

**Violent Signs:  
Ecocriticism and the Symptom**

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| <p><b>Summary of Thesis:</b></p> <p>This thesis recommends that the ‘ecocritical’ turn in American Literary Scholarship be brought into contact with ‘symptomnal’ forms of ideology critique, namely after the post-Althusserian thinking of Fredric Jameson, Slavoj Žižek and Deleuze-Guattari. This recommendation is made on the basis that the ecocritical turn has neglected to apprise itself of a thoroughgoing prehistory; by bringing together the lessons of Marx and Lacan, post-Althusserian thinking enables us to address the disavowal of formal and theoretical concerns constitutive of first-wave ecocriticism, and to acknowledge this as symptomatic of North American cultural and political pluralism more broadly. Where such disavowal promoted a widespread rejection of poststructural theories of immanence in the Americanist milieu of the 1980s, we consider how it effectively blocked psychoanalytic and Marxist approaches to literary form and human subjectivity.</p> <p>Following an initial examination of ecocriticism after Althusser and Balibar’s thesis on ‘symptomnal reading’, our study goes on to reassert issues of subjectivity for ecocriticism. Žižek’s subjectivist approach to ideology critique therefore enables us to diagnose the legacy of modern epistemology and thereafter to analyse ecocritical motivations of sublime aesthetics. By pursuing broader, ‘valetudinary’ issues in relation to literary form, the latter half of the thesis exceeds the former’s emphasis on ideology critique, moving to engage the post-subjectivist, ‘stratoanalytic’ project of Deleuze and Guattari. Predicated upon an a-subjective philosophy of differential relations, stratoanalysis suggests an ecological extension of ‘schizoanalysis’, enabling us to reappraise eco-literary and eco-philosophical concerns, chiefly after post-symptomatological analyses of the relationship between high modern literature, pre-personal affect and the ‘eco-social’ coding of desire. It is in this way that we assert the ‘body without organs’ as the privileged clinical figure with which to address eco-social organisation, and thus, exceed the subjectivist logic of the symptom.</p> |                |

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Robert 'Rorschach' Marriott (1973-2011), one of life's best friends, and whose untimely death in May of this year brought a renewed sense of drive and perspective to the project.

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# Introduction

### (i) Assembling the ‘Eco-Clinic’

The works of culture come to us as signs in an all-but-forgotten code, as symptoms of diseases no longer even recognised as such, as fragments of a totality we have long since lost the organs to see.

—Fredric Jameson<sup>1</sup>

The world is the set of symptoms whose illness merges with man.

—Gilles Deleuze<sup>2</sup>

If the mantra of this thesis must be ‘critical theory derives from historical circumstance,’ then it is because any critical orientation worth its salt must be evaluated as a product of specific cultural ‘complexes’. This appears nowhere more necessary than in the case of the ‘ecocritical’ turn in American literary scholarship. Given more typically as ‘ecocriticism’, the specialism initially emerged at a series of conferences of the Western Literary Association in the mid-1980s, a short while prior to the establishment of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988. Distinguishing itself from other literary specialisms by privileging ecological matters over social justice concerns, ecocriticism’s contribution to the subject area comes by way of its core condemnations of the ethical imperatives and critical solipsisms of the ‘anthropocene’ epoch.<sup>3</sup> As Herbert F. Tucker would have it, by ‘claim[ing] as its hermeneutic horizon nothing short of the literal horizon itself’,

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<sup>1</sup> Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974). p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze, Gilles. *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco. (London: Verso, 1998). p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> First coined in 2000 by Nobel Prize-winning scientist Paul Crutzen, ‘anthropocene’ might be read in analogy with the ‘holocene’ (or ‘entirely recent’) geological epoch; for Crutzen, however, the term serves to denote the extent to which the human influence on the biosphere has been sufficient in recent centuries to have constituted an entirely new geological era.

the movement promises to reestablish the consequence of non-human determinants for literary research over those that are markedly cultural in origin.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, no tidy binary can persist between the nominally ‘natural’ and the ‘cultural’ without denying long centuries of epistemological debate and conjecture. As Raymond Williams implies in his now seminal *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (1980), if ‘nature’ is one of the most complex and incompletely-defined words in the English language then it would seem that any critical premise that draws upon its problematic status must either risk a certain indeterminacy or suffer from over-compensation or abject reductionism. During a highly-spirited first-wave that persisted well into the 1990s, ecocritical advocates worked diligently to secure suitably ‘ecological’ epistemologies, or those that would enable robust negotiation of this much-debated but no less enduring schism as it might relate to eco-literary reception, drawing upon the rhetorical and doctrinal models of such American ‘nature writers’ as Henry David Thoreau, Annie Dillard and Wendell Berry to a significant extent. Diversifying in essential ways since that time, an initial ‘nation-centredness’, or almost exclusive focus on American literatures and their constitutive genealogies of ‘settler culture’ and ‘New World pastoral’, has given way to a complex interdisciplinary purview that today boasts ‘ecoglobalist’ outreach.<sup>5</sup>

Gainfully exceeding an inaugural ambit of nineteenth-century ‘Transcendentalist’ writing (Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller) and twentieth-century ‘toxic discourses’ (Carson, Leopold), ecocritical researchers have since come to submit progressive theses on such unconventional and heterodox topics as ‘ecotourist narratives’, ‘biopiracy’ and ‘acoustic ecology’ and regular colloquia on ‘ecological imperialism’, ‘queer ecology’ and ‘biosemiotics’ have made for innovative dialogue with such extra-literary disciplines as geology, climatology, population studies, and

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<sup>4</sup> In the introduction to the *New Literary History* special issue on ecocriticism in 1999, Tucker and the other editors of the journal described how the specialism ‘challenges interpretation to its own grounding in the bedrock of natural fact, in the biospheric and indeed planetary conditions without which human life, much less humane letters, could not exist’. See Tucker, Herbert F. ‘From the Editors.’ *New Literary History* 3, (1999). p. 505.

<sup>5</sup> The ecocritical canon is quite simply vast, implicating works well beyond the ambit of Americanist literary research. As such the writers listed should simply provide some sense of the movement’s initial emergence within Americanist disciplines. Whilst literary figures are our primary concern here, a wealth of non-literary writers are of great significance to ‘eco-centric’ studies and we will inevitably include some reference to important scientific figures such as Charles Darwin, E. O. Wilson and Rachel Carson.

environmental law. In the process, such dialogues have pointed up the wider difficulties facing the academy where the limitations of specialised erudition would foreshorten and constrain sufficiently ‘ecological’ enquiry, whilst dramatising powerfully those debates over the interdisciplinary consequence of interpretation.

And yet despite the very best efforts of such writers as Dana Phillips, Sue Ellen Campbell and Patrick D. Murphy to redress a number of persistent misapprehensions regarding such pivotal critical trends as poststructuralism, critics both internal and external to the movement have nevertheless come to identify a definite show of ‘theoretical inarticulation’ amongst ecocritical researchers; a deficit that may ultimately impede wider development and credibility within the academy.<sup>6</sup> That this transpires to be the case should be acknowledged as much less the product of philosophical negligence or insufficient expertise, however, than as the result of a deliberate program of methodological resistance. Perhaps unsurprisingly, poststructuralism has proven deeply troubling to preservationist orientations, largely on the grounds that close textual scrutiny unhelpfully threatens the referent and thus, the ontological status of biotic ‘reality’ itself.<sup>7</sup> In motivating American ‘wilderness narratives’ towards an ‘ecoliterate’ and culturally-informed hermeneutic, first-wave ecocritics purposefully denied the formal conceits of continental philosophies of language, rejecting wholesale the works of Lacan, de Man and Derrida, ostensibly ‘postmodern’ thinkers who had gained equal parts popularity and notoriety in the self-same, pluralistic context.<sup>8</sup>

Assured that ‘high’ (or largely ‘continental’) theory remained obscurantist and solipsistic, and thus, anathema to their environmentalist aims and objectives, principal writers of the movement, such as Lawrence Buell and Glen A. Love, distinguished

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<sup>6</sup> See Phillips, Dana. *The Truth of Ecology: Nature, Culture, and Literature in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Also, Murphy, Patrick D. *Farther Afield in the Study of Nature-Oriented Literature*. (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000). Also, Gifford, Terry. ‘Recent Critiques of Ecocriticism.’ *New Formations*. No. 64. (Spring, 2008). 15-24.

<sup>7</sup> During the late 1980s, debates over the role of poststructuralism in producing a sense of ‘relativism’ proved heated. Rorty’s work in particular has shown how the notion may well be applied to that of ‘pragmatism’ by realists, largely on the grounds that it destabilises truth claims. See Rorty, Richard. *Consequences of Pragmatism*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> As David Wood notes, ‘[i]t could be argued... that the direction [Derrida] took cuts against environmental concerns’. Wood, David. ‘Specters of Derrida: On the Way to Econstruction.’ *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*. Eds. Laurel Kearns and Katherine Keller. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007). 264-287. p. 264.

their contributions of the 1990s by a certain methodological radicalism: upholding such writers as Thoreau and Dillard for their ‘Green,’ neo-realist *content*, Buell and Love enacted a seemingly retrograde, yet not entirely ill-founded strategy that, it was argued, should sufficiently attest to the ecopolitical challenges presented to literary studies without conceding to poststructural analyses of *form* or rhetorics of Difference.<sup>9</sup> In one of the key papers that served to rally the movement, Love expresses immense dissatisfaction with what he perceives as the oblique and disobliging tendencies of poststructuralism. Given the impact Love’s paper has had upon successive ecoliterary researchers, his objections are here worth quoting at length:

...many [poststructural] theorists suspect that the verb to be is not worth worrying about at all, since it may not have a referent, at least not one we can discover, trapped in language, or rather in writing, as we are. They insist that a concern with being is the province of metaphysics, an outmoded and discredited way of thinking. In their view, the discursive is of necessity always recursive, and they feel unable to talk about the putative object of discourse directly. For the most radical deconstructionists and the most antic postmodernists, this feeling of inability raises the possibility that there is no such thing as an actual object of discourse in the first place. They suggest that any given ‘object’ is best regarded as a meaning-effect of the discourse in which it is embedded, rather than as an entity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Buell has been most radical in this regard: ‘The claims of realism,’ he argues, ‘merit reviving ... so as to enable one to reimagine textual representations as having a dual accountability to matter and to discursive mentation’. See Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture*. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995). p. 92.

<sup>10</sup> As Love continues: ‘For this reason, they maintain that if a discourse is to be theoretical, it must not be understood as a theory of anything other than itself: theory is a metadiscourse couched in writing laden with jargon, and this sort of writing is both deliberately obscure and entirely self-erasing. Since self-erasure keeps metadiscourses from becoming metaphysical discourses, and since deliberate obscurity keeps them from being intelligible to anyone not already an initiate, any claims a theorist happens to make are null with regard to the truth about the world, although claims about the possibility of such truth are another matter. It is the peculiar privilege of theoretical discourse, and of theorists, to

Evidently, Love's words appear immensely strong, suggesting that he has foreclosed entirely on modes of close textual analysis that would uphold 'meaning-effects' over the virtues of an implied empiricism, and as such are perhaps all too readily dismissed as lumpen and polemical. And yet as Dana Phillips has noted, Love's would seem to remain a fairly representative account of what a great many ecocritics take theory to be.<sup>11</sup> Despite the earnest declarations of second-wave writers to sufficiently exceed and reframe their foregoing ambit, almost all monographs, essay anthologies and journal editions dedicated in some fashion to the ecologically-informed humanities have appeared obliged to open with staunch declarations of fealty to anti-theoretical paradigms, or more typically, with an apologetic rehearsal of the methodological conservatisms that shaped their movement's earliest forays; a rehearsal which has often times seemed to amount not only to the continual justification of the fledgling practice they are involved in, but more significantly, to a plea for the continuing possibility of literary studies itself.

But whether or not ecocritical first principles have since met with disapprobation on the grounds that they were insufficiently attentive to ideological determinations, or have found belated, revolutionary distinction for so unprecedented and audacious a rejection of theory, this thesis will nevertheless consider how they cannot ever be formally divorced from the mode of production under which they first coalesced, nor from the constraints to which its practitioners remain institutionally subject. Despite the methodological epiphanies of hitherto Romanticist ecocritics such as Greg Garrard (who has recently embraced evolutionary psychology) and encouraging collections like the recent *New Formations* special edition *Earthographies: Ecocriticism and Culture* (Spring 2008), what ecocriticism nevertheless seems to lack most is an awareness of the economic fabric of its own constitutive epoch, an awareness that would surely embolden any motivation of the 'simplicity narratives' of 'Green' literatures with a properly materialist reflexivity.

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deny those claims outright' Love, Glen. "Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996). 212-237. p. 212.

<sup>11</sup> Phillips, Dana. *The Truth of Ecology: Nature, Culture, and Literature in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). p. 137.

As such, the ecocritical *rapprochement* with theory, whilst by no means as thoroughgoing or discipline-wide as certain second-wave writers would maintain, nevertheless seems mysteriously repressed in some way, even guilty, perhaps, of certain neo-liberal complicities, prompting the field to remain not only better characterised as a Green-hued reception theory than as a critical hermeneutic *per se*, but as in dire need of a careful and thoroughgoing *prehistory*.<sup>12</sup> Stated more plainly, as a symptom of the crisis it would seek to overcome, ecocriticism must itself meet with a sufficiently ‘metacritical’ analysis, with a rigorous self-assessment, perhaps even a psycho-cultural analysis, adequate not only to its increasing heterogeneity, but equally to its constitutive contradictions and conservatisms, its oversights and omissions, and most significantly, its unacknowledged repressions and exclusions, particularly if it is ever to convincingly contend with such social justice concerns as Post-Colonial or Gender studies.

Whilst it is hoped that this ‘symptomnal’ assertion should find sufficient legitimation throughout the course of this thesis, we might nevertheless acknowledge at the outset how the adequate historicisation of ecocritical mores and practices enables precisely such a ‘metacritical’ reorientation. Subsequent chapters will therefore advance a number of post-Althusserian lines for reorientation after an initial consideration of the exclusions and repressions of literary theory made by pluralist ideologues throughout the North American academy of the 1980s. Ever attentive to the ideological intimations of that which is absent or excluded, Fredric Jameson’s work bids us to acknowledge how ‘the repudiation of theory is itself a theory’.<sup>13</sup>

And if we invoke Jameson here then it is not simply to underscore that which should be relatively self-evident, but so as to highlight more substantially that by way of a putatively ‘postmodern’ writer whose work actively embraces poststructural tenets, the indissociability of the theoretical, the historical and the economic might be gainfully registered. Moreover, it is by way of precisely such thinking—drawing on

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<sup>12</sup> Love’s position in his 2003 book, *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment*, appears more disconcerting still, particularly when, following Lawrence Buell, he makes a baffling distinction between the ‘ecological’ and the ‘ideological’ as approaches to our post-pastoral period, as if ecology were somehow altogether impartial or ideologically-neutral for its scientific apodicty. See Love, Glen A. *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2003). p.70.

<sup>13</sup> Jameson, Fredric. *The Ideologies of Theory, Essays 1971–1986*. (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1988). (2 vols: ‘Theories and History of Literature vols 48 and 49’). p. 456.

Jameson, but not limited to him—that we will consider how the constitutive strategy of disavowal underwriting first-wave ecocriticism went hand-in-hand with the vested blocking of Marxist critical theories under North American cultural pluralism more generally, and which might today remain accountable for the deficit of ecocritical papers advocating poststructural theories of immanence.

Thus, whilst a number of ‘third party’ theories have steadily found favour amongst ecocritics since the impassioned theory debates of the 1990s, those writers who have deployed such diverse approaches as Bakhtinian dialogics and Harraway’s ‘cyborg’ theory have nevertheless fallen short of any fully-fledged elaboration of metacritical principles.<sup>14</sup> Of course, the movement can hardly be described as entirely bereft of reflexivity or self-awareness; the inevitable association of ecocriticism with the generalised ‘Green’ trends that have in recent decades touched almost all aspects of contemporary social life, coming to compete so forcefully for our ethical attention, has necessitated that the movement fight in certain quarters to keep its eco-virtuous rhetoric from dismissal, from appearing worn or disintensified by media hyperbole, and thus from being readily trivialised. Suspected at best of naive, or ‘uncritical’ naturalism, at worst, of a certain *malfeasance* and the cynical ‘green washing’ of a subject area more typically associated with social justice concerns, ecocritics have had to submit to lengthy and often times extraordinarily disproportionate processes of legitimisation.

And yet few ecocritics show direct interrogation of their own interests and motives, and moreover, as these might be structured by the demands of the marketplace; the ‘Greening’ of literary scholarship would appear to be a ‘self-evidently’ worthy reorientation of the discipline, a self-evidentiality that elsewhere we might find wholly indefensible, and thus summarily dismissible, and yet Green studies often appear somehow immune to such reproach. Despite debate over vested interpretations of data from the ecological sciences and the extent to which this would strongly underwrite preservationism and other forms of environmentalist anxiety—particularly under the ‘petropolitical’ climate of recent decades—we must surely query the urgent *desire* to read in an ecological connection for the very fact that it is typically inspired by *anxieties*, anxieties that are fueled by ecological concerns over

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<sup>14</sup> See *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory and the Environment*. Ed. Steven Rosendale. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002).

subjective relations to eco-systemic wholeness and equilibrium as much as over traditional concerns with pollution and sustainability. Such examination must surely precede any immediately apparent ‘ecocentric’ impetus, or at the level of common-sense or *doxa*, and what is more, examine that desire *eco-clinically*.

This brings us once more to the psychic aspect of our ‘eco-clinic’. In psychoanalysis, the fundamental fantasy is the myth of egoic wholeness as opposed to subjective fracture, which at base, is the source of all human pathology and resistance. In the second half of his career, Lacan demonstrated how the affect of anxiety alerts the subject to his or her ‘Imaginary’ fragility by way of an irruption of the ‘Real’. Would such insight not lend itself in crucial ways to the examination of ecological motivations, particularly where the wide-scale and at times, *uncritical* adoption of a generalised ecologism exhibits at best a problematic core of conservatism or homeostatic thinking, at worst, a sort of re-sacralising and *theophanic* zeal? Would the type of reading of the American ‘apocalyptic imagination’ that we find in such studies as Mike Davis’ *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (1998) not benefit immensely from an analysis of the hypostatisation (or ‘reification’) of political interests from the vitalistic and pre-individual fluxes of desire?

Preeminently, Freud’s conception of psychoanalysis and of a ‘Copernican’ unconscious checked its clinical veracity against the horrors of the first World War, which is, of course, typically given as the first truly ‘modern’ conflict, not merely in its mobilisation of armoured tanks and poison gas, but rather for the profound and enduring impact that its horrors had upon the human relationship to self-annihilation, perhaps even to species-extinction. Moreover, the Great War brought home the *materiality* of those pathologies and unconscious forces that would impel such catastrophic and seemingly ‘total’ forms of destruction. More precisely still, to reckon with the magnitude of the conflict is to recognise the valetudinary spur that such events had upon clinical observation in the reconfiguration of the modern episteme more generally. Throughout *The Birth of The Clinic* (1963/1973), for example, Foucault shows the extent to which the ‘fundamental place of medicine in the over-all architecture of the human sciences’ is attributable to its being ‘closer than any of them

to the anthropological structure that sustains them all', and thus, that 'medical thought is fully engaged in the philosophical status of man'.<sup>15</sup>

We might suggest that it can therefore be no less engaged in the philosophical status of *nature*, for surely it is under the current ecological 'crises' of the present time—whether as objectively 'real' or ideologically imagined as these may transpire to be—that the threat of sickness and death, the pressure of accelerated finitude under the spectre of ecological 'catastrophe', bring with them corresponding modifications to our epistemological and ontological prospects. More significantly, the secular re-situation of the human species within a broader ecology demands an alertness to what we might call the 'post-social' moment, where conceptions of 'health' and a correct relationship to the non-human forces of the biome become paramount, and most especially in view of the profusion of all manner of industrial, semiotic and ideological pollutants.

Whilst it might remain altogether 'perverse' to open a study such as ours—concerned as it is with the literary apprehension of *nonhuman* environs—in direct consideration of the clinical and the consequence of the valitudenary, we might nevertheless take up this observation towards a call for the *necessity* of the clinical, and acknowledge not only how the medical paradigm has imparted a form of observational empiricism, a 'clinical gaze', directly inspired by experiences of finitude, of sickness and death, but that this gaze might be actively *affirmed* rather than resisted and disavowed. As Freudian psychoanalysis upholds, disavowal (*verleugnung*) is fundamental to the operation of perversion, involving the simultaneous recognition and denial of a particular phenomenon; in Lacanian clinical terms this would result from the denial of symbolic 'castration', or of the necessary recognition of absence or lack that marks entry into the Symbolic order (or Law), a recognition crucial to 'healthy' subject formation. Perversion occurs when denial of castration is 'acted out', having significant consequences for political demonstration. When we identify with thought we lose being, when we choose words we erase the things they represent.<sup>16</sup> As Žižek and Jameson have shown, such formal logic can be

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<sup>15</sup> Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan. (London: Routledge, 2003). p. 244-45.

<sup>16</sup> For Lacan, what we also lose through castration is our enjoyment (or *jouissance*), which is subject to a Symbolic prohibition, prohibited by the phallus. Paradoxically, of course, such enjoyment is constituted by such prohibition and does not precede it. This loss is perhaps more significant still for

applied to the complexes that sustain all manner of traditional political and social justice struggles.

And yet if in this way we might seem to suggest psychoanalysis as the quintessential ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ after Paul Ricoeur, then this is only half the story. Rather than effectively privilege epistemology *over* ethical concerns, a move no doubt hotly anticipated by the Green anti-theory lobby, we might instead actively acknowledge the *limits* of interpretation when working in the eco-literary aesthetic domain. Whilst Ricoeur’s existential phenomenology worked to describe the interpretive procedures of Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud in such a fashion, the term is more often employed today by cultural conservatives such as Harold Bloom to rebuke politicised forms of literary criticism. For our purposes, psychoanalysis might therefore be invoked as simultaneously a means of considering latent motives and unconscious processes in ecocritical endeavour and yet also as the avatar of an *anti-hermeneutic* methodology, identifying of, but content not to have the final word on, an ineliminable and fundamentally *uninterpretable* Real.

