

# **Beyond the End of History?**

*An Exploration of the Relationship Between  
Deep Ecology and Liberal Democracy*

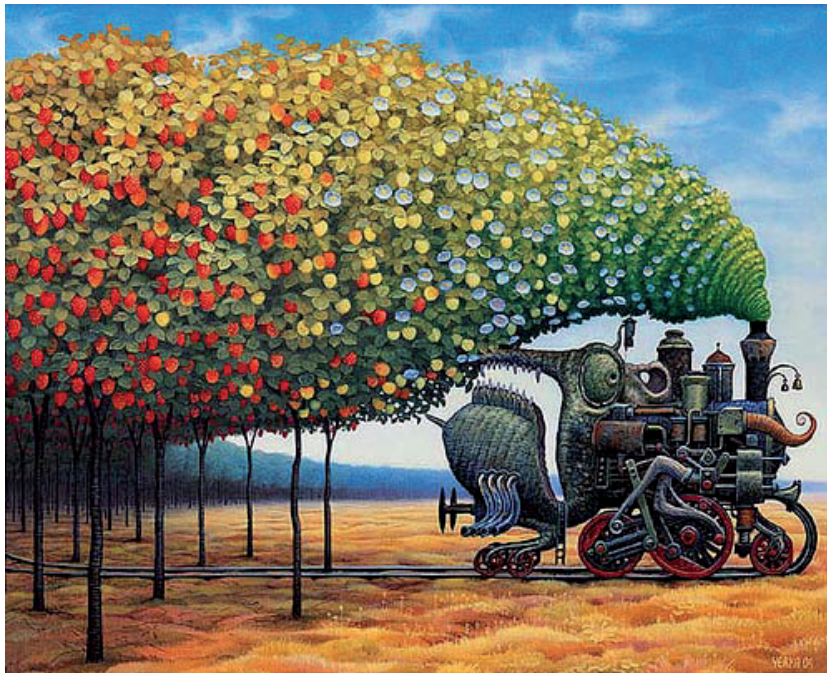


Image by Jacek Yerka, Poland: *Steamberry Train* (2005)

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*In the memory of my departed parents*



BRAND: Verre tider; verre syner gjennom fremtidsnatten lyner! Britens kvalme stenkullsky senker sort seg over landet, smusser alt det friske grønne, kveler alle spirer skjønne, stryker lavt, med giftstoff blandet, stjeler sol og dag fra egnen, drysser ned, som askeregnen over oldtids dømte by.

[BRAND: Viler times and visions light luridly the Future's night! Britain's coal smoke, foul and black, sinking o'er the land is seen, chokes and smirches on its track every freshening shoot of green, makes the country sunshine pale where its poison-clouds are rolled, drizzles like the ashen hail over that doomed town of old...]

- Henrik Ibsen, *Brand* (1866)

“Man has always lost his way. He has been a tramp ever since Eden; but he always knew, or thought he knew, what he was looking for. But in the bleak and blinding hail of skepticism to which he has been now so long subjected, he has begun for the first time to be chilled, not merely in his hopes, but in his desires. For the first time in history he begins really to doubt the object of his wanderings on the earth. He has always lost his way; but now he has lost his address”.

- Gilbert Keith Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World* (1910)

“Den lange, lange sti over myrene og ind i skogene hvem har trukket op den? Manden, mennesket, den første som var her. Det var ingen sti før ham. Siden fulgte et og andet dyr de svake spor over moer og myrer og gjorde dem tydeligere, og siden igjen begyndte en og anden lap å snuse stien op og gå den når han skulde fra fjæld til fjæld og se til sin ren. Slik blev stien til gjennom den store almenning som ingen eiet, det herreløse land”.

[“The long, long road over the moors and up into the forest – who trod it into being first of all? Man, a human being, the first that came here. There was no path before he came. Afterward, some beast or other, following the faint tracks over marsh and moorland, wearing them deeper; after these again some Lapp gained scent of the path, and took that way from field to field, looking to his reindeer. Thus was made the road through the great Almenning – the common tracts without an owner; no-man's land”].

- Knut Hamsun, *Markens grøde/Growth of the Soil* (1917)



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Trondheim, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011,  
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## 1.0 Introduction



Image by Daniel Conway: *Forever Lost* (2003)

*"Confusion about the future of capitalism—compounded by a confidence in technological progress beclouded by intermittent certainties of catastrophe and disaster—is at least as old as the late nineteenth century; but few periods [like the one we now inhabit] have proved as incapable of framing immediate alternatives for themselves, let alone of imagining those great Utopias that have occasionally broken on the status quo like a sunburst".*

- Fredric Jameson (2008: 644) -

For many, the year of 1992 signified the final transition into a post-utopian era. The Cold War was laid to rest, and the main adversary of liberal democracy – the Soviet Union and the socialist Second World – had recently imploded. In that year, the overwhelming sense of denouement was commented upon by a plethora of voices. Francis Fukuyama stands out among them as the most conspicuous medium of the liberal *Zeitgeist*. According to Fukuyama (1992) this climax was understood as "the end of history". It was not "the end" in the sense that there would not be any more dramatic events. Fukuyama opined it was "the end" in the sense that all of the really big questions had been settled. By 1992, liberal democracy remained the only coherent political aspiration that spanned different regions and cultures around the globe. At this liberal apogee Fukuyama argued that liberal democracy constitutes the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution" and the "final form of human government," and as such constituted the "end of history" (ibid: 4).

On the other side of the Atlantic – in France, and still in 1992 – Luc Ferry continued to flog the apparently dead horse of totalitarianism. As a Liberal, he was probably sympathetic to his American counterpart (though not referring to him). But Ferry did not quite share Fukuyama’s outlook. The excesses of Fascism and Stalinism might (at least temporarily) be recognized among the disillusioned subversives, but to bury political militantism altogether, would probably be unbearable for those who are alienated by liberal democracy: ”After two centuries of messianic utopias, the conversion to reformism seems rather unexalted, too tame, too flat to seduce militants, who the death of communism and leftism have left in a state of shock” (Ferry 1992: xx). Where the old star had faded, a new one had to be sought. This time in the guise of radical environmentalism, and especially in its branch of *deep ecology* (ibid.). According to Ferry, the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss (1912-2009) ”was the first to present its ideal-type” (ibid: 61).

Ferry did not expect major insurgencies against liberal democracy any time soon, but the subversive challenge would at least stay dormant (ibid: xxi). Especially as long as the environmental problems remain unresolved. According to him, deep ecology is a perfect example of *les extrêmes se touchent* with the capability of uniting both extreme Right and Left. Either in the name of romantic nostalgia of the distant past, or in the name of revolutionary hope invested in a radiant and distant future. Hence, the power of deep ecology is in one movement to combine both the traditional themes of the extreme Right and the futurist ideas of the extreme Left (ibid: xxvii). Based upon these statements, the commanding question of this thesis is:

*Conceptually speaking, how may deep ecology be compatible with or antagonistic to liberal democracy?*

How do I justify this research question? The nuances within it are important. If I relied solely upon the adjective ”compatible” when trying to define the relationship, that would close my question too much as I would implicitly insist on some kind of ”compatibility” *a priori*. However, I do not know. That is why I need an alternative avenue: the conjunctive ”or” opens up the possibility of other constellations, without necessarily making the question too broad to handle. My project not only attempts to describe the relationship between deep ecology and liberal democracy theoretically, but also to map out how this relationship is. That signifies an explorative project. The methodological approach will be accounted for more thoroughly in section 1.3. In the next section the main protagonists of this thesis – Arne Næss and Luc

Ferry – are being presented and contextualized. They revolve around the key concepts of this thesis: ecology and democracy.

### 1.1 Luc Ferry and Arne Næss

Luc Ferry (b. 1951) has been more than just a scholar. Since the 1990s he has been in the position of what Perry Anderson (2004) calls a "court philosopher", with connections to the echelons of power in Paris. Ferry was Minister for Education under President Jacques Chirac from 2002 until 2004 (ibid.). Ferry has sometimes been associated with a loose amalgam called "the New Philosophers" [*nouveaux philosophes*], whose onslaught against the spirit of 1968 in general and on Marxism in particular helped secure "the subordination of politics to ethics, in the name of human rights" (Lecourt [1999] 2001: 121). At least in the prevailing rhetorics and discourse since the end of 1980s. Other figures who have been labeled as "New Philosophers" are for instance Alain Renaut – Ferry's co-writer on several occasions – and more famously the triad of André Glucksmann, Alain Finkielkraut and Bernard-Henri Lévy (Kritzman et al. 2006: 596).

Some of these "New Philosophers" – for instance Glucksmann – were ex-Maoists<sup>1</sup> and/or former pupils of Louis Althusser (1918-1990), who was often referred to as a "Structural" Marxist (Lecourt [1999] 2001: 11 & 47). In the mid-1970s this group began to revive the concept of totalitarianism in their renouncement of Marxism and Nietzscheanism, which were both almost conflated with the Nazi ideology (Kritzman et al. 2006: 596). A common theme among "the New Philosophers" has been a defence of Republican democracy and what they regard as the "universal and eternal" values inherited from the French Enlightenment (ibid.).

Ferry and Renaut ([1985] 1992: 105) have stated that human rights are in crisis because humanism is in crisis. And it is from this position we should understand Ferry's distrust of deep ecology, since adherents of the latter label themselves as "anti-humanists". Ferry never castigates Arne Næss directly in *The New Ecological Order*, but does not hide his suspicions against the movement Næss initiated. If deep ecology is crypto-totalitarian, then so

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<sup>1</sup> "The New Philosophers" are perhaps the closest European equivalents to the American Neoconservatives. Like the former, many American Neoconservatives also had a Marxist background (though not Maoists, but Trotskyists). They also share many views regarding foreign policy, for instance that the world should be purged of anti-democratic and anti-liberal regimes, if necessary by military force (Cooper 2011: 34).

must Næss be as well? We will leave that question to the coming chapters. However, biographical accounts of Næss from the 1940s, the research he conducted on peace and democracy in the 1950s, as well as his Gandhian outlook makes it counterintuitive to believe that he could be a totalitarian.

During World War II Næss was drawn into the resistance movement, and in the fall of 1943 he played a central role in foiling a Nazi attempt to deport students from Oslo to concentration camps for "reeducation" (Glasser [2004] 2005: xxxiii). After the war Næss interrogated former Nazi collaborators, but at the same time he wanted to bring together suspected torturers and the families of torture victims to gain a sense of closure on the fate of their relatives (ibid.). Næss did not want the persecuted renegades to endure similar ordeals (ibid.). Whether or not Ferry has been aware of Næss's background is a matter of speculation. But it seems not.

The range of topics Næss touched upon are at best trying for our increasingly compartmentalized academic communities. The difficulties of studying Næss are compounded by the apparent discontinuity of his positions. He does not fit within any grid of contemporary academic specialization. Næss was not a stationary being, but rather philosophically evolving most of his life. During his doctoral studies in Vienna in the 1930s Næss acquainted the Vienna Circle, and his thesis from 1936 [*Erkenntnis und wissenschaftlichen Gehalten*] firmly defends a staunch empiricism (Eriksen 1999: xvii).<sup>2</sup> In 1939 Næss became Norway's youngest professor ever at the age of twenty-seven. And until 1954 he was Norway's only professor of philosophy (Glasser [2004] 2005: xix).

Næss had a profound influence on Norwegian academic life and the society as a whole. Though a kind of parallel to Ferry, Næss was an unmatched Leviathan of the Norwegian education system in a way Ferry never was within the French equivalent. Næss was chiefly responsible for organizing courses for the *examen philosophicum* with introductory examinations in logic, methodology and history of philosophy that an entire generation of undergraduates (roughly 100 000 people) were required to take, regardless of their disciplinary focus (ibid.). Næss exposed himself early as an academic maverick: he had a passion for Indian and Chinese thinkers of ancient origins and included Buddha and Confucius in his philosophy curriculum. How did Næss reconcile this with the analytical

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<sup>2</sup> The basic claim of *empiricism* is that all knowledge should be based on experience (Moses & Knutsen 2007: 24).



rigour required by the Vienna circle he frequented in the 1930s? That is a psychological<sup>3</sup> question beyond the scope of this thesis, but his relationship with the Austrians was complicated. He often maintained that their logical positivism<sup>4</sup> did not influence him substantially (Eriksen 1999: xvii). But in *Hva er filosofi?* [*What is Philosophy?*] (1965) Næss depicts himself as an “archempiricist” in contrast to the so-called armchair philosophers.

In the early 1950s Næss was eagerly reading the Danish existentialist Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Especially *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift* [*Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*] (1846) influenced Næss’s later views on the values of education. His interpretation of Kierkegaard’s message was that open inquiry does not end with specialized knowledge or specific truths about factual matters (Næss 1968: 196ff). It seeks to unite all ways of knowing and feeling, and hence integrate the life as a whole (ibid.). This thinking intersects with the theme of “Self-realization” which is prevalent in deep ecology, an aspect we will return to in chapters four and five. In the 1960s Næss became acquainted with the new Continental wave of Existentialism represented by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) (Glasser [2004] 2005: xxii). This new interest signified, or rather coincided with, “the spiritual turn” of Næss.

Many were mystified by his ostensible *volte-face*. Was this merely the result of an aging man’s obtuse sentimentalism? Already in the decades ahead there were fissures in his scientific (not to be confused with “scientific”) attitude. His fascination for Eastern mysticism is one aspect, but also his lifelong interest in the pantheism – the view that Nature and God are identical – of Benedict de Spinoza renders him heretical from a strict empiricist view (though Næss did not really believe in “God”). As we shall see in chapter four, the Spinozist ontology became (and has remained) the bedrock of deep ecology. Næss’s inaugural acquaintance with Spinoza predated the initiation of deep ecology by more than

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<sup>3</sup> After psychoanalytic sessions with Freud’s noted collaborator Dr. Edvard Hitschmann (1871-1957), Næss came to understand himself as a *Panzercharakter* (a person with an impenetrable shell) (Glasser [2004] 2005: xxiii). The early Næss regarded art, music and poetry as being seduced by emotions, but viewed empirical science and philosophy as sanctuaries where “objectivity” reigned (ibid.).

<sup>4</sup> The logical positivists subscribed to a single demarcation principle: the principle of verification. They argued that all scientific statements had one particular quality in common: that they could be tested and deemed true or false (Moses & Knutsen 2007: 38).

forty years (Fox 1995: 104). This fact alone makes it tempting to think that the “spiritual turn” of Næss was less drastic than one might suppose. Did his “nascent mysticism” actually incubate for decades behind his armoured empiricist shell?<sup>5</sup> That remains a matter of speculation. In the next section we will contextualize Næss furthermore in terms of the key concept “ecology” and other environmental discourses.

## 1.2 On Ecology

Ecology as a science signifies the adaptation of organisms to their surroundings (Bessey et al . 1902: 594). The prefix “eco” is derived from the Greek word *oikos* [οἶκος], which means “household”. The suffix “logy” is derived from another Greek word: *logia* [λογία], and conveys “study of”. So ecology literally denotes “the study of the household”, where household is the foundation of every life on earth (Næss 1998: 105). The term was invented in 1866 by the German biologist Ernest Haeckel (1834-1919) in his book *Generelle Morphologie* (Stauffer 1957: 138).<sup>6</sup> Haeckel openly stressed the influence of Charles Darwin. The latter did not encapsulate the adaptation of organisms within the term of “ecology”, but he described the phenomena as either the “economy of nature” (Darwin [1859] 1999: 86) or as “polity of nature” (ibid: 93). The economy of nature has places where the struggle for existence and natural selection occur (ibid: 86).

Very few scientists have been so thoroughly politicized as Darwin. Both Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Haeckel contributed to the advent of Social Darwinism,

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<sup>5</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) was another maverick who aberrated substantially from the strict logical positivism of the Vienna Circle, whose original impetus was fueled by him. Interestingly, Wittgenstein’s deviation from (and challenge against) scientism is probably more fundamental than that of Næss: “There are indeed things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is *mystical*” (Wittgenstein [1921] 1974: 6.522). And: “It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists” (ibid: 6.44).

<sup>6</sup> In *Generelle Morphologie* he introduced *the Biogenetic Law*: “Die Ontogenesis ist eine [...] Rekapitulation der Phylogenesis” (Haeckel 1866: 300). In other words, this law states that the embryological development of the individual (*ontogeny*) repeats the stages in the evolutionary development of the species (*phylogeny*). For example, the beginnings of gill clefts appear in both humans and fish. While they are elaborated and eventually function in the fish, in humans they disappear as the embryo develops (*The Columbia Encyclopedia* 2008).

an ideology where the evolutionary concept of natural selection functioned as an alibi. Spencer has often been portrayed as a fountainhead of the liberalist laissez-faire branch of Social Darwinism, defending the privileges of the socio-economically well-off at the expense of downtrodden lower classes (Hofstadter 1944: 74). It was also Spencer who invented the expression “survival of the fittest” in 1852, which was later adopted by Darwin in 1869 (Leonard 2009: 47). Haeckel on the other side, was ideologically rooted in German Romanticism, and represented the anti-liberal branch of Social Darwinism (Weindling 1993: 46). Parts of his philosophical works were exploited by admiring national socialists. In Haeckel they found justifications for a eugenic policy based on racism and nationalism. Haeckel's dictum “politics is applied biology” was later taken to an extreme under Hitler (ibid.).

The laws of nature – mostly in the narrow sense – have been used to justify numerous ideologies. Social Darwinism is only one of them. Irrespective of their position along the green or non-green axis, the ideologies are highly selective when they are exploiting the attributes of nature. The range of politicizable properties – imagined, exaggerated or real – is not confined to natural selection. Symbiosis<sup>7</sup> – one of the core principles of deep ecology (Næss 1976: 325) – is another property. A symbiotic economy of nature is not about natural selection, but the cohabitation of assorted organisms (Hoppe & Kutschera 2010: 6). Næss did not deny that natural selection and competition are features of nature, but he stressed the primacy of symbiosis and relationism (Næss 1976: 325). Hence, his use of the concept “ecology” deviates from Haeckel and Darwin.

Ecology without the prefix “deep” is a science about the biosphere, forming hypotheses about what *is*. It does not provide prescriptions about what we *ought* to do (Næss 1998: 106). On the other hand, the premises of deep ecology as interpreted by Næss – also labeled as ecosophy – are not limited to explore the human impact on nature. It is also a plea to cherish the entire biosphere (ibid.). The deep ecologists profess an ardour for holism. That constitutes one of the principal disparities between them and mainstream environmentalists. The latter are rubricated under the label “shallow ecology” by Næss and his followers. Mainstream environmentalism is regarded as shallow because it seeks to solve the environmental crisis through technocratic devices (Næss 1976: 117), without adequately

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<sup>7</sup> The term “symbiosis” was originally coined by the German biologist Heinrich Anton de Bary (1831-1888) in 1879 (Hoppe & Kutschera 2010: 1).

questioning its psychological, sociological and political origins. The problemsolving policy of shallow ecology is to fight against pollution and resource depletion (Næss 1973), in a manner which has been called "sustainable development" (Bosselmann 2008: 1). Shallow ecology is most importantly anthropocentric because man is center-stage in its outlook. It is first and foremost for man, because man stands at the summit of the ecosystem. In contrast to shallow ecology, deep ecology is biocentric and postulates biological egalitarianism: equality between the species across the domains<sup>8</sup> of life (Næss 1973).

In order to protect the ecosystem, and effectively fight against pollution and resource depletion, deep ecology seeks a fundamental change of society. The implementation of ecologically responsible policies is sought through decentralization and local autonomy. In addition, deep ecology is in favour of anti-class posture among human beings, which parallels the egalitarianism in the biosphere (ibid.). As mentioned, Spinozist ontology is the bedrock of deep ecology: here the human mind is not "a kingdom within a kingdom", but rather one part of infinite Nature (Gangle 2010: 32). This is understood on the basis of an underlying continuity of nature (ibid: 34). Everything that exists is immanent: Nature subsists together with what it creates (Stewart 2005: 159). I will return to the legacy of Spinoza and his philosophy of immanence in chapter four.

Spinozist ontology runs counter to that of René Descartes (1596-1650). When painted with broad strokes, Cartesian ontology regards man as subject and nature as object (Ferry 1992: 22). According to deep ecologists, mainstream environmentalism – or "shallow ecology" – resides within a Cartesian/anthropocentric mindset: the founding act is human thinking [*cogito ergo sum*] and the earth is an object to humanity's subject (Deluca 2005: 72). According to deep ecologists, this position is clear in mainstream environmentalism where humans act to save the object earth, and this action is motivated by the subject's self-interest

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<sup>8</sup> *Domain* is the category above *kingdoms* within biological taxonomy (Karleskint et al. 2010: 118). Bacteria, archaea and eukaryotes constitute different domains. Originally, within the taxonomy of Carl von Linné (1707-1778), there were only two kingdoms: the animal kingdom [*regnum animale*] and the vegetable kingdom [*regnum vegetabile*] (Linné 1735: 216 & 219). Historically, the number of kingdoms in widely accepted classifications has grown from two to six (Cavalier-Smith 2004: 1251). The kingdoms of plants, animals, protista and fungi are subdivisions of the domain eukarya (Karleskint et al. 2010: 119). Above the domains is *life* as a whole, the highest biological category (ibid.).

(ibid.). Hence, we must save the rain forests because they contain potential medical panacea. We will return to the Spinozist-Cartesian tension in subsection 5.2.3.

As mentioned, deep ecology is sometimes labeled “ecosophy” by Næss. This should not be confused with the concept of biosophy. The latter term was originally coined by the existentialist Peter Wessel Zapffe (1899-1990), Norway’s first ecophilosopher and in many instances a collaborator of Næss. Zapffe introduced a connection between philosophy and the biological place of man. His central point was that man is the ultimate tragic being, because he has learned enough about the world to realize the earth would be better off without his presence (Zapffe [1941] 1996: 619ff). The “biosophic” method was the tool Zapffe utilized when he contemplated the essence of “the tragic”. Furthermore, biosophy is a theory of existence which is oriented towards biology and its annexes (like paleontology) in an empirical fashion (Zapffe [1961] 1999: 66-67). In other words, it is targeted at human reactions of philosophical character as a direct response to physical and biological demands (Hessen 1999: 89).

Though biosophy is “a thought about life” (Zapffe [1941] 1996: 10), it is not directly related with the ecosophy of Næss. In the latter, Nature in its entirety is most central. Biosophy is about “Nature in man”, and hence anthropocentric (Hessen 1999: 88). But there is at least one ecophilosophical link between Næss and Zapffe: the German-Estonian biologist Jakob von Uexküll (1864-1944), who was read closely by Næss in his youth (Glasser [2004] 2005: xiv). Uexküll influenced Zapffe and Næss in different ways. Zapffe’s biosophy echoes one of the central tenets of Uexküll: the environment [*Umwelt*] of the animal is reflected in his inner world [*Innenwelt*] (Uexküll 1909: 13 & 31). For Næss, Uexküll contributed to undermine the pretensions of physical sciences to depict how the reality “really” is: “As the spider spins its threads, every subject spins his relations to certain characteristics of the things around him, and weaves them into a firm web which carries his existence” (quoted in Glasser [2004] 2005: xiv).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Uexküll, when building his “subjective biology” and at the same time criticizing Darwinians for not being scientific enough, was in search for a new methodology (Kull 1999: 390). He used metaphors from music for this purpose: “Gene, Plan und Protoplasma — Noten, Melodie und Klavier. Gene und Plan scheinen stets ganz tadellos zu sein, nur bei ihrer Einwirkung auf das Protoplasma können Störungen vorkommen, die wir experimentell ausnutzen; — wie eine Sonate Beethovens, die auf dem Papier tadellos ist, in ihrer Ausführung auf dem Klavier aber oft recht viel zu wünschen übrig lässt” (Uexküll 1913: 175).

A misunderstanding could rise due to the dichotomy between “shallow ecology” and “deep ecology”. The latter does not have a monopoly on green radicalism – Næss never implied that either – so it will not necessarily follow that you are either “shallow” or “deep”. Rather, you are either mainstream or not mainstream. Among the alternative currents, that of anthroposophy is perhaps most related to deep ecology. As opposed to biosophy – emphasizing “Nature in man” – anthroposophy emphasizes “man in Nature” (Edmunds 2005: 43).

The anthroposophical movement was initiated by the Austrian thinker Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). Both anthroposophy and deep ecology are influenced by Spinoza. In deep ecology, Spinoza is directly transmitted through Næss. But in anthroposophy, Spinoza has an intermediary in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), whose impetus fueled the anthroposophic movement (Steiner [1897] 1963). Though not explicitly referred to by Steiner, Goethe was heavily influenced by Spinoza, who emerged into prominence in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century thanks to Goethe among others (Yovel 1989: x).

Deep ecology and anthroposophy might resemble each other in the way that both emphasize the continuity of Nature: between minerals, plants, animals and humans (Edmunds 2005: 43). Again an echo of Spinoza. But the main difference is that anthroposophy maintains the centrality of man in Nature, since he is thinking (ibid: 44), and hence the prefix “anthro”. Furthermore, deep ecology is not concerned with “etheric” and “astral” bodies, which are important within anthroposophy’s explicitly religious thought (ibid: 51). But the conviction that microbes in the soil are fundamental to the ecological health of the whole, applies to both deep ecology and anthroposophy. This thinking is reflected in the practice of contemporary biodynamic<sup>10</sup> and organic farming (Dimitri 2010: 24).

On a more superficial level, deep ecology slightly resembles the subversiveness of green radicalism as expressed by social ecology and eco-Marxism (Dryzek 2005: 181). All three seek to dismantle the political and economic *status quo*, but deep ecologists are much more focused on changing the collective consciousness than the materialistic social ecologists and eco-Marxists (ibid.). Murray Bookchin (1921-2006) founded social ecology, and was an even harsher critic of Næss and deep ecology than Ferry, as we shall see in chapter four. Bookchin emphasized the social dimension, which is less prevalent in deep ecology. He called the social ecology vision of stateless social order libertarian municipalism

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<sup>10</sup> Steiner provided the foundation of biodynamic agriculture, and his lectures on this topic are published in *The Agriculture Course: Birth of the Biodynamic Method* (Steiner [1924] 2005).

(Bookchin 1986: 37). This is labeled as a confederal society based on the coordination of municipalities in a bottom-up system of administration as distinguished from the top-down rule of the nation-state (Bookchin 1992: 94).

Eco-Marxism is a latecomer among the environmental discourses because environmental degradation has not been a traditional concern of Marxism. It has been considered a mere epiphenomenon of capitalism rather than substantial in its own right (Eckersley 1992: 75).<sup>11</sup> But a possible spectre of ecological collapse is nourishing the subversive impetus among certain Marxists. For instance Joe Kovel, who Dryzek (2005: 209) labels as an “eco-Marxist”. Kovel distances himself from the policies of the Soviet bloc, due to its gross environmental failings. After its demise, the ecological crisis is now seen as a harbinger of the general crisis of capitalism (Kovel [2002] 2005: 422). Capitalism is regarded as a destroyer of the ecosystem, and thereby directed into a sequel to the extinct Second World Socialism.

Eco-Marxism departs from other varieties of green radicalism in believing that this destructiveness is contingent upon capitalism (Dryzek 2005: 208). A more rational economic system would thereby not be subject to ecological limits. In other words, a “transformation of needs” will make limits irrelevant when the economic system is redeemed from the pursuit of material excess (Kovel & Lowy 2002: 156). Reformists – shallow ecologists in the terms of Næss – are regarded as the “greenwashing” caretakers of the political status quo (Kovel [2002] 2005: 411). The eco-Marxist critique against the liberal-democratic “greenwashers” resembles that of deep ecology, as we shall see in chapter four.

The contextualization of Arne Næss and deep ecology in terms of other environmental discourses is by no means exhaustive. However, the narrow selection has been confined to the most relevant discourses in this regard: those which are related to deep ecology in essence – anthroposophy and to a lesser extent biosophy – or those which superficially resemble deep ecology in terms of their radicalness and sociopolitical subversion, like social ecology and eco-Marxism. Nonetheless, the historical and conceptual contextualization of Næss – the references to Darwin, Haeckel, Zappfe, Spinoza, Goethe and Steiner – has preliminarily demonstrated the *archaeological* methodology of this thesis.

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<sup>11</sup> Though never a proto-environmentalist, Karl Marx intuitively grasped some of the consequences of capitalism: “Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the techniques and degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth – *the soil* and the worker” (Marx [1867] 1976: 638).

### 1.3 An Archaeological Excavation

This thesis falls within the province of Political Science, and then within the segment of political theory. Still, the interdisciplinarity of Arne Næss is important to bear in mind when one enters his frame of references. As a consequence of the topic, there will be notable incursions into metaphysics and philosophy. A study of Næss also requires minor entries into biology and physics. Contextualizing deep ecology in a comprehensive way necessitates a sweeping voyage through some concepts and insights from these disciplines. Nonetheless, the danger of dilettantism is always looming when a non-specialist attempts to desalinate and thereby drink a few drops from the infinite ocean of knowledge outside his formal realm. Though this thesis attempts to honor the titanic ideal of a "total" view which breaks down the barriers between disciplines, it is still firmly anchored in Political Science. In the broader sense, it relies on a historical approach as it draws on textual documents and established works of literature. But so does most social-science writings.

My thesis is not a variable analysis: it does not seek to explore correlations or causal relationships. Instead, I will trace the evolution of concepts and arguments which, through the history of political ideas, precondition and underpin the views that Ferry and Næss entertain regarding ecology and democracy. Hence, this thesis is about reconstructing a chain of ideas: where do the political thoughts of Ferry and Næss come from? In this way, I place the views and arguments of these two thinkers in a broader tradition of political thought. I would say the *methodology*<sup>12</sup> of this thesis qualifies as an *archaeology of knowledge* inspired by Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and the archaeological prototype of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

Kant introduced the concept of "philosophical archaeology" [*philosophische Archäologie*] and uses it to describe the conditions of a "philosophical" history of philosophy (Kant [1793/1804] 2002: 417). Kant and Foucault both affirm the priority of order and the posteriority of inquiry and its objects. *Knowledge of order*, in other words, is possible because order really exists. We recognize empirical objects within a *pre-established* framework, because that is what it means to "experience" order (Foucault [1966] 2004: 166-167). Foucault associates his archaeology of the human sciences with Kant's philosophical

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<sup>12</sup> *Methodology* is about the logic of the use of *method* (Waltz 1979: 13), while the latter refers to a problem-specific technique (Moses & Knutsen 2007: 4).



archaeology because he takes order to be *the condition of the possibility and the condition of the existence of knowledge* (McQuillan 2010: 49).

Like Foucault, but unlike Kant, I am not going to ponder questions on teleology in my archaeological pursuit. And unlike Foucault, I do not have an agenda of disclosing a hidden intangible reality. The kinship Yovel (1989: 109) sees between Benedict de Spinoza, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud – though different in essence and style, they all attempted to carry out projects of disclosure – could easily be extended to Michel Foucault: “they set out to unmask accepted notions and established social façades by digging into the unavowed motives and mechanisms behind them”. Again, this is not the impetus behind my thesis. The archaeological inspiration is purely *pragmatic*, since it does nothing more or less than represent *the logic* of how I will trace the evolution of ideas: within which *pre-established* historical framework do Ferry and Næss reside?

The sites where I will excavate are within the concepts “liberal democracy” and “deep ecology”. My concern is to determine the reliability of Ferry’s accusations: for instance, when he links the crypto-totalitarianism of deep ecology with a Spinozist and an alleged Heideggerian legacy (Ferry 1992: 73 & 76), I will have to dig into the fields of Spinoza and Heidegger. As Foucault might have asked: are these thinkers really deep ecology’s “conditions of possibility”? If so, how were their democratic or anti-democratic credentials? This logic also applies to the concept of “democracy”: what is the pre-established historical framework of liberal democracy? A similar question goes for Liberalism, which is often conflated with liberal democracy. The site of liberal democracy and Liberalism will be excavated in chapter three, while the site of deep ecology will be excavated in chapter four.

My *method* is based on interpretation of texts. Ferry’s *The New Ecological Order* (1992) and the ecological works of Arne Næss constitute the core literature of this thesis. Their reliability will be determined by consulting auxiliary sources. Among the latter, especially works by and about Spinoza and Heidegger are notable when the chain of ideas are reconstructed. So is the literature which pinpoints different facets of deep ecology and democracy. The auxiliary sources either contradict, concur with or complement the ways Ferry and Næss understand the terms deep ecology and democracy.

*Quellenkritik* is not my characteristic method, since it is not meaningful to talk about “primary” and “secondary” sources in this thesis. Primary sources, as understood by Leopold von Ranke (1790-1886), are direct outcomes of historical events or experiences (Moses & Knutsen 2007: 120). They include eyewitness accounts, original documents, diplomatic reports etc. Secondary sources in the Rankean sense would for instance be newspaper reports

based on primary eyewitnesses or statistical summaries (ibid: 121). As indicated above, the terms "core literature" and "auxiliary sources" are more preferable and precise in this context.

This project is – for the most – not concerned with the maxim of Ranke: "how the past really was" [*wie es eigentlich gewesen war*]. But still there are brief passages within Ranke's ambit, for instance the comment on how ecological the Nazis actually were (see section 5.1). Here it will be right to say that this specific passage is based on "secondary" sources. Ranke's maxim also applies to the biographical commentaries on Arne Næss and his actions during and immediately after World War II (also based on secondary sources). Though these passages serve as empirical reality-checks, they are not the most central within the overall argument of this thesis. In other words – as opposed to Ranke – my object is not the chain of events, but the chain of ideas. I am not consulting eyewitness accounts or diplomatic reports, but political and philosophical works on the concepts "democracy" and "ecology" by particularly Ferry and Næss.

The pattern of my thesis emerges within an *architecture* constituted by six chapters when this introduction is included. In chapter two – "Deep Ecology on Trial" – Ferry's polemic against deep ecology serves as a primary catalyst of the entire thesis. His book *The New Ecological Order* (1992) is the central reference point of this chapter. Here Ferry argues that deep ecology is crypto-totalitarian. He sees a communion between the premodern and the deep ecological worldviews where man is on par with beasts and vegetables. Ferry also posits a linkage between Nazi ecology and the movement initiated by Arne Næss. But is Ferry's inquisition justified when it comes to deep ecology in general and Næss in specific? There is the rub for the rest of this thesis.

