to `locate the self' in a deep psychological sense" (Goodin 1992, 39). It would seem, however, that because our abstractions (which also encompass the natural world) have come to be the source of all significance in our artificial world, merely immersing ourselves in nature will not supply adequate medicine to cure our societal anomie. Many philosophers would contend that the problem of nihilism lies deeper than the merely psychological, and that its solution is more complicated than simple "nature walks." More important than encouraging the simple experience of nature, many argue, is the development of a reciprocal sense of place within the rhythm of nature's laws.

Heidegger argues (Zimmerman 1983, 103-105) that human fulfilment is contingent upon our receptivity to the "what things *are*." He asserts that the technological paradigm does not let things (beings) reveal or manifest themselves as they are (Being), but merely as objects of human consumption and use. Moreover, if we only allow things to reveal themselves in limited ways through our unidimensional apprehension of them, *we cease to be "human"*. To maintain our humanity, writes Heidegger, it is necessary to maintain an "openness for novel and creative ways of apprehending `what is';" we need to remain open to "the mystery of Being" (Zimmerman 1983, 105, 125).

Technology, as the metaphysic of the modern age, decides the way in which things are disclosed to us, and hence, determines the very "being" of what is. The technological disclosure of entities involves "an establishing and determination of their being ... it delimits the manner in which they can be present" (Foltz 1984, 327-329). The natural world, for example, within the technological world view, no longer is simply "nature" (tree, deer, waterfall), but rather becomes "natural resource" (paper, venison, Evian). Science and technology do not let nature "be," nature is no longer "grasped simply in terms of presence as sheer givenness" but rather, scientism sets up a conceptual framework into which nature is to fit, and then forces nature to display itself within that framework (Foltz 1984, 332-333).

The problem, as revealed by Heidegger, is that the "picture of reality" presented us through the metaphysic of technology is incomplete. He notes that our view of nature as "resource," is, in actuality, rooted in a more "primordial" understanding of nature which is revealed to us through our involvement and interaction with it. Nature "is not principally disclosed as an indifferent given, but as `environing nature' - as what surrounds us and is nearby from the beginning" (Foltz 1984, 332). Within the metaphysic of technology, primordial experiences of nature - the bubbling of a stream or the howling of a wolf - do occur, but are not considered legitimate understandings of the world, being "merely subjective."

Heidegger's methodology is known as phenomenology. Phenomenology "tries to give a direct description of experience without taking account of its psychological origin or any other causal (or "scientific") account" (Cooper 1991, 2). Phenomenology, then, attempts to remove human abstractions from our world, and instead allows us to account for appearance "directly" - in terms of our experience of it. It is a return to our immediate, or "common-sense" version of reality (Cooper 1991, 21-22). Phenomenology involves "bracketing," which is to "suspend judgement, prejudice, or commitment that had been shaped by concepts or intellectual constructions" (Cooper 1991, 3).

In Heidegger's view[1], the phenomenological view of nature is an experience, not the totality of material objects surrounding us, but of "the unity of earth and sky, gods and mortals assembled in and through the thing" (Zimmerman 1983, 113). Reality, in this analysis, is a single entity expressed through constituent and complementary parts; our understanding of reality is relational as opposed to discrete (Grange 1985, 357-358). The world is a "luminous realm drawn together by the things that shine forth within it" - humans form only one element within this realm (Zimmerman 1983, 113).

Heidegger was concerned with the human need to perceive the inner unity of the world. In his thought, "there is a predestinate unity in the universe, and the human vocation entails finding our way back to it. We are not called to create it, but find, experience and express it" (Grange 1985, 358). We do so through participating in tradition, which teaches us to cooperate with the wider cosmic order, to let things "take care of themselves spontaneously in accord with their own natures" (Zimmerman 1983, 115). This call for us to recognize our limitations within the systemic unity of reality is, moreover, a call for us to act in accordance with our *own* being, with who we really are. In Heideggerian thought, we are fundamentally united with all other beings, and allowing others to

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[1]. All references to Heidegger take into account the progression in thought made over his lifetime. Hence, primary consideration will be given to work developed after the late-1930s, wherein the notion of the "fourfold" was developed.

blossom permits our own growth and development as creatures within the cosmos (Zimmerman 1983, 119-122).