Necessarily then, an essential component of a metacritical purview that would work to demystify a particular cultural complex must be an adequate conceptualisation of human subjectivity under late capitalism. Entailing a concerted acknowledgement of unconscious processes as these relate not only to interpretation in the first instance, but to the elucidation of institutional practices as in their own way symptoms of a cultural unconscious, such an approach does not necessarily result in psychic determinism. Rather than encouraging a paranoid relation to cultural texts, fueling the assumption that to interpret is to critically eliminate opacity or uncertainty through analytical bowdlerisation, certain post-psychoanalytic modes of criticism can actively dispel such paranoia. In Laplanche and Deleuze, for example, we find approaches fundamentally accepting of resistances to meaning, fostering a view of cultural forms and complexes as much less puzzles to be decoded or obstacles to be overcome, than as representatives of an indomitable (perhaps ‘uncolonisable’) dimension of reality.<sup>17</sup>

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the metacritical reorientation of an ecopolitics, but we will address how this concept plays out differently in our selected thinkers a little later in the thesis.

<sup>17</sup> Sceptical about the viability of a ‘cultural unconscious’ for literary studies, Tim Dean suggests that ‘[d]iagnosing aesthetic artifacts as cultural symptoms tends to preempt the possibility of [...] ethical consideration’. Moreover, Dean contrasts the Žižekian approach with that of Laplanche, whose

As we shall see, in the work of Deleuze and Guattari a concern with pre-individual affect leads to a ‘schizoanalytic’ approach to life and literature that privileges a non-identitarian ‘delirium’, that not only ousts Oedipal interiority and the nuclear family as capitalist fabrications, but suggests them as precisely those forces that sustain un-ecological, or inhibited and exclusive relations; relations that deny desire (and we must at once say ‘Nature’) *qua* ‘difference in itself’. What this should do is show how despite the fact that a number of post-Lacanian theories have necessarily had *language* as their object—the social is bound by language and speech acts, ‘the unconscious is structured like a language’ etc.,—we might nevertheless begin to discern an ‘eco-discursive’ value in their logics, irrespective of their putatively ‘poststructural’ designation. In differentiating those poststructuralisms that would emphasise the Real over the Symbolic in this way, we at the very least lend eco-psychologists a vocabulary from within which to articulate what we might provisionally term an ‘eco-subjectivity’.

This thesis will therefore look not simply to Lacanian psychoanalysis as it stands discretely, but to a range of post-Althusserian Marxists who incorporate the lessons of Lacan in a more or less explicit manner, and in a concerted bid to redress theoretical inarticulation prior to reasserting precisely such a metacritical purview. Moreover, by drawing on such thinking we might assuage ecocritical reservations over the abandonment of political praxis by ‘high’ theorists; as Žižek and writers such as Jameson, Macherey, and Deleuze and Guattari have shown, both psychoanalysis and Marxism have been constituted by a distinct unity of theory and practice, sharing concerns with the historical and material accretion of the subject and the social.<sup>18</sup> What is more, both doctrines have been at pains to negotiate the discontinuities

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Lacanianism consists of a refutation of Ricoeur’s phenomenological reading of Freud and which is articulated about the notion of an ‘enigmatic signifier’ (or a signifier that does not form part of a signifying chain but instead causes something else to take its place), enabling Dean to suggest that ‘[t]he concept of the unconscious licenses interpretation as an interminable enterprise that permanently defers analysis of the disruptive impact aesthetic experience may have on us [...] but the enigmatic signifier holds the potential to halt interpretation and thus to reorient the focus of criticism.’ Dean, Tim. ‘Art as Symptom: Žižek and the Ethics of Psychoanalytic Criticism.’ *Diacritics*. 32.2: (Summer, 2002): 21–41. p. 39.

<sup>18</sup>As Steven Helming says of Jameson’s work ‘[it is] a criticism capable of achieving mediations between the social and the individual that could draw on psychoanalysis without reducing the social to the categories of individual psychology’. Not only is this spanning of individual and collective registers essential to the Marxo-Lacanian theories drawn upon by this thesis, but it keeps us from precisely the sort of anthropocentric solipsism that almost all ecocritics militate against. Helming, Steven. ‘Jameson’s Lacan’. *Postmodern Culture*. 7 (1). (September, 1996). p. 1.

between words and things, sharing complex relationships to literary expressivity—particularly to metonymy and figuricity—in the formation of their respective hermeneutics.

These are negotiations that necessarily confront any ecocritic, albeit on a battleground of another sort; the hypostatisation or reification of complex natural phenomena under the narcissistic processes of identitarianism and consumerism foreshorten and foreclose on life processes.<sup>19</sup> This thesis will therefore argue that to attempt to negotiate such discontinuities is to enjoin duties of a simultaneously economic and ‘clinical’ sort, and we will see more fully how this perception of simultaneity enables a thinker like Deleuze to discern in good Nietzschean fashion how high modernist authors such as Proust, Sacher-Masoch and Kafka serve as ‘clinicians of civilization’, palpating the social body and grouping symptoms as a physician would, leading him to elegantly assert: ‘[t]he world is the set of symptoms whose illness merges with man’.<sup>20</sup>

In short, Marxism and psychoanalysis have both been concerned with the representation of a material Real/reality that, if we can have even an idea of it, has already become a part of our representations, and thus the constitution of which is therefore as much a question of the operation of the psyche as of (eco)political economy.<sup>21</sup> As Žižek reminds us in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989), Lacan

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<sup>19</sup> In an essay written half a decade before his seminal *The Environmental Imagination* (1995), Buell promised to elucidate an ‘ideological grammar’ of American pastoral. Whilst drawing on an entirely untheoretical ‘diagnostic’ vocabulary, acknowledging the ‘pathological aspects’ of the male pastoral imagination as it pertains in particular to accounts of American frontier life and settler culture, Buell does not sufficiently extend the clinical trope, nor the clear implications of his work to the North American critical-institutional milieu or the economic base that would sustain it. When he makes an extremely strong point in suggesting how ‘to read Rachel Carson’s ‘elegiac, Thornton Wilder’sque’ opening to *Silent Spring* (1964), in which she describes ‘the death of a typical our town’ as ‘regressive fantasy’ would be ‘to read it the same way the [pesticide] industry’s defenders sought to make us read it’, he promises a level of *kultur kritik* that the remainder of his paper simply reneges on. See Buell, Lawrence. ‘American Pastoral Ideology Reappraised.’ *American Literary History*. Vol. 1. No. 1. (Spring, 1989): 1-29. p. 13, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Deleuze, *Essays*, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Whilst it is beyond the remit of this thesis to consider Lacan’s Marxism to any great extent, it will be useful to acknowledge certain formal symmetries between Marx and Lacan, and the extent to which Jameson, Žižek and Deleuze (with and without Guattari) present nuances and breaks with different periods of Lacan’s work.

claimed that Marx himself invented the symptom.<sup>22</sup> Both Lacan and Marx conceive of existing social economies or psychic systems as accommodating sites of disruption that are internal and even essential to the operations of the systems themselves. Both writers depart from classic Enlightenment views of consciousness as an autonomous vehicle, instead rendering it in terms of what Valente calls a ‘wholly reflexive, deeply heteronomous imposture’.<sup>23</sup> For Althusser, Marxism and psychoanalysis both address a particular structure of mis-recognition. For Marxism, this is the mis-recognition that individuals make history; for psychoanalysis, it is the subjects’ mis-recognition of themselves as centred autonomous egos.

As ecocritic Walter Clark has it, ‘[e]nvironmental literature is not a form that creates distance’.<sup>24</sup> If this is so, then the ‘necessary’ alienations that underpin subject formation in psychoanalysis, the vertiginous condition of Rimbaud’s ‘*je est un autre*’, and which Lacan terms *méconnaissance*, takes its place as a constitutive and pre-personal estrangement prior to those the subject undergoes during socio-political determination (as ‘black’, ‘gay’ or ‘straight’, even ‘Green’). Just as Freud’s dictum maintains that ‘the ego is not master in his own house’, the ecocritical pairing of *oikos* and *kritis*, and from which we obtain ‘house judge’, immediately suggests a wealth of under-acknowledged Oedipal relations that might haunt and constrain ecocritical epistemologies. Whether these are to be found in such *ecotheologies* as the ‘Gaia’ hypothesis and ‘mother earth/Shiva the destroyer’, or such ‘deep’ ecological notions of attachment to place and ‘reinhabitation’ as we find in Arne Naess, Gary Snyder or Kirkpatrick Sale, they surely warrant careful scrutiny.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> In fact, it was Lacan who suggested that it was not Freud but Marx who introduced the symptom into modern thinking ‘as a sign of what does not work in the real’ (Lacan, session of December 10th, 1974). See Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (London: Verso, 1989). p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Valente, Joe. ‘Lacan’s Marxism, Marxism’s Lacan (from Žižek to Althusser)’. *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*. Ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 153-172. p. 160.

<sup>24</sup> Clark, Walter. H. “What Teaching Environmental Literature Might Be.” *Teaching Environmental Literature: Materials, Methods, Resources*. Ed. Frederick O. Waage. (New York: MLA, 1985). 4-8. p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Looking as he does to the Greek etymology of the term ‘ecocritic’—to *oikos* and *kritis*—and which taken together yield ‘house judge’—William Howarth derives an obliging gloss on the term, suggesting a figure he characterises as a well-versed, ethological arbiter of the ‘world household’ and therefore as one ‘who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action’. Howarth’s definition is useful here insofar as it not only claims an unambiguously political valence for the movement, but a potentially Oedipal one, for problematically endowing the specialism

What this initial marshaling of theorists amounts to is an evaluation of a number of diverse ‘diagnostic’ approaches, with differing positions on psychoanalysis, clinical interpretation and perhaps most significantly, the structural logic of symptom formation. In one definition of the symptom, Žižek describes it as ‘the point of emergence of the truth about social relations’; in Deleuze, as we have noted somewhat fleetingly, a more Nietzschean evaluation of ‘active’ and ‘reactive’ forces begets a literary formalism in which ‘[t]he world is the set of symptoms whose illness merges with man’.<sup>26</sup> Whilst these images of what the symptom might amount to for (eco)cultural analysis supply a first look at a diagnostic approach to metacriticism, they are by no means the only definitions that we will consider and deploy in the following pages; in Lacan, from whom all of our symptomatologists take inspiration if not the underlying grammar for their technical vocabularies, the trope of the symptom underwent significant transformation during a dynamic and lengthy career, only amounting to a generalisable, sociocultural ‘concept’ (in the strong sense) in his late writings.<sup>27</sup>

Following Jacques-Alain Miller’s systematic periodisation of Lacanian thought, both Jameson and Žižek focus their attention most earnestly on this ‘late Lacan,’ wherein the concept of the Real (that which absolutely resists symbolisation or representation)—along with the notions of drive, *jouissance*, Thing, and *objet petit a* associated with it—is preeminent.<sup>28</sup> Yet Jameson’s equation of the Lacanian Real with

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with a degree of *prosopopoeia*: personifying and thereby giving voice to the otherwise ‘mute’ earth in the anthropocentric sphere. See Howarth, William. ‘Some Principles of Ecocriticism.’ *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996). 69-91. p. 163.

<sup>26</sup> Žižek, *Sublime*, p. 26; Deleuze, *Essays*, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> In Lacan’s own work, the symptôme/sinthome enjoys steady reformulation throughout the long years of seminars and critical practice. In his late reading of Joyce, given at Seminar XXIII in 1975, we see how Lacan interprets the author’s entire oeuvre as an extended symptom, a complex, literary abreaction effecting a specific organisation of *jouissance*, and so Joyce’s management of pleasure/pain via the (dis)satisfactions of language as this may have proven adequate or not to his individual pathology. For Lacan, *jouissance* neatly evokes the paradoxical satisfaction derived by the subject from his symptom. As in Deleuze’s post-Lacanian writing on literature—and which we will consider in chapter 3—we see how Joyce is less the neurotic patient, as the clinician of both himself and his cultural milieu in working on and through language as a poet-novelist. In his ‘pathology’, Joyce is a writer who cannot be objective about his experience of the complexities of Dublin and whose work therefore supplies a firm literary exemplar for the development of Lacan’s principal conceits.

<sup>28</sup> The period typically referred to as ‘late’ Lacan starts with Seminar XX. Following on from Lacan’s recognition of the irreducibility of the Real, the later teaching is characterised by a concern with the Real as immovable, insistent, but also intimately bound up with language in its entirety.

history, particularly in his *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981), lends diverse emphases to the historicising aspect of our project.<sup>29</sup> Wherever the historical accretion of the human subject and the social remains neglected by ecocritics, we forgo a truly materialist critique. In other words, what theories privileging of the Lacanian Real effect is to bring ecocriticism into contact with debates concerning the politicisation of that which is excluded for being beyond the reach of representation and which might thus present to the specialism an indispensable means of articulating relations with what I shall term ‘biotic alterity’.

Registering how these Lacanian notions emerge as sympathetic with the logic of Marxian ideology critique proves indispensable where a properly ‘ecoclinical’ position is our object. The ‘asymptotic’ theorising that we find in Lacan, Žižek and Deleuze offers a means of approaching a sense of the Real—of the nonhuman, the materiality of history, the unconscious or difference ‘in itself’—by way of the sort of non-representational ‘palpation’ we find in clinical diagnoses. New materialities, new groupings of symptoms might be drawn up as a fundamental component of a broader eco-clinical rubric. It may seem churlish to cite Marx and Engel’s famous declaration that ‘[t]he philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it’.<sup>30</sup> And yet it is surely a sentiment shared by many an ecocritic, psychoanalyst and Marxist alike, and one that it seems imperative to acknowledge the many homologies and antipathies between from the outset, particularly where we might encounter ideological resistances not only to Marxist paradigms, but equally to Lacanian ones, from ecocritics themselves.

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<sup>29</sup> Despite the works of such environmental historians as Leo Marx, John Opie and William Cronon, writers whose commitments to tracing the North American cultural past have yielded important insights on American settler culture and New World pastoral, particularly as these relate to modernity and urbanism for ecoliterary consideration, none of these writers have apprised the movement of a substantial link between human subjectivity and history, and thus its practices of historicisation remain bereft of studies that would analyse its maturation in terms of a ‘clinical’ epistemological unfolding. Uncognisant of the sort of symptomnal basis that might diagnose the singularly problematic relationship that ecocriticism evinces to institutional culture, ecocritics would remain deprived of substantial metacritical resources, and what after Deleuze amounts to the same thing, of conceptual adequation.

<sup>30</sup> Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. *The German Ideology*. (New York: International Publishers, 1981). p. 123.

## (ii) Case Studies

What remains now is to consider in detail how subsequent chapters will address key issues confronting the specialism. Accordingly, as we move to consider different aspects of the field and the extent to which our selected post-Althusserian theories might benefit or transform the material at hand, each chapter will initially make a case for the merits of a particular writer, opting more substantially for one over the other. These recommendations will be guided by a sense of the pertinence of that thinker to the particular level of debate, yet will not shirk from conceding their respective limitations. On the contrary, such ‘limits’ will themselves be treated symptomally, enabling us to explore how critical preferences are no less dependent upon the inertias, blockages and impasses of desire. Whilst we will initially consider the cultural level only, we will subsequently move to consider the psychic, before ultimately considering the interchange between these two levels. The unifying links will remain the relationship between desire and immanence, the impact of Althusser’s Spinozist influence upon contemporary theory and how these underpin and transform symptomal approaches to ecocriticism.

As such the first chapter will commence with an analysis of totality and immanence for ecocriticism, acknowledging those few attempts to account for eco-subjectivity and the ways in which these have failed to sufficiently address ideology or the need for a ‘metacritical’ approach, before moving to apprise our debate of the critical legacy of Spinozism, with a particular emphasis in the latter part of the chapter on its place in Althusser and Balibar’s ‘symptomnal reading’. This section of the thesis will not make close literary readings, nor consider in depth those made by individual ecocritics. Rather, literary ecocriticism *per se* will be reckoned with as a movement and in terms of its relationship to the North American cultural and political pluralism from which it emerged. This will include an acknowledgement of the exclusion of those critical theories considered as Marxist socialist, and thus, will examine how theories of immanence have remained under-regarded by ecocritics, largely to the detriment of a properly ‘metacritical’ ecocritique.

Like the first, the second chapter of the thesis will be given over to refining the theoretical basis by which the succeeding half of our project will proceed. We will

here investigate the relationship between ideology and aesthetics, noting in particular the role of ‘affect’ in rethinking the eco-literary relationship to the ‘violent signs’ of environmental catastrophe. We will do so initially by way of post-Kantian writings on the ‘sublime’, moving to a closer look at Žižek’s post-Althusserian Lacanianism and the manner by which his principal conceit, that the Kantian sublime can be read after Lacan’s reading of Freud’s ‘Thing’ (*Das Ding*), might be employed as a means to clinically evaluate eco-ideology. Opening with a reassertion of the Kantian subject enables us to reconsider the legacy of subjective interiority—particularly the ecocritical disavowal of such ‘human-all-too-human’ concerns as pleasure and displeasure (or *jouissance*)—by way of affects that are experienced in the sublime moment. Yet it is the *metacritical* implications of such a moment that might give us to reconsider ecocriticism *as discourse*. As such, recourse will be made to Žižek’s work insofar as it enables us to apprehend why ‘enjoyment is a political factor’. As the most sustained usage of sublime aesthetics for ecocriticism, Lee Rozelle’s *Ecosublime* (2006) will form the focus of analysis as we unpick the pros and cons of subjectivist *ideologie kritik* for the movement.

Transforming *ideologie kritik*, Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘schizoanalytic’ project enables us to propose a subsequent section on the relationship between literature and impersonal desire. Significantly, we will consider how schizoanalysis begets a ‘stratoanalysis’, a ‘geophilosophical’ orientation that incorporates all manner of non-human ‘becomings’ in its analysis of the organism, the individual and the State, and which thus has what we will term an ‘ecological pathos’ at its core. Although a French rather than an American author, Proust is afforded an honorary status in Deleuze’s Anglo-American literary canon; after the notion of assemblage, a term that bridged the schizoanalytic and stratoanalytic projects, we will consider how his literary-philosophical work remains of immense value for ecocriticism, chiefly insofar as Deleuze extracts an impersonal sense of ‘worldliness’ from *La recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927). Despite Proust’s emphasis upon the bourgeois society of France in the early twentieth-century, his symptomatology of different ‘worlds’ nevertheless enables us to consider the role of pre-personal affect as part of a ‘Deleuzian sublime’, one that in emphasising the notion of ‘sympathy’, advocates a stratoanalytic openness to that which ‘hurts us’.

The sympathy that Deleuze discerns in Proust will be crucial for the remainder of the thesis; by presenting a means of reckoning with the writer as an ‘eco-clinical thinker’, chiefly by way of an ‘a-signifying’ conception of signs, Deleuze opens up stratoanalysis as a resolutely non-subjectivist approach, focused upon what in his ‘geology of morals’ with Guattari he will name as three principal ‘strata’—the physico-chemical, the organic and the anthropomorphic. The manner by which Life (or desire) is ‘imprisoned’ by ‘organisms and genera’ reveals Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophy to owe as much to literary figures as to a Nietzschean-Spinozist subversion of Kantian synthetic philosophy. By extending their thesis on ‘desiring-production’, Deleuze and Guattari’s stratoanalysis enables us to retain a critique of Oedipal interiority, or of the familial values that sustain instrumental and consumerist attitudes, whilst suggesting ways in which literary form relates to a sense of ‘formless’ matter, to the non-human within man as much as that which lies outside him.

A stratoanalytic approach to eco-literary production therefore supplants Žižek’s Hegelian symptomatology by way of its principal conceit of the ‘Body without Organs’ (BwO) or ‘plane of consistency’, and which in effect, supplies us with a concept that by exceeding the Marxo-Lacanian symptom/sinthôme, enables us to move beyond a merely diagnostic approach towards one with ‘therapeutic’ implications. This movement away from a signifying symptomatology will in turn lead to consideration of the debt Deleuze and Guattari owe to Kafka’s literary pragmatics; between their schizoanalytic and stratoanalytic writings, Deleuze and Guattari published an important volume on Kafka, and in which they attended to the ‘collective assemblages of enunciation’ that are presupposed by any instance of language use, whether ‘nature-writing’ or otherwise. Extending their concerns with historically-contingent social machines in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise how Kafka’s ‘minoritarianism’ attests to a mode of creativity they describe in terms of a ‘becoming-animal’, a broadly utopian position on desire, language and society that crucially engineers a path beyond the Oedipal deadlock. By presenting this significant literary figure as at once a cultural diagnostician and agent of social transformation, Deleuze and Guattari suggest an approach to ‘eco-virtue’ after a specific conception of affective signs that are *constitutive* at the organismic as much as the perceptual level. A stratoanalysis of ‘regimes of signs’ will then enable us to reconceive of Thoreau’s eco-critical precedent, an historical figure whose work and

example has in many respects contributed towards today's eco-liberal perceptions of 'Wilderness.' Finally, this will enable us to acknowledge how 'eco-virtuous' responses to 'Climate Change' can be diagnosed in terms of the reactionary values at their core.

