DISSERTATION

RE-IMAGINING THE ECOLOGICAL SUBJECT: TOWARD A CRITICAL MATERIALISM

OF ENTANGLED ECOLOGIES

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

RE-IMAGINING THE ECOLOGICAL SUBJECT: TOWARD A CRITICAL MATERIALISM OF ENTANGLED ECOLOGIES

Given the severity of contemporary environmental degradation, especially climate change, a new understanding of the human-nature relationship is necessary for halting this destruction. Political theorists have tried to explain and rethink this relationship by turning to the social, the political, the structural, the historical, the ethical, the individual, the cultural, and the economic realms. At the same time, the production of subjectivity as both an explanation for environmental degradation and a possible domain where cultivating a better human-nature relationship could be found, remains under-examined by political theorists concerned with the environment. The purpose of my project expresses three different but interrelated trajectories of inquiry, each of which represents a dearth in ecopolitical theory generally. First, I interrogate how various radical ecopolitical theories have understood the production of ecological subjectivity and the consequences of these understandings of subjectivity for producing ecological subjects in the context of capitalism, specifically. If who we are and who we think we are matters for how the human-nature relationship plays out, then it becomes vitally important to understand how radical ecopolitical theory conceptualizes the relationship between the causes of environmental degradation, the production of human subjectivity, and the ecological context in which humanity finds itself. In short, I argue that the production of subjectivity has been neglected as one important political component that must be theorized much more robustly for its utility in creating more ecologically minded societies.

Second, I would argue that one of the most powerful and intransigent forces preventing humans from re-imagining the human-nature relationship is capitalism, which in addition to its material production, also aggressively targets the production of subjectivity. This assertion constitutes both a starting point of this project, yet also something that requires greater attention from political theorists concerned with environmental degradation and the human-nature relationship. Given this assertion, the task of critically examining the relationship between capitalist subjectivities and the creative production of ecological subjectivities remains necessary to any attempt at the cultivation of an ecological politics. To this end, and thirdly, I argue that Félix Guattari's work engenders the creative impulse necessary for reconceiving of our own subjectivity in the context of the new ontology presented by Deleuze, Guattari himself, and the new materialists. Furthermore, I explore the possibilities for producing eco-subjects through innovative receptive practices attended to by both Guattari and the new materialists in the context of the capitalist overcoding of being. For instance, "becoming receptive" to a rhizomatically (dis)organized world could produce new sensitivities to environmental ecologies through a fundamental acceptance of existential uncertainty. Importantly, Guattari's work, though deeply committed to ecological goals and the production of ecological subjectivities, has been largely neglected by political theorists seeking a solution to environmental degradation and an ethically and politically bankrupt human-nature relationship. Ultimately, ecopolitical praxis requires a further theorization of the numerous ways that capitalism orders and limits human existence in the context of contemporary life. The triad under examination in my project, namely, subjectivity, ecology, and capitalism, represents a necessary contribution to ecopolitical theory which can re-invigorate Guattari's work for its utility in re-imagining the ecological subject, combating capitalism, and working towards a real ecopolitics.

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In my estimation, there is no greater existential threat to humanity than the destruction of nature especially in the context of climate change. Humanity may have a chance to remedy climate change, but if not, its consequences will force humans to inhabit a very different world in which the meaningful bonds so difficultly won by the Enlightenment's material and subjective "victories" of humanity over nature irrevocably disappear. In fact, these bonds have largely already disappeared and so new ways of inhabiting the planet are fast becoming desperately necessary to cultivate meaning in this new, changed world especially given the urgency of trying to combat climate change. One reason for this loss of certainty and meaning results from the inherent bankruptcy of the dualistic separation of humans from nature in the first place, which finds its most important ally and its culmination in the capitalist project that objectifies nature beyond comprehension. Another reason for this loss of certainty relates to the ways in which capitalism fails to finalize and fully institutionalize this dualism into the day to day operations of human societies. In other words, the material entanglement of humans and nature belies capitalism's attempt to permanently separate the two from one another in a way that allows for nature's unending exploitation, and this fact of entanglement is becoming more visible in the context of climate change specifically, making capitalism's reliance on the dualistic separation of humans and nature that much more tenuous and meaningless. Capitalism will continue to try to produce subjectivities amiable to this fundamental separation but cannot simultaneously overcome this increasingly visible (and alarming) entanglement between humans and the planet and create more productive subjectivities with any meaningful staying power.

A revolution in subjectivity that can grapple with this entanglement and simultaneously illuminate capitalism's bankrupt production of subjectivity may constitute one of the most important ways to embrace the inherent uncertainty of the consequences of entanglement itself without resorting to reactionary and concretized subjectivities (such as those of a fascist variety) that respond to the failure of dualism with a new holism that neither solves the ecological crisis nor grapples with the uncertainty inherent in entanglement. In short, this uncertainty must be dealt with to create meaning on a planet, where the planet can only be productively conceptualized as a singular vehicle for the production of life (not as a holistic planetary configuration, but rather as an open-ended assemblage of possibilities of life which may emerge depending on the configuration that our understanding of this entanglement takes).

In order to verbalize and comprehend the mostly unfathomable ways in which humanity has irrevocably damaged and markedly changed planet Earth, the concept of the "Anthropocene" proves vitally useful. For example, in *Facing the Planetary: Entangled Humanism and the Politics of Swarming*, William Connolly (2017) describes the "Anthropocene" as

> A period of two hundred to four hundred years (depending on who is counting) during which a series of capitalist, communist, technological, militarist, scientific, and Christian practices became major geological forces that helped to reshape some of these nonhuman forces. (p. 3)

According to recent scientific studies, humans have likely contributed heavily to the 6th mass extinction that planet Earth is now undergoing (Wake and Vredenburg, 2008). Biologists and Zoologists David B. Wake and Vance T. Vredenburg, in an oft-cited article regarding this extinction argue that "Substantial evidence suggests that an extinction event is underway" (p. 11466). They also provide evidence of this mass extinction by studying the extinction of amphibians (one of the most threatened categories of species), arguing that "Both global climate change and many other factors (e.g., habitat destruction and modification) responsible for

extinction events are directly related to activities of humans" (p. 11467). Likewise, Thomas et al. (2004) argue in an article for *Nature* that 18-35% of species on the planet will likely go extinct by 2050. The U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity's recent meetings have also included 1/5th of the planet's species on their endangered species list, and 41% of all amphibians on the planet are also included on this list, taking up a disproportionate number (Dodds, 2012).

On this reading, then, the Anthropocene constitutes the current geological epoch, where human social, political, economic, and military practices become conceptually and materially interconnected with geologic, earth-system, and other "nonhuman" processes in a way that is virtually impossible to delink, conceptually or materially. At the same time, the Anthropocene constitutes something many might perceive as unfathomable in its devastating consequences. Extinction caused primarily by human activity, for example, constitutes a clear and devastating manifestation of entanglement, demonstrating that the entire idea of entanglement has no intrinsically positive or negative connotations. The fact of entanglement, in other words, is neither good nor bad nor entirely comprehensible in any sense of the word. Put differently, entanglement does not denote a peaceful and untroubled relationship between humans and the natural world, and it likewise does not always denote death and devastation. The ways that humans conceptually and existentially deal with this material entanglement express many possibilities. I would argue, however, that how the condition of entanglement is dealt with by humanity's collective psyche and the political steps taken in light of these dealings must incorporate material entanglement into a robust understanding of the constitution of human subjectivity. In short, dealing with this crisis requires a robust existential claim of entanglement that precludes the denial of entanglement in the production of human subjectivities (as is the norm under capitalist life).

On my reading, this also implies that entanglement becomes a material component of the existence of all life on the planet, in a way that produces human subjectivity through these processes. Life is produced, existence is produced on this "planetary" scale (to use Connolly's [2017] language), and therefore, the Anthropocene acts as a novel framing, conceptual tool, and material assemblage that constitutes and circumscribes the real production of life (and the above systems that Connolly mentions). In short, the existential is now wrapped up with material production and its consequences in a way that is not only difficult to deny, but that already infects the psyche and the political in ways that are not fully acknowledged. Humans in the West are only beginning to cope with the existential uncertainty that accompanies life in the Anthropocene, and capitalism provides many alternative ways to recapture meaning in this context (through conspicuous consumption, through neoliberal understandings of "self-care" tied to this consumption[1], through numerous interventions into the psyche by entertainment which attempts to capture and direct the psyche towards desires that can be fulfilled and are not marked by uncertainty). These are just a few examples; life in the Anthropocene is also characterized by the proliferation of numerous anxieties in search of firm ground on which to exist.

Put another way, the production of subjectivity (and the way that existence posits itself in the world) is perceived by those who engage with the concept of the Anthropocene as ontologically entangled, and thereby constitutes a relevant place to start investigating how this entanglement is both internalized and incorporated into a notion of the self both in the context of existence and in the context of capitalism's own entanglements with existence.

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[1]   See Michaeli (2017) and Rottenberg (2018) for this discussion of neoliberal feminist self-care.

In his *Capitalism and the Web of Life*, Jason W. Moore (2015) argues that

The *Anthropocene* makes for an easy story. Easy, because it does not challenge the naturalized inequalities, alienation, and violence inscribed in modernity's strategic relations of power and production. It is an easy story to tell because it does not ask us to think about these relations at all. The mosaic of human activity in the web of life is reduced to an abstract Humanity: a homogeneous acting unit. Inequality, commodification, imperialism, patriarchy, racial formations, and much more, have been largely removed from consideration. ... Are we really living in the *Anthropocene*, with its return to a curiously Eurocentric vista of humanity, and its reliance on well-worn notions of resource- and technological-determinism? Or are we living in the *Capitalocene*, the historical era shaped by relations privileging the endless accumulation of capital? (p. 206)

Echoing Moore's concern, my project confronts the problems that capitalism poses for the cultivation of a meaningful political revolution of the ecological variety and points towards important ways that humanity (especially in the Global North) can overcome these impediments by focusing on particular political tactics of experimentation on the production of subjectivity. Moore here is also correct in that the idea of the Anthropocene naturalizes the violence done to nature as part and parcel of nature's commodification under capitalism. The Capitalocene may constitute a more apt term in light of my own project as well, which takes a critique of capitalism as central to the political possibilities of an ecological revolution. Nevertheless, the Anthropocene is also conceptually useful for pointing out the materiality of entanglement present in this new epoch. Yet, the concept of the Capitalocene contextualizes this entanglement in the context of the effects of capitalism (and capitalism's historical and current tendencies to destroy the planet via an endless pursuit of production). I would argue that both concepts remain useful for different reasons, as noted, though I think the danger in naturalizing the idea of the Anthropocene in a way that lets privileged and elite capitalist groups of humans off the hook for environmental harm constitutes its most pernicious danger (as Moore [2015] implies).

Unfortunately, the future holds only uncertainty when it comes not only to the planet and human life upon it, but also in terms of the political possibilities for change. The recognition and

in many ways, the embrace of said uncertainty, requires political and conscious efforts on the part of those who would like to put forth different options for the future. A politics of uncertainty and a politics of existential experimentation constitute two (of the infinite) possibilities for crafting a future that will allow for a different kind of planetary habitation and different (and presumably less destructive) relations between humans and nonhumans (animals, species, ecosystems, atmospheric cycles, water cycles, the carbon cycle, etc). This requires, as I mentioned, existential effort channeled into political effort. In other words, humans must "work on themselves" (in a collective sense) in order to open up these possibilities. To posit different ways of inhabiting the planet, humanity must posit itself differently in the world (all the while constantly renegotiating the territories of the self and the production of subjectivity in ways the refuse the enclosure of future possibilities). No panacea exists to solve the ecological crisis. Humanity must face up to at least three different implications: the destruction that has been done to the planet (and well may continue), the capitalist system's role in said destruction, and the ways in which this system has precluded the taking up of numerous foreclosed political possibilities via new productions of subjectivity.

Generally speaking, the relations between the production of subjectivity, capitalism and its processes, and the prospects for producing ecological subjectivities remains undertheorized as a path toward re-imagining the relationship between humans and nature (particularly in the West) and with regard to the political possibilities that emerge from any such re-imagination. The fundamental assumption of this research relates to the relationship between the production of human subjectivity and the destruction of the environment. These two processes relate to one another because the limits of the possibilities for political action in the name of the environment relate intimately to the self and its possibilities for enunciation in the context of the capitalist

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system. Who we think we are and who we are (consciously or unconsciously) has profound implications for the reasons those in positions of global power continue to destroy the environment and why inhabitants of the West continue to balk in the face of meaningful action to address climate change. What we're doing to ourselves and our environment intimately relates to humanity's possibilities for more ethical (and ethico-political, to use Félix Guattari's language) action, given the real possibilities for enunciating who we are in different ways than the capitalist system allows given its contemporary stranglehold on the production of subjectivity.

Indeed, political action (and therefore human agency) is always tied to the production of certain kinds of subjectivities. Capitalism, for example, must produce subjectivities which are amiable to a given division of labor and which pursue consumptive practices as part and parcel of selfhood. For example, I internalize consumer subjectivity because I inherently tie my consumptive practices (buying certain kinds of clothing, for instance) to the ways in which I assert my existence in the world. Since others do the same, this production of subjectivity is also always collective. Political action in this context is directed away from questioning capitalism, since an anti-capitalist politics would wrench meaning away from consumer selves, so deeply entangled with the material and productive world. Ecological subjectivities usually do not prove useful to the capitalist models of individuation and consumption, and therefore a robust ecological politics remains a relatively minor commitment in the Western world. As Michel Foucault noticed, material power (and language imbued with power) produces subjectivity in important ways (Mansfield, 2000). The options for political action in this context are also limited by the circulations of power. Power has difficulty capturing subjectivity completely, however, and this basic assumption allows openings for alternative political practices to emerge in a world where "subjectivity is primarily an experience, and remains permanently open to inconsistency,

[and] contradiction" (Mansfield, 2000, p. 6). The way in which humans experience the world and their understanding of their own selfhood therefore has profound consequences for political action in a given situation.

In this regard, another key assumption of this research is that although other systems of power in the world produce subjectivity in ways that preclude environmental sustainability and ecological subjectivity,[2] capitalism must constitute the first and primary target of a revolution in the production of subjectivity because it alone has "capitalized" on the production of subjectivity like no other system (or better put, no other assemblage of power). As Maurizio Lazzarato's (2014) work on Félix Guattari will tell us in Chapter 4, for example, capitalism operates on contradictory and nonlinear logics which result in simultaneous attempts to enclose subjectivities into meaningful positions in the division of labor and to infiltrate the psyche and the body in ways that objectify humans and utilize them as it would any other inorganic or organic substance on Earth. These contradictory processes also contribute to the confusing enmeshments in which humans find themselves and the uncertainty that surrounds any attempt at the meaningful production of subjectivities in general. Since capitalism isn't very good at combatting anxiety and uncertainty in the Anthropocene (as Lazzarato [2014] notes), one way to cultivate meaning in the context of uncertainty should exist through the existential acknowledgement of entanglement itself. This acknowledgement constitutes the jumping of point of my project, whereby the main task is to re-imagine novel ways to cultivate ecological subjectivities in the context of this ubiquitous materiality in which humans are embedded. This is also fundamentally a political project, whereby a focus on the production of subjectivity constitutes a way to re-

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[2]   Nationalism, for example, encloses the possibilities for ecological subjectivity because it encloses the possibilities for planetary recognition of an entangled and interdependent world in the context of climate change. Everyone is on their own boat, out to sea, and if certain boats sink, it is not the purview of the nationalist to adjust or prevent this outcome. The entire notion of sovereignty, too, complexifies this situation.

inhabit nature and all of our ecological "habitats" in ways that preclude environmental degradation. This kind of collective political project must also tackle the ways in which capitalism specifically inhibits a new kind of habitability of the planet and produces subjectivity in ways that mask entanglement and possibilities for producing ecological subjectivities.

The term "ecology" in this project, especially in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, and in the context of the main arguments implied throughout, is conceived broadly and not only in the context of nature understood as organic life and its ecosystems. By contrast, I take ecology in the sense that Félix Guattari (2000) uses it in his *The Three Ecologies*. For Guattari, three kinds of ecologies (understood as milieus that humans and nonhumans inhabit) exist that must all be tackled and wrenched from the capitalist system in order to engender better relations between humans and the natural world and between humans themselves. These three ecologies are the social, the mental, and the environmental ecologies. Understood in this way, the term ecology broadens a more traditional understanding of environmental ecology and recognizes that the societies we inhabit and the mental landscapes which characterize our subjectivities each produce profound implications for the ways in which we also inhabit the natural world (Guattari, 2000).

In the context of the above assumptions, the purpose my project expresses three different but interrelated trajectories of inquiry, each of which represents a dearth in ecopolitical theory generally. First, I interrogate how various radical ecopolitical theories have understood the production of ecological subjectivity and the consequences of these understandings of subjectivity for producing ecological subjects in the context of capitalism, specifically. I examine deep ecology and ecofeminism, and ecosocialism in Chapters 1 and 2, respectively. These perspectives are each dedicated to rethinking the bankruptcy of the current configuration of the human-nature relationship and the possibilities for political action therein.

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In Chapter 1, I argue that deep ecology constituted one of the first radical environmental perspectives to centralize the importance of subjectivity to any reconceptualization of the human-nature relationship. Though deep ecology, ecocentrism, and some varieties of ecofeminism suffer from numerous problems, deep ecology contributes to any investigation of ecological subjectivity by noticing that the human-nature relationship itself is constitutive of human selfhood and therefore also tied to political action. One of these problems that makes deep ecology problematic, however, is its essentialization of the human-nature relationship. In short, deep ecology argues that only a certain kind of human-nature relationship based on "deep identification" with nature and "self-realization" of the embeddedness of the self in nature can correct the problem of anthropocentrism (Naess and Rothenberg, 1990, p. 84-85). Moreover, they offer a linear model of political change, where attitudinal and cultural changes automatically lead to environmentally friendly politics and societies, uncomplicated by the capitalist project and systems of power, for example. And finally, deep ecology's undertheorized model of political change diminishes its utility for re-conceptualizing the human-nature relationship in a way that fully rejects liberal individualism. For deep ecology, individual attitudinal changes can result in substantive political and social change, an assumption that allows them to easily fall into a problematic model of liberal moral voluntarism as the dominant form of political life. In short, deep ecology, Robyn Eckersley's (1992) understanding of ecocentrism, and some varieties of ecofeminism all fall short of a collective model of political change that escapes the liberal capitalist model, while also failing to theorize the relationship between power (capitalist power in particular) and the production of subjectivity as it affects the human-nature relationship. Similarly, they also vastly underestimate the heterogeneity of forces which produce subjectivity

in the first place. Nevertheless, they also connect subjectivity to concern for nature and cannot be ignored for that particular contribution to a theory of ecological subjectivity.

In Chapter 2, I argue that ecosocialism contributes to my project via its robust macro-critique of capitalism that points toward the fundamental incompatibility of capitalism and ecopolitics. Any perspective that centralizes a critique of capitalism for its destruction of nature aligns with the critical political force of my own project. Ecosocialism allows my project to engage with the most pervasive material planetary system which distances humanity from inhabiting the world in a better way. In short, capitalism may operate on many scales and in many ways, but ecosocialism allows us to view it in its more reified form, illuminating the contradictions and uncertainties produced by the capitalist mode of production that exploits nature freely. The contribution of ecosocialism to a robust re-imagination of ecological subjectivity also inheres in its focus on how humanity's capacity to creatively labor beyond its means of subsistence is reduced under capitalism, preventing alternative modes of creative self-activity. Though I argue that ecosocialism problematically reifies capitalism and reduces human subjectivity to a single expression of human nature, which also reduces myriad alternative expressions of freedom beyond the focus on animal laborans offered by ecosocialism, I also argue that this singular focus of ecosocialism remains relevant to any understanding of the relationship between ecological subjectivity and capitalist power.

Next, I look at two perspectives that are deeply important to understanding the problem of entanglement and the relationship of entanglement to subjectivity, ecology, and capitalism. I deal with new materialism in Chapter 3, and place it in conversation with ecology, capitalism, and subjectivity in order to discern its utility for creating ecological subjects out of its specifically novel ontology of entanglement and becoming, which emphasizes the active,

entangled, and uncertain processes through which human and nonhuman life on the planet is produced, including human subjectivity. New materialists like Connolly, for example, overcome the enclosed and limited historical materialism of Marxist perspectives by reconfiguring the relationship between all sorts of systems of planetary materiality and their effects on the production of subjectivity. Since humans are indeed entangled in numerous webs of both materiality and materiality imbued with power, new materialism's inclusion in this project is necessary for the ways in which the perspective incorporates a robust analysis of planetary materiality (as agentic) for its consequences in the realm of the production of subjectivity. At the same time, however, new materialism's expansive and nondualist ontology of becoming does not adequately deal with capitalism, since an analysis of the numerous planetary systems imbricated in the production of subjectivity overshadows an analysis of which systems might possess a disproportional amount of power at a given point of history. Currently, capitalism possesses this disproportionate capacity for exercising material power to produce subjectivity in ways not conducive to a politics of becoming which acknowledges planetary forces or combats environmental destruction. I begin Chapter 3 by elucidating new materialism's planetary ontology and its connection to the production of subjectivity, followed by an analysis of the political implications of the perspective. Finally, I critique new materialism for its less than stellar focus on the entanglements between capitalism and subjectivity, specifically. Fortunately for my project, the work of Félix Guattari analyzes this specifically capitalist materiality for its effects on both the production of subjectivity and the production of subjectivity as it relates to ecological politics and a politics of creative becoming (of existentially asserting ourselves in the world differently in the name of a new ecopolitics).

In Chapter 4, I analyze the contributions to a theory of ecological subjectivity through the greatly underutilized contributions of Félix Guattari, whose work constitutes the most important crux of my project overall. In short, Guattari alone robustly theorizes the above relationship between ecology, capitalism, and the production of subjectivity in a way that aligns with uncertainty inherent in the relationship between humans and nature. In this chapter, I start by tracing the uniquely rhizomatic and transversal ontological perspective of Gilles Deleuze and Guattari throughout their collaborative work. I then argue that Guattari's particular understanding of subjectivity as composed of numerous heterogenous capacities for vocalization and assertion of existence constitutes an extremely useful tool for re-imagining the ecological subject in the context of capitalism. Likewise, Guattari's understanding of capitalism specifically complexifies the role that capitalist power plays in producing subjectivities antithetical to a new ecological politics. In short, capitalism does not only produce subjectivity through a specific division of labor, but also through molecular and rhizomatic inroads into the human psyche.

And finally, Chapter 5 re-imagines the possibilities for the political development of ecological subjects in the context of capitalist power, material entanglement, uncertainty, and the work of Félix Guattari and the new materialists specifically. For instance, I start by arguing that new materialism contributes to these possibilities because it complements Guattari's analysis of the micropolitical investments that capitalism makes into the production of subjectivity by pointing to the planetary configurations that also impact the production of subjectivity and which fundamentally alter the habitability of the planet on a large scale. Entanglement with the world's materiality occurs on both planetary and the molecular scales, and an ecological subjectivity required for an ecological politics that takes seriously all kinds of entanglements requires an analysis of any and all scales and speeds of the effects of materiality on the production of

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subjectivity. New materialism and the work of Guattari each encourage political action oriented towards a rethinking of humanity's place in the world, not only the human-nature relationship, but more generally, the entanglements of humanity and materiality in all its forms. In short, the political task ahead is to rethink subjectivity in a way that allows humans to re-imagine new ways to inhabit the world by capitalizing on the disjuncts, eruptions of novelty, and strange becomings that disrupt any perception of unified entanglement and closed systems of power and material life. This critical materialist project, especially in the context of Guattari's work, also disrupts the boundaries of the material itself as traditionally understood by political theory.

No genealogy of the understanding of subjectivity in radical ecopolitical theories such as deep ecology and ecosocialism yet exists, and the primary reasons for this lacuna relate to the enigmatic quality of subjectivity generally but also to its continual neglect in ecopolitical theory as a key driver of political life and ecological devastation. Ecopolitical theorists have discussed structural, historical materialist, cultural, individual, political, discursive, conceptual, and social factors that all contribute to a less than ideal human-nature relationship, yet factors related to human subjectivity and its production have largely been neglected for their impact on this relationship. The first step, in other words, to discerning ways to re-imagine ecological subjectivity is to understand what has been said and implied about ecological subjectivity in the history of ecopolitical thought. In Chapter 3, new materialism also constitutes a bridge between older traditions of ecopolitical theory and a post-Marxist materialism that conceives of subjectivity as deeply related to entanglement differently than earlier traditions such as deep ecology and ecosocialism. And finally, the work of Félix Guattari has been persistently neglected by ecopolitical theory in general, though as mentioned above, only Guattari offers a robust theory of ecological subjectivity as it relates to capitalist power and the production of

subjectivity. The relative absence of Guattari's work in ecopolitical theory and new materialism is quite astonishing given his broadened understanding of ecology. Usually, this absence is blamed on Guattari's complexity as a writer and thinker, but perhaps it is also due to the field's general neglect of the production of subjectivity in relation to ecopolitical possibilities. The promise of Guattari's work in combination with new materialism's planetary politics of becoming is taken up in Chapter 5 in order to point towards a critical and materialist understanding of the production of ecological subjectivity in the context of capitalist power and the enclosure of subjectivity.

To re-emphasize a key point that stretches throughout my project: I argue that the production of subjectivity has been neglected as one important political component that must be theorized much more robustly for its utility in creating more ecologically minded societies. Ecopolitical theories (and of course, political theories generally speaking) almost always imply a theory of the production of subjectivities (of agencies, affects, selves, consciousnesses, needs, and/or desires), but ecopolitical theories have generally neglected any robust understanding of the production of subjectivity as a necessary (but not sufficient) component of a new ecopolitical world that can confront the current environmental crisis.

CHAPTER 1: A GENEALOGY OF THE SUBJECT IN DEEP ECOLOGY AND VARIETIES
OF ECOFEMINISM

The tradition of ecopolitical thought negotiates the terrain of the human-nature

relationship to remedy human-caused destruction of nature. The modern-day origins of radical

environmentalist thinking in the West trace back at least to the early 1970s, with the emergence

of a variety of perspectives that critique the current practices and cultural attunements of Western

civilization (Ray and Parson, 2016). Most of these perspectives seek to re-direct the relationship

between humans and nature in a way that alters the destructive ways that humans treat nature.[3] In

short, humans must change their relationship to nature or risk annihilation of themselves and

nature in any recognizable (and therefore valuable) form. This implies important changes in

ontology, ideology, relationality, and of course, politics. The political contribution of

perspectives like deep ecology, Robyn Eckersley's ecocentrism, and some varieties of

ecofeminism is that they recognize that the current political landscape of Western societies

revolves around flawed and problematic understandings (and enactments/policies) that relate to

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[3] Though I use the term "humans" and "nature" throughout this chapter (and my project as a whole), I also
recognize that the imposition of a universalist "humanity" or a universalist "we" is highly problematic since it
implies that humanity is homogenous and equally responsible for environmental degradation across space and time.
Of course, this is incorrect. Theories like deep ecology tend to make this mistake (and overgeneralize in this way) to
their detriment. For example, Naess and Rothenberg (1989) recognize like most environmentalists that the Global
South (the "Third World," in their terminology) cannot develop in the same manner as the Global North for the sake
of the planet. At the same time, however, they essentialize the Global South, paternalistically and contradictorily
arguing for the preservation of wild spaces without the influence of "human development," whilst also arguing that
the Global South and especially "traditional cultural beliefs and practices of much of the world are favorable to
norms of the deep ecological movement" (Naess and Rothenberg, 1989, p. 212). My project rejects this paternalistic
framing, and instead invokes the "we" and "humanity" in a much narrower sense, focusing on the necessity for
substantive political change in the West and the Global North capitalist world, first and foremost, and
acknowledging the fundamental inequality that this system produces, putting much of the Global South in an
environmental bind which is almost impossible to escape given the destructive tendencies of neoliberal capitalism
and the entire history of Western imperialism, colonization, and enslavement. When I argue that "we" must change,
I am speaking to those most responsible for this situation and other political theorists engaged with this problem
(while acknowledging that this responsibility also distributes itself unequally in the Global North).

the inert and separate status of nature in human societies. To quote Ray and Parson (2016), these perspectives argue that "By changing ourselves, we change the world" (p. 3).

Radical environmental theories such as deep ecology and ecocentrism attempt to cultivate fundamental alterations to the relations between humanity and the natural world. According to these perspectives, the necessity of these changes derives from incontrovertible evidence that humans are irreversibly damaging nature. The methods by which humans contaminate and destroy nature manifest in countless contexts, from the small actions of individuals littering to the massive carbon dioxide emissions of multinational corporations. From overfishing to deforestation to climate change, the actions of human beings individually and collectively have wrought lasting environmental change on a global scale. In other words, radical environmental theorists across the board ask themselves one question: Namely, how can humans as a species stop these changes and halt environmental harm? In other words, what do humans need to change about themselves and their actions in order to bring about a better world, presumably one that embodies better and more meaningful relations between humans and nature?

This chapter traces the major principles, contributions, and problems of deep ecological/ecocentric and some ecofeminist traditions to determine their utility for re-imagining ecological subjectivity and examine the reasoning behind their understandings of the human-nature relationship, in particular their understandings of the relationship between the production of subjectivity and political change. Indeed, these perspectives all focus in some substantive way on the idea of the ecological subject, a human that cares about their environment in a way that is constitutive of their selfhood. The significance of these perspectives, to varying degrees, lies in their underlying conceptions of the relationship between the natural world and human subjectivity, the psychological and existential parts composing a human individual and human

collective societies and groups as well (desires [conscious and unconscious], affect-imbued dimensions of the self, identities, the positing of the self in the world as whole or otherwise, etc). In other words, the production of subjectivity and who we think we are as human beings and actors in the world fundamentally circumscribes or enables political action (and political action in favor of or against the environment). Additionally, this project (including this Chapter and Chapter 2 in particular) contributes to research regarding the production of subjectivity as it relates to environmental politics generally, since very little work has been accomplished in this area. To date, no comprehensive genealogy of subjectivity in radical ecopolitical thought exists, though Mansfield (2000) does produce a comprehensive book on subjectivity and theories of the self in political and social theory more generally.

Deep ecologists and some ecofeminists together utilize a combination of ecological, spiritual, and ethical claims that aim to convince human beings to fundamentally alter their relationship to the natural world through an expansion of identification with nature itself. Moreover, ecofeminism advocates for both structural and epistemological analyses of the causes of flawed understandings of the human-nature relationship. In short, the flawed perspective that dominates contemporary society's understanding of its own relationship to nature includes instrumentalist and patriarchal assumptions about nature itself. (And this flawed perspective also naturalizes problematic and essentialized characteristics about women that also produce them as an oppressed category associated with nature rather than culture/objectivity/rationality) (Mallory, 2010; Smith, 2016).

One important critique that can be levied at these perspectives is that they reflect rather than substantively reconfigure the liberal project of the production of political change itself. In other words, they often draw a linear and therefore problematic connection between a

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transformation of the self and robust political change, without paying close enough attention to

the mediating factors that interrupt and make impossible this linearity in the first place. By

lacking a fully coherent model of political change and focusing squarely on individual actions

and self-identifications, deep ecology arguably (and problematically) distances itself from the

political by presuming that individual changes in behavior and identity will coincide with

societal transformation (Parson and Ray, 2016). For example, Ray and Parson (2016) argue that

> To foster this deep connection, humans are encouraged to seek individual practices, even
> if done in a group setting, to strengthen their personal bond with nature, and to reimagine
> their identity as one with the cosmos. In our analysis there is nothing wrong with these
> practices if they suit an individual, but they do not constitute political action. Cultivating
> a sense of belonging to the universe as practice emphasizes the importance of creating a
> right human–nature relationship, instead of directing attention toward the material
> conditions that produce environmental and social crises. (p. 3)[4]

Likewise, some ecofeminist perspectives fall short of completely embracing a political theory of

change, instead opting for a focus on personal ethical choices as engendering subsequent

political changes (Smith, 2016).[5] Additionally, Robyn Eckersley's (1992) groundbreaking text

The Environment and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach, tends to more fully

embrace a theory of political change, but ultimately suffers from some of the same problematic

assumptions as deep ecology.

Overall, these perspectives typically profess commitments to ecocentric rather than

anthropocentric culture, which often causes them to incorporate politics as an afterthought or as a

platform that naturally follows from substantive individual transformation in our understanding

of ourselves and our embeddedness in nature. I also highlight the political implications of these

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[4]   I take up this question of the status of "the political" in these perspectives, especially deep ecology, later in this
chapter, though I echo the sentiments of Ray and Parson (2016) here.
[5]   Notably, the variety of perspectives considered "ecofeminist" is large and separating ecofeminisms into
ethical/philosophical versus socialist does not fully comprehend the diversity of perspectives in this tradition.
Socialist ecofeminist perspectives will be incorporated into Chapter 2, whilst new materialist and some postcapitalist
feminist insights will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 5, specifically.

perspectives despite less than stellar attention to the relationship between human-nature relations and political action, especially collective political action.

Despite the varying degrees of "political-ness" involved in deep ecology, ecocentrism, and some varieties of ecofeminism respectively, they each offer (or imply) important understandings of the production of subjectivity which represents an undertheorized contribution to a robust understanding of the relationship between subjectivity and environmental politics, particularly the necessity of producing "ecological subjects" capable of halting the destruction of nature and revolutionizing political action therein. This chapter tackles the question of whether or not these understandings of the production of subjectivity hold promise for accomplishing these tasks.

In particular, this chapter develops a genealogy of the subject in deep ecology, Eckersley's work, and some varieties of ecofeminism, respectively, with specific attention given to the implications of these perspectives for the development of a politically engaged ecological subject. By way of tracing the development of the perspectives themselves, the aim of the chapter is to draw out the contributions that they can make to any theory of the ecological subject, while maintaining a critical eye toward their flaws and contradictions, many of which dilute their collective utility for contributing to a promising political ecological project in the first place. Overall, both deep ecology and ecocentrism have confronted environmental degradation head on, attributing fault to the human subject and the ways in which economic and cultural practices have continuously distanced that subject from the natural world throughout human history. By centrally locating the subject in their analyses, deep ecologists have made a much-needed move toward incorporating a theory of the self into a notion of the human-nature relationship and its political implications. Though they make missteps in their examinations of

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culture and politics, they remain committed to the insight that something must be done about the self in order to halt environmental harm. The claim that the self, intimately and irrevocably coincides with what we are doing to ourselves as a species and to our environment remains the most positive contribution that deep ecology makes in its efforts to bring about change in the human-nature relationship, however misguided its particular conception of that necessary self may be in the end.

Overall, I argue that deep ecology and ecofeminism suffer from a lack of attention to the heterogeneity of subjectivity and the heterogeneity of forces which produce it at the individual and collective levels. Deep ecology, for instance, tries to dictate the direction that ecological subjectivity must take for the resolution of environmental harm, posing a problematic linear model of subjectivity which grants too much agency to human beings absent the constraints of structures of power and regardless of power's effects on subjectivity and its possibilities of being "ecological." Moreover, deep ecology's model of the human self presents this self as capable of changing the entirety of human culture through individual acceptance of their own deeply meaningful relations with nature. Presuming that cultural change happens first and foremost via individual action is highly problematic in the context of power and a more robust understanding of selfhood. For example, the assertion on the part of deep ecology that humanity's material and subjective relations with nature a priori lead to a deep and meaningful connection between humans and nature fails to recognize that other intervening material systems negotiate this relationship in a way that may fundamentally alter the ways in which it can be meaningful. Other processes, material and ideological, also produce subjectivity, in other words. Capitalism, for example, constitutes subjects.

And finally, deep ecology may actually fall into a model of human selfhood that could be easily co-opted by liberalism and capitalism by virtue of its focus on individual transformation, specifically. Robyn Eckersley's (1992) model of ecocentrism also suffers from similar problems in that it presumes that cultural change must occur in order for robust ecological politics and democracy to follow. Notably, Eckersley does acknowledge that subjectivity is more complicated than deep ecology presumes but does not incorporate these insights into her understanding of the necessary steps towards an ecopolitical society. Finally, ecofeminism as understood in this chapter also complicates this picture by bringing in a complex understanding of domination and its relation to the dominant dualist understanding of the human-nature relationship. Ecofeminism ultimately recognizes a similar view of subjectivity as Eckersley, but also similarly fails to incorporate that notion into a complex understanding of political praxis through the production of ecological subjects.

I start this chapter by examining the more general tenets and assumptions of deep ecology. I then move to an analysis of each sub-tradition's understanding of subjectivity in particular, followed by an analysis of the missteps and lasting contributions that each sub-tradition can make to a robust understanding of ecological subjectivity, in particular, and especially given ecofeminism's critiques of deep ecology. Finally, I argue that deep ecology's major strength is that is centralizes the relationship between the self/subjectivity and nature, albeit in a way that limits the possibilities for producing that relationship differently in the first instance and by neglecting a structural analysis of capitalism, and its own ways of producing subjectivity in a way that impedes the primary political steps for which deep ecology advocates.

Primary Tenets and Observations

Historically speaking, the deep ecology movement emerged in the 1970s as a result of the ascendency of "liberal ideologies and conservative institutions on reformist environmentalism during the 1960s" (Luke, 2002, p. 179). In many ways, deep ecology exists as a critique of the modern project and Enlightenment dualism (Scerri, 2016; Zimmerman, 1994). Centrally, deep ecology argues that environmental degradation results from "Anthropocentric humanism that is central to the leading ideologies of modernity, including liberal capitalism and Marxism" (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 2). Likewise, deep ecologists claim that, "Hoping to free humankind from material deprivation by controlling nature, modern societies tend to overlook the fact that humans, too, are part of nature" (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 2). Fundamentally, deep ecologists promote the value of recognizing the interconnectedness between humans and nature, which in turn should result in better overall treatment and valuation of nature as a central part of humanity's own identity and being. With the emergence of the environmental movement in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the disappointment faced by the radical left post-1960s, and modernity's oppressive dualist assumptions in full swing, the search for another way to relate to the Earth seemed fitting. The Enlightenment preoccupation to separate "man" (and not woman) from nature was slowly culminating to its logical extreme (of the destruction and objectification of nature through harmful industrial practices) as both scientists and environmental theorists were beginning to recognize the substantive harms that humans had inflicted upon planet Earth.

Interestingly, ecofeminism emerges in the same period as deep ecology, mirroring its critiques of oppressive dualism by focusing beyond the human-nature dualism and extending its critique to the woman-man dualism as well. The founders of the so-called "first wave" of ecofeminism lay out claims that have remained significant throughout its development as a field.

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These perspectives occupied themselves with critiquing dualist assumptions that hierarchize man

and Enlightenment "reason" above woman and nature (Gaard, 2017; Warren, 2000). Though

some ecofeminists do essentialize the character of women as inherently connected to nature,

most ecofeminist work that has remained important in the field critiques the idea of an essential

connection between women and nature but also points out that these connections are born of a

devaluation of many of the characteristics associated with the two categories themselves (See

Gaard, 2017). In other words, though not inherently part of the character of women, the

association of women with nature has remained culturally dominant in the West. For example,

ecofeminists have argued that the association between women and nature has also historically

been utilized to devalue other kinds of human life outside of the West, from assumptions about

race to a general devaluation of non-western cultures which sometimes profess a profound and

interconnected relationship to nature (Gaard, 2017). In general, like deep ecologists, many

ecofeminists argue that,

> Clearly, Euro-Western culture is so permeated by Cartesian rationalism that children are
> taught at an early age not to receive—and certainly not to trust—the information being
> sent continuously by the animate world that surrounds us, and the diverse human
> communities with whom our lives are interwoven. (Gaard, 2017, p. xix)

Like deep ecology, then, the ecofeminists included in this chapter also critique Enlightenment

assumptions for distancing humans from nature in a way that prevents recognition of

interconnectedness and the inherent oppressiveness of that separation for both nature itself and

the negative effects of these assumptions on oppressed categories of human beings.

While ecofeminism focuses on these intertwined dominations stemming from

problematic dualistic thinking, deep ecology tends to focus solely on the problematic relationship

between humans and nature, rather than the intersectional analyses of ecofeminists. Tracing the

history of the above two streams of thought, I begin with an examination of the precise place of the category of the "subject" in these perspectives.

To elaborate, the distinctiveness of deep ecology lies in its solution to the problem of ecological degradation. In short, it was one of the first traditions in radical environmental theory to argue that the environmentally destructive habits of human beings derive from their own selfhood. In other words, the self directly relates to the problematic things that humans are doing to themselves (and nature). Importantly, deep ecology understands subjectivity as constituted enclosed selfhood with particular characteristics and relationships waiting to be brought worth via a rejection of cultural anthropocentrism.

Indeed, the deep ecology narrative suggests that the consequences of environmental degradation harm not only nature itself but also the essential character of human beings, i.e. their enclosed and largely impenetrable subjectivity. In this regard, deep ecology posits human subjectivity as complete, in the sense that it is fundamentally autonomously produced and configured, agentic (without many limits other than the material ones which embed the human subject in nature), and unimpeded by the systems of power and the material conditions that those systems create. In short, human subjects are agents whose only real encumbrance lies in the necessarily more valid and real character of their relationship with the rest of nature, conceived in the traditional sense of ecosystems, animals, and the biosphere as whole. Subjectivity as understood by deep ecology, then, is both produced consciously and autonomously by the individual self and by the fundamental (though often unrecognized) relationship between human beings and the natural world.

The ontological perspective here is one of interconnectedness in a relatively holistic framework (See Diem, 2002), though Arne Naess (1995a), the deep ecology's movements' first

philosopher and spokesperson, argues that these relationships and identifications may take a variety of forms, albeit remaining in a somewhat foundational or "gestalt" ontology that irrevocably intertwines humans and nature with one another, in irrevocable interdependence that is ignored by humans at their own peril and to the detriment of nature itself.

Deep ecology does not extensively trouble itself to pinpoint the variety of factors, material and cultural, that may contribute to this less than ideal human-nature relationship, instead focusing on anthropocentric attitudes as the primary causal motivator in human degradation of the natural world. Anthropocentrism describes an attitude with cultural and sometimes industrial roots. For example, Andrew McLaughlin (1993) argues that

> The regulation of social life by market mechanisms has ramifications in all dimensions of social life, ranging from family life and schooling to the way people live out their lives as workers or owners. Markets tend to generate selfish behavior and discourage cooperative behavior. Typically, the participants in these markets act to enhance their welfare without regard to others. In short, they are self-regarding. That this is the ordinary pattern of behavior within capitalistic markets is not a reflection of human behavior. (p. 29)

Herein lies a problem for deep ecology in general: its critique of capitalism posits an essentialist human nature that can only surface in the self via a conscious recognition of interconnectedness through a cultivation of ecocentrist attitudes. Anthropocentrism preceded capitalism in the West but also remains vitally useful to capitalism as an ideology which redirects and minimizes robust concern for nature in human socio-political life (McLaughlin, 1993).

In short, deep ecology attributes anthropocentrism to a misstep in human valuation that is not attributable to capitalist processes but instead doesn't have a clear cause. Consistent with this causal narrative, deep ecology presents human beings as fundamentally capable of self-transformation regardless of the material, ideational, or unknowable barriers that may otherwise stand in the way of such an internal and largely individualized self-transformations.

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Deep ecologists, however, no longer hold the monopoly on the relationship between selfhood and environmental ethics and practices. Following this line of reasoning, the ecofeminist perspectives outlined here also focus on relationality, selfhood, ontology, and ethics (Warren, 1996). Interestingly, ecofeminists have both critiqued and embraced deep ecology to varying degrees, maintaining either a critical difference focused on the lack of integration of patriarchal critiques into key assumptions of deep ecology or by contrast, decidedly arguing that deep ecology remains a compatible ally of ecofeminist perspectives (Diehm, 2002; Fox, 1995a; Salleh, 1984; Warren, 1996). What follows is an account of the treatment of the self in all of these perspectives, with particular attention to the ways that these perspectives forge the connections between selfhood and ecological practices and the political implications therein.

Briefly, deep ecology and ecocentrism[6] each acknowledge that human subjectivity must change in order for the human-nature relationship to change. As ecopsychologist E.A. Bragg (1996) suggests, "…the concept of the 'ecological self' is worthy of serious academic consideration as a possible intervening variable in the production of environmentally responsible behaviour" (p. 94). In short, humans must decidedly alter the way they understand their reality (ontologically speaking) in order to foster more ethical relationships with the natural world, cultivating new meanings and culturally significant practices toward their surroundings.

In deep ecology, specifically, this desire to incorporate the self into matters of environmental sustainability first emerges in the work of the default founder of deep ecology, Arne Naess (1973), as the concept of "ecosophy" (p. 99). For Naess and many deep ecologists,

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[6]   Ecocentric valuation (rather than anthropocentric valuation) remains a deeply important political commitment of all varieties of deep ecology. Robyn Eckersley (1992), however, does not officially consider herself to be a deep ecologist, but rather an "emancipatory ecopolitical theorist" (p. 26). Instead, she classifies deep ecology as "one very promising and distinctive *kind* of ecocentric approach" (p. 27).

an ecosophy constitutes a philosophical "personal code of values" and a "view of the world which guides one's own decisions," that applies to "questions involving ourselves and nature" (Naess and Rothenberg, 1990, p. 36). In other words, an ecosophy reflects the fundamental relationship between an individual human being and the natural world, a worldview that fundamentally shapes and molds our selfhood in the direction of environmentally ethical behavior toward and profound respect for nature. Changes in attitudes could then lead to political change; deep ecologists assert this perspective but usually shy away from analyzing it in depth.

For ecofeminists, the precise place of the "self" in their larger critique of patriarchal society and desire for substantive change is less central, but still important. For example, Karen Warren (1997) argues that,

> It is crucial to our human well-being…that these human capacities be developed, exercised, and balanced against each other and that none be allowed either to atrophy or to take over. Thus reason and emotion, individuality and sociality, care and connectedness must all find their appropriate balance within each individual self. (p. 376)

Warren goes on to argue that radical environmental theories rightly place an emphasis on the importance of selfhood to treating nature well, arguing that precisely because the egoistic and alienated self as severed fundamentally from others and nature does nothing to further a better relationship between humans and nature. Warren and other ecofeminists like Val Plumwood attempt to strike a balance between a relational understanding of selfhood (as intimately and inextricably related to nature) but also as possessing autonomy and the capacity for reason, qualities that have been denied to women consistently for much of human history (Warren, 1996). In other words, many ecofeminists try to cultivate an understanding of how humans can both identify with and care for nature while remaining distinct from it. Indeed, some ecofeminists fear that some of deep ecology's focus on the holistic relation between the self and the natural world dangerously presumes that the differences between selves in the human world

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no longer matter as much (Plumwood, 1996). For ecofeminists who care deeply about re-claiming the category of women from patriarchal oppression for its own sake and for the insights that women's (non-essentialist yet associated) values such as care and consideration for others can teach humanity at large about its relationship with nature, completely subsuming humanity into nature for nature's own sake could present a dangerous activity that leaves women with less autonomy and less distinctiveness as a valuable category of people than under patriarchy and anthropocentrism themselves.

Moreover, deep ecologists begin their critique of the contemporary human-nature relationship by critiquing the cultural and social phenomenon of anthropocentrism. According to ecocentrist Robyn Eckersley (1992), anthropocentrism is "the belief that there is a clear and morally relevant dividing line between humankind and the rest of nature, that humankind is the only or principal source of value and meaning in the world, and that nonhuman nature is there for no other purpose but to serve humankind" (p. 51). As Eckersley goes on to note, a rejection of anthropocentrism is not a rejection of humanism per se, arguing that the goal of ecocentrist political theory at least, is to recognize the anthropocentric assumptions embedded in "our humanist heritage" rather than equalizing the two terms with one another (Eckersley, 1992, p. 57). Whether or not Eckersley is convincing in her conclusion, however, remains debatable. Yet, critics of deep ecology in particular have vehemently charged the tradition with anti-humanist tendencies (See Bookchin, 1987, 1990; Ferry, 1992; Ray and Parsons, 2016).

For instance, social ecologist Murry Bookchin has argued that deep ecology is not merely anti-humanist, but misanthropic, while others contend anti- or non-humanist tendencies at the very least (Bookchin, 1987; Ray and Parsons, 2016). Some ecofeminists, as well as Bookchin have also pointed out numerous times that focusing on anthropocentrism as the root cause of

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environmental degradation ignores other systems of domination like patriarchy, hierarchy, and

racism in addition to blaming all humans equally for the actions of industrialized countries and

other structures like capitalism (See Bookchin, 1987; Salleh, 1984). Though, admittedly, the

transformation of self that deep ecology deems necessary for the cultivation of a better human-

nature relationship is decidedly human-focused, the relationship that deep ecology promotes

remains at least questionable given the above accusations.

> In this regard, Bookchin (1995)[7] argues that
>
> When biocentrists, anti-humanists, and 'deep ecologists' flagellate us with claims that
> life-forms have 'rights' to life and 'self-realization' that we, as humans, fail to recognize,
> they unknowingly participate in a hidden anthropomorphism that we bring to many forms
> of life. (p. 139)

Indeed, Bookchin here is pointing out a critical yet illuminating flaw in deep ecologist

methodology and political practice. In short, deep ecologists promote a perspective that attempts

to re-direct human loyalties away from a damaging anthropocentrism while also promoting

political action that requires individual transformation of identity/selfhood, where the only

acceptable types of actions de-center the human as a matter of course in decision-making. This

type of "hidden anthropomorphism," where an ecocentric epistemology participates in an

essentialized relational and ecocentric ontology also has troubling implications, which Luc Ferry

(1992) is apt to discern.

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[7]   Though I understand that Murray Bookchin represents an important figure in radical ecopolitical thought
generally, I do not deal with him in this chapter for a number of reasons. While a certain brand of communalism has
become popularized in contemporary political culture (in locavore and other grassroots movements, for example), I
would argue that Bookchin's own political project bases itself on extremely problematic assumptions that do not
adequately deal with the same human hubris that he critiques here in deep ecology. (Though he does not suffer from
anthropomorphizing specifically nor anti-humanism, he does suffer from the problematic assumption that humans
can "know nature" through his dialectical naturalist perspective [See Bookchin, 1995]). Unfortunately, Bookchin
suffers from the same technological optimism of many green capitalists and tends to vastly overestimate the
important role that humans can play in "guiding" nature in its most promising directions, one of the assumptions that
led to Enlightenment hubris in the first instance.

For instance, Ferry (1992) argues that for deep ecology "Humanism is not the answer to the modern industrial world but rather an original sin, the primary cause of evil" (p. 60). This also clarifies the causal understanding that deep ecology, McLaughlin's perspective included, attributes to industrialism and capitalism specifically. They are symptoms of a larger problem of anthropocentrism, rather than the causes of anthropocentrism itself. Anthropocentrism is a deep-seated attitude that humans must change to save the planet (and themselves); it is fundamentally against humanity's true interdependence and embeddedness. There is both an ecological and radical notion to this idea and a particularly liberal and individualist notion as well. By deciding to de-center humanity for the sake of cultivating more "accurate" relations with the natural world, deep ecology makes the same mistakes as liberalism, offering a particularistic notion of the good that requires an individualist interest-driven model of political change. Deep ecology would argue that by expanding humanity's interests to include the natural world in an intrinsically-valuable way, humans expand their own interests in the process (See Naess, 1973, 1995a, 1995c).

Ferry's (1992) critique goes further, however, and includes the assertion that deep ecology feels that every human, if sufficiently reflexive and attentive, can attain their (deep ecology's) particularistic sense of "duty" toward nature (p. 63). In a moment of admonition in relation to deep ecology, Ferry (1992) argues that it is "a form of fundamentalism [that] has come to be politically 'unclassifiable,' with its combination of themes that traditionally belong to the extreme Right and the extreme Left" (p. 67), where on the one hand, a critique of modernist dualism situates the perspective on the left and on the other hand, a desire for a "more natural" world borders on far-right fascism for Ferry.

To clarify, Ferry implies that deep ecological principles could easily lapse into fascist political tendencies by examining the environmental "values" of Nazi Germany. He argues that

> Like the aesthetics of sentiment and deep ecology, which also place new value on primitive peoples, mountain folk, or American indians [sic], the National Socialist conception of ecology encompasses the notion that the *Naturvölker*, the 'natural peoples,' achieve a perfect harmony between their surroundings and their customs. This is even the most certain sign of superiority of their ways over the liberal world of uprootedness and perpetual mobility. Their culture, similar to animal ways of life, is a prolongation of nature; it is this ideal conciliation that the modernity issued from the French Revolution has destroyed and which it is now a matter of restoring. (Ferry, 1992, p. 105)

Though deep ecology doesn't proclaim that certain peoples only belong in their native "habitats" outright, they do argue that certain places should be altogether off-limits from humans because of their naturalness and outstanding intrinsic value (See Devall and Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1973; Naess and Rothenberg, 1990). Likewise, they fetishize indigenous populations, as Ferry (1995) here notes. Ferry also clarifies the above position by referring to subjectivity specifically and its relation to an anthropocentric versus ecocentric attitude. He argues that "*subjectivity* (an 'I' or a 'we') …ultimately decides whether to value a particular attitude or not" (p. 85).

In short, then, deep ecologists commit an error when they assume that ecocentric valuation in and of itself precedes human valuation, as some universal, cosmic, higher order value. Although I would argue that Ferry's critique of deep ecology is somewhat exaggerated, it should serve as a cautionary tale in the sense that deep ecology, like the fascist ecologies to which he compares it, could easily become an ideology that promotes conformity to a "correct" way of viewing nature at the expense of democracy and human rights. Below, I hope to clarify how deep ecology tends to vacillate between a quasi-dogmatic view (a la Ferry's critique) and an open call for individuals to experience nature and view themselves within it differently (a la Naess' [1995a] understanding of "Ecosophy T"). The latter interpretation of deep ecology, unfortunately, collapses into a moral (and one might argue liberal individualist) model of ethical

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change, an equally damaging condemnation for deep ecology on the whole as its potential fascism. While deep ecology only fully embraces the value of human beings if they are willing to ethically alter their own relations with nature first and foremost, they also bring attention to the fact that humans remain indebted to the exterior world for their survival and flourishing in addition to focusing on the relation of the self to nature (a positive quality of the perspective overall). Next, I discuss more specific tenets of deep ecology and their merits and return to these critiques in addition to my own later in the chapter.

By focusing on anthropocentrism, deep ecology also directly confronts the Western Enlightenment assumption that humans alone are the creators of value in the world, values which possess utility for the species (Naess and Rothenberg, 1990). In other words, deep ecologists contend that the intrinsic value of all life and related ecosystems matters, regardless of its utility to human beings (Devall and Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1973; Naess and Rothenberg, 1990). Naess and Rothenberg (1990) argue that "To relate all value to mankind is a form of anthropocentrism which is not philosophically tenable," implying that humans tend to equate value with utility, despite intuitively knowing as a species that stating, "'this is valuable,' does not imply that, 'this is beneficial for humans.'" (p. 176-77). In other words, deep ecologists explicitly acknowledge that only humans can create value, but dispute the notion that because of this fact, humans only value things because of their usefulness. Notably, the assertion that nature has value in itself regardless of its utility to human beings does not dispute that humans are the only life-forms capable of granting value itself, but rather, constitutes an ethical assertion that humans *should* value all life regardless of the function it fulfills for human society (Devall and Sessions, 1985).

By pointing out this logical misstep in human valuation, deep ecologists presume a causal link between anthropocentric attitudes and environmental degradation. They do not deny that

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humans are uniquely positioned as creatures who create value, but rather, assert that this unique position alone does not imply that humans should restrict their values to only those of an anthropocentric character. Neither does deep ecology deny that human beings must consider utility when making decisions about their lives. Rather, the restriction of valuation to that of a utility-maximizing variety obscures the potential of humans to consider intrinsic value in general (Naess and Rothenberg, 1990). In other words, deep ecologists advocate the expansion of valuation to *also include* biocentric egalitarianism, the idea that all living things are equal in their intrinsic value (including humanity) and regardless of calculations of utility (Devall and Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1973)The call from deep ecologists, then, is for substantive consideration of intrinsic value in the context of human decision-making and action, with full acknowledgement that humans are the creators of value in the first place and that as a species, will consider their own vital interests first and foremost (Naess and Rothenberg, 1990).

Some critics also question the utility or the possibility of moving beyond the anthropocentric framework. For example, Eric Katz (2000) argues that deep ecology's emphasis on self-realization and ontological holism create problems for its claim to non-anthropocentrism, despite its own assertions that it is ecocentric, or places nature at the center of all things (Katz 2000). For example, he argues that "All three of the core distinguishing ideas of deep ecology—identification [with nature, through recognition of intrinsic value], Self-realization, and holistic ontology—are deeply embedded in a human-centered worldview" (Katz, 2000, p. 33). Katz (2000) goes on to argue that by discussing humanity's common interests with the natural world, deep ecologists position human interests as fundamentally aligned with the rest of nature. Deep ecologists have little to no historical and very little scientific evidence to support this claim.

Against this perspective, Naess and Rothenberg (1990) state that, "'Homocentrism' and 'anthropocentrism' which often have been used in a derogatory way should be qualified by an adjective, 'narrow homocentrism'" (p. 141). They clarify their critique of this "narrow" anthropocentrism by summarizing their understanding of biocentrism where,

> Gradually the prospect of protecting the planet as a whole and for its own sake is seen as one of the greatest challenges ever. And it certainly is a specifically *human* task. A deep human need is involved, we realize a unique potentiality in revising political decisions so as to satisfy that need. (Naess and Rothenberg 1990, p. 141)

The connection here between human needs and non-anthropocentrism justifies, at least for deep ecologists, their own claim that they truly are rejecting and transcending anthropocentrism. In other words, deep ecologists claim that ridding the world of anthropocentrism fulfills an essential human need, in addition to fulfilling the needs of the rest of the planet. Whether or not these claims "truly" escape an anthropocentric perspective may not be as important as deep ecology's own ethical claims. What matters for the purposes of this section is that deep ecology fundamentally rejects not only the assumption that humans and nature are fundamentally separate but also the dualist assumption that this separation does not exist as a matter of ethics. In short, the best way to cultivate better, more ethical relations between humans and the natural world, humans must embrace an ecocentric perspective (or biocentric perspective, depending on the deep ecologist under scrutiny). Deep ecologists' claim is that rejecting anthropocentrism constitutes an ethical decision on the part of individuals and humanity at large.

Relatedly, most ecofeminists reference the connections between anthropocentrism and androcentrism, specifically, positing that human-centeredness is really male-centeredness in disguise (Smith, 2016; Warren, 1996, 2000). By critiquing Westernized epistemologies specifically, ecofeminists reject understandings of nature as a "passive object of study" (Warren 2000, p. 34). Warren (2000) for example, argues that certain understandings of both human-

nature relationships and woman-man relationships (i.e., the relationships of difference between men and women) become naturalized relationships of domination, situated within oppressive conceptual frameworks. This concern permeates much of ecofeminist thought, and an important distinction between deep ecology and ecofeminism lies in their respective descriptions of the causal narrative detailing why nature is consistently destroyed by humans or subsets of humans. For instance, Ariel Salleh (1993) asserts that,

> The separation of humanity and nature is the lynch pin of patriarchal ideology, and both deep ecology and ecofeminism share a desire to dislodge that pin. For deep ecologists, overcoming the division between humanity and nature promises a release from alienation. For ecofeminists, it promises release from a complex set of exploitations based on patriarchal identification of femaleness with the order of nature. (p. 225)

Like Naess' "Ecosophy T," however, most ecofeminists tend to shy away from specifying the precise understanding that humans should profess as their relationship to nature, but like much of deep ecology, also assert that powerful cultural phenomena contribute to the destruction of nature.