Other philosophers, such as Spinoza, agree with Heidegger's essential point that reality can be understood as unity. Spinoza posits a prior, fundamental reality of "togetherness", often referred to as "nature" or "God," which is the "absolute, self-manifesting cause of itself" (Grange 1985, 352-353). What we perceive as separate parts are, in fact, manifestations of the same reality, unfolding over time. Like Heidegger, Spinoza writes that the human being is a dimension of this underlying reality. Thus, our genuine acts of self-affirmation will involve taking part within, and hence, affirming, the original source of power: substance, or nature (Grange 1985, 354-355).

Spinoza, like Heidegger, argues that modern malaise is rooted in our poor understanding of the place we occupy within reality. This knowledge is accessible though relinquishing our role as metaphysical (and physical!) conquerors of nature, and simply accepting our place as co-habitants of our world and "dwelling actively" within it. In this way we are free to choose a path which enhances our "power of being" as much as is possible within the limitations of reality (Grange 1985, 355). Thus, both Spinoza and Heidegger agree that human happiness and fulfilment are contingent upon us accepting a role of "dweller" within the framework of the reality which we inhabit. Importantly, as well, both agree that the *manner* in which we "move out of ourselves" and into the world, is through our feelings. Feelings, for both Spinoza and Heidegger, are "the felt sense of our interaction with the environment ...[and hence] are the natural outcome of being one with the world" (Grange 1985, 361-362). Our feelings, then, while indicating the degree of connection or disconnection that we feel with the unity around us, also disclose for us the world's meaning.

Morris Berman's work expands upon the sensual interpretation of the world developed by Spinoza and Heidegger. "The intellect," he writes, "is grounded in affect ...[and hence] body knowledge (sensual knowledge) [is] part of all cognition" (Berman 1981, 156). Berman (1981, 158-165) notes that as young children, our awareness of the world is gained entirely through tactile experience, which inheres a "fundamental realization" in the body of its inseparability from the surrounding environment. The ego-crystallization (or self-consciousness) that subsequently takes place[2] does not erase this imprint upon the unconscious. Moreover, because our tactile experience is rooted in a "primeval substrate ... the ground of our being" which is prior to the development of the ego, "participation remains the basis for our perception throughout our lives" (Berman 1981, 171-172).

Our cultural problems in the West, Berman (1981, 171-178) notes, are related to a metaphysical attempt to eradicate the sensual realm of experience from our consciousness. The "modal personality" that results from the scientific metaphysic has a distorted internal relationship, and hence deformation in its perception of the external world. That is, this

[2] Berman notes (1981, 162-165) that ego-crystallization does not necessarily take place. The development of the ego, he writes, although partially innate, is a comparatively recent historical development. He affirms, "the history of increasing ego-development in the West is also the history of increasing repression and erotic deprivation, manifested over the centuries by a drop in the body contact and sensual enjoyment that normally occurs during the first two years of life" (1981, 164).

personality is unable to have a "mimetic" experience,[3] wherein it abandons control - suspends the ego - and "merges" with surrounding objects. Berman writes that such an experience is at the base of all genuine encounters with nature. The Aboriginal rain dance is an example of such an experience. The Aboriginal dancer "is inviting the clouds to join him, to respond to the invocation ... By means of this approach, the native learns about the reality of the situation, the moods of the earth and the skies. He surrenders: *mimesis*, participation, orgastic gratification" (1981, 177-178).

Berman writes that the sensual participation in reality exemplified by the Aboriginal dancer, while being our primary mode of experience, nevertheless forms only a part of the cognitive process. Identificatory knowledge (non-cognitive) and analytic knowledge (cognitive) more accurately are interrelated. Most knowledge that we acquire is "tacit," or non-cognitive, gained through direct bodily encounter. For example, when learning to ride a bike, we do not analyze and delineate the various elements involved, but rather unconsciously assimilate the entire procedure through "feel." It is only after this occurs that our cognitive mind reflects upon and analyzes the experience, and in doing so, "find[s] out something we knew all along" (Berman 1981, 180-181).

Berman's aim is simply that of reinstating significance to the sensual realm of experience. The insight that follows from such recognition, he argues, will enrich the cognitions of western society through enabling the development of a relational understanding of reality.

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[3] Defined by Wilhelm Reich, from whose work Berman draws a substantial portion of his theory, as "the ability to love" (Berman 1981, 177).