A key chapter on science will develop our concerns with desire in the previous sections towards consideration of why it is that ecocritics must develop 'ecological literacy', and chiefly by way of Glen A. Love's work in this connection. As has been noted in brief, Love remains outspoken against poststructural and postmodern forms of literary analysis whilst remaining committed to a biological foundationism and the informing of literary research with the expertise of the life sciences, particularly evolutionary biology. In incorporating Darwinian ideas into his thesis, Love supplies our project with an important case study that might be investigated alongside a Deleuzian thesis; not only do Deleuze and Guattari rigorously distinguish and define the powers particular to art, science and philosophy in *What is Philosophy?* (1991/1994), but they also celebrate and challenge the Darwinian evolutionary paradigm in significant ways. What this chapter will do is enable us to move towards an understanding of the intersection of literature and ecology, particularly as the global hegemony of the sciences might be seen to force a 'hermeneutic corridor' of interpretation. Love's reading of the high modernism of Willa Cather might then be re-examined after our Deleuzian position on percepts and affects, particularly insofar as Love attempts to draw together literary ideas concerning archetypes with the notion of biological universalism in the work of controversial biologist E. O. Wilson.

In a final chapter on picaresque writing and humour, we will consider whether or not the putative 'innocence' of first-wave ecocriticism was not perhaps a direct and concerted response to the vicissitudes of postmodern cynicism. If today we know that we are receiving an ideologically distorted version of reality, then it might be suggested that the ecocritical strategy sets itself against the non-rejecting compliances of the cynical subject. Might ecoliterary research intervene in this process, and most particularly where a humorous lens emerges as tenable? Deleuze and Guattari's remarks on humour present a means of rethinking the Galenic notion that 'melancholy is the humor closest to the earth', and as such, presents a number of lines with which we might reconceive of picaresque literature for so apparently solemn a state of affairs

as ecological catastrophe. The seriousness of certain, adversarial modes of ecocriticism remains problematic where given as a response to or quarrel with the underlying ideologies of the mode of production; contestation and embattlement presuppose a certain seriousness, the seriousness that effects the very dialectic of any conflict if it is to be seen as at all worthy or valuable. Deleuze's work should aid us in this connection, identifying and calling for a 'superior irony' commensurate with the immanent ethical extensions of his 'superior empiricism.'

Joseph H. Meeker's work on picaresque literature and a 'play ethic' remains the only significant touchstone for this aspect of the field, and therefore the chapter will evaluate his work by way of Deleuze and Guattari, drawing in the process from Edward Abbey's picaresque account of eco-sabotage in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), a text renowned for having inaugurated the American *Earth First!* movement, and which portrays an eleventh-hour assault upon the aggressive development of the Utah and Nevada canyon lands and mesas.

All of which will enable us to draw to a conclusion, in which we will evaluate the continuing possibility of an eco-clinical approach to literature.

# **1: Symptomatic Reading**

## (i) Prehistory

Our first chapter opens with two, broadly ‘historicising’ questions, both of which will inform our general assertion that ecocriticism requires a *metacritical* engagement with its own prehistory. Our first question will again be one familiar from our introduction: namely, what might keep ecocritics from a Marxo-Lacanian approach to literature? Fundamental to our thesis, this broadly *ideological* question, one concerned with the relationship between desire and its capture, between symptom and cause, will be supplemented by a more properly *philosophical* one regarding concepts. This will take the form of a post-structural enquiry into ecocritical motivations of ‘immanence’, which tend to remain focused, often *uncritically*, upon ‘Nature’ as global whole (or ‘Totality’) rather than upon the historical, political and economic senses of the term. This deliberately *theoretical* enquiry will aid us in an eco-clinical diagnosis of the movement’s ‘problematic field’, the specific ‘horizon’ of sense, or cultural and political ‘unconscious’ to which it remains immanent.

Such questions will serve our ‘immanent critique’ of the movement, or one that would reckon with its constitution under determinate historical and political conditions. This is because an immanent critique, or a form of criticism that acknowledges the genesis of its object, necessarily turns upon an apprehension of the conditional *limits* of a given system, milieu or environment, and moreover, upon how such limits nevertheless remain *productive*. As our opening remarks suggested, because the aim of our study is to assert theories of desire for ecocriticism, it will be key to recognise how certain limits, blockages and absences—whether biological, cultural/political or conceptual—might be acknowledged as ‘symptoms’, yet beyond any Hegelian-Marxist basis in a logic of contradiction.<sup>1</sup> As such, our provisional line of questioning will draw us towards a first example of ‘symptomnal reading’, one that ascertains critical standards and criteria from *within* the cultural ‘pathology’ in

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<sup>1</sup> As our introduction made clear, this thesis will motivate three post-Lacanian symptomatologies in a bid to evaluate their respective bearing upon our assembly of an ‘eco-clinic’. Althusser and Balibar’s emphasis on ‘catachresis’ supplies us with a first look at the symptom; Žižek’s Lacanian emphasis upon the Real/Symbolic relation will supply a second; and Deleuze’s Nietzschean conception of forces and flows, of the impasses or ‘blockages’ that beset Life, will supply a third. These will lead us in the latter half of the thesis to posit the necessity of schizoanalysis as a post-symptomatological, ‘therapeutic’ approach.

question, yet which follows Althusser's assertion that it is in the appendix to part I of Spinoza's *Ethics* that we might find 'the matrix of every possible theory of ideology.'<sup>2</sup> It is therefore on the basis of Althusser's recognition in Spinoza of a theory of Man as a desiring-thinking 'mode' *within* nature that we will consider the emergence of ecocriticism under the North American cultural and political pluralism of the 1980s. When in the third and fourth sections of this chapter we explore this analysis in full, we will pay particular attention to the climate of 'general persuasivity' that characterised the era, suggesting how this might be diagnosed after Althusser and Balibar's thesis in *Reading Capital* (1968/1970), a text that draws on Spinoza to reconfigure our understanding of writing, ideology and history.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst *Reading Capital* was the result of a Freudo-Lacanian analysis of Marx's writing prior to 1845, one that discerned how the philosopher's 'mature' critical project was somehow latent in the form of his earlier, 'immature' (or 'ideologically'-biased) writings, the distinction drawn in that study between a 'theoretically-immature' and 'mature' criticism—or in Althusserian terms, the 'epistemological break' between a humanistic, ideological naiveté and a properly 'theoretical' and anti-humanist 'science'—is one that is suggestive indeed for our own attempt at immanent critique, promising as it does a range of 'symptomnal' implications for the historicisation of first-wave ecocriticism. Whilst Althusser famously claimed that 'Marxism was not an historicism', what he ultimately hoped to show was that the Marxist humanisms of Lukács or Sartre, for example, did not sufficiently overcome the difficulties of obtaining a non-ideological, or 'scientific' theory of history, nor a properly *conceptual* form of materialist critique that had incorporated the lessons of structuralism.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Althusser, Louis. 'The Only Materialist Tradition, Part I: Spinoza.' Trans. T. Stolze. *The New Spinoza*. Ed Warren Montag and Ted Stolze (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997): 3-20.

<sup>3</sup> Although she does not consider ecocriticism in her work, we will follow Ellen Rooney's adaptation of Althusser and Balibar's thesis. Along with her notion of 'general persuasion', this adaptation proves key to exploring an ecocritical prehistory as part of a broader, eco-clinical analysis. See Rooney, Ellen. *Seductive Reasoning: Pluralism as the Problematic of Contemporary Literary Theory*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989). pgs. 26-7.

<sup>4</sup> As Althusser makes plain: 'I should like to suggest that, from the theoretical stand-point, Marxism is no more a historicism than it is a humanism; that in many respects both historicism and humanism depend on the same ideological problematic; and that, theoretically speaking, Marxism is, in a single movement and by virtue of the unique epistemological rupture which established it, an anti-humanism and an anti-historicism.' See Althusser, Louis and Étienne Balibar. *Reading Capital*. Trans. Ben Brewster. (London: Verso, 1979). p. 119.

We might, therefore, explore the notion of ‘historicism’ strategically, so as to get at the very *challenge* of history for ecocriticism, a literary specialism that would by definition seek to demote humanist social justice concerns. We will follow Althusser’s ‘structural’ reading of Marx in this way, acknowledging the Spinozism that he draws upon to renounce Hegelian dialectics, and principally as this leads him to develop his a-subjective, non-teleological notion of ‘structural causality’, or vision of history as ‘process without subject or goal(s).’<sup>5</sup> Not only does Hegelian Idealism privilege human Reason, but ultimately retains teleological positions on contradiction, history and totality. As we proceed we will acknowledge how for Althusser structure is the ‘unconscious’ of social relations—whether our concerns be ‘environmental’ or otherwise—whilst considering how this ‘relational’ unconscious might be conceived of *without* negativity, without the reductivity that Hegel imparted so influentially in the *Philosophy of History* (1837), in which the World Spirit, with its anthropological ‘destiny of reason’, permeated whole civilisations.<sup>6</sup>

This will supply us with a means of approaching the paradoxical tendency amongst ecocritics to retain humanist sensibilities, a *symptomatic* tendency that, despite their ostensibly ‘anti’ or ‘post’ humanist ethos, appears to persist throughout their thinking.<sup>7</sup> As counter-intuitive as it might first appear, our Althusserian symptomatology is here precisely that which would diagnose this tendency. If Marx’s pre-1845 writings were too humanistic for Althusser, then his post-1845 writings were sufficiently ‘scientific’, which is to say that by virtue of their conceptual maturity they no longer amounted to an historicism, amounting instead to a fully-fledged ‘Historical Materialism’. That an avowedly ‘non-theoretical’ movement like ecocriticism might, in its own preliminary writings, have similarly gestured towards a theoretical maturity ‘to come’, to the sort of immanent cultural criticism that their (Althusser-inspired)

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<sup>5</sup> Althusser, Louis. *Essays in Self-Criticism*. Trans. Grahame Lock. (London: New Left Books, 1976). pgs. 96-99.

<sup>6</sup> Later in the chapter we will consider how this constitutes Althusser’s basic challenge to Hegelian ‘expressive causality’, in which Hegel posited totality as an essence that is ‘expressed’ at every level of society. Towards the chapter’s end will see how this relates to our ecocritical concerns with Althusser’s notion of ‘relative autonomy.’ See Poster, Mark. ‘Althusser on History without Man.’ *Political Theory*. Vol. 2, No. 4 (Nov., 1974): 393-409. p. 400.

<sup>7</sup> As Poster puts it: ‘Against the denigration of unconscious structure by humanists, who viewed it as mere mechanism, the structuralist revealed its opaqueness to the social subject and lucidly exposed the degree to which it was impossible for the subject to transform the structure. Subject and structure were systematically and radically out of phase.’ See Poster, *Althusser*, p. 397.

post-structuralist rivals were suggesting, enables us to draw a parallel between the example of the young, Hegelian Marx and that of such first-wave ecocritics as Lawrence Buell and Glen A. Love, both of whom we have acknowledged as ‘anti-theoretical’ exemplars principal to the movement’s formation.

For all its apparent lop-sidedness, this parallel, between Marx as the great political economist whose influence remains irrefutable and a handful of lesser-known career-academics working in a somewhat marginal literary discipline, nevertheless remains key, particularly when we seek to account for the ecocritical rejection of theory as part of its broader, institutional ‘problematic.’ Like most (post) structuralists, for Althusser, the problematic is the immanent, yet unconscious field of relations that circumscribes any instance of cultural production.<sup>8</sup> In the case of ecocritical approaches to literature, we can follow Althusser in ‘bringing to consciousness’ the ‘pre-conceptual’ genera and mystifications that populate the problematic field of a movement that has emerged within a specific, North American institutional context. Just as such pre-medical concepts as the Galenic ‘humors’ were supplanted by the development of medical science, the ‘epistemological break’ that might be said to be pending for ecocriticism is one in which this transition from certain, culturally-biased and ‘inadequate’ ideas about eco-literary relations—about how its practices might remedy ‘non-ecological’ attitudes and habits—develops into a properly ‘scientific’ (*qua* theoretical) and ‘adequate’ ‘eco-theory’, sufficiently aware of its own ideological biases.

The parallels between this ‘coming to consciousness’ and the Freudian process of transference should already be clear. Just as Marx’s work prior to 1845 was not yet ‘Marxian’ for being (pre) conceptually-dependent upon the philosophical anthropologies of Hegel and Feuerbach, we might endeavour to show how ecocriticism similarly remains too humanistic, too empirical in this Althusserian sense of unconsciously adhering to a subject-centered objectivity, to a pre-conceptual *weltanschauung* of genera and mystifications.<sup>9</sup> Where Althusser’s Spinozan-Marxism is informed by his readings of Freud and Lacan, we find an ‘anti-humanism’ that

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<sup>8</sup> Althusser follows Jacques Martin in defining the problematic as both ‘the particular unity of a theoretical formation’ and a ‘determinate unitary structure.’ See Althusser, Louis. *For Marx*. Trans. Ben Brewster. (London: Penguin Books, 1969). pgs. 32, 67.

<sup>9</sup> Not only did Althusser reject Marx’s Hegelianism, but also his early recourse to Feuerbach’s humanist anthropology.

dissolves the humanist subject. By frequently insisting upon an ‘empirical’ attention to environmental life, such ecocritics as Lawrence Buell and Glen Love appear to have uncritically endorsed a quasi-positivist and foundationalist ‘empiricist psychology’; in their bid for a less-anthropocentric literary theory, they have neglected the challenge posed to empiricism by structuralist positions on impersonal structure, challenges that comprehensively dethrone egoic ‘experience’, thus leading them to risk the unconscious *reproduction* of precisely the conventional humanist values they would otherwise hope to denigrate.<sup>10</sup> We will therefore show why ecocriticism should be treated as an institutional case study, not merely because its ‘immature’ first-wave was methodologically constrained by unacknowledged ideological-biases, but because its putatively more ‘mature’ second-wave might remain equally beset by humanist inhibitions that would, if not subjected to a sufficiently thoroughgoing meta-critique, be revealed as no less symptomatic of an all-too-pluralist (or all-too-*liberal*) bid to retain a ‘non-theoretical’ neutrality or ‘innocence’.

Later in the chapter we will suggest that this proclivity for theoretical innocence was tied to a paradoxically *exclusionary* pluralism, to a cultural and political orientation that enabled it to demote social justice concerns in favour of ‘environmental’ issues. We will show that where this ‘ideology of the text’ remains unrecognised, it would sustain ecocriticism as little more than a compromise-formation, as a ‘pale green’ shadow of what it might otherwise amount to, particularly where any commitment to a less forgiving, nationally-critical, or truly ‘revolutionary’ mode of analysis would call upon it to risk its liberal subjectivity.<sup>11</sup> It is, therefore, a parallel that informs our broader call for the movement to attend to its abiding concerns with ‘nature-writing’, ‘wilderness narratives’ and ‘toxicity discourses’ only *after* it has attended to the consequences of its own prehistory, to precisely the

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<sup>10</sup> As Berman explains, this neglect remains historically vested, remaining tied to the conflict between the inheritance of ‘empiricist psychology’ in Anglo-American literary criticism, particularly the New Criticism. See Berman, Art. *From the New Criticism to Deconstruction: The Reception of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism*. (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1988).

<sup>11</sup> Writing in 1981, Jameson discusses which ‘ideology of the text’ will become dominant in the context of ‘American cultural and ideological life’ in the next twenty years. This is, as Gregg Lambert has indicated, an essential consideration where Althusser’s characterisation of the modern university is one concerned with the ‘reproduction’ of knowledge, or as an ‘ISA’ (Ideological State Apparatus) within capitalist societies. See Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. (London: Routledge (Classics Edition), 2002). p. 222; Also, Lambert, Gregg. *Who’s Afraid of Deleuze and Guattari?* London: Continuum, 2006. p. 17.

ideological biases of the social and political milieu out of which it first emerged. To consider that which has been neglected or ‘disavowed’ by the movement in our first chapter will stand us in good stead when in chapter two we move to consider the methodological developments of certain second-wave writers.

We can begin to account for this disavowal by posing the first of our three principal questions: namely, what might keep ecocritics from a Marxo-Lacanian approach to literature? If our concerns are with extracting an ecocritical prehistory, a term borrowed strategically from the practice of clinical psychoanalysis, yet which is deployed here beyond any orthodox psychoanalytic concern with the personological register, then we must consider why eco-literary approaches to ‘eco-psychology’ remain separated somehow from the type of deeper-reaching, historical and cultural analysis that Marxo-Lacanian thinking offers. As Althusser does in his notion of the problematic, our clinical definition of prehistory invokes Freud, specifically, his infamous case study of the ‘Wolf Man’.<sup>12</sup> The failure of ecocritics to grasp what the ‘theoretical practice’ they have constitutively disavowed actually amounts to proves decisive for our ‘eco-clinic’, especially if we consider how their rejection of theory ultimately *remains theoretical*.<sup>13</sup>

With this in mind, let us now pursue this first question as far as we able prior to posing an allied one, or one regarding the relationship between immanent critique, history and notions of totality. This will initially entail noting how prior ecocritical studies that have promised an ‘eco-clinical’ approach have neglected to forge a connection between their object and ideology critique, or more precisely, between the *mode of production* of late capitalism and the very *desire* to read ecocritically. What we tend to find in such studies is the suggestion of an ‘eco-clinical’ project in only the most superficial of senses, with little more than an emphasis upon the private experiments of individual writers—such as Thoreau, Dillard or Abbey—and how they have individually struggled with eco-mimetic and eco-phenomenological approaches, with cloistered experiments in literary endeavour and ‘ecological attunement’, rather

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<sup>12</sup> Freud’s psychoanalytic notion of ‘prehistory’ and the allied one of *Nachträglichkeit*, or ‘after-effect’, describe the manner in which symptoms might be conceived of as trans-historical ‘traumata’, as the ‘untimely’ echoes or after-effects of an intensely felt primordial trauma, or what in his paradigmatic study of the ‘Wolf Man’ in *From the History of An Infantile Neurosis* (1918), Freud would term the ‘primal scene.’ See Freud, Sigmund. *The Freud Reader*. Ed. Peter Gay. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989). pgs. 400-426.

<sup>13</sup> As Jameson reminds us, ‘the repudiation of theory is itself a theory’. See Jameson, *Ideologies*, p. 456.

than with insights of any broader, materialist value. In other words, we tend to find little or no *metacritical* bearing upon the libidinal and political economies that have sustained such production.

In *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing* (1992), for example, a text noteworthy for its original valencing of canonic American writers and thus, to the broader establishment of the ecocritical turn, Scott Slovic devotes his opening chapter to ‘Approaches to the Psychology of Nature Writing.’ In that chapter he identifies Annie Dillard, Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry, and Barry Lopez as ‘students of the human mind’, and ‘literary psychologists’ whose chief occupation ‘is with the psychological phenomenon of ‘awareness’.’<sup>14</sup> Yet no sustained engagement with psychoanalytic theory since Freud is forthcoming. Whilst encouraging us, for example, to set down the canonic *Walden* (1854) and take up Thoreau’s much less widely known *Journals*—an immense, unexpurgated and thus, far less contrived resource that, Slovic argues, might be reconceived of as ‘a forum for testing perspective’ and ‘a testing ground of consciousness’ that presents to us in unattenuated form Thoreau’s ‘principal habit of mind’—the greater promise of Slovic’s conceit goes undeveloped, forestalled somehow by a lack of precisely the type of clinical insight recommended above.<sup>15</sup> In making occasional reference to American psychologist and vitalist philosopher William James (1842-1910), and at times to Emersonian ‘correspondence’ theory, Slovic, like those few ecocritics who have followed him, refrains from bringing to Thoreau’s epistemology a strong, *materialist* assessment that might fully diagnose his ‘spirit of commitment to environmental praxis.’<sup>16</sup> By drawing on the little-known psychology of James, and in so thin a fashion, we find very few moments in which his discussion reaches anything like the psycho-political ferment of Freudian stripes of Marxist critique or of those post-Althusserians working to politicise the Lacanian Real. At the very least, a literary critic like Jameson or Macherey would have granted Slovic the immanent reflexivity that his work so evidently lacks.

Prior to exploring such a reading, however, we might consider another more recent example, or Theodore Roszak’s *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of*

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<sup>14</sup> Slovic, Scott. *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing*. (Utah: University of Utah Press, 1992). p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Slovic, *Seeking*, p. 49-50; 21-22.

<sup>16</sup> Buell, *Environmental*, p. 430.

*Ecopsychology* (2001), which makes frequent reference to Dickens, Blake and Shelley, and towards what again amounts to a largely lacklustre, if not decidedly *vulgar* elaboration of a sort of ‘pop-ecopsychology.’ Indeed, the disparity that Roszak’s work proves most symptomatic of, or that between a hazy, non-psychoanalytic notion of ‘psychology’ that persists amongst theory-wary ecocritics, and such thoroughgoing ‘materialist psychiatry’ as Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘schizoanalysis’, will give us to ask, as they have done, if there can be any psychology but that of the priest?<sup>17</sup> As ‘anti-theological’ as this assertion might outwardly appear, it is one that would not only enable us to address the ideological function of belief since modernity, to clinically inspect the myth of ‘secularity’ under capitalist society, but to redress the lingering transference of ‘spiritual and even transcendental qualities onto the secularized text.’<sup>18</sup> As Žižek asserts after Marx’s classic indictment of religion, ecology is in many respects ‘the new opium for the masses,’ replacing the comforting totalisations of religion in the putatively scientific and secular West.<sup>19</sup> This is a sentiment that will have a number of consequences for our concerns with the ‘pieties’ of eco-virtue in chapter three, when we consider the extent to which eco-literary aesthetics are tied up with a ‘paranoid’, Oedipal form that affords desire its contents.

Yet for now, let us continue to build towards such analysis by acknowledging the shortcomings of one final example, Rinda West’s *Out of the Shadow: Ecopsychology, Story, and Encounters with the Land* (2007). Despite, on the surface of things, offering an equally unremarkable (not to mention, markedly *unfashionable*) range of narrative engagements with Jungian models, West’s text promises something more in her notion that the ‘nature’ of the unconscious might be ‘recovered’ through a literary meditation upon the ‘shadow’ aspect of the individual psyche. This is especially promising where she presents the notion of ‘re-storying’, or the eco-valent re-imagining of old stories as a form of therapy, as an eco-political form of

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<sup>17</sup> On the notion of a ‘materialist psychiatry’ see Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. (London: Continuum, 2004), pgs. 5, 24, 38, 129. On the psychology of the ‘priest’, see p. 122.