The debate about the "proper" place of human beings within nature has bogged down deep ecology for over four decades. Moreover, the debate does not necessarily lead to a place of productive political debate. By trying to determine the "proper place" of humanity with regard to nature, much of deep ecology ignores or obfuscates the actual facts of interconnectedness. In other words, whether humans naturally seek "oneness" with nature provides little political utility when it comes to dismantling anthropocentric attitudes or political systems of domination, in the case of ecofeminists. Some ecofeminists, too, have been guilty of discussing the connection between the domination of women and the domination of nature as a matter of overcoming male-centeredness as a cultural phenomenon, instead of focusing on dismantling various enactments of power and domination (Roach, 2000). The idea that the primary road to ecological awareness lies in convincing human beings to change their ethical attitudes without changing their material

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surroundings, their language, or their discourses besets deep ecology with numerous problems, not the least of which is contending with and cultivating political change, which requires collective action rather than simple individual attitude changes. To rely on the assumption that individual changes in attitudes will inevitably collect in an additive fashion and therefore result in large scale political, ethical, and ontological changes relies on a great deal of guesswork and hope. Of course, radical change (ethical, material, ontological, and political) always requires hope, but ignoring the importance of analysis in these other realms ignores significant structural and economic barriers to human fulfillment in the context of nature. Likewise, individual attitude changes may constitute an important piece of the larger puzzle of solving environmental degradation but not without accompanying transformations of the self, which is fundamentally constituted by exterior sources as well.

In deep ecology, a particular ontological standpoint "grounds," but does not necessarily determine the theory of subjectivity offered by the perspective. For Naess, this ontology provides the primary reason for an interconnected view of humans and nature or what he refers to as a "gestalt" ontological perspective (Diehm, 2002, 2006; Naess and Rothenberg 1990). The term gestalt represents a holistic perspective whereby the whole of nature (including humans) is "self-determining" and "self-reliant" (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 191; Naess and Rothenberg, 1990). In particular, this ontology is relational and holistic, where the whole represents more than the sum of its parts, and each part is also constituted by the whole and its particular place within it. Referring to "nature" writ large, Naess and Rothenberg (1990) note that,

> We can only etch out the meaning of a concept through its moving place in the field of other concepts and the ways they are perceived. In this process we identify wholes that are perceived to have organic identifiable unity in themselves, as a network of relations that can move as one. The term chosen for this kind of understandable shape is gestalt, borrowed from work in the psychology of perception in the early part of this century. (p. 6)

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Put another way, the authors encourage readers to "Look for things that flow together without opposition," and that in turn, "From these, meaningful wholes can be discovered" (Naess and Rothenberg, 2000, p. 10). Each part of the whole (of nature) possesses the character of the larger gestalt, but also exists as a smaller gestalt in itself (Naess and Rothenberg, 1990). For example, the Amazonian rainforest (including the Amazon River) would possess a gestalt character, but that river would also possess its own gestalt character. Relations are the fundamental building blocks of the whole biosphere (or ecosphere) according to deep ecologists, and Naess refers to this ontological standpoint as a "relational total-field image" (Diehm, 2002, p. 27; Naess and Rothenberg 1990; Salleh 1984). Accordingly, gestalt ontology presents a holistic view of the relationships between humans and nature where natural entities (including human beings) cannot exist and do not exist in isolation, and this includes human subjectivity, which is constituted through relations with surrounding gestalt(s) (See Diehm, 2002). According to Ariel Salleh (1984), this understanding of the human-nature relationship constitutes an attempt by Naess to replace the human/nature dualism altogether.

Though Naess has specifically been applauded for his understanding of gestalt ontology and its rejection of dualism, others are more skeptical of deep ecology's specific position on transcending the dualist paradigm. Expressing this perspective, Plumwood (1996) argues that deep ecology restricts its notion of meaningful selfhood to a model of transcendence, whereas ecofeminists support neither transcendence nor duality, but rather a model of a relational self that is both embedded in its constitutive relationships but also distinct. Likewise, Karen Warren has noted that dualism still rears its head in deep ecological perspectives because deep ecology merely attempts to re-value nature above humanity, whilst continuing to maintain the distinctiveness of the two spheres: human and nature (Sessions, 1996; Warren, 2000). Ariel

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Salleh (1984) was one of the first ecofeminists to call deep ecology out for the perspective's inability to fully overcome a dualist model in favor of a robust relational ontology. The focus on transcendence itself, Salleh and Warren argue, invokes a rationalist model of thinking whereby humans alone can craft a model of relationality with nature whereby they transcend themselves by doing what is "rational" (Salleh, 1984; Warren, 2000). As Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (1989) note,

> The dominant ethical theories postulate a detached subject considering possible moral rules and their applications. Deep Ecologists, however, would question whether it makes sense even to imagine such an abstract and desituated self-confronting nature as an object, as though doing so were a precondition for moral reasoning. (p. 205)

Since for deep ecology, interconnectedness and relatedness to the whole describe an ontological stance which impacts all parts of that whole, the perspective has also been relatively adept at noting the position of "individuals" in relation to this larger whole. For instance, Freya Mathews (1988) has argued that for deep ecology the "functional unity [of the parts] confers on them an essential ontological distinctness and integrity, but this individuality is strictly relative— it is itself a function of the particular environment which is capable of sustaining such a self-realizing, self-maintaining system" (p. 350). Interestingly, deep ecologists attempt to emphasize both difference and unity, and maintain that the individual does not wholly disappear in the context of their gestalt ontology, despite the charge from some ecofeminists on this point. In short, ecofeminists have charged deep ecology with privileging unity over diversity, resulting in the erasure of difference (including the constructed androcentric distinctions between men and women and their actual material differences in life and livelihood) (Plumwood, 1996; Warren, 1996). At the very least, however, deep ecologists have attempted to address this problem by pointing out the relationship between individuality and unity discussed above.

At the same time, deep ecologists promulgate a perspective on humanity that emphasizes the importance of a relationship to nature for the full development of the human self. Hinchman and Hinchman (1989) argued as early as the late 1980s that, "Indeed, for Deep Ecologists, man cannot attain his own full development so long as he thinks and lives in opposition to the natural environment" (p. 203).

In order to clarify the meaning of "gestalt," Naess also utilizes the concept of "concrete contents," where humans "apprehend the qualities of things only through their relation with each other" (Rothenberg, 2000, p. 152). In short, humans only comprehend the world and their place in it when they look at the web of relations and their own place in that web in a holistic manner. Rothenberg (2000) goes on to not that, "Naess then sidesteps the phenomenological tradition, with its subject experiencing the world, and hints instead at a world that as a whole experiences itself, with no primary subjects and objects, but instead a *web of relations*" (p. 152). The "subject," then cannot be understood as an abstraction, as an autonomous individual devoid of constitutive contextual relations with the rest of the natural world. The question of whether or not this ontological stance dissolves individuality is particularly tricky. For example, David Kidner (2001) argues that "If we mistakenly identify individuality with *isolation*, then it follows that *connection* must involve *relinquishing* individuality; and this is the Achilles heel of the otherwise profoundly important deep ecology viewpoint…" (p. 17). Kidner critiques precisely this vague ontology of deep ecology, whereby the self is on the one hand, responsible for cultivating a more holistic relationship with nature, but on the other hand, ultimately imbricated in a web of relations where the individual self only exists by virtue of its relations with the rest of the whole. This constitutes a fundamental and unresolved contradiction in deep ecology.

In this regard, Naess has argued that his particular notion of the self and its relation to nature remains a personal perspective; he has argued numerous times that his so-called "Ecosophy T" neither necessarily reflects the best way nor the only way for a particular human to understand their relationship to nature in a way consistent with the principles of the deep ecology movement. Additionally, he has clarified that the process of self-realization that may occur is neither self-centered nor completely devoid of egoism. In other words, individuals and their inherent diversity do not disappear through the process of self-realization. Rather, the interests of the larger whole become entwined with one's own interests (Naess, 1995a, 1995c; Naess and Rothenberg, 1990).

The particular notion of subjectivity which deep ecologists advocate begins with Naess' understanding of this self-in-Self perspective, where self-realization acts as an active condition, rather than an endpoint that one can reach. Underlying this notion of self-realization is the assumption that in order to live fully flourishing lives, humans must identify with nature. In this regard, deep ecologists have argued that self-realization is an active process, rather than a fully attainable condition (endpoint) (Naess and Rothenberg, 1990). The idea of a self that completely identifies with the rest of nature to the extent that the ego disappears entirely is impossible, but nevertheless, represents an ideal striving point that remains inherently teleological. Humphrey (2000) echoes this point, arguing that deep ecology bypasses complexity "…via an ontological shortcut that assumes a fixed end state to human development" (p. 102). Moreover, this perspective on the relation of the self to nature is echoed by Warwick Fox, who argues that,

> The appropriate framework of discourse for describing and presenting deep ecology is not one that is fundamentally to do with the value of the non-human world, but rather one that is fundamentally to do with the nature and possibilities of the self, or we might say, the question of who we are, can become, and *should* become in the larger scheme of things. ([Fox, 1986] qtd. in Naess and Rothenberg, 1990, p. 19)

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Likewise, Freya Mathews (1988) has characterized this perspective thusly: "It is accordingly part of my essence that I stand in certain relations to the relevant elements of my environment" (p. 350). In this regard, deep ecology, despite their understanding of the self's immersion in nature, understands humans as possessing an essential quality/essence of being that intimately connects them to nature. Similarly, SueEllen Campbell states that "[Deep] Ecologists…see an experience of lost unity and a desire to regain it as central to our human nature" (Campbell, 1989, p. 209). Unity, then, represents the ideal state of the human subject, despite the fact that the subject also maintains its distinctness in this context, according to both deep ecology and ecofeminism.

In this regard, ecofeminist Val Plumwood has suggested a triad configuration of the ways in which deep ecology conceptualizes subjectivity, in particular. These three "accounts" of the self in deep ecology include "indistinguishability," "expansion of the self," and "transcendence of the self." (Plumwood, 1996, p. 163-4). For Plumwood, the indistinguishability account replaces the idea of human beings as separate from the environment with a gestalt viewpoint, where self and other are merged. Distinction dissolves in this account of deep ecology, where "deep ecology has confused dualism with atomism and then mistakenly taken indistinguishability to follow from atomism" (p. 164). Problematically for deep ecology, this atomistic view of the self-in-Self configuration ignores what Plumwood refers to as the "discontinuity problem," where nature is ontologically separated from humans. In short, deep ecology recklessly replaces discontinuity with unity without regard to the ways in which the nonegoistic but still ontologically separate self can exist in relation to nature without dissolving subjectivity and difference completely (Plumwood, 1996).

Next, Plumwood (1996) describes the "expanded self" account in deep ecology. Contrary to the indistinguishability perspective, this account of the subject constitutes an extension of

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egoism, whereby the self is enlarged to include everything else (i.e. nature). Moral recognition, according to this account, may only occur when others are deeply incorporated into one's own subjectivity. With this in mind, Plumwood (1996) argues that, "…the strategy of transferring the structures of egoism is highly problematic, for the widening of interest is obtained at the expense of failing to recognize unambiguously the distinctness and independence of the other" (p. 166). This critique of deep ecology is reminiscent of the long-standing debate between deep ecology and ecofeminism about the role of identity versus difference, where the recognition of the latter is typically deemed necessary by ecofeminists (Plumwood, 1996; Warren, 1996).

And lastly, Plumwood (1996) discusses deep ecology's account of self-transcendence, which she attributes primarily to Warwick Fox's ecophilosophy. This understanding of subjectivity in deep ecology is by far the most universalizing, and Plumwood charges Fox with eschewing particularity altogether. In this regard, she says that, "Thus Fox urges us to strive for *impartial* identification with *all* particulars, the cosmos, discarding our identifications with our own particular concerns, personal emotions, and attachments" (p. 167). In his own work, Fox (1995) argues that transpersonal approaches to identification are cosmological in nature. Regarding cosmological identification, he argues that,

> Cosmologically based identification refers to experiences of commonality with all that is that are brought about through deep-seated realization of the fact that we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality. This realization can be brought about through the empathic incorporation of *any* cosmology…that sees the world as a single unfolding process—as a 'unity in process.' (p. 252)

In short, Plumwood (1996) argues that this perspective does not allow for particularistic identifications that derive from a closer, more local level, such as the family, emotional and cultural attachments, or other kinds of concerns near to or constitutive of the self.

The other necessary characteristic of deep ecology's ontology stems from the perspective's focus on experience as essential to the cultivation of a different kind of self. Andy Scerri (2016) argues that deep ecology's "self-identification process is derived therefore directly through experience" (p. 317), and that "Such self-identification confronts the question of the outside world and the removed ego" (p. 318). For Naess, gestalt ontology itself remains possible solely through a direct experience with nature as a moment of epiphany and profound recognition of interconnectedness (Scerri, 2016). Likewise, the deep ecological self has been described as "a self that developed by continually reinterpreting its world, enriching and deepening both parties in the process" (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1989, p. 207). The mutual constitution of self and nature running throughout deep ecology is vitally important to their connections of ontology and subjectivity, but this holist ontology also suffers from a problematic assertion that reserves mutual constitution solely for the realm of connection between humans and nature, as if other material and psychological forces do not simultaneously press upon and constitute the self simultaneously. In the next chapter, ecosocialists will address some of these issues with their holist and attempted non-essentialist understanding of the triad relationship between capitalism-nature-human subjectivity.

Additionally, however, Plumwood (1996) argues that part of the problem with deep ecology is that its adherents do not properly distinguish between these three perspectives in a way that clarifies their position on particularity, difference, and individuality. Although this perspective is useful for categorizing (albeit fuzzily) the various perspectives on the subject in deep ecology, it also in many ways mirrors various ecofeminist accounts of the self as well. Plumwood herself admits that,

> There are severe problems with these [deep ecology's] claims, arising not so much from
> the orientation to the concept of self (which seems to me important and correct) or from

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the mystical character of the insights themselves as from the indistinguishability
metaphysics which is proposed as their basis. (p. 164)

In other words, deep ecology fails to completely elaborate a full picture of human subjectivity

that is both connected deeply to nature yet also distinct not only by virtue of being human alone,

but also in the context of various human-identity categories that are negatively affected and

oppressed by the dominant, dualist, Enlightenment notion of fundamental separateness between

humans and the rest of nature.

Like deep ecology, ecofeminists also offer a relatively robust notion of selfhood that

seeks not only to discover the role of the self in political action opposed to the domination of

nature and the domination of women, but also which characterizes woman's notions of

themselves as necessary for their own liberation and the liberation of nature. In this regard, Ariel

Salleh (1997) states that,

Women are not 'closer to nature' than men in any ontological sense. Both women and
men are 'in/with/of nature,' but attaining the prize of masculine identity depends on men
distancing themselves from that fact. Ecofeminists explore the political consequences of
this culturally elaborated gender difference. (p. 130)

In this way, ecofeminists reject the dualist ontologies of industrialism, capitalism, and

individualism which deep ecology also critiques. Problematically, however, ecofeminists also

focus too much on the cultural (and, to their credit, discursive) issues that plague degradation of

humans and domination of women, rather than the material, structural (capitalist), and

psychological causes also imbricated therein.

Despite the robust notion of selfhood that deep ecologists and ecocentrists proclaim to

contain, Andrew Light (2000) has argued that deep ecology actually offers a problematic

fetishization of selfhood. Rothenberg (2000), himself a deep ecologist, echoes this point in

stating his uncertainty about the self-in-Self position. He says that, "I remain divided on this

point: it seems both arrogant and humble to feel that nature wants us" (Rothenberg, 2000, p.

158). Even Naess himself expressed problems with the transpersonal aspect of deep ecology.

Indeed, Naess is somewhat clear that his perspective on the idea of the self-in-Self is related to

his particular experience in the world rather than existing as a model that could be mapped onto

other individuals attempting to cultivate a more meaningful relationship with nature (Naess

1995a, 1995c; Naess and Rothenberg, 1990). Naess, however, isn't necessarily after this

phenomenological and humanist perspective, but rather presents an invitation to step outside of

humanist presumptions and dualisms which tell humans that they can know what's best for

nature or how nature feels in given circumstances (Rothenberg, 2000).

Problematically (and in contradiction to Naess's above sentiments about Ecosophy "T"),

Naess has also advocated a gestalt perspective (and its related conception of selfhood) as a

perspective that would benefit the deep ecology movement overall. In this way, he states that,

"The supporters of the Deep Ecology movement will profit from the further development, and

forceful articulation, of gestalt perception and, more importantly, gestalt ontology" (Naess,

1995a, p. 245). Alongside this assertion, however, Naess (1995a) also points out that,

> The relation [between ecosophy and gestalt ontology] is somewhat indirect. What may be
> called the dominant way of conceiving reality is roughly that of a vast supermarket
> stocked with individual things that are extrinsically related to each other: like primitive
> atomistic conceptions. These relations are no longer conceived to be Newtonian or
> mechanistic, but are still largely seen as extrinsic relations between things in themselves.
> Many supporters of the Deep Ecology movement, however, are inspired by ways of
> experiencing reality which clash with this dominant way of conceiving reality. (p. 244)

Indeed, Naess seems to be advocating an ontological vision which to him, represents reality, and

which he believes would be useful to the movement's goals of encouraging self-realization

generally speaking, but which also may not be consistent with the views of all deep ecologists.

On the one hand, the subject is capable of self-realization and "wider identification" because of

the inherent relationship between nature-as-ontological-whole and a deep-rooted attachment of

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the self to that whole. On the other hand, however, this configuration is neither sufficient to spur

deep ecological activism on the part of the subject nor necessary for one to identify as a deep

ecologist in the first place. This contradictory position in deep ecology remains unresolved.

By and large, ecofeminists have been subjected to fewer critiques with regards to their

conception of selfhood. Likewise, an ecofeminist understanding of subjectivity lends itself more

than deep ecology to a subversion of "Cartesian rationalism," and its focus on the importance of

liberating subjects from oppressive dualisms that hurt women, indigenous peoples, nonwhites,

and nature itself (See Warren, 2000 for this discussion of varieties of oppression).

Overall, like deep ecology, ecofeminism does shy away from a robust discussion of

selfhood, largely splitting the differences between deep ecology and ecosocialism (elaborated in

Chapter 2) by focusing on myriad forms of domination but not really the ways that those forms

of domination preclude the emergence of particular kinds of subjectivities and political actors.

Indeed, Karen Warren (1996) uses the term "subjectivity" in an interesting and instructive way.

She states that,

> At the core of the expanded concept of nature that I advocate is the rejection of a
> subject/object split at its root—the opposition of human consciousness and a mechanical
> nature—and the adoption, instead, of an ontology of nature as *fundamentally material
> and subjective*. This acknowledges the different types of subjectivity in natural
> phenomena that include human life and mental processes. In these terms human's
> consciousness is a specialized form of subjectivity but in no way exclusive or original.
> Imbuing nature with both materiality and subjectivity provides a substantial basis for
> commonality. (p. 10)

By critiquing the objectivity associated with dualism, and therefore masculinity, ecofeminists

attempt to imbue nature with the quality of subjectivity (as we'll see new materialism do in

Chapter 3, with even more detail and robust analysis). In other words, nature is characterized by

subjecthood in its own right, valuable status that disrupts the ways in which the human-nature

dualism acts as a filter for classifying not only nature, but human groups (perceived as inferior)

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to the status of weak and objectified beings. Likewise, the subjectivity in nature is acknowledged to be intimately related to human consciousness. Here, ecofeminism also commits a similar mistake to deep ecology. In short, deep ecology is overly optimistic about the ability of humans to change cultural commitments and attitudes towards nature relatively easily, absent a robust analysis of the effects that those underlying commitments may have on humanity's own selfhood and agency.

The understanding of subjectivity in these varieties of ecofeminism does mirror the stance of deep ecology as well but broadens the foci of the perspective to include the ways that dualism impacts the category of women (and other oppressed peoples) as well. Ecofeminists point out that these cultural commitments serve to "[deny] our own embodiment, animality and inclusion in the natural order," causing "hyperseparation" between humans and nature that negatively impacts humanity's conception of itself and its embeddedness in the natural world (Mellor, 1997, p. 117). I would argue that these perspectives still constitute a kind of holism, but unlike deep ecology (and its associated dangers), ecofeminism maintains a holism that also embraces differences in situatedness, identity, and subjectivity. In many ways, as Eckersley (1992) notes, deep ecology and ecofeminism also constitute ecocentric points of view.

Returning to deep ecology, the subject has been constructed as interconnected with and fundamentally constituted by nature. This perspective focuses on the transformation of the subject as a means to ecologically sustainable ends. Presumably, these ends will resonate deeply with the subject and the subject will in turn cultivate these sustainable ends in pursuit of meaningful and expansive selfhood. The next logical step, however, is entirely absent from deep ecological theory. Naess and others posit a subject that is simultaneously autonomous and embedded, which while admirable because it demonstrates the complex and inherently layered

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makeup of subjectivity in general, nevertheless fails to connect its theory of ontological holism

with a qualified theory of human agency. Deep ecologists tiptoe around this connection not

simply because there are no guarantees of praxis in political theory writ large, but because the

perspective itself posits no robust understanding of the connection between the production of

subjectivity, ontology, and ecological action/politics. Deep ecology ultimately retires to a place

where individuals are entirely responsible for political change in the world, based on their unique

Ecosophy T (but only in enclosed ecocentric directions). This political responsibility has no

connection to an ontological perspective of interconnected or embedded holism. In other words,

how does recognizing and embracing a particular kind of relationality with the world logically

lead to the practice of a certain kinds of politics? Deep ecology and the ecofeminist variants

examined here do not adequately answer this question.

In terms of agency, deep ecology emphasizes the primacy and the importance of

individual choice or ethical decision-making as the primary driver of political, social, economic,

and cultural change (Smith 2016). Deep ecology's perspective on human agency intimately

relates to its conception of ontology detailed above. The inseparability of the self from an outside

(nature) implies that humans are both inextricably linked to nature but also able to contemplate

and act on that relationship based on reasoned ethical choices and emotional attachments. A

variety of attempts to translate this new kind of relationship into a meaningful politics do exist,

despite the widespread criticism that deep ecology is anti-political. Instructively, most

suggestions involve a very liberal notion of political action and interaction concerning nature.

For example, Hinchman and Hinchman (1989) argue that extending Aristotle's understanding of

natural right could remedy the apolitical reputation of deep ecology. Culturally speaking, deep

ecologists urge humanity to alter their perspective on culture wholesale by making a few

important changes. In other words, "Deep ecological natural right stipulates that culture itself should be treated as an extension and expression of underlying natural relationships" (Hinchman and Hinchman 1989, p. 213). Humanity's diversity mirrors, in other words, the diversity of healthy natural environments. Utilizing John Dryzek's (1987) work, they argue in favor of participatory and localized decisionmaking mirroring Habermas's concept of the ideal speech situation.

Likewise, Luc Ferry's (1992) critique of "essentialism" and culture as representative of human freedom and instructive of humanity's fundamental differences with nature is instructive with regard to the liberal individualism that may paralyze deep ecology's own commitment to fundamental cultural change. Basically, deep ecology assumes that culture must change in order to bring about more ethical human-nature relationships without recognizing the separateness from nature that the term "culture" itself implies. Ferry, in this regard, has argued that by definition, culture denotes humanity's lack of any particular essence. By assuming that cultural change and an embracing of human "authenticity," can initiate a novel, deep, and biocentric ethic between humans and nature is also to privilege the possibility of humanity's essential character above its capability of practicing freedom, Ferry argues in critique of deep ecology (Ferry, 1992). A rejection of human essentialism, for Ferry, characterizes humanity's struggle for freedom. For deep ecology, however, an embrace of a certain kind of essentialism constitutes the most practical and meaningful way for humans to relate intimately to nature and therefore also care for nature.

Put another way, by re-inscribing the dualism between humans and nature in their quest to destroy humanity's anthropocentric cultural attachments, deep ecology resorts to a model of individual choice that limits human freedom in dual ways. First, this emphasis, as Ferry (1995)

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admits, positions human character as fundamentally connected to nature as its first and most important principle, which in and of itself limits the development of other kinds of human selves that may regard nature differently. Additionally, and in contrast to Ferry's critique, however, deep ecology does impose and call for the exercise of a certain kind of liberal freedom which is fundamentally inconsistent with its understanding of the human-nature relationship. For deep ecologists (as Campbell, 1989 and McLaughlin, 1993 above note), embracing humanity's true nature requires an almost spiritual embrace of deep identification with nature which invests itself in one's subjectivity, one's understanding of oneself, and one's place in the world. This remains contradictory to deep ecology's understanding of the relationship between political action and this new kind of subjectivity. Can autonomous, individual transformations in relationality to nature produce a political (and therefore collective) project geared toward an ecocentric society that has as its fundamental subject of politics a myriad of ecocentric and ecological subjects (human and nonhuman)? For instance, if the requirements of cultivating a better relationship between oneself and nature consist in an exercise of freedom on an individual level, as deep ecology implies, than the emphasis on cultivating holism as essential to any conception of this relationship attempts to direct individual exercises of freedom in teleological directions that assume a certain ecocentric end that will, finally, bring humanity and nature into harmony with one another after epochs of destructive anthropocentrism.

Similarly, by advocating for a change in the culture of anthropocentrism, deep ecology problematically presumes that structural and material changes are largely unnecessary in tandem with cultural change or likewise, that cultural change can occur absent a robust understanding of the impacts of other forces on human subjectivity. At the very least, deep ecology assumes that these changes in the consumptive and productive practices and structures of economy will follow

from significant attitudinal and cultural alterations. In defense of ecofeminism, it at least adds to deep ecology's overtheorized focus on human agency by adding structures of domination and oppression into its analysis, which act as constraints on human action and political change (Smith, 2016). At the same time, ecofeminism still suffers from some of the same issues as deep ecology in its understanding of the relationship between subjectivity and a given ontology.

Moving more directly into political terrain, Hinchman and Hinchman (1989) call deep ecology apolitical or even antipolitical, its "most serious perplexity" (p. 216). Though, of course, deep ecology is a political position, advocating for a certain kind of ecological politics and a transformation of economy, society, and relationality with nature. Nevertheless, deep ecologists have consistently failed to discuss important political systems in much depth and how they should be transformed in light of the interconnected vision of humans and nature that they offer. For example, they shy away from discussing what the economy should look like, the distribution of wealth in a society, and the political configuration of society itself (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1989). Likewise, Devall and Sessions (1985) have argued that the "dominant form of community in technocratic-industrial societies" must be replaced with the "minority tradition" of social organization, where communities seek to extricate themselves from the bonds of powerful and centralized state authority (p. 18). In this schema, "Small-scale communities" will replace bureaucracy; "decentralized, nonhierarchical, [and] democratic" forms of governance will replace "centralized authority;" "self-regulation" will replace "more government regulation," and "local autonomy" and "not leading" will replace the powers of police and state violence (Devall and Sessions, 1985, p. 18-19). The relationship between democracy and deep ecology, however, remains ambiguous and undertheorized especially given the requirement that these presumably democratic societies also remain ecocentric (even if ecocentrism is construed broadly and

differently across these localities). This understanding of politics also fails to fully problematize how other human to human relationships of domination are absent from deep ecology's analysis and therefore how ecocentric priorities supersede other humanist priorities.

Indeed, deep ecology seems to promote a world without politics (especially if the ecocentric society which they envision became a reality), where the struggle for a fair distribution of goods and a share of power are no longer the concern of harmonious communities of humans and natural entities living in peaceful and meaningful relationship. Deep ecologists make the leap from cultural change to biocentric living without discussing the mechanisms of substantive political change. This deep ecological aversion to politics is summed up well by critical supporters of deep ecology, Hinchman and Hinchman (1989) when they state

> Deep Ecologists, believing that man is, and should regard himself as, part of nature, inveigh against any philosophical position that extricates human will from nature's matrix and posits it as autonomous. Since politics is one of these activities in which human consciousness appears to operate most autonomously—and since politics (as Hannah Arendt noted) transpires directly between people, unmediated by nature—it is bound to seem suspect, a case of man trying to arrogantly and futilely evade nature's limits. (p. 221)

An ill-advised attempt to gently map human societies onto nature as part of an ethical regeneration of humanity pervades much of deep ecological thought (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1989). Of course, the dangers of a theory where the teleological goal remains the end of politics itself (and not just a statist politics, as Marxists might contend) echoes the same dangers that Ferry (1995) mentions in comparing deep ecology to ecological fascism.

Relatedly, in his discussion of ecosophy, Arne Naess argues that, "A conscious change of attitude towards the conditions of life in the ecosphere presupposes that we associate ourselves with a philosophical position in all essential problems of decision-making," including presumably, political decision-making (Naess and Rothenberg, 1990, p. 38). Naess goes on to note that, "Political philosophy is implied in any social development of an ecosophy." (Naess

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and Rothenberg, 1990, p. 38). Likewise, Devall and Sessions' (1985) text on deep ecology contains an interesting section on "direct action in political contexts," where the authors suggest a variety of strategies for political action and change (p. 29). Devall and Sessions suggest a wide variety of strategies such as reform legislation that punishes polluters and preserves wilderness, nonviolent protests, blockades, working with Christian environmentalists, engaging with the women's movement to promote "feminine" values like care, cooperation, and nurture, consumer responsibility, running for office and working with green parties, and finally, global political action. Elaborating on their green politics suggestion, Devall and Sessions argue that green parties and political movements almost universally promote political change via values such as nonviolence, nondomination (of human groups too), "consensus democracy," and a philosophy that embraces interconnectedness and reverence for nature (p. 37). In much of their work, deep ecologists present a veritable laundry list of political acts that could support a deeply ecological outlook, assuming perhaps problematically that these disparate actions will someday accumulate into widespread respect for the natural world in the context of a robust and widespread ecological subjectivity that connects itself to ecopolitical praxis. Given these gaps, deep ecology's political utility falters.

By presuming that cultural change implies future political change, deep ecology focuses much less on political action and instead focuses on ethical orientation or outlook. Ethical change, here, implies personal transformation of the self, whereas political change implies collective commitments as well (on the part of the individual and collectives). Perhaps one could argue that deep ecology broadens the "collective" so as to include the natural world in a way that makes this new individual ethical orientation fundamentally collective, but this partial rescue of the status of the political in deep ecology still fails to connect these commitments to real options

and possibilities for cultivating meaningful political action amongst human beings themselves. In short, the self-in-Self perspective detailed above may give priority to the ontological status of the collective as fundamentally imbricated in subjectivity, but no real analysis of the effects of this relationship upon subjectivity and therefore new possibilities for political action exists.

As mentioned in the introduction, the way that humans understand themselves as selves and especially as political subjects (and the production of subjectivity through power generally) has numerous implications for the possibilities for cultivating ecopolitical selves. For the most part, deep ecology ignores these relationships. Although proclaimed deep ecologists have a long history of utilizing disruptive and divisive political tactics like the so-called "monkeywrenching" advocated by Edward Abbey's (1985) work, they have been less successful as a political movement focused on radical change itself. In short, deep ecology has virtually no commentary on the requirements of collective political action.

One relatively promising exception to these political lacunae is the work of deep ecologist Andrew McLaughlin (1993), who focuses more closely than most deep ecologists on the problem of industrialism and how it relates to human destruction of nature. Andrew McLaughlin (1993) specifically focuses on industrialism as the main obstacle to an ecological society and an ecological self, advocating an "inclusive ecological ideology" as his brand of deep ecology (p. 146). His analysis in *Regarding Nature: Industrialism and Deep Ecology* (1993), begins by critiquing industrial society, including capitalism and socialism, both of which he argues depend on industrialism. In short, industrialism itself operates based on the idea that humans can dominate, control, and direct nature to suit their own purposes, without regard to interconnectedness. Moreover, industrialism refuses to recognize interconnectedness by reducing nature to its component parts. Humans, in short, are missing out on interconnectedness because

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of their cultural commitment to industrial society. Interestingly, however, McLaughlin specifically addresses the role of the human subject in understanding industrial society. He states his commitment to a relational ontological perspective, but also refuses to engage in the so-called "holism/individualism" debate which so often bogs down deep ecology. Distinctly, McLaughlin (1993) says that instead of presenting a unique ontological perspective, he acknowledges what he believes to be the observable loss of "degrees of relative autonomy" between nature and human beings over the last century, resulting in greater integration and interconnectedness between the two spheres (p. 91). This integration results not only from industrialism itself, but globalization in general and the damage industrialism inflicts upon ecosystems and species.

McLaughlin's perspective, while incomplete in the context of subjectivity, also mirrors Robyn Eckersley's (1992) model (detailed below) in the sense that it acknowledges the potential impact of other force fields beyond nature on human subjectivity and the potential for mutual constitution therein. Indeed, McLaughlin's perspective also echoes some ecosocialist work in terms of the co-production of both humans and nature in the context of globalization and industrialism. Absent a fuller picture of subjectivity, however, McLaughlin's work can only take us so far in pursuit of re-imagining an ecological subject. Also, absent a full critique of capitalist power and its effects upon subjectivity, McLaughlin's (1993) work and deep ecology have little political utility for combatting capitalism and its destructive environmental tendencies.

Carolyn Merchant (2005) summarizes this critique by not writing off deep ecology altogether, but rather by discussing its "naivete" about political action (p. 109). Merchant argues that deep ecologists "idealize culture as the reflection of society's values and the key to action," and that deep ecologists see change as "painless, benign, and independent of political struggle"

(p. 109). Moreover, as a socialist ecofeminist, Merchant points out the lack of analysis of other structural barriers to ecological change, including capitalism as well as patriarchy.

While deep ecology tends to shy away from expressing any need for social transformation by focusing on individualized ethical and cultural change, ecofeminism expounds concern with societal change in the context of environmental degradation. For ecofeminists, neither concern can take precedence over the other since they prioritize and illuminate the interconnectedness of all forms of domination in society more generally. For Merchant (2005), radical environmentalism's task (and the task of ecofeminism specifically) remains to "[empower] people to make changes in the world consistent with a new social vision and a new ethic," an ethico-political juxtaposition that deep ecology de-emphasizes (Merchant, 2005, p. 1).

Robyn Eckersley's foundational text, *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach*, tries to "elucidate how best to incorporate eco-centric ethics more centrally into Green politics—that is, to bridge the gap between eco-centric ethics and political practice" (Smith, 2016, p. 112). Eckersley's work deserves special attention in any genealogy of radical eco-theory generally and deep ecology in particular because she focuses on why ecocentrism can provide a democratic and "emancipatory" politics in line with treating nature with respect, dignity, and centrality in human life. She argues that a politics of emancipation must be linked, as deep ecology notes, to a politics of self-realization. Additionally, Eckersley provides enlightening critiques of other strains of ecopolitical thought that prove useful for any examination of the relationship between political theory and the environment in her own work. Specifically, Eckersley (1992) analyzes eco-Marxism, ecosocialism, critical theory (and the environment), social ecology, and of course, deep ecology.

Eckersley (1992) begins by agreeing with the deep ecologists that the environmental crisis is fundamentally a "crisis of culture and character," where the path towards emancipation requires "*universal* human self-realization" (p. 29). Most importantly, Eckersley (1992) argues that "an ecocentric approach regards the question of our proper place in the rest of nature as logically prior to the question of what are the most appropriate social and political arrangements for human communities" (p. 28). This assertion also helps clarify why deep ecologists are so often accused of lacking a robust stance on collective ecopolitical action: they (and Eckersley) regard a rejection of anthropocentric life and a de-centering of the human being as ethically prior to any cultivation of political practices, as a first necessary step that must be taken prior to meaningful political change. In short, the current configuration of politics, societies, economies (capitalism included) can only be radically altered in truly ecological directions once humanity changes its ontology and its understanding of itself and its place in the world. A new holistic ontology and practice of experiential self-realization (of eco-centeredness as it relates to our fundamental subjectivity) must accompany and precede any possibilities for non-anthropocentric change in the world. Interestingly, Eckersley (1992) also refers to her own project as "post-liberal" rather than "anti-liberal," (p. 30) placing herself squarely against the critics who elucidate alarming potential fascist tendencies from deep ecology, for example. If Eckersley's project is "post-liberal," this means that it focuses on political and social emancipation (including the oppressed categories of human beings that ecofeminists often charge deep ecologists with ignoring). I would argue that Naess' work also squarely places the possibilities for social liberation in the context of recognizing the interconnectedness between human beings and nature as well; emancipation depends on this gestalt ontology of interrelatedness in deep ecology too.

Problematically, however, this "post-liberal" orientation also implies that neither Eckersley (nor deep ecologists) confront capitalism head on, as worthy of a necessarily central critique focused on the production of subjectivity in the context of capitalist power (and capitalism's relation to the possibilities for an ecological self or ecopolitics). For instance, Eckersley advocates for a green emancipatory politics that does not necessarily overcome the marketization of life. Just as in McLaughlin's (1993) work, it is not capitalism (or industrialism) per se that constitutes the crux of the problem of ecological destruction. Rather, a revolution in the culture of dualism and human hubris is necessary for emancipation. A rejection of anthropocentrism as the overarching ideology that circumscribes human life, politics, and activities, in other words, remains the priority (Eckersley, 1992). To exemplify this problem Eckersley's own words will suffice: she notes that her ecocentric perspective "does not entail an outright rejection of entrepreneurial activity or of the market as a method of resource allocation, but it does require that the market become subordinate to ecological and social justice considerations" (Eckersley, 1992, p. 30). Green capitalism and social democracy are therefore not necessarily contradictory to Eckersley's emancipatory project. If more important ecological priorities are considered more fundamental than capitalist logic in societies at large, the operations of capitalism can theoretically still exist. Throughout her work, Eckersley (1992) does acknowledge that atomism, rampant individualism, and the prioritization of the free market at the expense of all other commitments constitute problematic liberal orientations, especially in the context of the destruction of nature, but she does not offer a robust critique of capitalism as a barrier in and of itself to an ecological politics.

In terms of subjectivity, Eckersley (1992) advocates a model of the subject that uniquely positions human subjectivity at the intersection of self-realization and institutions that hold power and influence. She states that,

> The ecological model of internal relatedness upon which ecocentrism rests applies not only in respect of human-nonhuman relations but also in respect of relations among humans: in a biological, psychological, and social sense we are all constituted by our interrelationships between other humans, and our political, economic, and cultural institutions…According to this model, we are neither completely passive and determined beings (as crude behaviorists would have it) nor completely autonomous and self-determining beings (as existentialists would have it). Rather, we are relatively autonomous beings who, by our purposive thought and action, help to constitute the very relations that determine who we are (p. 53).

This assertion by Eckersley is important, and this seeming contradiction between free will/determinism or agency/structure resolves itself via her commitment to an ecocentric ontology and epistemology, which posits humans as embedded yet constitutive of that embeddedness in their own right. This assertion resembles new materialists' and Félix Guattari's understandings of agency, and therefore, merits greater attention as a key understanding of the possibilities for politics in later chapters. Though ultimately, the same problems mentioned already plague this understanding of subjectivity and deep ecology. For example, Eckersley goes on to note that ecocentrists have inaugurated a notion of the self that is capable of self-determination, but only in an interconnected sense. This particular notion of the subject incorporates the individual and the social aspects of liberalism and socialism, respectively, but in a "more encompassing framework," Eckersley notes (p. 54). In short, humans must engage nature as internal to one's own selfhood—an assumption that Eckersley (1992) makes explicitly in solidarity with Naess's idea of the "self-in-Self" principle of deep ecology.

Ultimately, Eckersley designates herself as an "emancipatory ecocentric theorist" and advocates a radical "reconception of our 'place' in the larger whole." (Eckersley, 1992, p. 117).

Moreover, Eckersley focuses much more than deep ecologists on the political aspects of the ecological crisis, and in turn, the social and political problems that interrelate with the oppression of nature and how these political and social dimensions affect the self and its agency. She states that, "A general ecocentric emancipatory theory must accommodate all human emancipatory struggles within a broader ecological framework" (p. 70).

Importantly, Eckersley does vital intellectual work to present a model of subjectivity that more closely mirrors that of ecosocialism as presented in the next chapter. She fully recognizes that subjectivity is constituted and re-constituted by a combination of numerous institutional, psychological, and material forces and therefore, negotiates an important step toward a much more robust understanding of subjectivity than that of deep ecology. She argues that "Ecocentrism is based on an ecologically informed philosophy of *internal relatedness*, according to which all organisms are not simply interrelated, but also *constituted* by those very environmental interrelationships" (Eckersley, 1992, p. 49). At the same time, however, Eckersley does not fully connect this understanding of subjectivity to political practice and agency itself. Simply acknowledging the complexity of subjectivity does nothing to further illuminate the complexities inherent in trying to bridge the gap between one's ontology, the implications of that ontology for agency and subjectivity, and how those impacts on the subject translate or do not translate into ecological politics. Despite Eckersley's assertion here, there is no substantive theory in her work nor in deep ecology that indicates the profound constitutive powers of other material objects and relationships beyond that of the relationship between humans and nature. By presuming change begins with the individual, deep ecology similarly posits that subjectivity's production is easily immunized against the effects of material and discursive power.

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Importantly, Eckersley (1992) summarizes her political project as follows: To "Emphasize a general change in consciousness, and suggest that a gradual cultural, educational, and social revolution involving a reorientation of our sense of place in the evolutionary drama is likely to provide a better long term protection for the interests of the nonhuman world" (p. 59). Notably, Eckersley also aligns herself with an ecofeminist orientation while also acknowledging that the liberation of women does not necessarily automatically result in the liberation of nature, despite the dualist assumptions which engender both women and nature to a dominated category in contemporary society.

Eckersley's critiques of eco-Marxism and ecosocialism are also instructive and will be given greater depth in the next chapter for their utility in critiquing these traditions. Importantly for this chapter, however, are the ways in which her major critiques of eco-Marxism, for example, illuminate her own understandings of the centrality of an ecocentric attitude/ cultural commitment rather than the necessity of a structural critique of capitalism. Indeed, she classifies these ecosocialist traditions as "anthropocentric" varieties of emancipatory ecopolitical thought, arguing that their worst problems relate to each of their hubristic orientations toward the natural world. To be clear, Eckersley (1992) attempts to avoid the charges of anti-humanism so often levelled at deep ecology by rejecting "the many anthropocentric assumptions embedded in our humanist heritage [rather] than [equating] anthropocentrism with humanism and thereby condemn humanism in its entirety" (p. 57).

For instance, with regard to eco-Marxism, Eckersley (1992) argues that by accepting a Marxist orientation toward human capacities and innate behaviors, notably the idea that at their most fundamental, human beings constitute laboring beings is fundamentally problematic for an ecocentric orientation. This assumption in most eco-Marxist theory condemns the perspective to

anthropocentrism and an instrumentalist understanding of the purposes of nature, rejecting any

meaningful orientation towards intrinsic value. To clarify, Eckersley (1992) argues that eco-

Marxism and Marxism more generally associates emancipation with the freedom/necessity

distinction. The more that humans can provide for themselves beyond their basic necessities (to

embrace their human capacities for creativity and laboring beyond their immediate needs), the

more freedom they possess according to Eckersley's (1992) analysis of this Marxist logic.

Interestingly, eco-Marxists tend to argue that they are amiable to an ecological politics

because they conceive of alienation from the natural world as a fundamental form of alienation

that occurs under capitalism (Eckersley, 1992). Eckersley (1992) rejects this reading of an

ecological Marx because of the above understanding of freedom as freedom from the labor of

necessity. Moreover, eco-Marxists argue that nature here becomes an extension of the human

body and therefore that their perspective recognizes the same human embeddedness in nature

that ecocentrists themselves would offer. Rejecting this assertion, Eckersley (1992) argues that

> As we have seen, if true freedom is understood to be inversely related to our
> embeddedness in nature, then the realization of that freedom necessarily requires that we
> seek to increase our control over, and reduce our dependence on, ecological cycles. The
> upshot is that nature, although redefined as 'our body,' must be thoroughly tamed and
> made subservient to human ends. (p. 91)

The above critiques of Marxism, and thus, eco-Marxism, serve to illuminate Eckersley's own

commitment to decentering human life in the context of a new emancipatory ecological politics

where both human beings and the ecosphere (and all its parts) will be liberated from human

logics of domination. While Eckersley doesn't deny that structures impact opportunities for

political action, like deep ecologists, she also observes that attitudinal and cultural changes can

remedy these structural logics of domination. Though I will discuss this particular critique more

in depth in later chapters (particularly Chapters 4 and 5), this understanding by Eckersley and the

deep ecologists also fails to acknowledge that systems of power themselves do not operate only

via structuralist logics. They infiltrate the human body and the human psyche, and therefore the possibilities for political action. The idea that ideological and cultural commitments like ecocentrism can combat a system of power like capitalism (which also produces subjectivity) ignores not only the power of other material systems (like capitalism) beyond the natural world to produce subjectivity and therefore impede ecopolitics, but these assertions also ignore the openness and adaptability of "structures" themselves, which do not always operate according to the various logics which they portend to follow. In short, how can humans adapt their own subjectivities to better align with the natural world by ignoring the other forces beyond nature itself that also participate in the production of human subjectivities? This question remains unanswered and untroublesome to both Eckersley's and the deep ecologists' theoretical positions.

Bringing the Subject Back In: Possibilities and Pitfalls for Deep Ecology and Ecocentrism

Deep ecology, uniquely, offers the necessary insight that subjectivity and its relation to the outside world must exist in any meaningful transition from liberal capitalist to ecological societies. This insight is infinitely valuable because it forces theorists to think about the relationship between the structure of political society (which deep ecology largely ignores), the constitution of the human self, and how these two entities relate to caring for the natural world. Deep ecology's downfall in the context of ecological praxis emerges in its conception of a "right" and "wrong" way to relate to nature, thereby truncating the plurality of a future ecological people (or demos) a priori. With plurality comes invention and experimentation with subjectivity, and deep ecology is guilty of cutting off this potentiality from the start. Moreover, deep ecology does not fully connect its important gestalt/relational ontology to political possibilities, which limits its utility as a theory of collective action. Ethics without politics may

require individuals to change their habits to further their own flourishing, but this does not lead to widespread collective human recognition of entanglement with and dependence upon nature.

It is not surprising that deep ecology focuses in on the self as the primary agent of change in its philosophy. Perhaps deep ecologists presume that the subject constitutes the only terrain that is capable of change. By presuming that change begins with the individual, deep ecology also posits that the human self is easily immunized against the effects of an outside, material world (including structures of power and capitalism). Historically speaking, this understanding of the atomistic individual as the primary driver of social and political change is nothing new. The entire Enlightenment was founded on this kind of thinking, on the presumption from Descartes and others that by virtue of being a rational, thinking human being, humans possess a power unlike any other found in nature.

By also presuming that change emanates from individuals, deep ecologists pose a linear model of socio-cultural change that, eventually, must have an influence on the political (in their estimation). If individuals, independent from the surrounding material world (with the exception of "nature"), possess the capacity to choose their value systems by fostering closeness with some material artifacts over others (for example nature over consumerist culture), then there is hope. Individual humans will, the story goes, begin to change their subjectivity in a way that brings them closer to nature, and in turn, these selves will foster broader cultural change because the consequences of these expanded selves will be visible to the broader society. Presumably, they will be happier, less caught up in the rat race of consumerist life, and most importantly, capable of spreading these values widely. Cultural change, then, becomes based on the ability and willingness of enough individuals to change their own subjectivities. Deep ecology implies that all change begins with the individual subject, and collective political engagement follows.

Overall, this understanding of deep ecology makes sense in light of Luke's (2002) critique (below) of deep ecology and may also be reminiscent of Friedrich Nietzsche's (2006) passive nihilist figure from his *On the Genealogy of Morality*—a retreat to individualist ecological subjectivity as a coping mechanism for powerlessness.

The model of selfhood promulgated by deep ecology may at first glance seem simplistic, essentializing, and somewhat romantic. Interestingly, the prevailing interpretations of this model have diverged in two different directions, perhaps because deep ecology itself has gone further than most radical perspectives in trying to understand the fundamental relationship between human subjectivity and the natural world. One interpretation argues that deep ecology does not essentialize the human-nature relationship, but instead opens that relationship up to alternative nondualistic ways of relating to nature that are masked by the project of liberal capitalist individualism itself. In other words, identification with nature happens via experience first and foremost, and the myriad ways that that experience can occur are infinite and constitutive of the self in potentially differing, yet meaningful ways. Naess (1995b) indicates as much when he argues that individual humans will each formulate their own unique ecosophies depending on their direct experience of nature and its material impact on their subjectivity. Although this interpretation is less common given deep ecology's many critics, SueEllen Campbell (1989) and Simon Levesque (2016) have discussed deep ecology's understanding of the human-nature relationship as reflective of a post-dualist, post-structuralist ethical and political critique.

For example, Campbell (1989) argues that deep ecology substitutes "the traditional humanist notion of a centered self with the idea of an uncentered network. As Foucault puts it, an individual is a 'node within a network'" (p. 207). Both theories, post-structuralism and deep ecology argue that the assumptions of humanism and the Enlightenment have become destructive

and that humans require novel methods of discovering and understanding themselves in the world (Campbell 1989). Comparing the work of Naess to that of Félix Guattari, Levesque (2016) argues that both standpoints are deeply concerned with the development of new ecosophies: "philosophical worldview[s] or system[s] inspired by our living conditions in the ecosphere" (p. 512). Levesque argues that Guattari's vision of his three ecologies[8] manifests as a world where humans will cultivate heterogeneous and "repressed" subjectivities in relation to the natural world, outside the confines of capitalist stunting of these subjectivities. Likewise, "Our task, Naess suggests, is to realize a form of togetherness that would be most advantageous" as the human species and as individuals, which are one and the same (Levesque, 2016, p. 523). In other words, "the role of the ecosopher, in both Næss's and Guattari's visions, is to trigger an urge to develop a genuine, coherent, and sustainable pattern of relations with nature and our conspecifics" (Levesque, 2016, p. 534).

The above interpretation of deep ecology is interesting and intriguing in the sense that deep ecologists and Félix Guattari remain two of the only significant proponents of ecological thought that focus significantly on the importance of selfhood to environmental concern, but this understanding also makes some important missteps. Deep ecology does focus on the importance of cultivating a new kind of sensitivity to the natural world; however, the imposition of directionality upon subjectivity and teleology in the form of holistic rather than heterogenous and variable forms of subjectivity condemns the perspective to its more common interpretation of the problematic fetishization of the human self, detailed below.

This second interpretation of deep ecology that has emerged associates the perspective with moral universalism, holism, and essentialism (See Scerri, 2016). Though rarely stated

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[8] Guattari's understanding of the three ecologies is given a great deal of attention in Chapter 4.

outright, this may make it easier for deep ecological principles to be practiced by individuals in a liberal capitalist world without necessitating political change. For example, Scerri (2016) has argued that deep ecology encourages moral voluntarism by focusing primarily on ontological holism and ethics, rather than on politics and a structural analysis of domination. The holistic vision of deep ecology, for Scerri (2016), "'invest[s] corporate entities with a [voluntary] moral capacity that would in turn justify greater reliance on socially responsible private and self-regulation while serving to delegitimate binding political obligation" (p. 530). Furthermore, he argues that "the ontological and ethics-first strategy privileges 'an original' ideal condition, in the case at hand, holistic harmony amongst moral actors, which renders critique 'essentialist, ahistorical and insensitive to domination,'" (p. 537-38) and where "environmental and human exploitation emerge not as consequences of structural conditions, but as failures of moral worth" (p. 543). Though holism and the dualism of liberalism are not necessarily compatible at first glance, the ease with which the idea of personal ethical responsibility is absorbed into a liberal doctrine constitutes an alarming consequence of deep ecology's understanding of how self-transformation occurs. Luke (2002), for example, develops a critique of deep ecology echoing Scerri's, stating that, "Political action is pushed off into the realm of ethical ideals, making it every individual's moral duty to change himself or herself in advancing cultural change" (p. 184). Luke (2002) goes so far as to argue that deep ecology may resort to "green quietism" which would only help particularly ethical individuals survive in a doomed, unethical world (p. 184).

The promises of the ecocentric-focused perspectives above for the cultivation of free ecological subjects, then, are severely stunted. Not only do these models of subjectivity ignore that subjectivity itself is a product of political, institutional, material and ideational power (or in

Eckersley's case, fail to fully comprehend the consequences of this model), they also revert to a model of human agency that relies on individual ethical transformation in the face of profound institutional and capitalist barriers. Indeed, Sheldon Wolin (1960) warns of problematic justifications of political life in his volume *Politics and Vision*, stating that, "to ally political knowledge with private modes of cognition would be incongruous and self-defeating" (p. 4). Wolin's assertion explains one central reason why deep ecology remains fundamentally problematic in its assertions about the connections between personal experiences of nature (our individual "Ecosophy T's") and the prospects for meaningful, free, democratic, and non-dogmatic models of political change. In short, it assumes that an ontology of interconnectedness and embeddedness of the self in nature is sufficient to provide the impetus for political action, rather than quiet individual reflection. It assumes that political change automatically follows from personal experience and that those personal experiences can additively and collectively cohere into a meaningful and democratic political praxis. The perspective demonstrates its commitment to the environment by asserting human interconnection with nature mirrored in ecological science, yes, but deep ecologists fail to discuss a robust theory of the subject in relation to political power, and the implications that power itself have on their own model of fungible human subjectivity as it relates to experiences in nature. Of course, humans can bring their conceptions of science and existential experience into public space but relying on "private modes of cognition" to transition society away from practices of ecological harm does not constitute a step towards ecopolitical selves but rather, a step towards Nietzsche's description of nihilistic tendencies that deny the power of the self all together. In other words, deep ecology's elevation of the moment of self-realization of one's unity with nature either on the one hand promotes individual transformation in the face of unfathomable and unstoppable ecological

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destruction, or on the other hand, fosters aggressive nihilism, the assertion of selfhood in the direction of hatred, violence, and destruction of the enemies of nature, regardless of the costs to democracy, human freedom, or ultimately, ethics itself.

On the one hand, deep ecology contains an air of inevitability in its assertions. For example, George Sessions (1995) refers to all history from the 17th century and beyond as the "anthropocentric detour," (p. 168) implying that despite Western history's disease of rampant anthropocentrism, this worldview constitutes merely a long-standing misstep in the history of human-nature relations. Sessions notes that ever since the anthropocentrism of the modern Christian and early Enlightenment eras came to dominate, a backlash has been occurring against anthropocentrism on the part of philosophers and activists everywhere. In one essay, Sessions critiques the 17th century "anthropocentric humanism" of Descartes and others, maintaining that this worldview has gradually lent itself to the development of countervailing ecocentric tendencies (Sessions, 1995, p. 161-2). Citing Spinoza, J.S. Mill, and Rousseau as examples of philosophers who incorporated ecocentric elements into their work, Sessions characterizes this backlash against anthropocentrism as symptomatic of a growing awareness among intellectuals of ecological destruction (Sessions, 1995). The problem with this assertion by Sessions is not the fact that he points out the specific backlash against anthropocentrism but rather the outright dismissal of the possibility that anthropocentrism itself might have deeper connections to human subjectivity and its general malleability given this long-standing Western attitude toward nature as both separate from humanity and as primarily important for its exchange-value.

On the other hand, deep ecology does proclaim to speak against the dualistic assumptions of liberalism. The disconnect between those who critique deep ecology for reverting to a liberal environmentalism and those who proclaim that the perspective busts open the constraints of

dualism remains complex and unresolved in most discussions of deep ecology. In some ways, deep ecologists do not necessarily move as far away from traditional political theory perspectives as they seem to at first glance. Hinchman and Hinchman (1989) argue in support of deep ecologists by arguing that they promote an understanding that derives from Aristotelian notions of "natural right." In short, "Deep Ecologists regard the abuse of nature as simultaneously a self-forgetting, a failure to recognize the disharmony in one's own life" (p. 208). Both interpretations of deep ecological thought, the liberal and the Aristotelian promote an understanding of the world that is grounded in a static conception of the self, either as an autonomous chooser or as an embedded being. Moreover, both interpretations also promote an understanding of the self whereby a rational subject can act in its own interests in the context of nature, even if reason itself is circumscribed through an experience of interconnectedness with nature.

Most recently, deep ecology has all but disappeared from the radar of radical ecopolitical thought perhaps because of its above association with misanthropy, antihumanism, patriarchy, and Ferry's (1995) charges of eco-fascism. As Scerri notes, "By the early 2000s, deep ecology had fallen out of favour with many green scholars" (p. 527). Not only, as Scerri notes, had deep ecology become a fringe perspective, to some extent it always had been such a perspective despite having more popularity in between the 1970s and early 2000s in green circles. Deep ecology has always constituted "a somewhat esoteric philosophy/world view shared among a relatively small population of academics and activists who engage in what is a 'closed' social discourse" (Oeschlaeger, 2014, p. 235).

Politically speaking, deep ecology has always constituted both an ecophilosophical perspective and a social movement geared towards radical change. The "Eight Point Platform" promoted by Naess (1995a) orients the perspective towards political action and socio-cultural

change through its calls for various behavioral and attitudinal changes in humans, writ large.

However, as Oeschlaeger (2014) notes

> There is *little or no evidence* that DE has promoted *widespread* changes facilitating sustainability, social justice, or peace. And given the complexity and uncertainty of the near future, there is little reason to think that DE has either the paradigmatic resources or widespread popular support adequate to analyzing and facilitating adaptive change leading to sustainability. (p. 235)

At the same time, Oeschleager (2014) believes that deep ecology may hold a great deal of utility in the context of the Anthropocene because, as Naess implies, growing awareness and sensitivity to the fact that humanity's fate is intrinsically and inextricably linked to the fate of the planet itself only increases in the context of life in the Anthropocene. I am particularly skeptical that deep ecology will become in vogue anytime soon, however, given the above critiques.

Conclusion

Deep ecology does one thing that redeems its utility as a radical environmental theory. Namely, it has become the most prominent radical environmental theory that focuses on the importance of subjectivity when considering the prospects for environmental sustainability. In other words, it brings the subject back into the equation when considering the human-nature relationship and the prospects for altering the way that the configuration of that relationship impedes eco-subjects and ecopolitical practices. The way that the perspective makes connections between ontology, subjectivity, and environmental politics also stands out as particularly illuminating in that these elements are indeed intimately tied to one another in important ways. Ecofeminism and Eckersley's "ecocentric" perspective, however, focus even less on subjectivity overall and shy away from emphasizing the importance of the self for political, social, or economic change, though each perspective, respectively, remains useful for critiquing and clarifying deep ecology and locating a more specific politics therein. Though deep ecology

focuses mostly on cultural change, it still provides an opening into ecopolitics by emphasizing the importance of subjectivity in the first instance.

Furthermore, the need for a much more comprehensive discussion of the status of the subject in environmental political theory generally is also vital if we assume that what we believe about ourselves as human beings is essential to ecological sustainability. Despite the above flaws, deep ecology's apolitical-ness (and therefore amiability to dogmatism), its failure to theorize subjectivity in heterogenous ways, and its easy co-optation by liberalism (and therefore, capitalism), it also makes us aware of the relationship between subjectivity, the psyche (and valuation), ontology, and socio-cultural (and presumably, political) change. Until now, most of the work that relates to subjectivity in the field of radical ecopolitical thought has focused on the inclusion of a greater number of entities into the political fold (See Gabrielson, Hall, Meyer, & Schlosberg, 2016), and while deep ecology also grants subjectivity and intrinsic value to the natural world, it also goes beyond this to focus on the human self. The necessity of bringing subjectivity back into this discussion in terms of focusing on what these material, existential, and ideational entities actual do to human selves remains a relatively underdeveloped concept in ecopolitical thought. Although perhaps a laundry list of the best kinds of characteristics needed for an ecological subject may not be possible, the relationship between subjectivity, ecological sustainability, and contemporary society's ills requires much greater attention in the field of ecopolitical thought in general.