The *raison d'être* underlying our need to return to the sensual realm of experience, it may be remembered, stems from Heidegger and Spinoza's call for human acceptance of the role of "dweller" within the "wider cosmic order" - an order not unlike the "relational understanding of reality" expounded by Berman.

This discussion, however, begs the question, "why?" That is, *why* is human happiness contingent upon the acceptance of our place within a fundamentally relational reality? To answer this question, we now turn to the Czech philosopher of nature, Erazim Kohák.

A Moral Sense of Nature

The thesis of Kohák's poetic work, *The Embers and the Stars*, falls into line with the ideas of Cooper, Heidegger and Spinoza, detailed above. Within our artificial, humanly-constructed world, Kohák (1984, x-xi) argues, we feel alienated, and this conflicts with our human need to sense that our lives are meaningful. To deal with our alienation, we try to convince ourselves, that we, too, are machinery, instead of the beings, interrelated within a living cosmos, that we are. "Surrounded by artifacts and constructs," Kohák explains, we lose sight "of the rhythm of the day and the night, of the phases of the moon and the change of the seasons, of the life of the cosmos and of our place therein" (1984, x). We lose sight, in other words, of the primordial elements of our life experience. Most importantly, however, we lose sight of the moral significance of nature.

Modern nihilism is not caused by our artifacts, however - Kohák argues that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with them, nor is there anything intrinsically right about them - they are neutral and meaningless. What *is* wrong is that we no longer find a sense of purpose in our creation of them, nor in our action, generally. The reason for this, notes Kohák, is because the "moral sense of our humanity is ... obscured by the mechanical order of our artifacts" (1984, xi). In other words, our constructs consume our sense of reality to the extent that we search for meaningfulness in these neutral and dead creations. Evidently, it is impossible to eradicate our alienated feelings by "seeking to integrate our being with a nature construct from which we have abstracted the dimension of meaning" (1984, 22). In order to get a moral sense of life beyond artifacts, Kohák argues, we must go beyond them to experience the living world of nature (Kohák 1984, xii-xiii, 13).

Nature, in Kohák's definition (1984, 8) is the "primordially given cosmic context in which humans find themselves and to which they belong in their bodies and minds, and as humans are in fact aware of it ... in their lived experience." Kohák places nature within our lived experience because, as he puts it (1984, 5), it is counter-intuitive to imagine it otherwise; such an imagining requires a "suspension of lived experience" to produce. In his view (1984, 15-17), the human experience is set within a "the matrix of nature's rhythm" which is neither arbitrary nor merely subjective. I grow tired; I get hungry; I feel contemplative at night. The application of constructs to these natural processes is both possible, and indeed, prevalent (I grow tired at 2300h; I get hungry at 1800h; I contemplate from 0900h to 1700h). However, to treat our constructs as "real" while devaluing the natural patterns of our lives is a deformation of consciousness.

In Kohák's definition (1984, 69-71), nature is "an intermediate reality ... endowed with a meaning of its own." This reality includes a dimension of value - not merely utilitarian value, but "intrinsic and absolute value ingressing in the order of time." Kohák argues (1984, 71-72) that if nature is encountered primevally - "freed," as it were, from artificial constructs - it becomes obvious that nature is "primordially good ... a presence of being in its absolute worth, to be approached with infinite respect." Moreover, and "more deeply, it is *moral*: to destroy heedlessly, to pluck and discard, to have and leave unused, is an act of profound disrespect to the eternal worth of nature." This "morality" is "the vital order of the creation [wherein] the periodicity of the seasons, the rightness of the order of time, all the ethic of utility and appropriateness, are anchored in an intrinsic rightness, in the evident goodness, truth, and beauty of Being" (Kohák 1984, 190). There is a "rhyme and rightness" to nature's rhythms - a rhythm that humans can recognize in their own lives and therein participate (Kohák 1984, 74).

As Kohák expounds, it is to the extent that humans understand the rhythm of the cosmos that they can "feel at home in their world ... sensing what is appropriate to it and integrating their lives with it" (1984, 74). In honouring that rhythm - by abandoning our desire to "conquer" - humans can feel a sense of place within the earth's systems. "The great liberating discovery," writes Kohák, "is that the human is not a stranger to it, that he has his integral place therein" (1984, 81). However, in stating this, Kohák is not condoning a "back to the land" primitivism. He says, if humans are able to integrate the rhythm of the cosmos within their lives, even in technological society, the ordering vision of nature will guide our creations.