Chapter three – "Notions of Democracy and Liberalism" – is the first chapter which digs into the substance behind the concepts of this thesis. In section 3.1 the archaeology of knowledge is implemented on Luc Ferry and his position on democracy. Ferry's work *From the Rights of Man to the Republican Idea* ([1985] 1992) – written with Alain Renault – is the core literature here. Thereafter follows a conceptualization of liberal democracy, illiberal democracy, participatory democracy and Liberalism. The latter term has also different facets which will be differentiated in order to avoid conflation between liberal democracy and Liberalism. The amorphous term "Neoliberalism" – which Ferry distances himself from in his work from 1985 – warrants a more explicit definition, since it is supposed to be entangled with liberal democracy, as green radicals claim in their criticism of the political and economic *status quo*. An important auxiliary source on Neoliberalism will be *The Road From Mont Pelerin* (2009) by Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe. At the end of

chapter four I will take a closer look on the way Arne Næss regarded democracy and Liberalism.

In chapter four – “Deep Ecology As Interpreted Through Næss and His Followers” – deep ecology will be differentiated from “shallow ecology”, and I will present the views of different thinkers who are self-proclaimed “deep ecologists”. Some are the disciples of Næss – like William Devall and George Sessions, who more or less express the same views as their tutor, but with minor nuances – while others deviate substantially from the outlook of Næss: especially the misanthropes, like the ecowarriors of Earth First! [sic], Pentti Linkola and William Aiken. Their views will be differentiated from that of Næss.

The historical framework where Næss resides will also be explored: Baruch Spinoza and Mahatma Gandhi are the most prominent figures in this regard. The ecological works by Næss constitute the core literature of this chapter: *Økologi, samfunn og livsstil* ([1976] 1999), *The Selected Works of Arne Næss* (2005) – where volumes IX and X have been consulted most – and *Livsfilosofi* (1998) stand out as the most prominent sources, though they are accompanied by a dozen others. At the end of chapter four I will smoke out the pertinence of Martin Heidegger. Both Ferry and the disciples of Næss claim that he is an important source of inspiration to deep ecology.

In chapter five – “Varieties of Compatibility or Antagonism” – I will attempt to answer the commanding question of this thesis. Ferry’s allegations will be recapitulated and I will gather the threads from all previous chapters. I will discuss the alleged connection between Nazi ecology and the movement Næss initiated. I will also discuss whether the misanthropes are deep ecologists or not. Thereafter insights from chapter three and four will be synthesized in order to determine the compatibilities and/or antagonisms between deep ecology and liberal democracy.

In chapter six – the “Conclusion” – I will present the outcome of this endeavour and ask new questions which have arisen in its wake. What would this thesis encompass more thoroughly if it had more space at its disposal? If this format was a three-volume work – though we will get a glimpse of a broader horizon in the conclusion – the cathedral of this thesis would overarch the topography of material collapse and *post-abundance*. The prefix “post” is suggesting that there has been abundance, or that there will not be abundance for ever. The connotations in this case are that of material cornucopia. According to Michael Klare (2006), “post-abundance” is the defining term of the epoch we now inhabit. Already in 2006, neither “the post-Cold War era” or “post-911” possessed the power they once wielded, even in the United States (ibid.). If there was one thing most

inhabitants of the late 20th century shared in common, it was a perception of rising planetary abundance in virtually all fields: energy, housing and consumer goods. One day even basic necessities such as electricity, water and food might become much less plentiful and more expensive (ibid.).

Though relegated to the back burner, the larger considerations of "post-abundance" and material collapse remain inseparable from the commanding question of this thesis. The real metaquestion is: does liberal democracy really represent "the end of history" in the face of a potential ecological disaster or are there new waves of histories awaiting us? In other words: is there a vaster heaven above? Whether we are at a terminal stage of history or just at a terminal stage before the initiation of a novel epoch, remains a conundrum. Though these sweeping vistas are kept at bay in the coming chapters, a boomerang will recur with vengeance in the conclusion and force us into an acquaintance with the shadow of future. The spectre of material collapse and post-abundance will hopefully lead us to an Archimedean point which enables us to pose adequate inquiries about where the torrents of history might flow.

## 2.0 Deep Ecology on Trial



"This why you need insurance". Image credit: Dark Roasted Blend

*"There is some reason to hope, that this Essay will soon be followed by treatises on the rights of vegetables and minerals...thus, the doctrine of perfect equality will become universal; dominion of every kind be exiled from the face of the earth; and that beautiful period be realized, which at present is believed to exist only in fable, when Man walk'd with beast joint tenant of the shade".*

-Thomas Taylor ([1792] 1966: 20)-

Luc Ferry (1992: 128) believes that the end of history has not arrived yet. In the same vein, he does also recognize the advent of posthumanism. Ferry sees as a gradually transmuted relationship between mankind and animal kingdom in specific, as well as between mankind and nature in general (ibid: xiii). The separation of man and nature by which humanism came to attribute a moral and legal status to the former alone might just be an entr'acte of four centuries, marking the boundaries of an era that is now coming to a close (ibid: xvi). According to Ferry, the deep ecology of Arne Næss is an accomplice in the tendency of undoing humanism (ibid: 61). Before we come to grips with Ferry's prosecution against deep ecology, we will first turn our attention to what he reifies as a communion between the prehumanist and posthumanist visions of the world (ibid: xix).

## 2.1 The fugitive presence of humanism and modernity

*“Réconfort cependant, et profond apaisement de penser que l’homme n’est qu’une invention récente, une figure qui n’a pas deux siècles, un simple pli dans notre savoir, et qu’il disparaîtra dès que celui-ci aura trouvé une forme nouvelle [...] alors on peut bien parier que l’homme s’effacerait, comme à la limite de la mer un visage de sable”.*<sup>13</sup>

– Michel Foucault (1966: 15 & 398) –

By the accounts of Ferry, humanism originated with the formation of *modernity*, and he regards liberal democracy as an integral part of humanism (Ferry 1992: xxi). Furthermore, he links the “anti-modern” sentiment of deep ecologists with their apparently cryptototalitarian tendencies (ibid.). But how to make sense of the nebulous concept “modernity”? What could shortly be said about its essence? According to Shmuel Eisenstadt (1923-2010), modernity carried the conception of a future depicted by autonomous human agency (Eisenstadt 2000: 3). Further personal autonomy implied active mastery of nature, including human nature (ibid: 5).

In a more mature phase of modernity, the visionary impetus has been flattened and fragmentation has simultaneously inflated (ibid.). By the same token, it is necessary to emphasize that the planetary mosaic of multiple modernities<sup>14</sup> makes it hard to pinpoint one exact contemporary feature. There is no synchronization: most of the non-Western world is still at a relative short distance from the inception of modernity, while the Western world has entered a more fragmentary phase (ibid.). It is within the latter temporal-spatial segment Ferry locates the formation of deep ecology. For him this terminal phase of Western modernity resembles that of pre-modernity in some aspects. Ferry (1992: ix ff) depicts facets of the pre-modern mindset through chronicled anecdotes of animal trials.

According to the German historian Karl von Amira (1848-1930) – who Ferry cites as an important historical source in this regard – animal trials in Western and Central Europe were most prevalent from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. But hangovers prevailed into the

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<sup>13</sup> Translated into English: *“It is comforting, however, and a source of profound relief to think that man is only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old, a new wrinkle in our knowledge, and that he will disappear again as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form. [...] Then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea”* (Foucault [1966] 2004: xxv & 422).

<sup>14</sup> Western patterns of modernity are not the only “authentic” modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and still proceed as reference points for others (Eisenstadt 2007: 20 & Knöbl 2007: 111 ff).

18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries in outlandish districts in southern and eastern parts of the continent (Amira 1891: 2). In 1587 for instance, the inhabitants of the French village of Saint-Julien took legal action against a colony of weevils (Ferry 1992: ix). These creepers invaded the vineyard and caused havoc. In response the peasants called on their municipal magistrates to constitute a petition in their name, and thereby prescribe adequate measures to appease the divine anger and to undertake a lawful expulsion of the tiny beasts (ibid.).

In 1545 an identical trial occurred against the same creepers (or at least their ancestors). The affair ended in victory for the insects that were defended by a counsel chosen for them. The judge refused to excommunicate them, arguing that as creatures of God the animals possessed the same rights as men to consume plants. Instead he ordained public prayers for the unfortunate local residents to sincerely repent for their sins (ibid.). When the trial resumed 42 years later, the vine growers counted on the judge's severity faced with the resurgence of the scourge. Historical archives do not show the final decision in this specific instance, but it was fairly common that such trials resulted in a vindication of the beasts (ibid: xi). Nonetheless, according to Ferry this instance signifies the occurrence of a natural contract: of a pact with beings of nature (ibid: x).

It is also possible that a curse was placed on the weevils, considering what happened to the leeches of the Swiss lake of Berne in 1451 (ibid: xii). The sentences could vary depending on whether the animals were regarded as creatures of God merely following natural law, a wrath descended to men as punishment for their sins, or devices of Satan undermining the clerical authority himself (ibid.). In the first two cases, the imposition of penance and prayers would suffice, after which compensation might be offered to the animals, which were requested to take up residence elsewhere. In the latter, they were excommunicated or at least cursed (ibid: xiii).

As Ferry puts it, this legal aspect is entirely indicative of a premodern – hence prehumanistic – relationship to the animal kingdom as well as to nature in general (ibid.). For modern man it is self-evident that only human beings are worthy of a trial. Nature has become a dead and disenchant<sup>15</sup>ed letter devoid of a soul. To modern man the notion of crime implies

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<sup>15</sup> According to Max Weber, the process of de-divinization [*Entgöttlichung*] resulted in *disenchantment*: the elimination of magic from the world [*“Entzauberung der Welt: die Ausschaltung der Magie als Heilmittel”*] (Weber [1905] 2006: 154). Weber himself regretted the loss of divine enchantment, and occasionally complained that he was not attuned to the divine [*religiös unmusikalisch*] (Voegelin [1952] 2000: 104).

responsibility, a voluntary intention (ibid: xvi). Ferry asks a provoking question: is there truth in this or has modern man evoked contemptuous laughter from his future descendants (ibid.)? The question remains rhetorical, but Ferry implies that the legal separation of man and nature is just a historical interlude, marking the boundaries of an era that is coming to a close (ibid.).

Ferry refers to the American legal theorist Christopher Stone when he points to the advent of a post-humanistic world view (ibid: xvi). In 1972 Stone wrote an article entitled “Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects”. Though they seem light years away from the pastoral settings of medieval Europe, some Californian lawyers did nonetheless attempt to reinvent a law of natural beings in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (ibid: xvii). In 1970 the Sierra Club – which was the most formidable ecological association in the world at that time – made a suit against the Walt Disney Enterprises. The latter was granted a permission authorizing them to “develop” a wild valley, Mineral King, situated in the Sierra Nevada. The Sierra Club alleged that the project threatened to destroy the aesthetic and natural equilibrium of the valley. The suit was rejected by the court in the first instance, because the Sierra Club had no interests that were directly encroached upon by the project in question (ibid.).<sup>16</sup>

When the affair moved into appeals, Christopher Stone set about to rapidly draft an article proposing “that we give legal rights to forests, oceans, rivers and others so-called natural objects in the environment – indeed to the natural environment as a whole” (Stone 1972). He acted quickly in order to supply the judges with a theoretical precedent. Of the nine judges, four voted against Stone’s argument, two abstained, *but three voted for it*, so it can be said the trees lost their trial by one vote (Ferry 1992: xviii). The argument of Stone, even if it can be contested, is not without coherence: such an argument would make it possible to bring suits against large polluters *de facto*, in the absence of direct interest (ibid: xix). Though Stone does not represent deep ecology, he is a part of the same tendency in ecological thinking which seeks to subordinate man to what was formerly known as cosmos (ibid: xix).

From the vantage point of Ferry, this new cosmology is seductive in more than one way to those disappointed with the modern world. By his account, it reconnects with the notion of “systems” which were discredited at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> Century (ibid: xx). In other

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<sup>16</sup> American law rests in principle on the idea that the legal system as a whole exists to protect *interests*, whatever they may be, and not abstract values (Ferry 1992: xviii).



words this systemic pretension “allows the unhoped-for promise of rootedness to form, certain of a new ideal: purity founded on the incontestable facts of a science called ecology” (ibid.). It is a reaction against the fragmentation of thought in both science and politics. Here is something to revive the eternal flames of militantism, and both neofascists and ex-Stalinists hostile to the political status quo are provided an avenue of resurrection (ibid: xxi). And more explicitly in the guise of deep ecologists. What do the deep ecologists actually represent according to Ferry? In the next section we will go through his interpretation of deep ecology and its alleged vices.

## 2.2 Deep ecology: To Think Like A Mountain

“The cowman who cleans his range of wolves does not realize that he is taking over the wolf’s job of trimming the herd to fit the range. He has not learned to *think like a mountain*. Hence we have dustbowls and rivers washing the future into the sea”.

– Aldo Leopold ([1949] 1989: 129) –

Ferry (1992: 59) identifies Aldo Leopold (1886-1948) as an ancestor of deep ecological thought. “Think like a mountain” was the main imperative of Leopold (ibid.). After the rejection of slavery, we need to proceed further: to finally take nature seriously and consider it as endowed with intrinsic value worthy of respect (ibid: 60). As Ferry sees it, this conversion presupposes a deconstruction of “human chauvinism”, the root of anthropocentric prejudice par excellence. A prejudice that leads us to consider the universe as the stage for our enterprise, the mere periphery of a center which we have instituted as the sole object of value and rights (ibid.).

The debate that divides American ecology, and which has tended via Germany to make headway in Europe: should we merely be safeguarding the sites where *we* live because their deterioration might affect us, or on the contrary, should we be protecting nature *in and of itself* (ibid.)? The first stance resembles what Arne Næss called *shallow* ecology, while the latter resembles what he labeled as *deep* ecology (Næss 1973). These two positions may sometimes converge, in fighting a particular source of pollution, for instance. But fundamentally, according to Ferry, when it comes to the ontological premises they bring into play, the two are diametrically opposed: the first preserves the heritage of modern humanism intact (it is in man’s interest to respect the earth), while the second implies the most radical questioning of it (Ferry 1992: 60). In other words: the first stream is reformist, while the other

is revolutionary (ibid.). The reformist – shallow ecological – stream attempts to mitigate the worst of air and water pollution, and to save scattered remnants of wilderness. The revolutionary – in this case deep ecological – stream is much more ambitious: it seeks an entirely new cosmology (ibid.).

As Ferry puts it, deep ecologists consider humanism as an original sin, the primary cause of evil (ibid.). Humanism is therefore not the answer to the crisis of the modern industrial world. Ferry cites the conclusions of Stan Rowe (1918-2004)<sup>17</sup> as exemplary of the anti-reformist and anti-humanist stance (ibid: 65-66): “I argue that [...] a recognition of environment’s intrinsic value and thereby its inherent rights provides the only incontrovertible basis for protecting it against crimes of despoliation and degradation”.

Rowe’s critique, as Ferry further cites, is extended into a spirited denunciation of the ideals of the French Revolution (ibid: 66): “The French *Déclaration des droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen*<sup>18</sup> defined liberty as ‘being unrestrained in doing anything that does not interfere with another’s rights’. In line with this popular sentiment [...] liberalism [is defined] as the set of beliefs proceeding from the central assumption that man’s essence is freedom, and therefore what chiefly concerns man in this life is to shape the world as he wants it. Here is the prescription for the massive environmental destruction that is evident wherever western culture’s influence is felt; destruction whose motivation only the recognition of nature’s intrinsic values and rights can overcome”. Rowe therefore proposes that “the ecosphere ought to be valued above people” (ibid.).

Summarized, Rowe develops two ideas, both – according to Ferry – perfectly representative of radical principles: first, that of the sacred nature of universal life of the biosphere,<sup>19</sup> and second, that of the disastrous consequences of *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* and its associated humanism (ibid.). As for the first point, it is not

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<sup>17</sup> The article of Stan Rowe is entitled “Crimes against the Ecosphere” (1989). Ferry (1992: 65) tags Rowe as a conspicuous deep ecologist. But notwithstanding the sympathetic position of Rowe towards deep ecology, he was in fact somewhat ambivalent of it. He even saw his own ecocentric ideas as “deeper” than those of Næss (Rowe 2006: 204). But Ferry is quite accurate when he cites the conclusions of Rowe as “exemplary” of the antireformist position, whether the latter is deep ecological or not.

<sup>18</sup> In English: *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*.

<sup>19</sup> Biocentric & biosphere and ecocentric & ecosphere are used interchangeably, both by Ferry and deep ecologists (ibid: xix).

primarily a question of human life but of the ecosphere as a whole. A hierarchy results from the biospheric egalitarianism principle, according to which it is fitting to protect the whole before its parts. Holism – which means that totality is superior to individuals – and anti-humanism are thus overt slogans of deep ecology in its fight against modernity, as Ferry sees it (ibid: 67). He repeats that these terms are omnipresent in the literature of deep ecology, and should be strongly emphasized in the understanding of it (ibid.). Ferry labels deep ecology as a form of fundamentalism which is politically unclassifiable, with its *mélange* of themes conjured up by both the extreme Right and the extreme Left (ibid.).

Ferry suggests that the external critique of modernity can only occur in the name of a radically different world, situated somewhere either prior to or after the vilified present (ibid.). “Hence the ambiguity of an ideology that constantly lends itself to a double reading”, as Ferry notes before he proceeds to an examination of the eight points of deep ecology gathered by Arne Næss and George Sessions (ibid.). These points were previously mentioned in the introduction. The main emphasis is that Life – with capital L – on Earth have value in themselves. The rapidly worsening condition of the non-human world requires a substantial decrease of the human population, according to Næss and Sessions (Ferry 1992: 68 & Sessions 1995: 213 ff). Policies must therefore be changed, since they affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures.

The ideological transposition is mainly that of appreciating life quality rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living (ibid.). It is especially the eighth and last point of Næss and Sessions that Ferry finds averse: “Those who subscribe to the foregoing [seven] points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes”. As Ferry (1992: 68) sees it, this “last remark ties in with the theoretical aspects of the program and its practical desire to found a new militant movement”. Næss and Sessions are thus situated within the logic of a deconstruction of modernity by Ferry, and are hence ideologically dubious (ibid.). He does not devote much space for Næss<sup>20</sup> in his book *The New Ecological Order*, but this passage is notable when it comes to Ferry’s perception of what the

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<sup>20</sup> As I mentioned in the introduction, Næss is very much in the background in Ferry’s book about deep ecology. The Norwegian thinker is only explicitly referred to four times, even when he was the founding father of the movement. Heidegger – to whom I will return to in chapter four – is for instance mentioned seven times, and Ferry (1992: 55-56) has devoted two entire pages almost exclusively on him. Næss on the other hand, is always mentioned within the broader context of his followers.

Norwegian thinker represents. If Næss is not necessarily cryptototalitarian by Ferry's standard, he is at least seen as a subversive mainspring of a fundamentalist current.

Ferry admits that certain deep ecologists – Næss not included – like Roderick Nash, to some extent want to inscribe the recognition of the rights of nature within the logic of democratic societies (ibid.). After the emancipation of blacks, women and children, why not exalt animals, trees and rocks by the same token? But an attempt to ingratiate deep ecology with the dynamic of liberal Western societies is nothing but “fallacious”, Ferry claims (ibid: 69). At this point he is no-nonsense: the idea of an intrinsic right of beings in nature is in radical opposition to the legal humanism that dominates the modern liberal universe (ibid.). It is against the name of the “modern West” radical anti-reformists launch their ideological onslaught.

Given impressionistically by Ferry, with broad strokes, the following are denounced by the green subversives, in order of their appearance in history: the Judeo-Christian tradition, because it places the spirit and its law above nature, and Platonic dualism, for the same reason; the technical concept of science that triumphed in Europe beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century with Bacon and Descartes, for it reduces the universe to a warehouse of objects to serve man (a critique initiated by Heidegger); and the entire modern industrial world, which gives priority to the economy over all other considerations. From these perspectives rationality becomes the *absolute* norm of all evaluation in Western societies, and from here, technoscience could unabashedly wage violence against animals (ibid: 47-49 & 69).<sup>21</sup> Consequently, from the anti-reformist point of view, one cannot change the system by merely refitting it: what is needed is a true revolution, including on an economic level, which implies that the critique of the modern world draws sustenance from radical principles (ibid: 69).

Thinkers like Heidegger is brought to the stand as a witness against the West, while Spinoza has been posthumously reinstated against Descartes (ibid: 70). Bill Devall (1938-2009), one of Næss's main followers – whom Ferry cites – idolized Heidegger as the most influential European thinker of the movement (Devall 1980: 299 ff. & Ferry 1992: 76). In addition to Heidegger and Spinoza, Ferry also locates sources of deep ecology outside the

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<sup>21</sup> This observation of “irrational rationality” is in many ways an echo of the Marxist Frankfurt School: modern reason is a denial of human nature, and thereby seen to be grounded on the domination of external non-human nature as well as human internal nature [“Die Verleugnung der Natur im Menschen ward bei der Herrschaft über die aussermenschliche Natur und über andere Menschen bezahlt”] (Horkheimer & Adorno [1944] 2008: 61).

Euro-American West, like Zen Buddhism and the cultures of American Indians, whose traditions and customs provide an example of a life in harmony with nature in its original form (Ferry 1992: 176).

The environmental crisis depicted through the prism of deep ecology – Ferry seems to interpret the prism as singular in this regard – is an existential and metaphysical<sup>22 & 23</sup> crisis of the entire modernity. First, we deprived the world of its mystery by declaring it manipulable and calculable at will (ibid: 71). Gone are the days of animism and “occult” qualities, those mysterious forces with which nature studied by medieval alchemists was still imbued. But there is more: not content to merely rob the universe of its enchantment, with the birth of the industrial mode of production modern man also established the means to consume it to the point of depletion (ibid.). What is the remedy then?

George Sessions – who Ferry quotes – explicitly calls for the creation of an “inhumanist” philosophy, which alone would be able to reverse the dominant paradigm of anthropocentrism and finally grant nature the rights it deserves (Sessions 1977: 481 ff. & Ferry 1992: 70). As on a vessel wrecked in a storm there is no possibility of escape, nowhere to seek salvation and shelter: “The world we have treated as an object has become a subject again, capable of revenge. Worn out, polluted, mistreated, it now threatens to dominate us in turn” (Ferry 1992: 71). Hence the idea of a “natural contract” [*contrat naturel*], analogous to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century social contract (ibid.). Just as the latter proposed to govern relations among men through law, now we ought to envisage our relationship to nature under the same auspices. Man’s one-sided and inegalitarian relationship with nature must go from “parasitic” to “symbiotic”, accepting the notion of giving back what one borrows (ibid.). To paraphrase the French radical ecologist Michel Serres (1990: 67; also quoted in Ferry 1992: 71): “The law of symbiosis is defined by reciprocity; as much as nature gives to man, man must return to nature, *a new legal subject*”. Therefore, it is imperative to reverse the humanist perspective

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<sup>22</sup> Metaphysics entails at least three distinct, but partially overlapping meanings: (1) a philosophical discipline; (2) the antonym of Naturalism (a philosophical view which does not acknowledge any other reality than a tangible nature accessible by our senses); and (3) a region not available to critical scrutiny (Rippe 2004: 214). As for metaphysics as a discipline, the paramount question was articulated by Gottfried Leibniz ([1714] 1973: 199): “*Why is there something rather than nothing?*”. This conundrum was a refined sequel to another question posed 17 years earlier: “*Why should there be any world rather than none?*” (Leibniz [1697] 1973: 116).

embedded in the French Declaration of 1789. Ferry is ready to admit that the assertion of a natural contract might be nothing more than a metaphorical fable, rather than a rigorous argument (ibid: 72). But if we leave aside the contractualist metaphor, we should notice a recurring theme in deep ecology: in *all* cases – this is the word of Ferry – there is a questioning of the modern tradition of legal humanism to arrive at the idea that nature possesses an *intrinsic value* and that is, as such, worthy of respect (ibid: 73). Nature can do without men, but not vice versa. This is what Ferry identifies as the ultimate meaning of the deep ecological reference to Spinoza (ibid.).<sup>24</sup>

The “inhumanist theses of fundamental ecology” is not just an exotic vagary of an intangible academic endeavour, Ferry also finds it “in all the Green movements in Europe” (ibid: 74). For instance, he apprehends the ideological foundation of organizations such as *Greenpeace* as an activist extension of inhumanist philosophy. Ferry encounters a statement of this kind in an April 1979 editorial published in *Chronicles*, a Greenpeace periodical: “Humanist value systems must be replaced by suprahumanistic values that bring all plant and animal life into the sphere of legal and ethical consideration. And in the long run, whether anyone likes it or not, force will eventually have to be brought to bear against those who would continue to desecrate the environment” (ibid.). When some ecologists get to the point of arguing that the ideal number of humans – from a nonhuman perspective – would be 500 million (citing James Lovelock)<sup>25</sup> or 100 million (citing Arne Næss), Ferry would like to know how one plans to realize this objective (ibid: 75).

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<sup>23</sup> Metaphysics as a region outside critical scrutiny is what Heidegger ([1930] 2001: 40) called the “traditional” concept of metaphysics. This is intended to convey the impression of something mysterious and not directly accessible: a higher and suprasensuous being like God or an immortal soul (ibid: 40-42). Inquiring the history of this nebulous word, Heidegger stated: “We became acquainted with opinions *about* metaphysics, but not metaphysics itself” (ibid.). Secretive and cloistered, it will likely reside beyond rumination. Hence, the dominion of metaphysics remains as monumentally evasive and indefinable as both zero and  $\infty$ .

<sup>24</sup> Drawing inspiration from Spinoza, Klaus Meyer-Abisch (1984: 90; also quoted in Ferry 1992: 73) says: “Nature continues within us insofar it becomes language and art, and in other living beings insofar as the latter live their lives”.

<sup>25</sup> James Lovelock ([1979] 2000) famously promoted the notion of the Earth as a single organism in his *Gaia*-theory. A view which was anticipated by Goethe a century and a half earlier, when he thought of the Earth as a great creature breathing in and out (Eckermann [1827/1836] 1868: 238). Influenced by Goethe, Thoreau did also arrive at this idea (Root 2005: 244).

From Ferry's vantage point, an inhumanist approach is not only questionable. It is unequivocally cryptototalitarian and paves the way to a political abyss. The death program evoked by William Aiken convinces Ferry of that: "In fact, massive human die backs would be good. Is it our duty to cause them? Is it our species' duty, relative to the whole, to eliminate 90% of our numbers?" (Aiken 1984: 269 & Ferry 1992: 75). Here Ferry sees a link between this kind of thinking and the reason why many German ecologists preferred the Soviet system to liberal democrat regimes (Ferry 1992: 75). In this regard he cites Hans Jonas (1903–1993) – a former student of Heidegger – who considered that totalitarianism had the "merit" of rigorously planning consumption and of thereby constraining its subject to a "healthy frugality" (Jonas [1979] 1984: 147 & Ferry 1992: 76).

Though Jonas did not explicitly belong to the province of deep ecologists, he nonetheless settled within a biocentric and anti-humanist parish. And between them there was a consorted understanding of technology: it is getting away from us, so that we are no longer masters of our own mastery (Ferry 1992: 77). Hence, we must establish a third power, to again master the mastery of nature (ibid.). But the task seems infeasible – according to Jonas – within the framework of a democratic society. We must have recourse to force – here Ferry returns to the conclusions reached by *Greenpeace* – to State constraint, for which Jonas cannot help but admire in China and the former Soviet Union (Jonas [1979] 1984: 148 & Ferry 1992: 77). It is here the entire question lies, and Ferry is in no doubt: "the idea that the control of technology must occur at the price of democracy itself is an additional step which deep ecologists almost never hesitate to take" (Ferry 1992: 78). This is because they are propelled by what Ferry perceives as their hatred of humanism and Western civilization, but also by a nostalgic fascination with models of the past or potential models of the future (ibid.). Biocentrism – the cult of life – is no assurance for Ferry, because it is not about individual human lives, but "maintenance and blossoming of life in general" (ibid.). It is holistic, and defines the ensemble of elements within the total ecosphere. Again, man is just "an infinitesimal part of the universe": he is wholly dependent upon it and must venerate Cosmos more than humanity (ibid.).

Perennial expressions in the literature of deep ecology which puzzles Ferry are that of "sacrosanct values" and the "*Sanctity of Life*" (ibid: 79). He understands this as "a wish to transcend the limits of humanism, since the biosphere is a quasi-divine entity, infinitely more elevated than any individual reality, human or nonhuman" (ibid.). Both exterior to men and superior to them, it can ultimately be regarded as their true creation principle. One must accept the reality of our total immanence – a Spinozist dictum – to nature: a revolt against it is

only pathological, provisional, and destined to fail (ibid: 80). Two orders – the political and the metaphysical – meet when deep ecologists affirm the rights of nature, according to Ferry (ibid: 129). He never fully explains what being “metaphysical” brings about, but the instatement of nature as a legal subject is embedded within this epithet. The deep ecological worshipping of “the sacrosanct biosphere”<sup>26</sup> also corresponds with the notion of a fusion between politics and metaphysics.

Nonetheless, Ferry makes no room for ambiguity when he regards the dissolving of boundaries between nature and legality as a rejection of a certain type of democracy. Which means a political regime inherited from the Declaration of Rights that has inscribed itself in Western liberal-democratic societies (ibid.). The discontinuity between a social and a natural contract is thus evident: within the framework of legal humanism, nature can occupy only the status of *object*, not of *subject* (ibid.). But Ferry sees more in deep ecology: it offers consolation to those who regret the loss of utopias.

Deep ecology opens new horizons to a militant corps in search of a grand project to invest its energies (ibid: 127). Ferry admits that deep ecology poses *real questions* which liberal democrats cannot brush aside. As he says: “No one can convince the public that the ecology movement, radical as it may be, is more dangerous than the dozens of Chernobyls that threaten to erupt” (ibid.). Though “the age of extremes” – in the terms of Eric Hobsbawm (1994) – might have come to a halt with the disappearance of Communism, Ferry suspects that this is only temporary. Even liberals are saddled with a “democratic melancholy” associated by vanished “enemies”, as he put in the terms of Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) (ibid.).<sup>27</sup>

Ferry proceeds along this pessimistic line: “Liberals and social democrats, deprived both of an enemy and of an ally, will not emerge from the upheaval [disappearance of Communism] unscathed” (ibid: 135). After the two-fold eclipse of 1989 and 1991 there has for the most part

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<sup>26</sup> Which again overlaps with the notion of metaphysics as a suprasensuous region not available to critical scrutiny, as mentioned in notes 11 & 12.

<sup>27</sup> In politics, the core distinction is between *friend* and *enemy*, according to Schmitt ([1932] 2007: 29): “The *political* is the most intense and extreme antagonism”. War is the most violent form that politics takes, but even short of war, politics still requires that you treat the adversary as antagonistic to everything in which you believe. It is not personal, because it is the enemy in a *collective* sense. Therefore, the enemy does not need to be hated. But you do have to be prepared to vanquish him if necessary (ibid.).



been a lacuna in the realm of utopias. Ferry fears that deep ecology has the potential to fill this space of ideological vacuity. In his view, “the end of history has not arrived” (ibid: 128). Already painting an unsavoury visage of contemporary deep ecology, Ferry is even more unforgiving about its alleged pedigree: “Some of deep ecology’s roots lie in Nazism”, he claims (ibid: 90), as we will see in the next section.

### **2.3 Nazi Ecology**

We shall not indulge ourselves too much with the vast topic of Nazi ecology in this treatise. But in light of Ferry’s claims, a few pages need to be added on the subject before this chapter is brought a close. So where does Ferry see the affinity between Nazi and deep ecology? In the biocentric legal texts of the Third Reich where nature is instated as a legal subject. The lawmakers of the Hitlerist regime were frontiersmen in this field. They were simply the first in the world to reconcile a broad ecological plan with the concern for real political intervention (ibid: 92).

Ferry admits that we find no trace of them in contemporary literature devoted to the environment, but the philosophical underpinnings of Nazi legislation often overlap with those developed by deep ecology (ibid: 93). An excerpt from a speech by Adolf Hitler given in 1933 is an affirming indicator as Ferry perceives it: “In the new Reich cruelty toward animals should no longer exist” [*“Im neuen Reich darf es keine Tierquälerei mehr geben”*] (quoted in Ferry 1992: 91). (And here one is tempted to repeat the overworked anecdote about *der Führer* as a staunch vegetarian...) The legal provisions implemented in the aftermath of Hitler’s speech was unequalled at the time: on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1934 a law limiting hunting [*das Reichsjagdgesetz*], and then on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1935 – a landmark of modern ecology – the law for the protection of nature [*das Reichnatorschutzgesetz*] (ibid.). Hitler made these legislations his pet projects, which bear the signatures of the principal minister concerned. For instance Hermann Göring (ibid: 92). But it is also important to note that the ecological laws of the 1930s also corresponded to the wishes of numerous and powerful green associations in Germany at that time (Rollins 1995: 501-502 & Ferry 1992: 91). Among the major ecological theorists back then, Ferry cites Walter Schoenichen (1876-1956) in particular.

Schoenichen specified the appropriate way to understand the notion of nature from a National Socialist perspective. Caretaking of landscapes for instance, as well as landscaping, was regarded as a separate field of safeguarding the nature: “The preservation of landscapes is not merely a note on nature conservation [...], but an independent kingdom, which in many

regards is not without internal autonomy” (Schoenichen 1942: 33).<sup>28</sup> The primordial forest symbolized the indigenous landscape in general. It was “the epitome of the natural” [„*Inbegriff des Naturhaften*“] and the “pristine home of the German soul” [“*die Urheimat der deutschen Seele*“] (Schoenichen 1934: 51).