Next, Chapter 2 focuses on ecosocialism, arguing that where deep ecology fails to incorporate a robust critique of material systems beyond nature and therefore of capitalism into its theoretical insights, ecosocialism focuses a bit too heavily a certain relationship between material production and alienated labor, overemphasizing humans qua animal laborans but also

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bringing to light how capitalism as a material system participates in both ecological degradation and human alienation of producer subjectivities, specifically. While deep ecology's merits lie in its focus on the relationship between selfhood and the destruction of nature, ecosocialism's merits lie in its robust critiques of capitalism, albeit in a way that narrowly conceives of human subjectivity in the first place through a reductive and essentialist notion of human nature that only characterizes human subjectivity's alienation under capitalism in relation to humanity's capacity to freely "labor" beyond its means of subsistence. In other words, the production of subjectivity for ecosocialists is epiphenomenal to the capitalist system, rather than a central process through which it enforces its logic and where this logic affects the human-nature relationship.

CHAPTER 2: ECOSOCIALISM AND SUBJECTIVITY: OVERCOMING THE CAPITALIST
SELF

"We are nothing in comparison to Nature and yet everything through our recognition of nature," Joel Kovel (2014) reminisces (p. 17). Seemingly, this understanding of the importance of nature to human fulfillment calls to life a robust understanding of human subjectivity. Nevertheless, the word subjectivity appears very little in ecosocialist work. For a strain of ecopolitical thought deeply concerned with how human beings can overcome the capitalist system and re-establish a non-exploitative relation with nature, ecosocialists tend to shy away from directly discussing the kinds of selves required for the overthrow of the capitalist system and capable of an ecological politics. The reasons behind this omission seem twofold, one quite innocent, the other more problematic. First, ecosocialists tend to refer to subjectivity by words other than "self" or "subject." Words like "alienation," "consciousness," "human needs," "the production of life," "self-realization," and on occasion, "human nature" appear more commonly and in reference to the relations between both humans/nature and humans/productive activity. The second reason that ecosocialists refer more commonly to the above terms than to "human subjectivity" relates to an overcommitment to a dialectical analysis of productive life and their unwillingness to fully unpack the implications for agency and human subjectivity deriving from their assumptions of historical materialism.

In other words, ecosocialism possesses a myopia when it comes to engaging with the idea of subjectivity, focusing instead on how material production under capitalism precludes better relations between human beings and between humans and nature. Their concern is transforming material production, which in turn can liberate humanity and their creative processes (and therefore, their subjectivities). I unpack this and other critiques later in this chapter, but despite a

lack of focus on subjectivity outright, ecosocialism's robust analysis of capitalist manipulation of humans and degradation of nature remains critical to my project as it carries significant materialist insights into the capitalist project that inform our longer journey toward a re-imagined understanding of ecological subjectivity.

This chapter extrapolates the meaning of human subjectivity in the context of ecosocialist theory, another often-neglected component for understanding the relationship between ecology and the production of subjectivity more generally. Ecosocialism fills an important gap left by much of deep ecology, for example, by critiquing capitalism from the outset. In this chapter, I argue that ecosocialism's insights about the capitalist system and its relationship to nature remain invaluable to any robust understanding of capitalism's role in the restriction of human freedom and ecological sustainability. For example, the notion that capitalism constitutes an inherently ecologically destructive configuration of power illuminates that capitalism must constitute a central site of attack for any radical ecopolitical movement (Foster, 2000; Kovel, 2007; and O'Connor, 1996). Moreover, ecosocialism's insights into the co-optation and truncation of the self by capitalist systems of power also remain extremely important for any materialist analysis aimed at re-imagining ecological subjectivity. Surely capitalism takes explicit steps to direct subjectivity away from openings that could undermine its very existence. For example, ecosocialism argues that the human capacity to labor beyond its means of subsistence could manifest in ways which are less destructive of nature, but instead, capitalism co-opts and exploits the human-nature relationship away from one of mutual constitution, respect, and use-value, compressing it into a relationship of exploitation and exchange-value (Kovel, 2007; Löwy and Kovel, 2001; Löwy, 2015; O'Connor, 1998).

At the same time, my aim in this chapter is to problematize the assumptions made about subjectivity by ecosocialists. In this regard, I make two main arguments that will impact the way subjectivity and its relation to capitalism are discussed in upcoming chapters. First, I argue that ecosocialist conceptions of human nature or species being constitute only part of the story of human subjectivity. Though ecosocialists conceive of human productive capacity as a broad category, they do not fully account for the transformation of human qualities in a postcapitalist world that would exist outside the boundaries of the category of production itself (including aesthetic appreciation of nature that does not produce or create anything in its turn). These nonproductive activities, too, constitute an exercise of human freedom that is not fundamentally connected to our (also important) qualities as creative, productive creatures (or as animal laborans, according to ecosocialist assertions). In short, the ontological assumption of animal laborans in ecosocialism promotes an understanding of the human-nature relationship which fundamentally limits the possibilities for producing ecological subjectivity. In short, humans are more than their creative labor. The logic of productivism in ecosocialism (as understood by Baudrillard, [1975]) helps clarify at least some of these issues as well and is subject to critique because it restricts human liberty to the realm of labor. Second, the historical materialist assumptions espoused by ecosocialists serve to echo important understandings from both Karl Marx (1972) and Anthony Giddens (1971) on the relationship between agency and structure in the context of capitalism. However, historical materialism also reduces human subjectivity as well and oversimplifies the effects of capitalism on the production of subjectivity, conceived by ecosocialists as a form of alienation requiring resolution through freely chosen and acted up productive labor (See Kovel, 2007). The historical production of agents capable of overcoming capitalism as understood by ecosocialism only considers these agents as they relate to history's

cycles of material production. This ecosocialist understanding allows human agents to exploit

material (accumulation [surplus/underproduction] and ecological) contradictions but

ecosocialism does not accompany this understanding of agency with a model of the relationship

between materiality, the production of subjectivity, and agency which specifically

acknowledging that capitalism constitutes not only a material mode of production but also a

mode of production of subjectivity. Historical materialism in the context of ecosocialism has

largely ignored the relationship between materiality's production of affects and how alienation

under capitalism relies on the production of certain affective dimensions of subjectivity which

have a more-than-materialist dimension in human consciousness as well. Alienation does not

only stem from the historical materialist production of economic and social life, but also from the

production of the psyche and numerous (sometimes contradictory) forms of subjectivity, in other

words.

To summarize, I argue that ecosocialism contributes to a more macroscopic lens through

which to view the capitalist constraints imposed on the subjectivities of workers, women (as

invisible workers), and humans more generally as creative and free "laborers" (or active makers

of their world). What ecosocialism does contribute to a robust understanding of ecological

subjectivity lies in its critique of capitalism as a system whose logic as it currently stands is not

capable of treating the earth well. This is not to argue, of course, that capitalism does not

manifest and infiltrate human subjects in numerous and open-ended ways, but rather to elevate

the necessary insight that ecosocialists discover as irrevocably tying capitalism as a historical

force in its own right to ecological degradation. Though ecosocialists only point to capitalism's

historical materialist configurations in relation to ecological degradation, an analysis of

capitalism's heterogenous effects on human subjectivity must be added as well. In short, not only

does capitalism destroy nature via its productivism and material operations, it also infects

subjectivity via its material logics and operations in ways that cannot be summarized by merely

referring to the effects of capitalism on human subjectivity as it relates to labor (humanity's

"species being") alone (as ecosocialists often do). Nevertheless, an ecosocialist analysis of the

human-nature relationship remains necessary to understanding capitalism in its more macro or

structural sense, as not only a logic of material power, but also as system which fundamentally

truncates human subjectivity in the context of creative labor. Ecosocialists will argue that

capitalism damages the relationship between humans and nature because it alienates the former

from the latter and masks entanglements between the two (Kovel, 2002; Moore, 2015).

Moreover, my own project benefits from any critique of capitalism that relates to nature,

since capitalism has, in fact, participated in and accelerated the destruction of nature since the

Industrial Revolution. If, as Moore (2015) argues, we are in fact living in the Capitalocene, an

urgent political task of examining all the contours of this epoch in the context of production,

exploitation, alienation, and subjectivity remains necessary. In Antonio Negri's (1990) post-

script for his and Guattari's *Communists Like Us*, he argues that one of the primary tasks of any

communist project is to engage in an analysis of the relationship between environmental harm

and the liberation of humanity. I agree with this assertion, as do ecosocialists. Negri (1990)

argues that he and Guattari "ought to have acknowledged not only the necessity of defending

nature against the menace of destruction and the imminent apocalypse that hangs over it, but also

the urgency of constructing new systems and conditions for re-producing the human species. It is

easy to see that our text was written before Chernobyl" (p. 155). That "menace of destruction" is

capitalism, and Negri here and Guattari in much of his own work (particularly *The Three

Ecologies*) acknowledged that the necessary task of "re-producing the human species" to cope

with this destruction and combat it must target and imagine new modes of producing

subjectivity. Liberating humanity's creative capacity to labor from its alienation under capitalism

constitutes one important path that ecosocialists specifically propose for imagining new ways of

inhabiting the world (and producing ourselves) that more closely aligns with an

acknowledgement of the mutually constitutive relationship between humans and nature.

Basic Assumptions and Objectives

In this chapter, I use the term "ecosocialism" as an umbrella term for both ecosocialism

and eco-Marxism. The two strains of thought relate intimately to one another and separating each

into its own neatly defined category does not yield significant insights for my own research.

Briefly, both traditions utilize Marxist insights into the nature of capitalism and exploitation.

Upon closer examination, however, eco-Marxists usually rely much more heavily on Marx

himself, in the sense that some have sought to make him into "an ecological thinker *par*

excellence" while others have retrieved pieces of Marx's work in order to remake his relevance

for contemporary society in ecological directions (Macdonald, 2006, p. 48). In this respect,

ecosocialism constitutes a broader category, and eco-Marxism a smaller subcategory of the

ecosocialist tradition (Macdonald, 2006). While some important differences remain, the broad

tradition of ecosocialism shares some essential assumptions amongst its adherents that help

define the perspective, its goals, and conceptions of subjectivity within and beyond capitalist

power. Specifically, ecosocialism makes several important claims that draw on Marxism and its

understanding of the human-nature relationship. These claims are neatly summarized by Joel

Kovel (2014), stating,

> The prime goal of [ecosocialism]…is to generate a mode of production necessary and
> sufficient to overcome the combined accumulation crisis and ecological crisis we now
> suffer. Ecosocialism does not settle therefore for anything less than the transcendence of

capitalism as a mode of production, and whatever reforms it tolerates are not seen as ends in themselves but as means to its end. (p. 13)

Overall, ecosocialists share a belief in the inherent contradictions and rifts created by capitalism that separate humans from one another, their essence as laboring beings, and from nature itself, transformed into mere matter for the purposes of accumulation in capitalist society. These metabolic rifts result in crises of both capitalism and nature (See Foster, York, and Clark 2010). Additionally, ecosocialists share a commitment to elevating the importance of use-value over exchange value in socialist society and discuss how the relationship between humans and nature under conditions of use-value will fundamentally alter the limits of society/nature. A belief in fundamental limits to growth inheres in most ecosocialist analysis as well (See Löwy, 2015).

Ecosocialists also share many of these same assumptions about capitalism with ecosocialist feminists, who have keenly pointed to the importance of including an analysis of reproduction in any ecosocialist project that seeks widespread liberation from capitalist instrumentalization and exploitation. For example, Ariel Salleh (1997) argues that Marxism, while concerned about the relationship between humans and nature, remains committed to an exploitative and rationalized Enlightenment model of that relationship, whereby not only do humans exist relationally with nature, but where they must transform it through their labor to better it. Under this kind of system, it is far from clear that women would fare better if indeed, nature is still dualistically opposed to humanity (and human labor), since women's association with nature engenders the oppression and devaluation of womanhood in the first instance (See Warren, 1996 for this discussion). Relatedly, Mary Mellor (1996) has also called out ecosocialists for ignoring issues in the reproductive sphere, arguing that any ecosocialist project that focuses too much on economic relationships at the expense of other (personal/private) relationships implies that the liberation of public and economic relationships alone constitutes a

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revolutionary struggle towards socialism. In this regard, ecosocialist feminists acknowledge fully

that liberation requires the destruction of capitalism, but that it also requires the full

acknowledgement of capitalism's failure to monetize and therefore its tendency to mask and

exclude reproductive and care work as integral to the sustaining power of capitalism itself (and

as production/reproduction in its own right) (Mellor, 1996). To summarize, under capitalist

patriarchy, "women's bodies have never come to obtain a rent as land does, but they are none the

less 'resourced' for free by capital to provide ever-new generations of exploitable labor" (Salleh,

1997, p. 93). Other significant ecosocialist feminist insights are sprinkled throughout this

chapter, including their contributions to ecosocialist understandings of subjectivity.

Below, I briefly sketch some of the basic assumptions of the ecosocialist position,

followed by an analysis of the ecosocialist understanding of the production of subjectivity. In

order, these basic assumptions include the following: 1) Marx's understanding of the relationship

between the mode of production and the relations of production also applies to and includes key

insights about the relationship between humans and nature from an historical materialist

standpoint, 2) Capitalism includes not one, but two fundamental contradictions, and the second

contradiction of capitalism concerns the fundamental incompatibility between capitalist

production and environmental protection/sustainability, and 3) Ecosocialist praxis and Marx's

own vision of communist society each imply an expansive understanding of value as related to

the natural world and human freedom, rejecting the overemphasis on exchange value under

capitalist unfreedom.

Most ecosocialists pride themselves on their willingness to move away from perceptions

of Marx's own productivist logic. Ecological thinkers have long characterized Marx's work as

anti-ecological precisely because it often seems to reflect rather than critique Enlightenment

standards that objectify nature as an abstract entity which is only useful for human accumulation and progress (Pepper, 1993; Salleh, 1997). Löwy (2015) characterizes ecosocialism as, "a current of ecological thought and action that appropriates the fundamental gains of Marxism while shaking off its productivist dross" (p. 6). In other words, ecosocialists claim to reject a position where nature is only valued for its productive utility (which even Marx sometimes espoused) and focus instead on nature as both limited in its capacity to contribute to the capitalist logic of exponential growth and as connected in irrevocable ways to the possibilities for human freedom (Macdonald, 2006). Enlightenment Marx, whose instrumentalizing of nature has proven incompatible with ecological life, whether under capitalism or socialism, is scorned and rejected by the majority of ecosocialists.

Instead, ecosocialists point toward a variety of passages in Marx that contribute to his conceptualization of the human-nature relationship in various ways. For example, David Pepper (1993) notes that, "Marx did see nature's value as 'instrumental' to humans, but to him instrumental value did not mean merely economic or material. It included nature as a source of aesthetic, scientific, and moral value" (p. 64). In other words, ecosocialists claim that capitalism reduces the relationship between humans and nature to one of mere exchange value, displacing not only the importance of use-value for production but also other values that humans bestow on the natural world (Burkett, 1999). Through this reduction, capitalism objectifies nature (and those workers who transform nature thorough production), relying on the value of market commodities as a hollow substitute for production that satisfies the real needs of humans and nature alike.

Utilizing Marx, Foster et al. (2010) lay out their theory of ecological rift, drawing on Marx's own understanding of the capitalist metabolic rift. They argue that Marx himself noticed

that the capitalist growth imperative resulted in environmental degradation in the context of

agricultural production specifically. In other words, Marx understood that historically produced

social relations were deeply integrated with the way that production utilizes nature at a given

time. By degrading the land, capitalist production has created a metabolic rift where nature

sustains lasting damage that not only causes capitalism to expand to less degraded areas all over

the globe, but which also creates a fundamental contradiction in how social forces are required to

produce in the context of capitalist social relations. In this way, capitalism's social metabolism

becomes out of sync with its natural metabolism. Nature itself, in other words, cannot "keep up"

with the pace of production demanded by capitalist social relations. Producers and their workers

must produce more and more or the system of accumulation which undermines nature in the first

place becomes doomed to collapse in the face of its contradictions. While capitalism may

sometimes resolve these contradictions, in solving one, capitalism usually produces another rift

to take the place of the former through the invention of some new technological fix that creates

more degradation in another sector of nature (Foster et al., 2010). Summarizing this point, Foster

et al. (2010) argue that,

> Capitalism is incapable of regulating its social metabolism with nature in an
> environmentally sustainable manner. Its very operations violate the laws of restitution
> and metabolic restoration. The constant drive to renew the capital accumulation process
> intensifies its destructive social metabolism, imposing the needs of capital on nature,
> regardless of the consequences to natural systems. (p. 85-86)

Ecosocialists who ally themselves with feminism have also pointed to the detail that capitalism

imposes itself on nature and expects to bear none of the costs of exploitation. Jason W. Moore

(2015) in his *Capitalism and the Web of Life* argues that capitalism has survived so long not only

by degrading nature, but through technologies and practices that push nature to work infinitely

harder at little or no cost. Today, Moore (2015) argues, "it is becoming increasingly difficult to

get nature—of any kind—to work harder" (p. 13).

Moore (2015) develops the above point further by arguing that just as social reproduction by women goes unpaid, so does nature's work for capital accumulation. He argues, that, "Life activity outside commodity production, but articulated with it, is socially necessary unpaid work" (p. 300). For Moore, the reason that this kind of work remains uncounted or "unquantified" by capitalism is because capital itself fundamentally depends on an "even greater mass of unquantifiable work" for its survival through constantly increasing accumulation (p. 300). Related to the conception of the ecological rift, Moore's work suggests that capitalism's contradictions may survive longer than most ecosocialists portend, primarily because of its ability to reach into the "black market" of unpaid labor. Women's care work, the work that nature itself does in service of capitalism, contemporary practices of slavery, and extremely low wages all provide timely evidence to support Moore's claims.

An additional aspect of Moore's (2015) unique understanding of the relationship between human societies, capitalism, and nature relates to his concept of the "double internality." By presenting a robust critique of metabolic rift theories and charging much of ecosocialism with failing to extricate itself from Cartesian dualism, Moore attempts to construct a truly dialectical (rather than dualist) analysis of the human-nature relationship in the context of capitalism. Moore argues that capitalist power does not *do* anything to nature; rather, it operates through what Moore (2015) refers to as the "web of life." Moreover, the web of life constitutes a "flow of flows," the terrain where capitalism itself produces and reproduces itself. In short, capitalism and nature do not exist as separate entities. Instead, capitalism organizes nature in new ways. Production constitutes a fundamentally environmental activity, where "capitalism as *world-ecology*…[is] a patterned history of power, capital, and nature, dialectically joined" (p. 8). In other words, nature is historically produced through humanity's productive lives. To be clear,

nature itself (not the idea of nature or our perception of it), but its being (its actual substance), Moore (2015) argues, is produced throughout and within the context of human history. Nature itself works for capitalism. This conception attempts to show, for one, that the concept of metabolic or ecological rift is insufficient for understanding how capitalism produces nature because these entities are not working on but through one another in dialectical fashion. Indeed, Moore (2015) replaces the word "rift" with "shift" in this context, rejecting metabolic rift theorists' overemphasis on some form of nature that returns to an original (or at least benign) state once society overthrows the capitalist project.

Despite Moore's important critiques, which I return to later, and following George Lukács' (1971) revolutionary understanding of dialectical reality as reflexive, other ecosocialists have reformulated Marx's original understanding of nature away from a narrow productivist logic and toward a re-imagining of the human-nature relationship through an historical materialist lens that unites humanity and nature into a singular cycle of production broadly conceived (Foster et al., 2010). This reformulation constitutes a more common understanding of this relationship, absent Moore's critique. In depth, this understanding allows ecosocialists to understand the human-nature relationship as follows:

> The subject (the human being) recognizes in the object of his/her activity the results of humanity's own historical self-creation. We can understand history…because we have 'made' it. The dialectic thus becomes a powerful theoretical means of discovery rooted in praxis itself, which allows us to uncover the totality of social mediations. (Foster et al., 2010, p. 217)

In short, this understanding of historical materialism liberates human beings as merely functionalist tools of a given economic system, acknowledging that the history of economy and society precedes dialectically via material reality and opening a path for liberatory praxis in the context of capitalism as a social system.

The important thing to note about this perspective is its ontological view of the world, for now. The ontological understanding here is as follows: society produces specific relations with nature and, in turn, those relations become reified and reproduced by an economic system, which paints social relations with nature as produced and reproduced over time by particular social configurations, which may tweak and alter these relations over time. This relational perspective shows that society, nature, and production mutually constitute one another over time and in a dialectical fashion. The implications of this perspective for ecosocialism's complex understanding of human agency (and Moore's reconfiguration of this understanding) come under scrutiny later in the chapter, but for now, the focus remains on how ecosocialists have conceptualized the human-nature relationship overall.

For instance, ecosocialists have reframed Marx's own materialist conception of history, arguing that the human-nature relationship at any given point in history is constituted by the organization of economic production (Pepper, 1993). More specifically, James O'Connor (1998) has argued that historical materialism, in order to fully incorporate the relation between human culture and nature into its fold, must understand nature and culture as produced cumulatively by various forms of social organization which connect each to the other at a given point in history. The above understanding of rift and its relation to historical materialism results in significant consequences for how humans themselves produce their means of life under capitalism (which severely stunts and misdirects the aims of human agency through the production of false needs and processes of accumulation) (See Kovel, 2007).

Ecosocialists reinterpreting Marx's understanding of the human-nature relationship in non-Promethean directions argue that Marx discusses the real wealth of individuals in terms of their social relations with one another and their connection to producing their means of life in a

collective fashion. In other words, human freedom derives from humanity's creative, intellectual,

and social production of their needs and lives in common (Grundmann, 1991). If this is the case,

then the rifts and contradictions that harm both social and natural systems under capitalism

severely limit the prospects for human freedom and nature's own flourishing. Under capitalism,

humans and nature both become tools working for the sake of accumulation, rather than entities

which engender human freedom which should be exercised in relation to nature for the sake of

that exercise alone. Moore (2015) summarizes the first part of this point, stating that,

"Capitalism, as project, seeks to create a world in the image of capital, in which all elements of

human and extra-human nature are effectively interchangeable" (p. 204). Thus, as Burkett (1999)

argues, freedom under communist society entails more "free time" which allows individuals to

develop their fully human selves under conditions of freedom to appropriate nature in a way that

only enhances that self-fulfillment. These contradictions, however, can be understood in myriad

ways which enlighten us to the aspirations of ecosocialists themselves.

Indeed, James O'Connor (1996), first put forth the theory of the "second contradiction of

capitalism," explained in the following way:

> Marx wrote little pertaining to the ways that capital limits itself by impairing its own
> social and environmental conditions, hence increasing the costs and expenses of capital,
> thereby threatening capitals' ability to produce profits, that is, threatening economic
> crisis. (p. 199)

Precisely this contradiction between the mode of production and the degraded conditions of

nature under capitalism constitutes the idea of this second contradiction. Accordingly,

O'Connor's purpose can be characterized as an effort to explain why capitalism produces

scarcity, a specifically capitalist variety of scarcity to be exact (Spence, 2000). According to

O'Connor (1996), the second contradiction of capitalism is also characterized by an important

new category put forth by O'Connor himself, namely, the idea of "conditions of production,"

including "the labour power of workers," the "communal conditions of production," such as communication technologies, infrastructure, and transportation systems, and finally, nature itself, i.e. "external physical conditions" (as cited in Spence, 2000, p. 85). The second contradiction clearly relates to the idea of the limits of production, where external nature acts as one such limit at a given period in history (O'Connor, 1996).

Rosewerne (1997) characterizes the second contradiction as "premised on the argument that the production of value is contingent upon access to (among other things) natural resources and ecological systems" (p. 101). Capitalism degrades nature in the process of production, which in turn can raise the costs of production due to scarcity and inefficiency, leading to underproduction and economic crisis. In short, capitalism will most likely (and already is) destroying its own means of subsistence through its processes of infinite accumulation (O'Connor, 1996; O'Connor, 1998). This dialectical notion of historically produced material contradictions in ecosocialist analysis invokes a notion of crisis. Rosewerne (1997) goes so far as to call O'Connor's understanding of the second contradiction a "telos of crisis" (p. 104), which may actually restrict the myriad ways that capitalism might in practice deal with this contradiction. As Rosewerne (1997) argues, in order to fully account for the how society may decide to deal with crisis and whether or not society constructs this contradiction as a crisis in the first place, the uncertain character of social interventions into the crisis must also be considered.

Although ecosocialists present the capitalist crisis as inevitable, some ecosocialists move away from Foster's and O'Connor's more rigid and teleological notion of crisis, and O'Connor himself has also admitted that contradictions and their resolutions are often marked by practical

and unpredictable "compromises" that tweak the way that capitalism reproduces itself.[9] For

example, Michael Löwy (2015) argues that ecosocialists must replace Marx's contradiction

between the forces and relations of production with "the idea that productive forces in the

capitalist system become destructive ones" (p. 10). For others, like Joel Kovel (2007), capitalism

doesn't only set in motion its own self-destruction through contradictions, but also acts as an

uncontrollable system overall. Due to its internal contradictions, the system is fundamentally

uncontrollable, which results in a great deal of uncertainty about the feasibility of steps necessary

for its overcoming. For example, Kovel argues that, "If the argument that capital is incorrigibly

ecodestructive and expansive proves to be true, then it is only a question of time before the issues

raised here will achieve explosive urgency" (p. 242).

Relatedly, Grundmann (1991) argues that capitalism contradicts itself precisely because it

produces alienated social systems. He states that, "Far more serious is the problem that social

systems are often unable to control (to 'understand') the effects of their own working on

themselves" (p. 292). In short, social systems become alienated from themselves under

capitalism, becoming incapable of understanding their own feedback loops and cycles of

reproduction through alienation. Indeed, Marx himself argued that over time, individuals lose

more and more control over their own social relations; the task of ecosocialism, given this

observation, resides in trying to discern the best means for imbuing individuals with power once

more (Grundmann, 1991). Later, the question of the capacities of human agency under the above

conditions of precarity is also examined for its utility in illuminating pathways for ecosocialist

praxis.

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[9]   See Spence 2010, p. 83 for an explanation of O'Connor's caveat here.

And finally, ecosocialism supports these discussions about rift, ecological crisis, and contradiction with fundamental assumptions about ecological and social limits (Löwy, 2015; Rosewerne, 1997). In short, economic systems and social forces produce limits via their relationships with one another and technological capabilities at a given historical point. Grundmann (1991), for example, argues that "the social character of human beings re-establishes anew the natural limits at each stage of historical development" (p. 246). In other words, nature gives human beings natural limits to work with at a given point in history, and humans then navigate and reconfigure those limits in ways that suit the current mode of production (Grundmann, 1991). A "limits to growth" perspective characterizes almost all ecosocialist work (Kovel and Löwy, 2001; Macdonald, 2006).

More specifically, nature itself may impose limits on humanity's accumulation processes, but most ecosocialists argue that natural limits to growth do not exist outside of a social and productive context. Citing the importance of not reifying nature (or women), Mellor (2006) discusses the idea of hard and eternal natural limits as an essentialized view of the natural world, one that is fundamentally opposed to historical materialism. She states that,

> The dilemma between essentialist readings of women and nature versus a materialist analysis of economic relations is that feminist and ecological concerns will undermine historical materialism by positing essentialist limits to human activity (ecological or biological) or by claiming an intuitive source of knowledge that draws on biological or ecological dynamics. From the perspective of historical materialism such a course would trap human societies in a reified naturalism whereby social relationships are presented as ordained by biology or by nature. (Mellor, 2006, p. 253)

All of the above assertions relate to a fundamental assumption employed by most ecosocialists, namely, that society produces nature in its entirety: materially, socially, conceptually, and ideologically (Pepper, 1993). Of course, the above critique from Mellor (2006) could surely apply to deep ecology and the varieties of ecofeminism discussed in Chapter 1 as well. At least

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for ecosocialists, the human-nature relationship cannot conform to any predetermined model, no gestalt ontological condition which ignores the contours of history and material production.

Like most ecosocialists, Moore also critiques any discussion of hard and fast ecological limits in the sense that all limits produce themselves in the context of historical-geographical circumstances. Moore's perspective also adds to the above discussions of limits in interesting ways. In short, Moore argues that while real limits do exist to capitalism's unending expansion and to capitalist accumulation, these limits are produced by history and the way in which capitalism "works *through*," rather "than *upon* nature" (Moore, 2015, p. 30). Again, capitalism, nature, and humanity fundamentally produce limits through their entanglements with one another, not by the eternal presence of certain primordial natural limits produced by the earth alone, most ecosocialists argue. Moore adds an interesting dimension to this conversation by attempting to emphasize that nature and humanity work with capitalism in partnership, co-producing limits in the process. Moore's thinking about these systems as fundamentally entangled and inseparable (in a more robust and thought out nod to holism than deep ecology, for example), challenges previous ecosocialist work on the grounds that ecosocialists emphasize relations through separation between humans and nature. Despite their focus on these historical material relations, ecosocialists (from Moore's perspective) fail to methodologically (dialectically) prove entanglement rather than separation partly because they privilege an image of peaceful, restored nature under socialism. Instead, Moore counters this tendency of ecosocialism to emphasize rift and contradiction with an image of nature that, no matter what humans do or do not do, fundamentally alters itself because of our presence just as we too are altered fundamentally by nature through our productive activity. In short, Moore (2015) argues that "Capitalism is not an economic system; it is not a social system; it is a *way of organizing*

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nature" (p. 2). In short, the ideas of rift and contradiction assume that ecosocialist society

resolves contradictions and restores some more benign balance between humans and nature

prevented by capitalism. By contrast, Moore (2015) points out that any such balance cannot

really be discerned due to entanglement itself. This also implies that the dialectical method

employed by most ecosocialists to elucidate historical materialist theory oversimplifies historical

materialism itself and has very little to actually contribute to an analysis of the complexity of the

relationship between humans and nature in the context of material production.

In addition, ecosocialism claims to present a path for humanity to reconfigure their

dominant mode of valuation of nature, where "use-value and quality are valorized over

exchange-value and quantity, and the economy is now embedded within society rather than, as

under capitalism, standing over society" (Kovel, 2007, p. 243). At the level of abstraction,

capitalist accumulation positions itself as the creator of value in society, primarily exchange

value (Benton 1996). Accordingly, ecosocialism is defined by its commitment to elevating use-

value above exchange value by making sure that value becomes a function of society's needs

rather than a function of the capitalist drive for ever-expanding commodity accumulation (Löwy

and Kovel, 2001; Löwy, 2015; O'Connor, 1998). In socialist society, use-value (i.e. human need)

alone drives production (Löwy, 2015). Marx's own understanding of how the capitalist system

co-opts human need through exchange value is instructive. Hughes (2000) argues that,

> [The expansion of capital], Marx asserts, has a tendency to expand independently of
> human needs. Indeed, Marx characterizes this tendency as a 'need' of capital to which
> human needs are subordinated, capitalism being 'a mode of production in which the
> worker exists to satisfy *the need of existing values for valorization*, as opposed to the
> inverse situation, in which objective wealth is there to satisfy the worker's own need for
> development.' (p. 171)

Regrettably, capitalism turns all societal values toward its own goals of reproduction and self-

sustenance, leaving little room for humanity's own valorization of alternatives (or the production

of alternative needs through a revolution in the modes of the production of subjectivity). The anthropocentrism that deep ecology attributes to cultural missteps throughout history instead for ecosocialism derives from capitalist modes of valuation, rather than from a mistaken diversion on the part of all of humanity (as deep ecologists might argue).

One of the most important insights into valuation in ecosocialist thought comes from Paul Burkett's (1999) work. Burkett revitalized an understanding of "value-relational thinking—the law of value as co-produced by humans and the rest of nature" (Moore, 2015, p. 83). Burkett (1999) argues that, "For capital, the use values of labor power and nature are mere means of value accumulation. For labor, by contrast, value (in the form of wages) is merely a means to obtain necessary use values" (p. 205). Ecosocialist society, then, must overcome this relationship, through a "socialization of nature" which regards "the wealth of nature" as "the substance of human development itself—the 'real body' of labor" (Burkett, 1999, p. 215). Echoing the sentiments of Salleh and Moore above, Burkett (1999) argues that the amount of labor time that actually goes into the process of production becomes increasingly less accurate as a measure of use-value under capitalist conditions. He argues that, "With the decreasing correspondence between use value and direct labor, capital's utilization of natural and social conditions as bearers of value and surplus value increasingly takes the form of its *free appropriation* of these conditions" (Burkett, 1999, p. 188). Valuation that develops in capitalist society, in other words, only emerges via the exploitation and extraction of free labor from both nature and humans (especially reproductive women's bodies).

Indeed, if humans through their interactions with nature and the effects of those interactions on the productive mode of society constitutes the dominant configuration of value production, then this cycle of production and reproduction outlined by Burkett and others creates

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specific consequences for the transformation of society that ecosocialists have not adequately dealt with in their work. The co-production of value begs the question of whether or not (and to what degree) valuation can and does exist outside of the dominant mode of valorization in capitalist societies. One useful inroad into this understanding of the relationship between valuation and capitalism is Löwy's (2015) discussion of the role of advertising in human life under capitalism and its relationship to the production of needs. For instance, Löwy (2015) argues that "The advertising industry—which induces needs through mental manipulation—has invaded all spheres of human life in modern capitalist societies: not only nourishment and clothing, but sports, culture, religion, and politics are shaped according to its rules" (p. 33). In short, humanity comes to value certain consumptive practices because the capitalist system manipulates the psyche, and this manipulation and production of false needs constitutes one of the most important capitalist inroads into the human mind that ecosocialists seek to overcome (Löwy, 2015). Löwy's remarks point us in the right direction, but understanding the connections between valuation, historical materialism, and subjectivity may also be limited by the ecosocialist commitment to labor as the means of creation of value itself. I return to this assertion in the final section.

How do historical materialism, valuation, and ecological subjectivity relate to one another in the context of ecosocialist analysis? The next section provides an answer to that question by analyzing the various (albeit fuzzy) understandings of subjectivity implied by ecosocialism. The discourse of limits above may point toward some initial clues. If, as ecosocialists claim, limits to growth are not imposed as hard and fast barriers that nature has set forth from its beginnings, then nature and society co-produce these limits historically. This logic implies that the idea of limits should not only apply to capitalist accumulation processes in the

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context of environmental degradation, however. We also know that ecosocialists argue that capitalism places limits on the content of human freedom and self-realization. Given these fundamental assumptions, might limits on the liberation of subjectivity from capitalist reification also be produced through capitalism and nature simultaneously? Ecosocialists also tend to focus primarily on collective modes of both valorization and the practices of freedom. For example, they assume that under socialist administration, societies can collectively produce their means of subsistence through an exercise of freedom that allows individuals to pursue their talents, desires, and dreams through this exercise of productive creative capacity (See Kovel, 2007). Ecosocialism, however, has never focused on individuals themselves other than as an exercise in discussing the diversity of practices of freedom that would presumably occur under ecosocialist life. By focusing so much on materialist collectivization processes as historical drivers, ecosocialism underestimates the heterogeneity of forms of subjectivity that capitalism may both co-opt and fail to fully co-opt, including those of ecologically-minded human beings.

Ecosocialism rightly points out the importance of the collective production of life as it relates to the capitalist mode of production; however, a more central discussion of the production of subjectivity as necessary to these capitalist modes of valorization and need-production would allow ecosocialists to see the production of life play out materially and in the context of the self. By relegating subjectivity to epiphenomenal status, ecosocialists mistake a key mode of production (the production of distinct selves rather than classes alone) that capitalism needs in order to sustain itself. In short, the production of subjectivity need not trouble their revolutionary praxis toward socialism, since subjectivity is produced by materiality and is not the primary target of political action; the production of subjectivity occurs solely through the mode of

production, meaning that overcoming this mode of production and targeting the material base of society firstly should do the necessary work of overcoming capitalism itself.

The above assertion points towards one important misstep in the historical materialist presumptions made by ecosocialists that could affect our view of human subjectivity and its relation to a kind of ecological freedom. In order to overcome these problems, ecosocialism has at least implicitly attempted to trace the necessary conditions for the exercise of human agency capable of rotating the dialectical wheel, though not in a way that makes the production of subjectivity central to their political project of overcoming capitalism, alienation, and the destruction of nature.

A Genealogy of Subjectivity in Ecosocialism

Ecosocialism does not understand alienation as a problem of the individual or the collective in an existential or psychological sense (as many post-Marxists such as Deleuze and Guattari and Maurizio Lazzarato partly argue), but rather alienation is "a disharmony which may be thought not to be self-produced but to result from external pressures over which I have no control" (Pepper, 1993, p. 85). Alienation of human life from its fundamental species being goes back to Marx's own *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.* The Marxist conception of humanity consists in a belief that under capitalism (and previous modes of production), humans are fundamentally alienated from themselves and their true humanity (or species being) as homo faber or laboring beings (See Eckersley, 1993; Pepper, 1993). For ecosocialists, this alienation includes alienation of humans from the natural world. The relationship of humans under capitalism is particularly problematic for ecosocialists because humans are constituted in a way that forces them to think of nature as mere matter, as instrumentally valuable on a market in terms of exchange rather than use-value or aesthetic value. Indeed, ecosocialists argue that this

perception of the human relation to nature under capitalism results in environmental degradation and the externalization of costs onto nature itself (Pepper, 1993). In order to understand ecosocialist perspectives on alienation specifically, however, one must first understand Marx's own conception of alienated labor and its relation to humanity's "species being" in the context of human nature. In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx (1972) lays out his four fundamental forms of alienation which capitalism produces in human societies including alienation from the product of one's labor, alienation from the labor process itself, alienation from one's species being (as animal laborans), and alienation from one's fellow humans.

First, Marx argues that humans are alienated from the product and process of their labor. Since only humans create their means of subsistence through a fundamental transformation of nature, and only humans can labor beyond these immediate needs (Marx's reasoning for setting human beings apart from nature and giving them the capacity for freedom), humans alone express their unique form of freedom through the creative process of production. Humans are thus alienated from the product that they produce under capitalism because they do not own that product of their labor after they have created it (nor do they own their own labor during the process of production itself). Since workers are payed a wage rather than owning the product of their labor after they produce it, they are thus alienated from the product (which they have sold back to the capitalist in exchange for a wage) and the labor process itself. In short, humans gain no fulfillment (and express no freedom) from the process of production under capitalism because they are not laboring on their own terms beyond their means of subsistence in a way that is freely chosen and fundamentally expresses their individual desires and unique capacities for freedom as animal laborans (Marx, 1972).

More specifically, Marx (1972) argues that

The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an *external* existence, but that it exists *outside him*, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power of its own confronting him; it means that the life which he has conferred on the object confront him as something hostile and alien. (p. 72)

Since the work is not freely chosen because capitalism radically reduces the options through which workers may produce beyond their means of subsistence, workers can take no joy and no meaning from the products that they create under this situation. Similarly, if the worker confronts the product as alien, the worker also does not work to fulfill a fundamental human need. Rather, Marx asks "How would the worker come to face the product of his activity as a stranger, were it not that in the very act of production he was estranging himself from himself?" (p. 73). In many ways, all forms of alienation rely on Marx's understanding of humanity's species being, its most fundamental human quality of conscious free labor (or "self-activity" [See Marx, 1972, p. 192]).

Next, Marx argues that humans are alienated from both their species being and other human beings around them as well. For instance, since humans alone have the unique capacity to labor detailed above, they are not truly expressing their humanity through that process of labor as perverted under the capitalist system. Indeed, Marx (1972) argues that "Money is the alienated *ability of mankind*" (p. 104). Money creates false needs, and humans begin to try to fulfill needs that do not correlate with their fundamental status as animal laborans, as a species able to labor beyond its means of subsistence. Similarly, the working class can neither fulfill, nor do they really possess these false needs. Their only need becomes survival, where wage labor under capitalism "[reduces] the worker's need to the barest and most miserable level of physical subsistence" (Marx, 1972, p. 95). Workers become less than themselves; they are transformed into "workers[s]…lacking all needs" (Marx, 1972, p. 95). Of course, Marx noted that the

capitalist class is also alienated from their species being in this scenario, where their life is commoditized through the purchase of false objects of desire and where they express themselves only as owners of the means of production also not laboring for their creative freedom as laboring beings (Marx, 1972). Under communism labor transforms into "self-activity" that is thus chosen freely, absent capitalist social constraints like the division of labor (Marx, 1972, p. 192). Tellingly, Marx (1972) goes so far in *The German Ideology* as to argue that communism will, through revolutionary praxis, "bring their [humanity's] 'existence' into harmony with their 'essence'" (p. 168).

Likewise, since under capitalism humans are not able to express their humanity in a way that engenders fulfillment and freedom, they become alienated from their fellow human beings. They become socially alienated, since under capitalism, not only are humans not expressing themselves in a way that allows for the maximization of freedom, they are also competing with one another for their subsistence and survival, creating social alienation and truncating the possibilities for meaningful human relations outside the competitive rat-race of production circumscribed by capitalism (Marx, 1972). Not only are workers alienated from other workers and the capitalist class, they are also alienated from their societies at large; they do not constitute truly social beings under capitalism. For example, Marx (1972) argues that "communism [is] the complete return of man to himself as a *social* (i.e. human) being" (pp. 84). Put differently, to be a social being is also to be a laboring being, to labor beyond the means of one's substance in common with others and to relate to others through freely directed self-activity. To be alienated from oneself is automatically to be alienated from others. Labor also grants humanity its capacity for sociality. Humans can only view one another as workers, as beings occupying a specific position in a given division of labor under capitalism, rather than as conscious beings with

unique abilities that separate them from mere objectified matter and to some extent, from nature itself (Marx, 1972). Importantly, the brilliance of ecosocialism lies in its addition to Marx's original four forms of alienation; they add "alienation from the natural world" as another fifth form of alienation that devastates human possibilities for freedom and destroys nature in the process.

For ecosocialists, Marx's understanding of alienation as alienation from ourselves and our fundamental humanity is instructive for understanding our "essence" as human beings. Through production, humans change the nature of who we are. Labor acts then, as a means to creating ourselves. The transformation of nature into things that we value constitutes the essence of humanity (Pepper, 1993). Paradoxically, then, alienation from this species being removes human beings from their own capacity to produce themselves in non-essential and numerous ways. In other words, ecosocialists imply that human beings can produce themselves in unique ways solely via their fundamental capacity for production as laboring beings. By marking humans as imbued with this essential quality qua animal laborans, Marxists and ecosocialists are able to both essentialize human beings as laboring beings first and foremost, yet also utilize that essential quality as a means towards human liberation. Since capitalism suppresses this particular quality, it must be liberated from alienation, and labor must become freely directed self-activity, as Marx (1972) implied. In other words, the essentialism of the concept of human "species being" allows for the possibility of human freedom, since humans can only direct this laboring capacity in ways that are freely chosen under communism. By oversimplifying how human freedom can manifest in the world (i.e. only through free self-activity), both Marxists and ecosocialists restrict the means for producing human subjectivity via other processes beyond this kind of activity. Put more simply, with capitalism's barriers removed, humans are able to

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exercise their freedom and constitute their subjectivity (and selfhood) in myriad ways only because they possess one fundamental capacity that separates them from the rest of nature, i.e. the capacity to labor beyond their means of subsistence and transform their natural environment through meaningful productive activity upon it.

At the same time, humanity's expression of this species being relies on an important understanding of nature in and of itself and humanity's alienation from it. For instance, Donald C. Lee (1980) argues that Marx's early work on alienation is particularly fruitful for understanding the relationship between the natural world and Marx's own writings. Lee argues that capitalism produces humans as subjects and objectifies nature, and Marx believed that this objectification of nature would necessarily be overcome with the overthrow of capitalism. Though Marx argued that capitalism constituted a necessary step in humanity's quest to overcome the raw and freedom-limiting power of nature, Lee argues that this "is only the *first* step, which itself must be overcome for man to come into harmony of nature" (p. 6). For Lee (1980), nature becomes fetishized under capitalism in a similar way as commodities, where "*nature* is falsely seen as an external object to be manipulated" (p. 6). This objectification of nature, Lee (1980) argues, also falsely institutionalizes the objective versus the subjective as well, where "the split between *subjective* and *objective* is a manifestation of our own alienation, inherent in capitalism" (p. 7). The road to socialism, then, is also the road to overcoming the subject/object duality which capitalism utilizes in order to justify the fetishization of both labor and nature; Marx regards this dualism as false (Lee 1980). Lee (1980) summarizes the necessity of overcoming this dualism nicely, saying that

> This recognition of nature as our *body* will constitute the overcoming of the alienation of ourselves from nature, manifested in the subject-object dualism. Thus, the *identity* between supposedly external nature and human nature will be established. To act upon nature will be correctly seen as acting upon ourselves. (p. 8)

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Interestingly, Lee's position here evokes an understanding of human-nature interrelatedness not completely unrelated to that of deep ecology, for example. At the very least, the assertion that humans and nature are fundamentally interrelated and that humans must recognize this interrelatedness in order to fully exist as humans in the world in the context of their real relation with the natural world remains consistent. The difference, however, is not only the source (capitalism instead of anthropocentrism) of this alienation from nature (or nature's misrecognition by human beings), but also the ways in which this alienation is produced. Deep ecologists don't really analyze the sources of this alienation, and therefore fail to adequately derive political solutions from a more robust causal narrative of human destruction of the planet. Ecosocialists like Lee, tend to posit a historical materialist route for overcoming alienation in the name of better human-relations of nature. Though problems exist with this model as well (detailed later), ecosocialists are at least correct in identifying one of the most profound and dangerous sources of alienation, and therefore, the truncation of human subjectivities and possibilities for freedom, namely, capitalism. Another source of strength in this regard is the ecosocialist identification of the relationship between material productivity and the production of forms of alienation.

To clarify, at the very least, ecosocialists (and Marxism generally) has always been able to identify that a meaningful relationship exists between the materiality of life (the fetishization of nature and commodities, for example) and the way that human selves exist in the world. Materiality, then, has profound effects on the ways in which we interact with one another and with nature because it produces an affective dimension of alienation. Unfortunately, alienation does not garner much more attention than this in the work of ecosocialists. In other words, the relationship between capitalism, alienation, and the production of subjectivity is not given

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greater attention for the ways in which this materially produced alienated subject exists in the world as alienated and the prospects for overcoming alienation (from nature, for example) in this context. Nevertheless, a structural analysis of capitalism remains useful for discovering patterns of the production of subjectivity, and new materialists like William Connolly for example, may actually underestimate the subjectivity producing power of capitalism[10]. The real political question, then, remains unanswered in ecosocialism. Given that humans suffer from alienation from nature due to capitalist productive forces, how can an analysis of subjectivity and a theorization of the possible requirements for ecological subjectivity enhance ecosocialism's understanding of alienation? In short, how can alienation be theorized as a much more robust conceptualization of the truncation of subjectivity under capitalist life? For now, ecosocialism's understanding of subjectivity and alienation under capitalism requires further analysis to fully explain these critiques.

The focus on how capitalist production engenders alienation from nature and from other human beings also appears in Foster's work. By producing their means of subsistence through the capitalist mode of production specifically, humans alienate themselves from nature through the production of history. In other words, humans alienate themselves from an active and fulfilling life of transforming nature through a robust understanding of their own needs (Foster, 2000). Since capitalism creates new needs at an out of control pace, humans lack sufficient power to re-adapt the economic system to their own real (rather than imagined needs). Importantly, the tragic alienation produced by capitalism seems more complex, however, if we

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[10]   See Chapters 3 and 4 for this particular critique of new materialism.

begin to understand the relation between alienation and what Marx and ecosocialists have seen as the species being of humankind.

As Pepper (1993) indicates, just because capitalism fundamentally alienates human beings from themselves does not automatically lend itself to a realization of the fact of alienation a priori. For Marx, individuals in capitalism have lost a great deal of power over the relations of production (including the relations between humanity and nature). This realization by ecosocialists results in the impossibility of societies fully understanding feedback loops that participate in the collective reproduction of capitalist society (Grundmann, 1991). This begs the question: how do ecosocialists conceptualize the missing middle step from the sequence outlined above? For example, if human beings are simultaneously unable to realize their conditions of alienation from one another and from nature and yet are concurrently constituted by a subjective impulse to labor in the name of exercises of freedom, how does one move from point A (false consciousness) to point C (the realization of freedom through the exercise of freely creative and self-directed activity [formerly known as labor under capitalism])? In other words, if humans are fundamentally alienated under capitalism, if they are unable and unconditioned by their material environment to recognize the full extent of their alienation from the natural world, what specifically can engender political action? Of course, socialists consider the revolutionary agent of history to be the working class, which becomes so miserable in the context of capitalism that it finally "realizes" the conditions of its alienation (See Marx, 1972). At least some ecosocialists acknowledge that this solution is no longer tenable, and the revolutionary agent must be broadened (Kovel, 2007; Löwy, 2015; Macdonald, 2006). A more robust theory of how subjectivity is produced would allow ecosocialists to more readily link political agency with their understanding of alienation and the possibilities for overcoming its capitalist sources.

One potential answer to the above question comes from Kovel's work. Importantly, recognizing that humans have a key part of themselves that fundamentally needs to labor, to create, and to produce can help humans to fully grasp the severity of the ecological crisis. In other words, by recognizing ourselves as fundamentally entangled with and a part of nature, we may able to transform it fundamentally and indefinitely through our creative powers, an assertion that echoes Moore's (2015) contention that nature cannot possibly exist as separate from human beings. Through our relationship with the natural world, humans construct their selfhood. Under capitalism, that construction of ourselves creates a fundamental (but reparable according to ecosocialists) separateness of the human and natural spheres, creating alienation and exploitation in both spheres as well (Kovel, 2007).

For Kovel (2002), the idea of promoting a vision of human nature does not constitute essentialism because of the co-productive effects that each has on the other. The continual dialectic relationship between the two entangled entities, in other words, ensures that human subjectivity always undergoes significant reconfiguration simply by virtue of our productive interactions with nature, including in our aesthetic, scientific, and spiritual interactions with nature, which become possible in certain configurations under specifically historical circumstances and modes of production.

Laboring, then, constitutes the foremost capacity of humanity's life on earth. First and foremost, humans produce their lives through their labor and that labor gives (or could give, under ecosocialist circumstances) robust meaning and fulfillment to their lives as well. Certainly, our creative capacity to transform the material world around us into objects that make our lives better, more fulfilled, and more beautiful profoundly impacts our subjectivity as human beings. Those unable or unwilling to exercise this capacity in creative and meaningful directions miss

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out on an important part of what it means to be human in relation to nature and other human beings. Others who perhaps use this capacity in destructive or degrading ways equally miss out on this opportunity for fulfillment. In many ways, as both Moore (2015) and Kovel (2007) fully admit, this understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature is holistic, but neither deterministic nor essentialist. Echoing this point, Burkett (1999) has argued that the holistic vision of the dialectical interplay between "extra-human nature" and humanity does not constitute a closed system, but rather a system which co-evolves over time through mutual constitution. Production mediates this relationship between humans and "extra-human nature," producing nature itself in the process. Burkett also argues that holism is necessary to any ecosocialist praxis precisely because it breaks down the dualism between humans and nature created under Enlightenment rationality and capitalist production. Likewise, Burkett makes clear that a holistic view of this fundamental relationship of production does not equate to any kind of totalizing or necessarily closed vision of the humans-nature-production triad (Burkett, 1999). To elaborate, historical materialism as the history of this relationship itself assumes that openings will manifest. If no openings (or perhaps, contradictions) existed, then history would remain static and non-evolutionary.

Importantly, this understanding of holism differs from that of deep ecology's vision in a few important ways. For one, deep ecologists tend to essentialize this relationship in an almost spiritual way, whereas ecosocialists at least partially understand that the relationship is social at its core, rather than natural. In another way, deep ecologists posit that humans are no different from nature, whereas ecosocialists fully acknowledge the unique "laboring beyond subsistence" capacities of humanity. This historical materialism also differs in its negotiation of the idea of certainty as well. For example, while deep ecologists express certainty about the profound

interconnectedness of humanity and nature, ecosocialists recognize that this relationship could exist in a variety of forms, depending on the dominant way in which humans decide to produce their life on the planet. Taken generally, holism as the anti-dualist claim that all species and ecosystems are fundamentally interrelated and interdependent on one another still links ecosocialism and deep ecology together in interesting ways. The place that humans occupy within this broader assumption about interconnectedness, however, constitutes a fundamental and important difference between the perspectives. For example, Kovel (2007) argues that the difference between ecosocialism and deep ecology relies on their distinct understandings of human nature. In this regard, Kovel (2007) argues that

> Deep ecology also [takes] into account that as a species we are fundamentally part of nature, and that our 'nature' is to express nature's transformative power. By denying humanity's creative potentials, deep ecology is denying nature itself. Deep ecology needs to develop, then, an internal set of relations that will adequately give us a role *within* nature. (p.189)

Importantly, however, Kovel (2007) also argues that deep ecology's holistic reductionism prevents it from offering a robust critique of both domination and capitalism, including gender inequality, for example.

At the same time, however, historical materialism in ecosocialism and the holism expressed by deep ecology each suffer similar consequences in their understanding of the ways in which subjectivity is produced, though Kovel might disagree given his acceptance of the Marxist materialist understanding of humans as fundamentally creatively labor-driven beings as a better understanding of human nature than deep ecology's vague interconnectedness and radically decentered, unimpressive, and largely undifferentiated human species. Unfortunately for ecosocialists, however, there is a relatively ungrounded tendency to reduce subjectivity to its materiality at the expense of a robust analysis of the production of subjectivity through

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materiality and in spite of it. The whole of the production of subjectivity may be the target of capitalist processes of production, but that does not mean that subjectivity's production can be neatly contained as part and parcel of any holistic historical materialist framework. For ecosocialists, subjectivity is produced via the dialectical and historical movement of the mode of production, where overcoming whatever dominant form of subjectivity that inheres in the world at a given time requires reaching some kind of breaking point, some kind of deep recognition of a contradiction that cannot be resolved without a revolution in both production and therefore, the production of subjectivity. Deep ecologists, likewise, posit a revolution in subjectivity and a transformation of the self as possible through a recognition of holism in and of itself. On the one hand, ecosocialism reduces subjectivity as an epiphenomenon of capitalism's production of the world, where humans have a very specific kind of subjectivity that will be produced once capitalism is overcome (i.e. animal laborans). On the other hand, deep ecologists also posit a vague (though perhaps unreachable) subjectivity of the self-in-Self, whereby meaningful distinctions between humanity and nature are absorbed into a subjective whole and human subjectivity is no longer distinguishable from other kinds of nonhuman subjectivities.[11] Each perspective argues that "real" relations between humanity and nature exist; a profound interconnectedness that should be the primary constitutive element in the subjectivity of humans underlies both perspectives. For ecosocialists, nature is the body of humanity[12]; for deep ecologists, nature and humanity are equal and indistinguishable (even though human beings will always take care of their own basic needs prior to other species, as deep ecologists admit).[13]

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[11]   See Naess' work or the previous chapter for a discussion of the "self-in-Self" perspective.
[12]   See Burkett 1999 and Lee 1980.
[13]   See Naess 1973.

Furthermore, the universalization of the labor process as a means to human freedom and fullness remains problematic in ecosocialism for a few important reasons. Ted Benton (1996) nicely summarizes the first reason. He states that,

> Marx's conceptualization [of the labor process] is supposed to represent not just *one broad type* of human need-meeting interaction with nature, but, rather, a universal 'nature imposed condition of human existence.' Marx does, indeed, recognize such activities as felling timber, catching fish, extracting ore, and agriculture as labor processes. But he constructs his general concept of the labor process as if these diverse forms of human activity in relation to nature could be assimilated to it. (Benton, 1996, p. 160)

In other words, not all forms of human activity constitute laboring activities in and of themselves. A primary example of this is raising children. Under capitalist society, as ecofeminists fully admit, domestic labor and reproductive labor constitute unpaid forms of activity which contribute to the sustenance of the capitalist system itself (Mellor, 1996; Mellor, 2006; Salleh, 1997). In a postcapitalist world, however, since these forms of activity will not be co-opted and instrumentalized by capitalism, surely, they no longer represent something that can be classified as productive labor beyond human necessity, yet they remain important for the production of human subjectivity and our understanding of ourselves in the world. Even tasks done out of necessity produce effects on subjectivity and constitute an important and fuller picture of the production of human life and subjectivity.

To take another example, sitting and contemplating or meditating on the bank of a river does not constitute labor in a Marxist sense, but surely it fundamentally alters the relationship between an individual human and that singular river whilst also altering the configuration of subjectivity and perhaps valorization exercised by the person doing the sitting. If material entities constitute subjectivity and under capitalism, most material systems are co-opted for the purposes of accumulation and exchange-value, it follows that in a postcapitalist world, humans would not only exercise their freedom through production for their needs and desires. Production may need

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not take place at all to reconfigure the relationship between humans and nature on individual or collective levels outside of a capitalist context, where human productivity constitutes the primary driver of capitalism's constitutive powers. Moreover, as Pepper (1993) implies, nature is useful to humans for its aesthetic, technological, and use values. How does the creation of aesthetic value relate to the humanity's exercise of its species being?

For example, let's return to the river example. By sitting by the river, I am not exercising my labor. I am "relaxing," or "meditating," an intentional attempt to avoid putting myself into a creative or productive process. Although famously, Marx (1972) referred to "philosophizing" as a form of productive labor and intellectual work surely falls into this category of labor given that humans utilize their understanding of their place in the world and their relation to nature to often think about themselves. In addition, humans also produce physical objects that help facilitate the material existence of thoughts onto paper in the context of philosophical activity. I would argue that things like meditation or mindfulness or "daydreaming," however, don't really fit neatly into the category of philosophical contemplation in the Marxist sense. In short, the assumption that laboring constitutes *the* essence of human life activity overshadows other forms of entanglement with nature that humans may cultivate with intention or by chance. Not all subjectivity is constituted through the exercise of labor. Therefore, material production does not always constitute the most freedom-enhancing part of our heterogenous selves at all times.

Jean Baudrillard speaks to this precise issue in his *The Mirror of Production* (1975). For instance, by focusing so singularly on political economy and production, Marx (and therefore ecosocialism at large, though Baudrillard does not use this language) fails to notice what lies outside of productive life. In his introduction to this text, Mark Poster (1975) contends that "Baudrillard argues that Marx's effort to plumb the 'apparent movement of political economy' in

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order to reverse its theoretical flow in which use value derived from exchange value, far from

dismantling political economy, only completed and 'interiorized' it" (p. 2). Echoing this

sentiment, Marx himself confuses human nature with production beyond our immediate needs,

which in turn, blinds him to a variety of other forces that characterize the heterogeneity of human

selves and distances him from an understanding of capitalism that more readily analyzes the

content of alienation and characterizes capitalism beyond its materially productivist orientation.