Humans are validated in their existence on earth because we *are*, and "the sheer givenness of being is good" (Kohák 1984, 96). However, Kohák (1984, 97-103) states, we also possess the ability to transcend our temporal existence - "to encounter the good, the true and the beautiful" - and hence glimpse the eternal. Humans are capable of doing good, of being true, of recognizing beauty; in this way, we are able to honour these things by bringing them into the temporal order of time. "It is as dwellers in time that humans find their place in nature; it is as bearers of eternity that they find their justification" (Kohák 1984, 103).

The most crucial way in which humans transcend the temporal order of time is through the power of love, which "bring[s] the world alive, [and gives] things the love, care, and use they need for their fulfilment" (Kohák 1984, 108). Through love, humans forge a bond of belonging with the world, and in being loved, "a part of the world acquires an eternal significance" (Kohák 1984, 108). This is true, Kohák notes, of natural objects as of human artifacts. At once the unique privilege and obligation of our race, Kohák writes, our choice lies in whether or not we will take up our natural role within the cosmos.

Otherness as Selfhood

Our project thus far, then, has been, first, to establish a relational understanding of the human place within the cosmos and second, to ascertain that the well-being of our species rests upon our ability to regain a sense of place in the world. It has been suggested by Heidegger, Spinoza, Berman, and Kohák that we must learn to "merge" with the objects around us through our feelings in order to gain access to the world, and to obtain a sense of belonging within it.

The idea of "absorbing one's self" into the surrounding world is not the foreign concept that we might at first think it to be. The boundary that we establish as delineating "self" is not necessarily found at the epidermis, and is more fluid than we might at first imagine. Consider, for example, the notion of "personal space," a force-field surrounding the body which - as we all know - is highly sensitive to intrusion (Evernden 1985, 41-42). Moreover, some animal species, such as the stickleback fish, have been noted to behave in a manner that suggests that they consider their self to be equivalent in size to that of their territory. That is, for many animals, the boundaries of self are significantly expanded from the apparent limitations provided by their skin (Evernden 1985, 44).

Evernden (1992, 110-112), in support of Berman's thesis detailed above, notes that our societal construct of dualism provides a false representation of reality. As young children, our "field-of-self" is inseparable from the environment which surrounds us. Generally, or perhaps optimally, "soft" ego-crystallization and the recognition of "other" occurs in maturity, marking the beginning of awareness (Berman 1981, 163-164). From this basis, the self is able to merge with the surrounding environment. Our modern acculturation process, however, encourages "rigid ego-structures" wherein the realization of "other" is hindered. Our symbolization leads us to experience otherness within the brackets of humanly-made constructs. Hence, our experience of "other" is nothing more than a variation on the experience of self.

However, as Birch reminds us, at its essence otherness is wildness. In order to remain genuine, it cannot be tamed or domesticated; it requires "the maintenance of a radical openness, or the maintenance of the sort of unconditioned freedom that permits sheer spontaneity" (Birch 1990, 11). Moreover, otherness, or wildness, does not *allow* for any sort of finalization in identification, such as that which is attempted in our societal construction of nature (Birch 1990, 11, 17-20). Thus, whereas our colonization of wilderness and other natural areas has been a valiant attempt to subdue wild otherness, wildness can never be fully appropriated.

If encountered in a primeval sense, "freed," as it were, from human constructs, and "accepted *in its full individuality*, as a unique and astonishing event," otherness engenders the numinous, or "religious" experience of blank wonder and astonishment (Evernden 1992, 117).[4] The experience of wonder - an act of trust which may be construed as naïveté - is fundamentally other-acknowledging, and releases ourselves (and nature) from the false constructs that separate us from the natural world in which we live. This numinous experience, writes Kohák (1984, 129) is "a willed, conscious affirmation of the reality of meaningful lived experience." Through wonder, he writes, we gain "primordial insight" into the "metaphysical and moral irreducibility of the person, ... the truth,

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[4] It is said, in fact, that cathedrals were designed to replicate the sense of wonder which is experienced in walking through a forest grove.

goodness, and unity of all beings [and] ... into the morality underlying the universe" (Kohák 1984, 127-129).