Ferry remarks that the texts of Schoenichen foreshadow the biocentric justifications for ecology: even when we no longer need wood to warm the outer man, it will be all the more necessary to warm the inner man (Ferry 1992: 98). Schoenichen did also call for the rights of trees and rocks: “And not only the rights of the wooded lands, but also of the sand dunes, swamps, garigues, reefs, and glaciers!” (quoted in Ferry 1992: 99). The critique of anthropocentrism and the call for the rights of nature were especially present in the most important law. It affected the protection of the animal kingdom, this “living soul of the land” [“*die lebendige Seele der Landschaft*”] in Göring’s words (ibid.).

By its own admission, the originality of the *Tierschutzgesetz* lies in the fact that, for the first time in history, the animal, as a natural being, is protected in its own right, and not with respect to men (ibid.). Ferry is also seeing a parallel between deep ecology and Nazi ecology in their “Third-Worldism” and praise of difference (ibid: 103). Schoenichen cannot find words harsh enough to condemn the attitude of “the white man, the great destroyer of creation...he has only paved the path of epidemics, thievery, fires, blood and tears” (quoted in Ferry 1992: 103). For a contemporary reader it is possibly quite striking that an ideology instigating Holocaust, at the same time disapproved the colonialist misdeeds in the non-European space.

Schoenichen goes through the history of colonization and genocides committed against South American Indians to the Sioux, the South African bushmen and Australian aborigines. They were victims of a predatory liberal capitalism because they had no notion of private ownership (ibid: 104). But if the Nazis praised non-Caucasian people living in America and Australia, why did they hate the Jews? Within their rationale, cosmopolitan Jews were the most unnatural people: their blood was simply not connected to a native soil. The *Naturschutzgesetz* was designated to target liberalism, and more especially, French-style republicanism. But it also has an additional goal: to defend the rights of nature in all its forms, human and nonhuman, so long as they are representative of an original state

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<sup>28</sup> In the original words of Schoenichen (1942: 33): “Landschaftsschutz, ist nicht ein bloßer Anhang des Naturschutzes [...], sondern ein selbständiges Reich, das in vielen Punkten auch der inneren Eigengesetzlichkeit nicht entbehrt“.

[*Ursprünglichkeit*] (ibid.). The Declaration of the Right of Man of 1789 constitutes for the Nazis a backdrop for French colonial policy, so that there was no room for a treatment of primitive peoples that tended in the direction of protecting the nature (ibid: 105).

In opposition to the assimilation of the noble savage, Nazi policy advocated an authentic recognition of differences (ibid.). This is simply because the “natural peoples” [*Naturvölker*] should be left to flourish in conformity with their own racial stock (ibid.). The natural peoples are admired because they live in harmony with their surroundings and their customs. This was for the Nazis the most certain sign of superiority over the liberal world of uprootedness and perpetual mobility (ibid: 105). Here Nazi ecology anticipates deep ecology, as Ferry sees it. In addition, Nazi ecology essentially preestablishes a link between the aesthetics of sentiment – through the notion of “original land” [*Urlandschaft*] – and what would later become the central theme of deep ecology: the idea that the natural world is worthy of respect in and of itself (ibid: 98).

Ferry sees a proximity between contemporary radical ecology and the fascist-leaning themes of the 1930s, but he also warns against guilt by association (ibid: 92). He says we must be wary against a demagogy that invokes the horror of Nazism to disqualify any ecological concerns a priori. On that basis we would also denounce the construction of freeways [*Autobahn*], another enterprise the Hitlerist regime pioneered (ibid.). Ferry wants to assure that he is not trying to lend credibility to a prejudice which regards Nazism as a pure continuation and fulfilled realization of romanticism: “It would be absurd to consider Hölderlin or Novalis the founding fathers of National Socialism, just as it would be to view Stalin as Marx’s most faithful interpreter” (ibid: 94).

Though Ferry warns against guilt by association, does he really follow his own plea? Is it not exactly the attribution of culpability he achieves when a notable statement is: “the love of nature poorly conceals the hatred of men” (ibid: xxiii)? And when Ferry says that some of deep ecology’s roots lie in Nazism (ibid: 90), and links Arne Næss with anti-modern militantism (ibid: 68), is that not exactly guilt by association? Either Ferry is inconsequential, or he is committing duplicity – an instance of deliberate deceptiveness – in some passages. But Ferry’s overall message is already clear: it is not possible to harmonize the political vision of deep ecology with a liberal democratic system.

## 2.4 Summary

Deep ecology represents “a strange ideal-type” to Ferry: coherent, but difficult, even impossible to classify, a persistent intermingling of, on the one side, the love of the native soil, nostalgia for lost purity, hatred of cosmopolitanism, modern rootlessness, and the universalism of the rights of man; but on the other side the dream of self-management, the myth of zero growth, the fight against capitalism, and in favor of local power, and the right to be different (ibid: 89). The common thread among these themes, which seem scattered in every direction, runs deep nonetheless. Ferry claims to grasp the principle behind the ideal-type: “It is that in all cases, the deep ecologist is guided by a hatred of modernity, by hostility toward the present” (ibid.).

As Bill Devall – a follower of Næss – writes (quoted in Ferry 1992: 89-90): “the new is valued over the old and the present over the future generations”. The ideal of deep ecology would be, according to Ferry, a world in which lost epochs and distant horizons take precedence over the present (ibid: 90). Hence, deep ecology continually hesitates between conservative/reactionary romantic themes and futurist/revolutionary anticapitalist ones. In both cases, the imperative is to bring humanism to its End Time. This is why Ferry labels deep ecology as a sort of political eschatology (ibid: xx).<sup>29</sup> Hence, the flavour of fundamentalist and subversive ideologies: “Some of deep ecology’s roots lie in Nazism, while its branches extend far into the distant reaches of the cultural left” (ibid: 90). And the conclusion of Ferry is straightforward: deep ecology is incompatible with and antagonistic to real existing liberal democracy.

Does Nazi ecology really linger on in the mutated guise of deep ecology? Is this alleged mutant an insurrectionary and clandestine force brought in by stealth from the crypt of supposedly dead – or perhaps hibernating – ideologies? These questions are among many filaments exuding from the overarching inquiry posed in the introduction: *how may deep ecology be compatible with or be antagonistic to liberal democracy?* Answering this, a conceptual stumbling block needs to be dynamited in advance: liberal democracy. In the next chapter we will examine and differentiate concepts of Liberalism and democracy.

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<sup>29</sup> *Eschatology* – derived from the Greek word *eschaton* [εσχάτος] (the ultimate) – is the theological study of the *last* things: the final state of each individual, of the community of all individuals, and of reality itself (Stoeger 2003).

### 3.0 Notions of Democracy and Liberalism



“Waiting for the wind”, seen in Liverpool. Image credit: Christopher Furlong

*“Nec audiendi qui solent dicere, Vox populi, vox Dei, quum tumultuositas vulgi semper insaniae proxima sit”*  
[And those people should not be listened to who keep saying the voice of the people is the voice of God, since the riotousness of the crowd is always very close to madness].

- Alcuin in a letter to Charlemagne in 798 (quoted in Lejeune 1998: 24)-

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Ferry makes no room for ambiguity when he regards deep ecology as a rejection of liberal democracy. But what is exactly the latter? In this chapter we will first encapsulate Ferry’s understanding of the term democracy. In section 3.2 we will distinguish between the constituent parts “liberal” and “democracy” in order to state the meaning of “liberal democracy” as a whole. Finally, in section 3.3, we will have a brief look on democracy as perceived by Arne Næss.

#### 3.1 Luc Ferry on Democracy and Liberalism

In *The New Ecological Order* Ferry mostly frames his understanding of what “democracy” entails within a language of rights. Deep ecology is for instance antagonistic to “a certain type of democracy”: a political regime inherited from the Declaration of Rights [of 1789] that has inscribed itself in Western liberal societies, such as the French Republic (Ferry 1992: 129). By saying “a certain type” of democracy, Ferry admits that the word democracy has heterogeneous strains. But the variety he is most comfortable with is the one which put the

rights of man at the center, that of liberal democracy (ibid.). Adding rights to animals, plants, minerals and the entire ecosphere is the same as dismantling the legitimacy which liberal democratic regimes rest upon. And this in turn might be a pathway to tyranny.

Exterior to the language of rights, Ferry sees no contradiction between the superstructure called the nation-state and the ideal of democracy. For Ferry it is dangerous to think that the nation-state is outdated, because it will “incur the risk of seeing the turf abandoned by democrats immediately claimed and exploited, without competition, by the extreme Right” (ibid: 148). Imperfect as it may be, the nation-state is nonetheless inseparable from liberal democracy. Hence, Ferry is critical of green radicals who call for local self-management pure and simple (ibid: 145). Liberal democracy requires participation in the exercise of parliamentary power, with its inevitable constraints. Ferry then, sees democracy as a device which offers the possibility of nonviolent change (ibid.). Thus, only reform is congruent with liberal democracy, whereas incongruence between the latter and revolution. This might seem extremely obvious, but Ferry makes a point of it nevertheless. Apart from this, Ferry does not disclose any additional features that mark democracy.

To probe deeper into his conception(s) of democracy, we must consult an earlier tract of his: *From the Rights of Man to the Republican Idea* (1985). Here Ferry explains more at length what he leapfrogs in his prosecution against deep ecology seven years later. Again the language of rights prevails as the overarching theoretical framework. Clashing apprehensions of “human rights” are intimately tied to this discourse, which again serves as a tool of separating discordant notions of democracy. Analysis of the intellectual history of human rights reveals an initial problem in the very determination of human rights.

### *3.1.1 Permissions and entitlements*

The very content of human rights has undergone tremendous evolutionary change since the revolutions of 1789 and 1848. Vagueness to the term “human rights” has nonetheless not been eradicated. When it comes to the genesis of human rights, Ferry sees a bifurcation between permissions and entitlements: the former is a marker of what he labels as political [liberal] democracy, while the latter defines the boundaries of social democracy (Ferry & Renaut [1985] 1992: 15). The Declaration of 1789 proclaimed permissions specifying the individual’s intellectual possibilities (freedom of thought, expression, religion, and so on), and physical possibilities (freedom of work, commerce, assembly and so on) (ibid: 16). The law has the right to prohibit only acts harmful to society, and is designed to protect public and individual

freedom against oppression by those who govern (ibid.). Under the influences of Marxism and social Catholicism the notion of social rights – which Ferry rubricates as “entitlements” – came into the picture during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: right to work, rest, material security and education (ibid: 17). It is not enough to note the proliferation of rights: the evolution is not merely quantitative, but one of essence.

The gradual emergence – next to permissions – of entitlements whose number and content are *a priori* indefinable and variable ad infinitum, introduces changes in the conception of the relations between society and state (ibid.). The proclamation of permissions involved a theory of the limits of the state. The consideration of entitlements, on the other hand, implies that the state is expected to provide *services* (ibid.). Through a privileged reference to one or another of these two types of rights, two conceptions of law and democracy are at stake: (1) on the one hand, a purely negative conception of the law, which forbids forbidding, and whose function has political/liberal democracy as a stake; (2) on the other hand, a positive conception: the introduction of social rights where state is expected to intervene in the social sphere, notably to ensure a better distribution of wealth and to correct inequalities. This is what Ferry labels as social democracy (ibid: 18). Consequently, while on the horizon of the defense of permissions is the idea of a minimal state limited to protect its citizens’ autonomy, the horizon of the defense of entitlements seems to be a welfare state contributing to material security guaranteed to every person (ibid.).

This division between permissions and entitlements now inscribed in the rhetoric of human rights, seems to Ferry as a disclosure of the ambiguity inherent in the idea of democracy (ibid.). Liberals have tended to reject entitlements, and socialists to accord a merely relative importance to permissions (ibid.). But where do we find a rapprochement between liberals and socialists? Where does dissensus turn into consensus? Referring to his home country, France, Ferry mentions universal suffrage as the paramount hallmark of broad consensus (ibid: 6). Apart from that, the definition of democratic values remains an issue of debate along the lines of permissions and entitlements (ibid: 7).

### 3.1.2 Ferry’s position

Where does Ferry himself stand on the question of permissions and entitlements? He is certainly not a socialist, though he expresses some sympathy for Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) and the latter’s social democracy (ibid: 110). Ferry belongs to the liberal democratic camp, but he is not a Liberalist. Though Liberalism – when it is departed

from the democratic linkage – and Marxism are apparently poles apart, Ferry recognizes them as twins and is wary of them both.<sup>30</sup> As he sees it, they are fraternal enemies who share a *historicist* orientation (ibid: 95 & 107). What is the basis of Ferry’s argument? Here we will confine ourselves to his critique of Liberalism, which is exemplified by what Ferry interchangeably calls the “neoliberalism” and “hyperliberalism” of Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992).

Hayek says: “I must frankly admit that *if* democracy is taken to mean government by the unrestricted will of the majority I am not a democrat” (quoted in Ferry & Renaut [1985] 1992: 10). Instead of relying on popular will to avoid political tyranny, he appeals to an evolutionism that entrusts the improvement of conditions to the self-development of the market. To Ferry this evolutionism is a *historicism*: “market order results from a spontaneous and unconscious process” (ibid: 105). It is the result of competition. Only such a historicism, which makes the socioeconomic order and its rules necessarily the product of a process immanent in history, allows for the elimination of voluntarism (ibid.).

Hayek – like Hegel and Marx – presupposes that “in history everything unfolds rationally”: the development of the market is in this sense an “impersonal process, in which there is no subject” (ibid: 106). Consequentially, this is why Hayek rallies to the relativism of values (ibid.). This signifies the supreme paradox of the gulf between permissions and entitlements that has cannibalized the liberal tradition: “by trying to preserve permissions from the excesses of voluntarism and interventionism most often induced by entitlements of the state, liberalism ends up trusting everything to history” (ibid.). One is thus led from the criticism of social justice to the historicist dissolution of permissions!

Ferry paints an unsavoury portrait of Hayekian ultraliberalism: “it prevents the reference to human rights – if only permissions – from having any critical function whatever: in this sense, the discourse of human rights, purged of the theme of entitlements and reduced to the proclamation of permissions, comes to lose both its meaning and its function” (ibid: 108). History never takes a holiday, and Ferry warns that human rights risk once again being shelved with a number of outworn discourses (ibid: 1). And as he sees it, Liberalism at its most extreme may well be an accomplice in the undoing of liberal democracy. So again: where does Ferry himself stand on the question of permissions and entitlements? He adheres to what he calls a republican synthesis (ibid: 121). But in order to understand what that

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<sup>30</sup> Ferry does also recognize a shared animosity between Conservatives and Marxists against the liberal conception of human rights and democracy (Ferry & Renaut [1985] 1992: 41 & 90).



concept entails, we must first clarify the meaning of Republicanism: it is a model of governing a city-state or a nation as a republic, where the head of state is appointed by means other than heredity, often elections. The exact meaning of Republicanism varies depending on the cultural and historical context (Lovett [2006] 2010). For analytical purposes Quentin Skinner (1986) distinguishes between civic humanist Republicanism and classical Republicanism. David Held (2006: 35) refers to the first one as developmental Republicanism and the latter as protective Republicanism.

In the broadest sense, civic humanist or developmental theorists stress the *intrinsic* value of political participation for the development of citizens as human beings, and find their idealistic roots in ancient Greece. Classical or protective theorists stress the *instrumental* importance for the protection of citizen's aims and objectives, in other words their personal liberty, and draw on the pragmatic example of ancient Rome (ibid.). Developmental Republican theory builds on the elements of the classical democratic heritage, notably their exploration of the inherent value of political participation and of the polis as a means to self-fulfillment. In this account, political participation is a necessary aspect of the good life (ibid: 37). Notable developmental theorists were, according to Held, Marsilius of Padua (1275-1342) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1789).

Protective Republican theory emphasizes the highly fragile nature of civic virtue and its vulnerability to corruption if dependent solely upon the political involvement of any major grouping, whether it is the people, the aristocracy or the monarchy. The Republican ideal is a mixed form of government (ibid: 44.). Accordingly, protective Republican theorists stress the overriding importance of civic involvement in collective decision-making for all citizens if their personal liberty is to be safeguarded (ibid: 35). The classical tradition includes especially: Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1521) in Italy; English Republicans like John Milton (1608-1674); Montesquieu (1689-1755) in France; the rulers in Commonwealth of England, like Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658); and Americans of the founding era such as Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) and James Madison (1751-1836) (Lovett [2006] 2010).

Beyond this brief sketch of the classical/protective Republican tradition, there exists considerable historiographical controversy with respect to who its members are, and their relative significance; with respect to how we should interpret its underlying philosophical commitments; and with respect to its role (especially vis-à-vis Liberalism) in the historical development of modern political thought (ibid.). But nonetheless, there was a great deal of cross-fertilization between developmental and protective forms of Republicanism, and the key figures associated with them. Marsilius of Padua influenced Machiavelli, and the latter

influenced Rousseau (Held 2006: 37). Similarly, there were also significant differences among the political theorists within each strand. And writers sometimes shifted between these analytical types.

Though the two strands of Republicanism originated prior to the language of rights, they anticipated the division between what Ferry calls “permissions” and “entitlements”. In developmental Republicanism citizens must enjoy political and economic equality in order that nobody can be master of another (ibid: 48). They ought to enjoy equal freedom and development in the process of self-determination for the common good (ibid.). Hence, an emphasis which anticipates what Ferry ([1985] 1992: 17) calls “entitlements”. The principle of justification in protective Republicanism is not political and economic equality, but *personal liberty*: if citizens do not rule themselves, they will be dominated by others (Held 2006: 44). Here we see an anticipation of what Ferry ([1985] 1992: 16) calls “permissions”, since individual liberty and not economic egalitarianism is emphasized.

Ferry wants to reconcile permissions and entitlements in order to avoid the excesses of both extreme Liberalism and extreme Socialism. Hence, his preferred alternative is that of a republican synthesis, a middle path between social and liberal democracy (ibid: 121). Or perhaps more correctly, a middle path between developmental and protective Republicanism. This *mélange* incorporates the permissions of a modified Liberalism and assigns an appropriate place to the socialist idea of entitlements (ibid: 126).

As other theorists, Ferry stands in a tradition. As a French Republican, Ferry wants to balance the exercise of participation rights with the assumption of responsibility for the needs of solidarity (ibid: 120). According to him, the formulas of Léon Gambetta (1838-1882) – from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic of France – repeated in several speeches between 1872 and 1878, best expresses the French Republican conviction: the republic, that is, primarily the practice of universal suffrage, is “a form that entails the content” (ibid.). As Ferry sees it, the republic, whose law is necessarily the law of number (for the majority of the people, through their representatives, makes the law), cannot survive without ensuring decent living conditions for the most populous classes. Where universal suffrage is truly free and educated, this *formal* condition of democracy concerning the content of governmental decisions thus inevitably involves the assumption of responsibility for the needs of social solidarity (ibid.).

At the same time that participation rights presuppose respect for permissions, their exercise ensures the gradual actualization of what socialists consider entitlements, according to Ferry (ibid.). Great themes of the Republican tradition where Ferry stands are the idea of the sovereignty and the sanctity of law, expression of universal suffrage, the supremacy of the

legislative, and, correspondingly, the question of the separation of powers (ibid: 121). And according to Ferry, the unifying value of what he calls “the republican synthesis” is defined *de jure* when it is granted that the principal source of a possible solution to the antinomy of permissions and entitlements – which continues to oppose the liberal and socialist traditions – lies in the notion of participation rights.

Ferry does not fit neatly into neither of Skinner’s and Held’s analytical types. Ferry’s republican synthesis is a French synthesis of Rousseau (with an emphasis on the common good) and Montesquieu (with an emphasis on the separation of powers and individual liberty within the confines of legal permissions). In other words a synthesis of what Held calls developmental and protective Republicanism. But was Ferry consequential when he labeled himself as a “liberal democrat” instead of a “French Republican” in *The New Ecological Order?*

It is probably hair-splitting to focus too much on the distinction between the republican synthesis and liberal democracy. It is more reasonable to locate Ferry’s position within the realm of liberal democracy, since the latter also entails the sanctity of law, universal suffrage, the supremacy of the legislative, and the separation of powers. But in addition to all these affinities, the republican synthesis is marked by an explicit commitment to take care of the common good, which is not necessarily guaranteed in all liberal democracies. We will not dwell more on the issue of Republicanism in this thesis, but Ferry’s example of Hayek enhances the need for a further differentiation between Liberalism and democracy. This will be addressed in the next section.

### **3.2 On Democracy and Liberalism**

So far we have gone through the accusations which Ferry directs against deep ecology. We have also delineated Ferry’s political position and his understanding of what liberal democracy entails. What remains before we can really start a more focused discussion about whether deep ecology is at odds with liberal democracy or not, is to figure out the conceptions of democracy and liberalism both jointly and separately. First: what is “democracy”? Etymologically it is derived from the Greek word *demokratia*, which literally means the “rule of the people” (Held 2006: 1). This denotation sounds pretty straightforward, but is in fact somewhat tricky. Conceptual dilemmas arise when we begin to ask: (1) *who* are the people? And if we by “the people” include women, the uneducated masses, the

propertyless, the economically destitute and everyone above a certain age, further questions still emerge: (2) how, (3) when and (4) to what degree should people rule (ibid: 2)?

Should people get involved in all or most of the major political decisions (direct or participatory democracy) or should major decisions be entrusted to elected deputies (representative democracy)? Once elected, how are the delegates to be held liable? And what is the legitimate perimeter of democracy? Is a borderline between “private” and “public” a precondition for democracy? And should a rule of the people extend itself into factories and other working places? The questions could proceed indefinitely, and we will not address all of them. Suffice to say that they constitute a backdrop of theoretical discussions over the last 400 years about the essence of democracy. And as Ferry has previously pointed out, democracy remains a nebulous word with heterogeneous strains. In the following subsection we will take a closer look on the dominating model of democracy today and its liberal reference points.

### *3.2.1 Defining Liberal Democracy*

The prevailing perception nowadays of what democracy *is* and *ought* to be has departed substantially from the point of origin in Athenian antiquity. Apart from a different conception of who “the people” are and certain institutional features, the main distinction is that of emphasis: the primordial Athenian democracy was not a regime safeguarding individual rights, but rather a polity which stressed the individual’s duties [*civic virtue*] to public affairs and the common good (ibid: 14). After an interlude of roughly two millennia when hereditary rule was almost the dominating form of regime, the kind of democracy which has emerged – rather than “re-emerged” – as the most ascendant model is that of liberal democracy (ibid: 56). Liberal democracy is often conflated with representative democracy, which is a partly correct association.

Representation alone does not qualify as liberal democracy. As Fareed Zakaria (1997) has pointed out, liberal democracy requires not only free and fair elections but also constitutional protection of citizens’ rights. Illiberal democracy occurs when free and fair elections are combined with systematic denial of constitutional rights: “Democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been reelected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms. From Peru to the Palestinian Authority, from Sierra Leone to Slovakia, we see the rise of illiberal democracy” (ibid.)

Liberal democracies – as opposed to illiberal ones – are thus political systems that balance representative governing institutions with individual liberty and freedom. In addition to free and fair elections, liberal democracy requires the rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances (Montesquieu), as well as the basic liberal freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, and property (ibid.). And as Ferry has noted the discourse of human rights is intimately linked to the conception of liberal democracies. Though liberal democracy is mostly Anglo-Saxon in pedigree, its reference to human rights has a Continental source as well. The French declaration of 1789 was preceded by the American declarations of 1776 (Ferry & Renaut [1985] 1992: 19). But there is no point here in reviving a tiresome debate as to whether these American declarations did or did not have preponderant influence on the French text.

The proclamations of 1776 incontestably have in common with that of 1789 the affirmation that men are “by nature free and independent”, that they possess inalienable rights limiting the power of the state, and that the source of legitimacy is found only in the *consent* of individuals on the need for a government charged with guaranteeing these rights (ibid: 20). Despite some differing accentuations, there is an undoubted parallellism involving more a commonality of intellectual sources than a direct influence (ibid.). Though there is one crucial hereditary difference between the Anglo-American and Continental conceptions of liberal democracy: what was acted out in the American Revolution was mainly inspired by the writings of John Locke (1632-1704), while the French Revolution was given theoretical impetus by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) (Bloom 1987: 162).

Locke believed that all people were born with natural rights: such as liberty, equality and the right to personal property. And he thought that a sound political regime should be bound by a contract between the citizens and the institutions of government that defined the rights of the people and the powers of the authorities (Lansford 2007: 33). The English *Bill of Rights* from 1689 was a social contract of this kind. Locke viewed it as a protection of the citizens from the excesses of political bodies, and he argued in favour of a limited government (ibid: 34).

Rousseau, like Locke, believed in the social contract, but he asserted that a government could only function adequately if it was based on the common good (ibid.). Whereas Locke argued for limited government, Rousseau thought government should act to champion equality and opportunity (ibid.). Neither Locke nor Rousseau<sup>31</sup> were liberal

democrats, but both delivered premises to what would later respectively constitute the Anglo-Saxon and Continental versions of liberal democracy. Locke was clearly a liberal. The legacy of Rousseau is more ambiguous.<sup>32</sup> In the next subsection we will proceed further to a definition of liberalism.

### 3.2.2 Defining Liberalism

The liberal tradition in politics is, first and foremost, about individual liberty (Gaus 2003: 1). The primacy of liberalism is centered around the individual. The demarcation line between the etymological meaning of democracy and of liberalism lies between (1) the ideal of popular will as the imperative of political life, and (2) safeguarding the liberty and rights of the individuals (ibid.). In other words: The demarcation line between the ideal types goes between democracy as a majoritarian rule and liberalism as a ideology which seeks to protect the rights of minorities against potential mass tyranny. The latter aspect was explicitly articulated in John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* ([1859] 2003: 11). As we have seen in the former subsection, liberal democracy is an attempt to compromise between the terms of Liberalism and democracy. It is very common to conflate Liberalism with liberal democracy.

Though there are notable overlaps, Liberalism does also have heterogenous strains which also include anti-democratic postures. But the term is nonetheless much more tangible than that of democracy. We will not make a long expedition into the diverse terrain of liberal thought, but some paragraphs has to be added on the contrasts between Classical Liberalism, Social Liberalism and Neoliberalism. Especially because Luc Ferry has made a point of the crucial difference between the economic Liberalism of Hayek and the political Liberalism embedded in liberal democracy. The distinction between those two might have been blurred

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<sup>31</sup>Though not a democrat in the contemporary sense, Rousseau promoted what Held (2006: 37) calls developmental republicanism. Here the emphasis is on the *intrinsic value* of political participation for the enhancement of decision-making and the development of the citizenry (ibid.).

<sup>32</sup>As Allan Bloom (1987: 162) enunciated: "Locke was the great practical success; the new English and American regimes founded themselves according to his instructions. Rousseau [...] inspired all the later attempts in thought and deed, private and public, to alter, correct or escape from the fatality of Locke's complete victory". But as we will see in the next chapter, history is much more complex. In fact, Rousseau was polishing a medallion which was originally cast by Spinoza in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Israel 2006: viii).

the last 30 years (Dryzek 2005: 202), as we shall note later when the discussion of the relationship between deep ecology and liberal democracy reemerges.

The word liberal is derived from the Latin *liber*, meaning “free” (Dickerson et al. 2010: 126). It was first used as a political term in Spain during the Napoleonic Wars and became later common in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the establishment of the Liberal Party in England (ibid.). The ideas of Liberalism is, however, older than the name. Broadly speaking, Liberalism grew out of the struggle of Parliament with the Stuart kings in 17<sup>th</sup> Century England (ibid: 129). At the level of power, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 established the supremacy of Parliament over the monarchy (ibid.). At the level of ideas, the Revolution established that political authority is not derived directly from God, as the Stuarts maintained, but ultimately resides in people themselves, who delegate it to a sovereign (ibid.).

The ideas animating the Glorious Revolution were given an expression in the English Whig tradition of liberty under law (ibid: 126). Prominent Whig thinkers were John Locke in England, Adam Smith (1723-1790) and David Hume (1711-1776) in Scotland, and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) and James Madison (1751-1836) in USA. These men never called themselves Liberals, but they elaborated the principles later known as Liberalism (ibid.). They were followed by such writers as John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and his French contemporary Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), who consciously thought of themselves as Liberals (ibid.). The history of Liberalism reveals four principles, all of which relate to the broad concept of freedom: personal freedom, limited government, equality of right, and consent of the governed (ibid.). For Classical Liberals freedom – in the negative way – is simply the absence of coercion (ibid: 127). Classical Liberalism thus prefers a minimal state: its role is primarily to prevent people from harming each other through duress or fraud (ibid: 128).

Classical Liberals accept the use of force to protect the community from external attack and to punish those who commit acts of aggression or deception against others. Beyond that, the state should do relatively little, leaving the citizens to their own devices. Hence, a Classical Liberal regime is often portrayed as the night-watchman state, as merely the caretaker of society. When it comes to the Classical Liberal understanding of equality of rights, it only means that all abide by the same rules (ibid.). It does certainly imply equality of results in the outcomes of social and economic processes. Classical Liberals accept that there will always be inequality of wealth, status and power. One might say that equality of rights is the same as the right to be unequal (ibid.).

Already in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century there was a deep division within Liberalism between Classical Liberalism and the Social Liberalism elaborated by

John Stuart Mill. Social Liberalism was dominant most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the Anglophone world. It favours using the state to modify the market system without abolishing it altogether and advocates a larger role for the state in providing equality of opportunity (ibid: 127). While Social Liberalism differs significantly from Classical Liberalism in stressing *positive* freedom, the former was nonetheless an offspring of the latter (ibid: 128). If freedom is the absence of coercion, the individual will must be imperative to freedom. Both versions of Liberalism agree – at least in principle – in celebrating the fulfillment of individual desire as the highest good (ibid.).

During the 1970s Liberalism went through a major mutation. At that time the Western world experienced a major breakdown in the consensus on social benefits which had prevailed since the 1930s and the 1940s (Held 2006: 191). Simultaneously there was a sense of legitimation crisis of the state, which opened up for the “New Right” (ibid: 201). On a practical level this political deluge was initiated by Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in 1981, which has also been called *Neoliberalism*<sup>33</sup> (Harvey 2005: 1). Before we elaborate the major theoretical features of Neoliberalism – some have already been mentioned by Ferry – it must be said that the term is very slippery and mostly expressed in a polemical sense. This ideology cannot adequately be reduced to a set of Ten Commandments or six tenets. Thus it warrants some clarification. Many scholars – including Ferry and Held – are using this nebulous concept. It mostly signifies excessive capitalism, hence this is a moral category put into service by critics.

The very problem is that thinkers who are branded by this label do not describe themselves as “Neoliberals” (Mirowski 2009: 419). And many critics treat their target the same way as others treat pornography: they can’t define it, but they know it when they see it. The problem is further magnified because the term “liberal” has different meanings depending on the context. In the USA the word liberal is generally used as a synonym for progressive, and is situated in a social terrain (ibid.). In Europe the word tends to refer to a movement toward liberalization of markets. Hence, it is not a social but an economic concept (ibid.). But as Philip Mirowski (2009: 418) reminds us: “[we] should not therefore conclude that there is no such phenomenon as Neoliberalism”. So how to capture this invisible dragon in words?

The term Neoliberalism – in the modern sense – probably appeared for the first time in 1925 in a book entitled *Trends of Economic Ideas*, written by the Swiss economist Hans Honegger (Plehwe 2009: 10). In his survey Honegger identified “theoretical

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<sup>33</sup> Though the first experiments were carried out in Pinochet’s Chile already in 1973 (Harvey 2005: 7).



neoliberalism” as a concept which propagated doctrines of competition and entrepreneurship. The functions of the state were understood in a *negative* way, and therefore the heritage of Classical Liberalism loomed large (ibid: 11). But it was not until 20 years later – though the term resurfaced among some French Liberals in the 1930s – Neoliberalism began to gain theoretical momentum (Mirowski 2009: 427). Mirowski traces the initiation of Neoliberalism back to 1947. It began as a *thought collective* named Mont Pelerin Society (MPS) based in Switzerland, where Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman (1912-2006) were among the paramount figures (Plehwe 2009: 20).

Within MPS there were heterogeneous strains including libertarians and anarchists who were marginalized. More often than not did the MPS-members resort to be self-proclaimed Neoliberalists in the early years (Mirowski 2009: 427). Milton Friedman even used the term in an early survey from 1951 (ibid.). What has led so many commentators astray is the fact that the term went out of circulation within MPS in the later 1950s (ibid.). This is because the MPS-members ceased to insist on a break with the doctrines of Classical Liberalism, and therefore required no special neologism (ibid.).

What distinguishes Neoliberalism from Classical Liberalism is an inversion of the relationship between politics and economics (Tribe 2009: 75). Arguments for liberty become *economic* rather than political, identifying the impersonality of market forces as the chief means for securing popular welfare and personal liberty (ibid.). Hayek appealed to Classical Liberalism, but argues from economy to polity. His road away from “serfdom” to “freedom” ran through the market to political liberty, not the other way around (ibid: 76). Politics had now become the corollary of economics.

Classical Liberalism and its limited state were in fact gone for good in the 1920s. And it was this challenge Hayek was set to encounter within the schema of Liberalism. But a riddle addressing this predicament – posed by Carl Schmitt – remains unresolved in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: how can political order and liberty be secured if the state has no limit other than laws passed by whoever controls Parliament and government (ibid: 72)? We will not attempt to solve this conundrum here. That is the lot of others. Here we will simply note that Neoliberalism is a beast very different from Classical Liberalism. And even more different from liberal democracy.