<sup>18</sup> Lambert acknowledges how this theological sensibility remains the legacy of ‘the application of principles of interpretation and definitions of the elements of the textual work that were first developed by the Christian Fathers such as Augustine and Aquinas.’ Accordingly, much post-structural criticism (Barthes, Foucault) was concerned with wresting the notion of the author from such theological determinations. See Lambert, Gregg, *Afraid*, pgs. 18-22.

<sup>19</sup> See Žižek’s lecture ‘Ecology: A New Opium For The Masses,’ given at the Jack Tilton Gallery, New York on November 26th 2007. <http://www.lacan.com/zizekecologyvideo.html> [Accessed 19/09/09].

détournement. Moreover, by bringing Aldo Leopold's 'land ethic' into contact with Jungian notions of 'individuation' and maturity, West almost delivers a psycho-cultural meditation upon colonialism and capitalism. Nevertheless, West reneges on such promise by failing to pursue this insight as fully as she might; not only does she insufficiently challenge 'Nature' as a concept, but her eco-political argument proves unsatisfying indeed when her thesis fails to engage in any strong analysis of the liberal-humanist basis of 'sustainability', or the manner in which a psychoanalytic approach to literature might provide a basis for immanent cultural critique.<sup>20</sup>

It proves telling, then, that it has only really been within the domain of 'ecofeminist' research that we have seen anything like the sustainment of simultaneously clinical *and* material approaches to ecocriticism, and which moreover, might sufficiently question the very *desire* to read ecologically.<sup>21</sup> Concerned with the relationship between androcentrism and 'productivity', ecofeminists have most convincingly explored the link between cultural history, economics and subjectivity, usefully acknowledging the extent to which their sub-specialism would necessarily negotiate the tensions of patriarchal instrumentalism. In the process they have acknowledged the degree to which such major North American poets as Sylvia Plath might present singular case studies in this regard.<sup>22</sup> And yet few such studies have developed their premises towards critiques of those instances of *internal* androcentrism that may have befallen the movement, nor in a way that would foreshadow or benefit the metacritical aims of the present study.<sup>23</sup> Since Hilary Klein's 'Marxism, Psychoanalysis, and Mother Nature', which first appeared in the Summer 1989 issue of the journal *Feminist Studies*, only a handful have deployed post-Lacanian paradigms, or a synthesis of such with Marxian theories, and none that

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<sup>20</sup> An infinitely more *politically*-minded text would be Adrian Parr's relatively recent study. Although not written with literary concerns in mind, Parr considers directly how notions of sustainability serve to streamline rather than challenge the capitalist imperative. See Parr, Adrian, *Hijacking Sustainability*. (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> The term 'ecofeminism' tends to be attributed to *Le Féminisme ou la mort* (1974) by French feminist and science fiction writer Françoise d'Eubonne, a work that envisioned a future in which feminist attitudes prevailed, saving the biome from ecological disaster.

<sup>22</sup> See in particular, Brain, Tracey. 'Or shall I bring you the sound of poisons?' *Silent Spring* and Sylvia Plath.' *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*. Eds. Kerridge, Richard and Neil Sammels. (London: Zed Books, 1998). pgs. 146-164.

<sup>23</sup> For an example of the type of ecofeminism that not only neglects poststructural psychoanalysis, but French feminist thought altogether, see Karen J. Warren. *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

have appeared to address what we might describe as the movement's own status as a symptom of a geopolitical unconscious.<sup>24</sup>

It is here, however, with the very basis of ecofeminism in what Jameson has referred to as 'alliance politics', an ideological formation pertaining specifically to the North American context of the 1970s and 80s, that we might reckon with a materialist understanding of ecocriticism after the philosophical legacy of totality, particularly where notions of political unification and agency remain pressing for ecocriticism. As we will shortly consider, Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* (1981) supplies an essential historical document for any assessment of the North American intellectual context of the latter part of the cold war era. Not only does Jameson present a challenge to Althusser's 'structural causality' in that study, one based principally upon a sense that the cultural and political differences between the French and North American milieus called for very different approaches to political theorising, but by doing so he enables us to better explore the relationship between totality and literary interpretation for ecocriticism. Given the theoretical bias in the latter portion of this thesis, it will be essential to note how Jameson finds a certain apotheosis in Deleuze and Guattari's work; the sort of experimental, decentralizing (*qua* 'molecularising') politics that would stem from Althusserianism would seek to dissolve totality in a detrimental way, amounting to a species of 'autogestion', to an explosive theory-politics that was altogether unnecessary for the 'already molecular' North American scene.<sup>25</sup> As Jameson says: 'The privileged form in which the American Left can develop today must therefore necessarily be that of an *alliance politics*; and such a politics is the strict practical equivalent of the concept of totalization on a theoretical level.'<sup>26</sup>

Before we can answer our first question, therefore—or what has kept ecocritics from Marxo-Lacanian theory—it appears that our second question proves necessary, regarding as it does, notions of totality under a specific cultural and political climate for first-wave ecocritical practice. In other words, we can supplement our enquiry by

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<sup>24</sup> See Klein, Hilary Manette. 'Marxism, Psychoanalysis, and Mother Nature.' *Feminist Studies*. 15.2 (Summer 1989): pgs. 255-278; also, Mellor, Mary. *Breaking the Boundaries: Towards a Feminist Green Socialism*. (London: Virago, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> Jameson denigrates autogestion in *The Political Unconscious* (1981), but for a thorough discussion of the term see Rochard, Michel, particularly as quoted in Bernard E. Brown. *Socialism of a Different Kind: Reshaping the Left in France*. (London: Greenwood Press, 1982). p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Jameson, *Political*, p. 54 n 31.

asking why it is that we tend to find that ‘eco-psychological’ approaches to literature began with a disregard for immanent critique of the historical, institutional and disciplinary milieu within which ecocriticism—itsself a decidedly *liberal* form of ‘eco-subjectivity’—first emerged. Put more philosophically, we might concern ourselves with why ‘ecological’ motivations of immanence tend to remain focused upon Nature as global ‘totality’ rather than upon the historical, economic and linguistic (or ‘regional’) senses of the term. The points that Lambert raises in his analysis of Jameson’s ‘cultural war’ with postmodernism, and which stems from his ‘strategy of containment’, or bid to ‘corral’ and ‘inoculate’ the threat posed by the French post-structuralists to the American Left, prove deeply pertinent in this regard.<sup>27</sup>

Prior to asserting a certain ‘identity’ of the critical and the clinical in chapter three, we can begin to explore this complex of issues by emphasising how, outwardly, any prehistory of the sort we are concerned with seems to turn directly upon such disregard of totality *qua* disavowal. Where perceptions of individual, national or ‘ecological’ totality are concerned, perceptions of what it is to be a discrete subject, to live and work within a particular national context, or to be aware of how these more ‘regional’ totalities relate to the greater, ‘global’ totality of the ‘biosphere’—particularly where the totality of language itself is determining—prove crucial to a prehistory of a movement that would ostensibly receive literature ‘ecocritically’. But it is where Jameson would argue for the relative *necessity* of totalisation within the North American context that proves singularly important for our concerns with the covert humanism that would keep ecocriticism from its more radical, ‘anti’ or ‘post’-human potential. If ecocritical practices of reading and writing might be addressed after critical theories informed by the lessons of Althusser, or those that would investigate the ideological nature of totalities and part-to-whole relations—investigations that embrace Spinozan causality as much as Lacan’s post-Saussurean motivation of structural linguistics—then some account of the problems posed to agency by the anti-humanism unleashed by his ‘scientific’ Marxism seems necessary.

Shortly, therefore, we will see how it is Spinoza who provides Althusser with much of his philosophical and political grounding; whilst this will enable us to forge a link between ecological issues, the libidinal concerns of psychoanalysis and the

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<sup>27</sup> Lambert, *Afraid*, pgs. 17 and 33.

political-economic concerns of our selected Marxisms—namely those of Jameson, Žižek and Deleuze-Guattari—it is one that will require us to sustain this sense of ‘regional’ differences in perceptions of totality. In fact, it will be key to see how Althusser’s Spinozan epistemology gives him to employ the psychoanalysis of Lacan in a very particular fashion, chiefly as an authority upon the primary totality of the subject. Although Saussure’s structuralism was key to Lacan’s thesis on subjectivity, when Althusser draws, for example, upon the Freudian concept of overdetermination, he nevertheless reads it with a Spinozan emphasis; if for Freud overdetermination suggests that ‘a neurotic symptom cannot be traced back to a single or original trauma but is compounded by many levels and stages of psychic development’, then this can be read after Spinoza’s non-Idealist position on causality, or one in which ‘the structure is nothing outside of its effects’, suggesting that human phenomena are never unequivocal and ‘that they are always laden with multiple meanings.’<sup>28</sup>

This largely psychoanalytic position on causality, determination and meaning enables us to reckon with how ecocritical approaches to literature retain unique relationships to *interpretation*; if Nature as totality proves no less symptomatic of certain cultural notions of ‘alienation’, ones born of specific historical conditions and which are beholden to specific psycho-cultural forms of individuality and interiority, then the social role of the ecocritic proves decisive. Like the Oedipal social organisation we will discuss in chapters two and three, their persistence remains essential to any ‘eco-clinical’ understanding of desire, literature and the environment, particularly where interpretation would remain both a literary *and* a political concern. For all its apparent ‘obviousness’, however, few ecocritics have worked to account for the ecological significance of totality in this connection. The clear exception would be Timothy Morton, however, who has given rare voice to this eminently *ideological* concern, alluding to the curious inability of the environmentally-minded to think totality of an economic or historical sort, particularly as this might relate to our *valuations* of one much bigger, more inclusive, and ultimately, more-than-human:

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<sup>28</sup> Although he attributes it to Marx, the following formulation is truly Althusser’s own: ‘the effects are not outside the structure, are not a pre-existing object, element or space in which the structure arrives to *imprint its mark*: on the contrary... *the whole existence of the structure consists of its effects*, in short... the structure is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements, is nothing outside its effects.’ See Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 189; Also see Poster, *Althusser*, p. 401.

... any thinking that avoids “totality” is part of the problem. So we have to face it. Something about modern life has prevented us from thinking “totality” as big as we could. Now we can’t help but think it. Totality looms like a giant skyscraper shadow into the flimsiest thought about, say, today’s weather. We may need to think bigger than totality itself, if totality means something closed, something we can be sure of, something that remains the same.<sup>29</sup>

As we have already begun to suggest, what this call to think totality amounts to is significant for any discussion of interpretation; prior to conceiving of how Lacan’s post-structuralism enables us to address the relationship between individual and political totalities in chapter two, we can nevertheless begin to acknowledge how from a broadly ‘eco-political’ perspective there must be a dual acknowledgement: Firstly, that whilst there is indeed a totality larger than those of historical or economic discourses in the non-human biosphere, that secondly, there is nevertheless an inherent risk that in acknowledging a larger totality—something open, something including those non-human forces as chaotic yet as ‘everyday’ as the weather, and thus something we cannot entirely be sure of—we displace adequate discussion of key historical-economic forces. Not only do we lose sight of the *immanent* conditions that have enabled the instrumentalist attitudes and desires that have wrought biospheric degradation, but we equally constrain our critical and clinical approaches to them. Later in the chapter we will show how Althusser and Balibar enable us to diagnose the historical emergence of ecocriticism in a number of ways, but chiefly on the grounds that anti-Stalinist, ecocritical pluralists in the North American milieu of the 1980s rejected a specifically *political* notion of totality, whilst tending to replace it with the no-less ‘political’, no-less culturally-biased, totality of ‘Nature.’<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Morton, Timothy. *The Ecological Thought*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). pgs. 4-5.

<sup>30</sup> This uncritical and/or non-political grasp of totality persists amongst those who would approach environmental phenomenology. In *Reflections on the Edge of Askja* (2005), for example, the eco-psychology of Pall Skulason gives Nature in a manner that appears to block economic factors, chiefly because it retains the term uncritically, as merely the non-ideological ‘reality’ that binds all things: ‘To live, to be able to exist, the mind must connect itself with some kind of order. It must apprehend reality

The relationship between totality and interpretation is therefore particularly important where the desire for *meaning* appears symptomatic of abiding cultural desires for teleology and closure. What might it be to displace human narrative drama that is merely ‘framed’ by non-human environments and actively foreground mesas, arroyos, arboreal forests and oceanic terrain? What place does interpretation have where the ecocritic would work to give new, ‘eco-mimetic’ sense to a Conrad novel, or make a reading of Poe that is much less unconcerned with human mystery than with the ‘sense’ of biospheric implication? The ecocritical party line has always insisted that it ‘challenges interpretation to its own grounding in the bedrock of natural fact, in the biospheric and indeed planetary conditions without which human life, much less humane letters, could not exist.’<sup>31</sup> Yet theoreticians since Heidegger have remained sensitive to how such a ‘bedrock of natural fact’ remains implicated within an ‘enframing’ process, what he termed *das Gestell*, or ‘the overall horizontal understanding of being that gives unity to an epoch.’<sup>32</sup> This sense of unity becomes important when we consider the anxieties that attend our present, ‘environmental’ moment.

As Žižek avers, living as we are ‘in the midst of ecological catastrophe’ it is ‘especially important that we conceive this catastrophe as [...] meaningless.’ If this appears a somewhat ‘irresponsible’ assertion, then it should be understood to reflect what Žižek views as an imperative not to surrender our interpretations of Natural events to any pseudo-totality: ‘i.e. that we do not ‘read meanings into things,’ as is done by those who interpret the ecological crisis as a ‘deeper sign’ of punishment for our merciless exploitation of nature, etc.’<sup>33</sup> Beyond quasi-theological condemnations of human activity by a punitive *anima mundi* (or ‘world soul’), to do so would be to *stop thinking* about our environmental implication; not only would this reduce and contrive the complexity of the contemporary ‘ecological’ situation—one that is

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as an independent whole... The mind lives in, and we live, in a relationship of faith with reality itself. This relationship of confidence, which is always by nature uncertain and insecure... [This] relationship of confidence... is originally, and truly, always a relationship with reality as a natural totality: as Nature.’ Skulason, Pall. *Reflections at the Edge of Askja: On Man’s Relation to Nature*. (Reykjavik: University of Iceland Press, 2006). p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Tucker, *Editors*, p. 505.

<sup>32</sup> See Kolb, David. ‘Heidegger and Habermas on Criticism and Totality.’ *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. Vol. 52, No. 3 (Sep., 1992): 683-693. p. 691.

<sup>33</sup> See Žižek, Slavoj. *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). p. 140.

dependent upon all manner of complex cultural and climatic factors—but it would distract us with an imaginary and ideal unity that remains difficult to substantiate.

Later in the thesis we will consider how Deleuze and Guattari similarly counsel against the perils of interpretation, aiding us in rethinking the very desire for meaning after their notion of ‘precocious totality’, which forms an integral part of their thesis on ‘desiring-production’.<sup>34</sup> Such a view of totality rests upon their rejection of the ‘lack’ that is presupposed by the phallic organisation of desire under orthodox Lacanian accounts of castration, signification and fantasy, and which can be ousted as an ‘illegitimate’ or metaphysical understanding of its syntheses after their immanent critique of psychoanalysis. While this will enable us to consider how it is that an emphasis on lack might keep us from ‘sufficient’ ecological awareness, largely by way of Oedipal social organisation, for now, however, we will remain with a broader consideration of the relationship between interpretation, totality and immanence.<sup>35</sup>

This is because we must now turn our attention to the ‘disciplinary’ location of ecocriticism; to emphasise how totality remains an ideologically-charged concept will give us to ask why the concept of immanence appears germane (or *inclusive*) enough to restore humanity to its humbler status as but one species in the greater biosphere, yet appears to remain misunderstood (or *exclusive*) where political economy is concerned? This has particular bearing where the constraints of our educational institutions—those limits comprising our intellectual ‘eco-system’—prove determinate for ecocriticism as a discipline. Prior to engaging Althusser and Balibar’s thesis on ‘symptomnal reading’, then, we might say a few further words on the historical accretion of attitudes to totality, noting how these are linked to those of national identity, particularly where the Althusserian notion of the university as an ISA remains

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<sup>34</sup> See Deleuze and Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus*, pgs. 80, 131.

<sup>35</sup> As our introduction made clear, the differences between psychoanalysis and schizoanalysis will prove decisive for our study. To some extent, Lacan’s account of the Imaginary, or that register which mediates ‘between the Innenwelt and the Umwelt’ (the inner world and the outer world) can be seen to extend Spinoza’s own epistemological and political castigations of the faculty in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670). Where totality is concerned, however, the Lacanian Imaginary supplies the very matrix of individual Bildung, or as Lacan himself has it, is the register wherein ‘a drama’ with its own ‘internal thrust’ takes the subject from the ‘insufficiency’ of the ‘fragmented body image’ through the integrated ‘form of its totality’ to the ‘armour of an alienating identity.’ As we shall see, this schema is much transformed by Deleuze and Guattari. See Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. (London: Routledge Classics, 2001). pgs. 3-4.

pertinent. Whilst addressing totality as symptomatic of the institutional ‘eco-system’ in this way may appear at best too *figurative*, at worst, to unhelpfully conflate the complexities of both under a reductive metaphor, it nevertheless supplies a provisional rhetorical gambit with which to sustain our assertion that a properly metacritical approach must call for an inspection of the ties the academy retains to issues of national heritage.

As Raymond Williams has it, ‘the idea of nature is the idea of man . . . the idea of man in society, indeed the ideas of kinds of societies.’<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the notion of ecology remains a largely vested one, ‘simultaneously real, collective, and discursive—fact, power, and discourse—and needs to be naturalized, sociologized, and deconstructed accordingly.’<sup>37</sup> Beyond any first-order (and putatively overcome) ‘nation-centredness’, therefore, ecocriticism must surely begin by acknowledging its debt to the North American institutional context. Writing in 1989, as ecocritical papers were first starting to emerge in earnest, Jonathan Culler acknowledged how

American universities are structured by the conflict between the model of the production of knowledge and the model of the reproduction of culture. There is a tension between them, with local variations that may be quite difficult to interpret. Though the vast expansion of funded scientific research led the second model to become dominant after the War, the play of the two models continues, especially in educational rhetoric. The resistance to literary theory and speculative criticism often takes the form of appeals to the importance of reproducing or transmitting the cultural heritage.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Williams, Raymond. ‘Ideas of nature.’ *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. Ed. Raymond Williams. (London: Verso, 1980). 67–85. p. 71.

<sup>37</sup> Escobar, Arturo. ‘After Nature: Steps to an Anti-essentialist Political Ecology.’ *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 40, No. 1 (February 1999). 1-30. p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Culler, Jonathan. ‘Criticisms and Institutions: The American University.’ *Post Structuralism and the Question of History*. Eds. Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington, Robert Young. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). 82-100. p. 93.

Where Culler notes a ‘resistance to literary theory and speculative criticism’, we can extend our foregoing assertion that the North American ‘cultural heritage’ remains one in which certain eco-mimetic, pastoral and other non-theoretical forms of nature-writing might be privileged on this very basis (Thoreau, Emerson et al).<sup>39</sup> As we have noted in brief, the *reproduction* of knowledge relies upon certain libidinal mechanisms, to which the ISA is essential; the contradiction peculiar to ecocriticism is its situation within the university as ISA, yet its discourses, particularly insofar as they would critique instrumental productivity, retain a metacritical potential. Thus the reproduction of particular forms of subjectivity, forms that would (re)produce a generalised ‘eco-subjectivity’ as much as an ‘eco-feminist’, or other putatively ‘radical’ subjectivity, remains no less an institutional concern after Althusser’s thesis on ‘interpellation’.<sup>40</sup> Just like the family, religious institutions and the mass media, the university can only ever hope to promote a semblance of ‘freedom’ of thought or speech where the requirements of the job market, social status and professional funding bodies remain determining. Not only does Althusser’s notion of overdetermination present a challenge to what we think governs the *form* of our thinking, that like any other facet of material existence it is simultaneously both cause *and* effect, but in turn gives us to reconsider the illusion of subjective autonomy vis-à-vis our continual petitions for social reform rather than any substantial or ‘revolutionary’ change in the mode of production.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, whilst the Marxian component of our metacritical approach imparts an understanding of capitalism as the untranscendable horizon under which the academy itself must labour, it moreover begins to reveal institutional literary criticism as bound up in a broader, structural ‘unconscious’. As we will shortly see, it is by way of Spinoza as much as Freud and Lacan that Althusser can dissolve the Cartesian ‘knowing subject’, troubling liberal subjectivity by rendering individuals unconscious ‘bearers’ (*Träger*) of structural relations, or of a given ‘problematic’.<sup>42</sup> Prior to

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> It is not simply the extent to which we ‘freely accept [...] subjection,’ but to which we are ‘always, already’ interpellated (i.e. we are always operating within ideology), that is key. See Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy*. Trans. Ben Brewster. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978). pgs. 182, 176.

<sup>41</sup> For the essay ‘Overdetermination and Contradiction’, see Althusser, Louis, *For Marx*. pgs. 87-128.

<sup>42</sup> Althusser seizes upon Marx’s own use of the term *Träger*, claiming that the problematic thinks in and through the subject: ‘The sighting [for example] is thus no longer the act of an individual subject, endowed with the faculty of “vision” which he exercises either attentively or distractedly; the sighting

deepening our Althusserian analysis, however, it is useful to invoke, if only briefly, Jameson's extension of the notion of a 'political unconscious' into a specific, 'geopolitical unconscious', noting in particular the ways in which the concept of totality features in his historical analysis of North American cultural production. Not only does Jameson's emphasis upon the North American situation lend his work to our project more broadly, but at this juncture his cultural critique, whilst sharing many of Althusser's concerns with ideology, retains a number of more markedly *dialectical* strategies that enable us to test the latter's 'anti-humanism' throughout the remainder of the chapter.<sup>43</sup>

Let us consider, then, how in *The Geopolitical Aesthetic* (1992), for example, Jameson transforms what he describes as the 'banal political unconscious', towards a *global* valencing of the concept:

what I will now call a geopolitical unconscious. This it is which now attempts to refashion national allegory into a conceptual instrument for grasping our new being-in-the-world.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout *The Geopolitical Aesthetic* we find an emphasis on totality, and in particular on the ways certain representations (particularly of a cinematic sort) contain within them an allegorical or 'cognitively mapped' apprehension of this totality.<sup>45</sup>

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is the act of its structural conditions, it is the relation of immanent reflection between the field of the problematic and *its* objects and *its* problems... It is literally no longer the eye (the mind's eye) of a subject which *sees* what exists in the field defined by a theoretical problematic: it is this field which *sees itself* in the objects or problems it defines sighting being merely the necessary reflexion of the field on its objects.' See Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 25. (Original emphases).