Indeed, Baudrillard (1975) critiques this overly productivist tendency in Marxism, since it also

economizes those subjects that it seeks to liberate. In short,

> Far from transcending political economy, Marxism, to Baudrillard, strengthens and
> extends its most basic propositions. Man is conceptualized as a producing animal just as
> in political economy, except that Marx wants to liberate his productive potential. This
> still leaves us with a metaphor or "mirror" of production through which alone every
> aspect of social activity is intelligible. (Baudrillard and Poster, 1975, p. 3)

Humans are thus "metaphysically overdetermined as producer[s] by the *code* of political

economy" (Baudrillard, 1975, p. 31). If labor, in short, is the only avenue through which humans

can know themselves, this severely restricts the directions that human freedom can take. Labor

takes precedence as the defining characteristic of human life that requires liberation, and this

itself restricts human freedom.

Moreover, Baudrillard regards this productivist logic in Marx as the attempt to produce

"authentic *content*" where the "individual" is characterized "as an empty form to be filled finally

by his freedom" under socialism (p. 41). Problematically for Baudrillard, Marx's productivist

logic also fails to fully disentangle itself from the dualist assumptions of the Enlightenment since

"the entire rationality of the system of political economy" is directly tied to the emergence of the

"concept of Nature" during this time period as well (Baudrillard, 1975, p. 53). Baudrillard's

(1975) understanding of how nature is both produced and signified during the Enlightenment is

instructive here as well. He argues that "Nature appeared truly as an essence in all its glory but

the sign of the *principle of production*. This separation also involves the *principle of*

signification. Under the objective stamp of Science, Technology, and Production, Nature

becomes the great Signified, the great Referent" (p. 54). Since both nature and human labor

become essentialized through their association with production in Marx's thought, this leaves

little room for understanding subjectivity outside of productivist logic. Baudrillard refers to

ritualistic practices of ancient peoples to illustrate this point. He argues that

> It is simply absurd to define primitive activity as abstract subjectivity (utility) or
> objective transformation (labor or suppletory magic). Magic in the sense that we
> understand it, as a direct objective appropriation of natural forces, is a concept only
> negatively determined by our rational concept of labor. To articulate magic and labor in
> one 'interior and indivisible unity' only seals their disjunction. It ultimately disqualifies
> primitive symbolic practices as irrational in opposition to rational labor. (Baudrillard,
> 1975, p. 83)

Subjectivity cannot be confined to the practices of labor alone, historically or at the present.

Herbert Marcuse (1972) only adds to this critique of Marxism as it relates to nature. For

example, he argues that

> "Human nature" would be different under socialism to the degree to which men and
> women would, for the first time in history, develop and fulfill their own needs and
> faculties in association with each other. But this change is to come about almost as a by-
> product of the new socialist institutions. Marxist emphasis on the development of
> political consciousness shows little concern with the roots of liberation in individuals,
> i.e., with the roots of social relationships there where individuals most directly and
> profoundly experience their world and themselves: in their *sensibility*, in their instinctual
> needs. (p. 62)

This critique of ecosocialism (and orthodox Marxism, for Marcuse) not only echoes the idea that

for ecosocialism, the production of subjectivity is epiphenomenal to the mode of production

itself, but also reinforces the argument here, that liberation cannot derive solely from a revolution

in productive forces. Any such limited revolution ignores certain important ways that capitalism

itself infiltrates dimensions of the self other than the laboring part (for Marcuse, the libido and

sensibility, for example). In addition, Marcuse (1972) adds that "the rationality of the established system, tends to 'immunize' man against the very unfamiliar experience of the possibilities of human freedom" (like the robust experience of certain senses, for instance) (p. 62).[14]

A second problem relates to the projection of a productivist human nature onto human beings, even if that nature does not take an essentialist or stable form over the course of human history. Particularly important is the tension mentioned above between the assignment of a fundamental quality to the nature of human beings and the assertion that despite this one quality (in fact, *because of it*) humans are able to create their natures (really, their subjectivity) in ways not preconfigured by an exploitative mode of production. The assignment of this one quality, in other words, paves the way for ecosocialists to contemplate the myriad relations and qualities that humans could possess in full diversity in a postcapitalist world. Though obviously our creative productive capacities as human beings are important and vital to our existence and exercise of freedom in the world because they allow us fundamentally mutually constitutive relations with nature, other ways of creating things necessary for the exercise of an ecological and fulfilling human life exist outside of the realm of production. As Friedrich Nietzsche in his *On the Genealogy of Morality* said, "Only the will to power can provide the precondition for the

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[14] Though Marcuse's body of work is relevant here for problematizing some of the issues in ecosocialist thought (especially its hyper-focus on human nature as animal laborans, for example), his work can also point toward at least one other way of conceptualizing the relationship between the production of subjectivity, capitalism, and nature. In the context of its effects on a loss of freedom, Marcuse argues that capitalism's control of nature constitutes another way for it to also control human beings. He states that "Commercialized nature, polluted nature, militarized nature cut down the life environment of man, not only in an ecological but also in a very existential sense" (p. 60). Marcuse (1972) anticipates the new materialists like Connolly while also evoking ecosocialism by arguing that capitalist exploitation of nature actually limits the possibilities for humanity's recognition of nature as possessing subjectivity intrinsically. Indeed, Marcuse (1972) goes so far as to compare the pollution of the natural world to the pollution of the human mind/psyche. These interesting insights from Marcuse point toward at least some of the ways in which the relationship between humanity and nature can be thought of as both existentially produced but also the ways in which that relationship becomes degraded not only in productive life, but also in the human psyche through the objectification of nature and the misrecognition of its own agentic capacities. New materialists will take this assertion seriously in Chapter 3, and Félix Guattari will take the interest in the relationship between ecology, the production of existential (and sensuous) subjectivities, and capitalism seriously in Chapter 4.

concept of beauty" (Nietzsche, 1997[1887], p. 243). One of the most important actions that humans undertake remains their transformation of nature into other valuable and usable goods, objects, and necessities for the purposes of life, enjoyment, and comradery. Contemplating on this quality qua quality renders an illumination of other human needs, desires, and drives that may diminish and face repression under the capitalist accumulation mode. What characteristics of subjectivity move beyond the drive to produce, in other words? Marcuse points towards sensuousness, though this too is not an entirely sufficient characterization of the complexity and heterogeneity of human subjectivity (even as it relates to nature), as we shall see in Chapter 4, for example.

Capitalism's Impacts on Subjectivity: Alienation, Liberation, and Complex Agency

Ecosocialists know, and rightly so, that capitalism fundamentally alters human beings' character through its exercise of power and commodification. This implies that capitalism itself changes human values or at the very least, re-directs them towards less than fulfilling paths. Values and human needs intimately relate to one another in both Marxist and ecosocialist thinking as well. For example, Hughes (2000) argues that, "But capital's 'need' to expand is not only independent of human needs; it molds the needs that human agents perceive themselves to have" (p. 171). Others have commented similarly. For example, Moore (2015) argues that "…the hallmark of capitalism is its constant enlargement—and revolutionizing—of the geographies of potential accumulation and appropriation" (p. 124).

The above understanding of human selfhood and its relation to human need and desire constitutes a significant pathway that ecosocialists use to theorize the way forward in the context of capitalism's overthrow through revolutionary struggle. For example, in Löwy's (2015) vision

for an ecological society he agrees with most ecosocialist writers about the uncertainty of any vision for a postcapitalist world. He remarks,

> What guarantee is there that the people will make the right ecological choices, even at the price of giving up some of their habits of consumption? There is no such 'guarantee,' other than the reasonable expectation that the rationality of democratic decisions will prevail once the power of commodity fetishism is broken. (Löwy, 2015, p. 28)

Unsurprisingly, this uncertainty troubles most ecosocialists, but absent a rigorous, economistic, and teleological interpretation of Marx himself, no guarantees of future ecosocialism are assured.

One of the major reasons that inherent contradictions in and of themselves do not with any certainty lead toward emancipatory socialism relies on a key understanding of the production of subjectivity by capitalism itself. Indeed, Löwy's discussion of advertising is helpful in understanding capitalism's effects on society. Löwy (2015) argues that "advertising pollutes the mental landscape…nothing escapes its decomposing influence" (p. 45). In addition to polluting the collective psyche, advertising produces false needs based on profit motivation alone. Löwy (2015) argues that, "advertising plays an essential role in the production of consumerist demand by inventing false 'needs' and stimulating the formation of compulsive consumption habits, totally violating the conditions for maintaining planetary ecological equilibrium" (p. 43-44). Conceding that humans do have a great many different desires, Löwy responds to those who claim that at least some of these desires require repression even under the freedom of socialism. He argues that, "Personal fulfillment will be achieved through cultural, athletic, erotic, political, artistic, and playful activities, rather than through the unlimited accumulation of property and products…" (Löwy, 2015, p. 44). The relationship between desire and need in Löwy's work, however, is not made clear by the author. In other words, does false consciousness produce false needs and false desires or, by contrast, are pre-existing and existential desires merely turned in particular directions under capitalism, at least in part? Most ecosocialists do not venture so far as

to answer this specific question, but the question remains important and evokes the earlier discussion of the real status of "human nature" in ecosocialist thought generally. On the one hand, if capitalism makes certain desires and needs invisible or latent in our subjective selves, then perhaps, as ecosocialists contend, the question of tactics for overthrowing capitalism first and foremost must prevail. On the other hand, if capitalism cannot co-opt all forms of desire and need (and the capitalist mode of production alone does not constitute the producer of desire par excellence), then a taxonomy of the potential for other desires to participate in their own liberation from capitalism on grounds other than that of freeing human productive power, then revolutionary struggles may have an expanded capacity to attack capitalism from all sorts of subjective and existential angles.

Interestingly, the critique above that Löwy responds to makes a presumption that Löwy himself does not attack. As mentioned by David Pepper (1993), most ecosocialists do not see the production of life as existential or psychological but rather as collective and social. Certainly, capitalism produces false needs as one of its strategies of capturing and directing consumptive desire, but at the same time, concepts such as "self-realization," "desire," and "personal fulfillment" have an individualizing connotation that even emerges in Marx's own work considering the diversity of occupations he considers amiable to the production of real life under actual socialism. To elaborate, even if nature itself exists in a particularly stunted and exploited (and exploitable) manner solely because of (capitalist) economic production and its ensuing relationships, this does not a priori mean that desire is not also produced in revolutionary ways at least partially outside of the capitalist structure, at least some of the time. Additionally, if there are no guarantees of capitalism's overthrow due to the inability of humanity to upend false consciousness and recognize ecological contradictions, then equally, there are no guarantees that

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capitalism's myriad processes of co-optation and manipulation entirely circumscribe the diversity of human desires. Nothing can control everything at once.

Despite the absence of revolutionary guarantees, consciousness, its falsity under capitalist production, and its liberation under ecosocialism remains deeply important to any ecosocialist understanding of the liberation of humanity and nature from exploitation and harm. As Löwy (2015) remarks, "The development of socialist consciousness and ecological awareness is a process in which the decisive factor is people's own collective experience of struggle, moving from local and partial confrontations to the radical change of society" (p. 31). Again, ecosocialists do not proclaim that the development of ecosocialist consciousness is by any means inevitable, but Löwy here makes a point to discuss the relationship between a material context (as the collective experience of struggle) and the development of said consciousness.

Commenting on Louis Althusser's understanding of capitalism's impact on subjectivity, Nick Mansfield (2000) also argues that,

> The subject does not develop according to its own wants, talents, and desires, but exists for the system that needs it. Its only public reality is determined for it by the social apparatus that calls it into a certain kind of being. Subjectivity, therefore, is the type of being we become as we fit into the needs of the larger political imperatives of the capitalist state. It requires us not only to behave in certain ways, but to be certain types of people. (p. 53)

Once this relationship of exploitation of human subjectivity vanishes, however, human beings can reclaim their real subjectivity through meaningful production for and fulfillment of their needs, ecosocialism assumes. The tension historical materialism, which wrenches (some? all? most?) freedom away from the subject, and the necessity of both individual and collective human agency to overcoming the capitalist system also remains problematic and unresolved in ecosocialist thought.

Joel Kovel (2014) defines ecosocialism as "the world as I would have us struggle to bring about" (p. 11). The lingering question that has never been fully addressed by ecosocialists is as follows: What is the connection between revolutionary struggle and subjectivity with regards to the capitalist project, given its co-optation of subjects and its limiting of human freedom? In other words, does ecosocialism's ontology match up with its underlying understanding of human subjectivity (i.e. the liberation of consciousness and productive activity/selfhood) as it relates to the struggle to overthrow capitalism? Though this chapter focuses specifically on the utility of ecosocialist thought for producing or cultivating openings into ecological subjectivity, the question of to what degree capitalism really closes off human subjectivity remains enigmatic. Ecosocialists, in particular, can cultivate a better understanding of this relationship by thinking through particular case studies and examples of successful and not-so-successful practices of capitalist co-optation and misdirection.

Some ecosocialists, like O'Connor, have acknowledged that the working class no longer constitutes a sufficient agent of change in the pursuit of capitalism's overthrow. Other social and political groups have emerged, and they too must participate meaningfully in this revolutionary struggle. In this regard,

> For O'Connor, at least, this implies not only the traditional Marxist notion of the political subjectivization of the working class around the contradiction between forces and relations of production, but also the relatively new political subjectivization around the conflict between capitalism and its conditions of production exhibited in the rise of 'new social movements.' (Macdonald, 2006, p. 55)

This incorporation of new social movements into a critique of capitalist objectification of humanity and nature begs another question, however. To what extent do these movements themselves, presumably operating with values that do not fully align with capitalist valorization, both reproduce and reject simultaneously the capitalist modes of accumulation, valorization, and

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reproduction? Marcuse (1972) provides one answer by placing revolutionary potential in artistic practices, for example, in "permanent aesthetic subversion" where artistic expression cannot be fully captured by the capitalist system and does not denote any universalist position from which to ground any such revolution (p. 107).

In the context of ecosocialism specifically, Ray and Parson (2016) argue that "Much like spiritual ecologies [deep ecology], humanist ecologies [like eco-Marxism] do not adequately connect their ontology with their political practice" (p. 8). Does this critique imply that ecosocialism's primary problem is merely one of inadequately theorizing the structure-agent debate? Perhaps. Employing Anthony Giddens' structuration theory may provide some answers to the historical materialist conundrum in which ecosocialists find themselves.

Presuming that human subjectivity (and the agency that does or does not emanate from particular kinds of selves) relates intimately to any project of overcoming the claustrophobic capitalist machine, Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration becomes instructive. In his *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory,* Giddens (1971) argues (like many ecosocialists) that "The existence of 'contradictions' within capitalism generates no historical necessity for such contradictions to be resolved" (p. 242). In order to solve the structure-agent problem in political theory more generally, Giddens (1971) argues that structures of power like capitalism imprint agents with particular characteristics and affects. Choosing neither structure nor agent as more determining than the other, Giddens successfully shows that the two are mutually constitutive and entangled in such a way as to produce given configurations of society as the combination of both forces. In many ways, the ecosocialist discussions of entanglement, co-production, and mutual constitution above (Moore's, [2015] work, for example) reflect rather than re-invent Giddens own insights. Importantly, this doesn't really gain us much ground in the question for

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understanding how agency works in the context of capitalist power because ecosocialists imply that intentionality and struggle are important pieces to the puzzle, but the puzzle itself has not been fully contemplated for its effects on subjectivity, and therefore agency. In other words, the connection between political struggle and political subjectivity remains elusive in the context of future ecosocialist praxis. A robust understanding of subjectivity as it relates to ontology cannot merely refer to the concepts of structure and agency to justify itself. Ecological subjects do not just appear via dialectical struggles. Rather, the puzzle must also include pieces that help reconstruct which parts of humanity's relationship with nature and its corruption under capitalism fundamentally alter the capacity of humans to externalize and distance themselves from that destructive relationship altogether. Moreover, the concept of labor overall continues to prove problematic because it limits a broader understanding of human subjectivity as it relates to the rest of the world, including and beyond nature. Subjectivity, even under capitalism, cannot be synonymous with productive labor. Ecosocialists seem to make the two very close synonyms.

Conclusion

Despite a valuable commitment to the overthrow of capitalism, the understanding of subjectivity offered by ecosocialists still provides a relatively essentialist and therefore limiting understanding of the concept of human freedom. If ecosocialists presume to liberate humans from alienation thereby enhancing human freedom, then an analysis of humanity's power to create cannot be limited solely to their existence as beings whose labor alone constitutes the essence of their freedom. Humanity's capacity for the exercise of freedom also resides in its capacity to desire, to relate, to create beauty a la Nietzschean ethics, to communicate, and to exist physically in the world. Yes, laboring represents the part of this human capacity that becomes

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most degraded (presumably) under capitalism and this degradation does indeed extend to the above realms of the exercise of freedom in a capitalist context, as ecosocialists argue soundly.

The concept of needs also stands out in this regard. The assumption that humans will treat nature in non-exploitative ways once capitalism's metabolic contradictions are resolved runs throughout ecosocialist thought. At least one significant problem arises from this understanding of human needs, and these problems are not necessarily compatible with one another. The first problem stems from the assumption that human exploitation of nature disappears with capitalism's defeat and the takeover of ecosocialism. The dialectical relationship between humans and nature under capitalism as one reduced to exchange value for exchange value's sake remains compelling and accurate, but historical materialism problematizes the ecosocialist assumption that this new relation of production is fundamentally ecological. To be clear, this critique does not merely echo the myriad cries by ecosocialists themselves that capitalism's overthrow does not automatically lead to better relations between humans and nature. Struggle, reasonable democratic control, and an awareness of the previous relations of exploitation must ensue, at minimum, to guarantee an ecosocialist future (Kovel, 2002; Löwy, 2015). Again, broadening the lens through which we see humanity's relationship to nature outside of productive life activity alone constitutes a necessary but not sufficient first step to understanding the cultivation of human freedom (and ecological subjectivity) in a postcapitalist world.

A second, and perhaps more worrying reason to doubt the conception of human needs presented by ecosocialist thought relates to its under-theorization of the relationship between need and desire. Inconsistent perspectives from ecosocialists emerge regarding this particular relationship. For example, Löwy (2015) remarks in passing that political propaganda will also have to disappear (as a form of advertising) in postcapitalist eco-society. This assertion by Löwy

constitutes evidence that capitalism alone cannot constitute the only or even the primary (at least on a consistent basis) producer of desire in capitalist society. Even, for example, if the state's political apparatus fundamentally serves capitalist interests (which it usually does), politicians, diplomats, citizens, lobbyists, activists, and political parties all have their own interests in the political system that constantly entangle and disentangle themselves with capitalism in infinite and often contradictory ways. The concept of desire will reappear in subsequent chapters for its potential in contributing to a re-imagination of the ecological subject. Socially necessary labor for needs, however, is not synonymous with the concept of desire, nor necessarily akin to Marcuse's understanding of sensuousness. Desire as a human capacity evokes much more than the mere production of life activity or the experience and cultivation of aesthetic value. Instead it constitutes a subjective impulse towards a variety of values that are not necessarily produced by labor: toward love, acceptance, inclusion, meaningfulness, and beauty, to name a few.

Overall, then, the ecosocialist and Marxist understandings of subjectivity as both fundamentally constituted and restricted via material structures but also as inherently retaining the essence of humans as laboring, creative beings masks many alternative ways that humans can relate to their environments and to nature itself. As Mellor (2006) herself admits, no (superior) answer to the problem of human freedom lies rooted in nature itself. Given this assertion, I am convinced that by restricting so-called "human nature" to the portion that is most impacted and alienated under capitalist life, ecosocialism may restrict other ways of becoming human in the context of human freedom. Importantly, this is not to argue that humans do not possess any fundamental characteristics, but rather that humans cannot fully know the scope of these characteristics and the ways in which they are fundamentally altered by material, ideational, and linguistic/semiotic constructions and systems backed by power. Any essentialization of human

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nature restricts the options that can be taken up toward the cause of freedom and the possibilities for imagining new (and perhaps numerous) relations between humanity and nature. For ecosocialism, the production of subjectivity (and therefore the human-nature relationship) happens through historical materialism alone, where the production of subjectivity is circumscribed by the given contours of given modes and means of material production. This picture of human nature and its relationship to human freedom is oversimplified by ecosocialists. By restricting those options for human existence through a theoretical isolation of one (albeit important) characteristic of human life, the focus of postcapitalist life may become skewed in directions that may not constitute the best ethical options for humanity's relationship to nature at a given point in history.

At the same time, ecosocialism remains a necessary inclusion in any theorization of ecological subjectivity precisely because they analyze the destruction of nature through a more structural and dialectical lens, which illuminates the broad forms of alienation which capitalism creates. Even if ecosocialists do not fully incorporate how alienation connects to the production of specifically problematic subjectivities, they clarify a macro-perspective on the operations of capitalism that demonstrates its inherently exploitative character towards nature and towards human beings. The end is accumulation; the means are unending growth and exploitation. As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, however, another more microscopic critique of capitalism is also necessary to fully recognize its processes of alienation, exploitation, and infection of the production of subjectivity and the possibilities for producing eco-subjects in light of this more microscopic evidence. Nevertheless, ecosocialism holds a great deal of value. Similarly, we might argue that the new materialists, discussed in the next chapter do not adequately theorize capitalism itself, but they do add to the conversation of the eco-subject by granting subjectivity

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to the material world and discussing the "planetary" (to use Connolly's language) consequences therein. Like Marcuse, as well, the new materialists echo his important and useful call for a new sensibility, which can liberate sense from its current exploitation under capitalism, neoliberal rationality, and exploitation/ various forms of domination. The ways that non-capitalist, planetary material processes also affect the possibilities of political praxis and ecological subjectivity remain vitally important for any study in ecological subjectivity. In short, new materialism provides another necessary lens through which to view these problems, albeit one that like ecosocialism neglects subjectivity in detail (and its specific relation to capitalism and the destruction of the planet, in particular).

In the next chapter, the new materialists demonstrate that a robust materialism need not adhere to the ecosocialist orientation towards historical materialism alone. Not only can materialism be broadened to include other planetary systems like the carbon cycle as constitutive of subjectivity and as possessing their own material agencies, it can also incorporate an ontology of becoming, whereby these planetary systems (like capitalism) constitute assemblages that are "self-organizing," ubiquitous, and uncertain in their consequences for the future of political action tied to the production of subjectivity (Connolly, 2013, 2017). New materialists attempt to overcome the productivist logic that bogs down socialist projects and the legacies of Marxism while simultaneously rejecting the cultural turn in political theory as antithetical to a politics that as its central assertion, recognizes and incorporates human entanglement in the material world into its analysis of the possibilities for creating a new political world that does not destroy nature due to a recognition of this material entanglement.[15] New materialism's greatest contribution to my project constitutes this broadened planetary materialism. At the same time, however, the

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[15] See Coole (2013) for a discussion of the relationship of new materialism to both Marxism and the cultural turn.

rejection of productivism also leads it to falter in its analysis of capitalism, thereby under

analyzing one of the most powerful producers of subjectivity in contemporary life.

CHAPTER 3: NEW MATERIALISMS AND MATERIAL SUBJECTIVITY

Who we are and who we think we are has something significant to do with what we our doing to ourselves as human beings. Nevertheless, illuminating these significant aspects of ourselves and our subjectivities remains a difficult and enigmatic, yet important task to a fuller understanding of the relationship between environmental destruction and the production of subjectivity. Capitalism and those in power who largely support the capitalist system have often refused to acknowledge the severity of climate change, often doing the bare minimum to acknowledge the problem or denying it altogether. Ordinary citizens in the Western world often feel powerless to address the problem, themselves materially entangled with the capitalist production system and its valuation machine. Paying lip service to the severity of climate change or resorting to reactionary politics (for example, the recent revival in nationally-focused right-wing populist movements in Europe, the United States, and even "developing" countries like India) reveals a great deal about how far the political world still must travel to invigorate an ecological politics inhabited by ecological subjects.

Importantly, new materialism's understandings of ontology, subjectivity, capitalism, and ecology can point toward the ways in which human entanglement with the material world impacts subjectivity and how a new sensitivity to this entanglement can illuminate political possibilities for combatting environmental degradation (See Connolly, 2013, 2017). Moreover, looking through a new materialist lens may prove necessary to rethinking the human-nature relationship at large, and granting subjectivity to the natural world in a way that is much more open-ended, uncertain, non-hubristic, and creatively imbued than deep ecology's understanding of this relationship, for example. Not only do new materialists grant subjectivity to nature, they

offer a profoundly materialist outlook which invites humanity to ponder its entanglement with the rest of nonhuman life and material entities on the planet. Though, as explained below, new materialism's tendency to emphasize materiality broadly speaking may also prevent it from focusing on the greatest material barrier to an ecological politics, the capitalist system itself.

Considering the triad under examination in my project at large (subjectivity, ecology, and capitalism), new materialism provides at least some "lines of flight for another world of possibilities" (to borrow the title of Félix Guattari's, [2011a] manuscript *Lines of Flight*). In other words, new materialism illuminates necessary understandings of material and "planetary forces"[16] that may inhibit or enhance the prospects for humans to construct and build a different life for themselves and the planet in the future. At a minimum, they complexify the linearity of the relationship between humans and nature and the possibilities for politics dependent upon a rethinking of this relationship (a flaw which deep ecology's self-in-Self perspective and ecosocialism's historical materialism each suffer from in different ways). Seeing the world differently and most importantly, recognizing the inherent uncertainty that characterizes these material/planetary systems (capital, the environment, the carbon cycle, nationalist movements tied to territoriality, etc) and their effects initiates a fuller picture of life on the planet, its enigmatic character, and the political openings that a new perspective may provide.

In particular, new materialism rethinks the relationship between their novel planetary ontology and the production of subjectivity (and therefore political praxis) in a way that attempts to bridge the structure-agent problem in addition to granting agency and subjectivity to the nonhuman world. The former goal (transcending the agent-structure problem through an

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[16] See Connolly (2013) and (2017)

inventive and fluid understanding of human subjectivity) is particularly valuable for a novel understanding of the relationship between the self and the outside, particularly in the context of systems of power which themselves swirl through a ubiquitous materiality. New materialism irreparably bursts open political theory's toolkit when it comes to understanding the relationship between ontology, subjectivity, and materiality because on some level they refuse the structure-agent problem altogether. On occasion and in enlightening bursts of clarity, capitalism's effects on this configuration also make themselves known, sprinkled throughout new materialism in important, but unfinished ways.

To clarify, new materialism's contribution of a novel understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature relies on their novel ontological move that centralizes all matter as irrevocably connected to the production of human and nonhuman subjectivities (See Grosz, 2010). In short, new materialists engage with "subjectivity," "autonomy, agency, and freedom" by seeking to "make such concepts ontological conditions rather than moral ideals" (Grosz, 2010, p. 139). Put differently, they recognize materiality as deeply entangled with rather than located outside of human and nonhuman subjects, making this materiality central to any understanding of the production of subjectivity. For instance, Grosz summarizes this position, arguing that

> In elaborating the centrality of matter to any understanding of subjectivity or consciousness as free or autonomous, we need to look outside the traditions of thought that have considered subjectivity as the realm of agency and freedom only through the attainment of reason, rights, and recognition: that is, only through the operation of forces—social, cultural, or identificatory—outside the subject. (p. 140)

Indeed, Grosz here also helps illuminate the stark difference between new materialism and the traditions of deep ecology and ecosocialism under examination in Chapters 1 and 2, respectively. For instance, deep ecology tries to incorporate the natural material world into human subjectivity

through assimilation of the two into a singular holistic framework, but not only leaves the relevance of other material forces out of its analysis but focuses on the incorporation of the outside into the human self as a problem of identification and recognition, rather than as a problem of material entanglement with the world. For ecosocialism, as mentioned in Chapter 2, subjectivity remains epiphenomenal to the materiality of economic productivity, where subjectivity only requires attention in the context of the possibilities for a revolutionary subject of history which reconfigures productive materiality. New materialism refuses to enclose or essentialize both materiality and the production of subjectivity into such neat holistic frameworks, which I would argue, allows for a more robust orientation towards the numerous manners in which freedom can be practiced given the heterogeneity of materiality imbricated in human and nonhuman subjectivities. In short, while ecosocialism and deep ecology each characterize liberation as the removal of "external constraints" on self-improvement (capitalism and anthropocentrism, respectively, new materialism offers a positive understanding of freedom where "freedom is conceived…more positively as the condition of, or capacity for, action in life" (See Grosz, 2010, p. 140 for this understanding).

To start, new materialism embodies a variety of perspectives, but new materialists at large share a commitment to the above understanding of a broadened and agentic materiality which impacts human subjectivity and the political possibilities of materially embedded subjects. New materialists have placed themselves into a variety of different naming categories, including "immanent materialists," (Connolly, 2010, p. 179), "immanent naturalists," (Connolly, 2010, p. 196), "new materialists" (Coole and Frost, 2010), "critical materialism" (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 25), "new critical materialism," (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 27), "enchanted materialism," (Bennett 2016), and a strain of posthumanism (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 20).

In their groundbreaking anthology, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (2010) have gathered an infinitely valuable number of perspectives that they categorize broadly as new materialist. Additionally, and perhaps even more valuably, they divide the field into three different strains of thought (which also follows the organization of their book), including ontological insights, bioethical and political insights, and critical materialist insights (which tend to focus on capitalism, power, inequality, and a critique of deconstructivist/constructivist turns in political theory), specifically. Their goal in writing, like new materialism as a field, is to make known the inherent pluralism that marks the field itself, rather than pursue a bounded explanation of new materialism. Marked by "theoretical pluralism," new materialism embodies perspectives from phenomenology, ecology, complexity theory, and a wide swath of vitalist and materialist perspectives (Coole, 2013, p. 452). Lemke (2015) summarizes new materialism, stating that it

> Aims at a new understanding of ontology, epistemology, ethics and politics, to be achieved by overcoming anthropocentrism and humanism, the split between nature and culture, linguistic or discursive idealism, social constructivism, positivism, and naturalism. Central to this movement is the extension of the concept of agency and power to non-human nature, thereby also calling into question conventional understandings of life. (p. 4)

Additionally, many new materialist perspectives also fall into the category of "material feminisms" as well (which often share the above commitments of new materialism viewed through a feminist lens) (Alaimo, 2011; Alaimo and Heckman, 2008). These perspectives tend to be directly focused on the relationship between nature, a new expansive ontology and subjectivity, specifically. Reflecting my own work, Coole and Frost (2010) discuss "critical materialism," as a perspective where "materialism" means politically engaged social theory "devoted to the critical analysis of the actual conditions of existence and their inherent

inequality" (p. 25). This constitutes the critical and perhaps the most political goal of new materialist thought more generally and aligns with the goals of my own project as well.

Overall, new materialism gifts political theory with extremely valuable insights into a novel, expansive, agentic, and post-Marxist material ontology in relation to the production of human and nonhuman subjectivity, which is detailed below. At the same time, however, these perspectives do not necessarily incorporate two key dimensions into their thought in enough depth, considering their emphasis on this expansive ontology which is also intimately imbricated in the production of human subjectivity. In other words, capitalism and ecology constitute relatively minor interests of the tradition, despite their deeply important effects on subjectivity as material systems that help to produce[17] and constitute the world. New materialism's promise lies in its novel ontology of becoming (its positive, action and actant-oriented, non-dualistic, and non-edified perspective on the production of life on the planet) and its political program oriented toward the new possibilities that human creativity can take in the context of this novel ontology. With that said, the ways in which capitalism and ecology relate to one another tend to be overshadowed by a focus, especially in the work of Connolly (2011, 2013, 2017) for example, on large cosmological and climatological systems in terms of their potential to disrupt human life and subjectivity in an instant. The planetary overshadows the micropolitical infections of subjectivity via materiality, in other words. Nevertheless, a focus on this more macro-cosmology disrupts some key assertions that have stymied robust action on climate change, for example, since Connolly, for example, calls for a new sensitivity to uncertainty and rapid planetary changes taking place before humanity's eyes, which are often masked by Enlightenment assumptions about the fundamental separation between humans and the natural world. As

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[17]   The word "production" here obviously ties to capitalism, but it is understood more broadly as a producing or constituting the world that humans and nonhumans inhabit together.

Connolly argues, humans are not immunized from these planetary systems, including their effects on subjectivity and agency. We would be wise, especially in the West, to recognize and catch up with the rapidity with which planetary materiality produces uncertainty and the prospects for political change (Connolly, 2013, 2017). Despite this valuable perspective, however, the focus also needs to be on how capitalism and nature interact in the context of the production of human subjectivity, and the possibilities for creative political action therein. In Chapters 4 and 5, this planetary and material perspective is placed alongside the post-Marxist materialist contributions of Félix Guattari, who alone has managed to incorporate a robust critique of capitalism into a politics of ecological subjectivity. At the same time, however, Guattari only contributed to this discussion until 1992, and the rapid degeneration of the climate and other planetary systems has accelerated in this period. With this in mind, new materialist understandings of a planetary materiality beyond systems of capitalist production proves useful to incorporating the macro-level and affective dimensions of materiality into the more micropolitical and micro-material perspective of Guattari, for example.

My main arguments in this chapter proceed as follows: First, I detail and praise new materialism's novel insights into an expansive planetary materialism that not only grants subjectivity and the powers of agency to the nonhuman but also recognizes the profound effects that this materiality has upon the production of subjectivity and the fate of the planet specifically. Though new materialism is generally focused on environmental change and their expansive perspective on the planetary allows humans to more readily become perceptive to these forces, they also falter in their explanation of how what humans perceive as the "natural world" is specifically entangled with the production of human subjectivity. In other words, new materialism has broadened materialism at the partial expense of examining the relationship

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between the environment and the production of subjectivity. Second, I examine how new materialists conceptualize political action given their understandings of materialism and the production of subjectivity as situated in a plane of becoming. In short, this section agrees with new materialism's understanding of a politics of becoming and with its warnings that the pursuit of this kind of politics could evoke danger since, Connolly (2017) notes, "there are no existential guarantees" that such a politics will not producce reactionary political responses that attempt to combat a perceived loss of certainty of the self and its place in the world (p. 84). And finally, I argue in the final section that new materialism, despite its focus on the planetary, ignores the specifically pernicious dangers that capitalism as a planetary system poses to an ecological politics of becoming. Despite new materialism's significant and necessary contribution to the constitutive and agentic power of all materiality, they underestimate the power of capitalism to invade subjectivity in anti-ecological ways through its own materiality and therefore its own productions of subjectivity. Though new materialists do not ignore capitalism, and Connolly (2010) characterizes it as one material system among many that cuts off the possibilities for different models of "belonging" (p. 189) in the world, they do not centrally locate it as the most important target of a politics of becoming, as standing in the way of the production of eco-subjects and a new sensitivity to the world.

Ontology and Subjectivity: Matter and the Entangled Human

New materialism attempts to decenter the human subject from their understandings of subjectivity, consciousness, and the material world at large. To do so, they use the term "subjectivity" in two distinct contexts. The first understands subjectivity as *a quality*, to be granted to the other-than-human, where new materialism understands "subjectivity" as an attribute that humans have long neglected as a quality present in entities other than themselves.

In the second usage, subjectivity remains in a (qualified) humanist context as a quality of human beings (though these new materialists do not deny that it also exists in the above "entities"), whereby the focus of these perspectives lies on the effects that materiality has on human agency, human consciousness, and human political power. In many ways, however, this distinction does not constitute a clear dividing line between perspectives, and though broadly construed, new materialists have some foundational assumptions that they share, and each contributor to new materialism draws upon uniquely heterogenous bodies of prior theory to build their own theories of ontological subjectivity and subjective ontology.

The notion of human entanglement in material flows courses through the above disparate foci, however, sometimes in the service of an analysis of the subjectivity of the nonhuman, and sometimes in the service of an analysis of entanglement's effects on human subjectivity, specifically; though separating "ontology" from "subjectivity" becomes relatively arbitrary when analyzing new materialism as a whole. In other words, their new ontology of planetary and nonhuman materiality grants subjectivity to the nonhuman, thereby disrupting the Cartesian rationalism that attributes agency only to the subjective human realm, rather than the material world as subject. As Stacy Alaimo (2011) states,

> New materialist theories should not divide human corporeality from a wider material world, but should instead submerse the human within the material flows, exchanges, and interactions of substances, habitats, places, and environments. (p. 281)

The entanglement of human beings, in this regard, has implications for both human consciousness, human political life, and the fundamental ways that the world appears to and constitutes human subjects.

Jane Bennett (2009) states in her book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*,

> No one really knows what human agency is, or what humans are doing when they are said to perform as agents. In the face of every analysis, human agency remains something of a mystery. If we do not know just how it is that human agency operates, how can we be so sure that the processes through which nonhumans make their mark are qualitatively different? (p. 34)

Granting subjectivity as agentic (or actant) capacity to the nonmaterial, theorists like Bennett condition readers to more closely map the effects of the material world on their everyday lives. These maps don't necessarily align with traditional humanist assumptions of causality (since in these dualist narratives, humans alone are subjects who act upon the objective material world), but they do encourage a kind of mapping of the world in a way that embodies a sensitivity, using the senses to notice the material (organic and inorganic) world and our nearness or farness to the various material effects that it produces. In short, granting subjectivity to the nonhuman allows humanity to better and less hubristically account for the uncertainty of the infinite effects produced by our surrounding material, subjective milieus. For Bennett (2009), the "agency of assemblages" (p. 34) manifests via "*thing-power*," where "we *are* vital materiality and we are surrounded by it, though we do not always see it that way. The ethical task at hand here is to cultivate the ability to discern nonhuman vitality, to become perceptually open to it" (p. 14). A simple recognition of these flows, in other words, can do important ethical work that opens up different understandings of the world that could prove more politically and ethically appealing than the current situation of ecological destruction, human chauvinism, and reactionary politics.[18]

Bennett and other new materialists like Cheah (2010) distinguish their vital materialism from more politically dangerous forms of vitalism rooted in what Bennett (2010) refers to as "a naïve vitalism of soul" (p. 57) in contrast to what Connolly (2010) calls "the vitality of being"

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[18]   More on these reactionary responses to the uncertain effects of humanity's novel condition of precariousness is discussed later in this and subsequent chapters.

(197). This critique of vitalism can be levied at a variety of targets according to new materialists, including the "culture of life" perspective advocated by evangelical Christians which assumes that human life embodies freedom in and of itself, while matter is dead and destined for particular purposes at the hands of human beings (Bennett, 2009). The environmental implications of this kind of thinking may seem benign, since many neoliberals are now beginning to argue that treating the earth well constitutes a pre-requisite for the growth of capitalism, but new materialists (not to mention other traditions) find this assumption problematic since it ignores the fact that materiality and human life incorporate themselves into one another in sticky, fleeting, and innumerably complex fashions. Connolly (2008) often refers to this form of chauvinist vitalism as "naturalism" whereby the experience of human consciousness is attributed to either "nonconscious processes" or "lawlike naturalism" or to the notion of human exceptionalism detailed by Bennett above and common throughout traditions of Christianity (p. 80). Deep ecology's own spiritual naturalism may also fit here as well.

At any rate, the presumption of human control at the root of naturalist vitalisms could prove dangerous not only for the fate of the planet left to the devices of human hubris but also to the human psyche, left adrift without a sense of attachment to the world or those within it (See Connolly, 2017 and below for a discussion of belonging in the world). Examining how humans think that they belong to the world reveals a number of superficial attachments based on the old ontology where humans presume they can ignore (and thereby control at will) the external world with which they only engage through practices of choice and occasional bad luck (such as is the case in a vehicular accident). Cultivating a world of belonging where humans become more aware of their real powers of agency as intertwined with numerous knowable and unknowable forces and materialities can create ethical openings for changing our perception of ourselves and

our surroundings in the world. This is the central strategy and ethical goal of new materialist thinkers.[19]

At their most basic, new materialism's ontological perspectives "often discern emergent, generative powers (or agentic capacities) even within inorganic matter" (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 9). Coole (2013) summarizes the new materialist perspective on agentic materiality by stating that, "At an ontological level, new materialist propensity is to shift agency, entirely away from recognizable actors by ascribing becoming to difference or negativity; to cracks or reversals; virtuality or folds" (p. 456). Combining an ontology of becoming with a commitment to the agentic effects produced by other-than-human matter and processes, new materialism stresses the open-ended and unpredictable consequences in the real world of the interactions between any number of material and nonmaterial forces, flows, and human connections. Importantly, this understanding takes a "vital" step towards an ontology that captures the undeniable complexity of causality, interpellation of both material and nonmaterial forces upon human existence, and the embeddedness of these processes in a world of seemingly infinite connection. This novel ontological step allows new materialism to posit that a new understanding of the ontological world could have positive implications for creating a better ethical and political world in the lives of human beings, oriented towards a sense of entangled-ness and plurality (See Connolly, 2008, 2011, 2013, and 2017 for discussions of political plurality).

Ontologically speaking, some new materialists pay more homage to the cultural turn in political theory and philosophy than others. For example, Sara Ahmed (2010) writes,

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[19]   This key strategy of new materialism differs fundamentally from that of deep ecology for two key reasons. First, deep ecologists give essentializing directionality to their understanding of the relationship between environmental materiality and a more ethical human self. Second, they restrict their materiality to an ecological materiality, ignoring the actant-power of things like garbage (as Bennett, [2009] has noted, for example) and capitalist production itself. In short, new materialism broadens the terrain of materiality and its relationship to human entanglement. We are not only entangled with nature alone.

"…phenomenological engagements [often] belie the claim…that, during this period, matter was the only thing that did not matter" (p. 235). In other words, these perspectives reject the common critique levied at poststructuralism from at least some that the effect of discourse on human subjectivity is overemphasized at the expense of the materialities which are also imbricated in human life, experience, and politics. Perhaps this tension is best summarized by Coole (2013), where she discusses the kind of "realist" approach taken by new materialists (and distances it from the positivist and more traditional notion of realism in the field of international relations). In this regard Coole (2013) argues that new materialism,

> Takes an empirical interest in emergent materialisations without being simply empiricist; it does not call for the abandonment of constructivist investigations and critiques of power relations but seeks to contextualise them more broadly. (p. 455)

Importantly, then, new materialism does not reject the power of cultural formations, social discipline and configurations, nor discursive elements in human life, political action, and subjectivity, but it does constitute a necessary response to the hegemonic power with which the "cultural turn" imbued these elements in response to the hegemony of Marx's legacy of materialist thinkers.

Furthermore, some new materialists attempt to combine new materialism with poststructuralist and phenomenological insights in order to more thoroughly grant complexity to the force of material things and non-material things in the context of human life. For example, through an analysis of Marxism's understanding of the ways in which objects assume a "social form,"[20] Sara Ahmed (2010) argues that, "The object is not reducible to the commodity, even

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[20]   In *Capital, Volume 1*, Marx (1972) argues for his understanding of commodity fetishism. He argues that "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their low labour is presented to them as a social relation between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses" (p. 320-321). Commodity fetishism clearly impedes the

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when it is bought and sold. The object is not reducible to itself, which means it does not 'have'

an 'itself' that is apart from its contact with others," acknowledging that human consciousness

still acts (at least partially) as a filter through which objects have effects on human subjectivity

(p. 246). Relying on Judith Butler's work, and the importance of iteration in the "sedimentation"

that often marks history as static and determined, Ahmed (2010) argues that phenomenology can

lay bare the fact that history disappears in "the moment of enactment" (p. 246). Many other

materialist feminists echo this emphasis as well, trying more than many new materialists to truly

bridge the phenomenological and poststructuralist turns with a recognition of the materiality

inherent in the processes of production, reproduction, and signification.

In a discussion of sexual difference and how they become inscribed upon particular

bodies, for example, the work of Elizabeth Grosz proves instructive. Clare Colebrook (2008)

relays this significance by stating that,

> The idea of a materiality awaiting inscription, with the body acting as some passive
> surface upon which culture might do its work, was targeted rigorously by Elizabeth
> Grosz's assertion of the positivity of the body. Drawing on psychoanalysis, but not its
> emphasis on the psyche, Grosz argued that affective and bodily relations—touch,
> movement, perceptions of morphology, the experience of fluids—produced an interiority
> (Grosz, 1994). The body does not cause mind, for the body has to go through desiring
> encounters in order to achieve some minimal stability; nor does the mind cause the body
> to be sexed *as* this or that [emphasis in original]. (p. 71)

Indeed, Grosz (2010) has argued that the exercise of a positive, creative human freedom

consistent with feminism summarizes the goals of materialist feminisms such as her own. She

points out that freedom, though obviously important for political action and social

transformation, also relates intimately to a new ontological understanding of how freedom

interacts with matter and human creativity. For example, she argues that

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material sensitivity that new materialists themselves would like to cultivate and engender toward a more ecological
politics.

Freedom is not an accomplishment granted by the grace or good will of the other but is attained only through the struggle with matter, the struggle of bodies to become more than they are, a struggle that occurs not only on the level of the individual but also of the species. (Grosz, 2010, p. 152)

Noting that the common goal of both Deleuze and Foucault was to develop "all at once, an ontology, a politics, and an ethics (or many)," Grosz (2017) goes on to point out that Deleuze's concept of the "plane of immanence" proves particularly useful for new materialism (p. 132). For Deleuze and Guattari (2004), the plane of immanence is characterized by movement, in contrast to a plane of transcendence (which is easier to conceptualize because it would give genesis and structural meaning to any plane of immanence). The plane of immanence has no depths; it constitutes a flat surface whereby bumps and interactions occur between and throughout its material, an interaction without knowable consistency or inconsistency, a characteristic which characterizes all matter (Grosz, 2017). This kind of materialist ontology links to a feminist ethics for Grosz marked by "a joy in understanding and finding one's place in the intimate and open connections not only between objects and subjects but also within subjects" (p. 243).[21]

The insights of Grosz and her usage of Nietzsche and Deleuze in particular also fit well with Connolly's work (to be discussed in greater depth later). The role that feminist materialisms can and do play in this interpellation of the themes of ontology, agency, politics, ethics, and subjectivity in new materialist thought are twofold. The work illuminates the concepts themselves in important ways, but also points toward the ways in which a feminist analysis must continually point out how thinking about materiality in particular ways fails to theorize the relationship between the human body or "corporeality" and the oppression of minorities. A discussion of the human body has long occupied environmentally concerned feminist thought;

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[21]   Some of Grosz's work discusses feminism's place within the new ontology, other works, like her new book *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism* does not focus on feminism per se.

the body's relationship to the natural world as well proved important in this regard (Alaimo and

Hekman, 2008). Materialist feminisms make many of the same assumptions as new materialism

at large, and so could be considered a smaller subcategory of new materialism. I would argue,

however, that it constitutes another kind of critical materialist lens, through which the operation

of the body and its relationship to nature and other material realities of the contemporary

condition become central to any analysis, though the invocation of the natural world in new

materialism generally lacks substance in many respects.[22]

A monist version of new materialism also emerges in the field, where everything is

connected into an integrated whole (not unlike a holistic ontology) (Dolphijn and Van der Tuin,

2010). This discussion about whether or not new materialism occupies a monist philosophical

position remains open-ended, but at the very least new materialism relates very intimately to

traditions of phenomenology, where the "The task of a phenomenology of perception is

accordingly to rediscover that 'vital communication with the world' which precedes yet is taken

for granted by the physicist's 'freezing of being.'" (Coole, 2010, p. 93). New materialism's

ontological commitments consistently vacillate between the assertion of human and material

entanglement as a fundamental condition of the world and the assertion that this entanglement

remains fundamentally unknowable in terms of its boundaries or the full effects of each thing on

the other (organic or inorganic) therein.

For a new materialist phenomenology, the assumption that original material reality lies

just below the surface of human consciousness proves problematic because the unpredictability

and unknowability of the effects of materiality resist any enclosure of reality in itself (i.e.

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[22]   Whereas ecofeminists tend to also offer a vague holism which doesn't account for these material effects on the bodies of women, for example, they do tend to agree with new materialism in the sense that the domination of women is deeply entangled with the domination of the natural world and its associated dualist mindset.

unmediated reality). In other words, the substance of the world, its materiality, eludes but also

affects human consciousness and human unconsciousness (or psyche), but none of these qualities

can grant humans a privileged image of any totality. In response to the discussion of monism and

its relation to new materialism, Diana Coole (2013) argues that "if new materialism describes a

monist ontology, this does not express a single substance" (p. 455). Instead,

> The point here is that entities, structures, objects all emerge as unstable, indeterminate
> assemblages that are composed of and folded into manifold smaller and larger
> assemblages. At every level, these open systems are reconfigured by their encounters
> with other provisional constellations, from the tiniest to the most cosmic. (p. 455)

The above perspective allows new materialists to not only complexify the binary of dualism

itself (the mind-body or the nature-culture distinctions, for example) but also the dualist

assumption that monism constitutes the only viable alternative to dualism (a mistake that deep

ecologists themselves make due to their understanding of interconnectedness not as

fundamentally unstable, as new materialism posits, but as fundamentally unifying humanity and

nature as one into a greater whole). Thus, deep ecology has a less robust position than new

materialism since new materialism fundamentally accounts for the unknowability and

uncertainty (yet still emphasize the fundamental affective and subjective importance) of this

relational plane of immanence. Perhaps at its most conceptually stretched, new materialism

embodies a qualified and complexified monism of indeterminacy. Moreover, for deep ecologists,

the whole constitutes the raison d'être for changing human conceptions of ontology, where we

can just re-orient our angle of vision toward the interconnectedness of all living and nonliving

ecological systems and this will automatically spur political action, an oversimplified and linear

model of the relationship between subjective transformation and political change.

Not surprisingly, new materialism greatly complexifies the relationship between

ontology, subjectivity, agency, and political action, where a new ontology gives us no unifying

picture of the world we inhabit or in which we can act with any certainty to the consequences of those actions (See Connolly, 2010; Connolly, 2017). No unity (except that which derives from our egoistic desire to unify our relationship to the outside as one that is comprehensible in our daily lives) can emerge to mark the subject as connected *in particular and enduring ways* to that which we perceive as (but which is not consistently) outside ourselves, including the natural world. Though this could be reduced to a holistic or monist ontology, new materialism does not discuss ontology in a way that grants humans the ability to view this "indeterminate assemblage" from any epistemologically enlightening standpoint from which all the parts and interactions could be seen, tweaked, or even affected significantly.[23]

New materialists distinguish themselves along yet another line not unrelated to the above ontology. A debate about categorizing new materialist perspectives as (qualified) "humanist" versus "posthumanist" remains, with most theories falling explicitly into one category or the other. Where William Connolly (2017) puts himself squarely into the category of qualified humanist, others, like Diana Coole (2010) and Jane Bennett tend to occupy the posthumanist camp. Importantly, those who dub themselves qualified humanists tend to discuss human subjectivity in greater depth, whereas posthumanists emphasize the ontological entanglements and the agentic capacities of matter itself to shape history and human life. Coole (2010) goes so far as to call a discussion of human subjectivity a humanist impulse which re-centers humans as the center of the universe, moving too closely to an anthropocentric and dualist lens which allowed humans to ignore material agency at its own peril in the first place. This distinction

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[23]   For example, humans have consistently failed to anticipate, predict, and prevent the results of numerous interventions into ecological life.

constitutes an important debate in new materialism because it has implications for the discussion of rethinking nature and its relation to human subjectivity in the context of this new ontology.

On the one hand, are humans moving beyond the anthropocentric via the new ontology, in a way that decenters human subjectivity altogether (and its importance to political life, in some respects)? Or on the other hand are new materialists opening the ontological field not solely to decenter themselves but also to reconceptualize themselves in the context of their entanglement, in order to foster new commitments to other systems of human and nonhuman life simultaneously and a new appreciation of entanglement itself? To clarify these two not unrelated questions, the debate here relates to whether new materialism is anthropocentric and humanist and therefore problematic for ecology or rather, ecocentric and posthumanist, concerned with incorporating new nonhuman subjects into public life itself. This demarcation oversimplifies the debate, here, however. For example, I focus on new materialism's more humanist lens not because I argue that ecocentrism constitutes a conceptual impossibility, but rather because of the primary assumption of my main argument in this project. This assumption is that a re-investigation of the production of subjectivity in the context of a novel understanding of entanglement is required to theorize the possibilities for the production of ecological subjects and an ecological politics. Incorporating the nonhuman into public and political life by virtue of its actant-status as a subject in its own right does not constitute my central focus, although this is an important project that some new materialists like Jane Bennett also undertake.

Moreover, Connolly (2013) rejects what he refers to as an "exclusive humanism," where humans matter not because they are presumed to possess certain capacities like language, consciousness, or divine creation in the image of a god that other life on earth (or the stuff of earth) itself does not possess (p. 13). Instead, he seeks to foster the new appreciation and

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sensitivity mentioned above. Indeed, remarking on the ontological commitments above Connolly (2013) argues that humanness itself is fundamentally characterized by the condition of entanglement. To mask these entanglements by recourse to human exceptionalism risks masking both the "fragility" with which the planet and other systems of power, sociality, and materiality are constituted and to ignore the ways in which humans can rethink themselves (and presumably the production of subjectivity) in the context of these entanglements.

Indeed, human perceptions of their surroundings can change when the ontological lens of humanity itself is expanded and complexified. In this regard, new materialists seek to foster a new sensitivity toward uncertainty and the "fragility of things" inherent in a variety of what William Connolly deems "self-organizing systems" including neoliberal capitalism and a variety of ecological systems, including the climatological (Connolly, 2013).

Importantly, new materialism strives to open up the ontological field of possibility to better human understandings of our surroundings and our choices or lack thereof, placing human agency in the context of materiality, a new ontology, and the uncertainty of possibility. In this regard, most new materialist thought considers itself as transcending the constraints of humanism in a variety of ways. The goal, in this regard is to move beyond "the legacy of a narrow, humanist conception of culture as something separate from, and elevated above, the natural world" (Anderson and Perrin, 2015, p. 1). In this regard, new materialists attempt to undermine or problematize the human subject as the center of agency in the world (Coole and Frost, 2010). The insights in the previous section remain focused on the extension of subjectivity to the nonhuman world, and therefore, are relatively skeptical of an examination of "human subjectivity" in too stark of terms, since it is largely associated with human chauvinism and

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anthropocentric exceptionalism.[24] New materialism also tries to assert itself against two disparate but problematic claims about human subjectivity inherent in Marxism and poststructuralism. Rey Chow (2010), for example, argues that

> The signature intervention made by poststructuralist theory in this [in relation to Marxism] instance is thus a transformation of the classic Marxist opposition between ''head'' and ''hand'' (or superstructure and base, or thoughts and actions) into what may be called the determinacy of the signifier— whether that signifier be in the form of language, practice, or ritual— in the fundamental constitution of subjectivity. (p. 226)

While this intervention by Chow does greatly enhance the sources of subjectivity's constitution beyond that of structural economic constraints by the capitalist system (i.e. the Marxist orientation), new materialists argue that it is not sufficient for completing the picture of subjectivity necessary for a robust theory of agency and, therefore, political action.

Elizabeth Grosz (2010) argues that new materialism emphasizes the importance of "matter" to any theory of subjectivity or human consciousness (p. 140). But how, exactly, does matter act upon the self to constitute it in fundamental and irreversible ways? Samantha Frost (2010) argues that, "The perceiver is not passively impressed upon by stimuli but rather actively responds in the very process of perceiving" (p. 166). Here, Frost understands human subjectivity, not as the effect of a single event or process upon the self, but rather fundamentally as an interaction between elements (human and nonhuman), i.e. a process of mutual constitution and absorption. Likewise, Grosz (2017) argues that, "…consciousness remains…rather close to the peculiar nonlocalizable true form of subatomic particles, a consciousness before and without subjectivity…a consciousness that makes human subjectivity possible and undermines its aspiration to the position of outside observer, knower" (p. 221).

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[24]   Many new materialists assert that their perspectives escape the confines of narrow anthropocentrism, though this tends to be more of an assumption than a deeply dwelled upon claim. See Coole and Frost (2010), Coole (2010, 2013), and Alaimo (2011) for these mentions of anthropocentrism.

Utilizing Deleuze, Cheah (2010) adds to this picture by discussing how processes of iteration help to constitute the subject into a being that presumes itself as having a kind of essence. Arguing that, "one must think Being itself as a repetition of singularities, the reprise or recommencement of being" (p. 83), Cheah illuminates the process by which subjectivity produces and tries to reproduce itself through a repeated interaction with the singularities emergent in an immanent (or perhaps "rhizomatic") reality. Quoting Deleuze's (1990) *The Logic of Sense* (p. 103), Cheah (2010) argues that,

> 'Singularities,' he [Deleuze] notes, 'are the true transcendental events. . . .Far from being individual or personal, singularities preside over the genesis of individuals and persons; they are distributed in a 'potential' which admits neither Self nor I, but which produces them by actualizing or realizing itself, although the figures of this actualization do not at all resemble the realized potential' (p. 103). Because the transcendental is now no longer connected to the subject or person, or even to a pure stream of an immediate consciousness, it is also a plane of immanence. Deleuze uses this phrase to denote a limitless field that cannot be contained or conditioned by something else. First, the plane of immanence is immanent because it is coextensive with actual existence. But it is not contained within or reducible to actual existence because it generates it. But second, and more important, instead of being an attribute of some other thing that is transcendent, immanence as a plane is *absolute*. (p. 85)

So here, Deleuze and Cheah each point out an important understanding of subjectivity as produced through the event of singularity. This idea of singularity can be described as an instance or event where rhizomatic and material productions interact with the self and disrupt the perceptual unity of the self in the moment of interaction between the subject and the object (Mansfield, 2000). The process of iteration may or may not also be involved in attempting to capture and re-organize the moment of singularity in a discernable edifice of subjectivity, depending on how the subject perceives the moment in time, history, and space. Rhizomatics can help us to visualize this plane, as opposed to an arborescent (and therefore, transcendent) visualization. Deleuze and Guattari (1999, 2004) conceive of the production of subjectivity, singularity, and the emergence of events as a process of rhizomatic emergence rather than as a

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series of connected phenomena which can be traced to a rootlike interconnected structure below the plane of immanence which also upholds it. The tree roots themselves do not hold the ground in place, and it does not make any real difference in the possibilities for human ethics that there is no transcendent doer behind the act (to paraphrase Nietzsche). The transcendent is not a necessary condition for the emergence of the ethical (and open-ended) subject (which is always in process/ becoming other than it was before a new singularity emerges).

The process of iteration (sometimes referred to as repetition or imitation) characterizes some new materialist work, often drawing on the work of Judith Butler to analyze the importance of iteration for the production of subjectivity (Chow, 2010; Connolly, 2013). Though not materialist, per se, Judith Butler's (1990) work *Gender Trouble* illuminates the value of iterative behavior for the production of identities outside of the regulated norms of society, which tend to internalize themselves in the identities that people project to an outside. In this regard Butler suggests the idea of parody in order to disrupt the categories through which social discipline attempts sedimentation. Butler (1990) argues that, "The notion of gender parody…does not assume that there is an original which such parodic identities imitate," and "…parodic proliferation deprives hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to naturalized or essentialist gender identities" (p. 188). Through subversion of the processes of iteration encouraged by institutions of power like the state or the church (or the free market)[25], alternative subjectivities have the potential to emerge (Chow, 2010). Although Butler's (1990) work alone is not materialist (she focuses on how signification produces subjectivity, rather than materiality per se, although it's not completely absent in her work either), her work is useful for understanding how subjectivity is constituted through the mutual imbrication of parts, and especially how

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[25]   See Connolly 2017 for a more in-depth discussion of free market subjectivity, specifically.

subjectivity can become perceived as "fixed" through processes of power. Butler's understanding

of subjectivity also echoes that of Fredrich Nietzsche (2006) in his *On the Genealogy of Morality*

where he posits that there is "no 'being' behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it; 'the

doer' is invented as an afterthought, —the doing is everything" (p. 26).