Hayek actually regarded liberalism and democracy as antithetical: “Liberalism and democracy, although compatible, are not the same...[in] demanding unlimited power of the majority, [democracies] become essentially anti-liberal” (Hayek 1967: 161). On the question about dictatorship vs. democracy, Hayek gave an answer in 1981 (cited in Mirowski

2009: 446): “Evidently dictatorships pose grave dangers. But a dictatorship may limit itself, and if self-limited it may be more liberal in its policies than a democratic assembly that knows *no limitations*”. For Hayek democracy was not an end in itself, but a rule of procedure whose aim is to promote freedom. But he adds: “In no way it can be in the same rank as freedom. Freedom requires democracy, but I would prefer temporarily to sacrifice, I repeat temporarily, democracy, before having to do without freedom, even if temporarily” (ibid.). Hayek denounced the notion of freedom as an exercise of personal participation in political decisions: (Hayek 1960: 13): “You cannot activate your species by participation in the polis”. As both Ferry ([1985] 1992: 105) and Mirowski (2009: 444) observe: citizens must learn to forget about their “rights” and instead be given the opportunity to express themselves through the titanic information conveyance device known as the market.

A primary ambition of Neoliberalism is to *redefine the shape and functions of the state, not destroy it* (ibid: 436). Through the instrumentality of a *strong state* it also seeks to define and institute a more advanced market (ibid: 444). This is not the night watchman state of the Classical Liberals, and it is light-years away from John Stuart Mill. It must be recognized that Hayek and other Neoliberals have made a colossal impact, but Neoliberalism has – at least so far – neither eclipsed liberal democracy nor the welfare state. Though Hayek influenced Thatcher, and she in turn altered the terms of public debate, not all of the prescriptions were implemented (ibid: 90). To say that liberal democracy remains unchanged is another question, but that the market imperative has gained more momentum the last 30 years is hardly an exaggeration.

We have now have seen that democracy and Liberalism are compatible, but they are not identical and sometimes they can be at odds with each other. There is a plethora of Liberalisms and they can be roughly divided into three main paradigms: that of Classical Liberalism, Social Liberalism and Neoliberalism. Though they seek liberty in various degrees, they differ substantially on how they perceive individual rights and the function of government. Before we put Arne Næss into this varied arena of Liberalisms, we shall have a brief look on general conceptions of how democracy do apply in the real existing sense.

### 3.2.3 *Real existing democracy and its discontents*

By now we have contemplated democracy and liberalism. Ferry has already shown allegedly theoretical incompatibilities between liberal democracy and deep ecology. Do such discrepancies also apply in practice? This question will be recapitulated in chapter four and

five, so for the moment we merely want to lay down some additional premises: what is *real existing* democracy, and what is the prevailing argument of the leading countermodel within democratic theory? But first, real existing democracy: though Schumpeter ([1942] 1987) – in tune with Hayek – does not use the term, he nonetheless captures its instrumental essence by referring to democracy as a ”political method...for arriving at political-legislative and administrative decisions”.

The notion of real existing democracy is a conceptual transmutation of real existing socialism, a term which occurred in the 1970s during the Cold War. It referred to *de facto* socialism in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, as opposed to the utopian ideals of Marxism and Communism (Marshall 1998). According to Schmitter and Trechsel (2004) real existing democracy has three characteristics: (1) it calls itself democratic, (2) it is recognized by other self-proclaimed democracies as being “one of them;” and (3) most political scientists applying standard procedural criteria would code it as democratic.

All real existing democracies are products of a complex sequence of historical compromises with such other ideas and practices, such as Liberalism, Socialism, Monarchism, and Capitalism. They are not necessarily governments “of” or “by” the people, as is implied by the etymology of the generic term. It is debatable whether many of them are governments “for” the people. However, in the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln, they are still more “of, by and for the people” than all alternative forms of government (*ibid.*). The notion of real existing democracy applies to liberal democracies as well as illiberal ones. And all real existing democracies do have a system of representation, due to large-scale societies (*ibid.*).

The model of participatory democracy has been the leading counter-model to models of representation in general, and liberal democracy in particular since the 1970s (Held 2006: 209). It could also have been called direct democracy, and does in many ways resemble – but is not identical with – the democratic models of classical Athens, the Republicanism of Rousseau, in addition to certain Marxist and Anarchist positions (*ibid.*). Within contemporary democratic theory Carole Pateman might stand out as one of the most notable theorists in this regard (*ibid.*).

The idea that individuals are “free and equal” in real existing liberal democracies is questioned by Pateman (1985: 171): “[such an] individual is, in practice, a person found much more rarely than liberal theory suggests”. According to her, the formal existence of certain rights is of very limited value if they cannot be genuinely enjoyed (*ibid.*). Within participation theory “democracy is only real when it is conceived in terms of function and purpose, and the

function of an association is based on the purpose for which it was formed” (Pateman 1970: 37). Hence, from this perspective existing forms of representation are misrepresentations for two reasons. First, “because the principle of function has been overlooked, the mistake has been made of assuming that it is possible for an individual to be represented as a whole” (ibid.). Second, “under existing parliamentary institutions the elector has no real choice of, or control over, his representative, and the system actually denies the right of the individual” (ibid.). A system of functional representation, on the other hand, implies “the constant participation of the ordinary man in the conduct of those parts of the structure of Society with which he is directly concerned, and which he has therefore the best chance of understanding” (ibid.). From this it follows that within participation theory there is a distinction between the existence of representative institutional arrangements at a national level and democracy.

It is only by participation at the local level and in local associations that the individual can learn democracy (ibid: 38). The equality of citizenship implied by universal suffrage is thus seen as only formal and obscures the fact that political power is shared very unequally (ibid: 39). The theory of participatory democracy on the other hand, is built around the central assertion that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another (ibid: 42). It refers to equal participation in the making of decisions – even at the factory – and it also refers to equality of power in determining the outcome of decisions (ibid: 43).

The critique levelled against liberal democracy from the ground of participation theory brings us back to the main objective of this treatise: to assess whether deep ecology is compatible with or at odds with liberal democracy. In many ways Arne Næss would probably agree with Pateman. As he once argued, the environmental perils are so vast in scope that *no* single elite is able to handle them without aid from the multitude (Næss [1976] 1999: 16). Local participation of the latter is thus a substantial requirement for achieving the planetary objective of saving the ecosphere (ibid.). In the next section we will have a closer look on Næss’s conception of democracy.

### **3.3 Arne Næss on Democracy and Liberalism**

In 1948 Arne Næss was invited to be the scientific leader of a new UNESCO project created to explore ideological controversies between the East and the West (Glasser [2004] 2005: xxxiii). The Cold War was a tinderbox and two ideologies were contending for the

definition of the terms democracy and freedom. On the level of mutual vilification, both camps expressed their difference as one between “real” democracy and “mock” democratic forms (Næss [1951] 2005: 66). The objective of Næss was to elucidate what different scholars and politicians meant when they used the term democracy. In addition he inquired the origins of ambiguity and bewilderment that followed from its use (Glasser [2004] 2005: xxxiii). After a capacious literature review, Næss and his assistant, Stein Rokkan (1921-1979), found more than a thousand nuances of the term democracy.

The empirical study demonstrated democracy’s richness, diversity, and the abundance of meanings. It thus undermined its misuse in both the East and the West (Glasser [2004] 2005: xxxiv). This provoked detractors from both the Liberal and Marxist camps, who condemned the resulting report – *Democracy in a World of Tensions* – which according to Næss “was promptly sold out and never reprinted by UNESCO due to the politically dangerous character of its items” (Næss [1983] 2005a: 313). The fact that Næss and Rokkan avoided differentiations between various concepts of “democratic form of government” and “less democratic” (Næss [1951] 2005: 75), did not seem to temper the hostile reception on either side of the Iron Curtain.

Though primarily an *empirical* study, the report of Næss and Rokkan ended with *normative* remarks which were also directed against Western regimes: “Nationalist trends and political servility are fostered in research centers by their dependence on official bureaucracy or economic power [...] to produce statements agreeable to the dominant trends [...] in the foreign policy of their nation” (ibid: 87). Næss even called these inclinations “crude attempts at *Gleichschaltung*<sup>34</sup>” (ibid.). The UNESCO democracy study was the first and last international large-scale application of Næss’s empirical semantics approach (Glasser [2004] 2005: xxxiv). As we will see in the next chapter, Næss’s political outlook was to a large degree shaped by Gandhi. And Gandhian nonviolent communication designed to tackle core disagreements was embedded within Næss’s view of democratic procedure (Galtung & Næss [1955] 1968: 115).

Transferred to the realm of deep ecology, the premise is that the ability to forge notable agreements and debate major disagreements rests upon maneuvering discussion to what are surmised to be the root causes of the environmental crisis (Glasser 1999: 366). A

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<sup>34</sup> The term *Gleichschaltung* (it means “bringing into line”) was originally used in Nazi-Germany as an expression of the co-ordination of German political, social and cultural life with Nazi ideology and values (Todd 2002: 194).

crucial, underlying hypothesis is that drawing out the presumed inconsistencies between an individual's actions and their fundamental beliefs will help to effect constructive change. Næss offers us an extensive theory of communication which seeks to eliminate the misunderstandings that seem to plague effective communication (ibid.). We will not go in depth into every facet of this theory. But a few words need to be said: misunderstandings appear either in the guise of "pseudo-agreements" or "pseudo-disagreements" (ibid.).

Because of the inherent vagueness of language, a given expression can often be interpreted in almost infinite ways. Suppose we were confronted with this insistence: "Biodiversity protection is necessary". Various interpretations of "biodiversity" – from *only* charismatic megafauna to all species – "protection" and "necessary" might be similarly explored (ibid: 367). Does "protection" mean active management or recluse management? And does "necessary" mean only in certain situations or always?

As Næss warned, precization is context dependent and comes at a cost. Excessive precization adds more complexity and might even escalate misunderstandings. Hence, precization should only take place when necessary (ibid.). Once misunderstandings have been eliminated it can be established whether the agreements or disagreements are substantial. The way to resolve conflicts, Næss suggested, is to weigh alternative views against each other (ibid.). The goal is to establish which viewpoint is the most acceptable (ibid.). Whether this theory is naïve or not when it comes to implementation is another discussion, but it nonetheless points to what Næss emphasized as an ideal democratic procedure.

In light of Ferry's critique against deep ecology as a cryptototalitarian ideology, it seems puzzling that Næss prioritized the aforementioned procedures. Did Ferry ever read Næss's arguments thoroughly, and how is one to make sense of deep ecology as a whole in relation to liberal democracy? In the ten volumes of Næss's selected works from 2005, as well as in the anthologies in *Philosophical Dialogues* from 1999 (edited by Nina Witoszek), Næss never answered the charges of Luc Ferry. In fact, Ferry has never been mentioned by Næss. At least not in the literature published so far by 2010.

In *Philosophical Dialogues* Næss tries to get into dialogue with an even harsher critic of deep ecology than Ferry, the radical ecologist named Murray Bookchin (1921-2006). Bookchin was not just more merciless than Ferry, but probably the most unsavoury antagonist of deep ecology to surface so far. His charges are much more explicit, as I will briefly recapitulate in the next chapter. Against the indictments of Bookchin and others suspecting deep ecology of anti-democratic sentiments, Næss "disagreed that ecosustainable societies

will necessitate the rejection of liberal constitution and a kind of biocentric system of justice” (Næss 1999c: 469).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ferry finds the last of deep ecology’s Eight Points averse: “Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes”. As Ferry sees it, this “remark ties in with the theoretical aspects of the program and its practical desire to found a new militant movement” (Ferry 1992: 68). Næss has later admitted – not necessarily in response to Ferry, whom he never mentioned – that the last of the Eight Points is somewhat ambiguous. And he was ready to revise it by adding: “by peaceful and democratic means” (Næss [1995] 2005c: 99).

But again, when we put the hobby horse of Næss – that of precization – into service, what did he exactly convey by “democratic” means? His theory of communication is certainly a good indication of his ideal in this regard, but it must also be added that his democracy is a kind of local participatory democracy rather than a centralized representative one (Næss [1976] 1999). Næss was critical of the latter model, which dominates today. And he did not want to identify the last of the Eight Points with contemporary democracies due to their imperfections (Næss [1995] 2005c: 100). Næss clearly labeled himself a “democrat”, but not as a Liberal. He barely mentioned economic Liberalism, but he regarded it as a malign force, socially as well as ecologically. Consequentially equivalent to Leninism by his account, economical Liberalism is pregnant with the germ of violence and repression (Næss 1960: 21).

Though understanding the aspirations of emerging economies like China and India, he was worried that “the Third World does not seem to realize that the consumerism of the West is doomed” (Næss [1995] 2005d: 585). A free world market implying the four freedoms – (1) free crossing of goods through borders, (2) free flow of services, (3) freedom to compete for jobs anywhere, and (4) freedom of capital to flow across any border – are actually four catastrophic unfreedoms by the account of Næss (ibid: 586). A combined focus on the local and the planetary is thus impossible under such conditions (ibid: 585). The planetary flow of commodities and capital is seen as unsustainable. And if unsustainability increases, Næss sees the prospect of some authoritarian or dictatorial regimes to emerge in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as a response to the magnified desolation (Næss [1995] 2005a: 99 & Næss 1999c: 469). An outlook he called “an unspeakable tragedy” if it went to be realized (Næss 1999c: 469).

When Næss insisted that the intrinsic value was the same for every human being, he regarded it as incompatible with Fascism and the special ethical status accorded to the

supreme Leader (Næss [1995] 2005c: 95). His personal experiences during World War II and its immediate aftermath – as mentioned in the introduction – might indeed be indicative enough of his anti-fascist stance, making the charges of Ferry and Bookchin invalid when it comes to Næss in specific. But as we will see in the next chapter, Næss might have been wrong when he claimed that “none of the theorists of deep ecology show any [authoritarian or dictatorial] tendencies” (ibid: 99). This is why we will turn a closer attention to the corpus of deep ecology both in breadth and depth in order to differentiate between diverse positions within this vast landscape.

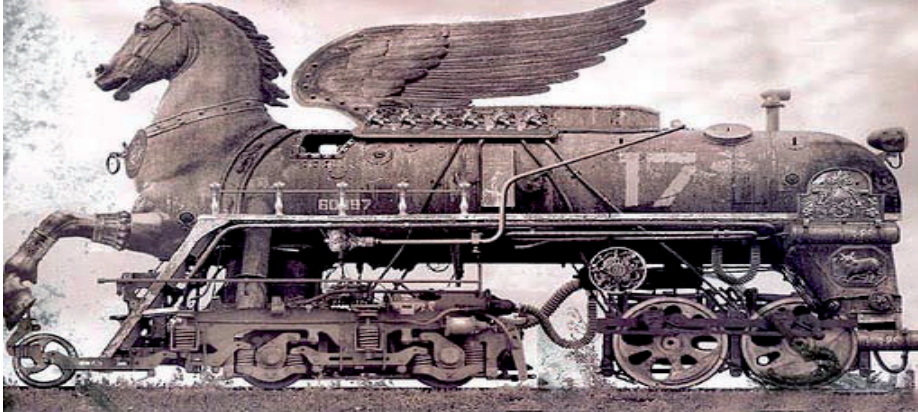
### **3.4 Summary**

As we have seen, the kind of liberal democracy Ferry advocates – a French republican synthesis – is not exactly the same creature as the liberal democracies of Anglo-Saxon countries. The fault line goes between the legacies of Locke and Rousseau, which is between the ideal of limited government and the ideal of the common good. Ferry – more in the tradition of Rousseau than that of Locke – frames his understanding of democracies within a language of rights, in the distinction between permissions and entitlements. He wants to reconcile permissions and entitlements in order to avoid the excesses of Liberalism and Socialism.

Ferry is critical of Hayek’s Neoliberalism because it purges the theme of entitlements. And what he finds most disturbing is that Neoliberalism is also negating the permissions which are central to Classical Liberalism. Here we see a slight convergence between Ferry and Næss: both are wary of economic Liberalism, but for different reasons. Ferry senses a dormant peril of unfreedom wrapped inside the concepts of Neoliberalism (which he interchangeably labels as economic Liberalism). His fear is not about ecological desolation, but individual liberties. Ferry’s republican synthesis is not about undoing the market, since he wants to domesticate it. Næss does not employ the word “Neoliberalism”, but talks solely about “economic Liberalism”. And it seems that he was a kind of participatory democrat in the sense of Carole Pateman and critical of the way contemporary, real existing liberal democracies work. In the next chapter I will excavate the pre-established historical framework of deep ecology and determine its genealogy.



#### 4.0 Deep Ecology As Interpreted Through Næss and His Followers



Sculpture by Vladimir Tsesler & Sergei Voichenko, Belarus: A locomotive “god” from the Victorian age that was supposed to be “the Physical Saviour” of humanity.

*“Die Natur hat weder Kern noch Schale, alles ist sie mit einem Male” [“Nature has neither kernel nor shell; she is everything at once”].*

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe ([1820] 1828: 101) –

Ferry passes a harsh judgment on deep ecology, and so does Murray Bookchin. They both think that deep ecology is redolent of totalitarianism. For instance, they allude to Heidegger as one of deep ecology’s prime sources of inspiration (Ferry 1992: 70; Bookchin 1999: 286). Ferry does not mention the Nazi past of Heidegger at all. Bookchin, on the other hand, is ready to exploit what Ferry at most tells between the lines: “Spinoza, a Jew in spirit if not in religious commitment, is intermingled with Heidegger, a former member of the Nazi party in spirit as well as ideological affiliation. [Deep ecologists are] opportunistic in their use of catch-words and what Orwell called ‘double speak’...Here, I may add, Heidegger, and, yes, Nazism, begin to grimace with satisfaction behind this veil” (Bookchin 1999: 286 & 290). Neither Bookchin nor Ferry did minutely scrutinize the arguments of either Næss or Heidegger.

The purpose of this chapter is to alleviate Ferry’s omission. In particular: what is the essential position of Næss? And is Heidegger really a prototypic deep ecologist? Though not necessarily premier in the final analysis, Heidegger is nevertheless a central figure to explore at this stage. Simply because he is emphasized strongly by Ferry and Bill Devall (1980: 299 ff.), one of Næss’s leading disciples. Even the founding father of deep ecology, Næss himself, said on an occasion that “I’m quite near Heidegger in a certain sense” (Næss

1999a: 21), and that deep ecology has “affinities with [the philosophy of] Heidegger” (Næss 1999b: 167). Therefore we should smoke out the pertinence of Heidegger before we proceed to the next chapter. And it is equally important to differentiate between Næss and his followers. Not all of the sources consulted are of recent provenance: to map out the pedigree of deep ecology one has to look beyond the genesis of modern ecological movement, which did not originate before the 1960s (Steiguer 2006: 1).

When diving into the genealogical matter of deep ecology one enters a vast corpus with no apparent core, and a somewhat chaotic and eclectic façade. Devall and Sessions juggle with many names: Heidegger and Næss for instance, join the Pantheon together with St. Francis of Assisi,<sup>35</sup> Benedict de Spinoza, Henry Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, Rainer Maria Rilke and Aldo Leopold to name only a few. In addition, deep ecology is supposedly connected to a host of traditions, including Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Native American thought, Romanticism, and ecological science (Devall and Sessions 1985: 79–108). This hagiographic assemblage seems like a nebula for outsiders. If the current of deep ecology came into being from separate streamlets and torrents, which of the alleged forerunners should we emphasize most?

Since the priority of this thesis is deep ecology in general and Næss in particular, it is more admissible to foreground the paramount inspirators of deep ecology’s founding father: nobody affected Næss more than Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677) and Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). Though poets like St. Francis of Assisi and Rilke might have incited sentience among certain deep ecologists, they remain peripheral in the fabric of deep ecological thought. The cruxes of Spinoza and Gandhi on the other hand, are so pervasive in this regard that it is difficult to imagine deep ecology at all without their anteriority. At least when it comes to Næss, as we will see in subsections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. Prior to that we will turn our attention to different visions of deep ecology within the deep ecological movement.

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<sup>35</sup> St. Francis of Assisi (1181/1182-1226) is honoured by the Catholic Church as the patron saint of animals and ecology. His ecological views are most famously expressed in *the Canticle of the Sun* (1225), a hymn where he cherished the wonders of creation and embraced them as “Brothers” and “Sisters” (Francis of Assisi [1225] 1982: 38-39).

#### 4.1 Ecology: The Shallow and the Deep

Deep ecology was first coined by Næss in 1973, the year of the international oil crisis. According to Næss, what mainstream perceives as "environmentalism" – then as now – is in fact a shallow kind of ecology. It is shallow because it seeks to solve the environmental crisis through technocratic devices without questioning its economic, psychological, sociological and political origins (Næss [1976] 1999:117). The problem-solving policy of shallow ecology is to fight pollution and resource depletion (Næss 1973), in a manner which has later been termed "sustainable development" (Bosselmann 2008: 1). Just as we cannot understand the essence of deep ecology without contrasting it with its "shallow" counterpart, it is equally hard to define shallow ecology without explaining what its key concept – sustainability – entails.

The term "sustainable development" [*Nachhaltigkeit*] appeared for the first time in 1713.<sup>36</sup> It was conjured up by the German silver mine administrator Hans Carl von Carlowitz (1645-1714) in his book *Sylvicultura oeconomica* (ibid: 18).<sup>37</sup> But sustainability did not transpire with full force until the 1970s (Carruthers [2001] 2005: 286). Since then, the term "sustainability" has conquered the hegemonic position among existing environmental discourses. At first it was a radical discourse about scarcity and limits to growth (ibid.). However, the "sustainability" of contemporary language bear faint resemblance to the radical point of departure forty years ago. Since then the concept of sustainability has migrated from opposition against *status quo* to an orthodoxy which accepts the rules of the existing system. Sustainability has thus become the hallmark of green reformism (ibid: 285). Scarcity is no longer on the agenda. This semblance accepts the validity of growth and tries to harmonize the tensions between environmental sustainability, social justice and economic prosperity. By

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<sup>36</sup> The imperative of sustainability has recurred in cultures and civilizations all around the world, but its legal formalization has European roots (Bosselmann 2008: 14). The history of environmental laws did not originate in the 1960s, but is as old as the European legal tradition itself. Already in the 14th Century laws in Central and Western Europe were guided by the sustainability concerns of local principalities. Their approach revolved around a land use system known as *Allmende* in German and *commons* in English (ibid.).

<sup>37</sup> Carlowitz criticized short-term instrumentalist forestry. He argued that ignorance and greed will ruin forestry and lead to irreversible desolation (Carlowitz [1713] 2000: 43 & 79). Though essentially a pragmatic, Carlowitz did also anticipate German Romanticism by insisting that nature is animated by a "living spirit" [*Lebensgeist*] (ibid: 22).

critics this is labelled as “weak” sustainability as opposed to the radical ideal of “strong” sustainability (Bosselmann 2008: 27).

Sustainable development entered mainstream vocabulary in 1987 when WCED<sup>38</sup> – led by Gro Harlem Brundtland – published the Brundtland Report (Dryzek 2005: 16). The Brundtland definition of sustainable development possessed an ambiguity that secured it a position as a “bridging” concept (Meadowcraft ([2000] 2005: 268). Its spoken concern for present and future generations was vague and left enough flexibility for pro-growth economists, business executives, and governments to embrace it (Carruthers [2001] 2005: 290). An open texture has been the premise for relative “success”.

Intimating both change and continuity, while avoiding any idea of a direct assault on established cores of political and economic power (Meadowcraft ([2000] 2005: 278). The appeal is drawn from faith in technological progress, and it features an underlying confidence in the power of human reason to recast social institutions and practices (ibid: 279). The green capitalism advocated by former US Vice-President Al Gore for instance, is entirely consistent with the concept of (weak) sustainability (Dryzek & Schlosberg 2005: 301), and thereby that of green reformism in general. Hence, green capitalism is shallow ecology in the terminology of Næss and his followers. And the same could be said about the Brundtland report. “Sustainability” as understood by the latter is exemplary of what deep ecologists consider as a “narrow interpretation” (Næss [1992] 2005a: 143-144).

As deep ecologists see it, the imperative of economic growth – even if it is supposed to be “ecologically benign” – implies avarice. Hence, the paradigm of sustainability disregards nature as a standing reserve: animals and plants are still treated as mere resources with no intrinsic value. By contrast, deep ecology is biocentric and postulates biological egalitarianism – equality between the species – and rejects the notion of man-in-environment image in favour of the relational and holistic total-field image (Næss 1973). Every living organism – from man and whales to conifers and microbes – are seen as knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations. Biocentric equality implies that no species, including *Homo sapiens*, rank higher than any other species (ibid.). According to Stan Rowe (2006: 21) “we are Earthlings first, humans second”. Deep ecologists value species, populations, and ecosystems, not just individual creatures (Dryzek 2005: 184). The antipode of biocentric equality is anthropocentric humanism (Eckersley 1992: 57). The latter is

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<sup>38</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development (Carruthers [2001] 2005: 289).

regarded as a predicament guilty of speciesism: the assigning of different values or rights to beings on the basis of their species membership (Ryder 2000: 5ff).

As David Ehrenfeld expressed, although humanism “has its nobler parts”, its “arrogance” still prevails: intrinsic value is generally taken to reside exclusively in humans (Ehrenfeld 1981: xiii-iv). Devall and Sessions (1985: 70) argue that nature and its diversity have intrinsic value irrespective of human uses and interests. As Næss (1998: 132) admitted, this is in fact a radical extension of the categorical imperative originally posed by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).<sup>39</sup> That “no person should be treated as a means by another” (Kant [1785] 2003: 63), is transformed into “no creature should be treated as a means by human beings”.<sup>40</sup> Man’s relationship with nature, now one-directional and inegalitarian, must go from “parasitic” to “symbiotic”, accepting the notion of giving back what one borrows (Dryzek 2005: 184).

Diversity and symbiosis are the core principles of deep ecology (Næss 1973). But how to sustain these fundamentals? Here Devall expressed the most profound difference between deep ecology and mainstream shallow ecology: “There are two great streams of environmentalism. One is reformist. The other stream supports many of the reformist goals but is revolutionary, seeking a new metaphysics, epistemology, and environmental ethics of the person/planet” (Devall 1980). What does Devall opine by “revolutionary”? Is it about storming the citadels of political supremacy and dethroning the potentate?

As we shall see, there are deep ecologists who are revolutionary in the militant and tangible political sense. But it seems that the agenda of Devall is not to provoke Leviathan unswervingly: “The deep, long-range ecology movement is only partly political. It is primarily a spiritual-religious movement” (Devall 1988: 160). The ecological crisis for deep ecologists is first and foremost a “crisis of civilization” (Barry 1999: 18). Thus strong sustainability – as opposed to the “weak” sustainability endorsed by green reformists – presupposes collective mental upheaval.

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<sup>39</sup> “Handle nur nach derjenigen Maxime, durch die du zugleich wollen kannst, daß sie ein allgemeines Gesetz werde” (Kant 1785: 52). Translated into English: “Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” (Kant [1785] 2003: 84).

<sup>40</sup> Occasionally Kant was also preoccupied with nature and man’s place in it. His evolutionary theory is *teleological* and puts man at the pinnacle: “only through a progression in a sequence of unspecified numbers of generations can the human race advance to its *destiny*” (Kant 1798 [1820]: 316).

In deep ecology the reason for care is as important as the care itself (ibid.). Again the reference to Kant: deep ecologists differentiate between beautiful and moral actions, where the former is based on inclination and the latter on duty (Næss [1986] 2005: 54). An act deserves the label “moral” if it is solely motivated by respect for the moral law: you do it simply because it is your duty; there is no other motive (Næss [1993] 2005a: 122). But suppose you perform the act because you are inclined to act in that way: it feels “natural” to do it (ibid.). Then it is a beautiful act which is benevolent and “expands our love to embrace the whole of life”, as Næss interprets Kant (ibid.).<sup>41</sup>

Green consciousness is achieved when the way people experience and regard the world in which they exist is the key to green change (Dryzek 2005: 181). We cannot hope to save nature until we learn to experience it once more as sacred and as living. Self-realization is a basic principle in this regard (Devall and Sessions 1985: 67). It means identification with a larger organic “Self” beyond the individual person; or “self-in-Self” as Devall and Sessions put it (ibid.). The idea is to cultivate a deep consciousness and awareness of organic unity, of the holistic nature of the ecological webs in which every individual is embedded (Dryzek 2005: 184).

Unlike some other deep ecologists, Næss is not misanthropic. And the same could be said about Devall and Sessions. But some even deny the legitimacy of special human interests, like William Aiken (1984: 269) who evoked a death program to exterminate 90% of all human beings. Miss Ann Thropy,<sup>42</sup> a columnist in the journal of the ecowarrior group Earth First!,<sup>43</sup> is another hardline deep ecologist who adheres such genocidal prescriptions. In a 1987 article Miss Ann Thropy welcomed famine and disease (such as AIDS) as useful checks on human population growth (Dryzek 2005: 184). In reality, ecowarriors have not gone at length to carry out another Holocaust. But they have experience with the method of ecotage: that is, sabotage of environmentally damaging activities (ibid: 199). The repertoire includes pouring syrup into fuel tanks and destroying logging roads among infinitely others.

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<sup>41</sup> Næss ([1993] 2005: 122) refers to a rudimentary work by Kant called *Versuch einiger Betrachtungen über den Optimismus* (1759). In fact, Kant did not develop the distinction between “beautiful” and “moral” acts at this moment (see Kant [1759] 1838: 45-54), but he anticipates what is to come in his critical philosophy of the 1780s.

<sup>42</sup> Miss Ann Thropy is the pseudonym of Christopher Manes (Dryzek 2005: 202).

<sup>43</sup> In 1989 the FBI classified Earth First! as the number one terrorist group in the USA (ibid: 199).

Dave Foreman has been among the most prominent ecowarriors of Earth First!. He regards his group as revolutionary and with no willingness to make any compromise with the establishment: “We are thwarting the system, not reforming it...we are therefore not concerned with political credibility...it is vitally important that we have biological credibility” (Foreman [1991] 2005: 351). But is ecotage compatible with deep ecology? As Espen Hammer (2006: 171) observes, the majority of deep ecologists are anti-authoritarian and commit themselves – at least in theory – to the anarchistic principle of “live and let live”. The latter maxim is not necessarily at odds with ecotage, because the activism of ecowarriors is directed against governments and companies at the systemic level. Ordinary citizens at the individual level are not the usual targets.

But the militancy of ecowarriors gives rise to another question: are they totalitarians in disguise? Not inevitably, though there are self-proclaimed deep ecologists who openly favour austere dictatorships. As for instance Pentti Linkola, who has been a renowned figure in Finland since the 1960s. He condemns liberal democracies as “seals of ruin” because “the public right to vote guarantee that no other than the sycophants of the people will rise to power” (Linkola [2004] 2009: 159). For him “any kind of dictatorship is superior to democracy” (ibid: 174).

Linkola regrets that the era of hereditary kingship and feudal lords is over (ibid: 160). But he hopes that once upon a time in the future a rare and supreme being will ascend: “someone capable of controlling the people without being led by it; someone capable, when necessary, of taking a stand against the people” (ibid.). This is because our society and ways of life are based on “what man desires and not what is best for him” (ibid: 204). Linkola wants an elitist regime ruled by ecological kings and mandarins: a government “led by a few wise individuals is necessary to protect the people from itself” (ibid: 205).

Linkola has endorsed Hitler and Nazi concentration camps as an acceptable demographic policy (Sundberg & Wilhelmsson 2008: 129). In a speech given to the Finnish Green Party in Helsinki in 1987, Linkola extolled Stalin for executing millions of people (Paastela 1987: 88). At the same meeting he distributed a pamphlet which besides idolizing the totalitarian state stressed the necessity of returning to small-scale agriculture employing horses and human energy (ibid: 37-46).

Though using Næss as an alibi in at least one instance (Linkola [2004] 2009: 115) – when talking about population reduction – Linkola’s interpretation of deep ecology seems fairly distant from that of the Norwegian founding father. As well as rejecting Gandhi and non-violence (ibid: 174), Linkola equates self-realization with “pure selfishness” (ibid: 155).

That is fairly opposed to how Næss, Devall and Sessions would have used this concept. Linkola seems to be a maverick residing in the outermost margin of deep ecology. Dryzek (2005: 184) is probably right when he thinks that “many deep ecologists want to distance themselves from the misanthropes”. Næss ([1987] 2005: 155) agrees that a drastic reduction in human population is needed. It is compatible with the flourishing of human life and cultures, and the flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease. But reduction should occur gradually: “A time frame of a century will be much too short for turning the present growth in human population into a reduction”. Furthermore, a reduction should “be consistent with the basic rights of the human as a living being and never resort to crude coercion” (Næss [1993] 2005b: 201). Needless to say, Næss is a paragon of moderation compared to Linkola, Aiken and Miss Ann Thropy.

Most deep ecologists would probably agree with Eckersley (1992: 46), who in defining ecocentrism (biocentrism) specifies that it “recognizes the full range of human interests in the nonhuman world” as well as “the interests of the nonhuman community”. The question of how to balance human and nonhuman interests belongs to casuistry: answers are more easily provided in particular cases rather than at the level of general abstraction. Deep ecologists are quite clear on what to do when it comes to wilderness: preserve, expand, and protect it (Dryzek 2005: 185). But they have much less to say on other environmental issues, such as air and water pollution in metropolitan areas. Urban agglomerations are by their definition outside the limit of defensible human-nature interactions, and thus of no concern (ibid.). Something correspondingly could also be said about the issue on animal liberation.<sup>44</sup> It is weakly ecological, some would say anti-ecological. For in its concern with individual creatures, it can lose sight of larger ecological connections (Dryzek 2005: 215). Animal liberation and deep ecology should thus not be confused.

What is the contemporary range of deep ecology? As a movement it is most prevalent in the Western parts of the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Germany (but not Norway, the land of origin) (ibid: 183). It is much more marginal in Ferry’s France.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The leading animal liberationist Peter Singer (1989: 148ff) wants to extend the rights of human beings to animals and formalize these efforts within an updated legal framework.

<sup>45</sup> In contemporary France the movement of *décroissance* – degrowth – has become the most influential among the radical green groups. Degrowth thinkers and activists advocate a downscaling of production and consumption in order to save the environment (Parker et al. 2007: 69 & Lavignotte 2010).