<sup>43</sup> Jameson's inclusion in our thesis as a 'post-Althusserian' thinker is significant inasmuch as in his earlier writings he set out to 'coral and inoculate' the influence of such French 'postmodernists' as Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Sollers and even Althusser himself; writers whom he at that time determined to offer the principal 'rival hermeneutic' to his more orthodox Marxian mode of interpretation. On this see Lambert, *Afraid*, p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> Jameson, Fredric. *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Jameson also discusses 'Cognitive mapping' in *Postmodernism: Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), drawing upon Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960) as much as Althusser's Spinoz-o-Lacanian concern with the subject's Imaginary relations to the Real conditions of existence. Jameson describes it as enabling 'a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that

Viewing the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 as ‘the paradigmatic assassination in (Western) modern times,’ Jameson suggests that this was not simply because Kennedy himself was so significant (‘in that respect, Malcolm X, or Martin Luther King, or Bobby Kennedy probably generated more intense experiences of mourning’), but because of the prevailing sense at the time that this assassination brought the whole of the USA together, generating a sense of totality *qua* national unity:

the experience of the media, which for the first time and uniquely in its history bound together an enormous collectivity over several days and vouchsafed a glimpse into a Utopian public sphere which remained unrealized.<sup>46</sup>

Whilst Jameson’s emphasis is anything but *literary* here, it nevertheless aids us in reckoning with the importance of totality for our concerns with the ‘greening’ of North American institutions. The manner in which ‘eco-cultural’ media might bind together an ‘enormous collectivity’, in the process offering a glimpse of a ‘utopian public sphere’, is something that ecocritics are all too familiar with.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, to suggest that environmentalism *per se* appears problematic as a ‘totalising’ cultural force is tempting indeed; certain Marxo-Lacanianisms would give us to consider how Green or environmentalist ideologies necessarily depend upon a highly *vested* notion of totality, of a specific (de)politicisation of ‘nature’ as totality. At once, they also present us with an opportunity to understand its relationship to *nation-centred* views of utopianism, suggesting that ecocritics might strive to acknowledge any *reconciliatory* impulse that might be going unchecked at the heart of any insufficiently ‘metacritical’ desire for Green ‘utopia’. In other words, to inspect what national interests might be served by an ostensibly ‘green’ imperative is to engage the political economy of one’s own prehistory. Accordingly—and as we have provisionally used Jameson to show—it is not by abandoning cultural studies or cultural theory that ecocriticism might best dissolve the anthropocentrism that threatens the non-human biome, but rather via a

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vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society’s structures as a whole.’ p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> Jameson, *Geopolitical*, p. 47.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

concerted *re-emphasis* upon human society and history by way of critiques of cultural production.<sup>48</sup>

We might, then, pose a further series of questions, which will draw together what we have gleaned in response to the first two, forming the critical focus of the remaining sections of this chapter. If Jameson's 'geopolitical unconscious' would appear to suffice where our concerns are broadly 'ecological', why might Althusser's more thoroughly 'anti-humanist' approach prove necessary? More precisely, how does his Spinozism contest Jameson's Hegelianism? We can begin to explore these questions by posing one more: namely, how might we attend to the determinate, *historical* relationship between theory and *history itself* for ecocriticism? This seemingly paradoxical question turns upon the historical rejection of theory by ecocritics, but recognises that we have yet to consider how this has inhibited attention to that particular historical period *per se*. Evidently, what we are at pains to consider here is just what cultural history amounts to for ecocriticism, a discipline that ostensibly emerged from a specific North American milieu during the latter portion of the cold war epoch, yet which at once seeks to alert those who would subscribe to it—increasingly on a global stage—to the altogether different temporalities of the 'natural' world? For a Marxist like Raymond Williams, it is essential to note how 'the idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history.'<sup>49</sup>

Before looking more deeply at the climate of cultural and political pluralism out of which ecocriticism emerged, however, and the extent to which such a climate inevitably produced nation-centred forms of literary research in this connection, it benefits us to take a philosophical detour in order to consider more fully the Spinozan stripe of materialism implicit to post-Althusserian Marxisms and the notion of 'conceptual adequation' so central to their political efficacy. Not only do we find in such Spinozisms a more immanent, rational-materialist position on ideology for an 'ecological' criticism, but in reckoning with the Althusserian shift in emphasis from Hegel to Spinoza we better understand the relationship between prehistory and history

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<sup>48</sup> Although she is not a literary ecocritic, this is effectively what Jennifer Daryl Slack has argued: '...that we jettison ecoculturalism, in favor of a revitalized commitment to cultural studies.' See Slack, Jennifer Daryl. 'Resisting Ecocultural Studies.' *Cultural Studies* 22:3 (2008): 477-497. p. 477.

<sup>49</sup> Williams, *Problems*, p. 68.

as part of a particular style of ‘symptomnal reading’.<sup>50</sup> This will, in turn, enable us to re-assert an approach to eco-criticism that is both ‘post-anthropocentric’ (*qua* ‘anti-human’) *and* historically-aware.

## (ii) Immanence and Spinozism

Whilst immanence has supplied rhetorical support to those few non-literary ecocritics, whom, like Luke Higgins and Adrian Ivakhiv, have recognised important post-theological extensions of the concept, it has nevertheless failed to capture the imagination of eco-literary researchers more particularly, whether with respect to philosophically legitimising the relationship between literary enquiry and assorted earth sciences, or in supporting the investiture of narrative analysis with materialist cultural histories.<sup>51</sup> This may appear something of a dramatic or inflated claim, particularly given the extent to which Spinozan ‘monism’—or univocal immanence—has undoubtedly contributed to the ecophilosophical understanding of human ‘situatedness’ or ‘embeddedness’ within nature, endowing non-literary environmentalists with a seemingly ready-made ‘naturalist’ ethics. In the 1970s, ‘deep ecologist’ Arne Naess ventured that: ‘No great philosopher has so much to offer in the way of clarification and articulation of basic ecological attitudes as Baruch Spinoza.’<sup>52</sup>

And yet whilst it remains true that a palpable *desire* for immanent bases for discussion has indeed arisen amongst ecocritics, it would appear to remain precisely at the level of desire, and papers and monographs that would evince substantial dialogue

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<sup>50</sup> In *Essays in Self-Criticism* (1974/1975), in which Althusser addresses his earlier work with Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (1968/1970), explaining how it might be conceivable that they were not in fact the structuralists that they had been denounced as, he nevertheless concedes to a certain philosophical heresy, for ‘[w]e were guilty of an equally powerful and compromising passion: we were Spinozists.’ See Althusser, Louis. *Essays in Self-Criticism*. Trans. Grahame Lock. (London: New Left Books, 1976). p. 132.

<sup>51</sup> See Higgins, Luke. ‘Toward a Deleuze-Guattarian Micropneumatology of Spirit-Dust.’ *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies of the Earth*. Eds. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007). See also Adrian Ivakhiv’s excellent blog forum on the implications of immanence for ecocriticism: <http://aivakhiv.blog.uvm.edu/> [Accessed 09/2009].

<sup>52</sup> See Naess, Arne. ‘Spinoza and ecology.’ *Speculum Spinozanum, 1677-1977*. Ed. Siegfried Hessing. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) 418-425. p. 423. See also Naess, Arne. *Freedom, Emotion and Self-subsistence* (Oslo: Universitets-forlaget, 1975).

between the ecologically-informed literary specialist and those critics working on Spinozist theories of immanence would seem decidedly few in number, an absence attesting to a theoretical blind-spot that remains as frustrating as it does debilitating. That leading lights in the environmental movement had acknowledged Spinoza proves especially vexing when we consider how for all their concern with Nature and immanence, they had nevertheless failed to trace a link to such immanent critiques of economy and history as Althusser's. As we considered in our discussion of totality, such motivations of immanence tend not to extend to *immanent critique*, to anything more than a sense of Nature as the underlying, a-political field of 'reality.'

By neglecting a Marxian reading of Spinozan philosophy, ecocritical concerns with the relationship between literary representation and environmental depredation have largely failed to recognise the philosopher's influence in such a way as to bridge ecological and traditional political debates, constraining eco-critiques of capitalist ideology. To date, extremely few Spinoz-o-Marxian or Marxo-Lacanian treatments of such 'nature writers' as Thoreau, Abbey or Snyder have emerged.<sup>53</sup> This is a grave shortcoming indeed; the inherent materialism of such philosophies presents them as much critiques of ideology as it renders them wholly germane to the principles of systemic interdependency essential to ecological thinking. Whether Lucretian or Spinozist, such philosophies comprehensively destabilise the mechanistic basis of positivist epistemologies, chasing away the stubborn spectre of the *cogito* so fundamental to Cartesian (and 'bourgeois') humanism.

And yet how does Spinozism, a philosophy that proclaims the illusion of free will, relate more precisely to post-Althusserian ideology critique? How, for example, do Spinoza's 'adequate ideas' supply a position on a *symptomnal* approach to ecocriticism, one that would diagnose the covert humanism that keeps it from post-structural theories of immanence? Specifically, how might they inform our understanding of the relationship between the non-human environment, post-structural theory and literary form *per se*? Althusser's challenges to Hegelian Marxism are

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<sup>53</sup> Notable exceptions would be Steven Rosendale's 'The Jungle, Social Change, and the Class Character of Environmental Impairment.' *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory and the Environment*. Ed. Steven Rosendale. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002). Pgs. 59-76; also Adrian Ivakhiv's 'Stirring the Geopolitical Unconscious: Towards a Jamesonian Ecocriticism.' *New Formations* #64 (Spring, 2008). 98-109. However, Ivakhiv concerns himself principally with cinematic examples and as such, does not enter into a discussion of literary form under a symptomnal rubric.

complex, beyond the remit of the present thesis. Yet it is in his fundamental reading of Marx after Spinoza and Lacan that we obtain a thesis against Hegelian dialectical contradiction and ‘expressive causality’, against the primacy of the ‘subject’, or that spectre of modernity that would support ‘non-ecological’ attitudes and desires. In order to understand why this must form the focus of our eco-clinic, let us first concern ourselves with an understanding of Spinoza’s ‘naturalist’ ethics.

As a monist, Spinoza viewed the universe as the dynamic expression of a single Substance; humankind therefore remains inseparable from Nature, automatically complicating any reductive, nature/culture dichotomies (or overly simplistic positions on causal relations). Nevertheless, as one ‘determinate mode’ amongst others, the human animal seeks to develop its capacities to ‘affect’ and ‘be affected’ via what in the *Ethics* (1677) Spinoza termed ‘*conatus*’ (or striving).<sup>54</sup> Implicated in the attribute of Thought as well as that of Extension, humankind distinguishes itself by way of certain (in)adequacies; through comprehending and subsequently participating in the Natural order, Man promises both his own and its *enhancement*. It is the degree to which our ideas about our activities, emotions or ‘affections’ remain either ‘adequate’ or ‘inadequate’ that we might achieve a sufficient causal relationship to our own effects (internal or external); this promises an increase in ‘active’ rather than ‘sad’ passions (or passivity).<sup>55</sup>

However, whereas Hegelian Idealism posits Spirit or Mind as the primary agency of history and progress, Spinoza’s concern with the development of adequate ideas provides only the unguaranteed *possibility* of such attainment. Or, in depending less on the progress of Spirit and confidence in Reason, and more precisely on the human propensity to exceed subject-centered relations, Hegel’s teleological triumph of Spirit is displaced by Spinoza’s far humbler belief in our mere *potential* to achieve adequate knowledge. In other words, whereas imagination binds us to certain ‘misrecognitions’, Spinoza’s modal view of humanity *within* Nature contributes to an overturning of, for example, Marx’s early (or largely Hegelian) conception of ‘alienation’, with its root in a definition of Man as a free, rational agent. Whilst for

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<sup>54</sup> Citations of Spinoza’s *Ethics* will conform to book number followed by proposition number. For example in this instance: III p9.

<sup>55</sup> Spinoza, *Ethics*, III p3.

Hegel, ‘the real is the rational and the rational is the real, and a seamless, definitive account of the historical process is therefore possible’, for Spinoza, by contrast, ‘real and rational remain distinct.’<sup>56</sup> We will see how Lacan’s distinction between the Symbolic and Imaginary registers of the human psyche benefits from this Spinozan distinction between two categorically different kinds of thought later in the thesis, but for now, it is important to note that for Spinoza, it is not that Spirit and matter require reconciliation, rather it is the extent to which human powers may be realised and increased that lends his ontology to our eco-clinical project.<sup>57</sup>

What this distinction means for the assertion of a metacritical ecocriticism should, it is hoped, be clear. Philosophically speaking, Spinoza offers a model of non-transcendent causality, enabling a non-Hegelian position on history and human agency that is a-subjective and non-teleological.<sup>58</sup> This in turn enables us to recognise a Spinozist form of ideology critique that suggests, like Nietzsche’s philosophy would after him, a decentering of the Hegelian absolute subject, who is not God’s privileged being. In his *Essays in Self-Criticism* (1974/1976), Althusser thus describes a ‘materialism of the imaginary,’ an affirmation of the political dimensions of Spinoza that would shift the tenor of the latter’s modal thesis from the purely epistemic to what Valente calls the ‘onto-pragmatic domain’, or from classic Marxist questions of ‘false consciousness’ to the fully-fledged recognition of ‘false positions’.<sup>59</sup>

In the Appendix to Book I of the *Ethics*, and in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, we find in fact what is undoubtedly the first

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<sup>56</sup> See Holland, Eugene. ‘Spinoza and Marx.’ <http://clogic.eserver.org/2-1/holland.html> [Accessed 20/09/09].

<sup>57</sup> If, as Holland has put it, ‘eliminating the notion of dialectical contradiction from accounts of historical process does not necessarily entail eliminating it from analyses of discourse and thought’, this is because we must acknowledge how there nevertheless remains a dialectic in Spinoza, but it is resolutely non-Hegelian (for being devoid of mediation), and should perhaps, this thesis will argue, be conceived of more profitably after Deleuze’s ‘lyrical’ or ‘asymmetrical’ dialectic (more on which in chapter three). And moreover, as Jameson for one has made clear, adherence to one form of dialectics does not necessarily mean adherence to all forms of dialectics. To suggest that there is no reason to assume that history mirrors thought, or vice versa is therefore to understand the merits of Spinozism in this connection. See Holland, Eugene. ‘Spinoza and Marx.’ <http://clogic.eserver.org/2-1/holland.html> [Accessed 20/09/09].

<sup>58</sup> As Althusser puts it: ‘Because he ‘begins with God’, [Spinoza] never gets involved with any Goal, which, even when it ‘makes its way forward’ in immanence, is still figure and thesis of transcendence.’ He therefore rejects Hegel’s ‘expressive causality’. See Althusser, *Essays*, p. 135.

<sup>59</sup> Althusser, *Essays*, p. 136; Valente, *Lacan’s Marxism*, p. 160.

theory of *ideology* ever thought out, with its three characteristics: (1) its *imaginary* ‘reality’; (2) its internal *inversion*; (3) its ‘centre’: the illusion of the *subject*. An abstract theory of ideology, it will be said.<sup>60</sup>

Practically speaking, therefore, Spinozism since Althusser should encourage us to track down those inadequate ideas, concepts and figurations that would not only keep us from obtaining an increase in power (*qua* ‘ideology’), but from critical positions that are themselves ideologically-inhibited. Where inadequate ideas continue to sustain illusion, typically in line with social or political mandates, ‘Man’ is itself an inadequate idea. The monistic apprehension of Man as a part of Nature as a single Substance rather than as its privileged subject (or ‘master’), supplies a purview within which the productive potential of Nature as a whole can no longer be limited to the localised productivity of Man. Here we begin to see how a ‘regional’ totality might relate to the notion of Nature as ‘global’ totality.

For Marxism, this means it can relinquish its ‘productivism’ (or its exclusive focus on marketable productive forces) and shift its critical focus accordingly.<sup>61</sup> Whilst we will attend to this notion more fully in chapters two and three we might here begin to sense how ecocriticism would benefit from this intersection of Spinozism and Marxism. Where, for example, conventional ideology critique would remain content with the analysis of anthropomorphic psychosocial structures, and with a corresponding increase in power at the *social* level, a Spinozan philosophical basis is more philosophically equipped to go beyond the limits of the psychosocial, beyond

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<sup>60</sup> As Althusser makes plain: ‘Spinoza’s ‘theory’ rejected every illusion about ideology, and especially about the number one ideology of that time, religion, by identifying it as imaginary. But at the same time it refused to treat ideology as a simple error, or as naked ignorance, because it based the system of this imaginary phenomenon on the relation of men to the world ‘expressed’ by the state of their bodies. This materialism of the imaginary opened the way to a surprising conception of the First Level of Knowledge: not at all, in fact, as a ‘piece of knowledge’, but as the material world of men as they live it, that of their concrete and historical existence. Is this a false interpretation? In certain respects, perhaps, but it is possible to read Spinoza in such a way. In fact his categories do function, daringly, in this way in the history of the Jewish people, of its prophets, of its religion, and of its politics, where the primacy of politics over religion stands out clearly, in the first work which, after Machiavelli, offered a theory of history’. Althusser, *Essays*, pgs. 135-36.

<sup>61</sup> As we will later see, it is from such a standpoint that Deleuze and Guattari can state in *Anti-Oedipus* that Nature = Industry... = History. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pgs. 3-4.

any privileging of human subjectivity, towards ontological comprehension of the complex interrelationships between determinate modes (whether given in terms of organic ‘species’ or inorganic modes of life) and their respective milieux, or in other words the emphasis upon precisely the symbiotic, immanent interdependencies that ecological discourses would call for.

Drawing no less upon the illusions of Spinoza’s inadequate ideas as Lacan’s Imaginary register, or that register to which perceptual falsehoods, abject fantasies and wish-fulfillments are attributable, such a theoretical approach to ecocriticism would deliver an ‘anti-humanist’ ideology critique, or one that is destabilising of what in chapter two we will acknowledge as the post-Kantian transcendental ‘subject.’ Prior to examining how this relates to literary form and content in that chapter, we might nevertheless acknowledge briefly how such an approach would enable Glen Love’s eminently *eco-literary* search for a purview that, like the one he finds in Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, ‘sweeps us out of our immaterial roles and presses us into a momentous drama in which we are confronted with the elements that link each of our lives to all life and our place within a biotic community.’<sup>62</sup> At the properly philosophical (or conceptual) level, such an approach would require a revision not only of what we take dialectical negativity to be, but equally of those mechanistic views of causality inherited from canonical Enlightenment thinkers:

in his effort to grasp a ‘non-eminent’ (that is, non-transcendent) not simply transitive (à la Descartes) nor expressive (à la Leibniz) causality, which would account for the action of the Whole on its parts, and of the parts on the Whole -- an unbounded Whole, which is only the active relation between its parts: in this effort Spinoza served us, though indirectly, as a first and almost unique guide.<sup>63</sup>

Enabling us to articulate the co-implication of categories that were previously conceived of as dualistic and dichotomous, this notion of an ‘unbounded Whole’ that

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<sup>62</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> Althusser, *Essays*, p. 141.

Spinozan immanence imparts, transforms our sense of totality, whether this be psychic, national-cultural (or ‘regional’), or biospheric and ecological (or ‘global’). For Althusser, this revaluation of part-to-whole relations underpins his notion of ‘structural causality’, one that enables us to provisionally show how whilst dynamically interlinked, such registers retain a ‘relative autonomy’.<sup>64</sup> We will shortly see how post-Althusserianism supplies not only a wealth of useful antagonisms to instrumentalist attitudes, but at once might give us to conceive of a ‘history without Man’, a properly *theoretical* ‘post-humanism’ as it might pertain to eco-literary production and reception. That ecocritics would forego Pierre Macherey’s *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966/1978), for example, a study that develops the implications of Althusser’s incorporation of Spinozan materialism in a pointedly literary connection, seems neglectful and imprudent if not wholly disheartening (yet which as we have begun to suggest, transpires to be resultant of a far more vested state of affairs than the mere institutional situation of such studies within exclusively Marxist—*qua* ‘sociological’ or ‘political’—discourses).<sup>65</sup> Such work as Macherey’s would redress the balance wherever immanence appears to remain at best a figurative and inspirational notion of Nature’s totality for ecocritics. Immanence *qua* immanent critique would reorient the ecocritical understanding of literary production and reception in a metacritical way, enabling such concerns as national and institutional histories to become available for debate.

As we shall see in successive chapters, Althusser’s blend of Spinozan ethics and Lacanian psychoanalysis remains discernible (yet becomes much transformed) in Jameson, Žižek and Deleuze; reformulating Marx’s classic definition of the concept as ‘the imaginary representation of the subject’s relationship to his or her real conditions of existence’, we find a certain inflection in the post-Althusserian schools that should supply a stimulating and moreover *adequate* complexity to those seeking to understand the place of literature in ecological debate: not only does literature play a fundamentally ‘utopian’ role in Jameson and Deleuze (a sort of immanent key to social mythologies or, rather, to social mythology as such), thus demanding a criticism

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<sup>64</sup> Althusser and Balibar define structural causality as the ‘determination of the elements of a whole *by the structure of the whole*.’ See Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p.187.