While this characterization of subjectivity opens up the self to a new understanding of its

own composition, it also has risks attached to it, including disillusionment and the possibility of

attempts to re-enclose subjectivity in ways that re-assert the unity/fixity of the self. Though this

danger could also be said to lie within almost any enclosed understanding of subjectivity in the

first place. For example, Melissa A. Orlie (2010) argues that, "The danger in the birth of an ego

that says 'I think' is a fixation of self and the loss of a fuller range of experience: the very

experiences that are prime sources of energy and resources for critical, creative subjectivity" (p.

124). Orlie's discussion here underscores the twofold danger of the production of subjectivity,

regardless of where those processes of production are located by theorists themselves in the

material world.

For example, Connolly (2010) uses Deleuze's work to discuss these dangers in some

depth. Emphasizing that people desire meaning/belief in this world or the feeling of belonging to

the world constitutes an important admission that helps new materialism to fuse its novel

ontology to the ambiguity of subjectivity. In Deleuze's (2013) *Cinema II,* Connolly describes the

cinematic scene as follows (a material scene, since visual ques are very much material in their

interpellation with other objects and life forms):

> The stage is set by explorations of flashbacks that expose strange moments of bifurcation
> in experience, comedic figures who enact exquisite sensitivity to 'aberrant' movements of
> world, irrational cuts that scramble the action image, crystals of time that enact the
> complexity of duration, and engagements with 'powers of the false' that open up
> dissonant traces of experience typically superseded by resolute calls to action. (p. 195)

The "moment of bifurcation," the dissonance created out of disharmony, and the disquiet created from strange goings on that do not necessarily easily mold with the boundaries of the self as it is typically thought of by humans themselves manifests in these movements. The danger lies in the fact that the dissonance and uncertainty with which the subject understands their surroundings takes hold fundamentally and results in reactionary attempts to re-enclose the self in a meaningful (and potentially oppressive) whole which relies on the knowability of the position of the self in time, space, and as an enclosed whole that may change over time, but not without the humanity's own power of choice on standby.

Relying on this model advocated by Deleuze, new materialists often derive their understanding of human agency and freedom. Connolly (2017) (echoing Nietzsche) argues that "the creative element in human agency is closer to something we participate in than to something we intend from the start or control through autonomous agency" (p. 60). New materialists in general reject the notion of the autonomous agent (and the autonomous subject), instead arguing that both human and nonhuman agency remain ambiguous and "uncanny" at all times (Connolly, 2017, p. 65-66). This attempt to displace the human subject as the primary locus of agency not only allows other agents to emerge in time and space, but also grants agency a very impersonal and uncanny quality (Coole, 2010; Bennett, 2010).

In other words, agency is thoroughly grounded in subjectivity constituted through material flows. For example, Orlie (2010) argues that

> Nietzsche's critique of theories predicated on the subject as a "doer behind the deed," like his insistence that the "deed is everything," suggests an impersonal understanding of subjectivity by emphasizing the action rather than the actor (p. 117).

Action can emerge spontaneously as a result of numerous interactions, many of which humans remain unaware. This makes action's origin ambiguous but also takes a measure of control away

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from human conceptions of themselves as autonomous agents with godlike capacities to manage

environmental, political, economic, and social change. As Orlie (2010) concludes, "subjectivity

is nature's activity: the creative-destructive power of nature itself," where nature is intended in a

broad sense of the material, rather than organic nature (ecosystems, animals, plants, etc) (p. 134).

William Connolly perhaps more than any other new materialist, embodies both

perspectives outlined in the introduction to this section, both the novel ontology of entanglement

and its relation to human subjectivity conceptualized as "becoming." In his recent work *Facing

the Planetary: Entangled Humanism and the Politics of Swarming* (2017)[26], Connolly goes to

great lengths to elucidate both the ontological framework for a new understanding of

climatological, planetary, and neoliberal capitalist materialities and their collective effects on

human agency and subjectivity. On the one hand, the conundrum of "what happens" to human

agency in the context of the new materiality is reflected in a complex notion that succeeds in

breaking apart the classic structure-agent debate that plagues both deep ecology and

ecosocialism. On the other hand, human subjectivity manifests in Connolly's analysis of how

human consciousness interacts with an outside in the context of materiality which consumes us

and which we attempt to consume back and integrate into our notion of ourselves.

Connolly largely bases his understanding of subjectivity on the foundation of much of

Friedrich Nietzsche's work. He argues that, "To Nietzsche every self is replete with multiple,

heterogeneous, culturally inflicted drives, periodically intensifying, blocking, overwhelming, and

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[26]   I focus a great deal on this particular work from Connolly in this chapter for two reasons. First, since it is his
most recent work it succinctly captures many of his insights from previous works in new and innovative ways, such
as fusing the politics of the general strike (present in many earlier works) with a politics of swarming. This is just
one example. The other, and perhaps more important reason that Connolly's most recent work is most relevant for
this chapter is because out of his long list of publications, this work focuses most in depth on subjectivity itself, and
its relation to agency and politics.

infecting on another" (Connolly, 2017, p. 53). This heterogeneity and its inherent ambiguity and disruption of human notions of linear time, efficient causality, and unified selfhood leads Connolly (2017) to conclude that, "We knowers are largely unknown to ourselves…because of the complexity of the heterogenous, purposive drives that help to compose us" (p. 53).

Using Nietzsche's concerns about both passive and aggressive nihilism, Connolly (2017) argues that humans must "rework the visceral register of cultural life on which passive nihilism is set" in order to create new possibilities for the emergence of a world in which humans neither feel that it is necessary to react with rage and confusion to a loss of unity and meaning (aggressive nihilism) nor to ignore the problem altogether in the name of faith in the afterlife or human exceptionalism, for example (the passive nihilist piece) (p. 13). Connolly goes on to support Nietzsche's understanding of subjectivity in that,

> Nietzsche understands the self to be a complex social structure consisting of a multitude of interacting drives replete with significant variations of completeness, complexity, and speed. Each drive is entangled both with - others within the self and with a larger variety of human and nonhuman processes. (Connolly, 2017, p. 52)

Understanding the ways in which we are entangled or at least trying to understand, Connolly argues, can result in experimentation with different "visceral registers" (or subjective impulses). Fundamentally, human creativity conceived as a negotiation of different desires and drives through an attempt to understand their singular emergences can assist in fostering human creativity that breaks beyond the boundaries of anthropocentric and hubristic human societies. These destructive and reactionary tendencies, due at least partially to a deafening effect upon the senses caused by capitalism, oppression, and history, have failed to cultivate subjectivities which can recognize the stakes and risks to our humanity contained in environmental destruction, human oppression, and a lack of faith in ourselves (as Nietzsche might conclude).

Unfortunately, nature is sprinkled, but not central in much of new materialists' analysis. The above assertion by Orlie makes that clear, where she argues that nature is understood broadly as materiality by new materialism rather than merely as the environmental entities in the world. Both ontologically and in the context of subjectivity, new materialism focuses less on nature as organic substance through which the earth itself maintains its own "world of becoming" and much more on nature as one substance among many that intertwines with the production of human subjectivity sporadically and to varying and unpredictable degrees. While this is an important reminder that no system can fully monopolize human subjectivity (a mistake made by ecosocialist productivist logic, for example), an under-representation of the way nature plays into new materialism's understanding of subjectivity and ontology creates a problem for its utility in understanding the ecological self, specifically, a term which does not really emerge in new materialist work. This is a problem in a specific sense, but not a problem that damns new materialism overall for a few key reasons. First, they are permanently concerned about the fate of the planet, especially in the context of environmental change. New materialists often discuss the potentially disastrous consequences of climate change as a primary reason for the urgency and necessity of thinking a new ontology in the first place (See Connolly, 2011, 2013, 2017).

Connolly (2017), for his part, is particularly concerned with the long-standing assumption that evolution and natural processes happen gradually rather than sporadically, unpredictably, and sometimes, with incredible speed. He posits that environmental change (amongst other "fragile" systems of organization such as neoliberal capitalism) may change rapidly, leaving humans at an even greater loss for belonging than is currently being experienced under the contemporary condition of climatological and political uncertainty (Connolly, 2013, 2017). The particular ontological commitments of new materialism also lead its proponents to theorize about

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the relationship between humans and "nature."[27] Indeed, most theorize this relationship by

denoting that natural or in Connolly's (2017) words "planetary" systems have substantive effects

on human life and subjectivity of which humans are not always or fully conscious, partly because

of an embeddedness in a particular dualist and autonomous understanding of our own

subjectivity.

Diana Coole (2010), too, emphasizes the importance of rethinking the human-nature

duality. She argues that to be "faithful to it [new materialism], one must pursue an ontology that

'defines being from within and not from without,' where 'Nature, life, Man,' are understood as

manifestations of diverse folds rather than as essentially separate categories" (p. 96). In many

ways, this novel ontology is consistent with the rhizomatic ontology of immanence and

metaphysical identicalness offered by Deleuze and Guattari detailed in Chapter 4. Another

strength of new materialism in this regard is that these commitments allow a more in-depth

theorization of the particular "self-organizing" systems which constitutively pass through

subjects. For example, Deleuze and Guattari never really captured the importance of their own

ontological commitments for understanding the relationship between large planetary processes

and their effects on the production of subjectivity. As mentioned previously, the new materialist

commitment to investigating this macro-materiality lends itself to incorporation in the

specifically ecological insights of Félix Guattari's own work (and the onto-commitments he

developed with Deleuze and also applies in his own work). Importantly, these onto-commitments

are compelling and more accurately depict the vastly complex and uncertain terrain or plane

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[27]   Though nature does not necessarily constitute the focus of all new materialists, an important emphasis on the
material effects produced by nature on human subjectivity and life manifests in at least some of their work. Though
a commitment to discerning precisely the dividing line between the "natural," the "artificial," and the uniquely
"human" would run counter to the rejection of dualist separations between these spheres consistent with the new
materialist outlook in the first instance.

upon which human action takes place and within which human subjectivity is continually made and unmade through continual destabilizations and attempts at enclosure. The problem, however, is that new materialists do not finish the story (not that it can be "finished" per se).

Indeed, they make sure to include nature as a category in their expansive ontology of becoming, but the relationship between what humans conceive of as "nature out there," its impact on human subjectivity, and the ways in which this relationship could significantly change in the context of the new ontology remains desperately undertheorized. In my estimation, humans cannot fully contend with their selfhood in the context of the jostling and unpredictable planetary forces which Connolly notes throughout his works without fully rethinking what human subjectivity consists of in the context of "this thing out there that humans perceive as requiring salvation," i.e. the human desire to save nature in some way. To clarify, who we are has everything to do with how we react to the stimuli or the singularities produced by "nature." Who we think we are has even more to do with how we have reacted to what is perceived by the dominant dualist ontology to be "nature out there." When we reconceptualize nature as a force amongst many overlapping cosmic, economic, social, semiotic, signifying, and material folds and invisible virtualities, what then happens to the "nature" part of the traditional "human-nature" dualism? How do we reconceive of the category entirely in a way that accurately theorizes its effects on human subjectivity and humanity's political role in relation to it?

Political Action in New Materialism

Just as the novel ontology of new materialism promotes a recognition of the situation of becoming over being, new materialism's political commitments also echo the need for a politics of becoming, but this is rather vague. What, in other words, do new materialists propose that

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humans become in the face of this new understanding of our place in the world, relative to these powers, crossings, and sometimes untraceable effects?

For new materialists, the role of creativity constitutes the central fulcrum for illuminating and acting upon diverse possibilities of new types of ethical and political action in a world replete with heterogeneity and multiplicity. Connolly's (2017) focus on creativity as it relates to political action can be summarized by the following terms: "an ethic of cultivation" (p. 59), "a militant pluralist assemblage" (p. 59), "cross-regional general strikes" (Connolly, 2013, p. 195; Connolly, 2017, p. 58), and a "cross-regional politics of swarming" (Connolly, 2017, p. 58).

The starting point of Connolly's (2013; 2017) understanding of political action relates to his commitment to planetary forces of speed and fragility detailed above in the section on ontology. Pay attention to your surroundings. Latch on to the moment of perception where the perception itself is not fixed in time or space and realize the infinite possibilities of understanding and action outside of rigid societal norms (See Connolly, 2010). These attitudes toward human creativity and awareness summarize Connolly's position in important ways. Indeed, an insistence on the importance of the relationship between ontology (conceived in profoundly materialist ways) and subjectivity, agency, and political action based on this new ontology marks the central concern of new materialism. For Connolly (2017), political action lies at the intersection of "tactics of the self," "the micropolitics of social movements," "macropolitics," and "cross-state citizen movements," all of which are vital to any critically oriented political ambition today (p. 55).

Drawing on Foucualt, Nietzsche, Whitehead, and Deleuze, Connolly (2017) argues that tactics or arts of the self constitute a useful starting point for moving toward his more collective forms of political action like the general strike or the "cross regional politics of swarming" (p.

58). Connolly (2017) defines this technique as follows: "A tactic of the self, on this reading, is an experimental strategy to touch and work on entangled microperceptual or micro-intentional tendencies flowing beneath direct conscious awareness and regulation." (p. 56). By themselves, Connolly (2017) notes, these tactics can pose dangers given that all experimentation on the self through new exposures could produce new affective desires that the "scientist of the self" was not expecting (p. 56). Indeed, the goal of these kinds of tactics is to help understand one's own constitution in a way that recognizes the points of resistance and open assemblages within which one is entangled. As much as Connolly focuses on the planetary systems at play in the production of human life, here he also recognizes the importance of microperceptions to the possibilities for producing subjectivity. Simply experimenting on the self through some of the tactics explicated by Deleuze in *Cinema II* for example constitutes only the starting point of Connolly's politics.

The accompanying step requires that the experimenter steer the projects of the self in particular productive and more ethical directions (Connolly, 2017). For Connolly (2017), this means that

> Each of these - tactics can be tethered to an ethic of cultivation whereby you experiment with tactics to accentuate gratitude for the excess of life over being and attachment to that strange element of creativity that periodically courses through and around us. (p. 57)

The micropolitics of "role experiments" that Connolly emphasizes are intended, in other words, to cultivate a sense of belonging in a world marked by novel manifestations existential anxiety and resentment combined with a swirling of planetary forces beyond individual or human control. Furthermore, the tactics themselves relate to the re-imagination of habits that simmer below the direct conscious awareness of humans. With these insights, Connolly (2017) tries to expand upon a notion of freedom and political action not fully compatible with either dominant

notion of freedom as either negative or positive, but rather, existentially creative of new modes of subjective belonging in and to the world.

Connolly also discusses many more options for political action beyond the idea of cultivating new bonds of spiritual attachment to a "world of becoming" (See Connolly, 2011). For example, he frequently argues that the possibility of a "general strike" could emerge to combat contemporary conditions that humanity is facing (Connolly, 2013, 2017). For example, in *The Fragility of Things*, Connolly (2013) argues that planetary disruptions can, of course, be very dangerous for human life but they also can help to put into place the conditions that allow for positive exercises of creativity and action. Connolly (2013) defines creativity as

> Action by the present upon ambiguities arising from the past oriented toward the future in a way that is not entirely reducible to the past as either implicit in the present or an aggregation of blind causes that produce the future. (p. 74)

Relatedly, Connolly's (2013) understanding of the general strike relies on the proliferation of these new spiritual attachments and "role experimentations" (p. 194). If these new kinds of attachments and subjective revolutions do proliferate, Connolly (2013) argues that the next political step may be a general strike exercised by "a set of interacting minorities in several countries" through "multiple means" (p. 195). Connolly (2017) also theorizes that the concept of that Anthropocene and the planetary effects of climate change have combined to increase humanity's awareness of "human entanglements with multiple beings and forces with diverse lives and tendencies" (p. 122). If this awareness is in fact growing (and the popularity of discussions of the Anthropocene in academic circles suggests that it is growing in some places, at least), then his political solution may be even more practical than at first glance.

For example, Connolly (2017) discusses his political project as a "politics of swarming" in the following way:

You multiply sites and scales of political action through swarming movements, moving back and forth between creative role experimentations in churches, worksites, consumption localities, investment, universities, research, teaching; you organize worker collectives and university enclaves where possible; you participate in new social movements, some of which are inspired and informed by earlier scouting activities; you return to electoral engagements once the movements have crystallized; and you accumulate these disparate energies and creative insights until a citizen movement becomes possible across world regions. (Connolly, 2017, p. 125)

Next, Connolly (2017) utilizes Foucault's understanding of the idea of the "specific intellectual" to move these swarming motions towards a politics of the general strike, where this figure helps to forge these cross-regional and planetary connections. He argues that

The task of specific intellectuals is to draw upon their specific expertise, citizenship capacities, and strategic location during a key period to call into question the ingrained responses to the occasion. Specific intellectuals seek ways to reconsider the habits that have governed them as they also use their expertise to call into question rules of normalization governing prison life, sexuality, psychiatric illness, nuclear stalemate, family life, extractionist practices, or racial definitions. (Connolly, 2017, p. 125-126)

The general strike is one option for responding differently to these kinds of situations once one has participated in practices of swarming and tactics of the self, in turn. The general strike here should include a class dimension, Connolly (2017) argues, but also disrupts the Marxist boundaries that restricted revolutionary activity to the working class as the agent of history. Connolly's general strike must fundamentally acknowledge the political landscape in the context of the Anthropocene as well, he argues. Strikes are an act of resistance, but they will also not have uniform participation given the different capacities and privileges amongst the members or inhabitants of a given region or state (Connolly, 2017). The uneven distribution of subjectivities amiable to participation in such a strike (or subjectivities amiable to political action as a specific intellectual) also complicates this situation, though Connolly does not tackle this issue in much depth. The connection between human agentic possibilities and capabilities in this context is under analyzed by Connolly (2017), since certain planetary forces (like capitalism) on which he

also focuses may preclude widespread participation and the forging of connections necessary to any general strike.

Connolly's notion of a cross-country general strike is useful because it illuminates a step beyond the collective and individual experimentation on subjectivity in the context of a new materiality. It provides a further step towards politicizing those experimentations on a planetary scale; and since at least some planetary forces such as climate change and neoliberal capitalism require political confrontation at the planetary scale, Connolly's suggestion here at least points to one option for "planetarizing" the new materialism and its consequences for the production of subjectivity. At the same time, however, this only constitutes one option for political action, and it's difficult to predict the effectiveness of this kind of strike in advance; adding concrete possibilities to any understanding of future political action always constitutes speculation but potentially useful speculation, nevertheless.

Other new materialists also discuss the political in substantive and important ways. For example, Samantha Frost (2010) argues that "The theory of causation that is the corollary of the presumption that the past repeats itself enables the subject to take the self as a cause of action" (p. 169). By examining the ways in which Hobbes' understanding of the almighty sovereign plays upon the human impulse to think itself as autonomous and profoundly agentic, Frost warns against the dangerousness of thinking of ourselves as autonomous beings in the context of sovereign power, uncertainty, and fear for the future. She argues that,

> Paradoxically, then, individuals' efforts to generate a sense of themselves as effective autonomous actors results in an inflated sovereign power whose efficaciousness is seemingly disconnected from, as well as set against, the daily activities of the populace. Not only are individuals thereby alienated from the ways in which they are in fact effective, that is, from the complex interdependencies through which all actions take place but they also invest themselves in a fantasy of autonomy whose inevitable fragility

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demands recurrent efforts to produce the sovereign as the object of fear that can make their illusory and elusive self-sovereignty feel more real. (Frost, 2010, 173)

Frost's warning here echoes that of other new materialists as well. Without the sovereign, Hobbes himself predicts the "war of all against all." Equally frightening, however, is the probability (in the context of the contemporary condition of precarity that characterizes humankind) that rethinking subjectivity in ways that open it up to losses of (imagined) autonomy will provoke outrageous and reactionary (aggressive nihilist) responses in those who feel lost and unable to cope with a perceived loss of control over their own lives. The potential for anger, scapegoating, and destruction of the sources of uncertainty themselves (like a continued hubristic attempt to steer nature itself) is high.

As Connolly (2017) fully admits, however, just as re-imagining human subjectivity can be both dangerous and provoke reactionary responses and attempts at re-enclosure, so too can a politics based on plural expressions of creativity that take advantage of the dissonances with which subjects are materially entangled. He begins his warning by stating that, "There are no existential guarantees here linking creativity and attachment to the world" (p. 84). Connolly's work also helps to illuminate why certain understandings of the human-nature relationship in both deep ecology and ecosocialism outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 are insufficient for a world of what he calls "pluripotential incipience" (See Connolly, 2017, p. 85). The dangerous path that human beings can undertake in response to the uncertainty of belonging that accompanies new materialism's ontology could constitute an expression of "existential resentment," which in Connolly's work very closely resembles the Nietzschean concept of *ressentiment*, which Connolly (2008, 2011, 2013, 2017) references frequently in most of his works.

Other new materialists, like Jane Bennett (2009) take a different approach to pluralizing and democratizing politics through a new-found awareness of the power of actants. Bennett's

perspective on matter allows her to argue that nonhuman entities constitute part of a broader

public in a given society, a public that creates substantive effects on human affairs, often

regardless of human desires and without humanity's knowledge of these workings. Though I

acknowledge the importance of "expanding the public" as a democratic strategy for enhancing

awareness of entanglement, the problem of the ecological self at issue in my project must

supersede this concern in Bennett for the expansion of democratic publics in the name of

increasing pluralism.

Broadened Materialism Minimizes Capitalist Power

The vital insight that nature itself (and all materiality) fundamentally constitutes human

subjectivity from new materialists helps to demonstrate the importance of expanded awareness

and expanded attachment to the "external" world. Additionally, the above insights give support

to the idea that human subjectivity embodies a complex terrain of intersecting elements,

contradictions, and materially produced affects/desires.

Though Connolly, most of all amongst new materialists discusses "neoliberal capitalism"

in some depth, new materialists generally do not target capitalist power head on, leaving it as an

aside to their analyses of the relationship between ontology, subjectivity, agency, and future

ethicopolitical possibilities. Coole and Frost (2010) in their *New Materialisms* book cite "the

cohort's [new materialism's] ongoing invention of new concepts and theoretical frameworks in

order to understand the complexities of global capitalism (in its broadest sense) and its diverse,

localized effects on everyday lives" (p. 25). The authors attribute this focus to "critical

materialists," who are generally concerned with the ways in which capitalist power "manages"

subjectivity and human heterogeneity (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 28). Many critical materialist

feminists also discuss how capitalism commodifies and fetishizes the body itself, and women's

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bodies in particular ways that have profound material implications (Ahmed, 2010). As a response to the exuberance (and failure) of modern and contemporary Marxisms, and as a response to the over-idealistic and culturist reversal of that exuberance, new materialists often invoke the importance of understanding global capitalism in the context of their ontology of becoming. Often drawing on Michel Foucault's work and Louis Althusser's Marxist materialism as well, new materialists attempt to understand the phenomenological and subjective effects that capitalism imposes upon the human consciousness and the human body (Coole and Frost, 2010). For instance, Coole and Frost (2010) explain new materialism's relationship to Foucault's understanding of the material effects of power on physical bodies by stating that

> Foucault describes the kind of micropractices that are at stake in pacifying and reproducing social regimes in order to demonstrate how thoroughly our ordinary, material existence is affected by, and saturated with, power and how protean yet banal many of its tactics remain. (p. 33)

In short, new materialism recognizes (as Foucault himself did) that tactics of power, especially biopower for example, have material effects (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 33). As an aside, however, Coole and Frost's (2010) volume *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* mentions the word capitalism only 20 times in its substantive chapters (excluding the "bibliography," "contributors," and "index" sections). Despite this, one chapter in the above volume entitled "The Materialism of Historical Materialism" by Jason Edwards does focus on capitalism in greater detail (not surprisingly, given its title).

In Edwards (2010) chapter, the author focuses on redeeming historical materialism from the dustbin of history by pointing out the various ways in which historical materialists (such as Marx himself and Louis Althusser) have consistently recognized "the complex nature of any given social formation" (p. 286). Edwards argues that "a complex totality of material practices that are constitutive of capitalist relations of production, is salvageable" out of the proverbial

dustbin (p. 286). His analysis is fruitful for thinking about what bringing a capitalist analysis to

the front and center of the new materialist project would look like. In this regard he argues, that

> So far I have endorsed the idea that a materialist analysis of the organization of everyday
> life and space in capitalist societies can and should proceed on the basis of an
> understanding of the totality of material practices that are necessary for the reproduction
> of capitalist relations of production. But it must avoid the reductionist trap of thinking
> either that the practices of everyday life and the structuring of space are all functionally
> beneficial for the reproduction of capitalism or that individual experiences of everyday
> life and space are uniform (or simply passive) in character. (Edwards, 2010, 291-92)

In other words, capitalism orders existence and subjectivity in profound ways that cannot be

ignored by new materialists. Given new materialism's own understanding of the open-endedness

of subjectivity, however, it would be naïve to think of capitalism as a totalizing force that

completely captures the subject irredeemably.

Despite this interesting lack of focus on capitalism (coupled with the above brief

acknowledgements of its importance), new materialists still have important things to say about

capitalism in many respects. Coole and Frost (2010), for example, discuss Foucault's insights

into the ways in which economic power, through disciplinary means and tactics "[renders] bodily

capacities…determinate" (or circumscribes them through the necessary dictates of the dominant

mode of economic power, i.e. capitalism) (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 32). As mentioned,

Connolly's work has probably engaged with the capitalist project the most amongst new

materialists. He focuses, though, not on capitalism more generally, but rather neoliberal

capitalism, in particular (Connolly, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2017). In other words, he does not

necessarily attribute any inherent characteristics to the operations of capitalism, but rather

examines its contents in the late modern period (Connolly, 2017). He argues that

> The small minority who own the vast proportion of capital exercise massive power over
> the ends of the economy, the direction of politics within capitalist states, and
> intensification of inequalities of race and class within and across states. Capitalism is

ugly, exploitative, and dangerous today, most radically so in its extractive and neoliberal modes. (p. 26)

For Connolly, capitalism constitutes a major barrier to a new politics of creativity, plurality, and becoming, but it does not possess inherent qualities outside of its operation in the context of the Anthropocene and the current climate crisis. Capitalism, in other words, does not operate in a vacuum, and not surprisingly given new materialism's understanding of the ontological, capitalism manifests in particular configurations due to its relationships with other self-organizing systems of materiality and power in the world. For example, in *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*, Connolly (2008) argues the "the capitalist-evangelical assemblage finds multiple modes of expression, each amplifying the other" (p. 40). While this work has "capitalism" in its title, subjectivity does not constitute a specific focus of the project (at least explicitly), but rather the power that capitalism asserts over everyday life in the American context, and the blockages created by its capacity to align with other systems of meaning and power in society.

Connolly's insights are fruitful, however, for thinking about the resonances between the various systems that produce resentment in the subject, even if his focus lies elsewhere for the most part. For example, he argues that

> The political formula of the Christian right is capped by defining men to be vulnerable, persecuted warriors in the capital-state system. They must receive special *compensation* for the ordeals that they undergo, if the most creative and godly economy the world has ever seen is to flourish. (Connolly, 2008, p. 32)

In other words, the resonances between capitalism and Christianity produce subjects which are particularly vulnerable to the condition of existential resentment and reactionary politics. The first step to needing a scapegoat is to think oneself as autonomous and entitled by virtue of existence in a given society. The presence of this type of (recently increasingly empowered)

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political and economic subject in late-capitalist societies around the world constitutes another "figure" with which any understanding of ecological subjectivity will have to deal in greater depth. Capitalism produces more than one kind of subject, but the kind detailed by Connolly in the above text must be dealt with in depth both theoretically and in the context of political power if a new ontology and a new ethics are considered essential to radical political and ecological projects of the future.

In the *Fragility of Things*, Connolly (2013) argues that biopower and neoliberalism work together to constitute the subjectivity of individuals in a way that reflects the competitive market logic of capitalism. The state, too, for Connolly plays a role in ensuring that those who would change this system or those who are disenfranchised or not privileged by it have no real capacity to make substantive or radical political changes to this system. While these insights are important in order to demonstrate how systems of power reinforce one another and work together to achieve particular goals such as stabilizing the systems themselves, Connolly shies away from attacking capitalism as a global phenomenon from which subjectivity production must be wrested most aggressively. Connolly admits to shying away from a definition of capitalism that "defined capitalism as a closed, contradictory structure" (Connolly and Macdonald, 2015, p. 263). The conundrum here, however, is that capitalism does not have to be closed or fixed in order to exert a disproportionate amount of power compared to other material flows and configurations of power. This fact of capitalism eluded neither Deleuze nor Guattari, for example. But this fact does elude new materialism more generally, despite their continued yet sporadic assertions of concern for the effects of capitalism. The fear of not wanting to essentialize (enclose) or give too much power in general to the capitalist system is not surprising given the rejection of Marxism and poststructuralism that new materialists embody, but still, this

fear of falling into the faults of past theory should not prevent a robust analysis of precisely where capitalism's power produces the most un-ecological subjects, and where the "lines of flight" away from these productions may inhere.

Perhaps the most important insight into capitalism from a new materialist perspective, however, lies in its insistence on its role in helping to destroy humanity's "sense of belonging in to the world" (Connolly, 2010, p. 189). As Connolly notes, this notion of belonging constitutes an important piece of the puzzle of human freedom. For neoliberals, belonging "to the market" constitutes the ideal type of belonging that they would pursue. Though Connolly argues that this type of belonging is not the only type at play in our contemporary context that affects how we perceive freedom, it remains an important part of the picture. In the above case, the freedom to buy, sell, and obey the rules of capital such as the value of goods on the market) constitutes the central crux of freedom, which as Connolly notes in the tradition of Foucault, is always bound up with disciplinary mechanisms as well (Connolly, 2017).

I would agree with Connolly on two important accounts of capitalism. First, his understanding of the "evangelical capitalist resonance machine" demonstrates one way in which assemblages of power work together to structure the modes of belonging in the United States, specifically. Second, capitalism is not a closed system through which we can discern the precise borders and boundaries of its projects of marketization or the production of what Wendy Brown (2015) refers to as "homo oeconomicus" in *Undoing the Demos* at a given point. The problem, however, in Connolly's work and in much of new materialism generally lies not in their substantive conclusions about subjectivity, ontology, and the role of materiality in affecting all systems of power and human interaction, but rather in their unwillingness to analyze in much greater depth capitalism's precise role in subject-formation in other venues of subjectivity

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production, like the mass media (though Connolly does this to some degree), the internet/ social media, and the sites of everyday living and relationality. What do the products of capitalism (literally the material products and the subjective effects), in other words, do to the human psyche? What blockages and fetishes are produced through cultures of consumption and what ruptures in the self could result? In short, new materialists downplay the economic and materialist facets of capitalism's production of subjectivity (and the effects of this on political action, specifically).

Interestingly, ecosocialists such as Löwy (2015), new materialists such as Connolly (2008, 2010, 2017), Deleuze and Guattari (1999, 2004), and Guattari (1992) all discuss how advertising affects human life and perhaps even human subjectivity. Looking into practices of advertising in the contemporary capitalist world may constitute a starting point for rendering the ubiquitous but unique pinpricks that capitalism utilizes to produce desire in the human self more discernable to the human consciousness. Since profit-motivation lies behind the whole of advertising, looking at this particular realm of the production of subjectivity under capitalism may produce interesting insights into the ways in which capitalism attempts to operate as an enclosed system, but also escapes those enclosures even in the context of one of its most important exercises of production: advertising. For instance, in Canada, IKEA on August 31, 2018 first aired a commercial about climate change where they decided to film customers walking around a Canadian IKEA store in which they had raised the temperature 4 degrees Celsius above the average store temperature. The 1 minute, 37 second advertisement shows customers complaining about the heat, and subsequently, when some are told of the experiment in which they just participated, they urge action on climate change considering how uncomfortable they felt with only a 4-degree Celsius rise in temperature. Toward the end of the

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video, IKEA pledges to reduce their own carbon footprint by "70% by 2030" (IKEA Canada, 2018). This is just one small example of how the climatological and the capitalist assemblages are intimately entangled. Moreover, it is an example of not only the co-optation therein, but the disorienting loyalties that these kinds of advertising must stir up in the context of the production of ecological subjectivities (or greenwashed capitalist "eco-subjects," in this case). The win-win solution posed by green capitalist advertising constitutes one of the most insidious interventions into the production and co-optation of human subjectivity.

None of the above discussion implies that new materialism does not care about the effects of capitalism on human subjectivity or on the prevailing Enlightenment understanding of the ontological field. Rather, this discussion demonstrates that new materialism has not fully found a way to infuse Marx's original project with their own rejection of both Marx's productivist structuralism and poststructuralism's cultural turn. Put more simply, new materialism has focused too readily on their novel ontology without accompanying their analysis with a focus on capitalism's effects on that picture of ontology and its relationship to subjectivity. In other words, new materialism's overemphasis on their own novel ontology masks the ways in which certain discreet self-organizing systems (which often still act in structural ways) preclude the possibilities for political and ecological liberation altogether. Capitalism, indeed, inserts itself into the world *as if* it constituted a discreet, enclosed system of exchange, and its capacity for masking its own imperfections and flaws may alone prevent the role experimentations and new sensitivities which many new materialists, especially Connolly, find necessary to their political praxes. Perhaps the reason for this derives from the fact that the preceding era of the dominance of poststructuralism took much wind out of the sails of the Marxist and Critical Theory critiques of capitalism and materialist capitalism, in particular. Luckily, the next chapter examines one of the

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most important contributors to a re-invigoration of these issues. The work of Félix Guattari specifically tries to maintain a robust understanding of materialist capitalism (as an attempt at enclosure) which produces subjectivities in ways that fail to account for the other materialist and planetary systems which new materialism so aptly acknowledges and theorizes. Despite the absence of a robust analysis of capitalism, however, new materialism has done an invaluable amount of work that points much of the forthcoming analysis in fruitful directions for understanding the relationships between ecology, capitalism, and subjectivity, specifically. Additionally, these differences in substantive foci between my own work and new materialism's do not suggest a substantive difference in ontology or in conceptions of subjectivity (although some differences will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5), but rather, illuminate the need to delve much further into two key relationships which go mentioned yet undertheorized in much of new materialism, namely, the relationships between capitalism and the production of subjectivity and ecology and the production of subjectivity.

The main issue here is that the treatment of capitalism remains unfinished in new materialism. New materialists may acknowledge capitalism's effects upon subjectivity, as truncating the possibilities of becoming, but they do not go so far as to discuss the relationship between ecology, subjectivity, and capitalism in any great depth nor the consequences of politics for this particular triad. New materialists generally acknowledge that their understandings of subjectivity and materiality do not promise any guarantees of human progress, overcoming oppression, or a new future society based on different ethical values. My project also makes no such guarantees, but I would argue that a potential lack of success does not mean that delving deeper into capitalism, ecology, and each's relation to subjectivity will not produce fruitful results.

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Though the focus in new materialism on the productive, innovative, and almost spiritual quality with which matter circulates around and through humanity and with itself constitutes a necessary view toward matter, it does not fully reveal matter's destructive possibilities. The more ethical and spiritual mode of acknowledgement remains important, however, in order to recognize humanity's entanglement as a possibility for understanding ourselves, our possibilities, and our ethical obligations to other entities (and other humans) in the world differently than in contemporary society in the West. It is not as if we could detach ourselves (consciously, emotionally, or physically) from these entanglements no matter how much we desire to do so. In this regard, the ethical force of new materialism's view toward matter relies on its commitment to an *acceptance* of entanglement as a starting point for re-engaging with ourselves as entangled beings with a limited yet important knowledge of entanglement itself, pointing towards modes of political action that embrace pluralism, precaution, and participation in the experimental passions of the self and its relation to other selves and other "things." It points toward the cultivation of productive desires embedded, not in a greater whole, but in a vast, infinite, and pulsing network or web outside of the containment of desire in dualistic, exceptionalist, hubristic, and calculable notions of human life and its relationship to nature.

The idea that new materialism may not focus quite enough on the dangers of their entangled understandings of materiality has been detailed briefly by Terry Eagleton (2016) in his book *Materialism*, and his point is worth quoting at length. He states that,

> There are strains of vitalism that tend to idealise and etherealise matter. As such, they run the risk of taking the pain out of it, turning their gaze from its recalcitrant bulk. Matter on this benign view is no longer what hurts—what spikes our projects and baffles our aims—but instead assumes all the fineness and malleability of spirit. (p. 9)

In other words, a final critique that may be leveled at new materialism concerns its lack of focus on the dangers of matter itself especially in the context of late modern capitalism and the

climatological exacerbations of the severity of storms, droughts, and other disasters. The danger

of the material must also constitute an important component of any understanding of what it

means to be an ecological subject.

Conclusion

Not surprisingly, the work of Deleuze tends to outshine Guattari's own solo projects in

the work of new materialists, leaving a great deal of work remaining to bring Guattari's

ecological insights more readily into the new materialist cradle of becoming. Ontologically

speaking, Deleuze's valuable materialist impulse

> Lies in its overturning of the central principle of dialectical materialism: organization. In
> dialectical materialism, the dynamism of matter comes from the activity or process of
> organization, the ordering of things through dialectical relations of mutual
> interdependence such that they become parts or members of a whole, where each part is
> an organ with its designated function within an integrated or systemic totality. (Cheah,
> 2010, p. 87)

While this Deleuzian critique can also be at ecosocialism's historical materialism and deep

ecology's holism, it also helps to clarify the key starting point of materialism in Deleuze and

Guattari's work. As Deleuze's incorporation into much of new materialism is detailed above, the

focus here is on the much more sporadic incorporation of Guattari, and how using more of

Guattari in new materialist work could enhance the specific overtures that it already makes

toward ecological politics and capitalist production.

Though this will come to play a much more important role in Chapters 4 and 5, Guattari's

work can only enhance and re-orient many of the above insights from new materialism. For

example, he argues in his *Chaosmosis* that some of the implications of the above understanding

of subjectivity are not only dangerous at the societal level, but also on an individual level as well.

For example, Guattari (1992, 2000) (and Deleuze in earlier work with Guattari [1983]) delves

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deeper into the study of "schizoanalysis" to demonstrate the inherent disunity of the self, where the lens of schizoanalysis can illuminate this fundamental disunity through a recognition of the ways in which desire is produced haphazardly in the self through the interplay of material, ideational, signifying, and other forces that swirl through the subject, interacting with one another to produce desires (which sometimes conflict in the self). For Deleuze and Guattari (2004), a rejection of subjectivity as unified and to use Connolly's term, a new sensitivity to these kinds of interactions within and through the self can constitute new understandings of ethics and politics as well. The danger emerges because these recognitions of the disunity of the self could trigger an existential loss of meaning, which both Deleuze and Guattari problematize in even greater detail in their understanding of schizoanalytic frameworks.

As Connolly (2017) himself notes, "Consummate answers are suspect today" (33). New materialism has enormous gifts to offer to the theoretical understanding of a new ontology of becoming and its imbrication in human subjectivity, especially considering the planetary entanglements of the climatological and other macro-scalar self-organizing systems. Reconceptualizing human subjectivity as primarily constituted through multitudinous and disruptive interactions with these sorts of material entanglements helps to move the production of subjectivity to a place of plurality, ambiguity, and possibility. Where the concept of the unitary and autonomous subject enclosed humans within themselves and thereby cut off possibilities for seeing ourselves differently in the world, new materialism opens the ontological field in a way that creates new paths for subjective experimentation and creativity within a universe of continually shifting and colliding contents. At the same time, these theories all suffer from a lack of detail for how precisely the material processes of capitalism fit into (or prevent) a more robust understanding of ecological subjectivity, in particular. This brings us to the work of

Félix Guattari, whose own post-Marxist, yet communist materialism combined with a specific focus on capitalism and ecology leads us to even more fruitful results for reconceptualizing these planetary entanglements, and in particular, their micropolitical dangers, infestations, and possibilities in the context of new materialism's (and Guattari's) novel ontologies of becoming creative (ecological) subjects in the world.

CHAPTER 4: ECO-MACHINIC BECOMINGS: FÉLIX GUATTARI AND "THE
IRREVERSIBLE ADVENTURE"[28]

Félix Guattari was a self-proclaimed communist, a self-proclaimed schizoanalyst, a self-proclaimed militant, and much more. Though communist he was, utopian he was not. In *Communists Like Us* (1990), his seminal (and only substantive) work with Antonio Negri, he states that "communism is the most intense experience of subjectivity, the maximization of the processes of singularization—individuation which represent the capability of our collective stock" (p. 39). To singularize is to take on the capitalist machine through a process of collective assertion of a right to suggest or assert oneself differently to the world (Genosko, 2009a). In other words, it constitutes "the need for permanent readiness for the advent of any rupture of sense" (Goffey, 2011, p. xi). For Guattari, finding the exit strategies for escaping the capitalist stranglehold on the production of human subjectivity, and therefore politics, social life, the psyche of the individual, and the ecological consequences of the previous three was an essential task to be undertaken by any and all who recognize those exits as such. His work also presents radically democratic possibilities, though this is rarely stated in such stark terms.

Félix Guattari's work stands out uniquely amongst ecological thinkers for its breadth, its intensity and frantic quality, and its political commitment to the centrality of a theory of human subjectivity in relation to the production of better social, political, and environmental relations. In particular, this chapter focuses on Guattari's materialism (including the complex ontological framework he develops on his own and with Gilles Deleuze), his ecological thought or

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[28] See Goffey (2011, p. xi-xii) for a discussion of Guattari's embrace of the pursuit of "irreversible adventures."

"ecosophy," and where capitalism and human subjectivity intersect in the context of these materialist and ecological insights. To be clear, however, Guattari was much more than a materialist due to the fact that to claim a position as merely a materialist would've constituted the acceptance of a universalist position (Goffey, 2011). In other words, examining the material world and its effects constitutes an essential task, but it does not constitute the only task necessary to rethinking ourselves in the world. Reducibility is a metaphysical impossibility; equally impossible is distinguishing between or ranking once and for all the importance of psychical, physical/material, and social effects on human political life. Likewise, though Guattari's work with Deleuze no doubt also emphasizes the importance of the above relationships, the focus here remains on Guattari's work, which has been underutilized not only in the disciplines of political science and philosophy at large, but particularly in ecopolitical thought, where his unique understanding of the relationship between human subjectivity and ecosophical possibility remains unmatched. In short, Guattari largely been neglected by radical ecopolitical theory, but Guattari's work elaborates the unique ontological commitments that he develops with Deleuze and highlights the political and ecological in ways that neither Deleuze nor their collaborative work approached. Of course, both Deleuze and Guattari were anti-capitalists and concerned with, at the very least, the onto-status of nature generally and the production of subjectivity under capitalism.

The possibilities for meaningful change and escape from capitalist destruction of nature and from the over-economized and individualized (neo)liberal subject produced by capitalism's material and discursive powers multiply when examining Guattari's work. For the purposes of this chapter, the focus on the material remains particularly important due to the fact that it too has been neglected as a producer par excellence of human bodily and psychical capacities docile

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enough to both continue the cycles of production/consumption and ignore or merely pay lip service to the environmental consequences of that production.

Additionally, Guattari's work illuminates some of the bankruptcies in deep ecology, ecosocialism, and new materialism, respectively. For instance, deep ecology's rigid holism is opposed to the possibilities for producing different kinds of eco-subjects in the context of an open-ended rhizomatic ontology offered by Deleuze and Guattari. Likewise, ecosocialism's dialecticism remains too productivist (and structuralist/arborescent) to fully illuminate how capitalism infects subjectivity in ways that cannot be fully assimilated to a particular mode of production or a particular understanding of capitalism's own valuation of the human-nature relationship. And finally, the new materialists' contributions are taken up more robustly in Chapter 5, but they undertheorize capitalism and its relationship to the prospects for relating to the planetary forces in the world in ways that eschew nature's destruction.

The first part of this chapter begins with the ontological, tracing Deleuze and Guattari's understandings of rhizomatic thought and its superior qualities compared to arborescent thought, Guattari's understanding of transversality (including his four-dimensional ontological schema), and the ways in which matter weaves through these novel ontological assertions in the context of the environment. The second part focuses on Guattari's uniquely polyphonic understanding of subjectivity, its relation to materiality, and its gestures towards alternative possibilities for existing in the world. In this third part, I begin to piece together the implications for Guattari's unique understandings of ontology and subjectivity for re-imagining our own subjectivity in a more ecological context by following lines of escape that present themselves as disjuncts or ruptures in the day-to-day order of life under current capitalist powers. And finally, in the last part I take up the problems that capitalism specifically poses for Guattari's political praxis and

the production of eco-subjects, broadly conceived, including its fascistic and authoritarian tendencies. Throughout some of these sections, I also take up the question of the particular resonances that a radical ecopolitical theory like deep ecology might have in common with Deleuze and Guattari and Guattari's thought in order to weave a more detailed picture of its problems in relation to these authors' own works. Guattari and Arne Naess both profess an ecosophy, and important resonances exist between these two strains of thinking.[29]

Generally speaking, I argue that since the issues of ontology and its relationship to subjectivity cannot truly be settled once and for all, the fact that Deleuze and Guattari each invent this relationship in new and exciting ways in and of itself marks a starting point for thinking ourselves differently, in the context of who we are and how that relates to the material and ontologically multitudinous world that we largely consider (in the dominant conception) as outside of ourselves. More specifically, Guattari's work can bring out the ecopolitical and ecosubject possibilities hidden within his unique understanding of ontology, though capitalism's role in truncating these possibilities remains undertheorized in some important ways.

Ontological "Matters": Félix Guattari's Expansive Cartographies of Difference

Imagine a prairie dog colony. A prairie dog colony is rhizomatic. Vertically, prairie dogs pop their heads out of their holes seemingly at random. Underground, networks of tunnels connect elements of the prairie dogs' world together in a constantly shifting configuration where new construction and planned and unplanned demolition marks the unpredictable landscape. Though trees no doubt constitute many environmental landscapes, including the prairie dog

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[29]   It seems fitting to refer back to the earlier chapter on deep ecology here in order to delimit the significant differences between Guattari's ecosophy and that of deep ecology. The limits of deep ecology can thus be teased out in the context of another kind of ecosophy. At the same time, ecosocialism's limits and new materialism's triumphs (and limits) will receive more attention in Chapter 5 and in the concluding chapter, in order to help guide us along the path to a robust theory of the eco-subject.

colony, the shape of a tree itself proves too fixed a model for understanding the configuration of life in general. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue that, "There is always something genealogical about a tree. It is not a method for the people" (p. 8). This assertion sets up the relationship between the revolutionary ontological perspective of Deleuze and Guattari and a new kind of politics based on the rejection of hierarchy, fixity, and the cultivation of collective practices of reaching and grabbing hold of prospective lines of escape (or "lines of flight" to use Guattari's [2011a] term) that produce something new and different. For Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome constitutes a stark contrast to a tree-like structure. While this assertion may at first seem abstract, it represents not only an abstract position but a material and semiotic position that attempts to characterize the general shape of societies, human desires, and the natural world. Rhizomatic thought is inherently characterized by multiplicity, while arborescent thought involves a tracing, an imposition of structure upon an otherwise multiple and heterogenous field (or "plane" in the language of Deleuze and Guattari) (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). This general difference in viewing the shape of the world (or its amorphousness, really) has profound implications for humanity's understanding of itself.

In a blunt call to "overthrow ontology," Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue that the focus of this overthrow rests on concentrated attention to the rhizome, the nonplace where things "pick up speed" (p. 28). The "between" which rhizome-thought makes available is characterized by "a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 28). But why does arborescent thought relate to slowness and rhizomatic thought to speed, specifically? For Deleuze and Guattari, tree-thought exemplifies many of the problems with structuralist thought, dualist thought, and Lacanian thought all in one. They argue

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that "the pivotal taproot provides no better understanding of multiplicity than the dichotomous root" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 6). The structure of a tree, in other words, grounds humanity in a circular and fixed relationship to itself, where nothing surprising happens and the possibilities for "branching out" derive only from the roots already in place. Structurally, a tree ties itself intimately to place through an imposition of an immediately recognizable form with definable characteristics and relations between those characteristics, whereas the rhizome or the "plane of consistency" evokes no such certainty or fixity (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). Rhizomes involve speed because they refuse to fix things (including nature) into place; their onto-status allows neither incrementalism nor determinacy. This begins the starting point for connecting ontology and ethical political practices as well, since the tree cannot be a "method for the people" due to its rigidity and hierarchy. Trees grow slowly; it takes a long time for a new branch to sprout and give rise to something else (and never to something new in the revolutionary sense of the word). Rhizomes house speed, intensity, and multiplicity, all of which are required for transforming political life in ethical directions (rather than incrementally producing feigned novelty). These connections are given more attention below, but for now, rhizomes deserve a bit more consideration in terms of their material existence.

Specifically, the rhizome invites multiplicity to foment without categorizing it. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue that "When a multiplicity is taken up in a structure, its growth is offset by a reduction in its laws of combination" (p. 6). In other words, thinking like a rhizome or thinking as if the world were shaped like a rhizome can produce unanticipated access to combinatory prospects inhibited by structuralist, dualist, and psychoanalytic paradigms, which attribute the unconscious, in the case of Lacan for example, to the structuralizing practices of signification and the almighty Signifier (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). In particular, arborescent

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thought and shape cut off the combinatory prospects of desire and minimize, mask, and sterilize

humanity's complex entanglements with matter. Therefore, the invention of new ethical and

political possibilities in the world requires thinking outside the literal "box," with its fixed,

discernable, and spatially/temporally significant contours and symbolic occupation of the world.

Unfortunately, tree-thought has other troubling downsides which Deleuze and Guattari

desire to overcome via a new "cartographic" perspective on the world. Tree-thought, for

example, always requires a middleperson, a transcendent mediator (Herzogenrath, 2008).

Structuralism imposes a specific shape on the world, and rhizomatic thought has the potential to

multiply the lines that connect the human and animal world, breaking the oppressive and narrow

conception of the opposition between humanity and nature as well (Guattari, 2011a). Some

speculation has surfaced that Deleuze and Guattari's perspective constitutes a non-

anthropocentric one as well (See Bogue, 2008; Genosko, 2002; Herzogenrath, 2008; Welchman,

2008). Another implication of this refusal to distinguish fundamentally between the ontologically

prior status of any object, semiotic function, unconscious production, or human body involves a

metaphysical assertion, one that intimately shapes the connection between Deleuze and

Guattari's ontology and their ethicopolitical outlook. I will take these two assertions in turn,

beginning with the metaphysical assertion and ending with the assertion that Deleuze and

Guattari are, ethically and politically-speaking, non-anthropocentric. Next, I discuss Guattari's

unique contribution to expanding a rhizomatic ontology even further than he did with Deleuze.

Starting with the metaphysical assertion, for example, Alistair Welchman (2008) argues

the following: "What could motivate a transformative identification with nature is not the mere

fact that humans are a part of nature, but the further claim that humans are, in some way,

genuinely metaphysically identical with (the rest of) nature" (p. 124). Welchman (2008) continues that,

> Deleuze and Guattari strenuously resist any concept of holism: the whole, far from having any priority over the parts (either valuative or ontological) is simply a part produced alongside other parts. And, despite some similarities of their work to a kind of general systems theory, they distance themselves from this through a refusal of even the idea of effective functioning. (124)

So, we have trees and prairie dog colonies, but in reality, those are material metaphors for non-material entities that Deleuze and Guattari also offer as rhizomatically (un)structured, as network-like. Matter itself (as in physical and microscopic matter), while important in Deleuze and Guattari's thought, is not uniquely central compared to the status of other kinds of configurations within which matter is imbricated as one of the mediums through which the intersecting movements of history, of practices, entities, social and economic systems, and desires manifest. For example, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) distinguish between steering or "piloting" roles (played out via the "abstract machine")[30] and content/expression, where matter becomes stratified and organized in particular ways, some of which end up being overcoded by apparatuses of power (expressions) and some of which remain real in the context of having form or order but not necessarily being "taken up" by apparatuses of power in ways which hierarchize, formalize (their form), and attempt to fix their expressions as ontologically prior to or superior to the content from which they may have been drawn. This differentiation between content and expression, however, should also not be interpreted as an argument that power only concerns itself with expression. Capitalist power also manipulates and deploys content in its operations in addition to expression (See Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Guattari, 1992, 2011a).

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[30]   See Deleuze and Guattari (2004), *A Thousand Plateaus*, "10,000 B.C.: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think it is?) (p. 56;157).

To complicate the picture, the terms "molecular" and "molar" also require translation and placement in relation to content/expression. Like Foucault's tactics of power, Guattari (1992) argues that the molar forms of stratified matter which are overcoded by capitalism and the state are fixed through the operations of what Guattari refers to as "collective equipment" (p. 22). "Collective equipment" refers to the precise devices, methods, expressions (in the general sense), and means through which capitalism operates both at the molecular and the molar level. Capitalism can take up content (as understood by Deleuze and Guattari above) and mold it in its service for either molecular or molar purposes, or both. For example, Genosko (1996) argues that what makes capitalism unique (and powerful) is its ability to take both nonmaterial and material content and integrate it into the intimate lives of human beings through molecular inroads, i.e., directly into the lives of individuals and societies and their daily practices and relationships. At the molar level, these molecular relations and inroads are taken up by capitalism as an abstract force and institutionalized as part of the "social division of labor" (i.e. as a form of expression geared toward particular self-sustaining capitalist objectives) (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 246). For Guattari (2011a), then, "types of collective equipment ought to be considered as machines that produce *the conditions of possibility for all capitalist economic infrastructure*" (p. 12).

In short, expression's job is to reterritorialize or deterritorialize content, and neither expression nor content precede one another. They coexist as a double articulation according to Deleuze and Guattari (2004). In this regard, they argue that "organizations of power…are in no way located within a State apparatus but rather are everywhere, effecting formalizations of content and expression, the segments of which they intertwine" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p. 76). The collective equipment of capitalism can take up either expression or content, and it can mold either to molecular or molar purposes, depending on numerous (though not infinite)

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possibilities of useful entanglement. Capitalism operates opportunistically, as does power more generally. Content and expression, then, are akin to what Guattari refers to as "the given" and the "giving," where expression and its imbrication in the abstract machine and the material world are drawn from content (the existence of the self and the universes of possible value in the world) (Genosko, 2002, p. 204; Guattari, 1992, 2013). This given/giving distinction, however, oversimplifies these relationships, such that it ignores the key insight from both Deleuze and Guattari and Guattari in his own work, namely, that expression/content feedback both negatively and positively upon one another in a manner which always expands and complicates every dimension of the production of complex life (broadly construed) on the planet (See Guattari, 1992, 2013 for a discussion of these resonances between content/expression).

Indeed, how things are brought together concerns not just the operations of capitalism, but power overall and its ontological entanglement with content, its expressive tendencies, and its abstract and concrete productions of possibility. On the one hand, capitalism infects the world by taking up content, expressing itself, and affecting and infiltrating the fields of the possible in the world. Guattari and Negri (1990), however, warn against conceptualizing capitalism merely as a structural phenomenon, stating that

> It is certainly important to avoid an ingenuous or anthropomorphic conception of I.W.C. [Integrated World Capitalism] which would entail describing it as the work of a Leviathan or as a one-dimensional macro-structure of the Marcusean variety. Its planetary expansion, as well as its molecular infiltration, occur through mechanisms which can be extremely flexible. (p. 48)

In this regard, capitalism continually participates in the frantic capture of everything within reach, not intentionally choosing between competing options but by pursuing opportunities which arise and circulate in a manner which allows them to be folded into its service. (In other words, it operates through autopoietic striving, just as does life itself) (Herzogenrath, 2009). It is

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fundamentally tentacular (rhizomatic), a squid's tentacles striving/reaching without drawing a direct causal line between the striving and the body/brain or conscious/unconscious of said squid. These are its fundamentally molecular inroads (Lazzarato, 2014). Lazzarato refers to this phenomenon as "machinic enslavement," where capitalism de-individualizes humans and no longer needs to operate in the context of structuralist/dualist logic. A cog is a cog, in other words, and capitalism need not bother with distinguishing between subject and object or nature and culture in order to enslave these parts to its larger productive (concrete) assemblages. For Guattari, enslavement doesn't necessarily require the imposition or assertion of distinguishable ontological categories of difference (Lazzarato, 2014). For Deleuze and Guattari, machinic enslavement corresponds to their formation of the idea of the "abstract machine," which denotes one of the most important ontological innovations of Deleuze and Guattari, and Guattari in his own right.

For Deleuze and Guattari, machinism describes the movement of a variety of processes and entities, ontologically speaking. For example, machinism describes the operations of the human unconscious, the material world, and invasions of the body and the self by power. In other words, a machine infiltrates, it can infect and affect, and if it breaks down, it either repairs itself or is repaired or transforms into something else. Additionally, machines are also made up of heterogeneous components that *could always be arranged otherwise in the service of something different or new*. In addition, subjectivity produces itself and is produced through machinism. On its surface (literally), machinism promotes a vision of the world that treats processes of material and subjective production as relying on a momentary combination of elements (material and nonmaterial) and affects through which temporary positions could be discerned (if it were in the interest or the realm of possibility of individuals, collectives, or the

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codes of power to discern them/ to strive toward them as they become discernable). Again, this insight constitutes the innovative capacity of Deleuze and Guattari to imagine the shape of the world and its means of producing subjectivity and desire in entirely novel directions. Moreover, Lazzarato (2014) characterizes the terms "machinic" and "molecular" as synonyms, where capitalism infects the most intimate psychical and physical manifestations of the self (p. 31).

Though the capitalist abstract machine dominates the field or plane upon which human life currently plays out, it does not constitute the only abstract machine, merely one that has overtaken and infiltrated the rest (or most of the rest, at least). According to Deleuze and Guattari,

> The Capitalist axiomatic…is the product of a generalized decoding of all fluxes and of the process of their artificial reterritorialization, underwritten by an abstract axiomatic machine. Here political economy and the production of the commodity turn into libidinal economy and the production of desire. (Boundas, 2018, p. 9)

An abstract machine set the limits of possibilities for all life, action, and interaction, where "the molecular 'makes the difference' for the machinic plane of consistency of possible" (Guattari, 2011b, p. 153). The abstract machine produces parasitic inroads and ruptures, while the concrete machinic assemblage (content, expression, and actualization) conceptually resembles the molar dimension, where the (capitalist) machine appears to function much more smoothly, transcendently, and with identifiable purposes and productive apparatuses, material and subjective. The abstract machine deterritorializes; the concrete machine and content/expression "artificially reterritorialize" everything (Guattari, 1992). Though capitalism acts as an abstract machine, abstract machines can also escape capitalism; where under capitalism they appear arborescent, in reality, they can also escape capitalism through all kinds of rhizomatic flights.

Put differently, the abstract machine represents the process of deterritorialization or the absolute decoding of reality, where the abstract machine

> Constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality. Thus when it constitutes points of creation or potentiality it does not stand outside history but is instead always 'prior to' history. Everything escapes, everything creates—never alone, but through an abstract machine that produces continuums of intensity, effects conjunctions of deterritorialization, and extracts expressions and contents. It is an Absolute, but one that is neither undifferentiated nor transcendent. Abstract machines thus have proper names (as well as dates), which of course designate to persons or subjects but matters and functions. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 157)

Abstract machines join "Matter and Function" together into a diagram where "a singular abstract machine functions directly in a matter" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 157). Indeed, abstract machines may work in the service of power or they may work towards a different universe of possibilities outside current configurations of capitalist and state power (both of which service and are serviced by the transcendental Signifier) (Guattari, 2011a).