Hence, in this regard there is an intra-Western rift separating the Latin world from the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic countries. This is not the place to speculate on why. But even compared with France, the appeal is considerably more diminutive in the Third World and the emerging economies of Asia. Here the reasons are seemingly more obvious: “the necessities of economic development relegate environmental questions to secondary status” (Ferry 1992: xxv). It is in the post-industrial West ecological denunciations of Western wrongdoings gain most acceptance.

Grasroot activists, ecowarriors, ecofarmers and academics constitute the deep ecological movement today. There have been deep ecological inroads into party politics, notably in Germany (Devall & Sessions 1985: 9). But since the 1980s the German Greens have been divided internally between the *Realos* and the *Fundis* (Wallerstein 2002: 35). The latter wing, constituted by radicals, was vanquished in the battle over tactical questions concerning action outside versus inside the parliament. Eventually the reformist wing became fully integrated into mainstream politics and even entered national government in 1998 (ibid.). As Perry Anderson (2009: 15 & 20) observes, it is possible that a moderated political program has made the German Greens more acceptable [*salonfähig*] within the majority, but then they also ceased to challenge the status quo.

The fear of being watered down by involvement in mainstream politics is probably why deep ecologists and other green radicals shed parliamentarism (Dryzek 2005: 221). And stealing of green ideas [*Themenklau*] by established parties have further weakened the prospects of green radicals for the time being (ibid.). A host of other factors also frustrate the momentum of green radicalism: market systems that reward and reinforce materialistic behaviour, atomistic individuals and employment settings which make wage-earners too exhausted to have time for political action, just to mention a few (ibid: 202). But the most immense constraint is that of international political economy: it conditions structures and institutions, identities and discourses (ibid.).

As Charles Lindblom (1982) noted: “the market imprisons government policy”. If there is a friction between economic imperatives and other values, priority is notably given to the former (Dryzek 2005: 202). And here we encounter what probably engenders the commanding incentive of our age: maintenance or expansion of the gross domestic product, the bedrock of political clout both at home and abroad. This is not the place to contemplate elaborately on the implications of Lindblom’s dictum, since they are ultimately extended to the sphere of international relations. But the latter dimension remains a key part of the predicament deep ecology addresses. For that reason – even if it is not directly

connected to the subject matter of this thesis – we shall recapitulate this determinant and meditate further on it in the conclusion. Before that we will proceed to Næss’s specific political outlook and his philosophical guiding stars.

## 4.2 The Outlook of Næss and Its Sources

*“Da ist kein Augenblick, der nicht dich verzehrte und die Deinigen um dich her, kein Augenblick, da du nicht ein Zerstörer bist, sein mußt; der harmloseste Spaziergang kostet tausend armen Würmchen das Leben, es zerrüttet ein Fußtritt die mühseligen Gebäude der Ameisen und stampft eine kleine Welt in ein schmachliches Grab”.*<sup>46</sup>

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1774) –

Arne Næss did not see himself as “inventing” deep ecology (Glasser [2004] 2005: xlii). Rather – according to himself – he conceptualized a nascent green philosophy that has been with humanity since at least Buddha and Lao-Tzu (ibid.). They ascended during the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE in India and China respectively. But it was not until the 1970s the manifest expression of deep ecology came of age. Supporters of this movement are not united by a commitment to a distinctly outlined philosophy, but by their willingness to endorse the general eight-point platform originally prepared by Næss and Sessions in 1984 (ibid.).

It does not follow that supporters of deep ecology must have identical beliefs (Næss [1986] 2005: 49). They do have common beliefs about intrinsic values in nature, but these can in turn be derived from different and mutually incompatible sets of ultimate convictions (ibid.). Another shared perspective is that of the planet as a basic unit (Næss [1988] 2005: 17). Næss ([1986] 2005: 50) regarded deep ecology first and foremost as a grassroots movement, not as a worldview. The specific outlook of Næss is labelled as *ecosophy T* (ibid: 52).<sup>47</sup> Its fundamental norm is Self-Realization (ibid.). It is based on the distinction between the individualistic self and the larger Self comprising all life-forms. This

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<sup>46</sup> Translated into English: *“There is not a moment but preys upon you, — and upon all around you, not a moment in which you do not yourself become a destroyer. The most innocent walk deprives of life thousands of poor insects: one step destroys the fabric of the industrious ant, and converts a little world into chaos”* (Goethe [1774] 2005).

<sup>47</sup> T stands for Tvergastein, where Næss built his cabin in 1937. It lies 1500 meters above sea level at Ustaaset in the mountain range Hallingskarvet, 200 kilometers east of Bergen (Næss [1992] 2005b: 340-341).

was originally conceived in the Sanskrit pronoun *ātman*: the universal and absolute Self (Næss [1977] 2005: 488). Næss wanted to break down some of the barriers erected between human and any other forms of life within our common space. According to him “we need a concept of mixed community defined in such a way that humans and limited groups of animals that play a more or less well-known role in human affairs are included as members” (Næss & Mysterud 1987: 23). The concept of mixed community may be seen as a subconcept of a general “life community” embracing all kinds of life (ibid: 24). Næss ([1995] 2005a: 97) admitted that a wide application of the predicate *living* is open to different proposals. But he did not regard it as necessary to include the HIV virus for instance (ibid.).

In ecosophy T the change of mentality must arrive before any other adjustments. Without a natural evolution of attitudes – seemingly a revolution when change is within reach – any ecological imperative, no matter how reasonable, would feel like a moralistic straightjacket (Næss [1976] 1999: 109). According to Næss, not even a green dictator – nor a democratically elected leader – is able to carry out the necessary reforms leading to a planetary ecological equilibrium (ibid: 112). So how does the utopia of Næss look like? In his opinion, deep ecology is in favour of anti-class posture among human beings, which parallels the egalitarianism in the biosphere (Næss 1973).

The implementation of ecologically responsible policies is sought through decentralization and local autonomy (ibid.). Social responsibility, mutual aid and a reign of nonviolence are other characteristics he preferred (Næss [1988] 2005: 14). The anti-class posture of Næss’s ideal society would mean an absence of social hierarchy. Furthermore, people should live in voluntary simplicity, with a high degree of self-reliance and with moderate mobility (ibid.). Industrial and agricultural units should be small, home and working place should be proximate and transportation mainly public (ibid.). Hence, it would be a *labour-intensive* economy as opposed to capital-intensive liberal economy (Næss [1997] 2005: 605).

The products stemming from an authentic green society – in the terms of Næss – would be that of soft technology: locally produced and non-specialized craftwork based on little energy (Næss [1976] 1999: 124). The opposite of soft technology is that of energy-intensive and massproduced *hard* technology, which requires expertise to manufacture. The implications of this mode of production is a centralized and technocratic hierarchy alienated from nature, according to Næss (ibid.). Næss argued that a technocratic society – whether it is capitalist or socialist – is incompatible with responsible ecological politics. Though he equalled the ecological hazards of real existing Soviet socialism with that of US capitalism,

he praised radical grassroot socialism as an opposing force to the political status quo (Næss [1976] 1999: 287). Because of this opposition against capitalism, Næss thought it was reasonable for deep ecology to lean itself partly on radical socialism (ibid.). The Green movement should avoid one-sidedness and sectarianism, letting for instance the movements of deep ecology, Anarchism and Marxism blossom in constant close collaboration (Næss [1995] 2005a: 74).

Næss sees the deep ecology movement and its supporters as part of a total view that comprises many levels and many ultimate philosophies and diverse practices in close correspondence with each other. To convey this he uses an apron diagram (figure 4.1), which illustrates logical – as distinct from genealogical – relations between views (Næss [1995] 2005b: 75). By logical relations Næss means verbally articulated relations between the premises and conclusions. They move down the diagram in stages: some conclusions become premises for new conclusions (ibid.). By genealogical relations, Næss refers to influences, motivations, inspirations, and cause-and-effect relations. They are not indicated anywhere in the apron diagram (ibid.). The apron diagram is perhaps the closest attempt to “systematize” the vast and seemingly contradictory corpus of deep ecology within a single model.

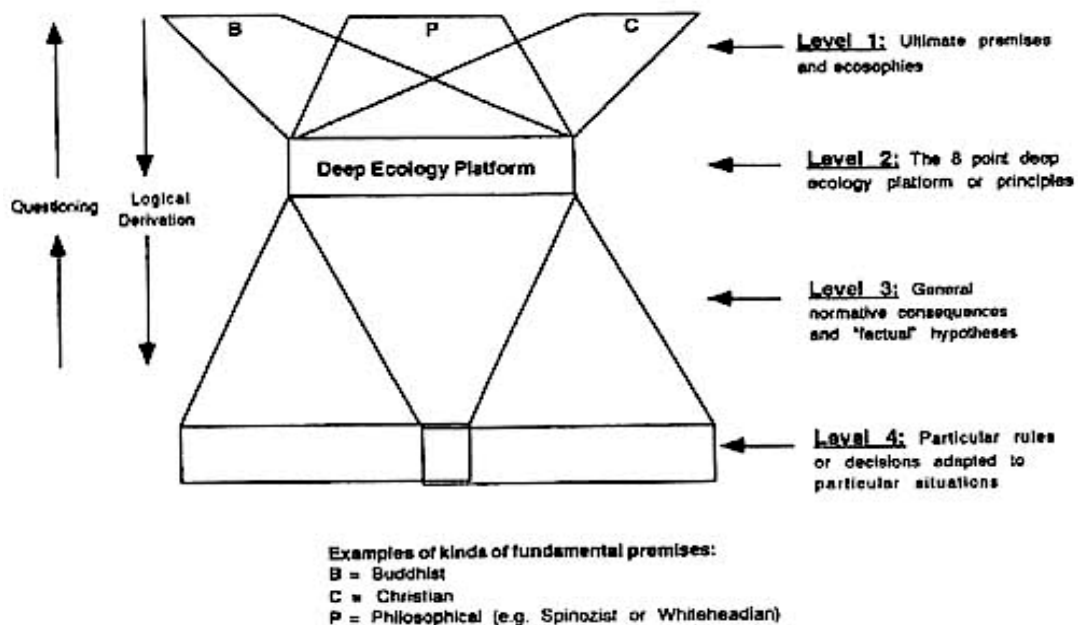


Figure 4.1: The Apron diagram (Næss [1995] 2005b: 76)

Much intercultural work is done at the level of platform principles, and deep ecologists do have a high level of agreement at what Næss calls Level II (the eight points of deep ecology). From Level II we can engage in the questioning and articulation of our own ecosophy, which might be grounded in some major worldview or religion, such as Pantheism or Christianity (ibid.). This level of ultimate philosophies is called Level I. There is considerable diversity at this level. From principles at Level II we can develop specific policy recommendations and formulations, carried out at Level III. The application at Level III leads us to practical actions, Level IV. There is considerable diversity at the level of policies, but even more at the level of practical actions (ibid.).

A distinction between the four levels is important. Supporters of the deep ecology movement have ultimate views from which they derive their acceptance of the platform, but those views may diverge individually and between groups (ibid.). When it comes to the fundamental premises of Næss, two species of *monism*<sup>48</sup> are foundational to his biocentric outlook: the first one stemming from Spinoza, the other influenced by Gandhi (Callicott 1999: 151). From either perspective reality is *one*. There is one substance – God – with an infinite range of manifestations, according to Spinoza. Each human being is a mode of the one substance. But so is every other organism (ibid.).

Gandhi was committed to *Advaita Vedānta*, a non-dual and monistic Hindu doctrine which recognizes the unity of Cosmos (ibid.). It states that *Brahman* and *Ātman* – the whole and the soul (what Næss calls the “Self”) – are one and the same, while everything else is illusory [*māyā*] (Hastings [1915] 2003: 546). The affinity between Spinoza and Gandhi is thus found in their holistic *Weltanschauung*, which again has been transmitted to Næss’s ecosophy T. In the next two subsections we will have a closer look on their philosophies.

#### 4.2.1 The Spinozist Legacy

Næss repeatedly stated his immense reverence for Spinoza, and elevated the Dutch thinker to his pedestal as “THE philosopher” (Næss [1982] 2005: 418). Næss had been profoundly influenced by Spinoza ever since he read *Ethics* (1677) for the first time in 1929 (Fox 1995: 104). Before we move on to how Næss applied Spinoza’s thinking in

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<sup>48</sup> An ontology insisting on a world constituted by one substance – material or spiritual – is *monistic*. If it allows room for two substances – spirit and matter – it is *dualistic*. When three or more substances are given space, the ontology is *pluralistic* (Kirkpatrick 1994: 15).

deep ecology, we will ponder somewhat on the essentials of Spinozism and its historical impact. The notability of Spinoza is quite considerable: he was the backbone of what Jonathan Israel (2001: 5) calls “Radical Enlightenment”.

The label “radical” warrants an explanation. According to Israel (2006: 10), a perennial and pivotal mistake made by many scholars is to depict “the Enlightenment” in singular. And he says: “This needs to be completely reversed. From the outset in the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century, there were always *two* Enlightenments” (ibid: 11). As he sees it, neither the historian nor the philosopher is likely to get very far with discussing modernity<sup>49</sup> unless he or she differentiates Radical Enlightenment from moderate mainstream Enlightenment. For the difference between reason alone (Radical Enlightenment) and reason combined with faith and tradition (mainstream Enlightenment) was an absolute difference. However, modernity is a richly nuanced brew which arose as a result from the ongoing disharmony between the two competing Enlightenments (ibid.).

Modernity is shot through with contradiction. The war of ideas was further fertilized by a third force which opposed both Enlightenments: the successive counter-Enlightenments (ibid.). The latter began with the traditionalist Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704) and has so far culminated in Postmodernism (ibid.).<sup>50</sup> A common denominator among the counter-Enlightenments has been the rejection of most principles stemming from both Enlightenments, as well as an aspiration to roll them back (ibid.). In Spinoza, nothing is based on God’s Word or commandment. According to Spinoza the only legitimacy in politics is the self-interest of the individual (Israel 2001: 5). Hence, by the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century there was widening perception of Spinozism as the prime and most subversive adversary of received authority, tradition, privilege and Christianity (ibid: 436). Of the two Enlightenments, the moderate mainstream was without doubt overwhelmingly dominant in terms of support, official approval, and prestige practically all over Europe except for several decades in France from the 1740s onwards (Israel 2006: 11).

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<sup>49</sup> Recall Eisenstadt’s conceptualization of “modernity” in chapter two.

<sup>50</sup> Not “postmodernity”, which is supposed to signify an era and a sociopolitical condition. But “Postmodernism” as a cultural and ideological critique which rejects objective science and modern metanarratives (McLennan 1996: 639). By the same token, it is superficial to assemble relativistic Postmodernism with the traditionalist varieties of counter-Enlightenment. An abyss light years wide divides their premises. Even if animus against the Enlightenments is shared, it is not accurate to speak about a united camp.

The moderates revolved around John Locke (1632-1704) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727) in Britain, while Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) and Christian Wolff (1679-1754) were at the apex of mainstream Continental Enlightenment. As opposed to Spinoza, they sought to accommodate the new advances in science to Christian belief and the authority of Holy scripture (Israel 2001: 15). Spinoza and the radicals rejected such dualism (ibid.). Politically, Spinoza deviated substantially from Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke. The two Englishmen advanced what Isaiah Berlin (1969) and Quentin Skinner (1984: 194ff) termed as “a classic statement” of the *negative* view of political liberty. As Hobbes ([1651] 1994: 136) put it: “Liberty, or freedom, signifieth properly the absence of opposition (by opposition, I mean externall impediments of motion); and may be applied no lesse to irracionall and inanimate creatures than to racionall”. In Hobbes, liberty of the individual is reduced to that sphere which the sovereign do not seek to control (Israel 2001: 258). Freedom in the negative sense was later adapted by Locke and moved into a more Liberal direction. Law precedes the state in Locke, but follows it in Hobbes (Ebenstein & Ebenstein 2000: 385).

For Spinoza freedom was conceived in *positive* terms as a tendency or condition of man linked to forms of political organization which serve the needs of the common good (Israel 2001: 259). Consequently, freedom is not defined as an absence of obstacles, or confined to the private sphere, but envisaged, as in Macchiavelli and later Rousseau, as an inalienable potential more apt to flourish in certain kinds of State than others (ibid.) And it depends in successfully inculcating certain attitudes, and discouraging others, both in individuals and society. Particularly emphasized in Spinoza is the connection between *ratio* (reason) and *virtue* (ibid.). The groundplan for Spinoza’s political thought is expressed most fully in Part IV of the *Ethics*, where he characterizes “slavery” as being as much an internal condition of mind as the outcome of harsh external conditions. “Slavery” is in essence the consequence of unrestrained impulse and passions, the urge to act according to external confinement.

“The more each individual strives, and is able, to seek his own advantage”, holds Spinoza (*Ethics* IV: Proposition XX), “that is conserve *his being*, the more he is endowed with virtue; conversely, in so far as each neglects his own advantage, that is, fails to conserve his being, he lacks power”. While Spinoza identifies “virtue” with “power”, his usage becomes closer to what is generally signified with his insistence on human “virtue” being anchored in *ratio* (Israel 2001: 260). The mind’s greatest virtue is to grasp the reality of things without being guided by impulse, as in the case of an irrational man (*Ethics* IV: Proposition

XXVIII). It follows that “in so far as men are torn by affects which are passions, they tend to oppose one another” (*Ethics* IV: Proposition XXXIV). Social cohesion and political stability become possible only where men learn to live according to the guidance of *ratio*. And these men are considered “free” by Spinoza (Israel 2001: 260).

What form of government is best disposed at serving the goal of freedom in the Spinozist sense? In the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), Spinoza ranks democracy above monarchy and aristocracy as the best type of governance. In democracy, freedom is enhanced in that one is consulted, and can participate in decision-making in some degree, whatever one’s social status and educational background, through debate, the expression of opinion, and the mechanism of voting (Spinoza [1670] 1862: 276). What to do about the multitude is the general problem underlying *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. The general answer is to reshape the cognitive and emotive power [*imaginatio*] governing the multitude as an external imitation of *ratio* (Yovel 1989: 14). For Spinoza, the universalization of redemption was neither a conceivable goal in itself nor a precondition (as in Hegel and Marx) for redeeming the individual (ibid: 100).

Though the multitude was regarded as the substrate for change, they would remain outside the scope of true salvation. True redemption for Spinoza remained a matter for the minority (ibid: 101). For over a century after his death, Spinoza was excluded from respectable circles, either abhorred or ignored, and usually more gossiped about than read (ibid: x). Spinozism generated a psychological tension not unlike the reception of Marxism in Western societies during the 1950s (Israel 2001: 436). To label someone as “Spinozist” was to stigmatize the person as an outcast, public enemy and fugitive. To be publicly decried as a “Spinozist” constituted the gravest possible challenge to one’s status, prospects and reputation, as well as standing in the eyes of posterity (ibid.). Spinoza’s influence, though already penetrating, remained marginal and clandestine. At least “marginal” on the surface. According to Israel, Voltaire and Rousseau were derivatives polishing a medal originally cast by Spinoza (ibid: 718). The French Revolution was thus not only the epilogue of Rousseau, but that of Spinoza as well (ibid.).

It was only in late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Germany that Spinoza emerged into prominence, both among poet-philosophers like Goethe and Heine, and within the major trends of post-Kantian philosophy from Hegel and beyond (Yovel 1989: x). Later on, thinkers like Marx and Nietzsche were either “root-Spinozists” or respired within Spinoza’s “climate of ideas” (ibid: xi). Like Spinoza, they set out to unmask accepted notions and established personal social façades by digging into the unavowed motives and mechanisms behind them



(ibid: 109). Nietzsche ([1881] 2003: 1005) explicitly recognized his debt and kinship to Spinoza and spoke of him as an “ancestor”.

For instance, Spinoza anticipated Nietzsche in rejecting the concepts of “good and evil” (Israel 2001: 162). But both Nietzsche and Spinoza were moral philosophers, not in the sense of prescribing duties or grounding moral obligations, but in setting a perspective of human ascendance and perfectability (Yovel 1989: 108). Spinoza also remained at the foundation of Marx’s thinking, and was used far more than Marx admitted (ibid: 78).<sup>51</sup> According to Yovel, there are at least two major areas of Marx’s thought where the actual presence of Spinoza far surpasses his direct mention by name: (1) in the preparatory critique of religion, and (2) in the way Marx construes the practical relation between man and nature as an immanent totality (ibid: 79-80)<sup>52</sup>. The notion of immanence is also perennially expressed within the corpus of deep ecology.

What is exactly *immanence*? According to Spinoza’s metaphysics, everything that exists is a part, and therefore an expression, of God, that is Nature or Substance. The latter is the ground from which all being originates (Goetschel 2004: 26). In Spinozism, God is the immanent cause of things, and not the transitive cause. A watchmaker, for instance, is the transitive cause of his watch (Stewart 2005: 159). An “immanent” cause is in some sense “inside” or “together with” that which it causes. The nature of a circle, for instance, is the immanent cause of its roundness (ibid.). Spinoza’s claim is that God does not stand outside the world and create it; rather God exists in the world and subsists together with what it creates. For this view Spinoza was either condemned as an atheist or as a pagan by his contemporaries (Israel 2001: 636).

Spinoza’s God is devoid of “personality”, and does not intervene in the course of events (Stewart 2005: 161-162). It is an immanent God, and not a kind of supernatural being. This runs counter to the prevailing notion in Christianity – as well as Islam and Judaism – of a transcendental deity beyond the visible realm (Plato’s ideas are also transcendental). As implied by Spinoza, God is Nature: *Deus sive natura* (*Ethics* I: Proposition XIV). According

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<sup>51</sup> Spinoza seeped into *The German Ideology* [*Die Deutsche Ideologie*], where Marx and Engels ([1845] 1976: 107) briefly used the Dutchman as a corrective to Hegel’s semireligious *Geist*. The concept of man was restored as a concrete natural being. Later – in *Dialectics of Nature* [*Dialektik der Natur*] – Engels ([1883] 1975: 225) implicitly emphasized Spinoza as a forerunner of historical materialism.

<sup>52</sup> At the dawn of this millennium, the immanence of Spinoza is again igniting revolutionary passion. Notably in the insurgent Neo-Marxist manifesto *Empire* (2000) by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.

to Karl Jaspers ([1957] 1974: 95), “when Spinoza says *Deus sive Natura*, he has in mind God as *Natura naturans* (Nature-as-creative), not *Natura naturata* (the created)”. In other words: there is creativity but not a creator. Immanence is the most integral attribute of Spinoza’s monistic ontology. This is what David Hume ([1740] 1882: 524) referred to as a “hideous hypothesis”, because it was a “doctrine of the simplicity of the universe, and the unity of that substance, in which [Spinoza] supposes both thought and matter to inhere”.

As Spinoza expressed in his parallel postulate: “The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things” (*Ethics* II: Proposition VII). This postulate consolidates his thought as a whole in one single claim, and towers like the highest peak in a mountain range. In a note amplifying this proposition (a *scholium*) Spinoza goes one step further, claiming that “a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways”. Not only is the “order and connection” of ideas and bodies one and the same, but an individual idea and its corresponding body are considered to be a single mode (Gangle 2010: 31). While Spinoza does begin with the particular case of the unity of human mind and body (*Ethics* II: Proposition XIII), he quickly clarifies that this unity applies equally to bodies of all kinds: organic and inorganic; simple and complex; molecular, geological, galactic, cosmological (Gangle 2010: 32).

As determined by Spinoza’s ontology the human mind is not “a kingdom within a kingdom”, but rather one part of infinite Nature or God. Individuation within nature is conceived on the basis of relations immanent to wholeness rather than presuppositions of separation and discreteness (ibid: 34). There are various degrees of mind according to this view, corresponding to various degrees of bodily activity. But differences between the soul of an insect and that of a human are not annulled by such a conception, but they are understood on the basis of an underlying continuity of nature.

In Spinoza’s nature man is a simple member among others, on a par with snakes and flowers (Yovel 1989: 79). And this brings us back to Arne Næss: the biocentrism of deep ecology is intimately tied to Spinoza’s notion of immanence. The overt political dimension of Spinozism – such as adherence to a positive notion of freedom and radical democracy – was either never or at most hardly brought up by Næss. Whether these facets of Spinoza’s thinking have been transmitted to Næss or not is therefore something which must be inferred. This will be done in the next chapter.

*Ethics*, and not the explicit political treatise *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, is the cornerstone of Næss's adaptation of Spinoza.<sup>53</sup> Many concepts and principles are funneled from Spinoza into deep ecology, such as *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*. For instance, the notion of planet Earth as a self-regulating being is fully compatible with these terms (Næss [1982] 2005: 404). They define a supreme whole with two aspects: the creative and the created (ibid: 403). Hence, the holism of deep ecology is to be understood within this ontology. The activism of Næss was also derived from Spinoza in a certain sense. Again, *Ethics* and not *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* was foundational. Here we must recall Spinoza's concept of *ratio*, which must not be confused with instrumental reason. It is more equivalent with intuition (Næss 1998: 92).

*Ratio* is a kind of inner voice which guides a person to the right choice. Spinoza's conduct is not based on morality, but rather on the distinction between active and passive feelings, which means positive and negative emotions (ibid.). As already mentioned, impulse and passion are not encouraged by Spinoza. But this does neither imply that feelings as such are discouraged. On the contrary, they are foundational to Spinoza's political philosophy. Active feelings makes it possible for humans to conserve their being, while passive feelings undermine their being (ibid: 19). Hatred, arrogance, resentment and envy – even hope – are examples of passive feelings. Active feelings engage our whole being and help us develop our essential nature, while passive feelings do not (ibid.).<sup>54</sup>

An absence of emotion induces a stagnation of development. Hence feelings, in the active sense, are vital. Næss offers us an equestrian analogy to bridge the gap between feelings and thoughts (ibid: 82): “the rider gives orders to his horse, but it is the horse that takes him where he wants to go. Thoughts are like the rider, emotions like the horse. We believe that thoughts spur us to do things, but they must stimulate feelings if anything is to happen. Dynamism is also found in the word *emotion*, which is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, to move”.

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<sup>53</sup>A quick digital search through the ten volumes of *The Selected Works of Arne Næss* at Google Books shows that the combination “Spinoza+*Ethics*” appears exactly one hundred times, while *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* comes into sight zero times.

<sup>54</sup> Here Spinoza anticipated Nietzsche's distinction between (active) master morality [*Herrenmoral*] and (passive) slave morality [*Sklavenmoral*].

Without feeling, no change. And that would probably serve as a motto of deep ecology, which seeks to unify the rider and the horse (ibid.). Hence, it is not enough to grasp the range of environmental havoc intellectually. Piles of statistics which points to an apocalyptic future are thus simply futile, unless they contribute to an increased reverence for nature and all living beings. This again is the key to a political change which is ecologically sustainable, according to Næss. This brings us to Gandhi's influence on deep ecology. Though Gandhi has been in the shadow of Spinoza within the bibliography of Næss, he is notable enough to be mentioned briefly.

#### 4.2.2 The Gandhian Legacy

Næss became an admirer of Gandhi already in 1931 (Sharma 2003: 9). He explained that "Gandhi made manifest the internal relation between self-realization, non-violence and what sometimes has been called biospherical egalitarianism" (Næss 1986: 11). Moreover, "Gandhi's Utopia is one of the few that shows ecological balance, and today his rejection of the Western World's material abundance and waste is accepted by progressives of the ecological movement" (Næss 1974: 10). While Gandhi allowed injured animals to be killed humanely, his nonviolence enveloped a reverence for all life (Weber 1999: 351). In Gandhi's opinion animals had rights no less than men (Hingorani & Ganga 1985).

*Ahimsā* – usually translated as "non-violence" – is one of the core terms within Gandhian philosophy, along with *satya* (Truth/God) and *brahmacharya* (self-mastery) (Galtung & Næss [1955] 1968: 95). *Ahimsā* can be seen as the fountainhead of Truth and the ultimate goal of life (Gandhi 1932). Gandhi had a strong sense of the unity of all life. For him, non-violence meant not only non-injury of human life, but of all living things. This was important because it was the way to Truth which he saw as Absolute, as God (Weber 1999: 352).

As mentioned, there is an intimate connection between Gandhian monism and Næss's ecosophy T. This was implicitly summarized already thirteen years before deep ecology as a concept came to the fore (Næss 1960: 28-33): (1) self-realization presupposes a search for truth; (2) in the last analysis *all living being are one*; (3) *himsā* (violence) against oneself makes complete self-realization impossible; (4) *himsā* against a living being is *himsā* against oneself and (5) *himsā* against a living being makes complete self-realization impossible. Consequently, the principle of nonviolence is intimately connected to the Gandhian notion of oneness, which again has been transmitted to Næss's ecosophy T. Gandhi was also a crucial

impulse to the nascent peace research which Næss conducted in the 1950s.<sup>55</sup> But Gandhi was mostly brought up before Næss became engaged with deep ecology. This stands in stark contrast to the prolific accounts on Spinoza, though one will often notice that Gandhi resides between the lines in Næss's writings. As in the emphasis on non-injury to all living beings. As inferred, Gandhi's ecological views are derived from his nonviolent philosophy.

The primary sources that Næss drew on to understand Gandhi's thinking, are for the most newspaper articles and historical documents concerning Gandhi's activities, like letters and recordings of conversations (Næss [1958] 2005: 422). This is because Gandhi was reluctant to write authorized textbooks (Galtung & Næss [1955] 1968: 216). Hence Gandhian thinking is primarily understood through his political practice, or more correctly: theory is practice and vice versa. Most of the sources on Gandhi's activities refer to well-known events in his lifetime (Næss [1958] 2005: 422). According to Næss, "the concrete nature of the problems at issue does not reduce the philosophical value of the material; rather, it enhances it. The interpretation of professional philosopher's texts is usually hindered by an almost lack of reference to application in concrete situations This holds for Plato, Hobbes, Nietzsche, and others. Even constructed examples are sometimes lacking" (ibid.).

Gandhism is not to be equated with pacifism, since the latter was regarded by Gandhi as a *passive* form of nonviolence (Galtung & Næss [1955] 1968: 292). It is commonly held that Gandhi regarded as self-evident that the voice of conscience should dictate the nonviolent form of battle as the only effective and justifiable one. According to Næss ([1970] 2005: 205) "this is a fundamental misunderstanding". Gandhi fully realized that many will conclude that the use of violence is the only effective course of action (ibid.). Insofar as the politicians in India held this opinion, it was their duty, according to Gandhi, to arm (ibid.). The standards of nonviolent conduct and intention are for Gandhi *subservient* to another standard, the highest standard in his system: "*Truth [which] is God*" (Gandhi 1931; cited in Næss [1970] 2005: 205). Consequently, the doctrine of nonviolence cannot, according to Gandhi, be evolved in isolation from a higher goal, which is beyond the distinction between violence and nonviolence (Næss [1970] 2005: 205). The doctrine of nonviolence rises from Gandhi's

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<sup>55</sup> But it was Johan Galtung (1930-), one of Næss's foremost students, who eventually became the principal founder of peace research as a discipline in the 1960s. As with Næss, Galtung's line of thinking also stretches back to Mahatma Gandhi (Weber 1999: 354).

personal conviction of a fundamental equality in the destiny of all men, and of their equal right to self-expression (ibid: 206).

His personal identification with all men equates injury to others with injury to oneself. Hence, “no fully justifiable goal may be reached by means that include planned or accidental injury to others in group conflicts” (ibid.). Between one’s own self-expression and the self-expression of others there is no sharp boundary (ibid.). Gandhi’s activist program follows from this identification. It does not help to retire from existing battles in order to avoid committing violence itself. Violence is regarded as evil, and must be fought (ibid.). Therefore, one must seek the root of the conflict, must go to where violence is beginning or has begun (ibid.). Gandhi distinguishes between condemnation of an act and condemnation of the person who has carried out the act.

A person who in a legitimate cause can see only the alternatives of cowardly reticence and violence does right in acting violently, as Næss interprets Gandhi (ibid.). That a person only sees violence as an option might disclose a lack of insight or experience, or perhaps a lack of opportunity to train himself in nonviolence due to the environment (ibid.). In line with this Gandhi expressed understanding of the resistance of smaller European states against Hitler’s Germany. To small powers that are attacked, Gandhi did not say that they ought to offer nonviolent resistance but that they may, and further, that nonviolence is in the long run the only method that can reduce counterviolence and suppression of an utterly superior opponent (ibid.).

The nonviolent campaigns of Gandhi were usually demonstrations for something rather than against: his agitation was for something, his strikes were for something, and even his boycotts and civil disobedience were for, not against (ibid: 213). A campaign was not an attempt to force a particular outcome. And Gandhi’s actions were usually directed toward something visible, something concrete and well defined. At the same time, specific aims were included as a small part of the large general aim, the inner and outer liberation (ibid.). Gandhi distinguished between negative campaigns/negative nonviolence and positive campaigns/positive nonviolence (ibid: 214).

Two examples of what Gandhi called positive nonviolent campaigns occurred when the untouchables entered temples and prayed in 1924 [the Vykom *satyāgraha*], and when the poor prepared salt from seawater at the coast in 1930 [the Salt *satyāgraha*]. The untouchables did not demonstrate outside the priest’s dwellings, nor did the poor march in processions carrying posters labelled “Down with the salt tax” (ibid.). The actions during the campaigns were

given a positive form because the active demonstrators showed what they wanted when they entered the temples, or when they extracted salt for their meals (ibid: 215).

During extensive positive campaigns – in Gandhian terms – the attackers must destroy something that has an obvious purpose and clearly shows the intentions of nonviolent fighters (ibid.). According to Gandhi, this is impossible in a negative and passive campaign since one only shows what one is against (ibid.). What one is against is usually something well established, something that the majority regard as more or less unalterable. Within this Gandhian rationale we cannot expect the adversary to be in an imaginative and conciliatory mood if the emphasis is on annoying him (ibid.). According to Næss, the reaction against “so-called nonviolence” is a healthy one insofar as it is a reaction against passive resistance (like pacifism) and negative campaigns (ibid.).