<sup>65</sup> In an as yet untranslated work, *Hegel ou Spinoza* (1979), Macherey better develops Spinoza’s materialism as a significant alternative to the Hegelian schema. Accordingly, the type of interest that is usually conferred upon his work is that of a political, rather than a literary sort.

adequate to what such utopianism implies, both materially and ideologically, but moreover, it can be reconceived of as a sort of ‘affective ecology’ in its own right.

It would seem altogether lamentable, then, that an ‘earth-centred’ or ‘ecocentric’ discipline should fail to avail itself of so germane a thinker as Spinoza (and his diverse line of critical descendants) or such potentially anti-instrumentalist discourses as contemporary Marxisms; unless of course, such an approach remains too troubling to the essentially *liberal* sensibilities of the Western institutional milieu to warrant the closer inspection that this thesis asserts that it deserves. Where literary production and the ideological complicity of texts (as aspects of a profoundly ‘unecological’ episteme) appears to remain of second-order interest, this must again, be by virtue of certain conservatisms implicit in any ‘pale green’ ethos that would maintain that the fundamentally *preservationist* ‘message’ underwriting many ecocritical orientations should not go obscured by undue ‘theoretical’ hubris.

### (iii) Symptomatic Reading

Despite Althusser’s deployment of Spinoza contra Hegel in his ‘scientific’ reformulation of Marx, which as we have begun to acknowledge, is in and of itself of great amenability to the present study, it is his ‘*lecture symptomnale*,’ which underpinned the classic *Reading Capital* (1968/1970) with Étienne Balibar, that is perhaps of most immediate utility to our project. Implementing Lacanian procedure, the study addresses certain rhetorical fragilities in Marx’s use of metaphor and figuration. Indicating how the *faute* (‘errors’ or ‘mistakes’, but also ‘crimes’) in Marx’s literary form register as its symptoms, *Reading Capital* presents a proto-deconstructive analysis of latent content. Conceiving of these inadequacies of language as gestures towards as yet unactualised concepts to come, towards that which paradoxically appears both latent *in* and absent *from* the text, symptomatic reading for Althusser and Balibar amounts to a philosophical project of ‘correction’ (*qua* refinement). By deploying Lacan’s conception of the symptom to Marx’s own work—or as a means of interpreting the neurotic’s persistence in his or her subjection to the socio-symbolic—Althusser and Balibar propose not only the development of a sort of ‘science of contradiction’—by which Marx’s own ‘symptomatic’ trope, or materialist

‘contradiction’, supplied him with a means of theorising the propensity of any given socio-economic order towards revolutionary change—but consequently, the development of a generalisable symptomatology.

As we have seen, Spinoza supplies Althusser with a means to assert a Marxism with a different sense of causality and thus, an altogether different sense of etiology. Necessarily, where on a broadly Hegelian account, language is conceived of as a signifying system that is negatively conditioned, or enabled by relational limits that paradoxically imply difference and at once its cancelation by virtue of a necessary equivalence between elements (or words), such limits ‘cannot be themselves signified, but have to *show* themselves as the *interruption* or *breakdown* of the process of signification.’<sup>66</sup> Let us consider, then, how Althusser’s Spinozist approach might benefit ecocriticism as a discourse that would, however inadvertently, de-emphasise Hegelian negativity and thus, the humanist telos of Hegelian progress and history.

Althusser claims that his symptomnal reading attends to ‘*the action of a real drama*, in which old concepts desperately play the part of something absent *which is nameless*, in order to call it onto the stage in person—whereas they only “produce” its presence in their failures...’<sup>67</sup> But this dialectic of presence/absence, as Hegelian (and thus, *dialectical*) as it outwardly appears, is nevertheless one that opens without a sense of teleological progression onto our concerns with theoretical maturity for ecocriticism. Whilst the symptom is here given as the ‘radical impossibility of the concept to appear “in person”, because ‘it is still in the process of being produced’, this instance of catachresis, or the (ab)use of existing words to denote something that as yet cannot be named, gestures towards a new conceptual horizon, yet one that refuses the perfection of completeness: in other words, one that acknowledges continual *process*.<sup>68</sup>

We will see how this enables analysis of first-wave ecocriticism as a symptom of North American cultural and political pluralism shortly, but for now this sketch of a specifically *formalist* type of symptomnal reading already begins to challenge the first-wave ecocritical strategy of valorising ‘Green’ neo-realism, or the canonical ‘nature-

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<sup>66</sup> Laclau, Ernesto. *Emancipation(s)*. (London: Verso, 1996). p. 37, original emphases.

<sup>67</sup> Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> Friedman, Geraldine. ‘The Spectral Legacy of Althusser: The Symptom and Its Return.’ *Yale French Studies*. No. 88. (1995): 165-182. pgs. 169, 174.

writing' of Thoreau, Abbey or Dillard as mimetically sufficient to the conveyance of environmental experience, or the privileging of manifest *content* for eco-rhetorical ends. Most explicitly, it is where Althusser and Balibar discuss Galileo's '*Great Book of the World*' that we find an approach that enables us to reappraise our earlier concerns with eco-cultural tendencies towards totalising forms of interpretation. Such an approach enables us to diagnose such tendencies as themselves symptomatic of theoretical 'immaturity':

to treat nature or reality as a Book, in which, according to Galileo, is spoken the silent discourse of a language whose "characters are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures," it was necessary to have a certain idea of *reading* which makes a written discourse the immediate transparency of the true, and the real discourse of a voice.<sup>69</sup>

As Geraldine Friedman points out, this 'incarnational, consubstantial discourse', with all of its Christian resonances, 'depends upon a metaphysics in which truth inhabits the word as the soul of the body.'<sup>70</sup> As such, an 'innocent' reading, or that one we might here correlate with an eco-mimetic reading/writing of the biome, is 'an understanding of the world as a text to be taken at face value', which is what Althusser and Balibar insist that the 'still ideological' young Marx, mired in his prehistory, practiced until he switched to a scientific problematic. It is precisely here, therefore, that we can extract a symptomatological understanding of the distance between immaturity and maturity with which to address a certain 'epistemological break' between first and second-wave ecocriticism:

We... have the right to speak about an 'epistemological break' and to use this philosophical category to mark the historical-theoretical fact of the birth of a science, including, in spite of its unique character, Marxist revolutionary science, by the visible

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<sup>69</sup> Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 16.

<sup>70</sup> Friedman, *Symptom*, p. 173.

symptom of its emergence from its prehistory, its rejection of the errors of that prehistory. On condition, of course, that what are only effects are not taken for the cause -- but instead that the signs and effects of the 'break' are considered as the theoretical phenomenon of the appearance of a science in the history of theory, which brings up the question of the social, political, ideological and philosophical conditions of this irruption.<sup>71</sup>

As we will shortly consider, it is precisely this concern with the material conditions that would induce an epistemological break that can help us to understand the emergence of first and second-wave ecocriticism. Moreover, the very immanence of the effects of the 'absent cause' in Althusserian-Spinozism enables us to advance a symptomnal view of any ideology that would privilege a non-theoretical approach; in other words, it is where Althusser draws upon Spinoza to show how the 'problematic' is an unconscious field of ideational presuppositions, one that merely harbors the *potential* for a 'scientific' *qua* non-ideological theory to emerge, that enables us to dispense with the anthropocentric assurances of Hegelian historicism. Again, this is precisely why a sufficient *prehistory* should matter for ecocriticism; an inspection of how the first-wave problematic may or may not have 'matured' towards a second-wave 'science' might turn upon an Althusserian reading of instances of catachresis amongst principal first-wave writers.

When, for example, Lawrence Buell writes disparagingly about the 'dichotomizing' of the respective commitments of Michael Denning's 'Marxist hermeneutic' and Walter Benn Michaels' 'cultural poetics' in an early essay, he cements his status as an historically-predisposed 'ecocritic'. What we find is that it is not the internal dividedness of the 'newer historical criticisms' that concerns him, so much as the fact that such 'intratribal' pluralism might prevent these thinkers from impacting upon literary studies *per se*.<sup>72</sup> What is crucial to note here, however, is how Buell's own concerns with the historical legacies of Thoreau and John Muir are

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<sup>71</sup> Althusser, *Essays*, p. 118.

<sup>72</sup> Buell is here referring to the literary reception of such works as Michaels' *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism* (1987), and Denning's *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America* (1987). See Buell, Lawrence. 'It's Good, But is it History?' *American Quarterly*. Vol. 41. No. 3 (Sept., 1989): 496-500. pgs. 496, 499.

accordingly beset by an overly self-conscious use of such words as ‘naturally’ and ‘empiricist’, usages that are ultimately constrained by an awareness of the ‘attenuations and elisions’ that would, if not mediated by the ‘social historian as superego’, risk resulting in either an overtly synchronic attention to form, or just as undesirably, in an ‘old style consensus historiography.’<sup>73</sup>

But Buell seems more mindful here of the necessity for ‘actual’ or ‘empirically-factual’ and ‘contextual indebtedness’ as of the structural *limitations* of disciplinary and institutional Law (*qua* the Althusserian ‘problematic’). Accordingly, what Buell’s writing seems to suggest is a symptomatic ‘gesturing towards’ a form of ecocriticism ‘to come’, one that appears to find one of its earliest prefigurations in an essay from 1989, when he suggests a broadly materialist position on the ‘interest-group politics’ that characterise the ecocritical canonization of Muir and Thoreau.<sup>74</sup> We will see how Buell’s own moments of catachresis might therefore supply the theory-curious second-wave ecocritic with diverse means of rethinking the ecological-literary relationship to history later in the thesis, and by way of the differing positions Žižek and Deleuze evince on Hegelianism; the latter’s Nietzscheanism will give us to revalue history as such, yet specifically where a Marxian form of eco-critique might exceed any normative ‘Historical Materialism’.<sup>75</sup> For now, however, it remains necessary to emphasise how the above procedure makes available for discussion those latent elements that subsist and inhere in a text despite what is manifestly being said, revealing catachresis as a diagnostic concern. This gives us to note the similarities with the Lacanian aspects of Jameson’s work, for whom the absent cause as history is commensurate with the Real as that latent content which necessarily exceeds language as the principal expressive mode of the ‘Symbolic’ register. By couching the construction of the individual subject in terms of its entry into language, and as perpetually oriented towards an unobtainable someTHING (the ‘Real’), Lacan described a paradigm somewhat homologous with a Marxian perspective, in which

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> See Buell, Lawrence. ‘The Thoreauvian Pilgrimage: The Structure of an American Cult.’ *American Literature*. Vol. 61. No. 2 (May, 1989): 175-199.

<sup>75</sup> As Nietzsche has suggested, is our relationship to what he terms ‘Nature *naturelle*’, or to the non-anthropomorphised natural world, the world not viewed through the lens of history and consciousness, not ultimately *paradoxical*, chiefly for being fundamentally *restorative* of cultures that have become trapped in history, thus tilling the earth for the ‘non-ecological’ individual? On this and many other aspects of Nietzsche’s thinking on nature and ecology, see Del Caro, Adrian. *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004). p. 64.

society determines the consciousness of its individuals, grounded at all times in the unapprehensible ‘reality’ of history. As Jameson puts it:

...it is not terribly difficult to say what is meant by the Real in Lacan. It is simply history itself; and if for psychoanalysis the history in question here is obviously enough the history of the subject, the resonance of the word suggests that a confrontation between this particular materialism and the historical materialism of Marx can no longer be postponed.<sup>76</sup>

When compared with the Real of ‘historical narrative’ we might reckon with the inadequacies of a particular author’s Imaginary ones. Because history abjectly defies symbolisation, always being in excess of our bids to represent it, it can never be grasped in itself in any text. But Jameson points out that some version of history is necessarily discernible in every text, in much the same way each of us carries some notion of what the Real World outside our consciousnesses must be. Therefore, we must ‘distinguish between our own narrative of history—whether psychoanalytical or political—and the Real itself, which our narratives can only approximate asymptotically’.<sup>77</sup> Like the Lacanian Real, history is that which would provide ‘unanswerable resistance’ not only to the ideological fantasies of such ‘nature writers’ as Thoreau or Dillard, but also to those of the reader or critic who would extrapolate such work towards vested ends.<sup>78</sup>

Thus for all his initial differences with Althusser, by drawing this concept from Lacan, Jameson also draws upon and reconfigures somewhat the classical Hegelian notion of ‘mediation’. To acknowledge this enables us to allay, to some extent, those ecocritical fears discussed above regarding theoretical insensitivity to the very different requirements of the North American and French milieus, and specifically as mediation might be invoked to account for the relationship between individuals and the real totality underlying a society. Whether it is the form of a Joseph Conrad novel, or that critical narrative told by an ecocritic in support of raising environmental

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<sup>76</sup> Jameson, *Ideologies*, p.104.

<sup>77</sup> Jameson, *Ideologies*, p. 107.

<sup>78</sup> Jameson, *Political*, p. 170.

awareness, the subtitle of Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*, which asserts 'Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act', proves significant; the narratives that mediate our existences (from the myths and stories we tell ourselves, to the plot-lines of novels) symbolically embody our social reality. As such, if 'genre is essentially a socio-symbolic message', then we might insist that so too must non-fictional 'nature-writing' be, for 'form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right.'<sup>79</sup>

Showing the points of affinity between Althusser and Jameson in this way allows us not only to encompass matters psychic, economic, historical and ecological in a single sweep—and as these reveal the 'political unconscious' or 'structural problematic' within which a given writer was (or remains) situated—but moreover to do so in a 'scientific' or theoretical way. Despite their differences over class and humanism, (i.e., whether they remain Spinozan or Hegelian), such thinkers would not only enable us to think more complexly about the ecologically-problematic subjectivism we find central to instrumental reason, but equally, we will argue, to negotiate the tendency towards conservative forms of ecocriticism. Prior to exploring the relationship between eco-literary aesthetics and ideology in chapter two, therefore, we might at this juncture deploy Althusser's *lecture symptomnale*, specifically as it relates to the cultural legacy of North American pluralism. This is because the historicisation of social movements is key to understanding psychic repression, of particular value where later we will attempt to understand subjective interiority as it might inhibit 'ecological' attitudes. A statement from a recent essay of Jameson's, in which he aired the need 'to defend the position that literary criticism is or should be a theoretical kind of symptomatology,' serves to usher such discussion in.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> The Real or History is, in our 'fallen world of capitalism,' necessarily 'that which resists desire, that bedrock against which the desiring subject knows the break-up of hope and can finally measure everything that refuses its fulfillment'. See Jameson, *Political*, pgs. 141, 170.

<sup>80</sup> Moreover, '[l]iterary forms (and cultural forms in general) are the most concrete symptoms we have of what is at work in that absent thing called the social.' See Jameson, Fredric. 'Symptoms of Theory or Symptoms for Theory?' <http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/issues/v30/30n2.Jameson.html> [accessed 15/09/09].

#### (iv) Pluralism and Exclusion

The politics of pluralism are frequently cold war politics<sup>81</sup>

Jameson's suggestion of the need to 'defend' symptomatological approaches to literature, as if somehow they might be less fashionable than they once were, seems at first blush more than a little perplexing, particularly if we consider the resurgence of interest in Lacanian critical theory in recent years and specifically, the work of such eminently 'clinical' thinkers as Žižek and Deleuze. Yet Jameson nevertheless registers that we might somehow have *dissuaded* ourselves from certain 'metacritical' perspectives even if we remain committed (in principle at least) to a range of experimental methodologies; a dissuasion that can only be borne of a fundamental, yet clandestine air of 'persuasivity' that inheres as a formal property within the dogmatic and totalising narrative of the late capitalist axiomatic.

It is therefore after Ellen Rooney's observation that 'political pluralism, 'American-style', is nothing but the exclusion of Marxisms' that we might more fully acknowledge not only the originating moment of ecocriticism under a climate of 'hegemonic pluralism', but why it is that theories of immanence (such as those we have nominated) have failed to impact upon Americanist ecocriticism in substantial ways, keeping the movement from such important critical-clinical resources as the quasi-ecological 'assemblage' theory of Deleuze and Guattari.<sup>82</sup> If the symptomnal reading of Althusser and Balibar, with its psychoanalytical emphasis on the latent content of Marx's language, spans concerns with expressive form as ideologically-determined, it equally permits us to more complexly conceive of how ecocritics may have desired to distance themselves from such a climate, albeit problematically so.

If 'old'-style pluralism was seen to recuperate almost any other critical account (feminism, minority, Marxist) that emphasised otherness, difference, conflict, or discontinuity within the problematic of 'general persuasion,' then the absent or excluded term was always going to be exclusion itself. Or more precisely, driven by a

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<sup>81</sup> Rooney, *Seductive*, p. 18.

<sup>82</sup> Rooney, *Seductive*, p. 26.

generalised agenda of persuasion, an agenda given ideological coherence by a host of unacknowledged presuppositions, limits, exclusions and repressions, US ‘pluralist’ rhetoricians of the 1980s-90s accused their opponents of a monolithic totalitarianism—the exclusion of pluralism—precisely in order to exclude them: ‘[The] reduction of heterogeneous Marxisms to a monolithic Stalinism is always achieved in the name of pluralism’.<sup>83</sup> The ‘old’ pluralists of the Cold War epoch, whose orientation Rooney discerns as ‘less an affable form of methodological eclecticism,’ than ‘an ensemble of discursive practices constituted and bounded by a problematic of general persuasion,’ were therefore about the business of chasing socialist theory from their door; first-wave ecocritics were, of course, operating under precisely such a climate of ‘general persuasion,’ and as such, developing in response to its ideological mandates.<sup>84</sup>

No discourse that challenges the theoretical possibility of general persuasion, no discourse that takes the process of exclusion to be necessary to the production of meaning or community and asserts, with Althusser, that is the definition of a field which, ‘by excluding what it is not, makes it what it is,’ can function within pluralism.<sup>85</sup>

The ‘exclusion’ of Marxisms by North American pluralists in this way not only aids us in understanding the institutional academic trends of that period, but more particularly, the emergence of first-wave ecocriticism as a largely non-theoretical practice of reading after a paradoxical mode of ‘innocence’ directly effected by the pluralist hegemony. Endowing us with an understanding of concrete, discipline-shaping forces, such distinctions are of course essential where the ecocritical specialism would, on first appearances, appear wholly ‘pluralist’ in the benign, methodologically-inclusive sense. Obtaining their force by way of precisely the sort of repressions that Lacanian Marxism would be best suited to analyse, such pluralists emphasised a gesture of exclusion based on a critical awareness that historically

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<sup>83</sup> Rooney, *Seductive*, pgs. 26-7.

<sup>84</sup> Rooney’s principle arch-pluralist is Wayne C. Booth, author of *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). pgs. 1-2.

<sup>85</sup> Rooney, *Seductive*, p. 5.

irreducible interests divide and define reading communities. Or, by way of the observation that interests and reading are inextricably bound together.

We have seen how, in its emphasis on such material factors, Althusserian symptomatology begins to furnish us with an approach to ecocriticism that acknowledges its formation as the consequent effect of the repression of certain signifiers constitutive of what we have moreover identified after Jameson as a 'geopolitical unconscious'. We might again cite Althusser and Balibar's *Reading Capital* at this juncture, acknowledging how this conception of an unconscious is akin to the structural 'problematic' that is registered after their concern with the 'epistemic break' in the 'mature' author of *Capital*, who enacts a significant rejection of the 'religious myth' of reading. We might thereafter begin to tie this concern to a provisional conception of first-wave ecocriticism as 'innocent' for being untheoretical (*qua* 'non-Marxist').

Marx could not possibly have become Marx except by founding a theory of history and a philosophy of the historical distinction between ideology and science... this foundation was consummated in the dissipation of the religious myth of reading. The Young Marx of the 1844 Manuscripts read the human essence at sight, immediately, in the transparency of its alienations. *Capital*, on the contrary, exactly measures a distance and an internal dislocation (*décalage*) in the real, inscribed in its structure, a distance and a dislocation such as to make their own effects themselves illegible, and the illusion of an immediate reading of them the ultimate apex of their effects: fetishism. It was essential to turn to history to track down this myth of reading to its lair... the truth of history cannot be read in its manifest discourse, because the text of history is not a text in which a voice (the Logos) speaks, but the inaudible and illegible notation of the effects of a structure of structures.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 17.

It is in this passage that Althusser determines Marx's establishment of a revolutionary new and anti-humanist conception of history: as Althusser puts it, the 'revolutionary inventor of a science (the science of history)'.<sup>87</sup> We have already seen how this is in and of itself significant for ecocriticism; here, however, we might extract more fully from this passage the fundamental Althusserian opposition between science and ideology, which is to say an 'idea' about writing that by its very 'adequacy' sustains a 'structural' (*qua* immanentist) symptomatology towards an analysis of ecocritical reading under pluralism. If Marx's (mis)use of language betrays a certain blindness or non-seeing where analysis of the social is concerned, a kind of linguistic index of an always already ideological unconscious that exceeds symbolic expression, then for his readers it is a betrayal and a non-seeing that nonetheless signals fissures in his theoretical problematic towards an incipient conceptual horizon.

As we have acknowledged in Buell's eco-valent historicism, this becomes salient when we consider how ecocriticism stakes out a very specific mode of engagement, often taking its cues from an already heavily ideologically-determined form of literature—the polemical nature writing of Henry Thoreau or Edward Abbey for example—and thus, effects a corresponding horizon of relevance or sense. If, for Althusser, a problematic gives shape and structure to the visible terrain of a discourse, it at once 'structures the invisible... defined as excluded by the existence and peculiar structure of the field of the problematic'.<sup>88</sup> If in *Reading Capital* the symptom registers that which we cannot see from within our present theoretical problematic, the very 'ecocentricity' of much ecocriticism would, in many respects, preclude a necessary degree of metacritical self-awareness via a sort of ultra-Green disavowal of human subjectivity. Such 'innocence' amounts to a theoretical immaturity that does not allow for an immanent critique of subject-positions. We cannot see ourselves seeing the trees, it seems, for we have rendered the trees more real than the eye that would see them.