In this regard, the above diagram of the world elicits quoting Guattari at length, for the sake of clarification. Its best to try and fit the puzzles pieces together in solidarity with Guattari's own eloquence, since together we may illuminate a different collectively produced piece of an always-unfinished puzzle. Since his *Lines of Flight* (1988) was written prior to *The Three Ecologies* (1989), *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* (1989), and his final work, *Chaosmosis* (1992), Guattari's insights in *Lines of Flight* have been understudied for the bridge they can provide between his work with Deleuze and his last written contribution to an understanding of a complex and meaningful way of understanding the relationship between subjectivity and the above ontology. In *Lines of Flight*, Guattari nicely maps the interactions and relations between concrete and abstract machines, content and expression, and discusses where capitalism overlays these fields of possibility and the production of certain kinds of meaning/life/theory. In this regard, he asks

> What makes desire work in a group, what makes a theory work, an experiment, an art form? What makes everything topple into the clutches of a repressive power formation at a given moment? What makes a certain kind of abstract machine—whether the

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arborescent abstract machines that refer in the last instance to Capital or the polycentric, polyvocal abstract machines that function according to a whole entangling of open lines— 'take power' in particular circumstances? When abstract machines succeed in escaping the regime of the capitalist economy of flows (that is to say, when they free themselves from institutional supervision, the equipment of power that hierarchize, ritualize and reterritorialize them according to an abstract and transcendent universal order), it is because they have ceased to be assimilable from near or far to Platonic ideas, Kantean noumena, Hegelian or Marxist dialectical moment, Lacanian structural mathemes of the unconscious…They metabolize passageways between different strata, they model the process of subjectivation—without it being a question here of a universal subjectivity—they open up or close down the possible, either by allowing sometimes minuscule lines of flight of desire, to escape, or by setting off revolutions in chain reaction, or by allowing themselves to bet taken over by systems of stratification. (Guattari, 2011a, p. 60-61)

In the above paragraph, content and encoding are synonymous. Guattari, here, directly relates the production of desire, theory, science, and art to the operations of any given abstract machine while at the same time noticing that capitalism can re-appropriate other abstract machines for its own abstract machinic tendencies. Additionally, the role of concrete machines is also clarified, as the hierarchization and attempt at enclosure of abstract machines in an arborescent structure. Abstract machines operate, then, both rhizomatically, but they can also be taken up by attempts at arborescetization.

Additionally, however, the logic of capitalism simultaneously operates as this other concrete machinic assemblage, whereby it participates in what Lazzarato (2014) calls "social subjection" (p. 30-32). These operations, across Deleuze and Guattari's and Guattari's work, become synonymous with molar power, "concrete machines," and certain contents/expressions. This constitutes the reterritorializing and individuating functions of capitalism, whereby subjects, objects, societies, and economies are situated in specific relations with one another in time, in a universalized and transcendent form, with/as immutable substances (See Lazzarato, 2014). They are given divine permanence and stability of purpose and identity, in other words.

Though these distinctions and seemingly contradictory[31] operations of capitalism are given more depth in the final sections of this chapter, for now, the important point is that machinic enslavement represents capitalism's rhizomatic infiltration without meaningful regard to elemental differentiation while social subjection always represents an attempt at enclosure of subjectivity. Just because something operates and infiltrates rhizomatically, in other words, doesn't mean that it can't service the molar power. Accordingly, social subjection is the realm of subjectivity which is more commonly recognized as capitalist, where subjects are individuated into binary categories and transcendental figures whom function in specific ways under the abstract capitalist machine (consumer/worker, man/woman, nature/culture, etc) (Lazzarato, 2014). As mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari above, however, abstract machines have "proper names and dates," which also reveals at least partially why Guattari gives capitalism the name Integrated World Capitalism (IWC) in his numerous works on the production of subjectivity (Guattari, 1992, 2000, 2009, 2011a, 2011b, 2013).

Molecular and molar, and content and expression, then, are merely terms for situating certain multiplicities and processes of enunciation within a field of possibility and actuality (while simultaneously recognizing that certain operations attempt to construct trees, while others deterritorialize/ open up lines of possibility rhizomatically), a method, in other words, of mapping. But Deleuze and Guattari offer a very specific kind of mapping of these entities, one that involves cartography. The model of the map represents, not a flat surface, but a performative dimensionality with multiple entryways and exits. Cartography constitutes the work of

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[31] Lazzarato (2014) makes this point perfectly clear: Capitalism decodes and overcodes subjectivity simultaneously. Overcoming the capitalist project (or rupturing it in any way) requires an acknowledgement of both processes of the production of subjectivity, especially the decoding functions, due to their generalized invisibility in the context of overcoding and role assignment (social subjection). If one is fulfilling multiple roles at the behest of society well, one need not engage in meaningful questioning of the status of oneself and one's unconscious commitments and practices.

geologists, not philosophers because the kinds of "maps" that cartographers create (at least in the academic discipline of geology) are not one-dimensional representations, but geologically significant in terms of their dimensionality; whether or not the "maps" are physically flat, they represent levels or stratified dimensions of space (Herzogenrath, 2009). Perhaps for this reason, Deleuze and Guattari sometimes called themselves "geophilosophers." Their concept of "geophilosophy" denotes, according to Deleuze and Guattari in their *What is Philosophy?* a term "in which the earth constitutes a fundamental concept since 'it is not one element among others but rather brings together all the elements within a single embrace,'" (as cited in Herzogenrath, 2009, p. 4). Quoting Dianne Chisolm, Bernd Herzogenrath notes that geophilosophy indicates the maximum number of existing "geos" ("geopolitics," "geography," "geology," etc) (as cited in Herzogenrath, 2009, p. 20). Indeed, here the focus on territory becomes critically important as well. Plateaus, territories, and rhizomes are "open to multiplicity and the becoming of the world" (Shaw, 2015, p. 158). In short, the earth as rhizome/territory/plateau does not constitute a metaphor for anything, but rather a real playing field upon which all life (social, cultural, machinic, psychical, material, and powerful) organizes, disorganizes, and reorganizes itself continuously. Power swirls through these motions and embeds the earth in ways that sometimes make disorganization and reorganization (or deterritorialization/reterritorialization) difficult; the lines of flight become cut off or unrecognizable by any who could or would follow them.

To summarize, neither a metaphysical nor an ontological distinguishability is possible according to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. Metaphysically, expression and content, molecular and molar dimensions all emanate from a singular (not single) formless abstract machine. Humans produce and reproduce their existence (and matter intervenes wherever it intervenes) through these processes and dimensions, which slide over one another in

unpredictable and unplottable ways. At the same time, ontologically, the rhizome characterizes the anti-shape of the field in which these processes, productions, reproductions, and affects take place. Matter and nonmatter, in other words, each swirl as forces producing subjectivity (the meaning of which will be detailed below). The relationship between mind and matter, in other words, is indistinct and constantly shifting; the world is made of rhizomes and sometimes those rhizomes assume the shape of something resembling a transcendent structural tree, though this remains an illusory (transcendentalized) component of the real, if no less real. Power continually attempts to make structures and their relationships real, where everything and everyone has a place, while also employing the molecular in a way which continually disrupts those structural dynamics and "undermines the banks" of the river that seems so sure of itself and its power. Capitalist power is particularly adept at the latter task. It swirls through molar power and infects subjectivity rhizomatically through its machinic and molecular processes.

In many ways, Deleuze and Guattari do away with the distinction between the metaphysical and the ontological in its entirety. The metaphysical, the relationship between consciousness and matter cannot be divorced from an understanding of the shape of the world at large, a metaphysically identical and machinic world where ontological separation only occurs in principle and through a theorization of the differential intensities and speeds involved in the processes of subjectivation and the materials involved therein (which may be material, semiotic, or microscopic) (or which may be, more concretely, auditory, codifying, inviting, visceral, visual, painful, or any number of other affective dimensions). The implications of this kind of dimensionality and its singularity for ecopolitical theory, in particular, are important.

As mentioned earlier, a second key assertion emerges when theorists characterize the thought of Deleuze and Guattari as nonanthropocentric (Bogue, 2009; Herzogenrath, 2009;

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Welchman, 2008). Given this potential orientation, some theorists have even gone as far as to discuss the differences and affinities between deep ecology and Deleuze and Guattari's work. In this regard, Herzogenrath (2008) argues that one of the significant reasons that deep ecology fails to convince most of its critics of the ethical necessity of intrinsic value or ecocentric loyalty relates to its failure to relate its ontology to an ethics. Though, he admits, there are ways in which this can be done that don't necessarily save deep ecology from its own failings, but which invoke the insights of Deleuze and Guattari specifically. In other words, deep ecology's non-anthropocentrism and commitment to the earth as place generally can be rescued but not by relying on deep ecology alone. For example, Herzogenrath (2008) argues that Deleuze and Guattari avoid reducing the cultural to the natural or vice versa, stating that,

> Thus, in a Plateau on ethology, territorial animal behavior (especially birdsong) is explained in terms derived from human cultural production (of musical styles) and vice versa with such suppleness that the twin objections of naturalizing the cultural and aestheticizing nature are simultaneously undermined. It is humanistic chauvinism not to attribute aesthetic ability [to the nonhuman]. (p. 122)

On the one hand, Deleuze and Guattari's thought demonstrates how deep ecology undermines its own metaphysical holism through a failure to problematize holism in general. On the other hand, deep ecology offers an ontologically holistic perspective, whereas the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari is fundamentally "machinic," neither holistic nor atomistic, making it possible to maximize the means by which humans and nature can co-produce their relationships with one another. Deep ecology's holism is unidirectional, closed, and non-negotiable in its unique ecocentric vision of the world.

> Bogue (2009) summarizes this tension nicely, stating that
>
> Humans, like all other life forms, seek to master their ambient space-time, to organize it, control it and render it a habitable milieu, territory, social sphere, and so on. Yet they also participate in flows that unsettle organizational patterns and thereby open up mutative lines of potential development. (p. 51)

Referring to the inseparable processes of reterritorialization and deterritorialization, respectively, Bogue here correctly identifies the machinic element which rescues Deleuze and Guattari's work from falling into holism/ enclosure or atomism/ uninhibited agency. The rhizome still connects itself underground, the prairie dogs who pop out their heads seem randomized, and yet the colony can also perceive itself or be perceived as an abstract machine. Machinism also evokes an interesting and productive way around the agent-structure problem as well.[32]

> In any case, *Anti-Oedipus* clarifies the above when Deleuze and Guattari state,
>
> We make no distinction between man and nature: the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man become one with nature in the form of production or industry, just as they do within the life of man as a species….man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other…; rather, they are one and the same essential reality, the producer-product. (qtd in Bogue, 2018, p. 46; Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 4-5)

Humans and nature both produce their means of life through the process of autopoietic strivings; though certainly under the capitalist mode of production, these productive activities become less creative and much more limited in their so-called possibilities of combination. Capitalism fundamentally reduces the ways in which nature and humanity can relate through a funneling of desire into conspicuous consumptive production.

Returning to the issue of anthropocentrism, however, makes these tensions even more evident. For instance, the status of any vitalist impulse in the work of Guattari needs examined in more depth to clarify the real relational ontology at play in his work. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) resist this vitalist impulse stating that "Thus there is no vital matter specific to the organic stratum, matter is the same on all the strata" (p. 51). Deleuzian feminist scholar Claire Colebrook (2010) argues that

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[32]   Though this issue is beyond the scope of this project, it is interesting in the context of ecology specifically, and requires further research.

The tradition that Deleuze and Guattari invoke is opposed to the organism as subject or substance that would govern differential relations; their concept of 'life' refers not to an ultimate principle of survival, self-maintenance and continuity but to a disrupting and destructive range of forces. The other tradition of vitalism posits 'life' as a mystical and unifying principle. It is this second vitalism of meaning and the organism that, despite first appearances, dominates today. (qtd. in Radman, [2018], p. 246)

In this regard, life and matter act as synonyms characterized by "autopoiesis" (or striving) but not toward any predetermined, equilibrium point. Disorganization, disruption, rupture, and deterritorializing properties characterize the movements of matter for Deleuze and Guattari (Herzogenrath, 2009, p. 6). According to Lazzarato (2014), partially quoting from *Anti-Oedipus*,

To understand the humans-machines functional whole, one must rid oneself both of the mechanistic thesis of 'the structural unity of the machine,' which makes it appear as a 'single object,' and of the vitalist thesis of 'the specific, personal unity of the living organism,' which makes it appear as a 'single subject,' whereas both the subject and the object are multiplicities. Once the *structural* and *vitalist* unity is undone, once we have recognized the multiplicities of elements, functions, expressions, and contents that constitute man as well as machine, a 'domain of nondifference [is established] between the microphysical and the biological, there being as many living beings in the machine as there are machines in the living. (p. 82-83)

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (in their discussion of the work of Hjelmslev) define matter as "the plane of consistency or Body without Organs, in other words, the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows: subatomic and submolecular particles, pure intensities, prevital and prephysical free singularities" (p. 49). The entire purpose of the desire to move past the ontological war between mechanism and vitalism here stems from the necessity of thinking the world differently in the context of the production of subjectivity as well. Ecosocialism, in many ways, suffers from the mechanistic flaw in their dialectical positing of the relationship between humans and nature and the status of nature as materially significant only in the context of humanity's prospects for laboring creativity.

In one way, Guattari's work picks up where he and Deleuze left off and echoes their most basic collective assertions albeit in a way that attempts to not only disrupt the dualist

culture/nature logic, but one that attempts to prioritize machinism as a path from which to view nature differently, a way that acknowledges both its characteristic similarity with the rest of the material, physical, discursive, semiotic, subjective, and unconscious/psychical world. At the same time, Guattari's work also represents an attempt to acknowledge, without necessarily distinguishing fundamentally, the singularity with which nature produces, destroys, and continually complicates its own existence. His work on the subject only adds to the creative and one-of-a-kind ontology that he developed with Deleuze.

Similar to geophilosophy and rhizomatics, Guattari also utilizes the concept of transversality to describe a number of important ontological observations about the possibilities for configuration of institutions specifically. Importantly, Guattari also developed this concept prior to his intellectual partnership with Deleuze. In his early work at La Borde clinic in France, Guattari experimented with the psychological institution as a means to politicize institutions themselves, and he specifically points towards practices of collective positing of the self in a different manner than in a hierarchical institution (which in addition to its hierarchy, also divides itself horizontally into an individuated division of labor). At its most basic, transversality describes a process of transformation built upon the intent to produce different subjectivities and in turn, the possibility that transversal experiments could lead in the direction of an overcoming or at least a problematizing of capitalist subjectivity (Genosko, 2009a). In short, transversality constitutes a strategy for overcoming what Guattari refers to as an expansion of existential claims which could "lead to the fall of the ontological 'Iron Curtain' that the philosophical tradition erected between mind and matter" and to which capitalism clings in its production of seemingly discrete individuals (Guattari, 1992, p. 108). In other words, transversality allows "smooth" movement between all of the above dimensions of singular abstract machines (and between the

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abstract machines themselves) (See Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 389 and Guattari, 2013, p. 54 for a discussion of smooth space).

In the context of his experiments and interventions at La Borde clinic, Guattari (1992, 2009) introduced the concept of transversality in 1963. He argues that transversality constitutes "The capacity of an institution to remodel the ways of access it offers the superego so that certain symptoms and inhibitions are removed... Under these conditions, repression and inhibition take on a completely different meaning" (Guattari, 2009, p. 146). In this regard, he summarizes the psychoanalytic perspective and its model of repression and lack by stating, "Let society have it is own way, we'll take care of desire, we will assign it the small, secret domain of the couch" (p. 147). He goes on, "And it [this psychoanalytic approach] works! Psychoanalysis works only too well. That's what makes it so dangerous! It's the best of all capitalist drugs" (Guattari, 2009, p. 147). Though this discussion of psychoanalysis and transversality may seem rooted in a discussion of subjectivity, rather than ontology, a uniquely material and ontological move by Guattari makes the production of transversal subjectivities possible (at least in the context of partially confined institutional settings).

For example, in La Borde clinic, Guattari attempted to organize life inside the institution in a "grid" like form. In a comparison to Michel Foucault's work, Genosko (2009a) argues that,

> In order to hold back from the drift toward reductionistic unity, transversality must behave transversally and remain ontically unbeholden to a whole, the very sort of whole into which Foucault pushes his analysis of docile bodies: composition of an efficient machine that integrates parts into 'whole ensembles' and coordinates chronological series in a 'composite time.' (p. 62)

Centrally, Guattari's notion of political praxis and its relationship to ontology derives from an implicit assertion that humans must think the world differently, in a way that is rhizomatic and transversal, combined with a willingness to embrace experimentation and uncertainty. By

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attempting to re-distribute and randomize the division of labor within the institution but also by

manipulating schedules of activities, meetings and the predictability of time and place generally,

Guattari discovered ways of de-institutionalizing the institution in the service of an anti-capitalist

and anti-psychoanalytic politics of immanent desire. In this regard, Guattari began to unearth

some possibilities for re-constituting human subjectivities away from rigid hierarchies, the

capture of desire, and the capitalist division of labor (Genosko, 2009a). Transversality, in other

words, constitutes a way of viewing the world, but also an attempted milieu-(dis)organization

that tries to inoculate against the capitalist infiltration of desire through disruption and collective

"remodeling" of the institution and its bureaucratic rigidity (Guattari, 2009, p. 146).

Similarly, the practices of cultivating transversal relations relates directly to Guattari's

advocacy for the employment of schizoanalytic methods rather than psychoanalytic methods. As

Genosko (2009a) details,

> The schizoanalyst's micropolitical task is to discern in a particular subjective assemblage
> of components the mutational potential of a given component and explore the effects of
> its passages in and between assemblages and milieus, producing and extracting
> singularities by undoing impasses, alienated and deadening redundancies; 'Rather than
> indefinitely tracing the same complexes or the same universal 'mathemes,' a
> schizoanalytic cartography will explore and experiment with an unconscious in actuality.
> (p. 4-5)

Schizoanalysis constitutes a twofold process, then. First, it entails identifying the pathologies

with which capitalism infects our own understandings of subjectivity, and secondly, identifying

and pursuing the "lines of flight" away from repression of desire (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983;

Guattari, 2011a).[33] In short, transversality (and Deleuze and Guattari's "nomadism") constitute

the same politicized processes which resonate intimately with their creative ontology. Politics

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[33]   This idea is taken up in the next section, including its relationship to Guattari's understanding of
psychoanalysis as one of the best "capitalist drugs" (Guattari, 2009, p. 147).

itself becomes rhizomatic, countering capital's own attempts at machinic enslavement/desire

infection.

In addition to this complex schema, Guattari (2013) adds an even greater dimensionality

for the purposes of understanding the heterogenous components of the abstract machine (or the

"plane of consistency,") (Deleuze and Guattari,1983, 2004).[34] Fundamentally, and uniquely,

> Guattari provides the experimental speed to Deleuze's conceptual slowness— [behind this speed] lie a very calm, legato consistence [sic]; a deep conceptual rigour, and an insistent question and demand. How can we make life on this planet better? More livable? More in tune *with* or adequate *to* the functioning of the world? (Berressem, 2018, p. 129)

This diagrammatic (or cartographic) schema from Guattari sections off into four very different

"diverse modalities of transversality" (Berressem, 2018, p. 130).[35] Importantly, then, this entire

approach of de-mystifying (yet re-complexifying) the "world's constitution" takes as central the

idea that only through the entanglement of subjectivities and new ethical experimentations can

human beings "think themselves differently." If we consider fast-forwarding a TV show, for

example, yet concentrating on the elements that jump out to us in the process of that motion, we

can theoretically begin to reimagine a world where the capitalist production of subjectivity and

its universalized valuation do not infiltrate subjectivity. In short, look for things that glitter, glow,

disrupt, deform, and disgust. Grab them to see where they lead.

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[34]   Though I would argue that an in-depth examination of this cartography provides even greater conceptual depth to Guattari's ontology, it is beyond the scope of my project. For thus understanding, see his *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* (2013). In short, for Guattari, the four-dimensional "informal" diagram constitutes a vertical and horizontal layering of onto-components, including "flows," "phyla," "incorporeal universes," and "existential territories" (Berressem, 2018; Guattari, 2013). Guattari refers to these categories as the four "functors of deterritorialization" (Guattari, 2013, p. 26).

[35]   A diagram, for Deleuze and Guattari (and Guattari) "is the 'impossible blueprint' of the energetics and intensities of the world and of its changes 'under the condition that there is no dimension outside of this world" (i.e. there is no n+1) (Berressem, 2018, p. 130).

A final ontological element which also clarifies some of the materialist elements of Guattarian subjectivity production and capitalist operations of power lies in the concept of asignifying semiotics. To be clear, asignifying semiotics do not constitute the only operators which produce subjectivity; Guattari also acknowledges the presence of signifying, symbolic, and "mixed" semiotics[36] as well (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 18). Indeed, "Guattari clarifies that a-signifying part-signs 'break the effects of significance and interpretance, thwart the system of dominant redundancies, accelerate the most 'innovative,' 'constructive,' and 'rhizomatic' components [of the world]" (Genosko, 2009a, p. 147). Examples of asignifying semiotics include objects like stock market indices, computer codes, and technologies of capitalism which have material manifestations but also operate as abstract machinic technologies. Asignifying semiotics at least partially participate in the production of subjectivity through a deterritorialization (the molecular infiltration which capitalism employs to disrupt the unity of the self to utilize it as a machinic component in the reproduction of social and political life, the state, and in consumptive life generally) (Lazzarato, 2014). Subjectivity, for Guattari, constitutes an extremely important plane with which humans can attempt to creatively engage in order to break or disrupt the operations of capital on the body, the psyche, and the environment.

Subjectivity is therefore produced by and played out upon the plateaus of existence and in a way that fundamentally disrupts any notion of a unified, whole self existing in the world in a specific relationship to the environment or other milieus in which it is embedded. This unique ontological perspective allows for a new conception of the production of subjectivity and its relation to the material and semiotic world, which upon further examination also allows for a

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[36] Mixed semiotics, in reality, characterize all "modes of expression," due to the fact that no expression can occur without the employ of discourses, material entities, part-signs, and molar/symbolic significations (Lazzarato, 2014).

new politics, and new ways of relating, ultimately, to the natural world. Eco-subjects engaged in ecopolitics now becomes a real possibility.

The Production of Subjectivity: How it Works and Why it "Matters"

Examining Deleuze and Guattari's rejection of Lacanian and Freudian psychoanalysis and Lacan's and Freud's conceptions of desire as fundamentally a condition of lack, Constantin V. Boundas (2018) states that, "Desire threatens society, not because it is asocial, but rather because it is revolutionary" (p. 7). In other words, the capture of desire constitutes a primary means through which capitalism attempts to control and direct the production of discrete human subjects, bounded existential territories, and particular human desires. The capture of desire has important implications for the political possibilities of attacking capitalism from a position of reclaiming subjectivity, since capitalism has already done away with all stable modes of valuation and signification that stand in the way of its capture of desire (Guattari, 1992; Lazzarato, 2014). In many ways, Guattari's project attempts to find ways for desire to flee in the face of the two forces which capitalism employs: firstly, the production of individuated divisions of labor through subjecting the social body to processes of hierarchization and the establishment of individuated roles (social subjection), and secondly, by its continual deterritorialization of the prospects for stable modes of individuation, desire, and certainty of self (machinic/molecular enslavement) (Lazzarato, 2014).

In particular, Guattari's idea of subjectivity is inherently multiple; the positing of subjectivity always constitutes a collective enunciation. He argues that,

> Vectors of subjectification do not necessarily pass through the individual, which in reality appears to be something like a 'terminal' for processes that involve human groups, socio-economic ensembles, data-processing machines, etc. Therefore, interiority establishes itself at the crossroads of multiple components, each relatively autonomous in relation to the other, and, if need be, in open conflict (Guattari, 1992, p. 36).

Guattari scholar Gary Genosko (2009b) similarly summarizes this position, stating that "The

Guattarian subject is not an individual, an individuated person, thinking and thus being…no ego

shipwrecked from real territories of existence, as he underlined" (p. 106). He goes on,

> Rather, the Guattarian subject is an entangled assemblage of many components, a
> collective (heterogeneous, multiple) articulation of such components before and beyond
> the individual; the individual is like a transit station for changes, crossings, and
> switches…The Guattarian subject is also polyphonic—of many relatively independent
> parts—because it assembles components in order to posit itself in terms of some points of
> reference (body, social clusters, etc.), in an existential territory, a field in which it is
> incarnated, but out of which it also ventures. (Genosko, 2009b, p. 106-107)

Just as the rhizome plays out in a way that does not distinguish between an inside and an outside,

Guattari's understanding of subjectivity also foregoes this distinction. Under the right

(transversal) circumstances (cultivated collectively) the self can potentially "venture" outside of

its normally perceived existential territory through an invention of alternative subjective and

machinic components of the self. A recognition of the subject as a multiplicity constitutes a

possible productive step in these new directions because it allows humanity to see itself

composed of a great many options for channeling desire and producing subjectivity in different

ways not conducive to capitalist objectives.

In both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari focus intensely on

the production of subjectivity and its relationship to capitalism, though in differing ways which

may illuminate the break between the pair and Guattari's own work. Their position (collectively

and for Guattari) can be summarized in the following steps (in no particular order): first,

reconceive the ontological, which we've discussed; second, start with capitalism and recognize/

problematize its capture of collective desire in the world; and third, re-invigorate desire in

meaningful directions, which point toward better ethical, political, and aesthetic practices that

align better with the shape of the world generally. In short, create meaning in the world by disrupting the pathologies of the capitalist production of desire.

For example, in *Anti-Oedipus,* the concern is with the production of desire and Deleuze and Guattari (1983) assert a key assumption throughout, namely that

> Desire can never be deceived. Interests can be deceived, unrecognized, or betrayed, but not desire…It happens that one desires against one's own interests: capitalism profits from this, but so does socialism, the party, and party leadership. How does one explain that desire devotes itself to operations that are not failures of recognition, but rather perfectly reactionary unconscious investments? (p. 257)

Even early in the collective project that Deleuze and Guattari undertake, they claim not that desire constitutes a form of compensation, but rather that it "invests," and "reacts." In short, desire is productive. Here, Deleuze and Guattari are concerned specifically with the idea that fascism does not constitute a perversion or attempt at compensation in the absence of fulfillment of one's desires, but rather (and dangerously), it constitutes an outward-oriented, productive orientation of desire, where a desire for fascism itself exists. Like the other components of a metaphysically undifferentiated world, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) characterize desire as a machine. Indeed, all the activities that humans undertake, physical, conscious, unconscious, and libidinal are machinic in their collective and singular orientations and activities. In this regard, "Desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented. Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 5). Desire compared to a river means that desire always strives toward speed, intensity, and entanglement rather than arborescent capture, "the perversion of desire" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 29) that leads to fascism and existential roadblocks.

As Lazzarato (2017) notes, desire is an "immanent" force; it inheres in the world and is not produced extrinsically from without by any single divine process (p. 50). Desire for Deleuze

and Guattari constitutes the realm of possibility; it arises during eruptions of disequilibrium (Lazzarato, 2017). Indeed, "desire can always be detected by the impossible that it opens, and by the new possibles that it creates. It is desire that allows a process that secretes other systems of reference" (Lazzarato, 2017, p. 52). Additionally, Deleuze and Guattari "de-sexualize" desire, displacing it away from a focus Oedipal lack, repression, and unfulfillment. Desire is irrevocably productive, creative, and collectively machinic, rather than individual (Lazzarato, 2017). According to Lazzarato (2017) "[Desire] contains virtualities, but their actualization requires a constructivist work that is political, social and clinical. Desire does not need mediations, but an immanent process of construction" (p. 53). In short, "thought is not arborescent, and the brain is not a rooted or ramified matter" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 17). Indeed, though capitalism seeks to enclose desire, it remains rhizomatic in its form. Indeed, the unconscious produces desire through an "acentered system" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 19).

To clarify the relationship between the production of desire and fascism in capitalist societies, Lazzarato (2014) argues that the failure of capitalism to configure the subject in a meaningful way after its deterritorialization results in a retreat towards fascism because the individual needs something to which to cling. Guattari (2009) has argued that as soon as desire is captured by power in some way, it no longer constitutes desire, and since the capitalism system channels desire in particular directions, it doesn't really allow for the expression of desire in the first place. In short, capitalism requires two simultaneous processes, it wants "people to express themselves in a way that confirms the division of labor," and it wants "desire to be only expressed in a way that the system can recoup, [in] linearized, quantified in systems of production" (Guattari, 2009, p. 284). Indeed, fascism's proliferation and its new continual manifestation as what Guattari (2009) refers to as "micro-fascism" and "molecular" fascism

directly feeds off of the capitalism capture of desire by triggering "repressive responses." (p. 171). Since fascism operates molecularly, not only in the State, but also in the school, the family, and other social machines, it cannot simply be targeted as a single force. It has multiple manifestations (Guattari, 2009). Capitalism tolerates and does not actively challenge fascism for several important reasons.

First, fascism constitutes a much more benign social phenomena that is much less threatening to capitalism than the liberation of desire. Capitalism requires the repression of desire to operate, and this also remains a reason why psychoanalysis constitutes one of its strangely useful allies. Since capitalism tries to order desire in certain ways, Guattari calls for not only the liberation of desire, but insists that desire's real expression is disordered, even "irrational" (Guattari, 1996b). The danger of fascism always exists because the enclosure of desire can always trigger a fascist response intended to cultivate meaning in the face of repression. It is an expression of desire that is fundamentally destructive; fascism is an act of desperation that does not ultimately threaten capitalism (Guattari, 1996b). Fascism, like capitalism perverts desire because real desire does not possess a teleology; it is not goal-oriented (Boundas, 2018). Surely a great difficulty lies in attempting to liberate desire when desire itself cannot be deceived. The unconscious makes investments in the world that have very little to do with decisionmaking (as Deleuze and Guattari [1983] mention above).

Additionally, the idea of the desiring-machine occupies specific territorial importance in the context of the discussion of the production of subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) note that "Desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down" (p. 8). Indeed, desire operates primarily on the molecular level; it is invaded molecularly by capitalism's needs and fascism's temptations at the aggressive channelization of desire (See

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Guattari 2009 for a discussion of this aggression). Accordingly, the "first positive task" of

schizoanalysis consists in discovering the variety of desiring-machines which operate

collectively in given subjects. Rather than interpret desire; the "schizoanalyst is a mechanic"

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1996).

Schizoanalysis, then, assists in the process of opening up possibilities for liberating desire

through unearthing the desiring-machines operating in the unconscious, and by allowing those

parts to break down, drop off, and be arranged differently, as different desiring-machines. For

Deleuze and Guattari,

> The unconscious is not to be seen as a reflection of something lost or lacking, but as the
> production of something new and dynamic. In this sense, the unconscious is not a fixed
> and stable structure, but merely the collective term for an infinite number of
> uncoordinated and obscure desiring-machines, that are not merely replaying a pre-coded
> subjective truth that analysis seeks to reveal, but are seeking out endlessly new, plural,
> and contradictory possibilities of interconnection, expansion, and production. (Mansfield,
> 2000, p. 142)

The unconscious, much like subjectivity for Guattari, constitutes the transit station for the

production of desire. Subjectivity constitutes the existential territory upon which the production

of desire plays out. Indeed, Guattari (1996b) argues that, "The important thing is not the final

result, but the fact that the [schizoanalytic] cartographic method coexists with the process of

subjectivation, and that a reappropriation, an autopoiesis of the means of production of

subjectivity, are made possible" (p. 198).

> According to Boundas (2018):
>
> Given the nature of the desiring machines and the interaction of the molar and molecular
> instances, the lines of escape that define every individual and every group can either
> escape schizophrenically and generate a revolutionary investment of desire or flee the
> way the paranoiac does and activate all kinds of conformist and fascist investments. (p.
> 10)

This idea demonstrates the inherent tension that marks Guattari's understanding of the purpose of schizoanalysis, a concept that derives mainly from Guattari which presents itself first in *Anti-Oedipus*, but then appears much less robustly in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The necessity and importance of schizoanalysis, however, never drops out of Guattari's work, and in fact, is transformed into the idea of ecosophy in his later works (Genosko, 2002).

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Delueze and Guattari (1983) argue that schizophrenia manifests not as a mental illness, per se, but as a product of the intersections of capitalist and social production. Though this is not entirely true, since the schizophrenic's relation to the clinic, Guattari would argue, is also entangled in the capitalist production of social life (Polack, 2018). The body-without-organs also constitutes the existential desiring-machinic territory through which schizoanalysis becomes possible. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) note that

> The socius is not a projection of the body without organs; rather, the body without organs is the limit of the socius, its tangent of deterritorialization…The socius—the earth, the body of the despot, capital-money—are clothed full bodies, just as the body without organs is a naked full body; but the latter exists at the limit, at the end, not at the origin. And doubtless, the body without organs haunts all forms of the socius. But in this very sense, if social investments can be said to be paranoiac or schizophrenic, it is to the extent that they have paranoia or schizophrenia as ultimate products under the determinate conditions of capitalism. (p. 281)

Likewise, Boundas (2018) argues that "Schizoanalysis does not recognize desiring machines outside of social machines nor does it recognize social machines without the desiring machines that inhabit them" (p. 9). Schizoanalysis is psychoanalysis without recourse to representation or molar formations of capitalist power (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). The schizoanalyst is a "mechanic" whose "positive task" constitutes mining the desiring-machines of the individual (again which is always collectively posited in themselves) (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 322). In other words, discovering one's desiring-machines can only be a molecular task, otherwise

desire would be pushed into any number of structuralist paradigms which attempt to categorize

and locate desire as part of a molar power formation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983).

Put differently, schizoanalysis refuses to locate desire within the framework of a larger

complex (the psychoanalytic model). For schizoanalysis, acceptance of the complex is

unnecessary and universally damaging to the creative ways through which subjectivity may be

produced (Boundas, 2018). For example, the interaction between the numerous producers of

subjectivity (and therefore desire) are too multitudinous to locate within a single figure of

entrenchment. Psychoanalysis itself represses the recognition of the heterogeneity and

multiplicity of the self. In this regard, Boundas (2018) argues that psychoanalysis "blocks

systematically every line of escape, sidesteps the part-objects for the sake of integration, and

substitutes, with the help of a gigantic hermeneutic machine for 'the rhizomatic layout of desire,

the aborescent growth of subjectivity'" (p. 5). Here, Boundas refers to subjectivity in the

traditional, non-polyphonic manner, specifically. Making the subject whole through repression of

desire also ensures that capitalism may proceed along its modes of valorization and molecular

investment with malleable subjects that perceive themselves as subjects in their own right, as

transcendental egos ripe for re-appropriation for the sake of production.

Lazzarato (2014) summarizes the relationship between desire, economy, and politics in

Deleuze and Guattari and Guattari's work. For instance,

> Recognizing the consequences of capital's socialization, Deleuze and Guattari argue for
> the univocity of the concept of production. If production and the social overlap, then the
> 'field of desire' and the 'field of labor,' the 'economy,' and the production of
> subjectivity, infrastructure, and superstructure, can no longer be taken separately. The
> question of production is inseparable from that of desire (Guattari) such that political
> economy is no more than a 'subjective economy.' (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 50-51)

Here, Lazzarato's connection of Deleuze and Guattari and Guattari's work paints a clearer

picture of the reasons for the centrality of subjectivity in their projects. Capitalism's relationship

to production is not solely material, but also fundamentally related to subjectivity. In other words, the capitalist project's infatuation with production extends far beyond material production and the production of the social and the relationship of society to labor. Rather, the production process travels and applies to a vast number of other domains, such as human subjectivity, which capitalism also produces. Material production, in other words, is intimately entangled with the production of subjectivity, desire, and assumptions about human individuality and responsibility. One cannot be considered separately from the other, and neither precedes the other.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) also mention something deeply important about the idea of production generally. Production itself, economical, subjective, or in the context of filiation/reproduction does not resonate across difference. In other words, production constitutes an attempt at enclosure, categorization, imitation, classification, tracing, and evolution. Production attempts, in other words, to create something outside itself; it constitutes a process perceived as a means toward an imagined, intended end. Creation, on the other hand, works through and on itself without an intentional or known endpoint. Just as the rhizome is associated with alliance and the tree with genealogy and descent, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) also promote the idea of "becoming" as opposed to the idea of the "supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes" (p. 262). In other words, there are no stable roots with which to attach any singular becoming to the world because the idea of becoming involves only itself as the appearance of the rhizomatic shoot.

In Plateau 10, "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming Imperceptible," Deleuze and Guattari outline their understanding of the political project of "becoming" these things and more. The idea of becoming relates to a way of understanding the way in which life constitutes itself and emerges in the world; becoming characterizes heterogeneous movement

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away from arborescent structuralisms and into new realms of possibility for creative existential assertion. The process of becoming does not base itself on some a priori human perception or conception of interiority (Mansfied, 2000). This sense of the self goes directly back to Nietzsche (2006), who insists that no being exists behind the deed.

Importantly, the idea of becoming requires experimental clarifications about how this existential practice might appear in the world. Becomings are "irreducible dynamisms," where "becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself," and "produces nothing other than itself" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 262). In this context, becoming-animal involves itself in a dynamic multiplicity, where becoming-animal does not involve resemblance, imitation, or evolution. Rather, becoming involves "expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 264). In short, to contaminate something requires transversality, rhizomatic infiltration without regard to any structure or genealogy, and the process of becoming-animal connects and asserts a singular instance of "alliance" that brings differential elements together into a creative novelty (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 263). Becomings involve "unnatural participations," (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 267).

Connecting this idea of becoming to a particular conception of nature, the purpose of schizoanalysis, and political praxis, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue that, "Schizoanalysis, or pragmatics, has no other meaning: Make a rhizome. But you don't know what you can make a rhizome with, you don't know which subterranean stem is effectively going to make a rhizome, or enter a becoming, people your desert. So experiment" (p. 277). Since no practically relevant distinctions can be drawn between humans and nature, becoming-animal represents an opportunity for discovering different ways of existing in the world. Though Guattari largely abandons the language of "becoming" in much of his own later works, the sentiment and the

political project it evokes remain practically speaking, similarly useful. The idea of becoming-animal will become important in the next chapter, as an important component of re-imagining the eco-subject.

Importantly, the uniqueness of Guattari's own commitment to the centrality of the production of subjectivity to any progressive political praxis lies in his refusal to reduce subjectivity's production to discursive conventions and signifiers (the Lacanian error, according to Guattari) (Lazzarato, 2014). Instead, Guattari offers a theorization of "other forces," which irrevocably constitute and inform human subjectivity and desire. Most importantly, perhaps, of these other forces is Guattari's asignifying semiotics. As mentioned above, asignifying semiotics can be deployed in a variety of material contexts that often involve monetization, computerization, representation without signification, or equivalizing functions in the context of capitalism. They act in and on the material world and depoliticize social reality despite constituting technologies of capitalist power themselves (Lazzarato, 2014). But alternatives to the capitalist employment of these tools which direct desire toward certain practices and endeavors (like consumption and the satisfaction of repressed desires) also exist. For example, film, art, and other forms of creative expression and desire-production can also be employed as verbal, auditory, visual, and other sense-cues through which creatively anti-capitalist productions of subjectivity could manifest. For example, Guattari argues that producing heterogenous subjectivities could help human societies live more in tune (literally) with the resonances of other forms of life, where difference could erupt through regimes of creativity which currently (and unfortunately) have generally been taken up and coopted by capitalism itself (Lazzarato, 2014). The fact that Deleuze and Guattari reject the centrality of the Signifier relates directly to a willingness on Guattari's part to locate other forces which function to produce subjectivity.

Perhaps most importantly, Guattari alone has asserted more forcefully (and frantically) than most theorists who take up a reinvention of the human-nature relationship as their task that subjectivity's production and polyphony have both been deeply neglected as critical elements to any positive and existential transformational political praxis. As Boundas (2018) aptly notes, "If the question is to understand what Deleuze's politics entails…the answer is to be found in the work of Guattari" (p. 2). The social and the environmental ecologies require greater attention for their relationship to the production of subjectivity (who we are and who we think we are) considering the degree of exploitation of the Global South and the destruction of nature, especially in the context of climate change. In short,

> This approach [a focus on the 'mental ecology'] to the unconscious allows us to better understand that the former territories of the self, family, occupation, religion, culture and social or ethnic group affiliation are degraded under the impact of mass media of communication and information, of new technologies that cannot be considered only as extra-psychological factors but as an essential component to what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'production of subjectivity' (Antonioli, 2018, p. 78).

In other words, as Genosko (2009b) notes "For Guattari, the three ecologies point the way toward emancipatory praxes 'whose major objective [is] to target the modes of production of subjectivity, that is, knowledge, culture, sensibility and sociability'" (p. 107). Beginning with a revolution in the psyche, Guattari uniquely posits subjectivity as an essential component for a politics of becoming and a politics of ecological concern (for *all* of the environments that humans inhabit and inhibit).

A New Ecosophy: The Politics of Speed and Eco-Machinic Becomings

Félix Guattari noticed something about the contemporary condition of human life. He firmly believed that the registers of life had two distinct components which make them necessary to an understanding of the deployment of new kinds of political strategies. One quality

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mentioned earlier in the context of rhizomatics but not fully elaborated is the quality of speed and the location of speed in relation to the modus operandi of the world at large (and the production of subjectivity). The second quality relates to his now famous understanding of the three ecologies, which play out and intersect on the levels of the psyche, the social, and the environmental.[37] The psyche (or the mental ecology) for Guattari constitutes the terrain upon which we can reinvent an understanding of ourselves in the context of our own bodies and our subjectivity and that can potentially lead to the search for and selection of remedies to capitalist standardization, economization, and general equivalence (Guattari, 2000). Though Guattari (2000) and Lazzarato (2014) are also deeply concerned with developing a new sensitivity (a new ecosophy) as well, predicated for Guattari on transforming the mental, social, and environmental ecologies, these theorists are also deeply concerned with the ways in which subjectivity is truncated through forces, material and semiotic, and of domination through subjectivization. Indeed, the concept of ecosophy becomes useful for interrogating these possibilities and blockages. For Guattari, ecosophy characterized an updated version of the he and Deleuze's earlier work on schizoanalysis (Conley, 2009; Herzogenrath, 2009). Ecosophy constitutes Guattari's unique attempt to make schizoanalysis productive not only within the institution, but for a radical ecological politics that directly confronts the problem of the production of subjectivity and the capitalist pathologies through which subjectivity is now primarily produced.

Interestingly, the word "ecosophy" itself was first taken up by both Arne Naess and Félix Guattari at approximately the same time in the history of radical environmental thought

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[37] The "environmental register" to which Guattari refers in *The Three Ecologies* seems to refer to nature at large, in a relatively conventional sense. Very little discussion of any distinction about what constitutes "the environment" and what does not take place in either Guattari's work or in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. This issue is not taken up here either due to the fact that this distinction remains a matter of future collective assemblages of enunciation. The definition of nature marks its own rhizomatic plane upon which lines could be drawn in infinitely numerous ways.

(Antonioli, 2018; Citton, 2017). Though this eruption of a term at approximately the same time in the two theorists' work has no known connection, it marks an interesting resonance between the two nonetheless (Antonioli, 2018). According to Citton (2017), this "central affirmation of the ecosophical approach is that individuals do not pre-exist the relations that constitute them" (p. 31).

> Though Guattari never directly references deep ecology, he does argue that
>
> Current ecological movements certainly have merit, but in truth I think the overall ecosophical question is too important to be left to some of its usual archaizers and folklorists, who sometimes deliberately refuse any large-scale political involvement. Ecology must stop being associated with the image of a small nature-loving minority or with qualified specialists. Ecology…concerns the whole of subjectivity and capitalistic power formations. (Guattari, 2000, p. 52)

Again, Guattari's contribution to an entirely different understanding of ecology and its relationship to human-nature interactions and environmental degradation remains unmatched in terms of its commitment to the idea that subjectivity and the destruction of nature are deeply tied to one another. The project of the three ecologies seeks to make each of these milieus more "habitable" (Guattari, 2000, p. 53). Any project that does not consider the habitability of the planet in terms of the habitability of social life, the economy, and the psyche fails to recognize that the production of desire relates directly to the idea of habitability altogether. The material environment (the machinic world and all its forces) circumscribes desire; capitalist power circumscribes it in a way that is deeply destructive. The goal then is to re-invigorate the desiring-machines towards new possibilities which find novel resonances between desire and the material world, which may point toward new possibilities for relating to and becoming differentially situated in our surroundings (again environmental, social, or otherwise). In other words, can we learn to live with our dynamic, unfixed desires on planet earth? How can we live, in other words, with ourselves? How do we incarnate the world in a way that's oriented towards habitability and

alliance? These are Guattari's fundamental questions. Additionally, this is not a question of habitability in terms of pre-destined "fit," but rather of a continuous "becoming habitable."

For Guattari specifically, ecosophy (or the ecosophical project) constitutes a collective enunciation of ethics and politics which navigates the three ecologies (Antonioli, 2018). As such, ecosophy "draws our attention to the plurality of ecologies, environments, habitats, that do not 'surround' us as a container would envelop its contents, but that define us and that we constantly define and reconfigure in a network of relations" (Antonioli, 2018, p. 75). Indeed, ecosophy promotes the drawing of attention to other prospective ontological points of view which reconfigure the dominant regime of human knowledge and draw out the implications of a new kind of wisdom in the context of a willingness to become nomadic in the search for new possibilities of collective enunciation outside of the capitalist destruction of nature. Ecosophy and nomadic searching both constitute processes of creative enunciations of difference (Antonioli, 2018; Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). In short, ecosophy constitutes a creative technique of transforming processes subjectivation, the social division of labor, and the material throughput with which society currently posits itself as productive through which the three ecologies could become something other than capitalist tools for its own regeneration. Additionally, by following the "lines of flight" that inevitably develop because of the impossibility of full capitalist enclosure and capture of subjectivity, Guattari (2000) argues that a reinvention of the ecology (or milieu) of the psyche (the mental ecology) can point toward new means for re-imagining the relationship between subjectivity and the material body and the "search for antidotes to mass media…standardization [a symptom of capitalist machinic standardization]" (p. 35).

The common sentiment among those few scholars who choose to focus on Guattari seems to relate to the fact that his political commitments extend his own work with Deleuze into particularly robust political directions (See Boundas, 2018). For example, for Deleuze and Guattari (2004), ethics and politics intimately connect to one another, to the transversal and to the rhizomatic, and to a continual revolutionary praxis through which the psyche encounters the sentiment that "Good and bad are only the products of an active and temporary selection, which must be renewed" (p. 10). The themes of selection mark the launching point for discovering new political aspirations in the context of overcoded capitalist desires and under-appreciated movements towards greater distance from these markers of power upon collective and individual subjectivities. Selection and striving are characterized by the phenomenon of "autopoiesis" (See Guattari, [1992] for his most robust discussion of autopoiesis).

According to Genosko (2002), Guattari's understanding of autopoiesis designates machines as "unstructeuralizable." (p. 197). In fact, Guattari's central ontological vehicle is autopoiesis, characterized as "the autopoietic nuclei of the machinic multiplicities, slipping out of the semiotic register and into the transversal assembling of 'partial enunciations' [unformed matter]" (Genosko, 2002, p. 203). These nuclei are fundamentally inaccessible (i.e. can only ever be viewed from the position of n-1 dimensions); autopoiesis is onto-giving and generates the world in the domains of existential territories and incorporeal universes (Guattari 1992). In short, this inaccessibility does not imply that machinism embodies any mythical, transcendental, or divinely imbued properties, but rather, that machines continually escape easy signification or "universalist reduction to the Signifier and to scientific rationality" (Guattari, 1992, p. 30). Importantly, Guattari (1992) attributes this tendency to universalize and reduce the world in terms of these significations derives from a "failure to see the machinic segments are

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autopoietic" (p. 30). In short, the ease with which power attempts to enclose the subject into a knot of being intimately relates to the lack of attention in society to the entangled subjectivities, ontological complexity, and the relations and interactions between these domains of signification and their invasive molecular qualities of production (especially the production of subjectivity).

Interestingly, the idea of autopoiesis also appears in the work of deep ecologists. For example, Herzogenrath (2009) argues that Deleuze sees matter as rife with "autopoietic potential" (p. 7), where matter does not require an outside mediator since all matter strives and is alive. This aliveness of matter clarifies why Deleuze and Guattari eschew an organic vitalist impulse. This kind of vitalism harbors a particularly damaging flaw because it "totalizes" (Herzogenrath, 2009, p. 8) its elements into a holistic, organic, nondifference which masks how the production of life generally proceeds. Some new materialists echo this understanding as well, cautioning against a totalizing vitalism and rather envisioning a dynamic and irreducible materialism (See Bennett, 2010; Cheah, 2010). Moreover, Connolly (2017) calls autopoiesis "striving" which can be characterized by "the creative element in freedom in the biosophere" (p. 52). Machinism cannot be reduced to a whole, in other words because "the concept of the machine neither proceeds from nor leads to an organic whole, a unity—an essence" (Herzogenrath, 2009, p. 5). Indeed, machinism constitutes an entirely different stance on the world than the "view from nowhere" advocated by deep ecology (Bogue, 2009, p. 51). For example, deep ecology operates on the assumption not that the relationship between whole and parts is unimportant but rather embraces the assumption that the whole and the parts form a total that can be ascertained (even if individuals come to different views of this whole and the relation between its parts); the problematic point remains that this view is even in the realm of possibility.

Importantly, the implication of this kind of understanding traps deep ecology into what Berressem (2009) calls the "subjective fallacy." (p. 66). Deep ecology commits the subjective fallacy and "would save it [nature] not only because it sees it as a living entity, but because it considers it as a subject with specific unalienable rights" (Berressem, 2009, p. 66). In other words,

> To succumb to this subjective fallacy is especially unfortunate in an ecological context, because it obscures the fact not only that landscapes are not human, but that humans themselves, as nested aggregates of autopoietic systems, are not completely human. They are assemblages of an infinite number of heterogenous, both human and nonhuman, both material (bodies) and immaterial (habits|routines) parts|series that are organized in a specifically 'human' manner, similar to the way that animals are made up of an infinite number of heterogenous series both material (bodies) and immaterial (habits|routines), organized in what we call a specifically 'animalistic' manner. (Berressem, 2009, p. 66)

Indeed, by subjectifying nature, deep ecology fails to recognize that the subject/object duality in itself creates conditions the miss the machinic shape of the world as presented by Deleuze and Guattari. The human-nature relationship cannot be summarized neatly as a certain kind of relationship; rather, it manifests "intensities," (Berressem, 2009, p. 67) and each category dissolves into an unorganized, striving, network of potentialities and interactions. Just as Deleuze and Guattari (2004) characterize their understanding of becoming as "becoming-intense" (p. 256).

Guattari's (1996a) work reminisces on the possibilities of *"micropolitics*, that is, a molecular analysis that allows us to move from forms of power to investments of desire" (p. 177). For Guattari (2011a),

> Political life is played out at the level of collective assemblages of desire and the equipment of power. That these latter today occupy the foreground to the detriment of the former ought not to mask the problematic that they harbor, that is to say that the new technologies of social alienation that they put to work appeal to, and to a certain extent, render possible, radically new modes of restructuring of revolutionary struggles. (p. 47)

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Here Guattari points out something particularly unique about his own perspective, namely the fact that he remains relatively optimistic about the possibilities that technology (and the equipment of asignifying semiotics) could be deployed differently. In this regard, Citton (2017) notes that "Guattari situated the (radical) critique of the present in the perspective of the new forms of emancipation made possible (and already taken up) by the digital development of our collective intelligence" (p. 139). (I shall take up the problematic of technological optimism [though not technocratic reductionism] more systematically in the forthcoming chapter).

But why does Guattari bring micropolitics to the forefront specifically? He asks and answers this question in *Lines of Flight*, stating that

> Because if one allows micropolitical problems to depend exclusively on concrete machines, that is to say on social institutions, equipment of all kinds, systems of interaction between individuals, or systems of semiotic interaction, on ready-constituted theory, on programmes, etc., one ends up reducing them so that they are nothing more than ideological superstructures. (Guattari, 2011a, p. 61)

The enemies of a new ecosophy also work on the molecular/machinic level, so responses must confront that enemy head on within those dimensions as well, by waging war on the territories of subjectivity, affect, and desire collectively. Fighting these enemies requires the recognition that "At the heart of every particular situation, of every disciplinary machine, of every surveillance system, a certain type of micropolitical virus is at work, a certain constellation of abstract machines is subjected to a power formation" (Guattari, 2011a, p. 61).

Relatedly, one extremely important conviction that bubbles to the surface in Guattari's work concerns its radically democratic stance. This conviction plays out in a few different ways. First, capitalism's power and its alliance with all forms of postmodern recourse to language and the Signifier results in a destruction of democratic desires in the public (Guattari, 1992). Second, in his work with Antonio Negri (1990), the pair argue that anti-capitalist sentiments constitute

the only possible inroads to a restoration of meaningful democratic life. And finally, and perhaps

most importantly, Guattari asserts that *anyone* (collective or individual) can participate in the

exercise of creatively chasing the lines of escape "away" from the capitalist system, at least

partially through a seizure or a re-invention of the technologies (including new technologies) that

capitalism itself employs through its collective equipment functions (Genosko, 2009a; Goffey

2011). This latter assertion results in alarming dangers (i.e. the re-entrenchment of fascist modes

of enunciation) and exciting possibilities (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 2004; Guattari, 2000,

2011). The deployment of tactics of the self, depending on their singular deployment and/or a

given theory's stance on subjectivity, can have interesting implications for the environmental

register as well, especially in the context of the re-entrenchment of dangerous modelizations of

selfhood, including fascist tendencies for some deep ecologists and, at the very least, benign

assertions of selfhood that may have absolutely no effect on capitalism's grip on its power to

produce subjectivity. The environmental register can become entangled in these dangers in

problematic ways. For example, in the first instance, the environment itself typically plays an

important symbolic role in fascist movements of all kinds, a transcendental figure of universal

and eternal representation of the nation. The capitalist phenomenon of "greenwashing" illustrates

in the second instance, where individuals can reward themselves for caring about the

environment through conspicuous consumption, existential certainty, and the production of

benign, interest-driven, subjectivities which do not realize the importance of desire in the

production of different kinds of ethics, politics, and different conceptions of the world.

> Speaking in the context of Deleuze's work specifically, Welchman (2008) argues that
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> Deleuze's conception of machinic valuation is both metaphysically and axiologically
> anti-humanist, but quite different from the deep ecological view that natural systems have
> an interest in Self-realization. Machinic valuation does not represent selection based on
> anything remotely approximating interests; but rather the selection of systems that are

interesting, in the quite specific sense of optimally productive of exploratory novelty. (p. 131)

Taking the earlier points about deep ecology's ontological distinctness from the work of Deleuze and Guattari as a starting point, I would argue that this quote by Welchman summarizes their appeal in comparison to ecopolitical endeavors like deep ecology, which rely on the production or the attention to *certain kinds* of subjectivities, without regard to their means of production in the context of the world at large and its machinic dimensions of power. In other words, deep ecology travels along in its assertions as if these subjectivities can be constituted in advance, in addition to individualizing the ecosophic function in a way that denies the polyphonic enunciation of subjectivity altogether. The real implication of this kind of understanding of the development and deployment of ecosophy is that deep ecology remains ignorant to the infinite means to and positions from which to follow the lines of escape from capitalist subjectivity, and the ways in which these lines of escape offer movements away from environmentally destructive practices through an assertion of a different reality, a discrete possibility for becoming something else, individually and collectively, whatever that difference looks like in the "end".

For Deleuze and Guattari, the movement of exploration of possibilities and lines of escape from reified life under capitalism and state power can happen in the context of a rhizomatic ontology based on difference and in-betweenness. In this regard, for Deleuze and Guattari, creative exploration of deterritorialized flows can produce new paths toward the production of difference and newness, including a different politics (Welchman, 2008). For Guattari, this amounts to a "permanent readiness" to pursue "irreversible adventures" (See Goffey, 2011, p. xi-xii), through the selection of possibilities which follow paths which emerge or manifest in the context of the rupture of the sense of unity in the self, in the powers-that-be, in the "socius," (See Guattari, 1992, p. 50) or in the material reality of the world or the paths

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produced by asignifying semiotic breaks or dissonances (Lazzarato, 2014; Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). The irreversible adventure is not only "irreversible," it also happens very fast in a world marked by ongoing erosion of desire to capitalist machinic enslavements and social subjections (to use Lazzarato's terms). For his part, Guattari more closely examines possibilities for converting these processes in the context of creative ruptures (or what Guattari refers to as "existential singularization"). He argues that, "It is from such a rupture that existential singularization correlative to the genesis of new coefficients of freedom will become possible" (Guattari, 1992, p. 13). For Guattari, the primary goal of "eco-logical praxis" is to "target the modes of production of subjectivity," where these modes have mostly fallen under the dominion of capitalism (Guattari, 1992, p. 49).

> Complicating this picture, Guattari (2013) argues that
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> To work…for the recomposition of existential Territories, in the context of our societies devasted by capitalistic Flows, the architect would have to be capable of detecting and exploiting processally the catalytic points of singularities that can be incarnated in the sensible dimensions of the architectural apparatus as well as in the most complex of formal compositions and institutional problematics. (p. 238)

Here, Guattari is arguing that "existential singularity…establishes itself in a rupture with substanceless redundancies and it can generate proliferation and lines of flight in every register of the desire to live, the refusal to give in to the dominant inertia" (Guattari, 2013, p. 238). The goal of the production of singularity, in other words, specifically targets the combination of the production of desire, its incarnation as part of existential territories of the self (which like rhizomes, can be mapped but never truly subsumed by an arborescent structure) in the name of producing a more habitable milieu, in the name of cultivating an eco-machinic becoming which recognizes the intensity and machinic quality of the world and the self.

Capitalist Overcoding: Materiality, the Environment, and the Production of Subjectivity

As an important starting point, it should be mentioned that none of the above sections (ontology, subjectivity, ecosophy/ecopolitics) are distinct from one another in the eyes of Deleuze and Guattari. Metaphysically identical in every sense of the word, these forces all constitute machines; they function as machines. Capitalism, too, functions like an abstract machine, though this aspect of Guattari's thought remains less noticeable and less fleshed out, especially in bringing forth its relationship, metaphysically and politically, to his four-dimensional diagrammatic/cartographic plane. Rhizomatic capitalism remains an understudied force of parasitic invasion.

In the context of capitalism, Guattari offers two key assertions about the capitalist project's relation to subjectivity (and therefore its relation to an ecological reinvention, or reterritorialization, of subjectivity specifically). The first claim relates to the phenomenon of capitalist overcoding of subjectivity, which "seeks to gain power by controlling and neutralizing the "maximum number of existential refrains" (Guattari, 1992, p. 50). The second claim seems contradictory to the first, however, in that it relates the spectacular failure of capitalist overcoding in the general sense (Guattari, 1992, 1996a, 2000; Lazzarato, 2014).

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) discuss the powers of the modern state in relation to the processes of capitalist decoding and overcoding, or what they refer to as "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization" (p. 258), where the power of the state consists in reterritorializing or re/overcoding what capitalism has deterritorialized or decodes. This insight derives from Marx himself in *Capital*. Quoting Marx's understanding of capitalism's double movement, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) argue that

On the one hand, capitalism can proceed only by continually developing the subjective essence of abstract wealth or production for the sake of production. Under [this] first aspect capitalism is continually surpassing its own limits, always deterritorializing further, 'displaying a cosmopolitan, universal energy which overthrows every restriction and bond'; but under the second, strictly complementary, aspect, capitalism is continually confronting limits and barriers that are interior and immanent to itself, and that, precisely because they are immanent, let themselves be overcome only provided they are reproduced on a wider scale (always more reterritorialization—local, world-wide, planetary). (259)

If this is indeed how capitalism functions, then Deleuze and Guattari make a key claim here both about its staying power and its openings. To survive, capitalism invests in a variety of human and nonhuman contexts in order to convert the human unconscious or recalcitrant matter (human or nonhuman) to molecular equipment with which it can reinvent itself.