Along the lines of Gandhi, Næss insisted on the imperative of a militant nonviolent method in dealing with a political adversary: demonstrate for something, and not against (ibid.). Curiously, this dimension of Næss’s thought is absent in his later writings on deep ecology. At least it is not often explicitly mentioned. But Gandhi might offer a key to how Næss wanted to resolve antagonisms when a hypothetical deep ecologic policy was to be implemented. Hence, Gandhi’s ultimate premises as applied by Næss will be considered again when we enter the next chapter. Before that, we will end this one by inquiring the claim that deep ecology is affiliated with Heidegger.

### 4.3 An Alleged Heideggerian Legacy

*“Was ist Liebe? Was ist Schöpfung? Was ist Sehnsucht? Was ist Stern?” - so fragte der letzte Mensch und blinzelt. Die Erde ist dann klein geworden, und auf ihr hüpfte der letzte Mensch, der alles klein macht. Sein Geschlecht ist unauslöschbar wie der Erdflöhe; der letzte Mensch lebt am längsten. ‘Wir haben das Glück erfunden’ - sagen die letzten Menschen und blinzeln”.*<sup>56</sup>

–Friedrich Nietzsche ([1883] 1967: 13)–

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<sup>56</sup> Translated into English: “What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?” Thus asks the last man, and he blinks. The earth has become small, and on it hops the last man, who makes everything small. His race is as ineradicable as the flea beetle; the last man lives longest. ‘We have invented happiness’, say the last men, and they blink” (Nietzsche ([1883] 1978: 17).

Is Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) really a principal source of inspiration to deep ecology, as both Devall and Sessions claim? Their critics, like Ferry and Bookchin, seem to agree with them on that. Also Næss (1999a: 21 & 1999b: 167) has briefly admitted the affinities between his green philosophy and Heideggerian ecology. Though Heidegger is widely acknowledged as the paramount existentialist thinker of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there remains a controversy about his involvement in the Nazi movement.

Even when he (seemingly?) abandoned Nazi ideology after the Second World War, he has been suspected of being a closet fascist by his less conciliatory readers ever since. Since this thesis is primarily about deep ecology, we shall not ponder too much on whether Heidegger was a real Nazi or not. But the question deserves a clarification, simply because the image of deep ecology as a movement with totalitarian streaks partly stems from the connection with Heidegger. That has to be sorted out before we equate deep ecology with Heidegger's thinking on nature, or differentiate between them.

In order to understand why Heidegger adhered to Nazism in the 1930s, one has to understand his thinking as well as his terminology. But should we then be guided by the strict maxim that "whatever truth a philosophical doctrine contains must be mirrored in the mentality and lifestyle of the philosopher" (Jaspers 1955)? Not necessarily. As Jürgen Habermas (1989: 436) cautions: "One cannot bring the truth-content of a philosophy into discredit by associating it with something external to it. But no more can – or may – one immunize it against the question of whether issues of substance have been confused with those of ideology" (ibid.). The point of departure here is Heidegger's torso *Being and Time* [*Sein und Zeit*].

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger ([1927] 1967: 2; §1) notes that the question of the meaning of *Being* was of paramount importance to the ancient Greeks prior to Plato, but has ever since lost its sense of urgency. Already in *Being and Time* Heidegger rejected the concept of humanism. In order to raise anew the question of the meaning of Being, he refers to the temporal being *Dasein* instead of "man" [*Mensch*]. The term *Dasein*<sup>57</sup> – an ordinary German word used to refer to the existence of anything whatsoever – is reserved by Heidegger to refer specifically to the kind of being that we ourselves have (or are) insofar as our Being is an issue for us (Cutrofello 2005: 49).

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<sup>57</sup> *Da* in German means "there" and *sein* "to be". The term *Dasein* taken literally means "to be there" or "there being" (Fuller 1990: 51).



Heidegger links the human understanding [*Verstehen*] of Being with time. As being-in-the-world [*In-der-Welt-sein*] – that is, as something specific to and inseparable from its historical-cultural context – *Dasein* is experienced as an on-going possibility that projects itself towards a future that is “not yet actual” (O’Meara 2004: 121). *Dasein* equally possesses past, present and future in the immediate present [*die unvergangene Vergangenheit*] (Heidegger [1927] 1967: 20, §6; Sloterdijk 1985: 15). The three temporal dimensions mutually enrich and transform each other, and are captured by the term *historicity* [*Geschichtlichkeit*] (Benoist [1981] 2004: 12). Historicity is closely related to the notion of understanding as happening [*Geschehen*]. For this reason historicity must be distinguished from history [*Geschichte*] and historiography [*Historia*], the study of the past (Bilen 2000: 46). Historicity is not conceived as fleeting, sequentially ordered now-points following the arrow of time, but as simultaneous dimensions of mindful existence (O’Meara 2004: 121).

*Dasein*’s experience of time – temporality – is incomparable with ordinary clock or calendar time (ibid.). *Dasein*’s time is therefore not durational, in the quantitative, uniform way it is for natural science, but existential. It is experienced as the present thought of an anticipated future which is “recollected” and made meaningful in terms of past references (ibid.). The past, then, cannot be seen in the way a scientist observes his data. It is not something independent of belief or perspective that can be grasped *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, in the terms of Leopold von Ranke. Its significance is mediated and undergoes ceaseless revision as man lives and reflects on his existential condition (ibid.). Concrete history remained for Heidegger a mere “ontical”<sup>58</sup> happening (Habermas 1989: 439). But then we must ask: what is the link to Nazism?

In *Being and Time* Heidegger is focusing on the individual who resides in a sociocultural space. *Being and Time* in itself is not a political endeavour, but it gets political implications when Heidegger projects the notion of historicity from the individual to the collective level in the 1930s. The existential framework is thus elevated as a measure of everything, even politics. The range of *Dasein* is extended to the people as a whole who share a common historical fate [*Schicksal*]. This marks the conversion to Nazi ideology, and was

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<sup>58</sup> Heidegger (1927 [1967]: 12; §4) differentiated between two types of knowledge: (1) *ontic* knowledge, which concerns the knowledge of things as such; and (2) *ontological* knowledge, which concerns the conditions of possibility for ontic knowledge. For instance, an ontic question is “how old is the king’s scepter?”, whereas “what is the mode of being a scepter?” is an ontological question. The first question may be addressed and resolved by science, but not the second (Crampton 2003: 54).

openly proclaimed in Heidegger's Rectoral Address [*Rektoratsrede*] at the University of Freiburg in 1933 (Cutrofello 2005: 269).

Like Nietzsche's *amor fati*, fate in this definition is not submission to the inevitable, but the embrace of the heritage of culture and history into which man is thrown at birth [*geworfen*] (O'Meara 2004: 126). As Heidegger perceived it in 1933, the ascension of Hitler was seen as a possibility to restore the meaning of Being which had been lost since Plato (Habermas 1989: 441). Like Plato who travelled to Syracuse – harbouring hopes of converting the dictator into a philosopher king – Heidegger wanted to lead the leader. Only he could show the exact meaning of Being, and put truth at work (ibid: 447). He wanted to counsel *der Führer* on how to awaken the will to *Dasein* of the people, and thus overcome the “bleak frenzy of unleashed technology and the rootless organization of the normal being” (ibid.). It was this titanic ambition, and not racism which constituted the political imperative of Heidegger: “he was himself no racist; his anti-Semitism, so far as it can be confirmed at all, was rather of the usual, culturalistic breed” (ibid: 445).<sup>59</sup>

The messianic mode of basic change became an apocalyptic hope of salvation, but gradually turned into disillusionment. When this transformation occurred is uncertain: perhaps after the beginning of the war, or only after the depressing knowledge of inevitable defeat (ibid: 447). Whereas previously fascist leaders represented a countermovement to nihilism, Heidegger began to identify them as *expressions* of it, and thus as mere symptoms of that fateful destiny of technology against which they were formerly supposed to be working (ibid.). Technology, now the signature of the epoch, expresses itself in the totalitarian “circularity of consumption for the sake of consumption”, and “leader natures are those who allow themselves to be put in the service of this procedure” (Heidegger [1949] 2003: 107). And this leads us to Heideggerian ecology.

Just like the deep ecologists, Heidegger rejects the notion of “humanism”. For him humanism was a part of, and not a solution to the predicament which had haunted Europe in the guise of totalitarian ideologies, technological domination of nature and the nuclear threat

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<sup>59</sup> And this is further confirmed by Denker and Zaborowski in their recently published *Heidegger-Jahrbuch*, volumes 4 & 5 (both from 2010). Here the transcripts of Heidegger's seminar “On the Essence and Concepts of Nature, History and the State” (1933/1934) are released for the first time. Heidegger never mentions Jews or extermination. According to the notes, he refers to the “Semitic nomads” whose “specific knowledge” has engendered in them a different relationship with the nature of their land than “a Slavic people” or the German people. In Denker's and Zaborowski's (2010a) analysis, “Heidegger was much more interested in the difference between the *sedentary* and *nomadic* ways of life”.

(Heidegger [1947] 2000). Though condemning humanism, Heidegger was never a “biocentrist”. His former student Hans Jonas criticized the mentor’s denial of humans as animals. Noting the Greek definition of “animal” as any animated being – including gods, stars, and even the ensouled universe – Jonas (1966: 227) concluded that Heidegger objected to *any* accommodation of humans within a natural scale. He was rather agnostic, viewing humans as aliens adrift in an indifferent or even hostile cosmos (ibid: 232). Within this scheme of thought, only an ethics anchored in human finitude can lead to a harmonization with nature (Zimmerman 1994: 118).

The critique of machination [*Machenschaft*] in *Contributions to Philosophy* [*Beiträge zur Philosophie*, 1936] is at the core of Heidegger’s early ecological thinking, and foretold his later critique of technology. Machination is about a logic, not a particular machine (Deluca 2005: 75). It is characterized by calculation, gigantism, acceleration, and technicity [*Technizität*] wherein animals, plants, and the earth become objects, mere resources, and humans also, are reduced to the service of a ravenous enterprise (Heidegger [1936] 1999: 194). Later, Heidegger ([1954] 1977: 4) explained that “technology is not the same as the essence of technique”.

The essence of technology is technicity, and is not technical in itself (ibid.), as also Carl Schmitt ([1929] 2007: 81 ff.) observed. Similarly, the essence of a tree is not any particular tree (Heidegger [1954] 1977: 4). Heidegger rejects the understanding of technology as a “mere means” that humans can master. This is what he terms as a merely correct but not true “instrumental and anthropological definition of technology” (ibid: 21). Instead, he proposes technology as “way of revealing” (ibid: 25). What does he mean by that? The way of revealing of modern technology is referred to as enframing [*das Gestell*] (Deluca 2005: 79): “The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging forth”, a challenging which reduces nature to a “standing-reserve [*Bestand*]...a calculable coherence of forces” (Heidegger [1954] 1977: 17). Animals and plants are thus treated as mere resources.

Interestingly, Heidegger dismissed the possibility of a return to an archaic past: “whose onset can neither be hindered nor even held up in any way, by any romantic remembering of what was earlier and different ([1936] 1999: 108). Indeed, Heidegger’s fundamental critique of modern technology is not directed at the world it reveals but the world it erases: “Where enframing holds sway, regulating and securing the standing-reserve mark all revealing” (Heidegger [1954] 1977: 29). The problem is not that nature is seen as “standing-reserve”, but that it is all nature can be seen as.

Modern technology's ordering of nature is thus regarded as an ordering of humanity and a reduction of both to standing reserve. This means that modern technology is a regime, not a particular device (Deluca 2005: 81). Modern technology is not the chainsaw. Rather, it is the chainsaw in constellation with forestry science, the transportation system, the profession of journalism and printing presses, the machinery of politics and the manipulated public opinion (Heidegger [1954] 1977: 17). If humanity avoided nuclear war only to survive as gratified hedonists, Heidegger believed we would exist in a state of ontological damnation: hell on earth masquerading as material paradise ([1959] 1966: 52). He associated the pursuit of material happiness with Nietzsche's last man (Heidegger 1961).

Heidegger's notion of standing reserve has affinity with deep ecology's critique of shallow ecology. The same applies to the condemnation of humanism. But nonetheless, it is probably an exercise in wishful thinking to appropriate Heidegger for deep ecology. The relationship is overstated by Devall and Sessions, as well as by their critics Ferry and Bookchin. The thinking of Heidegger is a totally different beast than the corpus of deep ecology. Devall and Sessions (1985: 98) are certainly inspired by Heidegger's critique of Western civilization, but ultimately they follow another trajectory, notably the philosophy of immanence by Spinoza.

Essentially, the critique by Heidegger seems to be much more fundamental. This is especially striking if we contrast him with Næss, who believed in political activism. Heidegger shed it: after the Second World War he became politically agnostic and reclusive (Deluca 2005: 69). Though Næss ([1976] 1999: 47) adopted Heidegger's conception of the essence of conformity – *das Man*<sup>60</sup> – in describing the prevailing environmental mindset within the majority, he was much less attached to Heidegger than Devall and Sessions. Næss's cautious optimism resembled little of Heidegger's diagnosis: "Only a god can still

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<sup>60</sup> There is no exact English equivalent for *das Man*. It often appears in the guise of 'the They', as in John Macquarrie's translation of *Being and Time*. Though, Anglophone scholars differ in their conventions. *Das Man* derives from the impersonal singular pronoun 'man'. The closest English equivalent is the 'one', as distinct from 'I', or 'you', or 'he', or 'she', or 'they' (Dreyfus 1991: 151 ff). Both the German 'man' and the English 'one' are neutral or indeterminate in respect of gender and, even, in a sense, of number, though both words suggest an unspecified, unspecifiable, indeterminate plurality (ibid.). *Das Man* is not a proper or measurable entity, but rather an amorphous part of social reality (Heidegger [1927] 2005: 168 & Heidegger [1927] 1967: 130).

save us” (Heidegger 1966). And the only possibility of salvation left to humanity is to prepare readiness by patient contemplation in the coming centuries: “through thinking and poetry, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god during the decline; so that we do not, simply put, die meaningless deaths” (ibid.). Hence, Heidegger refused to give any concrete prescriptions. As a last remark it is probably fair to say that there are tangential links between deep ecology and Heidegger at most.

#### **4.4 Summary**

Ultimately, deep ecology is not about the value of nature per se, it is about who we are in the larger scheme of things. Deep ecology is no more monolithic than any other school of thought. Individual authors develop their thought in accord with their own concerns and preconceptions. There are, however, several themes that appear repeatedly in the representations of deep ecology. Deep ecologists of all flavours agree on biocentrism: human beings are no more special than other creatures that also have intrinsic value. And they all abhor the notion of nature as a standing reserve. Shallow ecology seeks to harmonize environmentalism with economic growth, while deep ecology seeks a subversion of the status quo. But the method of change seems to vary substantially.

Though Devall and Sessions call themselves “revolutionary”, their project is more like a long-term mental evolution rather than an urge for a more immediate upheaval. But the implications – if carried out – would nonetheless be revolutionary within a longer time horizon. The degree of militancy differs, and so does the view on political egalitarianism. Linkola wants totalitarian dictatorship, while Næss preferred a decentralized society and a dismantling of the state. Deep ecologists also diverge on the issue of population reduction: some are misanthropic and wish a rapid extermination of most humans – like Aiken and Miss Ann Thropy – while Næss wants a more gradual transition. Genealogically, deep ecology is a bricolage of divergent influences. Næss’s own branch – ecosophy T – is a composite of Spinozism and Gandhian non-violent philosophy. As to the link between deep ecology and Heidegger, this is tangential at most.

## 5.0 Varieties of Compatibility or Antagonism



“The frightened one”, seen in Vienna, Austria. Image credit: Anjelicek

*“Die Natur hat sich als die Idee in der Form des Andersseins ergeben... sie ist vielmehr der unaufgelöste Widerspruch”. [“Nature has presented itself as the idea in the form of otherness...it is the unresolved contradiction”].*

-G.W.F Hegel ([1830] 1991: 200-201) -

*Conceptually speaking, how may deep ecology be compatible with or antagonistic to liberal democracy?* By now we have elaborated on the commanding question of this thesis by exploring its constituent parts – deep ecology and liberal democracy – which were pondered on in these stages: in chapter two the accusations of Ferry were presented, statements which consider deep ecology to be crypto-totalitarian; in chapter three we differentiated democracy from Liberalism and we located the positions of Ferry & Næss with regard to liberal democracy; in chapter four we went through varieties of deep ecology, thereby we contemplated the two main pillars of Næss’s ecosophy T – Spinoza & Gandhi – and finally we smoked out the pertinence of Heidegger.

In the present chapter we will pull together all the major strings and a conclusion will emerge after this sequence: in section 5.1 we will recapitulate Ferry's accusations; in section 5.2 we will ponder on the assumed links between Nazism and deep ecology; in section 5.3 we will canvass the adaptability of deep ecology to liberal democracy and vice versa; and finally in section 5.4 we will confront Luc Ferry with Arne Næss for the last time.

### **5.1 Ferry's Allegations Recapitulated**

Ferry starts his polemic against deep ecology by reifying a perceived communion between the prehumanist and the posthumanist visions of the world. Ferry equates humanism with modernity, and depicts facets of the anterior mindset through chronicled anecdotes of animal trials which occurred in Europe from medieval times until the Age of Baroque (Ferry 1992: IX). As Ferry sees it, there has been a gradually altered relationship between mankind and animal kingdom in specific, as well as between mankind and nature in general (ibid: XIII). The separation of man and nature by which humanism came to attribute a moral and legal status to the former alone might just be a quadricentenary interlude, marking the frontiers of an époque that is now on the brink of dissipation (ibid: XVI). The prehumanist animal trials were signified by the occurrence of what Ferry perceives as a natural contract: a pact with beings of nature (ibid: X).

Some American legal theorists attempted to reinvent the natural contract in the 1970s, according to Ferry (ibid: XVI). Among them, Christopher Stone stands out as one of the most prominent. Ferry refers to him when he points to the advent of a post-humanistic world view (ibid.). In 1972 Stone wrote an article entitled "Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects". Though this text seems light years away from the pastoral settings of medieval Europe, it is leveling the supremacy of man back to a standing where he is on a par with residents of the animal and vegetable kingdoms (ibid: XVII).

From the vantage point of Ferry, Stone represents a new cosmology which is seductive in more than one way to those disappointed with the modern world, which is the world of humanism – the most explicit anthropocentric approach to the relationship between Nature and Man. Here is something to revive the subversive impulse of anti-democratic militancy (ibid: XXI). Though Stone is not a deep ecologist, he shares the biocentric outlook of the latter, as Ferry sees it. What do the deep ecologists actually represent according to Ferry? In one sentence that would be: hatred of humanism and Western civilization (ibid: 79). Why is that so? Ferry locates deep ecologists at the biocentric endpoint of the anthropocentrism-

biocentrism axis. Deep ecology is biocentric because it postulates biological egalitarianism – equality between the species – and rejects the notion of man-in-environment image in favour of the relational and holistic total-field image (ibid: XXIV). This is opposed to mainstream environmentalism – labelled as shallow ecology in this regard – which is anthropocentric because man is center-stage in its outlook.

In a humanist – hence anthropocentric – outlook nature is first and foremost for man, because man is perceived to be at the pinnacle of the ecosystem (ibid.). Anthropocentric mainstream environmentalism [shallow ecology] is reformist, because it is implemented within the political and economic framework of the existing liberal democratic system (ibid.). Biocentric deep ecology on the other hand, is revolutionary since it seeks a radically different world beyond the premises of economic growth and liberal democracy (ibid.). If we recall the self-understanding of deep ecologists as presented in the previous chapter, they would most likely agree with Ferry’s description so far.

Ferry does recognize that deep ecology is *not* a monolithic entity, but rather a *mélange* of different influences. Though he admits that certain deep ecologists – like Roderick Nash – to some extent want to inscribe the recognition of the rights of nature within the logic of democratic societies, their ideology remains essentially anathema to liberal democracy (ibid: 68). The idea of an intrinsic right of beings in nature is in radical opposition to the legal humanism that dominates the modern liberal universe, as Ferry sees it (ibid.). While the implication of Nash’s agenda might be a dismantlement of liberal humanism by stealth, Ferry regards other deep ecologists as much more explicit in their anti-humanist and revolutionary demands.

The “inhumanist theses of fundamental ecology” is not just an exotic vagary of an intangible academic endeavour, but Ferry finds them “in all the Green movements in Europe” as well (ibid: 74). For instance, he perceives the ideology of organizations such as *Greenpeace* as an activist extension of inhumanist philosophy. Especially when they refer to the necessity of replacing humanistic values “by suprahumanistic values that bring all plant and animal life into the sphere of legal and ethical consideration” (ibid.).

Furthermore, when some ecologists get to the point of arguing that the ideal number of humans – from a nonhuman perspective – would be 500 million (citing James Lovelock) or 100 million (citing Arne Næss), Ferry would like to know how one plans to carry out this imperative (ibid: 75). From his vantage point, an inhumanist approach is not only questionable. It is unequivocally crypto-totalitarian and paves the way to a political abyss. The death program evoked by William Aiken convinces Ferry of that (ibid.). Ferry is in no



doubt: “the idea that the control of technology must occur at the price of democracy itself is an additional step which deep ecologists almost never hesitate to take” (ibid: 78). This is because they are propelled by what Ferry perceives as their hatred of humanism and Western civilization, but also by a nostalgic fascination with models of the past or potential models of the future (ibid.).

Biocentrism – the cult of life – is no assurance for Ferry, because it is not about individual human lives, but “maintenance and blossoming of life in general” (ibid.). As he sees it, a hierarchy results from the biospheric egalitarianism principle, according to which it is fitting to protect the whole before its parts. Holism – which means that totality is superior to individuals – and anti-humanism are overt slogans of deep ecology in its fight against modernity, as Ferry sees it (ibid: 67). Ferry makes no room for ambiguity when he regards the dissolving of boundaries between nature and legality as a rejection of a certain type of democracy. This means a political regime inherited from the Declaration of Rights that has inscribed itself in Western liberal-democratic societies (ibid.). The discontinuity between a social and a natural contract is evident as Ferry sees it: outside the framework of legal humanism, nature is admitted the status of subject instead of as an object (ibid.).

Ferry discovers an affinity between deep ecology and Nazi ecology in the biocentric legal texts of the Third Reich. The lawmakers of the Hitlerist regime wanted to reconcile a broad ecological plan with the concern for real political intervention, and that on a scale which was arguably unseen in the annals of world history before and after. As in the work of Christopher Stone, the Nazi legislator Walter Schoenichen relegated man to an equal footing with the animal and vegetable kingdoms (ibid: 92). Apart from emphasizing biological egalitarianism, the environmental concern of the regime’s upper echelon was probably theoretical at best (Rollins 1995: 508).

At the practical level, feeding *Wehrmacht*’s hungry warmachine was the most urgent concern. Consequently, that meant industrial expansion (ibid.). Environmental politics in the Third Reich suffered because Hermann Göring, the top forester and the man ultimately responsible for enforcing environmental laws, was also in charge of running the economy at full speed in order to carry out Hitler’s war-oriented Four-Year Plan in 1936 (ibid: 509). His change in forest policy was illustrative: cutting rates in 1937 and 1938 were respectively 50-60% above normal (Rubner 1985: 82ff.). Ferry does not mention the gap between environmentalist ideology and practice in Nazi Germany, but sticks solely to the theoretical level. Hence, he sees in Nazi ecology an essentially preestablished link between the aesthetics of sentiment and what would later become the central theme of deep ecology: the idea that the

natural world is worthy of respect in and of itself, independent of all human considerations (Ferry 1992: 98).

The conclusion of Ferry is univocal: deep ecology is incompatible with and antagonistic to liberal democracy. But his statements are mostly rhetorical and at best based on pure theory. In the worst cases the theoretical groundwork is totally lacking. Ferry does not proceed much beyond the conceptual level and mostly neglects empirical facts. For instance, the Nazis were probably Romantics, but in reality not so ecologically oriented. They were industrialists, as Heidegger disappointedly realized. The lack of empirical foundation is even worse when it comes to Næss. As we have seen in chapters three and four, the notion of a crypto-totalitarian Næss is far-fetched. And this will be demonstrated again in the following sections.

## **5.2 On Deep Ecology, Totalitarianism and Cartesian Dichotomies**

What was the historical context of environmentalism when the term “deep ecology” was conjured up? We will address this question and take a brief glance at the relationship between Nazism and deep ecology. Thereby we will differentiate between the position of Næss and the misanthropic currents within deep ecology.

### *5.2.1 Situating deep ecology historically*

In the immediate aftermath of World War II political concern for the environment – mostly lip service by the Nazi regime – was punctuated by a caesura on the theoretical level lasting into the 1960s: the necessities of economic development in conjunction with an escalating Cold War overshadowed any other concern. But little had changed in practical terms. Champions of ecological sentience like Martin Heidegger and Aldo Leopold were already marginal before the war. And they resonated even less within the materialistic grand narratives of both the capitalist West and the communist East.

When environmentalism reappeared one generation after World War II, the references were mostly not of the romantic or German “rightist” brand. It rather emanated from the acolytes of natural science. Among them the marine biologist Rachel Carson (1907-1964) stands out as the most influential (Steiguer 2006: 1). It was with the publication of her seminal book *Silent Spring* (1962) environmentalism as a prevailing social and political issue was (re-)established (ibid.). The romantic monopoly on ecological issues was broken.

Carson's book went beyond a descriptive account of the lethal effects of toxic chemicals. It alerted society about the perils inherent in environmental negligence.

Though *Silent Spring* initiated the advent of environmentalism, Carson was not solely behind its formation. Her warnings simply affirmed public suspicions and unleashed pent-up anxieties (ibid: 2). Multiple heralds followed in North America and Western Europe throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, and among them were Arne Næss. He went to length as to say that "we date the beginnings of the international deep ecology movement [with Rachel Carson]" (Næss [1991] 2005b: 191). The conflation of Carson and deep ecology is an overstated *post hoc* construction by Næss, since she departed nine years before Næss invented the term. And more importantly, she helped to launch the modern environmental movement in general (Steiguer 2006: 1), which would include what Næss calls "shallow ecology" as well as his own movement.

When it comes to Nazi ecology, it is hard to see a direct transmission of ideas to deep ecology at all. Walter Schoenichen for instance, does not serve as an authoritative voice to the deep ecologists, simply because he is absent from their corpus. Though Ferry is quite correct when he points to certain affinities between biocentric Nazi legislation and deep ecology: both opine that the natural world is worthy of respect in and of itself, independent of all human considerations. But there is no continual historical chain between Nazism and deep ecology. Nazi ecology does not linger on in the guise of Næss and his followers. On this Bookchin (1999: 290) is completely wrong, and similarly Ferry (1992: 90) misses the point *en masse* when he claims that "some of deep ecology's roots lie in Nazism".

### 5.2.2 Casual resemblances and genetic fallacies

There are parallels between Schoenichen and Næss when it comes to the deconstruction of man's centrality within nature. Still there is no genealogical connection, but rather a *casual* resemblance. In analogous terms, a giant squid and a human being share the physical attribute of having spherical lensed eyes as opposed to the compound eyes of a fly (Land & Nilsson 2002: 59; Morris 2003: 152). But this affinity is based on nature's evolutionary rediscovery in the case of vertebrates and not because of a direct lineage to invertebrate cephalopods. A comparison between the pairs "Schoenichen+Næss" and "squid+man" is an illustrative plaything, not an act of deriving logical conclusions from biology to the history of ideas.

While the assumed legacy of Nazi legislation within deep ecology is easy to invalidate, an assumed Heideggerian legacy is harder to dismiss. Næss (1999a: 21 & 1999b: 167) has briefly admitted the affinities between his green philosophy and Heideggerian ecology. For instance, both Heidegger ([1953] 1961: 31-32) and Næss ([1976] 1999: 287) regarded the USA and the USSR as mirror images of each other: technocratic regimes devoid of ecological sentience, treating nature as a standing reserve with no intrinsic value.

Heidegger is also strongly emphasized by Bill Devall (1980: 299 ff.), one of Næss's leading disciples. Consequently, both Ferry (1992: 70) and Bookchin (1999: 286) allude to Heidegger as one of deep ecology's prime sources of inspiration. Ferry does not explicitly mention the Nazi past of Heidegger, but Bookchin (1999: 286) sees the "proof" of a crypto-fascist deep ecology embedded in Devall's reverence for Heidegger. Though Ferry (1992) abstains from such a direct assertion, Heidegger is still baked within the dough of allegations where deep ecology and totalitarianism are of the same venomous flavour.

The appeal of Heidegger has been considerable among deep ecologists, but it is a genetic fallacy to assume that his affiliation with the Nazis logically signifies a transmission of totalitarian ideas to deep ecology. A genetic fallacy is a fallacy of irrelevance where a conclusion is based solely on something's origin rather than its current content, meaning or context (Damer [2005] 2009: 231). This overlooks any difference to be found in the present situation, typically transferring the positive or negative esteem from the earlier context (Scott 2010: 130). To regard a casual vegetarian as a potential Nazi because Hitler excluded meat from his diet is an act of genetic fallacy. Another example: Volkswagen Beetle was originally launched by the Third Reich, but being an enthusiastic owner of a Beetle does not necessarily signify a simultaneous desire for Nazi regalia.

Apart from genetic fallacy in the case of a crypto-totalitarian deep ecology linked to an assumed Heideggerian legacy, the Nazi "credentials" of Heidegger have similarly been overcharged. It was the ambition of leading *der Führer*, and not racism which constituted his political imperative (Habermas 1989: 445). Eventually he became disillusioned with the Nazi regime: whereas fascist leaders previously represented a countermovement to technocratic nihilism, Heidegger began to identify them as expressions of it (ibid: 447). After the war he shied away from all political activism and became a reclusive thinker. Notwithstanding a shared condemnation of humanism, the reclusiveness of Heidegger and the political activism of deep ecologists (Næss included) are worlds apart. Hence, one should not

be misled by the veneration for Heidegger expressed by Devall and Sessions, the main disciples of Næss.

### 5.2.3 Cartesian by-blows vs. apostles of immanence

Within the corpus of deep ecology, only Pentti Linkola explicitly praises Hitler's Nazi genocide as a beacon of demographic policy. Neither Miss Ann Thropy nor William Aiken has gone that far, notwithstanding their promotion of death programs aimed at decimating the world population substantially. Linkola does not adhere specifically to Nazism, but endorses totalitarian ideologies in general. Stalinism is similarly held in high esteem by him (Paastela 1987: 88). Linkola – who is absent from Ferry's critique – is a much more obvious and radiant marker of totalitarian sympathies within the deep ecological movement than any of the characters mentioned in Ferry's *The New Ecological Order*. Linkola is clearly anti-humanistic and biocentric, but he is also staunchly opposed to the principle most dear to Næss, Sessions and Devall: that of self-realization (Linkola [2004] 2009: 155). Linkola regards Gandhian nonviolence – another important inspiration to Næss – with contempt as well (ibid: 174).

If we recall the apron diagram (figure 4.1), we see that there is a high level of agreement at what Næss ([1995] 2005b: 76) calls Level II (the eight points of deep ecology). But there is considerable diversity at Level I, where the ultimate premises and ecosophies reside (ibid.). As for Linkola, he hardly sticks to Level II (the eight points of deep ecology) in its entirety. The same is to be said about Aiken. Here we shall evoke the first point of deep ecology: “The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: inherent worth, intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes” (Sessions 1995: 213 ff).

While Linkola and Aiken might cherish the statement that well-being and flourishing of nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves, it will probably not apply for human life according to their premises. Point three is also something they would agree with at face value: “the rapidly worsening condition of the non-human world requires a substantial decrease of the human population”. But again the genocidal prescriptions of Linkola and Aiken are a far cry from the more moderate expedients proposed by Næss. The latter agreed that a drastic reduction in human population is needed, though reduction should occur gradually (Næss [1987] 2005: 155). And a reduction should “be consistent with the basic rights of the human as a living being and never resort to crude coercion” (Næss [1993] 2005b: 201).

Furthermore, he insisted that that the notion of intrinsic value was incompatible with Fascism: where the supreme leader equals one, while the multitude equals zero (Næss [1995] 2005c: 95).

The distinction between Næss and Linkola is obvious when it comes to totalitarian measures: the former renounces them, while the latter applauds them. There is a difference which is no less fundamental, but not that plain at first glance: a consideration for man is woven into the biocentric ideal of Næss, whereas the misanthropes Linkola, Aiken and the ecowarriors of Earth First! do in fact represent an “inverse anthropocentrism” when they claim to be biocentric hardliners. How is that so? “Anthropocentric” biocentrism seems to be an oxymoron. Counterintuitive as it may sound, this is not a far-fetched trope if we recall the Cartesian distinction between object and subject presented in the introduction of this thesis.

As Kevin Michael Deluca has pointed out, mainstream environmentalism – what Næss calls “shallow ecology” –resides within a Cartesian world: the founding act is human thinking [*cogito ergo sum*] and the earth is an object to humanity’s subject (Deluca 2005: 72). This position is clear in mainstream environmentalism where humans act to save the object earth, and this action is motivated by the subject’s self-interest (ibid.). Hence, we must save the rain forests because they contain potential medical panacea and because they temper the rise of planetary temperatures. As notified, anthropocentric environmentalism has been attacked by deep ecologists, and most vigorously by Earth First! and hardliners like Linkola and Aiken. Deluca argues that their anti-anthropocentric positions have not escaped the gravity of Cartesianism (ibid.). Though Deluca only mentions the group Earth First! among the biocentric hardliners, their misanthropic position converges with that of Linkola and Aiken: they all think that man is a disease on planet earth.

When humans are demonized as cancer, they are seen as somehow different from all other forms of life, an alien other, not a part of but apart from (ibid.). And the metaphor of cancer does not break the spell of Cartesianism: the dichotomies subject vs. object, culture vs. nature, civilization vs. wilderness, remain intact. The active subject man threatens the object earth (ibid.). Reformatory shallow ecologists and revolutionary deep ecologists dismiss each other’s seemingly contrary positions as, respectively anthropocentric and compromised versus misanthropic and unrealistic, while perhaps remaining oblivious about the Cartesian *origo* whence they both depart. Humanity is privileged by reform environmentalists and demonized by biocentric hardliners. In this morality play, on the fate of the earth, humanity, whether hero or villain is the actor (ibid: 73).