If a symptomnal view of literature is to be assessed for its veracity where ecocritical concerns would pose reformist challenges to the anthropocentrism of neo-

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<sup>87</sup> Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 51.

<sup>88</sup> Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 26.

liberal ideology and instrumentalist depredation, the influence of the pluralistic climate that Rooney identifies cannot be underestimated. Specifically, the pluralist polemic against theory might then be conceived of as a defence of the innocence of reading, over and against the ‘guilty’ or interested reading attributable purely to the (Marxist) poststructuralists. Put another way, in discerning how Marx ‘deconstructed’ the political economy of Adam Smith via his own textual analysis, we follow Althusser in characterising a symptomatic reading as not only that by which a critic discloses a text’s problematic, but where metacritically, an American movement such as ecocriticism might be seen to repress theory *tout court* for its socialist complicity. Despite the putative ‘innocence’ of first-wave ecocriticism and its construal of the self-sufficiencies of American nature-writing, any mode of reading must always betray ‘interest’, or as Althusser would later describe it, a certain ‘guilt’.<sup>89</sup> As Rooney has it in her concerns with the inherently persuasive orientation of pluralist discourses, ‘guilt is associated with persuasion. The possibilities and impossibilities of persuasion reveal the play and struggle of interests’.<sup>90</sup>

The sort of persuasivity that ecocriticism has required and perhaps even desired, must surely render it as guilty as the next literary reception theory? That theory has been excluded as a repressed component from ecocriticism appears symptomatic of a determinate historical condition enabled precisely by a North American pluralist agenda that would preserve its own ideological ground without recognising its exclusionary basis: ‘An awkward if not troubled relation to theory is central to the pluralist problematic... Theory threatens to force pluralism to announce its own systematic exclusions; on those grounds alone it must be avoided if at all possible’.<sup>91</sup> By simultaneously conceiving of ecocriticism *as* a symptom (with its formation under determinate historical conditions) and suggesting symptoms *for* ecocriticism (or how its exponents might implement symptomatic practices of reading), the movement can be examined for the problems of exclusion and persuasion where these surface as both political and theoretical issues. Moreover, the movement can be appraised for those environmentalist ‘fantasies’ (*qua* ideology) that would not so much serve as critique as to mask such wounds, whether stemming directly from the work of writers like

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<sup>89</sup> Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 28.

<sup>90</sup> Rooney, *Seductive*, p. 42.

<sup>91</sup> Rooney, *Seductive*, pgs. 30-2.

Thoreau or Dillard, or from their reception by critics like Buell and Slovic who have extracted second-order ecocritical argument from them.<sup>92</sup>

All of which returns us, after the trope of the symptom, to matters of health and fortitude; if capitalism views itself as the optimum model of socio-economic health despite a series of undeniably pathological symptoms (widespread oppression, poverty and misery), then the Althusserian Marxist serves as a sort of social clinician, palpating those areas where the painful problems of modern society have been ‘buried’ or repressed. If, decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the term ‘Balkanization’ continues to register the tendency of literary criticism to beget all manner of exotic (yet swiftly reified) specialisms, what we then begin to find in Althusserian Marxism is a means of redressing ecocriticism as a specific practice of reading that might remain in denial of its guilt or persuasivity.<sup>93</sup>

#### **(v) Relative Autonomy**

Given the extent to which Althusser’s work on ideology and ‘oppressive totalities’ insists upon certain decentrings in its focus on the gaps and exclusions underwriting Marx’s own textual form, the parallels with what would come to be identified as ‘deconstruction’ remain clear. But despite the continuing aversion to precisely this type of poststructural analysis (as maintained by such ecocritics as Jonathan Bate, for example), we might suggest that by way of Althusser’s notion of ‘relative autonomy’ a measure of reprieve be given to poststructuralism and any fears over psycho-cultural determinism allayed. As Tim Dean has argued, ongoing reactions to New Critical formalism in literary studies have generated profound skepticism regarding any notion of autonomy when it comes to aesthetic practice. Claims on

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<sup>92</sup> See in particular Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

<sup>93</sup> The notion of ‘Balkanization’ in this connection is Harold Bloom’s, and attributable to his conservative criticisms of the ‘excessive’ specialisation of humanitarian disciplines: ‘After a lifetime spent in teaching literature I have very little confidence that literary education will survive its current malaise.... We are destroying all intellectual and aesthetic standards in the humanities and social sciences, in the name of social justice.... The Balkanization of literary studies is irreversible’. Quoted in Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). p. 36.

behalf of ‘relative autonomy’ have occasionally met with consternation amongst left-leaning humanitarians, who would uphold Althusser’s concept as a largely anti-Marxian idea. Althusser makes clear what he means by relative autonomy when he argues that

[t]he fact that each of these times and each of these histories [including the history of aesthetic forms] is *relatively autonomous* does not make them so many domains which are *independent* of the whole: the specificity of each of these times and each of these histories—in other words, their relative autonomy and independence—is based on a certain type of articulation in the whole, and therefore on a certain type of dependence with respect to the whole.<sup>94</sup>

Yet Dean suggests that we might retrieve what Althusser meant by relative autonomy by recognising it as a commitment to discursive specificity in terms of aesthetic alterity or otherness.<sup>95</sup> We might emphasise the degree to which ethical as well as epistemological issues are involved in our approaches to eco-aesthetics if we recognise how discursive specificity suggests acknowledging that element of irreducibility or alterity particular to distinct cultural domains. For Dean, appraising aesthetic examples in ‘less individualistic ways’ might register a certain critical progress, but must acknowledge the assumption that any cultural text should be understood as a compromise formation, or the symptomatic product of a conflict whose terms are at least partly unconscious.

Whether one approaches textual forms in the context of an authorial or a cultural unconscious, the conviction still holds that the work of art is duplicitous or ignorant of something, that it exhibits contradictions of which it is unaware and therefore requires extraction by critical specialists. On such a view, neither artists nor their cultures are considered masters of the conflicts that produce their work; instead the role of mastery—of interpreting the symptom—falls to the demystifying critic. Hence Dean’s

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<sup>94</sup> Althusser and Balibar, *Reading*, p. 100, original emphasis.

<sup>95</sup> See Dean, Tim. ‘Art as Symptom: Žižek and the Ethics of Psychoanalytic Criticism.’ *Diacritics*. 32.2: (Summer, 2002): 21–41.

suggestion that there is something ethically suspect about so ostensibly progressive an approach to cultural forms: ‘[I]n other words, that there is a significant disjunction between the politics and the ethics of cultural study’.<sup>96</sup>

But whilst the New Critical position on aesthetic autonomy propagated a view of art as self-sufficient and problematically removed from mass culture, the Althusserian account of relative autonomy presents art as disruptive of discrete boundaries, as troubling rather than reinforcing the divide between high and low cultural products. Therefore, as Dean suggests, that which we term ‘aesthetic’ might more properly amount to those experiences in which meaning is disrupted by alterity, which means that the sort of popular cultural references supplied by a thinker like Žižek ‘may give rise to an experience whose *relative autonomy* from normative coordinates of sense requires acknowledging’.<sup>97</sup> By reading Althusser through Laplanche, Dean suggests that the concept of relative autonomy pertains equally to cultural production *and* to our critical reception of it: ‘Relative autonomy at the level of reception implies a fundamental irreducibility to sense or understanding’.<sup>98</sup> Putting this matter at its most schematic, Dean suggests that Laplanche’s concept of the ‘enigmatic signifier’ rewrites at the level of reception what Althusser meant by relative autonomy.<sup>99</sup>

If alterity—be it biotic or otherwise—is of preeminent concern for a given mode of cultural or literary criticism, then it surely requires an approach that is weighted towards ethics over pure epistemology. In Althusserianism and late Lacanianism, the ethics of psychoanalytic cultural criticism, whilst certainly motivated by the abiding desire to demystify, might ethically restrain that desire to do so in any absolute and total sense. Where our focus in the present thesis is with post-Lacanian epistemologies as these may respond to eco-literary complexes, the effects of the Real on interpretation would take eminence, which would also keep us from any deterministic psychoanalysis of Green motives: it would be disobliging in the extreme to suggest any ready equation between the ecocritical disavowal of poststructuralism (with its

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<sup>96</sup> Dean, *Art*, p. 31.

<sup>97</sup> Dean, *Art*, p. 38.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> ‘Thus whereas the concept of the unconscious licenses a critical commitment to demystification, the concept of the enigmatic signifier puts the brake on demystification’. See Dean, *Art*, p. 39.

challenges to the Law) and castration anxiety, or to insist that, taken as a whole, the movement would benefit from a collective moment of abreaction or catharsis.

As we have thus far noted in brief, the notion of ‘relative autonomy’ that we find in Althusser might supply a partial solution in this regard insofar as it shows how aesthetic forms cannot *only* exist as an expression of ideological or cultural conflicts, or that art cannot be fully determined by (or reducible to) its contextual matrix. Whilst further consideration of this aspect of post-Althusserianism will no doubt show up the many differences in the thinkers this thesis draws upon, it is hoped this will provide a fuller sense of what symptoms *might* be for ecocriticism, rather than what they *must* be. Rather than suggesting that ‘ecocentricity’, like environmentalism, is reducible to a sort of hysterical group fantasy, the consistency of which is maintained by a fantasmatic cast of ecologism (or ‘biophilia’) that would in effect, conceal a deeper absence or problematic, we might instead develop a fuller sense of what ecosubjectivity and ecosemiotics might amount to.<sup>100</sup>

The present thesis would not, then, merely amount to a project of actively reassuring ecocritics, or of challenging the assumptions that the theory from which they initially recanted maintains the sort of epistemological depredations that would threaten the biome itself. Crudely put, if the various social and cultural determinants comprising works of eco-literary merit (Thoreau, Dillard, Berry, Abbey et al) require a moment of ‘deconstruction’, then of necessity we would point out how an Althusserian Marxist would subsequently move to a crucial phase of *reconstruction*, even if during that phase he or she remains aware of the many contradictions her position contains. This is because like the contemporary ecocritic, an Althusserian Marxist would nevertheless work to retain a fundamentally political sense of what he or she is doing. And so however important the initial disregard for deconstruction remains to the movement’s ongoing aims and objectives, in what follows we will actively consider our post-Althusserian approaches and the extent to which these might again show how the movement might honour the fundamental neo-Marxist injunction: that the ecocritical problematic is not one of merely *interpreting* the world, but one of actively *changing* it.

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<sup>100</sup> The term ‘biophilia’ is taken from Edward O. Wilson and describes a blind irreverence for life. See Wilson, Edward O. *Biophilia*. (MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

Which returns us to consideration of the forces that would *arrest* change, whether institutional or extra-institutional. If we are to acknowledge how theory and politics suffer so problematic a relationship since the Fukuyaman ‘end of history’, it is of course crucial to acknowledge the degree to which they remain indivisible: ‘If, as Gramsci says, intellectuals in the capitalist state function as ‘experts in legitimation’, then theoretical criticism might be deemed the place where critiques of legitimacy are continually being carried out—in a quarter where they may seem to pose the least direct threat to social and political institutions.’<sup>101</sup> By way of analyses of critical pluralism as an effect of a politics of exclusion (particularly the exclusion of Marxism) within North American institutions throughout the cold war era, we have begun to obtain a first idea of an ecocritical prehistory. In doing so, we have established grounds for a form of ‘eco-clinic,’ or post-Althusserian ‘meta-commentary’ as apprised of theories of human subjectivity as of those that would enable critique at the institutional level. But in acknowledging several, often extremely disparate theories of the symptom as these might pertain to language, literature and the constraints facing professional criticism, so putatively ‘un-clinical’ a discipline as ecocriticism must surely reckon more fully with immanence if it is to accommodate and act on these concerns.

Despite the obvious ‘innocence’ or seemingly naïve gestures of a practice of reading that would favour the content of nature-writing and mimetic referentiality over stylistic or formal concerns, we might acknowledge more fully how any form of ‘interest’ necessarily keeps us from innocence despite abiding claims to a sort of post-human ethical immunity. Wheresoever a rejection of form persists on the grounds that it is most often obscurantist and hubristic, what, then, might lead us beyond a relatively simplistic assessment of this sort towards one accommodating of the numerous paradoxes at work in such issues? Surely it must be the concept of immanence.

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<sup>101</sup> Culler, *Criticisms*, p. 96.

Let us now consider the relationship between aesthetics and ideology for ecocriticism. This will give us to consider Kant's transcendental subject, and the manner in which sublime aesthetics necessarily presuppose it.

## **2: Violent Signs I**

## (i) Symptom / Sublime

Nature loves to hide

—Heraclitus<sup>1</sup>

By neglecting theoretical approaches to ‘nature writing’, ecocriticism risks neglecting too the relationship between ideology and aesthetics. Whilst it is heartening to note those few instances of second-wave ecocriticism that have embraced a measure of aesthetic theory, very few indeed have attempted a clinical understanding of the connection between desire, aesthetics and ideology. Whilst papers by Aaron Dunckel, James Kirwan, Rick van Noy and Lee Rozelle have suggested sublime aesthetics as something of an ideal mode of engagement for those ecocritics who would seek to enact a more theoretically-mature ‘second wave’, they have nevertheless fallen short of any metacritical analysis of the movement’s institutional locatedness and specifically, those instances of humanist liberalism that would constrain it.<sup>2</sup>

Having suggested approaches to the prehistory of North American ecocriticism in our first chapter, therefore, we might now seek to understand why such second-wave experiments with the aesthetic writings of Edmund Burke or the Kantian ‘analytic of the sublime’ have failed to produce an ecocriticism with a clinical component at its core. This will mean extending the concerns we began to broach in our first chapter regarding concepts, specifically where the desire to motivate them proves symptomatic of certain limits immanent to prevailing notions of ecocriticism. For any properly ‘critical’ approach, the aesthetic emphases we find in Kant’s late philosophy and the manner in which such writers as Zupančič and Žižek have subsequently deployed these in a political connection might be evaluated for their role in any ongoing diagnosis of

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<sup>1</sup> See Heraclitus, fragment cxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> See the following three papers: Noy, Rick Van. ‘Surveying the Sublime: Literary Cartographers and the Spirit of Place.’; Dunckel, Aaron. “‘Mont Blanc’: Shelley’s Sublime Allegory of the Real.’; Kirwan, James. ‘Vicarious Edification: Radcliffe and the Sublime’, each of which can be found in section III, ‘Rethinking Representation and The Sublime’ of *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment*. Ed. Steven Rosendale. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002). pgs 181-206, 207-223 and 224-246, respectively.

ecocriticism, particularly where a ‘clinical’ approach would recommend a genealogy of eco-cultural values.

This chapter will, therefore, continue to uphold an emphasis on ecocritical pre-history, which is to say with that which remains presupposed by its terms, whilst shifting the focus of discussion onto the relationship between subjectivity, aesthetics and value-formation. Unlike those examples cited above, however, our emphasis here will involve attention to Kantian aesthetic and moral philosophy as it relates to Lacanian theories of desire and the social. As such, we will initially embark upon a genealogical evaluation of the legacy of Kant’s transcendental Idealism and the extent to which it has underwritten both modern aesthetics and contemporary (eco) liberalism. Given the onus upon recognition and representation in Kant—what many post-Kantian critical theorists will name as a reductive fealty to ‘common sense’, or more precisely, a *common sensibility*—the fact that this subjective form has gone largely unacknowledged by ecocritics will give us to consider the eco-political value of bringing it to consciousness, particularly where the notion of *duty*, or a ‘deontological’ ethics remains principal to Kant’s ethico-aesthetic thesis.

As Žižek avers, not only did Kantian reason take its part in enabling Freud to postulate the unconscious, but his notion of the ‘categorical imperative’ has its psychoanalytic correspondent in Freud’s punitive, guilt-inducing ‘superego’, the psychic agency key to the success of any ideology.<sup>3</sup> This will have two consequences where our inspection of the sublime for ecocriticism is concerned: firstly, it will, as such Lacanians as Žižek and Zupančič have indicated, enable us to reckon with a certain *a priori* morality or ‘Lawfulness’ underwriting the very desire to do ecocriticism. This will have consequence for how we consider ideology for eco-literary research, specifically in relation to Lee Rozelle’s *Ecosublime* (2006), which holds that it is in the face of both awe-inspiring and catastrophic (or ‘sublime’) environmental events that we, and those North American literary figures who have preceded us, experience a deontological calling, a dutiful spur to act on behalf of our environs, but which ultimately tests our sense of what the social is. Where eco-virtue and the notion of the ‘eco-social’ are concerned, Rozelle’s methodological utility of the sublime

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<sup>3</sup> Žižek, *Sublime*, p. 88.

suggests itself as symptomatic of a certain utilitarian ethos, one that does not sufficiently inspect the values implicit in the Kantianism it privileges, and which therefore proves of metacritical concern, particularly when, as Zupančič has suggested, ‘the stronger the subject’s superego, the more this subject will be susceptible to the feeling of the sublime.’<sup>4</sup>

This is significant where Rozelle’s work, most apparently, appears to refrain from acknowledging its own basis in a liberal-humanist reading of Kant, treating the sublime moment as a spur to a *reformist* eco-politics, rather than towards any revolutionary, ‘post-humanist’ position, critical of its own imperatives. To emphasise the consequence of the superego for ecocriticism will accordingly entail a closer, eco-clinical examination of the relationship between sublimated desire and the partial satisfaction of drives in Lacanian thinking. By following Rozelle in his discussion of North American nature-writing, specifically his readings of Edgar Allen Poe and Isabella Bird, we might enter more fully into a meditation upon the very desire to read ecocritically, one that necessitates a coming to terms not only with those biospheric elements that elude representation, broaching upon the place of signification and interpretation and how the ‘desire of the Other’ proves consequential for ecocriticism, but with a certain ethical compromise with respect to what Lacan terms the ‘Real’. In other words, if in Lacan there is a basic distinction between desire (as hitched to the order of representation) and the unconscious drives that have no representable goal or object of satisfaction but rather only satisfaction *per se* as their object, then we might consider the place of the ‘will’ or drives when we seek to interpret nature-writing toward eco-political ends. Are such imperatives as ‘sustainability’ truly ‘eco-centric’ or merely ‘all-too-human’?

Once we have apprised ourselves of the humanist consequences of the Kantian legacy, noting the primacy of recognition and representation for transcendental Idealism, and thereafter how this takes its part in supporting a certain bourgeois conception of totality and meaning for society, we will take into account how Rozelle’s work may be reconceived of after Žižek’s Lacanian concern with ‘sublime objects of ideology’, those ineffable, unrepresentable objects, which, like ‘Nature’, can be said to ‘quilt’ the ideological fabric. Not only does Žižek’s psychoanalytic approach loan us a

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<sup>4</sup> Zupančič, Alenka. *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan*. (London: Verso, 2000). p. 154.

diagnostic perspective upon Kantianism as itself a symptom of an immanent limit in Enlightenment epistemology, but enables us to underscore how by proving symptomatic of an unthinkable element in Kant's own work, the term 'Nature' remains fundamentally aporetic, throwing into question any hasty, environmentalist deployment of his aesthetics. This thereafter enables us to consider how for all its apparent 'maturity', Rozelle's second-wave adoption of Kantianism inevitably remains inhibited by a trenchant liberal-humanism, chiefly where his motivation of sublime aesthetics fails to inspect the values inherent in Kant's own philosophy, therefore keeping it from precisely the type of deeper-reaching and *immanent* psycho-cultural analysis we have begun to prescribe above.

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We might begin, then, by considering how in the first half of the seventeenth-century, during the period following Descartes' inauguration of modern philosophy, empiricism and rationalism were ascendent as divergent, if not wholly opposed philosophical traditions. Whilst both sought to break with pre-modern dogmatism and metaphysics, it would not be until the latter half of the eighteenth-century, however, at the apex of the Enlightenment, that Kant's 'Copernican revolution' would begin to lay the groundwork for a fully-fledged 'aesthetic' theory, or one in which a reflection upon the site of experience—upon that which 'gives' the phenomenal world—would necessitate a rigorous account of humanity's basis in representation.<sup>5</sup> Taking empirical knowledge as entirely synthetic, as *a posteriori* or derived from experience, Kant viewed the rationalists as arguing instead for an analytic, *a priori* basis for knowledge, or knowledge derived from that which is inherent to reason. This elementary divide

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<sup>5</sup> It is in the preface to the second edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason* (first ed. 1781; second ed. 1787) that Kant compares himself to Copernicus, announcing that he has effected a Copernican 'revolution' in philosophy: 'We should then be proceeding precisely on the lines of Copernicus' primary hypothesis'. More particularly with respect to 'point of view', Kant writes: '[concerning] the invisible force that holds the universe together... [it] would have remained forever undiscovered if Copernicus had not dared in a manner contradictory of the senses, but yet true, to seek the observed movements not in the heavenly bodies, but in the spectator. The change in point of view, analogous to this hypothesis, which is expounded in the Critique, I put forward in this preface as a hypothesis only, in order to draw attention to the character of these first attempts at such a change, which are always hypothetical. But in the Critique, itself it will be proved, apodeictically not hypothetically, from the nature of our representations of space and time and from the elementary concepts of the understanding'. See *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Ed. Norman Kemp Smith. (London: Macmillan, 1933). pgs. 22, 25.

between the analytic (as *a priori*) and synthetic (as *a posteriori*) enabled him to readily (if somewhat reductively) characterise the work of his predecessors and thereafter, to argue for a much revised, ‘transcendental’ conception of knowledge.