Ironically, Evernden (1992, 112) writes, it is only through the unimpeded realization of "other" that true self-hood can emerge. Just as we become cognizant of our cultural biases when we travel among foreign cultures, so too we become aware of our "self" through the shock of encountering something which is "other." Moreover, though, an experience of the other discloses the *nature* of the self, as existing within the unity of beings which form reality. It provides "the liberating recognition that the impersonality of our world is no more than a mask of a real world, a personal world that can be the home of persons" Kohák 1984, 211).

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This chapter has explored the notion of "liberation" from artificial constructs, which are erected by society in order to exude control over wildness, or otherness. It has been proposed that we return to the experience of reality that precedes the development of these constructs - a primordial experience which is gained sensually and which requires the abandonment of control. This experience, it has been argued, will enlighten us as to our true self-hood, to our role as "dweller" within the vast unity of the cosmos.

CONCLUSION

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

- Henry David Thoreau

This thesis has suggested that both deep ecology and social ecology fail to dispense with the splintering device of the subject position in their efforts to include environmental interests within the ring of identity politics. The fourth chapter of the thesis has provided us with insight into the origins of our modern preoccupation with subject representation. Cooper's research shows that the scientific world view, epitomized in our technological society, encourages the development of artificial constructs to substitute for a more immediate, or sensual apprehension of reality. The invariable ramification of scientism is a world view that labels and classifies reality - that prevents us from apprehending reality as it exists or appears to the senses and that lends itself to the flourishing of nihilism.

Deep ecology and social ecology both ultimately fail to provide representation for nature as it actually exists - as an independent, highly complex, and fundamentally unknowable entity *and* as the ground of our existence, within which our lives are inextricably interwoven. As Sandilands' research shows us, these efforts render obvious our democratic system's inability to accommodate such uncertainty within its subject representations: within the ring of identity politics the subject's identity must be fixed and spoken with a singular voice. The limitations inherent to identity discourse become evident when attempts are made to create a subject position for nature. These limitations, writes Sandilands (1995, 89), call into question the very project of the emancipatory struggle:

> [Ecology] shifts the basis of politics away from a quest for a speaking subject, a bearer of revolutionary consciousness, toward an understanding that this subject cannot possibly exist and that social change is based on this impossibility, this inherent self-limit. This recognition means that political actors cannot rely on a speaking subject to produce a new truth, be it a truth of nature or one emanating from a particular set of experiences, but must instead shoulder the responsibility for constituting a society that validates plurality as permanently unfixed and that recognizes ambiguity.

Attempts by deep ecologists and social ecologists to provide subject representation for nature are telling because the natural world serves as an excellent metaphor for the ground, or reality, which scientism encourages us to conceal within the guise of the subject position. Obviously, reality is not limited to wild nature. When recognized, however, the "wild otherness" of the natural world serves to indicate that we are no more served in imposing artificial constructs upon wild nature than we are in doing so upon oppressed subject groups within the human community. In both cases, the result is the generation of splintering and antagonistic positions - whether these be within the human community, or between the human community and the natural world - instead of a recognition of the complexity and fundamentally unclassifiable nature of our pluralistic interrelations.

This thesis has indicated that a solution to the problem of the subject representation of nature lies in the cultivation of an alternative world view that is able to conceive of all political struggles as within the larger project of democratic emancipation. Such a world view is cooperative and integrative; it focuses principally upon the interdependent nature of our inter-and intra-human relationships and tends to gloss over specific categorizations. Chapter four of this thesis pointed out means toward the development of such an alternative world view, toward the "liberation" of mankind from the artificial constructs promulgated by scientism. Kohák suggests that fostering the phenomenological experience of reality will enable us to discover a rhythm to the cosmos which is fundamentally moral, and "primordially good." This rhythm indicates the elemental unity underlying reality - it points to a more genuine understanding of Self as interdependent within a fundamentally interconnected matrix.