Næss, Sessions and Devall – as opposed to the biocentric hardliners – short-circuit the mental captivity of Descartes by regarding man as a part of and not apart from the world. This is due to the monistic philosophy of immanence transmitted from Spinoza and Gandhi to Næss, as mentioned in the previous chapter. From an immanent perspective reality is *one*. There is one substance with an infinite range of manifestations, according to Spinoza. Each human being is a mode of the one substance. But so is every other organism (Callicott 1999: 151). Gandhi stressed the unity of Cosmos: the whole and the soul (what Næss calls the “Self”) – are one and the same, while everything else is illusory (ibid.). How Næss regards man’s place in nature is intimately connected with the holism of both Spinoza and Gandhi.

The demarcation line between the immanent ecosophy of Næss and the biocentric hardliners is in fact a theoretical Iron Curtain. Næss, Linkola and the ecowarriors of Earth First! regard themselves as carriers of deep ecology. At face value they might share major aspirations, such as reduced human population, strong sustainability and a higher status for animals and plants. And all deep ecologists uphold holism as the supreme principle, whether they are “soft” biocentrists like Næss or biocentric hardliners. But as already indicated the hardliners stay within the ambit of *de facto* Cartesianism. They probably pay lip service to notions of immanence, simply because regarding humanity as cancer to object earth is incompatible with a genuinely holistic view. From this perspective one might question whether the biocentric hardliners are real deep ecologists or not.

As Næss ([1986] 2005: 49) has pointed out, deep ecologists have common beliefs about intrinsic values in nature (ibid.). But here the biocentric hardliners differ substantially: intrinsic value is only reserved for a nature *without* man, while for Næss man does also have intrinsic value because man is nature. Whereas the hardliners are (unconscious) progenies of Descartes trying to prolong a distinction between man and nature, Næss is an emissary of Spinoza’s notion of immanence where nature resides in man and vice versa. Næss might be correct that deep ecologists do not need to follow a distinctly outlined philosophy. But if self-proclaimed deep ecologists fail to appreciate an immanent notion of intrinsic value integrating man and nature, they appear to be phony adherents.

### **5.3 On Deep Ecology and Liberal Democracy**

Deep ecology is not an uniform discourse, since the prescriptions of its adherents differ. The same is to be said about their views on political *agency*. Some are the champions of

egalitarian grassroots mobilization, while agency of the multitude is denied by others. These distinctions within deep ecology prevail if we still include the misanthropic ecowarriors of Earth First!, Linkola and Aiken. As notified, they are *de facto* Cartesians, and for this reason it is problematic to regard them and Næss as “kindred spirits”. It is only with strong reservations that the misanthropes are included within the deep ecological movement: it is conceptually difficult to reconcile the Cartesian dichotomy between subject and object with a Spinozist immanence where such binaries are dissolved into a single substance.

The misanthropes might have been eliminated from our considerations by now, but Ferry’s challenge is still not laid to rest. Even in the absence of totalitarian adherents, there remains a chance that deep ecology is incompatible with liberal democracy. Therefore we must excavate the fields of deep ecology somewhat more on the conceptual level. How do we consider deep ecology vs. liberal democracy in terms of holism, secularism and modernity? And how do we consider deep ecology vs. liberal democracy when we contemplate the legacy of Spinoza, and in terms of negative & positive liberty, permissions & entitlements? We will not any longer speak of “deep ecology” in the broadest term, but confine ourselves to the positions of Næss and his philosophical heritage.

### *5.3.1 Deep ecology in terms of holism, secularism and modernity*

If Linkola and Aiken are left out, Næss ([1995] 2005c: 99) might be vindicated in his claim that “none of the theorists of deep ecology show any [authoritarian or dictatorial] tendencies”. But is he correct? There remains a theoretical prospect that thinkers outside the portfolio of this thesis who truly pass as deep ecologists – in the sense of accepting that nature resides in man and vice versa – still are totalitarians or at least authoritarians. In other words: the turf of green despotism might already germinate at the *conceptual* level. Appreciating the intrinsic value of man and other creatures is not necessarily a hedge against political oppression of those who violate the norms in a hypothetical society/regime where deep ecology has become the hegemonic idea. Which norms would that be? As Ferry (1992: 78) correctly observes, there is something deep ecologists value far more than anything else: the supreme principle of holism.

Even biological egalitarianism – equality between the species across the domains<sup>61</sup> of life – is subdued to a sacrosanct and holistic entity called the *biosphere* (ibid: 79). In other



words, concern with individual creatures means losing sight of larger ecological connections and life in its entirety (Dryzek 2005: 215). This is also what distinguishes deep ecology from animal liberation movements, notwithstanding their shared biocentrism (ibid). Recalling the apron diagram (figure 1.1), Næss ([1995] 2005b: 76) tells us that deep ecology could be – but not necessarily – grounded in a major religious worldview. Despite the alleged atheism of Næss, deep ecology remains quasi-religious across all its facets. In the corpus of deep ecology “sacrosanct values” and the “sanctity of life” (in a holistic sense) are perennial expressions. Again Ferry (1992: 79) is correct about how deep ecologists ultimately perceive the world: the biosphere – life in its entirety – is a quasi-divine entity, infinitely more elevated than any individual reality, human or nonhuman.

Being religious or quasi-religious is not necessarily at odds with liberal democracy, but the order of precedence matters: if a divine or quasi-divine entity is deemed as more essential than singular individuals also on the political level, then deep ecology is not resonating well with liberal democracy. The latter operates within the framework of *secularism*: the view that religious considerations should be excluded from political affairs and relegated to the private sphere or civil society (Zafirovski 2007: 432). That being said, secular politics can be dictatorial as well as democratic. Hence, secularism is not confined to liberal democracy (ibid.).

Though secularism is not at issue here, it is a marker to start with when we try to distinguish liberal democracy from deep ecology, since the latter is tied to the concept of biosphere as a quasi-divine entity. Two orders – the political and the metaphysical – meet when deep ecologists affirm the rights of nature, Ferry opines. He refers to deep ecology as a philosophy led by quasi-religious considerations (Ferry 1992: 129). If he is correct – he probably is – then it will be difficult to reconcile deep ecology as a political concept with secularism.

Secularism is a feature of modernity. According to Eisenstadt (2000: 3) – as briefly mentioned in chapter two – modernity gave rise to the conception of autonomous human agency. Further personal autonomy implies active mastery of nature, including human nature (ibid: 5). Ferry (1992: ix) equates modernity with humanism (anthropocentrism) and deep ecology is equated with both post-humanism and anti-humanism. Hence, deep ecology is anti-

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<sup>61</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, *domain* is the category above *kingdoms* within biological taxonomy (Karleskint et.al 2010: 118). Bacteria, archaea and eukaryotes constitute different domains. The kingdoms of plants, animals, protista and fungi are subdivisions of the domain eukarya (ibid: 119). Above the domains is *life* as a whole, the highest biological category (ibid.).

modern as Ferry sees it: the environmental crisis is an existential and metaphysical crisis of modernity (ibid: 71). It is true that deep ecology has explicitly denounced the notion of an “autonomous” human agency and active “mastery” of nature: man is just a knot in the biospherical field of intrinsic relations (Næss 1973). Nature can do without men, but not vice versa. The leveling of man’s supremacy is another feature of deep ecology which is at odds with anthropocentric liberal democracy.

### 5.3.2 *The legacy of Spinoza revisited*

Though deep ecology is anti-modern in its sentiment, does it really make sense to distinguish it from modernity? The paradox here is that Spinoza – perhaps the single most important ancestor of deep ecological thought – is a part of what Israel (2006: 11) perceives as the birth of modernity. And more precisely the progenitor of Radical Enlightenment. This seems to run counter to what Ferry (1992: 73) identifies as the “anti-modern” reference to Spinoza. We will postpone the question of Spinoza’s affiliation with modernity to the end of this section. Before that we will stick at the core of Ferry’s critique: the Spinozist legacy of deep ecology. In other words, the politics of immanence where a potential of totalitarianism is supposed to germinate. Here Ferry seems to confuse totalitarianism with *totality*. Immanence is about the totality of Nature: everything that exists is a part and expression of it, the ground from which all beings originate (Goetschel 2004: 26).

As determined by Spinoza’s ontology the human mind is not “a kingdom within a kingdom”, but rather one part of infinite Nature. Individuation within nature is conceived on the basis of relations immanent to wholeness rather than presuppositions of separation (Gangle 2010: 32). Differences between insects and human beings are not annulled by such a conception, but they are understood on the basis of an underlying continuity of nature. In Spinoza’s nature man is a simple member among others, on a par with snakes and flowers (Yovel 1989: 79). As mentioned, the biocentrism of deep ecology and Arne Næss originates in Spinoza’s notion of immanence. What Næss deducts from this is a concept of mixed community where barriers between humans and any other forms of life are broken down (Næss & Mysterud 1987: 23).

Liberal democracy is anthropocentric, and does not address Spinoza’s and deep ecology’s claim of the continuity and immanence of nature. What was Spinoza’s position on democracy? As mentioned in chapter four, he ranks democracy above monarchy and aristocracy as the best type of governance. In democracy, freedom is enhanced in that one is consulted, and can participate in decision-making in some degree, whatever one’s social

status and educational background, through debate, the expression of opinion, and the mechanism of voting (Spinoza [1670] 1862: 276).

### *5.3.3 On deep ecology and contemporary democracies*

Spinoza and Næss do not advocate liberal democracy, since both emphasize direct and equal participation rather than election of “representative” elites. But is the politics of immanence a variety of illiberal democracy? The latter occurs when free and fair elections are combined with systematic denial of constitutional rights (Zakaria 1997). Liberal democracy requires protection of the latter: a balance between representative governing institutions and individual liberty and freedom (ibid.). Applying Zakaria’s distinction between liberal and illiberal democracy in this analysis would be to talk past the issue at hand here. If a hypothetical deep ecological democracy is conceived as illiberal, then “illiberal” in this instance would be a homonym of Zakaria’s term. It would be designating another meaning.

In a prescriptive fashion, Næss mostly refers to how it ought to be on a conceptual level. Zakaria on the other hand, attempts to be descriptive about how it *is* in the empirical world while being normatively in favour of liberal democracy. Both liberal and illiberal democracies are encapsulated by what Schmitter and Trechsel (2004) would call real existing democracies. The latter call themselves democratic and are recognized as such by other self-proclaimed democracies. Their instrumental essence is captured by what Schumpeter ([1943] 1987) referred to as a “political method...for arriving at political-legislative and administrative decisions”.

Within Zakaria’s terminology both illiberal and liberal democracies are representative and electoral systems. Hence, Zakaria’s distinction would be irrelevant from a deep ecological point of view. Both illiberal (in the Zakarian sense) and liberal democracies constitute the antipode of deep ecology’s political horizon, which is diametrically opposed to real existing democracies of all sorts. Næss ([1995] 2005c: 100) did not want to identify deep ecology with contemporary democracies, which he regarded as centralized regimes. Constitutional rights are not a topic of deep ecology, and neither are elections of political representatives. Deep ecology is first and foremost a grassroots movement (Næss [1986] 2005: 17). According to Næss ([1976] 1999: 112), a democratically elected leader is not able to carry out the necessary reforms leading to an ecological equilibrium. Political “representation”, no matter how benign, is thus ruled out as a sufficient solution. As Næss sees it, environmental perils are so vast in scope that no single elite is able to handle them without aid from the multitude.

Local participation of the latter is a requirement in order to save the ecosphere (ibid: 16). In tune with Carole Pateman (1970: 43), this would mean equal participation in the making of decisions and in determining the outcome of decisions.

When it comes to democratic procedures – as mentioned in the previous chapter – Næss is influenced by Gandhi and not Spinoza. Especially the notion of Gandhian nonviolent communication (Galtung & Næss [1955] 1968: 115). Transferred to the realm of deep ecology, the premise is that the ability to forge notable agreements and debate major disagreements rests upon the maneuvering discussion to what are surmised to be the root causes of the environmental crisis (Glasser 1999: 366). The preference of nonviolent communication is compatible with liberal democracy. But this convergence is superficial as long as the ideal of deep ecology departs substantially from the macro-sociological realities of contemporary democracies.

On a conceptual level, liberal democracy is often regarded as a formal category in tune with Schumpeter: a shell which could be the domicile of market friendly policies as well as radical anti-class postures, both funneled through the ballot box. Questions regarding the structural link between centralized technocratic hierarchies and environmental desolation – essential to deep ecology – are not necessarily addressed within liberal democracies. They could be if the politicians elected care about these issues. But there is a tendency that liberal democracies either create or is unable to escape incentives that perpetuate the breed of politicians who willingly serve the interests of capital (Dryzek 2005: 202). If there is a friction between economic imperatives and other values, priority is notably given to the former (ibid.). Whether this tendency is inherent in the very nature of liberal democracies or caused by structural forces exterior to them is an important additional question.

#### *5.3.4 On deep ecology and economic Liberalism*

Capitalism presides in dictatorships (think of China and the Emirates) as well as real existing democracies. Hence, liberal democracies do not have a monopoly on the inextricable nexus between heavy economic interests and current political establishments. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the most immense constraint is that of international political economy which conditions structures and institutions, identities and discourses (ibid.). Thus the paramount incentive of our age applies to both liberal democracies and dictatorships: maintenance or expansion of the gross domestic product, the substratum of power projection both domestically and internationally. This is a topic on its own which merits further investigation outside the scope of this thesis. But it illustrates another dimension where

deep ecology represents an alternative to liberal democracy. Or more precisely, the macroeconomic base of real existing liberal democracies.

In order to prevent ecological collapse, Næss wants to undo the capitalist world-system where commodities from distant places circulate. He advocates autarchy – an entity with a high degree of self-reliance – where industrial and agricultural units are small and local (Næss [1988] 2005: 14). For Næss the mode of production defines the degree of egalitarianism. Decentralized autarchic units scattered around the planet would not only mean diminutive amounts of pollution, Næss opines, but they also enhance human freedom. As he sees it, centralized technocratic hierarchies accompanying planetary capitalism must be leveled in advance (ibid.). A liberal world economy is for him not only the harbinger of ecological doom, but also the origin of contemporary unfreedoms (Næss [1995] 2005d: 585). Liberal democracy is not to be conceptually equated with economic Liberalism, but they entangle each other in the real world at this juncture in history (Mirowski 2009). Therefore economic Liberalism has to be taken into account while we ponder the commanding question of this thesis.

#### *5.3.5 Negative & positive liberties, permissions & entitlements*

So far in this section we have seen that deep ecology – as perceived by Næss – is at odds with liberal democracy in terms of man’s place in nature, secularism and agency. The latter demarcation is marked by how much role the multitude should have in political matters. Liberal democracies are electoral and centralized regimes where citizens vote in favour of elites who are deemed to be “representative” within the framework of national states. In deep ecology – as perceived by Næss – electoral politics is anathema, and the ideal is local self-management and direct participation of the multitude. In other words, the power structures are much more vertical in liberal democracies than in the egalitarian ideal society of Næss. Neither deep ecology nor liberal democracies are monolithic concepts.

As we have seen in chapter three, the kind of liberal democracy Ferry advocates – a French republican synthesis – is not exactly the same creature as the liberal democracies of Anglo-Saxon countries. The fault line goes between the legacies of Locke and Rousseau, which is between the ideal of limited government and the ideal of the common good, and between negative and positive conceptions of liberty (Lansford 2007: 33). Negative liberty is the absence of external restraint, while positive liberty is absence of internal restraint (Berlin 1969). The latter is about self-mastery and the potential to flourish as a member of society

(ibid.). In the concept of positive liberty there is not necessarily an iron curtain between personal and collective interests.

Ferry – more in the tradition of Rousseau than that of Locke – frames his understanding of democracies within a language of rights, in the distinction between permissions and entitlements (Ferry & Renaut [1985] 1992: 15). The former specifies the intellectual possibilities of an individual (freedom of thought, expression, religion etc.) and physical possibilities (freedom of work, commerce, assembly etc.) (ibid: 16). Entitlements are social rights: right to work, rest, material security and education (ibid: 17). Here the fault line is defined by a negative conception of the law (permissions) and a positive conception (entitlements) (ibid: 18). These conceptions foster distinct ideal types: a minimal state limited to protect its citizens' autonomy is within the horizon of permissions, while a welfare state aimed at equalizing material conditions is within the horizon of entitlements (ibid.).

Ferry wants to reconcile permissions and entitlements in order to avoid the excesses of Liberalism and Socialism. The republican synthesis preferred by Ferry is a French synthesis of Rousseau (with an emphasis on the common good) and Montesquieu (with an emphasis on the separation of powers and individual liberty within the confines of legal permissions) (ibid: 121). This is an attempt to balance negative liberty with positive liberty. Ferry abhors the Neoliberalism of Hayek because it purges the theme of entitlements (ibid: 106). And what he finds most disturbing is that Neoliberalism is cannibalizing Classical Liberalism by negating permissions: there is no subject in the impersonal market because everything is subject to history which unfolds “rationally” (ibid: 105). Within this universe there is a potential of a faceless tyranny where both the negative and positive liberties of man are obliterated by the juggernaut of blind and unchecked economic forces.

Ironically, here we see a convergence between Ferry and Næss: both are wary of economic Liberalism, but for different reasons. Ferry senses a dormant peril of unfreedom wrapped inside the concepts of Neoliberalism (which he interchangeably labels as economic Liberalism). His fear is not about ecological desolation, but individual liberties. Ferry's republican synthesis is not about undoing the market, since he wants to domesticate it. Næss does not employ the word “Neoliberalism”, but talks solely about “economic Liberalism”. Nonetheless, this is hair-splitting. When Næss refers to the unfreedoms emanating from economic Liberalism, he talks about the undermining of what Ferry would label as entitlements. Hence, the negation of positive liberty.

According to Næss (1999c: 469), the ecological mayhem caused by a capitalist world-system could eventually result in a dictatorial response when economic Liberalism has

become a spent force in a post-abundance era. Næss' concept of radical and participatory democracy resides within the sphere of positive liberty, which means the common good. Here we are not only talking about the equation between individual self-interest and collective interests, but also an extension of "interests" into the entire biosphere as well. There are residuals of negative liberty in Næss' deep ecology – like freedom of speech and assembly – but the absence of internal restraints is privileged at the expense of an absence of external restraints.

If one takes deep ecology seriously, there should not be too much negative liberty. This would be manifested in several restrictions or even prohibitions: for instance on the use of speed-boats, private cars (both examples of what Næss calls hard technology) and on the consumption of food and goods manufactured outside the pastoral settings of your local village. There might be plenty of entitlements in the deep ecological ideal society of Næss, but permissions – in the terms of Ferry – would be scarce. This is why it is impossible to reconcile deep ecology with liberal democracy. In the latter there should either be symmetry between entitlements and permissions (the republican synthesis of Ferry's France and Nordic social democracies) or a stronger preference towards permissions (the Anglo-Saxon regimes). In the deep ecology of Næss the inclinations are gravitating with overwhelming force towards entitlements and a positive conception of liberty.

#### *5.3.6 Deep ecology and Spinozism epitomized*

Here it is time to wind up the thread on Spinoza's influence and how Ferry perceives it. The politics of immanence and holism is at the root of Ferry's criticism. Though Spinoza advocated a kind of radical democracy, a partial reading or misinterpretation of him by would-be "Spinozists" could lead to the totalitarian outcome Ferry fears. But would this not require the ignorance or neglect of Spinoza's anti-authoritarian credentials? Spinoza opined that nothing is based on God's word or commandment (Israel 2001: 5). According to him, the only legitimacy in politics is individual self-interest (ibid.). This is clearly a modern statement in the sense that he accepts the possibility of autonomous human agency.

"Self-interest" in the Spinozist sense is wrapped inside the notion of positive liberty, because it is about self-mastery. In order to achieve the common good in society as a whole, man has to follow his *ratio* – an inner compass – if he wants to vindicate the active feelings and vanquish passive feelings such as hatred and arrogance (Næss 1998: 19). When the emancipation from inner constraints – positive liberty – is achieved, our whole being is

engaged (ibid.). The continuity and totality of nature are inseparable from man's self-interest. Man resides in nature and nature resides in man. That is the ultimate meaning of immanence.

#### 5.4 Reassembling Næss and Ferry

*"Il y a, je le sens, un âge auquel l'homme individuel voudrait s'arrêter ; tu chercherais l'âge auquel tu désirerais que ton espèce se fût arrêtée. Mécontent de ton état présent, par des raisons qui annoncent à ta postérité malheureuse de plus grands mécontentements encore, peut-être voudrais-tu pouvoir rétrograder ; et ce sentiment doit faire l'éloge de tes premiers aïeux, la critique de tes contemporains, et l'effroi de ceux qui auront le malheur de vivre après toi".*<sup>62</sup>

– Jean-Jacques Rousseau ([1755] 1817: 261) –

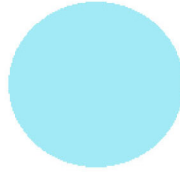
Before the endgame, we will resume how deep ecology may be antagonistic to or compatible with liberal democracy. The misanthropes are abandoned here because they probably fall outside the province of deep ecology. For that reason and the sake of clarity we will now confine ourselves to Næss when we refer to the deep ecological movement. In this synopsis prior to the denouement, we will arrange a final rendezvous between Næss and Ferry as the ambassadors of deep ecology and liberal democracy respectively. If there is one thing Næss and Ferry would agree upon, it is that deep ecology revolves around the concept of immanence. If they are correct, the elimination of *de facto* Cartesians from this consideration is justified. But we have still not precluded that a behemoth might reside in the crypt. Therefore the misanthropic totalitarians will be redressed in the conclusion.

For the time being we will reassemble Næss and Ferry. Conceptually speaking, there are at least four possible ways deep ecology and liberal democracy as interpreted by Næss and Ferry might interact: total overlap (figure 5.1), overlapping segments (figure 5.2), no interface between the discourses (figure 5.3) or tangential links (figure 5.4). These interactions are illustrated by circles, where blue represents liberal democracy, green represents deep ecology and turquoise represents a total overlap between deep ecology and liberal democracy.

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<sup>62</sup> Translated into English: "There is, I feel, an age at which the individual man would wish to stop: you are about to inquire about the age at which you would have liked your whole species to stand still. Discontented with your present state, for reasons which threaten your unfortunate descendants with still greater discontent, you will perhaps wish it were in your power to go back; and this feeling should be a panegyric on your first ancestors, a criticism of your contemporaries, and a terror to the unfortunates who will come after you" (Rousseau [1755] 1984: 79).

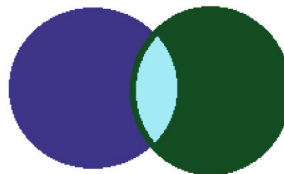




**Figure 5.1:** Total overlap

In terms of a *total* overlap between Næss and Ferry, this will be restricted to the most rudimentary notions of negative liberty and permissions: freedom of expression, religion and assembly. Here Næss and Ferry would concur totally, but beyond these rudimentary notions Næss and Ferry diverge substantially. If one takes the deep ecology of Næss seriously, there should be more external restraints than the absence of them. In the ideal society of Næss there are much less commodities to select, which would have been an external restraint to consumers desiring a shopping spree.

A multitude of unrestricted consumers could easily magnify the ecological imbalance. Especially if they prefer to eat food transported from the geographical antipode. Liberal democracies do not prohibit people to make this choice if such goods are available. Though not a neoliberalist, Ferry would probably disapprove the strictness of Næss when it comes to the opportunity to select commodities from distant horizons. There is no precedence of prohibiting this in Ferry's republican synthesis. Here Næss and Ferry depart substantially (as visualized by figure 5.3). The overlapping segment (figure 5.2) between Næss and Ferry is defined by a trinity of the common good, positive liberty and entitlements. Here Næss would emphasize social rights and political egalitarianism much more than Ferry. That is due to the anti-class posture of Næss, who wants a radical participatory democracy. Ferry prefers a representative democracy within the framework of the national state, while Næss seeks decentralization.



**Figure 5.2:** Overlapping segment

Though Næss called himself reformatory, the implications of his philosophy would be revolutionary. The politics of immanence is revolutionary because it stands outside the realm of parliamentary and mainstream politics. In other words, exterior to the confines of

liberal democracy. Within the latter universe, Næss opines that only shallow ecology could be achieved at best. In other words, he challenges contemporary status quo where electoral politics and/or market economics preside. Extra-parliamentary politics is a suspect enterprise as Ferry sees it, to say the least. Næss is an anti-humanistic (but not misanthropic) biocentrist stressing immanence: the continuity of nature signifying biological equality between the species across the domains of life. In humanistic and anthropocentric liberal democracy where Ferry stands, the notion of treating toads and dandelions on par with man is abhorrent.



**Figure 5.3:** No interface between the discourses

There is no interface (figure 5.3) between Næss and Ferry on questions regarding extra-parliamentary politics and biological egalitarianism. Though Ferry is not very inclined towards ecological practice, he seems to be in favour of moderate environmentalism, or what Næss would call shallow ecology. There is a tangential – and hence superficial – link (figure 5.4) between Næss and Ferry when it comes to the issue of “sustainability”. What Næss calls “weak” sustainability is surely compatible with anthropocentric liberal democracy: its imperative is to harmonize the tensions between the pursuit of economic growth with and the ecosystem. This is the only kind of environmentalism Ferry is willing to endorse, since it does not seek to subvert the institutions of liberal democracy. For Næss such environmentalism is insufficient at best. He seeks “strong” sustainability which is solely about ecological equilibrium, not about safeguarding the political and economic *status quo*. But the concept of “sustainability” provides a tangential link between deep ecology and liberal democracy nonetheless.



**Figure 5.4:** Tangential link

Notwithstanding dimensions of total overlap, overlapping segments and tangential links, the bottom line is unerasable: even in the absence of misanthropic totalitarians, deep ecology remains mostly incompatible with liberal democracy. And this antagonism starts and ends full-circle with the concept of immanence: the continuity of nature makes man no longer the subject and primary agent. Here Ferry is absolutely rectified, but what about the allegations of inherent totalitarianism? Has he served us a canard? These questions will be redressed in the conclusion.

## 6.0 Conclusion



Planina v Lazu: “the Golden Village in Slovenia”. Image credit: Fejkerjevo Odložišče

*“Our task of today, and for the next 50 years, is the task of utopistics. It is the task of imagining and struggling to create this new social order...Utopistics is the analysis of possible utopias, their limitations, and the constraints on achieving them”.*

-Immanuel Wallerstein (2000: 201 & 470) -

In this thesis I have discussed this commanding question: *Conceptually speaking, how may deep ecology be compatible with or antagonistic to liberal democracy?* In terms of methodology, I have carried out archaeological excavations in the fields of deep ecology and liberal democracy by examining the historically pre-established frameworks of these concepts. In terms of method, I have interpreted core literature by Arne Næss and Luc Ferry. The reliability of Ferry’s accusations were determined by examining works of Næss and auxiliary sources. Among the latter, especially works by or about Spinoza and Heidegger were notable when the chain of ideas were reconstructed. So was the literature which pinpointed different facets of ecology, democracy and Liberalism.

Ferry's overall message is clear: it is not possible to harmonize the political vision of deep ecology with a liberal democratic system. Despite Ferry's dubious claim that there is a "kinship" between Nazi and deep ecology, he is correct about the most fundamental antagonism between liberal democracy and deep ecology: in liberal democracy man is the subject and the primary agent, while in deep ecology – based on a holism where there is a continuity of nature – man is on par with beasts and plants. In this final chapter I will not only epitomize the forerunning dissections, I will also move beyond and complete the thesis full-circle by confronting the specter of Francis Fukuyama's "End of History" which sparked off the introduction.

In section 6.1 I will recapitulate the most important inferences from the previous chapters. Additionally, alternative trajectories of research will be suggested and potential lacunas of this thesis will be pointed out. In section 6.2 I will try to break through the wall surrounding the commanding question of this thesis: away from a purely conceptual exercise towards the tangible challenges in the real world. The Norwegian political scientist Thomas Christian Wyller (1999) provides the dynamite by asking: "Is it possible to solve the environmental crisis with democratic means, and do we really have enough time to follow the democratic path?"

Wyller's practical and timely question is followed up in section 6.3. Here I will contemplate the current ecological status of planet earth, which is entangled with the economic and geopolitical enterprise of mankind. Michael T. Klare's notion of "post-abundance" – which came to the fore in the introduction – is thus re-introduced. The consequences exposed in section 6.3 lead us to a dual predicament: "what is to be done?" and "what can we hope for?" This troubling duplexity will be addressed in the last section. Though there will not be a commencement of practical prescriptions, the indispensability of *utopistics* – the task of imagining and struggling to create a new socio-political order – will be emphasized. Determining the constraints on achieving the ideal of deep ecology, and its limitations, is also an undertaking within the province of utopistics. In the next section I will recapitulate for the last time, and I will also give remarks on potentially uncharted terrain.

### 6.1 The Thesis Epitomized and Beyond

Ferry correctly implies that many deep ecologists regard liberal democracy not only as an edifice of imposture, but also as an inadequate political system in dealing with environmental hazards. By the same token, he warns against the kind of demagoguery that invokes the brutality of Nazism to disqualify any ecological concerns *a priori* (Ferry 1992: 92). In this significant passage he does not say deep ecological concerns, but ecological concerns in general. So deep ecology remains suspect, though there seems to be some leeway for more conventional environmental groups. Deep ecology is suspect from Ferry's vantage because of an alleged affinity with Nazi ecology.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is no continual historical chain between Nazism and deep ecology. Nazi ecology does not linger on in the guise of Næss and his followers. The biocentric commonality between Nazi and deep ecology is just a casual resemblance. The net effect of Ferry's allegations is *guilt by association*,<sup>63</sup> whether he intended that or not: for Næss as well as his followers. After detecting the casual resemblance between Nazi and deep ecology, there is less reason to assume that the deep ecology of Arne Næss is crypto-totalitarian. The guilt of association extends to Spinoza as well: because, if deep ecology is based on a Spinozist legacy, and deep ecology has affinity with Nazi ecology, then there must be something crypto-totalitarian about Spinoza as well! Painted with broad strokes, this is how Ferry regards the politics of immanence, because immanence is about the totality of Nature: everything that exists is a part and expression of it, the ground from which all beings originate. The fact that both Spinoza and Næss were adherents of radical democracy seems to have gone unnoticed by Ferry.

As mentioned in chapter four, many notable thinkers have respired within Spinoza's "climate of ideas". Among them was Rousseau, an important pillar of the French republican synthesis, to whom Ferry adheres (recall chapter three). What is ironic here is that Rousseau was a derivative polishing the medal originally cast by Spinoza. This means that also the political position of Ferry descends from Spinoza! But Ferry's "Spinozist legacy" is very watered down after an unknown number of intermediaries. Hence, there is no direct transmission as there is between Spinoza and Næss. But Spinoza remains a genealogical connection between the positions of Ferry and Næss, even if the "kinship" is very distant (to

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<sup>63</sup> This association fallacy verges on a *reductio ad absurdum*, or what Leo Strauss (1899-1973) would have coined *reductio ad Hitlerum*: "A view is not refuted by the fact that it happens to have been shared by Hitler" (Strauss [1953] 1965: 42-43). In some passages Ferry also verges on *reductio ad Stalinum*.

say the least). Ferry did not seem to be cognizant about this when he wrote his polemic. If he was, such awareness might have been inconvenient. The bottom line: Ferry is ideologically more proximate to Næss than Næss is to the Nazis. The brownshirts were totalitarians, while both Ferry and Næss are democrats. Though the distance between the liberal democracy of Ferry and the radical democracy of Næss seems interminable, the ocean between Næss and Nazism is considerably wider. Ferry – who is a “*nouveaux philosophe*” and a child of the Cold War – operated with a strict binary division between liberal democracy and totalitarianism in his polemic against deep ecology. That probably inhibited him from an understanding of Næss: that Næss was neither a totalitarian nor a liberal democrat, and that Næss was neither a humanist nor a misanthrope.

In the previous chapter it was questioned whether the misanthropes – Linkola and Aiken – were deep ecologists or not. The misanthropes demonize humans as cancer; they are seen as somehow different from all other forms of life, an alien other, not a part of but apart from. Næss, Sessions and Devall – as opposed to the misanthropes – short-circuit the mental captivity of Descartes by regarding man as a part of and not apart from the world. This is due to the monistic philosophy of immanence transmitted from Spinoza and Gandhi to Næss. Is Ferry correct when he claims that reverence for holism is integrated with a totalitarian mindset? Not inevitably, as the case of Næss shows. But hypothetically, it cannot be precluded. All depends on how the ideal of holism is interpreted. Again we risk committing a genetic fallacy if we blur the distinction between “totalitarianism” and the holistic ideal of “total view/totality”. Still, deep ecology might have some totalitarian seeds. But the fruition of totalitarian germs remains hypothetical, because there have never been macropolitical experiments with the aim of creating a society in tune with the ideals of deep ecology.

Before we move on, I will point out some potential black spots of this thesis. As shown in previous chapters, deep ecology is not confined to Næss. The movement is a kaleidoscope of multiple congregations. And if we “rehabilitated” the previously excluded misanthropes in the sense of granting them the status as deep ecologists, the universe of deep ecology would expand. This thesis has not delivered an exhaustive account of every possible variety of deep ecology, since I have mostly confined myself to Næss and a few other characters. A new research could have resulted in a broader selection of deep ecologists, and the concluding remarks might have been more complex and perhaps more nuanced. But would more complexity reinforce the texture of my argumentative fabric? Not necessarily. The list of omissions is probably infinite, but if there is one thing this thesis could be charged

of, then it is “eurocentrism”. That brings us back to Næss. Though he mostly stayed within a European discourse, he also contemplated Indian and Chinese philosophy. And this is partly reflected by Næss’s ecosophy.