They also hint to this notion of the double-life of capitalism in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where they acknowledge that

The important point is that the root-tree and the canal-rhizome are not two opposed models: the first operates as a transcendent model and tracing, even if it engenders its own escapes; the second operates as an immanent process that overturns the model and outlines a map, even if it constitutes its own hierarchies, even if it gives rise to a despotic channel. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 22)

Here, too, is the relation between the given and the giving, imagined differently. The river will always pick up speed in its middle, but it can always divert its speedy channels into "despotic," channels which always follow dead ends, trapping the flowing water into stagnant pools of lethargy which can be easily contaminated, but also re-appropriated in the context of flooding.

In fact, the model of a river and its speed/slowness, overflowing/capturing qualities also constitutes another way of mapping or diagramming the universe of possibilities and realities in relation to one another and to the production of selfhood (or in this case, the production of the existential territory/ incorporeal universe modelization). In the case of a river, the Colorado River or the Nile River evoke incorporeal universes of reference and valuation. Universes of

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rivers could be as follows: The Colorado River as running dry, the Nile River as an important site of ancient Egyptian culture and civilization. Moreover, the Colorado and the Nile Rivers occupy space, physically, mentally, and discursively; they have ontological textures and territorialities which initiate an occupation of space, a territorially and existentially intense occupation and invasion of space. The Capitalist River is despotic, occupying its space in destructive ways; the Eco-Machinic River creates the possibility of creative occupation, where the environment is not subject to continual encroachment by the Capitalist River. The Capitalist River is polluted, infested, dammed, subject to continuous cycles of destructive flooding and drought, where destructive flooding decodes and disrupts the banks of the Capitalist River, infecting the surrounding milieu with pollution, molecularly contaminating the body of the ecosystem and all its human, nonhuman, and nonorganic inhabitants. At the same time, other portions of the Capitalist River experience droughts which produce desertified subjectivities incapable of meaningful participation in the collective satisfaction of desire, producing the death of desire, the death of a fish in its striving activities, all sorts of animalistic and human becomings. In each case, machinic enslavement and social subjection, deterritorialization and reterritorialization, becoming and the production of fictious being, the lines of flight are blocked, and there is no possibility of retrieving a given line of flight once it has fully flown. This model of the river should not be taken to imply that leaving the river untouched, without dams, without human interaction denotes an ideal model; rather the model points out that the river under capitalism is restricted in is possibilities of becoming-river, since even human interactions with the river must fit into the dominant mode of production (of capital and subjectivity). Flooding is not inherently bad or good; damming is not inherently bad or good. Their "active and temporary selection" in the context of a "despotic" capitalist signification regime that treats the river as

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object/inert matter/nature/inferior limits what damming, and flooding could promote, and ensures that rivers are not given their due as their machinic "selves." Again, this also does not imply that the rivers are "subjects in their own right" because this assertion still misunderstands the Deleuzian and Guattarian desire to undermine signification's role in constructing subjects and objects in the first place.

In the context of Guattari's own work, the focus remains on the complex processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in the context of the specific limits and possibilities for converting these processes in the context of creative ruptures and productions of new territories of becoming (new channels of the river). In this regard, Guattari more closely examines the creative rupture in the context of specific molecular practices in relation to what he refers to as "Integrated World Capitalism" or IWC. Guattari's remarkable understanding of IWC only adds to his original work with Deleuze in the sense that "For Guattari, micropolitics is about pragmatically intervening at the smallest levels in order to ensure that the dominant kinds of subjectivity produced under Integrated World Capitalism do not win out" (Genosko, 2009a, p. 25). Interestingly, Guattari's understanding of IWC complexifies a traditional understanding (not surprisingly) of capitalism itself. Capitalism does not operate structurally in a fixed or unified sense of the world. This relates not only to its staying power but also to its capture of subjectivity and re-appropriation of subjectivity for its own purposes. Importantly, "Post-industrial capitalism—which Guattari calls Integrated World Capitalism (IWC)—is delocalized and deterritorialized to such an extent that it is impossible to locate its power." (Pindar and Sutton, 2000, p. 6). Indeed, capitalism itself operates as a mass of fluid assemblages of power, employing differential tools of collective equipment and what Lazzarato (2014) refers to as simultaneously occurring processes of "social subjection" and "machinic enslavement." On the

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one hand, social subjection entails a process of individuation through the assignment of an identity and a process of attempted fixity in a particular division of labor. On the other hand, machinic enslavement constitutes a process of "desubjectivation," where the individuated subject is dismantled, and capitalism infects the unconscious and affective dimensions of the self regardless of the individuated persona's position in the division of labor itself (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 12). In other words, capitalism manufactures desires which ensnare the most visceral, existential, "pre-personal," and unconscious dimensions of social, individual, and collective subjectivities. As mentioned, however, the project remains incomplete and fails in its infectious (molecular) and individuation (molar) phases of subjectivity production. This begets the opportunity for the lines of flight to emerge to a person or a group.[38]

As Guattari (1990) notes, "One must admit that a certain universalist representation of subjectivity, as it had been embodied by the capitalistic colonialism of the West and the East, is now bankrupt, and we are unable to measure fully the consequences of such a failure" (p. 114). Lazzarato takes Guattari's work to argue that capitalism's fundamental weakness manifests in its production of subjectivity because capitalism has failed to enclose the subject in meaningful ways that both satisfies the self and remains useful to capital at the same time. Lazzarato (2014) argues, in this regard that, "The systematic failure of the configuration of the individual subject has always led to the opposite of individualism, namely to the collectivism of nationalism, fascism, etc" (p. 42). In short, Guattari disrupts any firm ground upon which subjectivity could

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[38]   Guattari (and Deleuze and Guattari) as well, generally avoid talking about the "individual" in the sense that an individual is isolated, autonomous, or independent from the rest of the rhizome. In this context, the process of individuation becomes a capitalist overcoding process of attempted production of distinction in a division of labor (social, material, productive, and mental labors). The "individual" as such, however, is never fully taken up into such a process, and remains "polyphonic," in the sense that subjectivity and individuality are never contained in an individual in any holistic or atomistic sense. The self, the individual, and subjectivity are all multiple and heterogenous territories of "interiority" (as Guattari, 2011a occasionally refers to subjectivity).

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potentially stake its claim. He argues that subjectivity has no means of making itself, in the sense

that it can never exist as an internally produced process absent vast invasions, interventions, and

interludes with things, material and semiotic, which appear as alien or outside ourselves

(Lazzarato, 2014). Capitalism has failed to tie its interventions of collective equipment to its

attention to the production of subjectivity, to its detriment and to the proliferation of fascisms.

With regard to this "failure," however, the situation for creative re-singularization

becomes unclear due to tension between reification and escape. Guattari (1992) argues that

> Modular individuation thus breaks up the complex overdeterminations between old
> existential Territories [the territories of despotism that capitalism itself overcame in its
> genetic invasion] in order to remodel the mental Faculties, a self, organs, personological,
> sexual and familial modalities of alterity, as so many pieces compatible with the
> mechanics of social domination. In this type of deterritorialized assemblage, the capitalist
> Signifier, a simulacrum of the imaginary of power, has the job of overcoding all the other
> Universes of value. Thus it extends to those who inhabit the domain of percept and
> aesthetic affect, who nevertheless remain—faced with the invasion of canonical
> redundancies and thanks to the precarious reopening of lines of flight from finite strata to
> incorporeal infinity—nuclei of resistance of resingularization and heterogenesis. (p. 104-
> 105)

In other words, Guattari argues[39] that capitalism possesses the power of individuation, which in

many respects also constitutes the power of reterritorialization, in the sense that it assigns roles in

the division of labor, while also "undermining established communities" (Lazzarato 2014, p. 42).

To summarize this tension, then, "In the Marxist language Guattari employs, the 'worker' is

deterritorialized in 'production' by asignifying semiotics and can thus also be the agent of

revolutionary rupture as well as of reactionary reterritorialization" (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 125).

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[39]   Michel Foucault (1979) also noticed the capitalist power of individuation in his *Discipline and Punish* calling
it a "calculated technology of subjection" (pp. 220). As a mode of "disciplinary power" (Foucault, 1979, p. 221)
capitalism inaugurated its own individualizing functions where "discipline is the art of rank," that "individualizes
bodies by location that does not give them a fixed position but distributes them and circulates them in a network of
relations" (Foucault, 1979, p. 146).

These prospects for resingularization constitute dangerous avenues for change. Lazzarato (2014) summarizes this tension nicely. He states that,

> Capitalism produces crises, indiscriminate and concomitant advances toward a post-human world as well as spectacular retreats toward man. It moves to a world 'beyond the human,' and it must reterritorialize itself according to that which is most petty, most vulgar, and most cowardly in 'man' (racism, chauvinism, exploitation, war). And this incessantly renewed return to 'man' (with no possibility of humanism) is justified by the obsessive fear that through deterritorialization and asignifying semiotics, by taking advantage of them as well as acting against them, one might construct a politics beyond the human, in other words, beyond exploitation, racism, war, and colonization, beyond man's power over women and over all other existents (living and non-living). (p. 125)

The crux of the problem, then, does indeed revolve around the double movement of capitalism that Deleuze and Guattari refer to in *Anti-Oedipus*, quoted above. This double movement itself, however, does not constitute a neatly drawn double in the sense that things are always flailing, fighting for the prize of territory and simultaneously resisting the decoding flows of movement which threaten to challenge their existence (at all) or reboot them in another format. In *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari (2004) admit as much: "Each articulation [territorialization and deterritorialization] has a corresponding type of…multiplicity; one type is supple (more molecular), the other more rigid, molar, organized" (p. 67).

If this double movement is not, in fact, ontologically "double" in the strict dualist or binary sense of the word, however, then something has been left out of the major conclusions to which Guattari comes in terms of the possibilities for creatively enunciating ways out of this capitalist subjectivizing bind. Capitalism, too, operates rhizomatically, which spells out certain qualifications for the lines of flight which Guattari projects as escaping not only capitalist overcoding, but also desperate capitalist deterritorialization of the social sphere into machinic and cog-like elements of the production machine (in all of its micro and macro and institutional manifestations). The danger of working against capitalism by attempting to produce subjectivity

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differently relates to the authoritarian, the fascist, and the reterritorialization of subjectivity in general as well. Perhaps more importantly, however, is the consequence of the idea that every deterritorialization is not always coupled with an accompanying reterritorialization. Decoding and experimenting on desire outside of the capitalist system may, in fact, result in deeply dramatic losses for the human species; experiments will fail, and losses are inevitable. In other words, an immanent tension exists between pursuing any emergent line of flight (at speed) and treading cautiously in pursuit of thinking ourselves differently. Capitalism already fails to provide a firm foundation upon which to permanently install an indelibly useful human subjectivity, and this of course, is why fascism constitutes a major ally, installing its desecrated and aggressive subjectivity alongside the capitalist pursuit of profit. Where capitalism (because of its embeddedness in liberal and neoliberal discourses of equality under the law, privatization/ "less government," and the globalization of profit/production) fails at territorializing subjectivity, the state, and especially a fascist state can do most of the spatial legwork of tying subjectivity to place, race, history, and destiny. Fascism also provides capitalism with a necessary scapegoat for when the capitalist project produces mishaps in its projects of social subjection.

Importantly, this entire discussion of capitalism begs a second question about the status of matter in Deleuze and Guattari's thought more generally, not merely its ontological status, but its substantive status as "stuff" from which subjectivity constitutes and is constituted. Hinting toward this missing link, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue the difference between content and expression, where "content" includes "formed matters" in two parts: "substance (insofar as matters are chosen" and "form (insofar as they are chosen in a certain order)," and where "expression" denotes functionally specific structures. These are not clear dividing lines either, however, because "The double articulation sometimes coincides with the molecular and the

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molar, and sometimes not…Each articulation is already, or still, double" (p. 49). Following this distinction (or lack thereof) still does not answer the question of matter and its status in relation to the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. In other words, in what specific instances does matter "participate" (voluntarily or involuntarily) in these movements? The new materialists, in particular, may help us along the path to answering these kinds of questions.

In short, the escape paths for a new world themselves may be but are not necessarily produced by capitalist machines alone, but rather, will definitely (at least in numerous circumstances) require production anew. Just as capitalism overcodes, so too must new practices of freedom at a very minimum recode desire onto more desirable territories than does capitalism and its destructive tendencies (physical, mental, and psychological). The assertion that capitalism itself also operates rhizomatically tends not to be directly connected to the new ontology with which both Deleuze and Guattari play nor to the implications of this fact for the possibilities of escape paths. In other words, capitalist rhizomatics and particular subjective desires and impulses produced by asignifying semiotics and other materially present artifacts requires greater attention in general. In other words, noticing the effects on subjectivity that social subjection produces has tended to overshadow the effects on subjectivity produced specifically by machinic enslavement. Even Lazzarato (2014) admits that machinic enslavement deterritorializes the individuation function of social subjection, disrupts the flows of conscious thought, and the stability of societal representations. He too, however, discusses its functions without necessarily discussing the effects of those functions on the production of subjectivity specifically. For example, machinic enslavements "de-subjectivize," "de-humanize," "de-codifies," and "de-territorializes" (Lazzarato, 2014). Quoting Guattari's *The Anti-Oedipus Papers* (2006), Lazzarato (2014) relates these functions to watching television. He states that

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> We are subjugated to the television machine as a user and consumer, identifying with programs, images, and narratives as a subject, with a subject's consciousness and representations. On the other hand, we are enslaved 'insofar as television viewers are no longer consumers or users, nor even subjects who supposedly "make" it, but intrinsic component pieces that are no longer connected to the machine in such a way as to produce or use it. (p. 46)

Again, this is deeply important because capitalism clearly produces subjectivity from as many angles as possible. At the same time, the implications of these productions are never fully fleshed out in Guattari's own work. A disconnect between the possibilities for becoming eco-machines and the ways in which capitalism mechanizes and employs desire, physical presence, visceral reactions remains undertheorized overall.

Deleuze and Guattari (2004) do, however, hint at this notion of rhizomatic capitalism in *A Thousand Plateaus*, saying that,

> …in America everything comes together, tree and channel, root and rhizome. There is no universal capitalism, there is no capitalism in itself; capitalism is at the crossroads of all kinds of formations, it is neocapitalism by nature. It invents its eastern face and western face, and reshapes them both—all for the worst. (p. 22)

Most interestingly here is the assertion that capitalism is "neocapitalism by nature." Not only is it constantly reproduced anew (as Marx himself would agree) for its own survival and flourishing, it also operates as amorphousness—as a force of deterritorialization of flows which it also attempts to capture in the context of their movement, though not in an identifiably causal or consistent manner. Guattari (1992) himself reads capitalism as "capitalistic deterritorialized assemblages" which rely on a model of presumptuous economic independence and the "desertification of Universes of value" (p. 105).

The rhizomatic side of capitalism sounds especially worrying because it could prevent escape from its multiple and heterogenous grips on power, on pulling up things by their roots, by blocking a path in the network of underground tunnels. In *Lines of Flight*, Guattari (2011a)

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acknowledges that the bourgeoisie class (or the "State" in *A Thousand Plateaus*) holds together capitalism's own schizoid and frantic deterritorializations. He states that, "The 'welcome' has become very important for power!" (p. 46). The friendly capitalist, in other words, who wants people to express themselves and their individuality, not only through purchasing power, but also through social media (which itself is commercially commodified) becomes a dominant figure for re-organizing and deploying capitalist deterritorializations for the purpose of the maintenance of power formations and the reterritorialization of specific divisions of labor and identity in the context of the state.[40]

The implications for this understanding of capitalism's rhizomatic qualities and the (potential) lines of escape it produces are profound in the context of the production of ecological subjectivities and earth-concerned ethical and political paths toward change. Incorporating a variety of insights from the field of ecophilosophy, Dodds (2012) refers to the ecological self as a porous self, a self with no set boundaries between inside and outside. As both Deleuze and Guattari are each apt to note, simply attempting to reconfigure the ontological does not necessarily promise fruitful political action and can definitely lead to fascist reterritorializations (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Guattari, 1992, 2011a; Lazzarato, 2014). The reactionary force to a loss of meaning proves potentially alarming in the context of such a porous ecological self as well.

An additional and extremely interesting facet to the possibilities for ecological subjectivity's production results from an often-overlooked piece of Guattari's understanding of institutions themselves. His perspective on transversality, in particular, has taken an unnecessary

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[40]   See Guattari (2011a) and Deleuze and Guattari (2004) for numerous delineations on the partnership between the state and capital. Though of course, they do not reference social media or the new media in any way, they do discuss mass media in the context of a similar function.

backseat to his later work with Deleuze and *The Three Ecologies*, in particular (which tends to produce all sorts of theorizations about how we should care for the environment without necessarily taking a broader look at the contributions of the entire breadth of Guattari's own work). This work on transversality, in particular, could give potential to an intermediary force (a rhizomatic and fast/speedy middle, in other words), where practices of institutional experimentation can provoke the production of new subjectivities in a (seemingly) confined context (though of course, nothing is confined solely "within" the institution). In short, we must explore the institutional components and possibilities for a rupture of subjectivity since institutions constitute physical/environmental, mental, and social sites of the exercise of power through both an exercise of machinic enslavement and social subjection.

Guattari himself is particularly famous for advocating a micropolitical stance. Guattari's program has been described as "Hack the asignifying machinic part-signs" (Genosko, 2009, p. 105). Hacking sounds well and good for infiltrating and reconstituting the operations of capitalist overcoding (especially in the context of materially sited institutions) but does Guattari advocate these kinds of creative experimentations in the context of a particular scale (i.e. the institution itself)? In other words, what relation do the molecular, the molar, and the transversal institution have in the context of re-singularization through the creation of new territories of becoming, through collective practices of interpretation and redeployment of capitalism's own tools against its own practices of overcoding? Are there tools outside of capitalism's grasp that could also be utilized in the collective machinic hackings? What is the scale and scope of enclosure and opening, in other words?

Conclusion

Though the answers to some of these questions will be answered in the next chapter, it is fruitful to discuss some possibilities here in the context of Guattari's unique contributions to a theory of the production of ecological subjectivity and the overcoming of capitalist subjectivity. Guattari's theory of transversality marks a good starting point because it posits the importance of the institution as a mediator between the molar and molecular powers which capitalism employs. Importantly, "Revolutionary political action must also position itself between the molecular and the molar" (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 36). This "between," i.e. the middle "intermezzo," where things "pick up speed" exists in multiplicity in every abstract machine (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 27). But the micropolitical and its relation to the molecular invasions of capitalism must also constitute an essential piece of this puzzle, identified in great depth by Guattari's asignifying semiotics (though these also play a role in the "between" as well). At the same time, the enemy, the molecular invader grows stronger in some ways (through fascism) and weaker in others (through loss of identity and the failure to fully capture desire). These two processes themselves mimic the idea of the double articulation of fascistic capitalism, where content characterizes national borders, skin colors, flags, national anthems, the history of the Western world and colonization/colonial mindsets, among many other elements; expression characterizes the presumed destiny of the nation, the white race, all conspiracies related to a (perceived and unfounded) loss of power, and financial, military, environmental, neocolonial, neoliberal, and capitalist exploitation of the Global South. This is not a singular abstract machine but consists of numerous abstract machines within other abstract machines as well. The lines of alliance are not immediately discernable. There are many capitalisms, even if we only look towards the West for its manifestations; and of course, we must look towards the West first and foremost, for it is

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culpable in the first instance for deploying capitalism globally, for keeping many (though of course not all) of the machines in operation.

Of course, without knowing the significance that his words could possibly hold later, Félix Guattari (2000) said something profoundly interesting and eerie in his *The Three Ecologies*. While discussing inseparability of nature and culture he argues that "Now more than ever, nature cannot be separated from culture; in order to comprehend the interactions between ecosystems, the mechanosphere and the social and individual Universes of reference, we must learn to think 'transversally'" (p. 43). The resonances between things, where things possess speed must be taken up and attended to in the context of any practical ecopolitics. Guattari (2000) elaborates his perspective further by way of example:

> Just as monstrous and mutant algae invade the lagoon of Venice, so our television screens are populated, saturated, by 'degenerate' images and statements [*énoncés*]. In the field of social ecology, men like Donald Trump are permitted to proliferate freely, like another species of algae, taking over entire districts of New York and Atlantic City; he 'redevelops' by raising rents, thereby driving out tens of thousands of poor families, most of whom are condemned to homelessness, becoming the equivalent of the dead fish of environmental ecology. (p. 43)

Bypassing the interesting fact that Félix Guattari once compared Donald Trump to algae, this assertion by Guattari also marks an essential starting point for thinking about what it really means to become an ecological subject, a subject attuned to resonances of this kind which reveal something of the parasitic nature of capitalism, its ability to capture all kinds of milieus, and its dangerous tendencies towards racism, fascism, and ecological degradation. Attunement and recognition of resonances (or "sensitivity" to use William Connolly's term) requires an infinite number of singular approaches as well. It is not enough, despite what the deep ecologists might say, to extricate ourselves from anthropocentrism and recognize the resonances between "humans" and "nature" conceived holistically, relationally, and interdependently. The picture is

much more complex and difficult to navigate. Attunement requires the recognition of the

following statement (stated earlier): "Good and bad are only the products of an active and

temporary selection, which must be renewed" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 10). The

recognition that fascism is both anti-ecological, "bad," and capitalism's abstract machinic ally

necessitates an immediate willingness to examine how these processes relate to the production of

various subjectivities and other abstract machines which attempt to govern societies, individuals,

economies, environments, and the human unconscious.[41]

Importantly, Guattari's work rests on the principle of a will to difference (rather than the

will to power, as Nietzsche might contend), although difference perhaps constitutes a kind of

tactical intervention into the self and an attack upon the institutional, social, and molar

dimensions of power where those opportunities emerge. Difference, for Guattari, also relates to

his understanding of heterogenesis, which marks the process of producing subjectivity from the

field of "diversity and irreducible differences out of which subjectivity takes shape in a collective

setting" (Genosko, 2009a, p. 67). In relation to the political assertion that works upon both the

molecular production of subjectivity in whatever collective endeavors one happens to find

oneself and in relation to the possibilities of the occasional molar intervention, numerous

political endeavors could manifest. As such, Guattari (2011a) succinctly summarizes these

possibilities by stating,

> There is no question of evading all that [transforming collective equipment and molecular
> equipment] by waving a magic wand! But one can at least try not to be taken prisoner by
> it, not to be the active accomplice of such mechanisms, and beyond, and start to make
> this type of object and molar relation, de-exist! …hollow them out from the inside when

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[41]   Of course, Ferry (1992) accuses deep ecology of fascism, and the final chapter discusses this danger in greater
depth. By attempting to re-embed humans in nature (and specific meaningful places at that), deep ecologists
problematically may also assist the capitalist project, since capitalism (as mentioned earlier) would rather have
fascism than the liberation of desire as its ally. Fascism, of course, also insists on embedding its subjects in specific
territorialities in order to re-invigorate a unified and enduring national people/nature combination.

one cannot avoid them…and dismantle them from the outside when the opportunity presents itself—even if that means carefully preparing such opportunities. (p. 70)

The institution may act as an intervening variable in this regard, one that has a particularly interesting relationship to the environment in general in the sense that, again, institutions tend to have physical sites which all encode themselves in particular milieus.

Overall, Félix Guattari contributes to a robust understanding of the possibilities for producing ourselves differently and in ecological directions. Guattari's primary insight remains that capitalism targets subjectivity and renews itself through a project of producing subjectivity in certain disparate ways. At the same time, this critique relies at least partially on his own ontological complexity. The great gift of these creative and sometimes dissonant ontologies is that they make deeply apparent the connection between the way that humans view their world, its shape, and therefore, its possibilities in addition to the way in which desire shapes those three vantage points (if sometimes only in the abstract sense). Deleuze and Guattari would both admit that the project of re-imagining the ontological field through the lens of capitalism remains an unfinished task that must constantly be renewed. Though these ontological points of reference can promote intensely interesting possibilities for analyzing how humans in the West could become ecosubjects, they cannot possibly constitute the endpoint of an onto-revolutionary political ecosubjectivity. Genosko (2009) characterizes Guattari as keenly aware of this infinitude, stating that "For Guattari there was always other ways of doing things, complexifying componential [made of components] heterogeneity, respecting singular…and collective…assemblages" (p. 221). The next chapter explores not only where we have been, but where these lines of flight may take us in the context of producing ecological subjectivities, in addition to the restrictions on these possibilities and their risks in the absence of foundational meaning and fascist backlash to practices of "becoming different," of becoming "eco-machinic."

Incorporating some insights of the new materialists will prove integral to re-imagining this onto-revolution in the context of climate crisis and perceptions of the Anthropocene, capitalism's doubling down throughout this ongoing crisis, and possibilities for singularization of subjectivity via a re-engagement of the concept of "speed."

CHAPTER 5: A CRITICAL MATERIALISM OF ENTANGLED ECOLOGIES

I'd rather be a sparrow than a snail

Yes I would, if I could, I surely would

I'd rather be a hammer than a nail

Yes I would, if I only could, I surely would

Away, I'd rather sail away

Like a swan that's here and gone

A man gets tied up to the ground

He gives the world its saddest sound

Its saddest sound

I'd rather be a forest than a street

Yes I would, if I could, I surely would

I'd rather feel the earth beneath my feet

Yes I would, if I only could, I surely would

Lyrics to *El Condor Pasa (If I Could)* by Paul Simon (1970)

How do we become different than we are now, as societies, as communities, as States, as individuals, as subjects, and as hierarchized groups of people endowed with particular rigidified identities? How do we become-sparrow; how do we avoid being "tied up to the ground," and losing ourselves in the process? In short, how do we cultivate and encourage the eruption of difference in a way that moves past essentialized identities that capitalism finds necessary? If we

could, we surely *would.* These are the ambiguous questions that inevitably accompany any analysis of the production of subjectivity, its pathologies under capitalism, and its possibilities for liberation in directions that allow us to inhabit the world better, especially in the name of ecology, broadly construed. Félix Guattari called these possibilities for liberation "degrees of freedom" (Berressmen, 2018; Guattari, 2013). How do we become eco-subjects compatible with the future of life on the planet? How do we become eco-subjects more suited to the heterogenous production of life more generally speaking?

Make no mistake, Félix Guattari was a communist; the force of this project is also practically speaking, communist. Communism can no longer fulfill its promise of social and individual liberation by continually redefining the promises of the socialist state, resolving its environmental failings through socialist dialectics, or by attributing ecological politics to Marx himself. Guattari defined communism very differently from previous ecosocialist thinkers. In this regard,

> Communism…ceases to be what it was in Guattari's youth—a space to be conquered, gun in hand—but something to be created at every moment, wherever one might happen to be, with whatever means one has at one's disposal. Everywhere that subjectivity is liberated, freed up from what conditions it, what keeps it on a leash and obliges it to participate in maintaining domination, it can become invested in tangible projects that can offer a means of orientation for…molecular revolution. Chaosmotic in its modes of propagation, this revolution from below will not be victorious straightaway, but it will disturb the powers that be sufficiently to make them produce, somewhat reluctantly no doubt, fissures and cracks into which the desire for change that already exists will rush. (Querrien and Goffey, 2018, p. 106).

This chapter proceeds then from the premise, as Guattari asserted, that communism constitutes a project of "maximizing" the "number of existential refrains" (Guattari, 1992, p. 50). By "maximizing singularization" and "materially recomposing the possibilities of struggle," "an open method…takes substance from its openness to engender an open organization" (Guattari and Negri, 1990, p. 112). In *Communists Like Us*, Guattari and Negri (1990) argue that attempts

at collectivism and the implementation of socialism and communism have failed; only by

revolutionizing communism itself can it hold any future promise of liberation. Echoing

Guattari's own ideas, they argue that

> Communism is not a blind, reductionist collectivism dependent on repression. It is the
> singular expression for the combined productivity of individuals and groups
> ('collectivities') emphatically not reducible to each other. If it is not a continuous
> reaffirmation of singularity, then it is nothing—and so it is not paradoxical to define
> communism as a process of singularization. Communism cannot be reduced in any way
> whatsoever to an ideological belief system, a simple legal contract, or even to an abstract
> egalitarianism. It is part of a continuous process which runs throughout history, entailing
> a questioning of the collective goals of work itself. (Guattari and Negri, 1990, p. 17-18)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Guattari and Negri (1990) refer to communism as "the most

intense experience of subjectivity" (p. 39). We must presume, then, that becoming-ecological or

at the very least opening up the possibilities for relating to our environments differently requires

communism due to the fundamentally Guattarian assertion that capitalism now blocks ways in

which to become eco-subjects in any meaningful and ethical manner (See Guattari, 1992, 2000,

2011a). "Rupturing"[42] these blockages requires a political revolution via the production of

subjectivity, and practically speaking, numerous details require examination upon realizing the

transversal lines that this revolution must work upon in the name of defeating the capitalist

perversion of subjectivity. As a reminder, to singularize is to take on the capitalist machine

through a process of collective assertion of a right to suggest oneself differently to the world

(Genosko, 2009a).

Annihilation always lurks in the shadows as a real risk involved in following a line of

flight. Becoming-animal risks complete and total annihilation of the self, subjectivity shattered

into a million non-comprehensible pieces (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). Coupled with the fact

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[42]   Lazzarato (2014) describes this political process as rupture throughout his *Signs and Machines*.

that the risk of annihilation may prove riskier for certain, underprivileged groups, the task of understanding the possibilities for the production of ecological subjectivity proves crucial in the context of the differential roles that capitalism applies to different groups of people in the world. By making use of both privileged and non-privileged groups, capitalism allows itself to re-capture subjectivities that may have been produced historically by forces not of its own making; this point is less relevant than the fact that capitalism has literally *capitalized* on its surrounding milieu. We too, should capitalize on moments where we notice the opportunity to embody our milieus, our ecologies differently.

The purpose of this chapter is to come to a point where the possibility of rethinking ourselves as ecological subjects becomes more tangible, especially via Guattari's work in combination with some important insights from new materialism. This theorization of transformation must begin by detailing why, specifically, a Guattarian politics of becoming and a politics of transforming subjectivity constitutes a fruitful entrance into creating a world where the environments we embody matter. In other words, what kinds of subjects might prove necessary for this transformation, and what kinds of political moves might this revolution in the production of subjectivity require? Next, I re-engage with new materialism in order to theorize its resonances with a Guattarian ecosophical political project. For example, new materialism's contributions to a materialist perspective can supplement an ecosophical project with needed examples of the specific relationship between becoming and materiality beyond the molecular scale on which Deleuze and Guattari focus. William Connolly's (2011, 2013, 2017) recent work scales up a politics of becoming to molar dimensions of entanglement in the world. After discussing the ways in which new materialism can add to a Guattarian politics of ecological subjectivity, I argue in favor of a critical materialism of entangled ecologies, an ontological and

political perspective whereby the production of subjectivity, its relation to a new understanding of ontology, and the political results of such a move can engender a new understanding of humanity's place in the world in relation to the destruction of nature and present pathways for escaping this bind. And finally, in the last part, I revisit many of Guattari's own insights into the capitalist project that may prove both useful and/or detrimental to this larger political project. Indeed, some items in Guattari's work remain undertheorized and potentially fruitful to this kind of project, such as his understandings of institutions and his understandings of minoritarian politics (particularly the politics of sexuality) for combatting the capitalist enclosure of subjectivity. At the same time, the problem of capitalism's continuous attempts at blocking "lines of flight" and rigidifying political minorities remains ever-present, a problem which eludes solutions in advance and remains perhaps the most intense roadblock to a re-imagining of ecological subjectivity.

What Kinds of Subjects, What Kinds of Politics?

A key assertion of this project is that one of the most important ways to resist capitalist domination of both humans and the environment is through reorienting the production of subjectivity as a practice of subjectivation, or the "power of affectation of the self by the self" (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 174).[43] In Guattari and Lazzarato's understandings, this means that the

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[43]   This project, of course, is reminiscent of Michel Foucault's understanding of "concern for the self as a practice of freedom" in his essay "The Ethics of Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" (Foucault 1994). For Guattari (1985), one of Foucault's most important understandings of a contribution to a theory of the production of subjectivity is that he presents "the actual agents that engender the discursivity of social groups and institutions— which in turn leads him to the discovery of a vast domain of forms of collective production and technical modalities of the construction of subjectivity, virtually unrecognized until then" (p. 175). One of the key differences between Foucault's emphasis on the production of the subjectivity and the one advanced here, however, is that Foucault never really emphasizes a collective understanding of subjectivity outside of power, though I think he does indeed hold such a view of subjectivity, in the last analysis. Perhaps this absence in his work also constitutes the primary reason that he has been criticized on numerous occasions for advancing a (non-economistic) liberal and voluntaristic model of producing subjectivity by concerning the self with oneself (See Behrent, 2009; Zamora and Behrent, 2016; Zamora, 2016).

production of singularities is also a process of giving "existential consistency to" the production

of the self, which always positions itself prior to language altogether (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 190).

In other words, this novel understanding of the methods by which subjectivity can be redeployed

requires that humans re-inhabit their world differently, in a way that resonates as consistent with

an ethical mode of life (See Guattari, 1992 for a discussion of his "ethico-aesthetic paradigm").

Briefly, Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) understanding of the concept of the "refrain" is

useful here as well to illustrate both the complexity and the "consistency" with which the self

posits itself. Lazzarato notes that,

> The relation to the self represents an incorporeal existential focal point, an autopoietic
> machine whose consistency, durability, and development depends…on the multiplicity of
> actualized elements that it *traverses* and *reconfigures* (the discursive, the cognitive, but
> also institutions, the social, the economic sphere, etc.) (p. 206).

Importantly as Lazzarato notes, this relation of the self is incorporeal and therefore not material

in the strict sense, though ultimately the idea of positing oneself in the world has material

implications. Indeed, existential territories compose material territories and remain inextricably

tangled with one another. If, however, we think of the production of subjectivity as incorporeal,

as "threshold crossings, the gradients of intensities," (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 209), we can become

hyper-aware of the ways in which the focus on language alone (and signification) becomes

insufficient for a politics of becoming that understands subjectivity as constantly productive of

itself (Lazzarato, 2014). Guattari refers to these differences as "semiotic logic" and "ontological

pragmatics," respectively (Guattari, 1985 qtd. in Lazzarato 2014, p. 207). The idea of the refrain

undoes the hegemony of language and semiotics, thereby opening the field of production of

subjectivities onto new possibilities and pragmatic assertions of one's existence in the world.

Rather than producing changes or consistencies in discourse, the refrain produces "changes in

subjective states which mold subjectivity" (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 208).

In addition, refrains produce various kinds of complex arrangements ("universes of value" [See Guattari 1992]) "which ['correspond'] to a production of subjectivity at the level of the collective" (Guattari, 1985 qtd. in Lazzarato, 2014, p. 208). The political force of the production of these kinds of subjectivities re-orients the process of subjectivation to a terrain that is immanent to the world of possibilities of becoming itself. As Lazzarato (2014) argues,

> The subjectivation process is not the effect of economic, sexual, linguistic, or social infrastructures (which would mean it has a referent external to itself). Instead, a self-positioning, self-affectation, and self-referentiality—as openings to processuality, as the creation of possibles, as the impetus to becoming and mutation—are originary. But these autopoietic focal points take on consistency only by transversalizing, repositioning, and reconfiguring all the domains considered to be 'structural' (the economic, political, social, linguistic, sexual, scientific, etc.). (p. 210)

The political force, then, of the idea of becoming-animal in Deleuze and Guattari (2004) does not simply involve a re-signification of the self or a parody, but rather an entering into the world differently, where the "self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two [or more] multiplicities" (p. 275). Perhaps a more concrete example can illustrate this kind of "ontological pragmatics" which Deleuze and Guattari (2004) make synonymous with the method of "schizoanalysis" (p. 277).

An interesting example illustrates these differences between the work of those like Deleuze, Guattari, and Lazzarato versus other structuralist and discursive/semiotic understandings of a politics of the production of subjectivity. For example, Lazzarato (2014) critiques linguistic and performative models of emancipation through a critique of Judith Butler's work, arguing that

> It is difficult to understand why Butler considers performative Rosa Park's refusal to give up her seat to a white man. There is nothing performative about it, or if there is, then we have to change the meaning of the term. It is an *act* of resistance, of self-positioning, of affirmation, showing itself in a *gesture* of refusal without speech. The act precedes both thought and speech; it constitutes the breaking point in dominant meanings and the negation of the distribution of roles and social functions. (p. 176)

This example demonstrates the political force of a project of becoming-animal, of positing oneself in the world in a way that is always collective and also always has the potential to rupture these "dominant meanings" of subjectivity. But why not simply refer to acts of resistance, like the act of Rosa Parks' refusal above merely as acts of resistance rather than processes of subjectivation? Ultimately, I would argue that the framing of political resistance as an act of subjectivation resists the tendency to categorize such acts not only as performative (and therefore, linguistic) but also complexifies the identity/difference couple altogether since by becoming-different, Rosa Parks did not merely assert her identity as a black woman but rather, produced a mode of subjectivation that allowed what it means to be a black woman in an altogether different manner from the dominant paradigm placed upon her by whites (and any other dominant understanding as well of the condition of black women generally). Asserting a right to difference becomes the opening onto re-imagining our places in the world, in Rosa Parks' case, her physical place on the bus and of course, in the social ecology (milieu). Language and performance alone cannot rupture sense in the same way as existential assertions of difference.

The work of feminist scholar Sara Ahmed is useful for understanding this kind of politics as well, since her work focuses readily on the idea of producing subjectivity in a context of becoming-different in the world, with a discerning eye to the ways in which becoming itself is entangled with a differential distribution of power and privilege in the world. For example, Ahmed (2014a) argues that survival in a system of power that forbids your survival does not constitute an individualist (and therefore selfish, competitive, and neoliberal capitalist move) but rather caring for a body that is not supposed to be cared for in the first place, which in itself constitutes a radical political act. Indeed, this idea of "caring for" can also be understood as

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"willfulness," and this is the stance that Ahmed (2014b) takes in her *Willful Subjects*. In this regard, Ahmed characterizes the idea of willfulness in "queer feminist history as a history of willful parts, parts that *in willing* are *not* willing to reproduce the whole" (p. 121). In short, the idea of willfulness is the idea of "making yourself" a body-without-organs (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 165).

Additionally, Ahmed seeks to discover how these non-co-opted parts become expressions of willfulness that reject being subsumed into the tasks of the powers-that-be. Only through acting and obeying the entire social system of production and reproduction can a participant in the system retain freedom in a way that reproduces the system as a whole; therefore, a practice of freedom outside of this perversion of freedom as only ever consistent with the will of the majority (or the dominant power) is taken by Ahmed as the starting point for exercising willfulness in radical ways (Ahmed, 2014b). For example, she argues that "following willfulness around is one way we can move toward a more impulsive, less intentional model of subjectivity," that assumes we do not necessarily know ourselves in any meaningful, non-contingent way (p. 175).

Ahmed (2014b) goes on to assert that the idea of "becoming" does not constitute some radically individualist assertion of selfhood, but rather that "in asserting ourselves, we are asserting more than ourselves" (p. 160). In short, each willful expression that does not re-constitute and re-enforce the oppressive forces of society is an assertion of the following sentiment: "Perhaps some have 'ways of life' because others have lives: some have to find voices because others are given voices; some have to assert their particulars because others have their particulars given a general expression" (Ahmed, 2014b, p. 160). This notion of the production of subjectivity as a collective task reminds us that neoliberal individuality masks the

ways in which subjectivity (or selfhood) always results from collective production. Indeed, in the concluding chapter of *Willful Subjects,* Ahmed argues in favor of a "willful politics" which could manifest as "a refusal to cover what is missing, a refusal to aspire to be whole" (p. 184). This is a radical notion of asserting the self in a way that refuses any notion of an enclosed, rationalist, fully-knowledgeable subject which can choose (purely on the basis of individual thought) between good and bad without positing some transcendental position of selfhood which omnipotently "knows" their "interests." It is a rejection not only of the Cartesian model and the nature/humanity divide (in a radically non-reductive manner), but also a call to refuse enclosure through a caring for of one's parts, of becoming incomplete as a model of political resistance and construction of a politics based on a meaningful notion of indeterminate subjectivities. In short, becoming constitutes a fundamental act of caring for oneself through the assertion of different constellations of collectivities.

But Ahmed's insight does not end there; she also conveniently applies her understanding of the producing subjectivity to the ecological. In a discussion of the relationship between human hubris, desire for control, and physical matter, Ahmed is worth quoting at some length. She utilizes a parable of the stone (as in the physical matter of a rock) to illustrate her key point about the relationship between human "willfulness" and the political possibilities that we miss due to an attachment to making things whole, to making the parts fit together into something meaningful for ourselves. Ahmed (2014b) says the following:

> Willful stones do not stay in the right place, the place assumed as divine or, in my reading, as human. They move around. That their movement begins with dissatisfaction tells us something. The point of stones we might assume is to be satisfied by the place we have assigned them. They participate in creating a dwelling for us. We might even say they are willing. If we build a house, we might assume we have their agreement. But when the stones do not stay in place, they bring our walls down. Willful stones would be those that bring the walls down. They get in the way of our purpose; they get in the way of our capacity to create the conditions we assume necessary for survival or flourishing…

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> The human appears with a rod: he punishes the willful stones, turning them into dust, as if to lessen the particle is to lessen the capacity to resist. The human rod straightens things out, forcing the wandering stones back into their place. The rod as a technology of will assumes might as right; it might punish the wayward stones for the stones themselves, to give them a chance of a more meaningful life. (p. 191)

Here, Ahmed presents a fundamentally materialist and extremely useful understanding not only of the troubled and ongoing relationship between humanity's desire for control and its inability to enclose the natural world in a way the tends towards cooperation and benign inertness, but also between the relationship between free will and determinacy so troubling to the history of political theory generally and ecopolitical theory, in particular. In a brilliant call for acknowledging the constitution of the human subject from "without," but not wholly so, Ahmed characterizes the will as "wiggle room, as the room to deviate, a room kept open by will's incompletion, a room most often in human history designated as ruin" (p. 192).

For Ahmed (2014b), a so-called "willful ecology" "inhabit[s] this ruin," through recognizing that parts never completely enclose any whole and by recognizing that parts "wander," always constituted from within and without (p. 192). Indeed, as a political act this means that "becoming" something else always constitutes the goal of such a creative inhabitation of the world. In many ways, Ahmed's is a militant call to inhabit the space that we take up differently, to "become" "army" through practices of disruption, through "persistence as protest," and through a constant unwillingness to fix those becomings once and for all (p. 194).

Importantly, Ahmed's insight above about "becoming army" needs to be placed in conversation with the entire idea of "becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible" in the work of Deleuze and Guattari (2004) in order to determine its utility as another piece of the political strategy of re-singularizing ourselves through rethinking the production of subjectivity. Just as Ahmed's work privileges disruption and queerness as the revolutionary occupation of space

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where one is disallowed, Deleuze and Guattari characterize "becoming" as infectious and therefore also as collective in every sense of the word. Likewise, they describe it as producing "dark assemblages," as "troubling," echoing Ahmed's understanding as well (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 265-267). Since no practically relevant distinctions can be drawn between humans and nature,[44] becoming-animal represents an opportunity for discovering different ways of existing in the world for Deleuze and Guattari. There is always an uneasiness, a "wrongness" (as Ahmed might say), and an uncomfortableness that goes along with the practice of becoming. Characterized by uncertainty, "becoming-army" for Ahmed, and "becoming-animal" (and more) for Deleuze and Guattari constitute ways to shape the world and posit ourselves differently in the moment, to infect sterility with difference. In short, as Mansfield (2000) argues, becoming can be characterized by ever-changing movement out of fixity/structure and into new possibilities of life.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (2004) becoming-animal involves "unnatural participations" which stop only when their "circulation of affects" is captured through power (especially capitalist power) (p. 286-287). In this regard, they argue that

> All becomings are already molecular. That is because becoming is not to imitate or identify with something or someone. Nor is it to proportion formal relations…Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfills, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 300-301)

One could say then, that the pursuit, the "snatching" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 301) of particles of enunciation constitutes attention to the pursuit of desire (i.e. to care for one's desire in a way that eschews the dominant modes of subjectivity). Indeed, therefore Deleuze and

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[44]   As detailed in Chapter 4 in its discussion of metaphysical identicalness between these elements.

Guattari (2004) refer to the in-betweenness to which becoming latches itself; it is fundamentally liminal. Additionally, this quote illuminates the beginning of their understanding of "becoming-imperceptible," in all of its molecular quality, its indeterminacy, in-betweenness, and pursuit of open possibility. Guattari (2011a) describes this pursuit as uniquely political by stating that

> The stakes become political at the deepest level of libidinal investment: either one opts for the stratification of power, one's most intimate being included, or one agrees to follow the lines of flight of desire and to rid oneself of pre-established equipment, dominant redundancies, constraining significations…To our mind, it is against this question that, failing to recognize in it their genuine 'optional matter,' every current problematic of social change, innovation and collective experimentation [fails]. (p. 53)

In short, becoming-imperceptible involves inhabiting the nuance, the messiness, the uncertainty, and the microscopic tendencies which may provide openings unto new possibilities for seeing ourselves differently in the world.

The production of subjectivity always distributes itself in a collective field of desire, a field that unifies itself only through its heterogeneity and ability to shift and move at will (willfully, to use Ahmed's term). The neoliberal capitalist production of subjectivity occurs in a way that directs practices of self-affectation towards objects useful to the cycles of production and reproduction. Luckily, misdirection is inevitable, and mistakes happen all the time. Identifying and occupying the revealed spaces of becoming that these mistakes engender constitutes an important task for seeing the world around us differently, its materiality, its relationality, and its precarity. With uncertainty (could) come the recognition of precarity and an attunement to physical space and its current occupation by neoliberal capitalist power. Connolly's work, detailed below, presents this opportunity for recognizing these forces in the context of materialism specifically.

Another reason that the production of subjectivity must remain a central vehicle for political revitalization and capitalist demolition is because capitalism no longer focuses

exclusively on its mode of production in the traditional Marxist sense. Rather, the mode of production relates not simply to the material and relational resonances between bourgeoisie and proletariat, but more importantly for capitalism's own survival is its mode of production of subjectivities. Of course, it's easier to visualize, characterize, calculate, and render distinct the material operations of capitalism; grasping its powers of producing subjectivity is much more difficult, since subjectivity itself remains and must remain an elusive domain of human understanding, at least in the final analysis. Though the production of subjectivity always remains infinitely uncharacterizable, that does not mean patterns do not emerge (resonances, lines of relation, and similarities in the ways in which it is produced under capitalism).

In this context, where does an ecosubject fit? Why must the focus of revolutionizing the modes of production of subjectivity center itself on the ecological? The central reason that ecology (or milieu, habitat, even home) must remain central in this regard is because as humans, we constantly move in and out of different ecologies on a continual basis. The goal of focusing on the production of ecological subjects is to make the planet habitable. If we inhabit ourselves in a way that makes the rest of the world uninhabitable, then something related to the production of subjectivity has gone deeply amiss. Though humans inhabit a variety of milieus or ecologies to use Guattari's terminology, the production of subjectivity as it relates to the environmental ecology specifically remains central to my project because, as mentioned in the introduction to the project, the planet and numerous environments are under particular threat in the context of mass extinction, climate change, and even the continuing influence of dualist assumptions (upon which capitalism relies) about the inherent separation between humanity and nature. A politics of inhabiting the world differently, while not solely focused on the environmental ecology, must remain committed to a focus on the production of ecosubjects capable of rejecting the capitalist

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appropriation and degradation of nature specifically. If humanity is to flourish and the human-nature relationship is to be re-imagined in a non-destructive and creative manner, this kind of environmental politics constitutes a necessity. As both Ahmed and Deleuze and Guattari imply above, this kind of creative inhabitation of the world constitutes a politics of becoming.

Indeed, the idea of entanglement and its relationship to a politics of becoming reflects the title of Connolly's (2017) most recent work *Facing the Planetary*, but also resonates with Guattari's work; each of these authors trace their particular understanding of the evolution of the concept of the entanglement of subjectivity back to Nietzsche. A Nietzschean understanding of subjectivity is explained by Connolly (2017) as follows:

> Nietzsche understands the self to be a complex social structure consisting of a multitude of interacting drives replete with significant variations of completeness, complexity, and speed. Each drive is entangled both with others within the self and with a larger variety of human and nonhuman processes (p. 52).

This explication of Nietzsche echoes Guattari's own understanding of subjectivity as both polyphonic and akin to a "transit station" or a "terminal" (See Genosko, 2009b, p. 106; Guattari, 1992, p. 36). For Connolly (2017), this understanding of subjectivity implies that humans do not know themselves nor the real composition of the desires, drives, and entanglements with the world. Of course, this is also why Connolly (2013, 2017) and other new materialists such as Jane Bennett (2009) call for a new sensitivity to these entanglements, especially of the material variety. Likewise, for Guattari, subjectivity constitutes a key site of any revolutionary movement since the revolution of the self entails a re-orienting of the ways that humans understand themselves and the ways in which and through which they produce subjectivities, both through matter and through other mediums of subjectivation (like his asignifying semiotics).

Notice above that Connolly also invokes Nietzsche's understanding of the interaction of all these forces as comprised of speed (not in contrast to slowness but in the context of

movement, speed and/or slowness depending on the particular interaction). The understanding of

the production of subjectivity offered here centralizes this idea of movement, of speed versus

slowness in the context of the ways in which, depending on the dominant configuration of ideas

in a society, subjectivity's production or dissolution may possess speed or slowness. For

example, Berressem (2018) characterizes Guattari's understanding of the production of

subjectivity as constituted via "the infinite speed of deterritorialization," versus the "finite speed

of territorialization" (p. 143). Interestingly, Berressem (2018) also admits that in Deleuze and

Guattari's work, the necessity of slowing one's speed in order to create a "chaosmotic

consistency" is often interpreted as "tragic" (p. 143). In other words, to bring about a new

"ontological pragmatics" and a new understanding of the production of subjectivity requires

fixing the unfixed as unfixed, whereby a constant struggle against essentializing the subject or

the world continually bumps up against a desire to embrace it as chaosmotic (as "the giving"

[Berressem, 2018, p. 132]) (or as fundamentally "ungraspable," as Deleuze and Guattari's "plane

of immanence" [p. 145]). In short, the danger of essentializing the production of subjectivity or

directing it in particular ways which block other paths of producing it differently looms large as a

real danger of this project generally. The eco-subject constitutes a new mode or method of

attempting to produce subjectivity in ways which make the world habitable, in many ways a new

mode of production altogether, since capitalism now operates through the mode of production of

subjectivity, rather than merely material production, though the two are of course intimately

linked to one another through the physicality and entanglements with objects in which humans

find themselves. Since capitalism targets its mode of production primarily at subjectivity,

democratic revolutionary praxis and the micropolitics that must inhere in these practices require

targeting these modes of production. Likewise, this entangled production cannot illuminate any

dialectical motion, since dialectical movement requires the replacement of distinct/discrete modes altogether. Entanglement is neither neat nor as easily identified as traditional dialectics presumes.

And finally, the theme of "making the world habitable" through a re-honed sensitivity to the ways in which we might become-creatively-different runs throughout this chapter, but first, I turn to a more in depth understanding of new materialism and its relationship to these particular understandings of entanglement, materiality, becoming, and speed.

Revisiting the "New Materialists"

Some of the important differences (and resonances) between new materialism and the work of Guattari become visible upon further reflection on the two bodies of work. For new materialists, for example, the focus remains on elevating materiality as a force of the production of life in order to make that domain noticeable and therefore ripe for utilization on the path to political change. The idea of the entanglement and its implications for understanding our world differently constitutes one of the primary gifts which new materialists endow upon a novel understanding of our world. For example, Connolly (2017) argues that "Appreciation of diverse entanglements challenges visions of both detached mastery and organic belonging" (p. 119). He argues that "Entangled humanists also acknowledge limits to the human ability to feel, think, know, judge, and respond in a world teeming with a variety of human and nonhuman modes of perception" (p. 170).

> Connolly clarifies this issue of agency in the context of the entanglement as follows:
>
> A critique of sociocentrism does not mean the denial of human, collective agency. It means accentuated attention to how a variety of active nonhuman force fields interact with late modern versions of human agency in capitalism, social democracy, Christianity, and so forth, joined to active efforts to adjust our conduct to these volatile realities. If

communism were still in force, we would add it to the list. The critique of sociocentrism also means paying attention to how the agency of microbes and so on enter into, help to constitute, enable, and limit human modes of agency. These are not simply nonagentic forces. They are micro-agents that help to constitute us. Without them we would not be agents. Human-nonhuman entanglements. (Macdonald and Connolly, 2015, p. 266)

Connolly tends to substitute the idea of constitutive entanglements for the idea of the production of subjectivity, even though he also invokes the idea of becoming throughout his *Facing the Planetary*. Importantly, Connolly's idea of entanglement not only grants subjectivity to the nonhuman, however, but also references these "volatile realities" as forces which must be recognized in order to rethink our place in the world. In short, acknowledging these entanglements and becoming sensitive to them can help us along the path towards a "viable" understanding of human subjectivity (Connolly, 2017, p. 100). Displacing the socius as the centralized fulcrum upon which human existence sways in combination with a method which attempts to make subjectivity (or becoming) "viable" constitutes Connolly's primary project (in addition to guarding against resentment that accompanies the uncertainty of this new ontological understanding of the world and the subjectivities of nonhumans (Connolly, 2017; Macdonald and Connolly, 2015). The idea of becoming-viable marks an interesting way of conceiving of this project not unrelated to the idea of habitability. The idea of viability relates to the inhabitability of the Earth. Which subjectivities may make the human species more viable in the context of life on/with the planet?

Additionally, Connolly's (2017) understanding of nature also resonates deeply with the idea of entanglement. He states that,

Nature is incomplete in that every mode of self- organization involves external connections and internal constraints that enable it to be this and not that. Without some constraints— that is, modes of limit and incompletion— human beings could not be selves projecting, however imperfectly, into the future. On my reading, nature is also incomplete in ways that periodically allow perturbations from elsewhere to trigger creative processes within or between entities that exceed the sufficiency of any closed

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explanation…[These processes] are unpredictable because microprocesses of real creativity sometimes throw new results into the furniture of the universe. (Connolly, 2017, p. 48)

Nature, too, then is "micro-processual," just as Deleuze and Guattari have noted in their story of the wasp and the orchid from *A Thousand Plateaus*.[45] These understandings of nature also imply that the environmental ecology which Guattari includes as a key part of a new ecosophy outlined through the production of new ecological subjectivities is in itself continually creative in its production, reproduction, and transformation of itself, at all kinds of scales and in infinite ways.

Connolly's work helps to link the idea of becoming-animal to Guattari's understanding of embodying our environmental ecology differently, in a way that acknowledges not merely the interconnectedness of humans with nature but more importantly, the ways in which the transversal connections between humans and the environmental ecology are not easily quelled or ignored. A second implication of this understanding also demonstrates that a politics of becoming ignores at its peril the becomings of our surroundings, our milieus, and significantly, the ways in which these milieus' effects on the production of subjectivity (or its potentialities) are constantly masked by capitalism itself. This connection between the work of Connolly and Deleuze and Guattari harks back to the earlier assertion that the shape of the world, its metaphysical ambiguousness (indiscreetness) requires a re-orientation of our understanding of human exceptionalism as un-impacted by our material surroundings. In an important sense, the entire project of Guattari constitutes an attempt to actively reconfigure and deploy desire in a

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[45]   Describing the orchid-wasp as a rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue that when the two "heterogenous elements" interact with one another, they form a rhizome, which is "not imitation at all but a capture of code, a surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp" (p. 11).

way which liberates desire in the direction of non-capitalist objects, orientations, intensities, and becomings.

Moreover, the contribution of granting nonhuman agency (and centrally, creativity) to nonhuman entities also serves to bridge the gap between a new ontology of human-becoming and the reasoning behind the necessity of inhabiting our world differently. The entire Cartesian and Western bias of only attributing creativity to the human species in itself blinds humans (especially privileged groups of humans) to other kinds of becomings and to use Connolly's (2013) term, other "fragilities".

Indeed, Connolly's work laudably welds the molecular processes of the production of life to his political project, as Deleuze and Guattari do in their own work in the context of subjectivity specifically, but uniquely, Connolly welds molar, "planetary" processes to a political project of becoming, an entirely novel attempt at tying who we are to what is happening on the planet, albeit without a robust enough critique of capitalism as both molecularly infective and macro-signifying. For example, echoing Foucault, Connolly (2017) argues that "Tactics of the self (and micropolitics on constituency and institutional scales) work on encultured habits and molecular tendencies to action below direct conscious control installed in the soft tissues of life" (p. 64). But most importantly, he brings in the planetary. He argues that

> By 'the planetary' I mean a series of temporal force fields, such as climate patterns, drought zones, the ocean conveyor system, species evolution, glacier flows, and hurricanes that exhibit self-organizing capacities to varying degrees and that impinge upon each other and human life in numerous ways. The Anthropocene is a period of two hundred to four hundred years (depending on who is counting) during which a series of capitalist, communist, technological, militarist, scientific, and Christian practices became major geological forces that helped to reshape some of these nonhuman forces. (Connolly, 2017, p. 4)

By bringing the planetary into conversation with the micropolitics of becoming, Connolly offers a unique and massively useful way of rethinking the political project of producing eco-subjects

through a recognition of these forces and their imbrications with one another and with human life

on the planet. This contribution constitutes a new rhizome in itself, a new way of thinking about

the habitability of the planet in the context of its fragility and the larger processes in which

humans are themselves imbricated. By putting these seemingly disparate processes and "bumpy

temporalities" (Connolly, 2017, p. 43) into conversation with one another in the context of the

Anthropocene, Connolly successfully contributes to a robust understanding of the ways in which

the unpredictability of these forces must also be considered as a fundamentally materialist

element that requires us to pay attention to the ways in which we inhabit the world. In short,

Connolly (2017) rejects any response to such a condition of conundrums that favors resentment

(in the Nietzschean sense) and "acting out of injury and anxiety about the future" (p. 148).

Though Connolly does not typically directly correlate this materialism with the

production of subjectivity more generally, this perspective remains ripe for such an

understanding. This is not really a simple retreat toward the linguistic; towards the production of

subjectivity as occurring the large structural or systemic apparatuses that we call by certain

names and therefore produce certain kinds of subjects that also have particular names. Rather,

Connolly's understanding of materiality (its agency) can also be applied to the ways in which

materiality itself is productive of subjectivity. As mentioned earlier, Guattari supplements his

own materialism with an assertion of the importance of incorporeality, while at the same time

discussing the revolutionary potential of arts, experimentation on the senses through asignifying

semiotics, and beyond (Guattari, 2009, 2013; Lazzarato, 2014). Connolly gives us another

technique through which to test a Deleuzian/Guattarian understanding of materiality on a macro

scale, rather than on the terrain of molecular infestations of the body/psyche/desire. Surely,

though they cannot be thought of as unitary, these force fields that Connolly refers to can

certainly be thought of as machinic, though in a way that renders them akin to large, looming clouds, casting shadows over the existence of humanity, the way that subjectivities are produced, and the possibilities of escape therein, of breaks in the clouds. Coole (2013) summarizes this understanding nicely by arguing that "in order to understand its materialisation and, from a critical perspective, the way it is entangled with power relations, it must attend to the microscopic and the macroscopic, the molecular and the molar" (p. 456).