It is important to note at this point that the notion of interconnectedness, and the very method of phenomenology itself, forms an integral element of the philosophy of deep ecology. It seems, however, that while deep ecologists ardently espouse these ideas, their understanding of interconnectedness nevertheless remains rooted in the very scientism that their philosophy seeks to reject. As Mathews (1994,

160) reminds us, deep ecologists interpret interconnectedness "to mean that Nature, as a metaphysical whole, is logically prior to its parts, and that the identity of each part is functionally determined by way of its relation to the whole." In other words, and in line with Cheney's views outlined in chapter three, deep ecologists place primary ethical value in the individual (in this case the "gigantic individual") and hence do not allow for differentiation between entities which would enable the development of a genuine interrelationship between them. Thus, their attempts to abet the negative aspects of splintering subject positions through eliminating the subject altogether, are bound to fail.

Within a relationship of interconnectedness, instead, "the world ... appears as a field of relations, a web of interconnections, which does indeed cohere as a whole, but within which a genuine form of individuation is indeed possible" (Mathews 1994, 161). This thesis seeks to borrow from the phenomenological methodology claimed by deep ecology while integrating such thought with insights provided to us by social ecology regarding the importance of individuation - strengthening of the human community - which precedes an ethic of true interconnectedness. Because social ecology focuses, as it does, principally upon interhuman relationships, it falls short in enabling the development of an egalitarian relationship between humankind and other beings. This thesis argues, rather, that a perspective of interdependence and cooperativeness can be fostered between all beings within the ecosphere.

Ecofeminist theory provides us with some insight into the nature of a truly interconnected relationship. Writes Mathews (1994, 162), for example, "Nature, from the ecofeminist perspective, is a community of beings, related, in the matter of a family, but nevertheless distinct ... to whom the proper attitude is one of familial consideration and care, born of an empathetic understanding made possible by common origins." Ecofeminists accept and even celebrate differentiation between individual beings, yet this does not inhibit their understanding of the holistic framework within which we live. Rather, the strengthening of individual identity enables the process of interrelation. Moreover, continues Kheel (1991, 70) "Our sense of union with nature must be connected with concrete, loving actions rather than being borne from an "aggressive drive" to "fuse an alienated self." The driving force in the development of interconnection is a "morality of care" which addresses the concerns and needs of others around us (Zimmerman 1987, 34).

Protection of wilderness, then, optimally will proceed as an expression of our love of it - the forging of an emotive bond that enables communion between two independent spheres. As outlined in chapter four, such non-cognitive, sensual experience encourages us to understand the world in terms of our inter-relationships within it. However, far from facilitating the dissolution of one's Self into the "mystical other," such an approach validates humankind, and the integral place of humanity and human constructs within the ecosphere. The most promising of philosophies to this end is bioregionalism, which it has argued may provide the framework within which the tenets of ecofeminist thought can be realized (Plant 1990, 158). Bioregionalism is principally concerned with the task of developing a "sense of place" as "dwellers in the land ... to come to know the earth fully and honestly" (Sale 1991, 42).

This approach involves not only a re-enchantment of our place within the natural context, but also a re-vitalization of "nature" within our human context. That is, in removing the false dichotomy that we have posited between humankind and nature, we become more open to a recognition not only of our inherent place within an interconnected reality, but of the fact that such a reality resides even within the most "artificial" of our constructs. Concurs Mathews (1994, 165),

> To be prepared to accept as natural and hence to respect - perhaps to sacralize - our cities and our technologies of destruction, is to respect and re-enchant the Nature that we actually inhabit - as opposed to the Nature that exists in some remote region which we may never visit ... It is within our own everyday world that we must forge our relationship with Nature, and perhaps rediscover the sacred.

At the same time as re-affirming human individuation, however, the approach of kinship-styled interconnectedness enables us to realize an ethic of humility and of limitation in our actions. Awareness of our place within the broader context of ecological relations awakens us to a shift toward an ethic of care and concern for all beings that surround us.

Oelschlaeger writes, "perhaps we are on the edge of articulating *a new mythology*, a fresh and profound creation story within which humankind can again be at home in a cosmos that, though infinite and ever changing, is the ground of all that is eternal and sacred" (1991, 331). This new mythology follows on the heels of a world view which, through attempting to reduce reality into a singular system - a "linear view of truth" - has shown itself to be fundamentally impossible. The failure of scientism, thus, has shown us that "*process* is reality, and the order of cosmological process is irreversible ... humankind is embedded in an evolving universe" (Oelschlaeger 1991, 325). It is in our hands, it would seem, to enable this evolutionary process to proceed in a direction that serves to benefit all living creatures.

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