If we recall the apron diagram (figure 4.1), then we will be reminded that in the opinion of Næss, the ultimate premises of deep ecology could be grounded in multiple worldviews or religions. But the all-encompassing garment of Næss seems to be imposed upon non-Western philosophies like Buddhism and Taoism in an all too permissive fashion. Labeling these disparate worldviews – despite possible affinities between them – as instances of “deep ecology” is perhaps a fruitful *Nachkonstruktion* (a *post hoc* device), but adherents of these philosophies or religions would not necessarily recognize their alleged affiliation with “deep ecology”. A less conciliatory hypothesis would be that Næss attempts to camouflage a chaotic New Age syncretism. There we have a topic for an additional research.

Apart from a few casual asides, the most ancient among Næss’s Oriental impulses – like Buddha and Lao-Tzu – have been omitted in this thesis. With the exception of Gandhi, only Occidental references have been foregrounded here. If the scope of this thesis was larger, I might have contemplated deep ecology within a broader framework which includes contemporary non-Western ecosophies. For instance, how may deep ecology be compatible with or antagonistic to the ecosophies of selected activists from the Third World,<sup>64</sup> indigenous people<sup>65</sup> and from religious practitioners outside the cultural sphere of (post-)Christianity?<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> An example is Vandana Shiva from India, who argues that capital-driven globalization leads to a devaluation of local knowledge and practices (Shiva [2000] 2005: 481ff.). According to her, the move to monocultures in industrial farming is a direct threat to existing “polycultures” on the local level in the Third World (Dryzek & Schlosberg 2005: 461).

<sup>65</sup> For instance Fabienne Bayet, an Aboriginal author and activist from Australia. He stresses the importance of the indigenous connection to the land and challenges the notion of preservation: “To indigenous people the land is no abstract wilderness. The whole of Australia is an aboriginal artefact (Bayet [1994] 2005: 500) ”.

<sup>66</sup> Within Islam, the Iranian philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr probably stands out as one of the most significant ecological thinkers. In his *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* ([1968] 1997: 20) he maintains that the disequilibrium between man and nature is due to the destruction of the harmony between man and God: “The substance of Cosmos [has been] emptied of its sacred character and has become profane” (ibid: 21). Nasr is a traditionalist in the sense of his French master René Guenon (1886-1951), who regarded tradition as a belief and practice that should have been transmitted but was lost to the West during the last half of the second millenium A.D. (Sedgwick 2004: 21). Tradition in the Guenonist sense is the totality of divinely



This question is all too broad and unpolished to be handled within this format, but nonetheless it points towards uncharted terrain worthy of exploration. A previous omission, which will not stand unaddressed by the end of this thesis, is the question about the adequacy or inadequacy of democratic regimes in dealing with the ecological Sword of Damocles. We have now left Ferry for good in this thesis, while Næss will stay with us until the end. The torch is passed to Thomas Christian Wyller in the next section.

## 6.2 Wyller's Challenge

Like Næss, Wyller (1999: 96) fears that the environmental crisis could result in the demise of democracy and the ascendance of green dictators. In 1999 Wyller asked: "Is it possible to solve the environmental crisis with democratic means, and do we really have enough time to follow the democratic path?" Wyller never provided clear answers in his book *Demokratiet og miljøkrisen* ['Democracy and the Environmental Crisis'], but he highlighted some potentially fatal flaws inherent in the democratic system. With "democracy" he means liberal democracy, and he confines himself to the national context of Norway. Wyller (1999: 89) maintains that he is a staunch liberal democrat and that he does not seek a subversion of the democratic system.

As Wyller sees it, there are physical, biological, social, economic, political, psychological and ethical components within the environmental crisis. Its planetary/regional/local scope, composite patterns of causalities and potential effects, supplemented with the scientific mixture of knowledge and uncertainty, and the politicians' duality between cosmetic ardour and systemic paralysis, makes it difficult to view the crisis as a single totality (ibid: 24). The nature is threatened, but not by a natural disaster. The crisis is made by man, since it is caused by overconsumption and abuse of the natural resources (ibid: 12). The crisis is structurally connected with the entire organization of modern society, which originated in the industrial Western countries. This modernity was thereafter emulated by others, notably in Asia (ibid.).

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revealed Knowledge, which determined the makeup of all sacred civilizations (Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, Confucian, etc.) (Laruelle 2006: 10 & Laruelle 2008: 122). This is further explained in Guenon's *The Crisis of the Modern World* ([1927] 2004).

According to Wyller, the causes of the environmental crisis are integrated within the social and economic structures we have erected, and the same causes pervade our minds and actions. Individual causes are found in human lifestyle and material demands. Our behaviour could be placed within a scale which ranges from meeting the needs to the fulfilment of wishes (ibid.). Wyller is sceptical of those who stress the primacy of economy. Though the mode of production is not without concern, Wyller opines – in tune with Næss – that the crisis stems from inside human beings and their materialistic desires. In total, political action is required under a new horizon of values (ibid: 25). As he sees it, fighting against socialism or capitalism as an ecopolitical goal, could be a dead end (ibid: 17). The roots of the misery stretches far deeper. Overemphasizing economic systems could lead to the neglect of political ones: it is striking that the crisis has been rarely explained by the nature of political systems (ibid.).

Echoing Schumpeter, Wyller regards democracy as a method for arriving at political decisions. The democratic system is defined by procedures, not the outcome of a political process (ibid: 28). While democracy is *process*, environmental politics is substance (ibid: 30). The time horizon of democracy is often short (national elections every fourth year), and that makes it difficult to sustain the momentum in environmental politics. And radical environmental groups, which aim for drastic changes in liberal democracies, become either marginalized or assimilated [*the embrace of the Duchess*] (ibid: 60). Recall the German Greens for instance (mentioned in section 4.1), who have long since been worn away by wave upon wave of political pragmatism. The axioms of democracy – freedom of speech, political competition through the ballot box and the right to dissent – have so far been insufficient in dealing with the environmental crisis (ibid: 61).

Wyller distances himself from the authoritarian survivalists or ecocrats, who had their heyday during the 1970s, which has often been referred to as the “Doomsday Decade” (ibid: 79).<sup>67</sup> The political philosophy of survivalism is elitist. Survivalism treats most people as statistics, refusing them the capacity to act. They are only acted upon as mere aggregates of

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<sup>67</sup> Key metaphors of survivalism are for instance “spaceship earth” (envisioned by Kenneth Boulding in 1966) and the “population bomb” (sensationalized by Paul and Anne Ehrlich in 1968), while the Tragedy of the Commons is probably the most paramount survivalist concept (Dryzek 2005: 40). The originator of the latter was Garrett Hardin (1915-2003). His critique centres on how the rational self-interested actions of individuals lead to devastating collective consequences (Hardin [1968] 2005: 28).

biomass (Dryzek 2005: 40). Survivalists have sought to ingratiate themselves with the mighty instead of rallying the masses.<sup>68</sup> Their discourse favours expertise, notably in fields like biology (ibid: 37). Often, the relevant knowledge is quite demanding to grasp: ecosystems in both their entirety and composite parts are very complex. William Ophuls probably manifested the gold standard of survivalist elitism. He approved the installation of a governing class of “ecological mandarins” (Ophuls 1977: 163). Wyller is against such prescriptions, because he regards them as devoid of resonance in political practice and institutional design. Furthermore, he is sceptical of the “objectivity” and “neutrality” of hypothetical philosopher kings (Wyller 1999: 79).

Wyller’s conclusion is pessimistic: he finds it difficult to see how our democratic system could possibly handle the environmental crisis. He admits that dictatorships might be more effective than democracies when it comes to policy implementation and political action, though they are not necessarily more effective when it comes to decision making (ibid.). But as he also sees it, the political system – dictatorial or democratic – is not ecologically decisive per se: the significance is derived from the policies executed within its framework (ibid: 95). Nonetheless, Wyller remains normatively a democrat. According to him, the system could in theory be manoeuvred into a sustainable direction (ibid.).

As Wyller sees it, there is nothing wrong with the majoritarian principle, only with the majority (ibid: 89). Liberty is not a liability in itself, only the way liberty is practiced (ibid: 94).<sup>69</sup> What is needed, according to Wyller, is what Nietzsche called “the transvaluation of values” [*die Umwertung aller Werte*] (ibid: 84). Here Wyller is in line with Næss, who also called for a metamorphosis of the collective consciousness. Just like Næss (recall section 3.3), Wyller fears that political despotism could be a possible reaction against unchastened consumerism (ibid: 96). Dread and repression unleashed by ironfisted overlords might be the reality of a future where the resource depletion is magnified. In the next section we will enter the tangible challenges of the real world and confront the ecological and geopolitical realities of the last decade.

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<sup>68</sup> In 1972 survivalism was given a major boost by the Club of Rome, an international assembly of industrialists, politicians and academics (Dryzek 2005: 26). Under their aegis a research was conducted by a scientific team from MIT, using computer modeling to predict the environmental outcome of exponential population growth and extended industrialization (ibid.). Their project was published under the title *Limits to Growth* (1972).

<sup>69</sup> Wyller does not make a distinction between negative and positive liberty.

### 6.3 The End of History as *Endzeit*?

In the 1970s survivalists regarded exponential growth<sup>70</sup> in both human reproduction and the intensity of economic pressure as an omen of imminent cataclysm. Næss did also refer to the survivalist discourse in his *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* (1976).<sup>71</sup> According to the survivalists the humanity seemed to transgress what Garrett Hardin called carrying capacity: the maximum population of a species that an eco-system can support in perpetuity (Hardin 1993: 207). The foremost contribution of survivalists was to raise the stakes of environmentalism by throwing apocalyptic imagery into sharp relief (Dryzek 2005: 42). But forty years ago the prospect of ecological collapse was probably theoretical at best. Consequently, in the 1980s the survivalist were regarded as alarmistic and became marginalized. Simultaneously, environmentalism in general became domesticated and institutionalized by the political establishments (ibid: 16)

Since the turn of this millennium, environmental doomsday scenarios have been on the rise again. The messages of Næss and survivalists have become timelier. But these messages often drown in the saturated space of continuous and infinite flux of news events. Words like the “ozone hole” and “global warming” have got a hackneyed quality, and any sense of urgency the words might once have communicated has been dulled by overexposure. The phenomenon of “peak oil”, as I will briefly touch upon in the following subsection, has also seeped into mainstream media the last three or four years. But peak oil fails to capture the attention of the greater public despite decline in the planetary oil output since the previous decade and recent spikes in the oil price (Klare 2009).

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<sup>70</sup> A quantity exhibits exponential growth when it increases by a constant percentage of the whole in a constant time period (Bartlett 1978: 877). For instance: a colony of yeast cells in which each cell divides into two cells every ten minutes is growing exponentially (Meadows et al. 1972: 25).

<sup>71</sup> Survivalism is Malthusian in pedigree, and has often been called neo-Malthusianism after its precursor Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) (Dryzek 2005: 29). The survivalists instigated his renaissance after 150 years of oblivion. Malthus was ostracized into obscurity by both Liberals and Marxists in the 19th Century because he doubted the Victorian confidence in material progress (ibid.). And 200 years of prevailing economic growth – despite a mushrooming world population – seemed to invalidate the dystopia of Malthus. At least until the latter part of the 1960s, when the Malthusian correlation between exponential population growth and material collapse was brought into light again (ibid.).

As we shall see, the possibility of an imminent ecological collapse seems less theoretical today than in the 1970s. Here I am speculative, but the abstractness and planetary magnitude of this predicament probably explains why words like “peak oil” fail to capture most people’s imagination at present. The consequences of peak oil are not tangible enough yet. Does this lethargy – and perhaps denial – affirm the validity of Fukuyama’s claim about the End of History (Hegel) and the Last Man (Nietzsche)?<sup>72</sup> If so, would for instance peak oil and post-abundance in general herald the termination of such stasis? We cannot know at the moment. But as we shall see, the age of consumerism cannot go on indefinitely.

According to the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek we are living in the end times of planetary capitalism. He identifies four horsemen of this coming apocalypse: the worldwide ecological crisis, imbalances within the economic system, the biogenetic revolution and exploding social divisions (Žižek 2010: 327 ff.). This is not the place to contemplate each horseman, but they nonetheless depict that ecology is not the only looming disaster. Though, the ecological crisis probably stands out as the most formidable horseman. In the following subsection we will briefly explore the geological age named after us.

### 6.3.1 *The Age of Anthropocene*

*“Transpierce the mountains instead of scaling them, excavate the land instead of striating it, bore holes in space instead of keeping it smooth, turn the earth into Swiss cheese”.*

-Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari ([1980] 2004: 456) -

*“The cartography of oil as an omnipotent entity narrates the dynamics of planetary events. Oil is the undercurrent of all narrations, not only the political but also that of the ethics of life on earth”.*

-Reza Negarestani (2008: 19) -

Our current ecological standing might serve as a mirror whence favourable auguries or troubling omens are envisaged. This is why an empirical reality-check is needed before we

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<sup>72</sup> History supposedly “ends” with the triumph of liberal capitalism ensuring peace and economic security, but this end also signifies a relentless secularization and to the spiritual impoverishment of humanity. The result would be a culture of passivity and consumption (Fukuyama 1992). This is “the Last Man” [*der letzte Mensch*] that Nietzsche heralded in *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

can decide “what we must do” and “what we can hope”. It is impossible to provide an exhaustive account and mention every significant ecological macrotrend with equipoise. There is for instance hyperinflation of global warming in the media already, and this phenomenon does not warrant additional remarks here. My selective focus is on post-abundance and a potential sixth biological mass extinction. Both predicaments coincide with the alleged age of Anthropocene.

Paul Crutzen – a Dutch Nobel Prize winning chemist – suggested in 2000 that we had left the Holocene<sup>73</sup> and had entered a new epoch – the Anthropocene – because of the planetary environmental effects of increased human population and economic development (Crutzen & Stoermer 2000: 17-18). The term has since then entered the geological literature informally to denote the contemporary planetary environment dominated by human enterprise (Zalasiewicz 2008: 4 et al.). A case can be made for its consideration as a formal epoch in that, since the start of the Industrial Revolution, Earth has endured changes sufficient to leave a planetary stratospheric signature distinct from that of the Holocene or of previous Pleistocene interglacial phases, encompassing novel biotic, sedimentary, and geochemical change (ibid.). These changes, although likely in their initial phases, are sufficiently distinct and robustly established for suggestions of a Holocene–Anthropocene boundary in the recent historical past to be geologically reasonable (ibid.). If Crutzen and the geologists are correct, then the magnitude of human imprint is more considerable – in relative terms – than aeons of sheer terrestrial evolution.

A panoramic snapshot of geopolitics and geoeconomics in the Anthropocene is given by Michael T. Klare in his *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet* (2009). As mentioned in the introduction, Klare regards “post-abundance” as the defining term of the epoch we now inhabit. It is also an epoch of escalating geopolitical rivalry where the dynamics revolves around a declining US superpower and the rise of BRIC-countries (Brazil-Russia-India-China) (Klare 2009: 7). The main theatres of this planetary chess game are Eurasia (where Russia has emerged as the paramount power broker of continental energy supplies), Africa (which experiences a new scramble for its resources, and where China is economically

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<sup>73</sup> The Holocene is the latest of many *Quaternary* interglacial phases and the only one to be accorded the status of an epoch; it is also the only unit in the whole of the *Phanerozoic* – the past 542 m.y. – whose base is defined in terms of numbers of years from the present, taken as 10 000 radiocarbon years before 1950 (Zalasiewicz 2008: 4 et al.).

omnipresent) and the Middle East (a region with the lion's share of the world's oil resources, and currently experiencing a trans-Arabic uprising). At the core of contemporary "post-abundant" geopolitics are US-China relations (ibid: 6). In the emerging international power system – according to Klare – we can expect the struggle over energy to override all other considerations, national leaders to go to extreme lengths to ensure energy sufficiency for their countries, and state authority over both domestic and foreign energy affairs to expand (ibid: 7). Oil will cease to be primarily a trade commodity, to be bought and sold on the international market, becoming instead the preeminent strategic resource on the planet (ibid.).

While "peak oil" is the dominant theme of resource depletion – 95% of the world's transportation fuel is provided by petroleum – the world's stockpiles of other essential commodities are also shrinking. The peaks arrive in battalions: natural gas, uranium, copper, cobalt, chromium, titanium, rare earth minerals (essential to mobile phones, laptops, and components in windmills), phosphorus (essential to artificial fertilizers), and the list could probably go on (ibid: 32-35). According to scientists from the US Army Corps of Engineers, "the earth's endowment of natural resources are being depleted at an alarming rate, exponentially faster than the biosphere's ability to replenish them" (quoted in Klare 2009: 34). Also new discoveries are failing to keep pace with the exhaustion of existing reserves (Klare 2009: 35).

What does Klare say about alternative energy sources? He regards the prospects in the intermediate term as bleak: "The current financial crisis [as of 2009] is also deterring investment in oil alternatives like wind power, solar power and advanced biofuel. When oil prices were high [...] Barack Obama pledged [in his election campaign] to spend as much as \$15 billion per year on the development of renewable energy options. But with the onset of the [financial] crisis and the diversion of vast public funds to the rescue of banks and other financial institutions, it may not be possible to proceed with ambitious energy schemes of this sort" (ibid: 267).

In sum, the energy industry will be even less prepared to meet future demand than before. And difficulties are multiplied by the fact that vital components in windmills are made of scarce rare earth minerals. Furthermore, if we are going to produce the necessary quantity of windmills and solar panels, it is hard to avoid an extensive use of hydrocarbons in the process (ibid.). Nuclear and hydroelectric power will not be sufficient. For these reasons, the vision of "green" capitalism remains a chimera. The dynamics of rising powers on a shrinking planet is perhaps entangled with an even bigger drama of the Anthropocene: that of biological

mass extinction. Current evidence – also acknowledged by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – demonstrates that a sixth<sup>74</sup> major extinction is underway (McKee 2009: 300ff.; Jones 2009: 316ff; Ceballos et al. 2010: 1821ff). The Earth is losing between one and ten percent of biodiversity per decade, mostly due to habitat loss, pest invasion, pollution, over-harvesting and disease (Kluser et al. 2010: 3). The planetary mass death of bees is especially worrying because many fruit, nut, vegetable, and seed crops depend on their pollination. Bees are the predominant pollinators in most geographical regions. Out of some 100 crop species which provide 90% of food worldwide, 71 of these are bee-pollinated (ibid.). In Europe alone, 84% of the 264 crop species and 4000 vegetable varieties exist thanks to pollination by bees (ibid.). The production value of one tonne of pollinator-dependent crop is approximately five times higher than one of those crop categories that do not depend on insects (ibid.). The causes of this drama is still an enigma. One thing is certain: if the bees become extinct, the food security of millions of people would be affected.

The ordeal of the bees has a far bigger rival: in evolutionary terms, the most dramatic decline of species is seen among amphibians. A higher percentage of amphibians are threatened than birds or mammals, with many amphibians on the brink of extinction: 435 species are regarded as “rapidly declining” (Blaustein et al. 2011: 108). The decline of amphibians is especially striking, since they have been the great survivors of four previous planetary mass extinctions. The causes of this devastating process are manifold, but again the imprint of human enterprise is a lethal factor (ibid.).

Marine ecosystems are also severely affected by the activities of man: not only by the excesses of industrial fisheries and massive pollution (chemicals, debris etc.), but also by human noise (Weilgart 2002: 99). Most marine animals, particularly marine mammals and fish, are very sensitive to sound. Especially whales are highly vocal and dependent on sound for almost all aspects of their lives, e.g. food-finding, reproduction, communication, detection of predators/hazards, and navigation (Weilgart 2007: 159). Low frequency sounds, such as

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<sup>74</sup> The most famous among the former mass extinctions is the end-Cretaceous event 65 m.y, when the dinosaurs disappeared. But the most devastating so far was the end-Permian mass extinction 250 m.y where as few as 5-10% of species survived, whereas 50% survived the end of the Cretaceous (Benton [2003] 2008: 9). The end-Permian event coincided with the eruption of the largest-known continental flood basalt province ever, the Siberian Traps (Saunders & Reichow 2009: 21). Among the ‘Big Five’ mass extinction events were also the Ordovician-Silurian event (444 m.y), the Devonian-Carboniferous event (360 m.y) and the end-Triassic event (200 m.y) (Hallam & Wignall 1997: 4).



naval Low Frequency Active (LFA) sonar and distant shipping, travel especially well and may sometimes be heard over millions of square kilometers of ocean with levels high enough to cause possible disturbance in marine mammals (ibid.). Observed effects of noise on marine mammals include: changes in vocalizations, respiration, swim speed, diving, and foraging behavior; displacement, avoidance, shifts in migration path, stress, hearing damage, and suicidal strandings (ibid.).

I could go on forever in the exposure of these unfolding events, but the examples above probably suffice. Though, since we are in a section on a novel geological epoch and in a thesis on deep ecology, it is reasonable to mention man's place in deep time<sup>75</sup> before I proceed to the last section. Deep time – or geological time – designates timescales of millions or billions of years. Just like deep ecology, the notion of deep time challenges the anthropocentric worldview, but in a different way. Deep time points back to manifestations of what was “anterior to the emergence of thought and even of life, posited as anterior to every form of human relation to the world” (Meillassoux [2006] 2009:10; Brassier 2007: 58)<sup>76</sup>. Hence, deep time also points towards what is posterior to every form of human relation to the world. In biological terms, the perennial occurrence of extinction comes to the fore.<sup>77</sup>

Being the most complex species of a certain epoch is no guarantee of endurance. Furthermore, those species which have experienced evolutionary domination do not even form a continuous evolutionary lineage: trilobites, dinosaurs and *Homo sapiens* are completely different species which have stumbled into this position one after the other (ibid.). Since no genetic continuity links these successive dominators, domination should not be attributed to adaptive prowess, but sheer “luck” (Gould 1996: 173). But even measured against this backdrop, we might say – with the danger of flattering our conceitedness – that the Anthropocene is a remarkably intensive and volcanic spike on the plains of eternity. Though humans do not stand a chance against the endurance of microbes, could we prevent – or at least postpone beyond the longevity of contemporary generations – the self-inflicted and

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<sup>75</sup> The Scottish geologist James Hutton (1726-1797) contributed to the discovery of “deep time” (Rudwick 2005: 170).

<sup>76</sup> The French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux ([2006] 2009: 10) labels any reality anterior to the emergence of the human species as *ancestrality*.

<sup>77</sup> Thanks to fossils and the evolving discipline of geology, the French zoologist George Cuvier (1769-1832) established extinction as an integral part of natural history (Rudwick 2008: 236).

ultimate downfall of our own species? We might gamble on our survival despite the potential mass disappearance of what Næss (1973) called “*knots* in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations”, but then we probably play Russian roulette. It is dangerous to expect the salvation from a *deus ex machina*. Instead of Fortuna’s mercy, a menacing hyperchaos might as well await us. In the next and last section I will ask: “what is to be done?” and “what can we hope for?”

#### 6.4 Pascal’s Wager and the Resurrection of Utopia(s)

“*Le silence eternal des ces espaces infinis m'effraie*”.

[“*The eternal silence of these infinite spaces fills me with dread*”].

– Blaise Pascal ([1670] 1844: 224 & [1670] 1995: 201) –

“Pascal’s Wager” [*le Pari de Pascal*]<sup>78</sup> is the name given to an argument due to Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) for believing, or for at least taking steps to believe in God. As he saw it, it was safer to bet on God’s existence than to bet against it. This thesis is neutral about the existence of a deity. For our purpose, Pascal’s Wager serves the role as a metaphor: do we dare to bet *against* a possible ecological collapse, and leave the foundations of our economic and political system unquestioned? Perhaps nothing will happen, and all the preceding passages on Arne Næss, Michael Klare and mass extinction were the fancy of just another alarmistic discourse, the survivalism of the 1970s digitally remastered.

If we bet on the possibility of collapse within the next decades, then we must find an answer to the question “what we must do?” Both bets have repercussions, and so does the indecisive “neutral” middle-ground of the agnostics. How much knowledge should we have before an informed decision is made? Næss ([1976] 1999: 15) would say that we can never know enough. The snapshot of empirical events presented in this chapter is certainly selective. Some scientists may disagree with the statements on looming disaster, but both peak oil and the notion of mass extinction are mainstream today. Doomsday scenarios are no longer sectarian by nature.

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<sup>78</sup> The term “Pascal’s Wager” is somewhat misleading, for in a single paragraph of his *Pensées*, Pascal apparently presents at least three such arguments, each of which might be called a ‘wager’ — it is only the final of these that is traditionally referred to as “Pascal’s Wager” (Hájek [1998] 2008).

The issue of climate change for instance, has so far – at best – produced nostrum with limited resonance, since many emerging economies are not willing to diminish their carbon emissions yet. Socio-economic catch-up is their first priority. Why should they be denied the same material standard as the developed world? So goes the argument. The climate summit in Copenhagen in 2009 ended with a whimper: the governments failed to concert strategy and pool their effort, and no solution has as yet been advanced (Traufetter 2010). Much of this failure is due to what Kenneth Waltz (1979: 111) labels the anarchy of the international state system. Though this anarchy is not absolute: superpowers and great powers have certainly a greater say, and the lesser powers bandwagon the mightier ones. But still there is no omnipotent and planetary sovereign which could impose its will in instances like the climate summit in Copenhagen.

As long as the international system of states prevails, deep ecologists and other green radicals probably have little scope to advance their views on ecological issues. And that is the case domestically as well: as implied in chapter four and five, the inextricable nexus between market forces and political establishments is also a major confinement. But is it possible to see anything beyond the horizon of what Fukuyama calls “the End of History”? It is difficult to provide a simple answer here, but the political *status quo* might already be faltering due to the financial crisis alone. And if the predicaments of the Anthropocene evolve more drastically in the next decades, a denouement might also haunt the liberal democracies.

Nonetheless, every real existing regime today is heading towards perilous times of unprecedented challenge. That applies to nominal democracy as well as unconcealed despotism. If a planetary breakdown in the fabric of nature occurs within the next generations, it will be interesting to see how the caretakers of prevailing systems are going to survive the watershed. A return to the political *status quo ante* will be quite wearisome to say the least. It is premature to exclude an event where liberal democracy meets its Nemesis. In cyclical terms, one age hostile to a specific *Weltanschauung* might be succeeded by another more receptive to its ambitions and so forth until the end of human history. Not “the end” in a linear Hegelian sense adopted by the epigone Fukuyama, but *the end* of material existence as such.

It is possible that both endpoints might coincide: a Fukuyaman stalemate being the eschatological accomplice of physical extermination. The “progressive” view of history would then be “vindicated”, relegating any notion of cycles to the dustbin. Perhaps no (human) witnesses would remain to affirm such a Hegelian “victory”, but a tree falling in the

forest when nobody hears it still makes a sound.<sup>79</sup> Are there options left against a potential encounter between the “historical” and material endpoints? As of 2011, Fukuyama’s terminal as an eternal objective condition seems questionable. The ideological stasis might not have been exceeded yet, but the surface of planet earth is changing at a pace where deficient theoretical – and hence practical – ingenuity leaves future to the confinement of punitive circumstances.

In light of the prospects above, I ask “what is to be done?” This “we” could be deep ecologists or some other radical group. The common denominator of these groups could be the search for alternative political ways beyond liberal democracy and/or Neoliberalism, which do not necessarily end up in totalitarianism. Also, thinkers from the past of different stripes should be consulted: whether they are hibernating or consigned to oblivion by the ravages of time, they might shed some light on our current situation in analogous terms. Hence, the approach to the history of ideas should not resemble the way scavengers approach their carrion. And there should be no *cordon sanitaire* around past thinkers who are deemed radioactive.

Many subversives might for instance scourge the prospect of consulting Liberals like Adam Smith (1723-1790) or John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), which is understandable along subversive lines. But these thinkers had insights regarding resource depletion. From Adam Smith – most famous for his notion of “the invisible hand”<sup>80</sup> – to John Stuart Mill early theorists of the wealth of nations were pessimistic about their societies’ long-term prospects for growth, and assumed that the productivity gains from specialization and the division of labour would be thwarted after a certain point by exhaustion of the soil and population increase (Balakhrisnan 2009: 6). Smith and Mill argued that growth was expected to peter out after a time, arrested by changes endogenous to the growth process itself, and giving rise to a growthless stationary state (Wrigley 1990: 3).<sup>81 & 82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> “If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” was a riddle posed by George Berkeley (1685-1753). It raised questions about observation and knowledge of reality (Berkeley [1710] 1982).

<sup>80</sup> Adam Smith ([1776] 1869: 28): “[...] he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention”.

The example of Smith and Mill is not a digression, because it captures the essence of the law of diminished returns: in manufacturing, diminishing returns set in when investment in the form of additional inputs does not cause a proportional increase in the rate of productivity (Tainter 1988: 92). While this is not exactly analogous to the processes that cause diminishing returns in increasingly more complex societies or an increasingly more complex science (ibid.) – where disciplines fail to communicate with each other – the term “diminishing return” might be helpful in contemplating some of the challenges ahead. In analogous terms, would specialization and division of labour between scientific disciplines be thwarted due to diminished returns? If so, what are the consequences in terms of finding alternative energy sources? This could be an additional research project of ecopolitical interest.

Consulting past thinkers – whether they are Smith, Marx, Heidegger or some pre-modern traditionalists – could be a challenging task. They might shed light on some current predicaments in analogous terms, but the past is a foreign country. The commensurability with our own time is uncertain. Therefore we must also look beyond the horizon of our present and try to imagine an alternative future which follows a different trajectory. This is the task that Wallerstein (2000: 470) calls utopistics: the analysis of possible utopias,<sup>83</sup> their limitations, and the constraints on achieving them.

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<sup>81</sup> John Stuart Mill ([1848] 1866: 106): “[...] the stationary state [is] the state in which no further addition will be made to capital unless there takes place some improvement in the arts of production...though capital does not on the whole increase, some persons grow richer and others poorer”.

<sup>82</sup> The notion of “stationary state” should not be confused with entropy. The latter is a property of substance explained by the second law of thermodynamics, which specifies that any closed system will eventually deteriorate in the direction of disorder without external input of energy (Georgescu-Roegen [1971] 1999: 7; McMahon & Mrozek 1997: 504; Gowdy & Mesner 1998: 140). The Romanian mathematician Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen (1906-1994) explored the implications of entropy in his ecological economics, which has been the theoretical foundation of the French degrowth-movement [*décroissance*] (Parker et al. 2007: 69).

During the Cold War (and in Eastern Europe immediately after its end), Utopia had become a synonym for Stalinism and had to designate a program which neglected human frailty and original sin (Jameson 2005: xi). As Fredric Jameson sees it, the relationship between Utopia and the political, as well as questions about the practical-political value of Utopian thinking and the identification between Socialism and Utopia, very much continues to be an unresolved topic (ibid: xii). Jameson seems to (selectively) confine the range of Utopias to the “Leftist” varieties. But Utopia should not be monopolized by Socialism or by any other ideology. If Utopia is any form of “ideal-state” which has not yet emerged, then the term “Utopia” is an empty shell which could be filled with an opulent repertoire of imagined societies. Hence, the range of Utopias is infinite: from feudalism to futurism, from absolutism to anarchism, from clericalism to libertinism, etc.

Paradoxically, according to Jameson, the increasing inability to imagine a different future enhances rather than diminishes the appeal and also the function of Utopia (ibid: 232). As he sees it, the very political weakness of Utopia in previous generations – no account of agency, nor a coherent historical and practical-political picture of transition – now becomes strength in a situation in which neither of these problems seems to offer candidates for solution (ibid.). Most interestingly for our ecological purpose, is that Jameson suggests developing an *Angst* about losing the future which is analogous to Orwell’s anxiety about the loss of the past and of memory and childhood (ibid: 233). This would be a good deal more intense than the usual rhetoric about “our children” (keeping the environment clean for future generations, not burdening them with debt, etc.); it would be a fear that locates the loss of the future, of history itself, within the existential dimension of time and indeed within ourselves (ibid.).

The *Angst* about losing the future might be a point of departure, but how to proceed from there to something tangible? Gopal Balakhrisnan’s advice is: “To be politically effective, one must take stock of the remorseless realities of this [world], without recourse to theoretical ecstasy” (Balakhrisnan [2000] 2009: 31). Those utopians that do not ruminate on this message before they enter the great outdoors, run the risk of being beset by a veritable

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<sup>83</sup> The first user of the word was Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) in his book *Utopia* ([1516] 2003). He coined the name from the Greek roots meaning “no place” (Barzun 2000: 117). Jacques Barzun suggests another term: *Eutopia*, the Greek prefix altered to mean the “good” place (ibid.).

catalogue of disasters at worst. But in a time when ecological impasse looms, the opposite – the inability to imagine another world beyond the horizon of *status quo* – might even be more dangerous. “What is to be done” first and foremost is to imagine other possible worlds. From the latter we could deduce “what we can hope for” through the tool of utopistics. Practical and concrete measures come thereafter: like what kind of strategies should be pursued if an ecopolitical transition is to be secured? For instance, would the solution be a partial withdrawal from the world by a “creative minority”, while the fallacies of the political *status quo* are simultaneously pushed to their ultimate conclusion?<sup>84</sup> Answers are not provided here, but such a strategy implies risk, but so do most other strategies in this regard as well. A quote by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1521) – who has often been regarded as the quintessential connoisseur of political intrigue – is of utopistic value:

“Fortune provided the matter, but they [Moses, Cyrus, Romulus and Theseus] gave it its form; without opportunity, their prowess would have been extinguished, and without such prowess the opportunity would have come in vain” (Machiavelli [1513] 1999: 20).

An ecological predicament would be a potential *opportunity*, but also a potentially insurmountable abyss. The *prowess* would be an equilibrium between utopistic sensibility/imagination and practical skills which take stock of the remorseless realities of the world. When can we expect a solution to the ecological crisis? According to Næss (1998: 121), the moment of realization will be in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century. In the meantime we will not receive any Marshall Aid from the moon.

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<sup>84</sup> As Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) said: “Resistance only animates the Leviathan by giving him a welcome pretext for repressive measures. In the face of such conditions only one hope seems to remain, that the process may spend itself like a volcano spends its fiery ashes” (Jünger [1951] 1954).

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