Moving forward from the idea of becoming and its molecular and molar entanglements with matter (and the ways in which these may prevent becoming-different), another interesting debate here relates not only to the classic "identity/difference" debate mentioned earlier that has long been the purview of feminism but also to the ways in which new materialism cannot abandon[46] identity, history, and the formation of oppressed subjectivities altogether in its project merely in favor of a novel ontology which distributes agency (and subjectivity) differently in the world. Power also distributes agency differently in the world, with no fewer real effects. The key is to navigate this debate in such a way as to not destroy a notion of identity altogether, or simply attribute it to the effects of power without acknowledging its own materiality. Interestingly, one way of delving into this debate is to discuss another new materialist's understanding of ideology. Chow (2010) argues that "Ideology works because, in the process of coming to terms with it, people become 'interpellated'—are hailed, constituted, and affirmed—as socially viable and coherent subjects, as who they (need to) think or believe they are" (p. 224-225). Since we are categorically not these kinds of subjects according to most new materialists and to Deleuze and Guattari, the hegemony of ideology merely masks the uncertainty of the self. At the same time,

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[46]   See Hinton and Lui (2015) for a more detailed discussion of the idea of "abandonment" as a critique of new materialism through an engagement with Ahmed's work specifically.

however, the precise place that identity holds within a new materialist framework remains

relatively elusive and must constitute a key debate within any politics of the eco-subject.

Indeed, Sara Ahmed's work also constitutes something akin to a new materialist

perspective. Along with Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (2010), however, she also identifies

herself as a "critical materialist," because her "own work draws on, and is indebted to, earlier

feminist engagements with phenomenology that were undertaken during the period of the

'cultural turn'" (Ahmed 2010, p. 234). Interestingly, both Chow and Ahmed reference the work

of Judith Butler as useful in their own (new or critical) materialist works, respectively. Connolly

(2013, 2017), too, often references Butler. The example of Rosa Parks' singular (i.e. asserting

difference in the moment of event/act)[47] act of protest proves useful again in this respect.

Guattari's asignifying semiotics can add to what the new materialists are already saying

about the importance of paying attention to planetary processes and all sorts of other

materialities. For example, Gary Genosko (2009) explains the ethical necessity that Guattari

attached to granting attention to various material processes in the context of asignifying

semiotics (and the "age of planetary computerization" therein [p. 90-91]). Genosko (2009)

summarizes Guattari's position for today's audience, arguing that,

> Guattari struggled against IWC's appropriations from the same technological [matter] for
> the sake of the production of certain kinds of subjects compatible with most of its value,
> stratifications, and disorienting visions of progress. For example, he thought that
> miniaturization was a way for capital to equip individuals with devices that would
> manage their perceptions by plugging them into strands of the machinic phylum
> concerned with consumer electronics, making them crazy for self-medicated highs of the
> kind that come from the aptly rechristened CrackBerry. The drug of wired consumerism
> inserts subjectivity into incorporeal networks, sometimes requiring detox by
> disconnection…Guattari sought to frame these issues in semiotic terms and to theorize
> these issues in semiotic terms and to theorize a species of part-signs that expose salient

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[47]   See Lazzarato (2014) and Guattari (1992, 2009) for a discussion of becoming-as-event.

features of informatized capital in whose networks they directly intervene by exploiting the potentiality materially present there. (p. 91)

Asignifying semiotics operate on the level of pre-linguistic and pre (or non) signifying affects that infiltrate the production of subjectivity and configure the material body as well. They signify nothing in particular since they operate infectiously, ubiquitously, and largely go unnoticed as producers of capitalist subjectivities. By operating at the level of affect rather than at the level of signification or the production of meaning, Guattari also argued that they are forces of deterritorialization which render their own functionalities incomprehensible, alluding representation and (Lazzarato, 2014; Genosko, 2009). In the context of their political utility, asignifying semiotics are also particularly sensitive or fragile, prone to glitches. Just as Ahmed's understanding of parts refusing to embody the whole constitutes a political project of becoming different and Connolly's understanding of fragility and entanglement constitutes a political project of becoming differentially sensitive, portions of Guattari's project advocate the necessity of recognizing how the effects of asignifying part-signs "accumulate" to produce capitalist-complicit subjectivities (Genosko, 2009, p. 109).

Using the example of an ATM, Genosko continues to summarize Guattari's understanding of these semiotic investments of capitalism. For example,

Guattari's lesson is to appreciate how sticky, suffocating affects accumulate around brandished plastic cards [credit cards] and the part-signs triggered by them, for capitalist subjects 'unfortunately'…enriched by the absence of meaning. Still, remember to ask about how the card works; don't remain subjugated to the micropolitical vectors buried in the infomachinic phyla. For surely, even before an ATM, one is not merely tributary of the specifically battle-hardened hardware and software of the 'empire of digital credit,' but, rather, on the lookout for a hackable command prompt (Genosko, 2009, p. 109).

The idea of "hacking" these various technological equipments of capitalism may prove useful as a method for exploring the ways in which to shake of the yolk of vapid and hollow capitalist subjectivities, the simulacra of what meaningful life on the planet could offer via a novel

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deployment of asignifying semiotics. Guattari seems to embody technological optimism, not necessarily for its utility in saving the planet (or surpassing biophysical limits to planetary processes, for example—something normally associated with such optimism), but rather for its possibilities for re-appropriation as capable of producing counter-affects, affects counter to the dominant usages and deployments of these same devices (See Genosko, 2009 for a discussion of these possibilities for re-deploying these part-signs).

There are material machinic entities: planetary, technological, technical, computerized, environmental, and otherwise which produce subjectivity absent mediation by linguistic signification or explanation. The constitutive power of materiality cannot be denied and herein lies the value of combining the new materialist and the Guattarian understandings of materiality. The molecular and the molar, the planetary, the asignifying part-signs, and molecular invasions of body and psyche of all kinds constitute the terrain upon which subjectivity is produced through the medium of physical materiality. The real force of this kind of project is that materiality, since it can easily elude signification and still function in useful and often very uncertain, conflicting ways means that materiality constitutes a suitable (and most likely crucial) starting point for becoming-different in the world through acts of resistance and refusals which disrupt the ability of capitalism to incorporate these "parts" into its production of a meaningful subjectivities. Ultimately, since these kinds of subjectivity-producers require minimal or no mediation, they may prove easier targets for illuminating the hollow meaningless void through which capitalism produces pale simulacra of meaningful, inhabitable subjectivities.

Entangled Ecologies and Eco-Machinic Becomings

Though ecosocialism correctly identifies the primary source of the twin enslavements of humanity and the environment, namely capitalism, ecosocialists fail to theorize the widespread

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effects of capitalism in a way that first, recognizes the dispersed and disjointed quality of

capitalist powers and second, understands the futility of returning to terminology which posits

the working class or the economic sphere as possessing primacy over other spheres of production

(Guattari 2000). For example, Guattari argues that

> Although Marx's own writings still have great value, Marxist discourse has lost its value. It is up to the protagonists of social liberation to remodel the theoretical references so as to illuminate a possible escape route out of contemporary history, which is more nightmarish than ever. It is not only species that are becoming extinct but also the words, phrases, and gestures of human solidarity. A stifling cloak of silence has been thrown over the emancipatory struggles of women, and of the new proletariat: the unemployed, the 'marginalized,' immigrants. (p. 44)

We might add to these already grave concerns the concerning tendency of Integrated World

Capitalism to collude with the production of identity in a way that not only sometimes renders

these marginalized groups into silence, but which also takes up these identity categories for its

own self-maintenance. Capitalism can no longer be rendered as merely a system of

"infrastructure" (Guattari, 2000, p. 48). Though of course, capitalism possesses primacy in

Guattari's work, he remained reluctant to hegemonize it or erect it as something transcendent or

determining. This reluctance manifests in the ways in which he (often much more than Deleuze,

for example) remained frantically committed to his own terminologies and semiotic inventions

and interventions. He summarizes this commitment as follows:

> The ecosophical perspective does not totally exclude a definition of unifying objects, such as the struggle against world hunger, an end to deforestation or to the blind proliferation of the nuclear industries; but it will no longer be a question of depending on reductionist, stereotypical order-words which only expropriate other more singular problematics and lead to the promotion of charismatic leaders. (Guattari, 2000, p. 34)

In other words, Guattari's inventive language attempts to transversalize without essentializing

new ways for coping with and grasping his new "ontological pragmatics" (See Lazzarato, 2014,

p. 207). Since, as mentioned in the previous section, however, the actual creative eruptions of

difference required for inhabiting ourselves and the world differently precede language-

formation altogether, Guattari only offers tools through which we could come to understand these eruptions, knowing full well that these are in themselves insufficient to the task at the moment of the event.

Ecologically-speaking, transversality as a concept fits well with the idea of movement, motion, marked by occasional, singular rest. The idea of transversality itself constitutes an eco-machinic process of movement, where different milieus are occupied in a singular instance of becoming-different. Indeed, the task of ecosophy really lies in transforming economies of desire into ecologies of desire. The desperate reason for which Guattari thinks that these transformations necessary for the future of society, liberation, freedom, and democracy still fundamentally relates back to the idea of entanglement of all machinic assemblages through which life produces, reproduces, and re-orients/imagines itself. Transversality constitutes the starting point for thinking ourselves differently in the world; whilst the idea of nomadism produces possibilities for following transversal lines across all the dimensions of life with which Guattari deals.

For instance, to "think transversally" (Guattari, 2000, p. 43) for Guattari constitutes a method by which to begin engaging in movement by making collectively-meaningful connections between domains of production (his comparison of Donald Trump and algae discussed in the previous chapter follows this call to think "transversally," for example). At the end of *The Three Ecologies*, he couples this call to think transversally with his ecosophical project, and its prospects for rescuing humanity from the Nietzschean abyss (though he doesn't reference Nietzsche, it's clear that this abyss looms large in Guattari's work, even if it differs linguistically, the existential consequences of the loss of meaning and resentment are the same

throughout Guattari's and Connolly's works as well). To paraphrase Nietzsche (2006) from the

On the Genealogy of Morality, how do we recover humanity from this abyss?

> Guattari (2000) tries to answer this question, arguing that
>
> Individuals must become both more united and increasingly different. The same is true for the resingularization of schools, town councils, urban planning, etc. By means of these transversal tools, subjectivity is able to install itself simultaneously in the realms of the environment, in the major social and institutional assemblages, and symmetrically in the landscapes and fantasies of the most intimate spheres of the individual. The reconquest of a degree of creative autonomy in one particular domain encourages conquests in other domains—the catalyst for a gradual reforging and renewal of humanity's confidence in itself starting at the most miniscule level. (p. 69)

The interesting use of the word "confidence" in the above quotation relates to Guattari's (2000) call to "counter the pervasive atmosphere of dullness and passivity" (p. 69). Humanity (especially in the West, but not exclusively), clearly, possesses plenty of hubris, something altogether different from a kind of confidence in our own abilities and desires to inhabit our world differently. Interestingly, the experimental commitment required to transversalize, to cross domains of subjectivation, materially and otherwise, in novel ways necessitates a commitment to becoming-ecological by familiarizing ourselves with means of existential singularization. Caring for the self through a re-assertion of singularity and difference, by becoming eco-machinic, by remaking milieus habitable for ourselves and therefore collectively so, we could revoke the license with which capitalism engenders political passivity, apathy, and thereby is allowed to destroy nature and subjectivity in tandem and without significant resistance.

More specifically, Boundas quotes Guattari to further explain what really constitutes the Guattarian politics of becoming. First, Boundas (2018) argues that Guattari's work was "never about complete freedom, but about creating milieus [ecologies] that allow for degrees of freedom…" (p. 146). To quote Guattari's *Chaosmosis*: "How do we produce [the subject], capture it, enrich it, and permanently reinvent it in a way that renders it compatible with

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Universes of mutant value? How do we work for its liberation, that is, for its resingularization?" (Guattari, 1992, p. 135 qtd. in Boundas, 2018, p. 146).

Another key idea that emerges in *The Three Ecologies* is the idea of "desiring ambivalence" (Guattari, 2000, p. 57). "Desiring ambivalence" constitutes the Guattarian understanding of a revolution in mental ecology, specifically, and Guattari (2000) argues that the revolution in mental ecology cannot operate simply by borrowing concepts from other domains (like "specialized psychiatric domains" [p. 57]). This is one of the only times that Guattari's mentions this idea of "desiring ambivalence" as a political project, but certainly this resonates with Connolly's understanding of the uncertainty and fragility of planetary forces as well. Capitalism produces paralysis, whereas, "desiring ambivalence," produces liberation from paralysis and anxiety, especially existential and ecological anxieties that characterize life in the Anthropocene as doomed and largely unfathomable. With little to cling to except hollow co-opted identities and tired consumerist tropes, producing ourselves by intimately engaging with ambivalence may actually prove quite useful in the context of liberating desire itself.

For instance, I would argue that uncertainty works both ways: it may breed resentment (fascism, doubling-down by capitalists, nationalists, Statists, and militaristic cultures of all sorts) or it may breed freedom, open possibilities of creation of new universes of meaning through a re-engagement of materiality and the production of affect through the re-appropriation and novel creation of asignifying part-signs. If we are to care about the planet and ourselves, the existential task of overcoming the immobilizing force of uncertainty is required. These ruptures in our ability to "make sense" out of the world also disrupt the pathologies which characterize uncertainty as laziness, indecisiveness, failure, and replete with meaninglessness. Just as "lack" characterizes desire (or so the psychoanalysts presume), uncertainty characterizes an

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unacceptable ground upon which to exist in the world. To curb desire, we must curb feelings of

uncertainty; neoliberalism tells us we must be sure of ourselves in order to care for ourselves.

But what if, rather, we embraced uncertainty not merely as opportunity, but as abundantly

creative potentialities, characterized by the possibilities for becoming eco-machines, the

possibilities for inhabiting the world of our making because the stuff of that making can always

be arranged differently to produce uncertain, yet nevertheless productive and meaningful

outcomes. In many ways, the project of becoming an eco-machine requires the re-orientation of

the concept of production altogether. Rather than producing hollow subjectivities, production

actually becomes productive of new possibilities, rather than destructive of the possible.

For Deleuze and Guattari (2004), the idea of transversality introduced by Guattari also

allows them to develop what they call "nomadology." According to Boundas (2018), "the

nomadism of schizoanalysis finds in the theoretical and tactical programme of ecosophy its

concretization and completion" (p. 15). In other words, Guattari's work "completes" (though his

work always remains far from complete) the schizoanalytic framework through his numerous

discussions of ecosophy in which he attempts to transversalize a politics of the eco-subject.

In fact, schizoanalysis and the figure of the schizo transforms into the figure of the nomad

from *Anti-Oedipus* to *A Thousand Plateaus*. Here, the relationship between capitalism and

schizophrenia and capitalism and nomadology comes to life. For example, in *Anti-Oedipus*

Deleuze and Guattari characterize capitalism's relationship to schizophrenia as follows:

> Capitalist production both sets in motion and arrests the schizophrenic process. Deleuze
> and Guattari contrast capitalism, as the relative limit of all societies, with schizophrenia,
> as the absolute limit of capitalism. While capitalism's relative limits are immanent, those
> of schizophrenia constitute the exterior limit of capitalism that the latter wants to fill with
> its own immanent limits. This desire to fill by means of the reproduction of capitalism's
> interior limits smothers the revolutionary potential of schizophrenia's decoded flows by
> means of apparatuses of domination and regulations enforced by the State. The

relationship between the capitalist and the schizophrenic is antagonistic. (Genosko, 1996, p. 25)

Further introducing the idea of the "war machine," Deleuze and Guattari (2004) argue that a minoritarian politics fundamentally constitutes an act of warfare against the dominant modes of producing subjectivity. They compare the war machine to an eruption of multiplicity, a pre-existing becoming-animal which the State itself captures and puts to use in war, yet the war machine constitutes a priori materials from which the State draws its military prowess (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). In particular, their understanding of nomadology is necessary to understanding the relationship between becoming-warrior, becoming-army (as Ahmed notes), becoming-imperceptible, and finally, becoming-ecological. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) describe the idea of the war-machine as "another species, another nature, another origin than the State apparatus," and as a "pure and immeasurable multiplicity," "outside [the state's sovereignty] and prior to its law: it comes from elsewhere" (p. 388-389). Nomad and minoritarian traditions occupy

> A field, a heterogenous smooth space…wedded to a very particular kind of multiplicity: nonmetric, acentered, rhizomatic multiplicities that occupy space without 'counting' it and can 'be explored only by legwork.' They do not meet the visual condition of being observable from a point in space external to them. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 409)

Indeed, Constantin V. Boundas (2018) argues forcefully that "the nomad wages war because her lines of flight are blocked, and her deterritorialization prevented" (p. 14). The nomad is not always a minority or an underprivileged group in the strict sense, but they are consistently forced to retreat from desire in some way, to wage war because their self is prevented from producing meaning in the world beyond that of neoliberal rationality or the production of their own marginalized and truncated subjectivities.

The idea of becoming-imperceptible illustrates an interesting example into the relationship between nomadology and the waging of warfare. In short, appropriating the war

machine may prove necessary for the cultivation of nomadology. For example, the idea of "becoming-imperceptible" has particularly interesting relations with the feminist theory. Becoming-imperceptible is about the occupation of liminal space, the peopling of space where certain people are disallowed or made into subjects which they themselves may reject. This understanding of becoming-imperceptible can also be deployed in numerous other ways which not only attend to the microscopic but which fundamentally work against oppression and domination, in other words, as caring for the self as an act of warfare, to paraphrase Audre Lorde (1988).

Waging war requires not only frontal attacks and the snatching of opportunities when they arise/are noticed, but also clandestine operations. Interestingly, though Deleuze and Guattari (2004) seem to focus on the importance of speed in the context of these becomings, they also fully admit that becoming is always defined via "a relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness…by an emission of particles" (p. 305). The notion of relative movement has an intimate relation to the idea of becoming-imperceptible in Deleuze and Guattari. More specifically,

> Movement has an essential relation to the imperceptible; it is by nature imperceptible. Perception can grasp movement only as the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form. Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception. Doubtless, thresholds of perception are relative; there is always a threshold capable of grasping what eludes another: the eagle's eye…But the threshold can in turn operate only as a function of a perceptible form and a perceived, discerned subject. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 309-310)

I would argue that this idea of becoming imperceptible reflects at least two pathways through which to become different in the world. Though really these pathways are infinite, ubiquitous, and indescribable, extrapolating these pathways to some degree may prove useful in identifying

productive becomings and acquiring new ways of understanding the production of subjectivity and the stranglehold of neoliberal capitalism upon it.

First, becoming-imperceptible as a microscopic process of occupying space between discernable subjectivities and visible "realities," can productively be put into conversation with Audre Lorde's understanding of self-care as political warfare. Let us consider the example of a woman in an abusive relationship. After an instance of abuse, for example, let's say the target of that abuse decides that the best course of action is to remain non-combative, to become quiet, and to withdraw from the situation when she is able to do so. Once she is alone or with company for that matter, she engages her senses in a way that feels somehow rebellious. At the same time, however, she has shrunk quietly from the situation; she has become imperceptible so as to survive the situation, so as to not provoke even more damaging angry tirades. She hid in plain sight, rebelliously caring for herself, discussing the collective injustice of the situation with herself, whom is always in conversation with herself-as-other, or with friends. She knowledgably became-imperceptible as an act of political warfare. This situation, too, has many layers of privilege. Depending on the neighborhood she lives in, the color of her skin, the status of her citizenship, maybe the yelling never provoked a call by neighbors or passersby to the police. Becoming is always collective; becoming constitutes a political care of the self. Becoming-imperceptible is collective because it not only has affects "before and beyond" the individual since the self is an illusion posited not as concretely located, but rather as always in-between, always becoming but also because becoming-imperceptible is a common collective strategy of survival and a waging of war. Again, "the nomad wages war because her lines of flight are blocked" (Boundas, 2018, p. 14).

The nomad must wage war, however microscopic. Wars are won and lost on the grounds of the production of subjectivity. The natural world, too, is destroyed as these truncated territories of existence play out, produced through the intersections of nomadic warfare and capitalism's blockage of the production of difference and the creative pursuit of desire. Through becoming-imperceptible, through self-care, we open up possibilities to change our habitats, our "existential territories," and their intersection with the material territories of existence.

The second way to become-imperceptible evokes the more common interpretation of Deleuze's and Guattari's work as a becoming-different, as an occupation of space, as a making habitable a milieu that one currently finds uninhabitable by evoking "unnatural participations" of relationality, transversality, and infiltration. The point of my distinction between these two different ways of thinking through the concept of becoming-imperceptible is to point out that these processes can be accompanied by privilege or not, and that habitability varies by circumstance that may (or may not, depending again on numerous factors) further restrict the prospects of becoming and how becoming advances itself in-between the powers-that-be in the world. Perhaps one more understanding of this process will illuminate the stakes of the necessity to think ourselves differently in the world in order to rectify environmental degradation, to locate and root out the crippling presence of ecological and existential anxiety, and to counteract the neoliberal enclosure of subjectivity, which prevents environmental concern, care of the self, and care of any and all habitats in which the collective, heterogenous self inheres.

William Connolly (2017) summarizes the work of Nietzsche, Foucault, and Deleuze [and presumably Guattari] as "Don't explicate too much; cultivate care; experiment politically" (p. 55), where a "tactic of the self, on this reading, is an experimental strategy to touch and work on the entangled microperceptual and micro-intentional tendencies flowing beneath direct conscious

awareness and regulation" (p. 56). Without spending too much time analyzing Nietzsche's own words, Connolly (2017) quotes Nietzsche's (1997) own words from his *Daybreak*:

> As Nietzsche says, attending to the call to tend to heterogeneous drives artistically, 'Out of damp and gloomy days, out of solitude, out of loveless words directed at us, conclusions grow up in us like fungus: one morning they are there, we know not how, and they gaze upon us, morose and grey. Woe to the thinker who is not the gardener but only the soil of the plants that grow in him.' (p. 57)

This is precisely the political impetus of becoming-imperceptible, becoming-animal, becoming-army. It constitutes the processual existential effort towards creative difference, differentially produced, situated, privileged, and useful. Becoming-gardener requires weeding out the parts of the picture no longer suitable to the continued success of life on the planet (or life in any habitat for that matter), through a recognition that how we fundamentally understand and see ourselves in the world intimately relates to the destruction of nature and our current immobility and existential anxiety (that breeds fascist backlashes). We don't feel at home in a world that inscribes us as competitively situated beings (and non-beings—those who are disallowed from "full" existence) for whom another kind of human praxis beyond the project of capitalism remains out of reach. Of course, there are no guarantees of success, so we should listen to the existential refrains (of all minoritarian traditions), as Deleuze and Guattari mention together and separately throughout most of their works.

Institutional and Political Matters: Putting Capitalism on Trial

In one of his most infamous presentations, which he presents to a French court, "Three Billion Perverts on the Stand," Félix Guattari (2009) argues that homosexuality constitutes a rupture with dominant paradigms, where "far from resolving itself by fixation on the Same, it is an opening into Difference" (p. 216). He clarifies this position further: "the gay, no more than the schizo, is not *of himself* a revolutionary—the revolutionary of modern times! We are simply

saying that, among others, he *could* be, *could* become, a site for an important libidinal disruption of society—a point of emergence for revolutionary, desiring-energy from which classical militantism remains cut off" (p. 216-217). If he *could*, he surely *would*. Guattari goes on to say that "at issue is the definition of what sexuality would be in a society freed from capitalist exploitation and the alienation that engenders all levels of social organization" (p. 218). After Guattari's collective research group *Recherches* published an issue with the same title on homosexuality, the French judicial system charged Guattari with "affronting public decency" (Genosko, 1996, p. 7); his defense is worth a read in and of itself for its brilliant reversal of questioning as a technique of pursuit of lines of flight. At this point in time, Guattari had been subject to police searches of his home and "harassment" by the French authorities on suspicion of "suspected militancy" and "pornographic publications" (Genosko, 2009, p. 7).

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that "knowing how to love does not mean remaining a man or a woman, it means extracting from one's sex the particles, the speeds and slownesses, the flows, the *n* sexes that constitute…*that* sexuality" (p. 306). They go on to argue that

> Sexuality…is badly explained by the binary organization of the sexes…Sexuality brings into play too great a diversity of conjugated becomings; these are like *n* sexes, an entire war machine through which love passes… What counts is that love itself is a war machine endowed with strange and somewhat terrifying powers. Sexuality is the production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrolled becomings. (p. 307)

The 3 billion imperceptible invasions and takings up of sexualities in order to become-woman here point to implications for their understanding of sexuality, which can be expanded to also encompass gender in today's language as well, though really the two, sexuality and gender cannot be as easily delinked as contemporary society might have it. In other words, with *n* sexes, there are also *n* genders, *n* becomings relating to and crossing between the two domains and

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beyond those domains altogether. What is so revolutionary and interesting about this perspective, which has been taken up by numerous scholars like Ahmed who advocate for a "queering" of feminist and revolutionary politics,[48] is that it is meant not only as one becoming which could disrupt capitalism, but it pairs nicely with Guattari's assertion at the French trial.

In "Three Billion Perverts," Guattari effectively reverses who is on trial by questioning the judges' motivations for accusing a research organization of criminality for the revolutionary content that they study. This in and of itself constitutes a revolutionary reversal. Let's put the capitalists on trial, instead, for their slash and burn attitudes towards the production of subjectivity, for their enforcement of "compulsory heterosexuality," to borrow a term from Adrienne Rich (1980). In current society, there are numerous ways to express these *n* dimensions of sexuality and gender that are themselves pathological, most of which subjugate women to men, or lesbians to men, and numerous other perversions of becoming-woman that direct desire in ways which are productive for capitalism (think of the popularity of problematic and male-directed/intended pornography or the numerous commercial lines of "sexy" Halloween costumes that evoke a woman's societally agreed upon place in the workforce—as sexual object plus labor power). The political force of Deleuze and Guattari's discussions of subjectivity is to re-capture these becomings for other projects not related to capitalism's enclosure of dominant and subjugated subjectivities, to produce ourselves differently by putting the capitalists (and their State-sanctioned judges) on trial. The whole concept of a "trial" itself relates to a mode of experimentation, especially as the place where capitalism invades the juridical modes of society in order to experiment on the most useful placements (social subjections, to use Lazzarato's

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[48]   See Nigianni (2005) for *Deleuze and Queer Theory*, Davis (2013) for *The Desiring-Image: Gilles Deleuze and Contemporary Queer Cinema*, and numerous others, such as the collective works of Donna Haraway, for example.

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term) for certain groups of people. Those who are not frequently put on trial are then more readily invited to participate in a million different machinic enslavements which direct sexualities, desires, and consumerist inertia towards useful objects and pleasures under capitalism. Again, the role assignment that capitalism maintains in order to produce and reproduce itself is marked by differential encounters with the State and juridical life. Indeed, we must reverse who is on trial; take the millions of minorities off the stand and subject an *nth* number of capitalists instead to the experimental trial on the grounds of the production of subjectivity. In fact, the image of this reversal itself proves promising for understanding paths towards the liberation of subjectivity. Reverse who is on trial in the court of becoming-different.

Félix Guattari was genuinely hopeful about the possibilities of producing different kinds of subjectivities outside of economized and capitalizable forms, the dominant forms. In *The Three Ecologies* (2000), he enthusiastically states that

> As for young people, although they are crushed by the dominant economic relations which make their position increasingly precarious, and although they are mentally manipulated through the production of a collective, mass media subjectivity, they are nevertheless developing their own methods of distancing themselves from normalized subjectivity through singularization. In this respect, the transnational character of rock-music is extremely significant; it plays the role of a sort of initiatory cult, which confers a cultural pseudoidentity on a considerable mass of young people and allows them to obtain for themselves a bare minimum of existential Territories. (p. 33)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Guattari sees his project as radically democratic as well as communist in its orientation. In *The Three Ecologies* (2000), he writes "At every level, individual or collective, in everyday life as well as the reinvention of democracy,…it is a question of looking into…the production of subjectivity, which tends towards an individual and/or collective resingularization" (p. 34).

If Guattari's project remains fundamentally nomadic, ecosophical, communist, democratic, and driven by a fundamental rejection of the model of the unconscious presented by

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much of psychoanalysis, where does his theory lead in the context of the relationship between fascism and uncertainty? As mentioned in Chapter 4, the dangers of the ecosophical project cannot be understated. At the same time, it appears that these dangers have crept forth quite forcefully in contemporary society after a very brief and restless slumber (which was only really perceived as a "slumber" from the perspective of those with degrees of privilege in the first instance). Guattari (2000) sums up the former danger

> Nothing in these domains is played out in the name of history, in the name of infrastructural determinisms! Barbaric implosion cannot be entirely ruled out. And, for want of such an ecosophical revival (or whatever we wish to call it), for want of a reatriculation of the three fundamental types of ecology, we can unfortunately predict the rise of all kinds of danger: racism, religious fanaticism, nationality [sic] schisms that suddenly flip into reactionary closure, the exploitation of child labour, the oppression of women. (p. 35)

In light of the fact that these reactionary forces seem to be gaining strength in the contemporary West (and beyond), the danger seems both already present and future-oriented. This trend has some important implications. In a sense, one could argue that the fact that these dangers seem ever-present could engender an even greater desire amongst minorities of all kinds (in the Deleuzian/Guattarian sense) to seek out new ways of existing and singularizing themselves in the world. At the same time, these trends also contribute to the mounting pile of evidence that capitalism itself produces losses of meaning in the world through its processes of deterritorialization and hollow reterritorialization. In this context, the stakes and the risks of the ecosophical project distribute themselves differently in the field of possible collective political actions. So much anxiety, apathy, feelings of powerlessness, despair, pessimism, and pain already accompany numerous productions of subjectivities in the world; we're getting used to these dimensions of ourselves, and those feelings of loss could engender political re-invention or further re-entrenchment of these dangerous trends. We must at least partially leave these matters to a politics-to-come (to paraphrase Guattari himself on numerous occasions) to assess these

risks in light of new becomings-different, becomings-animal, and the ways in which collective

and individualized identities have become marginalized, objectified, instrumentalized, uplifted,

or deified by the various capitalist tactics of the production of subjectivities. (Though despite its

current integral role to these productions, it would be far-fetched and dangerous to argue that

capitalism itself is solely responsible for the invention and marginalization of races, genders,

sexualities, or minorities generally speaking). Since uncertainty so centrally marks the

contemporary condition (and reactions to it), some possible openings require special attention in

order to point towards the production of ecological subjectivities.

As mentioned above, the idea of "desiring ambivalence" constitutes a shift in the

dominant mode of human thinking towards a model of transversality. At the same time,

ambivalence and uncertainty and losses of meaning can devastate the human psyche towards

repression, violence, and the re-assertion of essentialist and transcendentalized identities.

Echoing Nietzsche's understanding of the will to power, though with perhaps less pessimism,

Guattari (2000) argues that "Violence and negativity are the products of complex subjective

assemblages; they are not intrinsically inscribed in the essence of the human species but are

constructed and maintained by multiple assemblages of enunciation" (p. 58).

For example, the production of ecological anxiety (anxiety[49] about how we inhabit the

planet, for example) can be tied directly to the capitalist project. Perhaps this idea can grant us

even greater understanding of the blockages preventing our becoming-ecological. Moreover, the

idea of desiring ambivalence may allow an overcoming of certain manifestations of this

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[49]   Just as in Guattari's own work (explained in Guattari [2009] at length), the term "anxiety" here is not meant to
embody any kind of clinical terminology; rather, it is a feeling of displacement or non-belonging, a feeling of being
unable to embody what it means to be a self in meaningful ways. Of course, there is a clinical side to the medical
phenomenon of anxiety that might be related here, but by no means can we or should we take up this question here.

phenomenon. The production of eco-subjectivities requires acknowledgement of the collective production of desire and a working on that desire in the self as a collective project of transformation and possibility. The earth depends on it, and so does our liberation from anxiety in the context of the precarious planet and our fragile (easily fascist-ized and fetishized) selves.

I would also argue that the politics of Deleuze, Guattari, and Connolly combined denotes what might be termed a "radical politics of self-care." As Connolly (2017) notes above, there is something about the idea of becoming that is about "cultivating care," though Deleuze and Guattari rarely evoke this terminology, it is not completely absent from other critical materialist scholarship, especially feminist work. This kind of radical politics of self-care could prove useful for re-imagining the relationship between humans and nature that recovers the anxiety we might feel at the perceived inadequacy of ourselves in the context of seemingly insurmountable global environmental crises. In fact, the idea of inhabiting milieus creatively in ways that transform them into fundamentally habitable spaces directly coincides with a more productive understanding of care-as-becoming in the context of the production of subjectivity.

Certain kinds of subjectivities have a much easier time coping with this anxiety, putting to rest this anxiety, and "caring" (however superficially/capitalistically) for themselves in the context of this eco-anxiety. Others, as in those who are othered (by capitalism, by the state, by violence), have a much harder time not only coping, but also in securing enough time (and safety) to re-orient what it means to exist in the world differently through the potential openings presented here. Sara Ahmed's (2014a, 2014b) work is particularly careful to point out this important caveat. In short, privilege plays a distinct role in restricting the openings of becoming different which appear to the self in the first place. There are two interesting and troubling paths through which this different existential situatedness in the world can travel. The first relates to

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the fact that *because* certain ways of becoming remain "easier" for certain groups, they may also

be more easily captured and re-appropriated through the techniques of neoliberal capitalism. The

second even more troubling caveat is that this means not only that the privileged (however this is

defined depending on context, history, and numerous other factors) must tread lightly when

experimenting with becoming different, so as to not erase more marginal or more minoritarian

becomings, closing or ignoring pathways of escape that may be less perceptible because they are

more marginalized than the experimental becomings of the already-privileged. These two caveats

cannot be taken lightly and must inhere in any concerted collective assertion of eco-machinic

becoming.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, though Deleuze and Guattari and Guattari himself tend to

focus on the micropolitical scale of interventions into the political (and therefore subjectivity and

desire), Guattari often hints toward the institutional level or the "intermediary" level (Guattari,

2011a, p. 54). Not only does this hark back to the distinction between the molecular and the

molar, which Deleuze and Guattari (2004) admit as somewhat relative, where "*intermediate*

states" also exist (p. 50), it also proves important for further scrutinizing Guattari's

understanding of political praxis. In *Lines of Flight* (2011a) for example, Guattari notes that

> The analytic entry route at the 'intermediary' level of Collective equipment that seems
> necessary and possible to us is not to be opposed to the 'massive' political pathways, or
> to the very small scale analytic pathways. It should be a matter of complementary
> interventions calling each other into question. (54)

Put differently, engaging with the institutional or intermediary level of politics, social life, and

even of subjectivity/identity (as its embedded in various institutions) to try to provoke change

does not preclude re-singularization or revolutionary movements of transversality on the other

two scales. The issue of scale has been generally understudied in the work of Guattari, but it is

worth exploring here in order to understand the possibilities for existing differently in the world

and attempting to thwart the capitalist production of subjectivity. Additionally, this quality of

theorizing this level of intervention sets Guattari apart from his work with Deleuze and harkens

back to his earliest work on transversality in the psychiatric institution.

> Thus institutional reformism without any revolutionary horizon and revolutionary movements without any immediate praxis of everyday life must be questioned together. It is always possible to delimit a field of analysis and micropolitical intervention that allows the rhizome of collective assemblages of desire to make an advance. What we criticize both the militants of groupuscules and psychoanalysts for is that is that in all sorts of ways they impede the putting into place of such assemblages…The molecular revolution is not hostile to political movements, whether classically contestatory or protest. It simply makes them take flight from inside, and opens them up onto other outsides. (Guattari, 2011a, p. 55)

Thus, the institutional, bureaucratic, educational, familial, industrial, identity-based, and other

domains where life plays out, including other social, economic, political, and existential

dimensions of these intermediate levels are ripe for political experimentations.

Indeed, one aspect of Guattari's theory that has been understudied is the relationships

between the molecular, the molar, and the liminal/institutional spaces between. Guattari (2000)

argues that "the crucial objective is to grasp the a-signifying points of rupture - the rupture of

denotation, connotation and signification—from which a certain number of semiotic chains are

put to work in the service of an existential autoreferential effect" (p. 56). In order to "hack" these

points of rupture, to *capitalize* on them in a way that is productive of difference, Guattari never

really specifies the scale of these interventions beyond the molecular—the use of a credit card in

an ATM, for example. But what of this institutional level as one of the "strata"[50] upon which the

production of subjectivity also occurs? In some ways, we can think of an institutional strata as

mediating the molecular and the molar, since psychoanalysis mediates between the minor

disturbances which it blames on lack rather than on an over-produced/over-economized

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[50]   For Deleuze and Guattari (2004), stratification is the arborescent fixing of being (as opposed to smooth spaces, which are amiable to rhizomatic eruption and production).

production of subjectivity and the molar requirements of the maintenance of power through the resignation of desire to "appropriate" domains (such as the university, the medical or psychiatric office, the video game [and all of the pathologies therein], or as a last resort, the prison [though this is all too often the first resort for many underprivileged groups]).

At least two important trajectories must be discussed in the context of the reality of the intermediary level and its role in micropolitical struggles in the context of Guattari's work and the work of the new materialists. First, the issue of scale (as I'm sure Guattari would agree) also exists in vertical dimensions from the molecular to the molar. Thinking vertically, neither the molecular nor the molar constitute "endpoints" but rather unknown thresholds of the limits to the production of life. On the molecular level, we can include imperceptible affects, the frontiers of quantum mechanics, dark matter, and who knows what other microscopic horrors. On the molar level, we can include the limits of the machinic assemblage that is capitalism on the most generalized level, which are also unidentifiable. At the same time, the vertical layers between the molecular, the intermediary, and the molar are infinite in themselves, layered like many thin pancakes. This complex ontology should not preclude experimentation at the institutional scale, although I would argue that other dangers lurk in the context of these kinds of interventions.

Secondly, Guattari does not fully elaborate the political implications of subjectivity experimentations on the institutional level (i.e. politicizing subjectivity in the presence of or within the institutional dimension of life). Labor itself, so tied now to survival, perhaps even more so than in Marx's time (desire for survival in the context a greater number of desires deemed necessary for meaningful survival—in the context of a new definition of needs and meaningfulness through consumption), may actually be more powerful and more difficult to resist in the context of the institutional dimension. Fear of losing something that one finds

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meaningful (or necessary) like a job, itself stifles creativity in the institutional context. This is, finally, a critique that can be levied at Guattari's work. He gave the options for micropolitical, molar, and ecological revolutions of desire, but not the tools of the unconscious that can make these interventions more realizable in the context of the survival function of the institution (i.e. its necessity to survival in the context of late capitalism), and in some respects, he also neglected the subjectivizing functions of the material in favor of a complex ontological diagram which eventually overshadowed some of those material elements of asignifying semiotics, for example.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Guattari (2009) refers to psychoanalysis as "the best of all capitalist drugs" (p. 147) because it limits any discussion of desire in society to the domain of the professional psychiatric environment. Any desire that does not fit with the necessities of capitalism is only allowed expression in this particular institutional context; the liberation of desire constitutes the Guattarian project writ large (Guattari 2009). Clarifying this position, Guattari (2009) continues to relate capitalism and psychoanalysis to one another, saying that

> Desire is always deterritorialized-deterritorializing; it passes over and under all barriers…[Psychoanalysis] serves capitalism as a substitute religion. Its function is to update repression, to give it a personal touch so it sells better…Sin and confession don't work the way they used to. Desire has to be given leeway. Gadgets aren't enough. Something imperishable, waterproof, and [not liable to deterioration], an interminable ritual. Once hooked on this new drug, there is no longer any reason to fear that the subject will truly invest its energy into social struggle. (p. 148)

Capitalism's production of desire (and therefore of subjectivity) does not just produce desire as satisfied through druglike affects of conspicuous consumption, it also produces desire through infestation. Where psychoanalysis is the "best of all capitalist drugs," neoliberalism becomes the best of all capitalist bugs! Computers sometimes spread viruses, and neoliberalism spreads such an individualizing virus that one's entire lifetime may now be spent mostly in front of a

computer screen. It is particularly interesting that Deleuze and Guattari characterize becoming as a process of becoming virulent, since capitalist occupies and infiltrates through infection as well.

Can technology constitute the methadone with which we ween ourselves away from the capitalist drugs or by contrast, are there certain kinds of technologies that are not only drugs that capture imaginative desire and re-orient it towards production, but which also act themselves as virulent proliferation machines that infect subjectivity? Put differently, since capitalism initiated the production of many of these technologies, how useful are they to overcoming capitalism itself? This is an unanswered question that mirrors Marx's own technological optimism. But there is always a danger in relying too much on technological optimism, just as hollow calls for environmental sustainability or sustainable development hinge on the ability of technology to liberate us from environmental degradation in the long run.

Conclusion

Fundamentally, and in alliance with the work of Félix Guattari himself, this project has sought to place the production of subjectivity, and ecological subjectivity in particular, at the center of its analysis. Guattari himself admits that this road to transforming societies for the better is less philosophical popular than other methods of inquiry. He says,

> In the name of the primacy of infrastructures, of structures or systems, subjectivity still gets a bad press, and those who deal with it, in practice or in theory, will generally only approach it arm's length, with infinite precautions, taking care never to move too far away from pseudo-scientific paradigms, preferably borrowed from the hard sciences…It is though a scientist superego demands that psychic entities are reified and insists that they are only understood by means of extrinsic coordinates. Under such conditions, it is no surprise that the human and social sciences have condemned themselves to missing the intrinsically progressive, creative and auto-positioning dimensions of processes of subjectification. In this context, it appears crucial to me that we rid ourselves of all scientistic references and metaphors in order to forge new paradigms that are instead ethico-aesthetic in inspiration. (Guattari, 2000, p. 37)

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Though this project tries to re-invigorate the long-neglected work of Félix Guattari for the

production of an ecological politics, this project also cannot contain itself within these specific

parameters. Write like a rhizome, to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari (2004). I have attempted

here to bring in some other disparate elements of thought in order to place them in conversation

with one another; new materialism in particular serves as useful because it brings to bear the

effects of the planetary on the production of resentment, anxiety (Connolly, 2017) and feminist

politics as well (Ahmed, 2014a, 2014b).

Importantly, what might a politics of becoming-ecological entail? Are there concrete

practices that can illuminate this kind of productive engagement with the world through an

assertion of a right to singularity? Though I mention this in the conclusion as well, this point

marks a difficult venture into uncertainty. Certainly, practices like meditation, cavorting in the

natural world, and a reflection on ourselves more generally could all constitute vague starting

points, though of course "survival" and tactics of the self, as both Ahmed (in the first instance)

and Connolly (in the second instance) note, also constitute starting points. Perhaps Connolly's

call for a general strike may point us in some interesting directions as well, even if he doesn't

call for a novel production of ecological subjectivity specifically.

For example, Connolly (2017) acknowledges the inequality inherent in any politics of

becoming, in any revolutionary praxis in the context of the constitutive inequality that currently

characterizes the global landscape. In this regard, he argues that

> Many either outside the old capitalist states or in their urban centers face the most
> adverse consequences of the Anthropocene while having made the least contribution to it.
> This asymmetry itself, if publicized and dramatized often and loudly enough, can provide
> incentives to join a cross--regional movement crystallizing in general strikes. (p. 148)

His call to become more attentive and sensitive to the entangled, self-organizing, and fragile

nature of the world also matters for cultivating this politics of ecological (though he does not call

it this) becoming. Other options include becoming-imperceptible to the capitalist system itself by asserting whatever characteristics one deems unique and constitutive of oneself outside the capitalist system and its practices of social subjection, for example. Of course, this becomes a question of tactics, a question of constantly negotiating and continually moving inside and outside of the capitalism system itself.

For example, another seemingly simple and ecological option is to rephrase the often elitist and capitalist question that is posed when two strangers meet one another for the first time. Instead of asking "What do you do for a living?" perhaps we should start asking "How do you ground your life and yourself in the world that you inhabit?" Especially in underprivileged circles, capitalist questions about employment and statist questions that invoke "belonging to a nation" can be particularly insidious, unhelpful, and sometimes outright painful. Again, this is a simple suggestion, but it also ties a notion of existential and ecological becoming in the world to a notion of habitation of the planet, not of tying soil to an enclosed notion of belonging to a nation but rather opening up the possibilities of belonging to assertions of selfhood and acts that one conceives of as constitutive of oneself in the world. In short, these kinds of revolutionary questions tie the material life which one embodies to the existential life which one perceives as meaningful to oneself and to one's community. Let us be fully aware that this question is not merely individual, but also imbued with numerous collectively produced subjectivities (as all subjectivities are anyway).

Briefly, the concluding section of my project also revisits the other ecological strains of thought under examination in order to illuminate their remaining merits which may prove useful to the re-imagining of the eco-subject as well. We cannot fully detach ourselves from these traditions, since they may as yet have unnoticed resonances that fit within a critical materialism

of entangled ecologies, though I would argue that the perspectives detailed in this chapter currently hold the most promise, it would be too arborescent to conclude that the other radical ecopolitical traditions have nothing of value to say about the production of eco-subjects.

Ultimately, becoming-eco-machinic through an engagement with materiality constitutes only one entry point into revitalizing the relationship between humans and numerous ecologies in ethical and politically viable directions. If we continually think about the idea of producing habitats, however, I would argue that this project becomes slightly less daunting. Almost everyone can agree on their own desire to occupy a space that promotes peacefulness or milieu-compatibility. The idea of producing ourselves through a focus on eco-habitability, a politics of becoming, and the reversal of who is on trial in the production of subjectivity and the satiation of collective desires constitutes a useful starting point for becoming eco-machinic subjects, for re-imagining what the world can look like from the perspective of planetary entanglement and molecular productions of subjectivity, such as the promises of re-appropriating the domain of asignifying semiotics in "unnatural," or "queer," subjectivation directions. Follow the lines of flight that appear; recognize that those lines of flight always have implications for the collective production of novel subjectivities. We must tread carefully in order to care for ourselves in this context; but we also must be experimentally and experientially open to new possibilities, to a new political re-imagining of the machinic productions of desire. This requires not only Connolly's understanding of new sensitivities to materiality (and fragility), but also an embrace of uncertainty, a politics of refusal to assign one's parts to the whole (Ahmed's major contribution to a minoritarian politics of becoming), a becoming-partial as a political act of refusal, resistance, and creative becoming-ecological, of inhabiting the spaces which are currently deemed uninhabitable by the capitalist mode of production of subjectivity. The future

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of the planet depends on a new planetary ecological politics of becoming that ruptures the capitalist domination of subjectivity production and the capture of desire. Capitalism makes the planet uninhabitable as well as certain subjectivities uninhabitable; these resonating repressions of desire and habitability can come together in a politics of becoming-different, by becoming-communist and maximizing the production of singularities in a way that ruptures capitalism from the inside (the only real option for rupture anyway). Expose the ruptures; inhabit the ruptures, and collectively produce life differently. If we could, we surely would become-different, rupture the logic of the certainty with which capitalism inscribes subjectivities as tied to transcendental, grounded, arborescent poles of the production of life. Of course, the future of sparrows, snails, and the planet itself also depends on the success or failure of this political project. As climate change accelerates, so must we become-imperceptible through a politics of speedy inhabitation of in-betweenness and uncertainty.

CONCLUSION: RE-IMAGINING ECOLOGICAL SUBJECTIVITIES

The environmental problems addressed by my research cannot elicit solutions of an enclosed type, since the problems of ecological degradation, climate change, and alienation from the natural world require an urgency of pluralist integration of numerous open-ended political possibilities for the sake of the production of plural subjectivities. At the same time, however, this project began in urgency in order to address the current environmental crisis in light of the contemporary condition of human entanglement with nature and its deeply disturbing and seemingly irreversible consequences for the planet. Below, I sketch the promises of the theoretical perspectives examined in my project, while also emphasizing the importance of a robust incorporation of subjectivity into any ecopolitical project since ecological destruction is profoundly impacted by the production of subjectivity and humanity's understandings of itself.

For instance, some ecological subjects will personify Arne Naess himself, where their attachment to nature derives directly from their robust experiences in nature and where those experiences cultivate a profound respect and feeling of inherent interconnectedness and intrinsic relatedness. A strategy of environmental education and immersion in nature in schools could cultivate these sensitivities as well, though of course this solution cannot constitute a panacea given deep ecology's troubling tendencies toward fascism and therefore, anti-ecology in the broadest sense (since inhabiting our ecologies cannot be confined to inhabiting the natural world in the ways that deep ecology offers). Nevertheless, not everyone will or can proceed along the same path, and therefore deep ecology's understanding that the self remains embedded in the natural world in a way that demands our attention remains valuable. Deep ecology and ecofeminism both share an affinity for using the human senses to gain access to a natural world

that is otherwise obscured by the rapid pace of life in the West. Of course, these kinds of practices are usually cultivated at the individual level, which also problematizes deep ecology's solution to the problem of ecological degradation and makes it particularly vulnerable to co-optation by capitalism. For example, perhaps those who can embody some sort of ecological subjectivity in the ways that deep ecology envisions are also those who are most easily able to navigate their individuality through a condition of privilege that allows them access to some presumably "unspoiled" landscape. Although this is clearly not entirely possible in the context of the Anthropocene, the illusion that it is possible remains rigidly embedded in the Global North and in certain privileged communities with access to this ultimately illusory understanding of nature. Still, cultivation of care for the natural world should never be eschewed altogether, even if produced somewhat problematically and naively.

Additionally, I don't think that we can or should deny that ecofeminist insights also remain valuable in the context of producing an ecological subject. For instance, the way that women are by default associated with nature means that their subjectivities are produced in particular ways that result in domination by capitalism (See Warren, [1996] for a discussion of the association of women with nature in relation to the domination of each category).

Likewise, ecosocialism gives ecopolitical theory another important understanding of the ecological subject with its various understandings of the second contradiction of capitalism (See O'Connor, 1996) and the theory of metabolic rift (See Foster, York, and Clark, 2010) which may also be useful conceptualizations of the way that capitalism operates at the macro or structural level. Moreover, and equally importantly, ecosocialism also characterizes the self as embedded in and produced by capitalism, a materialist insight necessary to my own project. As mentioned in Chapter 4, capitalism attempts to become an enclosed structural (arborescent) facet of all

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human, organic, and inorganic "life" on the planet. Treating capitalism as if it has been relatively successful in accomplishing this task, as ecosocialists tend to do, may prove useful for understanding how it is viewed from the perspective of many people in the West under capitalism's spell. Indeed, capitalism often successfully naturalizes itself in the hearts, desires, and minds of its consumers and detractors alike. By understanding capitalism from the perspective of historical materialism, ecosocialists reify the capitalism system into its form as an economic system of production rather than also as a system of the production of subjectivity. There is no denying, in short, that capitalism is very good at masking its unnaturalness, its arbitrariness, its processes which target not merely the mode of production but the mode of production of subjectivity. It is an assemblage, an abstract machine, a rhizomatic virus capable of investing itself into humanity's most intimate desires, affects, and subjectivities.

Moreover, if humans tend to view capitalism as natural, as merely an economic system of production, this reification underestimates and masks its other material effects and productive capacities. By understanding capitalism in the way that ecosocialism does, ecopolitical theorists concerned with overcoming capitalism may be able to pinpoint how capitalism naturalizes its processes and in fact operates in a way that constantly seeks out new objects to incorporate into its attempts at enclosure.

In short, viewing capitalism as historically produced through material revolutions in production (as ecosocialism does) illuminates the ways that it has been naturalized in the psyches and subjectivities of its targets of subjectivation and the possible openings therein. Just as capitalism cannot be contained in any arborescent and historical materialist schema, it also proves politically useful to act as if the impossibility of enclosure is invisible to those under its sensuously captivating and drug-inducing effects.

Human apathy towards nature and existential anxiety in the context of the Anthropocene may in fact derive from a similar problem related to a misrecognition of capitalism as natural. If we view capitalism merely as another mode of production in the movement of material history, it becomes not only more difficult to overcome, but more benign because it can be assimilated as just another production process that needs to be overcome in the context of historical materialist motion. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the entire idea of entanglement cannot be easily assimilated to a dialectical method of the movement of material history, since capitalism itself for example exists neither as its reified economized form, nor as a discrete entity in any meaningful sense of the word. At the same time, even with its productivist and economized orientation, ecosocialism recognizes that capitalism is good at its job, of overcoming what they refer to as contradictions. Though Guattari would probably classify this talent as precarious at best, when one gap in the enclosure is virulently infected, more lines of flight may also become available. There is really no method (including dialecticism and its historical materialist orientation) that can capture these movements of speed, infection, and uncertain capture.

Additionally, ecosocialism targets capitalism first and foremost and even a structural and productivist view of capitalism illuminates at least some of its important operations (like the production of the division of labor or what Lazzarato [2014] refers to as "social subjection," for example). Capitalism has rarely been targeted as a machinic process, and this is one of Guattari's key contributions in that regard. This does not mean that its structuralist components (or the illusion of these components) does not also require rigorous intervention and political action. Again, there is no panacea, and therefore any project that targets capitalism and its relationship to the destruction of nature remains vital as a contribution to an understanding of the production of eco-subjects. Importantly, ecosocialism can help illuminate a distinction noted by Boundas

(2018) where "Only in relation to molar formations will the part-objects of the molecular order give the impression that they lack integrity" (p. 5). Ecosocialism sees the forest; Guattari's work understands that the trees in the forest have no pattern, but they aren't supposed to have a set pattern in the first place. The trees in the forest are distributed rhizomatically.

Moreover, becoming-sensitive and becoming-ecological constitute similar practices of becoming which may also prove useful for the production of ecological subjectivities outside of capitalism's grasp which both new materialism and Félix Guattari's work point towards. As mentioned throughout Chapters 3, 4, and 5, a politics of becoming oriented toward the various novel ontological commitments offered by Guattari and Connolly, respectively, constitutes a useful start to a new ecopolitics. Whether we refer to this political project as a politics of becoming or a new sensitivity, an existential assertion of difference, or a political (and therefore, collective) experimentation of the self, the importance of these novel becomings cannot be understated. An existential sensitivity to becoming attempts to inhabit entanglement and the openings within material entanglement produced by capitalism. A politics of becoming also allows the assertion of difference and singularity that rejects the dualistic and structuralist enclosure that places humans and nature in opposition to one another as metaphysically and ontologically distinct categories. We must become eco-machinic subjects; we must inhabit these milieus differently. Humans cannot afford to eschew experimental and subjective experimentation in favor of a hollow certainty of self and one's place in the ecologies of the world (of which there are probably also more than Guattari's own three, as Bogue [2018] notes, for example). At least if there really are "a thousand ecologies," as Bogue's (2018) article suggests, the sites of potential eco-becomings also proliferate, making for more ways to inhabit the planetary messiness that characterizes the planetary milieu, the plane of immanence.

Additionally, I have a few important suggestions for expanding the project laid out here. For example, my project has not only tried to clarify the relationship between ecology, subjectivity, and capitalism but also how various conceptions of ontology in ecopolitical theory intervene in this triad relationship. In this regard, a few questions remain that may be useful to interrogate. First, and perhaps least importantly, Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) understanding of the metaphysical identicalness (See Welchman, 2008) between humans and nature may not only prove useful for its utility to political praxis, but also for its resonances with the other theories examined in my project (especially deep ecology and new materialism). Likewise, Félix Guattari's (2013) understanding of his "four functors" (mentioned briefly in Chapter 4) may prove useful in the creative production of ecological subjectivities as this production relates to a novel ontological understanding of the world.

Moreover, the specific operations of capitalism also require greater attention from ecopolitical theorists for their specific effects on subjectivity. My project has largely theorized capitalism's impacts on subjectivity and the prospects for ecopolitics therein in an abstract way that emphasizes material entanglement and capitalism's infection of subjectivities to the detriment of human desire and possibilities of becoming-different, ecological, and non-capitalist in the world. At the same time, a further elaboration of the possibilities for the production of ecological subjectivities requires, as Guattari (1992) notes, the "maximizing" of the possible "number of existential refrains" (p. 50). Likewise, the ways in which collective subjectivities become path-dependent and pathologized under capitalism becomes important in this respect.

Ultimately, as mentioned in the introduction to my project, an elaboration of subjectivity cannot constitute the only political path towards treating nature better, but it does constitute the most neglected political option for reimagining the human-nature relationship in ecopolitical

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theory. Incorporating this neglected realm of subjectivity in my project then also remains in line with Guattari's understanding of "maximization" of a variety of becomings and existential assertions of subjectivity as necessary to overcoming capitalism and inhabiting the world through an incorporation of these becomings into an ecopolitical project of difference and care of the Earth and of our mental, social, and environmental ecologies. Focusing on the production of subjectivity, at the very least, inaugurates an important connection between how we position ourselves ontologically in the world and the ways in which we are much too easily able to destroy that same world that we claim to inhabit with meaning on a daily basis. The destruction of habitats relates to our own future prospects (and the prospects of future peoples) for inhabiting the planet that, as far as we know, only exists in the here and now. If we do not "get ourselves together" and recognize that our ability to inhabit our environment, our social milieu, and our own psyche is on the edge of catastrophe (or already experiencing catastrophe in many senses) than not only have we neglected to pay attention to our entanglements with the rest of nature, but we have also neglected the relation of ourselves to that world and to one another. Capitalism structurally, materially, and existentially prevents much of this more ethical inhabitation of these various ecologies, but it does not constitute an impenetrable fortress. The first step to "capitalizing" on capitalism's openings is to pay attention to how we can (and sometimes do) inhabit the world differently and the effects of the material world on our understanding of ourselves.

The project of becoming-different, becoming-ecological always also situates itself in the context of differentially situated individuals and collectivities and this important contextualization of my ecopolitical project was elaborated in Chapter 5 (and via Ahmed's work as well). This situatedness also has profound implications for the political possibilities of

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becoming that these differentially situated groups may or may not be able to practice.

Unfortunately, the less privileged in contemporary societies also tend to embody physical places

and social categories that are predicted to be (and in fact already are being) most negatively

affected by environmental degradation and climate change. Given this profound cycle of

injustice, a political project of becoming-ecological must first and foremost pay close attention to

and try to amplify, listen to, and encourage these micropolitical and often less perceptible

becomings-different in the world. This, too, is another task to engage with more substantially in

order to bring to light the issues of inequality that inevitably cross any ecopolitical project that

attempts to overthrow capitalism, the domination of nature, and the neglect of subjectivity that

partially allows these cycles of destruction to precede unimpeded in the world.

Ultimately, inequality also intersects with the production of subjectivities via power, and

via capitalist power, in particular. The neglect of the production of subjectivity in ecopolitical

theory requires even greater attention than my project can provide, but I hope that I have at least

opened the door to a more robust examination of these questions. Félix Guattari's work should

specifically be granted a more robust role in ecopolitical theory, given its uniqueness for

understanding the production of subjectivity in relation to capitalism and the three ecologies.

Entanglement pervades the social, the mental, and the environmental ecologies, and therefore a

practical understanding of material entanglement both as an ontological condition of humanity

and an uncertain condition that requires revolutions in the three ecologies requires the attention

of ecopolitical theorists. These revolutionary becomings must embody the communist ethos that

Guattari and Negri (1990) characterize as the maximization of existential assertions that refuse

capitalism's tendency to mask entanglement and infect human desire, to the detriment of our

collectively inhabited ecological world.

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