As a ‘critical philosophy’, therefore, Kantianism would supersede previous rationalist and empiricist philosophies insofar as it allowed for a form of knowledge that could be both synthetic and *a priori*. This is because for Kant, whilst any emphasis upon relations to the outside world must be synthetic, we must nevertheless remain concerned with the *form* of the relations and not with that which is experienced, with those *a priori* structures that ‘give’ experience rather than the *content* of discrete experiences. For Kant, this pure, ‘transcendental’ form of ‘synthesis’ remains both consistent and universal. Yielding the transcendental ‘subject’, this Copernican turn inaugurates ‘point of view’, or the discovery of that which remains *presupposed* by experience: a ‘supersensible’ (or ‘noumenal’) *subjectivity*. Kantianism remains ‘Idealist’, therefore, inasmuch as the mind is upheld as the ground of all experience: ‘if I remove the thinking subject, the whole material world must at once vanish because it is nothing but a phenomenal appearance in the sensibility of ourselves as a subject, and a manner or species of representation.’<sup>6</sup>

It is precisely because the subject is *not* another object of rational knowledge but the very *power* to ‘give’ (or represent) objects that it can be distinguished from that which is causally determined.<sup>7</sup> For Kant, this ‘Law-giving’ ‘power’—one that conditions rather than is conditioned—opens onto the *practical* vocation of Reason and thus grounds morality; an autonomous subject is non-determinable as an object and ultimately wields the ‘faculty’ (or power) of judgement (*Urteilkraft*). Significantly,

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<sup>6</sup> Kant, *Pure*, p. 383.

<sup>7</sup> Symptomatic of the early phases of modernity, Descartes’ cogito subjected thought to a grounding substance within the world and thus foreclosed the question of how this substance would itself be known. Inaugurating the first critiques of Cartesianism, Kant therefore reformulated the subject as that synthesising power which determines being as substance. Kantianism thus prompts us to enquire if it is possible to think the very possibility of representation itself without positing a human who represents. If we persist in the belief that the subject is itself a type of substance then we not only forgo true autonomy, but misrecognise a movement as a reified thing or substance. Kantianism holds that we must recognise the subject as that which permits the very possibility of the thinking of things; rather than a represented thing, the subject is a procedure of representation that, as Kant maintains in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, averts the anthropologist error of tracing and explaining things in general from one more empirical thing (i.e., man, mind, or res cogitans).

this will include aesthetic judgements of ‘beauty’ and ‘sublimity’ and which remain indissociable from notions of nature’s ‘purposiveness without purpose’ in the case of judgements of beauty (or serving no purpose whilst nevertheless appearing to), and an incarnation of immense power, infinity, or extreme turbulence in the case of judgements of sublimity.<sup>8</sup> This will prove ideologically significant for our concerns with eco-literature when we consider how for Kant, such judgements pertain in different ways to a *polis* via the notion of a *sensus communis* or ‘common sense’.

For our ‘eco-clinical’ purposes, then, we can begin to approach this link between aesthetic judgements, common sense and ideology by first considering in more detail how Kant’s aesthetic theory relates to his moral philosophy. We can then move to link our findings to the assertions of Žižek and Zupančič regarding the Freudian superego, thereafter acknowledging how their work in turn takes its part in a Lacanian understanding of desire and the social for eco-literary research. Before considering it in any depth, we can begin by acknowledging Kant’s third *Critique* as unifying the aims of the first two, drawing together the transcendental approach and its practical and moral implications. Thereafter we can ascertain that judgements, defined as the subsumption of a particular under a universal (a concept)—say for example in the way that a general rule might be applied to particular instances—play a crucial role in the synthetic *a priori* basis of Idealism, which gives us to understand Kantian morality as equally *a priori*. This is important where ‘common sense’ possesses a ‘legislative’ function.

Because, for Kant, judgements can be said to mediate between Understanding, or that which supplies concepts (such as the universal itself) and Reason, which draws inferences, they therefore supply a certain *unity*.<sup>9</sup> Where ‘common sense’ is concerned, then, such ‘unity’ proves eco-politically significant, particularly where aesthetic judgements remain key to an ideological understanding of subjective autonomy and moral activity in an ‘environmental’ epoch. Specifically, it is important to think here in terms of the ‘legislative’ power of the notions of ‘common’ and ‘good’ sense as they

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<sup>8</sup> Kant, *Judgement*, § 22.

<sup>9</sup> Simply put: ‘my ability to judge effectively is thus determined by my ability to apply a general concept, which has universal validity and which exists prior to experience’. See Shaw, Philip. *The Sublime*. (London: Routledge, 2006). p. 76.

govern Kant's faculty of judgement. Although our focus will remain with aesthetics and shortly, with how these relate to our eco-literary concerns, the fact remains that aesthetic judgements ultimately have ethical consequence in Kant's epistemology. As Deleuze has indicated, despite his emphasis upon immanent critique, Kant's characteristic shortcoming is that he does not allow for the internal generation of sense from a particular problem, and which he appears to sustain 'in order to preserve the ethical accord of the faculties.'<sup>10</sup> Although we will not discuss the strictly philosophical conception of the problem and its relation to the faculties here at any length, it is nevertheless crucial to note how this 'accord' of the faculties is one integral to the ethical role of judgement in the operation of pure and practical reason, rendering it, as Deleuze has noted, 'inevitable that common sense should seem to us a kind of a priori fact beyond which we cannot go.'<sup>11</sup>

As we will see in chapter three, for a thinker like Deleuze, Kant's evaluative (and pre-emptive) need for 'just measure or "justice"' is of great importance to understanding non-ecological attitudes as it forces a certain closure in Kantian epistemology, an inhibition that as we will shortly see, not only loans his moral philosophy all too readily to a universal, liberal 'sensitivity', one that remains palpable in contemporary environmentalism, but does so by way of an *a priori* logic of 'sense' that retains a fealty to the assumption that thought must necessarily possess a good and upright nature and thus have truth as its object: '[Common sense] designates ... an a priori accord of faculties, or more precisely the 'result' of such an accord. [...] Common sense appears not as a psychological given but as the subjective condition of all 'communicability'. [...] Kant will never give up the subjective principle of a common sense of this type [...] the idea of a good nature of the faculties of a healthy and upright nature which allows them to harmonize with one another and to form harmonious proportions.'<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Farrell, Patricia. 'The Philosopher-Monkey: Learning and the Discordant Harmony of the Faculties.' *Thinking Between Deleuze and Kant: A Strange Encounter*. Eds. Edward Willatt and Matt Lee. (London: Continuum, 2009): 11-27. p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> See Deleuze, Gilles. *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. (London: Athlone, 1984). p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Deleuze, *Kant*, p. 21.

Because our concerns are with a Lacanian reading of Kant's aesthetic and moral philosophy, for now we will suspend any engagement with Deleuze's post-Kantianism, focusing instead upon how Kant describes aesthetic judgements in particular as 'disinterested'—which is to say that in elevating us above the world of objects, of sensible flora and fauna, the faculty of judgement ultimately tells us more about the functioning of the human mind and the libidinal economy underwriting it than about the properties of nature *per se*. Taken together with the legislations of common sense, it is in this way that we might begin to register how transcendental Idealism loans itself to an 'un-ecological' instrumentalism. As Nick Land has shown, this is chiefly by virtue of Kant's 'universal form', or that 'which is necessary for anything to be 'on offer' for experience, it is the 'exchange value' that first allows a thing to be marketed to the enlightenment mind.'<sup>13</sup> This enables us to begin to bridge 'mere' aesthetic concerns with our clinical concerns with desire and environmental ideology.<sup>14</sup>

As a basis for a universal, secular subjectivity, for our relations to alterity or the 'otherness' we encounter in experience, the representational logic of Kantian idealism must therefore be acknowledged wheresoever it might be said to support a non-'ecological', or broadly instrumentalist outlook, wheresoever it might be said to structure our Western cultural assumptions, largely through its demonstrable amenability to capitalist modes of exchange. Before looking at how certain forms of Marxo-Lacanian thinking can aid us in thinking through these issues, it is important to stress further how Kant's *universalism* of human (re)cognition relates to his moral philosophy. This is of especial interest where it implies the assumption of universal qualities that would result in the denial of specifics, which, in our case, may mean the disregarding not only of unique environmental factors, but of all the differences that might constitute and concern those individuals who live in different cultures and climes and therefore whose relationship to the biome is equally specific. We encounter this reductionism in Kant when we consider how common-sense relates to the aspiration of individual virtue described by the 'categorical imperative', one within which we are

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<sup>13</sup> Land, Nick. *Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987-2007*. (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2011). p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Beauty, for example, 'is not a concept of an object, and a judgement of taste is not a cognitive judgement. All it assumes is that we are justified in presupposing universally in all people the same subjective conditions of the power of judgement that we find in ourselves.' See Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement*. Trans. Walter S. Pulsar. (Indianapolis and Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987). § 15 and p. 156.

bidden to '[a]ct only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.'<sup>15</sup>

The categorical imperative has significant implications for any insufficiently metacritical stripe of 'eco-virtue', which as we will consider, might risk retaining precisely that which would appear most anathema to its aims and objectives: an autonomous, 'all-too-human' moral subject. Like other Nietzschean neo-Marxists, Nick Land suggests that with Kantianism, 'Western cultural history culminates in a self-reflecting bourgeois civilization.'<sup>16</sup> This seems especially pertinent where our concerns are with the tendencies toward all-too-liberal forms of eco-critique, particularly when we acknowledge Stephan Körner's eco-cultural nuancing of the categorical imperative, observing that as all effects happen in accordance with laws of *nature*, one must '[a]ct as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a *universal law of nature*.'<sup>17</sup>

These concerns prove most interesting from a clinical, symptomatological perspective when we consider how the third *Critique* is often considered to indicate that Kant had reached a certain threshold in his thinking, gesturing towards a type of philosophy 'to come' that in his elderly years he personally did not have the strength to formulate. As our concerns will increasingly lie with issues of an impersonal and productive unconscious, this is a broader, epistemic point that we will return to again and again throughout the thesis. For now, let us look in more detail at the last offering of Kant's philosophical career, his *Kritik der Urteilkraft* [*Critique of Judgement*] (1790), noting the distinction he draws in that study between judgements of beauty and sublimity, and moreover the significance of 'disinterestedness' for them. It is by way of disinterestedness that we can begin to link the categorical imperative to our nominally aesthetic concerns. Let us begin by noting how Kant distinguishes between the quality of the affects attending our appreciation of the beautiful from those attending that of the sublime. 'The former delight is very different from the latter in kind', Kant comments,

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<sup>15</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (2nd ed.) Trans. James W. Ellington. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994). p. 421.

<sup>16</sup> Land, *Fanged*, p. 60.

<sup>17</sup> Körner, Stephan. *Kant*. (Middlesex: Penguin, 1955). p. 136.

...for the beautiful is directly attended with a feeling of the furtherance of life; and is thus compatible with charms and a playful imagination. On the other hand, the feeling of the sublime is a pleasure that only arises indirectly, being brought about by the feeling of a momentary check to the vital forces followed at once by a discharge all the more powerful, and so it is an emotion that seems to be no sport ... charms are repugnant to it; and since the mind is not simply attracted by the object, but is also alternately repelled thereby, the delight in the sublime ... merits the name of the negative pleasure.<sup>18</sup>

As we have noted in brief, Kant gives the beautiful as that judgement concerned with harmony and form; nature does not trouble us in this regard and such judgements suggest nature as containable and therefore under one's control. By contrast, however, the sublime is that which exceeds or overflows our powers to attribute immediate form and measure to an object, presenting 'a momentary check to the vital forces.' This results from the failure of the faculty of Imagination to represent to itself such powerful and infinite natural phenomena as 'volcanoes in all their violence of destruction; hurricanes with their track of devastation; the boundless oceans in a state of tumult.'<sup>19</sup> Yet regulated as it is by common sense, the 'legislative' faculty of Understanding eventually triumphs over such failure, amounting to 'a discharge all the more powerful', or the triumph of the quintessentially human power of Reason. When contemplating the stars, for example, the failure of Imagination to present an object 'fit' for Understanding does not prevent us from sustaining an 'Idea' of the universe as infinitely massive. Understanding supplies the concept of infinity, which is presented *negatively* by virtue of the inability of Imagination to present an object that would be adequate to this concept.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Later, Kant again stresses that this 'negative pleasure' is a kind of pleasure-in-pain, at once 'a feeling of displeasure, arising from the inadequacy of imagination in the aesthetic estimation of magnitude to attain to its estimation by reason, and a simultaneously awakened pleasure, arising from the very judgement of the inadequacy of the greatest faculty of sense being in accord with ideas of reason.' See Kant, *Judgement*, § 23 and § 27.

<sup>19</sup> Kant, *Judgement*, § 28.

<sup>20</sup> 'The sublime cannot be contained in any sensible form' because it 'only concerns ideas of reason, which, though they cannot be exhibited adequately, are aroused and called to mind by this very inadequacy, which can be exhibited in sensibility.' See Kant, *Judgement*, § 23.

As Philip Shaw puts it, “whereas natural beauty’ provides judgement with an echo of its own capacity for self-determination, so that nature appears ‘preadapted’ or ‘purposive’ to this faculty, the sublime, by contrast, appears to frustrate judgement, to the extent of calling its autonomy into question. The sublime is... an affront or ‘outrage’ to our powers of comprehension.”<sup>21</sup> Yet this affront is short lived insofar as it results in a moment in which we identify a greater power within ourselves; Reason is that power which, as we have begun to suggest, guarantees subjective autonomy and therefore the capacity for morality.

Yet it is by way of a particular ‘disinterestedness’ that, as Zupančič points out, points to a certain divide within the house of Reason, enabling us to broach upon how Kantianism opens up the Freudian notion of the superego. For Zupančič, in the sublime moment ‘the subject is confronted with the traumatic proximity of a (threatening) Thing, and responds by introducing a new distance, a kind of disinterestedness in face of something of drastic concern. This is precisely what Kant refers to as the *pathos of apathy*.’<sup>22</sup> If a sense of mastery over nature can be said to be obtainable from judgements of beauty, which is itself ultimately tied to the very power to judge, then the sublime proves curious insofar as the disinterestedness that accompanies it ultimately results in a certain distance from the reasoning ego. For Freud, this rests upon the superego, upon the subject’s having ‘withdrawn the psychical accent from his ego and having transposed it on to his superego. To the superego, thus inflated, the ego can appear tiny and all its interests trivial.’<sup>23</sup> It is in this way that a sense of elevation or distance from both the ego and its sensible relation to the world is attained.

As Zupančič confirms, this elevation is common to both the sublime and the superego: ‘This dominion the subject feels over herself and her ‘natural existence’ is precisely the capacity of the superego to force the subject, despite all the demands of reality, to act contrary to her well-being, to renounce her interests, needs, pleasure, and

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<sup>21</sup> Shaw, *Sublime*, p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Zupančič, *Ethics*, p. 154.

<sup>23</sup> Freud, Sigmund. *Art and Literature*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988) (The Pelican Freud Library, vol. 14). p. 430-31.

all that binds her to the ‘sensible world.’<sup>24</sup> As such, disinterestedness is a first clinical outcome of the ‘negative pleasure’ experienced in the sublime moment, and which enables Žižek to develop his thesis on ‘sublime objects of ideology.’ In order to grasp how Žižek fuses Kantian aesthetics and Freud-o-Lacanian libidinal theory to ideology critique, we need to initially consider two things: firstly, how such negative pleasure might be given in terms of ‘*jouissance*’, or of an unrepresentable and thus excluded surplus that betokens the unbearable ‘kernel’ of the Real, and secondly, how this relates to Symbolic castration, to the signifying totality of language as a differential system of relations and the necessary sublimation of desire constitutive of the socio-symbolic order. In this way we can, as Žižek does, extend Laclau and Mouffe’s notion of the ‘empty signifier’ at the heart of their Marxo-Lacanian approach towards an eco-clinical diagnosis of this relation and how can it help us to understand signification and meaning for ecocriticism, an eco-literary discipline that in its earliest publications, sought to demote both psychoanalytic and textual concerns.<sup>25</sup>

As we saw in our first chapter when we followed Althusser and Balibar’s analysis of catachresis in Marx’s writing, the relationship between text and concepts is as much a clinical concern as a critical one. But we have yet to engage Lacanian concerns with signification at any length. We might, therefore, begin by acknowledging a symptomatic difficulty wheresoever the word ‘Nature’ appears in Kant’s work. Prior to engaging in the politics of the empty signifier, it seems imperative to consider how, by initially defining Nature as the whole of phenomenal reality, Kant later asserts another conception of Nature as ‘the kingdom of ethical goals, as the community of all rational ethical beings.’<sup>26</sup> As Žižek suggests, the structural ambiguity of this word can here help us to diagnose Kant’s motivations of ‘human nature’ and that which is considered to exist ‘beyond’ it: ‘for both Kant and Sade, the recourse to “nature” is a symptomatic gesture by means of which they shrink from the ultimate consequences of their theoretical edifice’.<sup>27</sup> Monique David-Menard puts a finer point on this when she

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<sup>24</sup> Zupančič, *Ethics*, pgs. 154-55.

<sup>25</sup> As Žižek acknowledges, it was Laclau and Mouffe’s work that first suggested to him the use of the ‘Lacanian conceptual apparatus as a tool in the analysis of ideology.’ See Žižek, *Sublime*, p. xvi. See also Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. (Second Edition). (London: Verso, 1985).

<sup>26</sup> Žižek, Slavoj. *The Parallax View*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006). p. 93.

<sup>27</sup> For many Lacanians, Sade is largely considered to be ‘the truth of Kant’; As Žižek has it: ‘Sade is the symptom of Kant’. Which is to say, the former enables us to understand the extent to which the latter’s

writes: ‘Nature is, in Sade as well as in Kant, the symptom of that which remains unthought in these two thinkers of the universal.’<sup>28</sup> This acknowledgement of the ‘unthought’—not only of that which perhaps *cannot be thought*, but equally, that which Kant and Sade (or any other writer) did not perhaps have the ‘strength’ for—provides a means of grasping what Lacan’s psychoanalytic concerns with signification amount to for an eco-clinical approach to an individual, cultural or political unconscious, both where specific writers are concerned, and particularly in the case of Kant, to that which his subjectivist legacy has bequeathed the Occidental imagination.<sup>29</sup>

Just as Zupančič has suggested, we might draw a metonymical correlation between the ‘cruelty’ that we find in the actual, biospheric world of ‘Nature’, in the example, say, of a hurricane or volcanic eruption, and ‘the cruel, unbridled and menacing superego – the ‘real or reverse side’ of the moral law (in us), of the superego as the place of *jouissance*.’<sup>30</sup> It is in this elliptical way, via a sort of catachresis in Kant, that we can acknowledge more fully how desire invests our social and linguistic structures (or Lacan’s ‘Symbolic Order’) and why the dialectic between sublimation and sublimity might hold a key to understanding ecocritical ethics. A further question might then be: how is it that *jouissance* figures that which *exceeds* our Symbolic structures and why might the ‘psychoanalytic sublime’ of Zupančič and Žižek supply us with a critical-clinical rubric with which to address this ‘surplus’? This question is one that enables us to exceed our own emphasis upon the purely epistemological relationship between sensibility and reason, broaching more fully upon an ontological and materialist analysis of desire *vis-à-vis* biospheric experience, and so that we might ultimately reckon with its pertinence to ‘nature writing’. It pays, therefore, to follow

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model of subjective and moral autonomy remains bound to a notion of Law that often renders fealty to it a painful experience; the ethical paradox being that ‘...societies prosper as a result of the transgression of [their] maxims’. See Žižek, *Parallax*, pgs. 93-4,.; also. Lacan, *Écrits* p. 78.

<sup>28</sup> David-Menard, Monique. *Les constructions de l’universel*. (Paris: PUF, 1997). p. 64.

<sup>29</sup> In his own diagnosis of both Kant and Sade’s views of Nature, Žižek writes: ‘...in Kant as well as in Sade, the “elementary” neutral notion of Nature as the indifferent mechanism that follows its course is supplemented by another, “ethical” notion of Nature (the suprasensible kingdom of ethical goals; the diabolical commandment to pursue the evil path of destruction); and, in both cases, this second notion of Nature masks a certain gesture of shrinking back, of avoiding confrontation with the ultimate paradox of one’s position: the uncanny abyss of freedom without any ontological guarantee in the Order of Being’. See Žižek, *Parallax*, p. 93.

<sup>30</sup> Zupančič, *Ethics*, p. 156.

Zupančič's lead at this juncture and turn more fully to Lacan in this regard, prior to engaging Žižek's political extension of Laclau and Mouffe.

Lacan's discussions of literature and theatre, particularly those concerning Sophocles and Joyce, would not, on first impression, appear to lend themselves to an ecocritical understanding of the sublime.<sup>31</sup> Despite how contentious it remains to pursue Lacan ecocritically, however, it is nevertheless by way of his principal conceit of the Symbolic Order or 'Big Other'—the intersubjective matrix of language, meaning and social convention—that we can move beyond our initial diagnosis of the elementary 'self-deceptions' and distortions constitutive of the ecocritical first-wave, towards an account of eco-literature and environmental ethics that would consider the motivation of specific aesthetic concepts. As Steven Rosendale indicates, the sublime is an ethico-aesthetic concept that would seem ready-made for eco-literary reception: 'Since most notions of the sublime include a recognition of the strictly unrepresentable elements of the human experience of the environment, the sublime might [...] prove a particularly powerful concept for thinking about the limits, purposes, and potential of nature writing'.<sup>32</sup> Understood in light of the Lacanian Symbolic, it is Rosendale's acknowledgement of the 'unrepresentable elements of the human experience of the environment' in relation to the 'limits' of nature-writing that enables us to engage Lacanianism by way of the turn that such thinkers of ideology as Eagleton and Žižek have made to Kantian aesthetics in particular, enabling us to 'more rigorously formalise the object of ideology-critique'.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the limits of 'common' and 'good' sense that we have registered in Kant's philosophy, limits that might readily be conceived of as blockages or symptoms

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<sup>31</sup> As Philip Shaw notes, despite his interest in the excessive and the unbounded, qualities that Kant attributed to the sublime in his third *Critique*, Lacan does not present a fully elaborated analysis of the concept. Twice in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1986) he asserts the centrality of the sublime to his thought, yet in the first case, leaves the task of explaining it to another speaker, whose discourse is not published in the proceedings of the seminar. In the second case, his promise to 'take up the question' of 'the Kantian definition of the sublime' is left unresolved. See Shaw, Philip. *The Sublime*. (London: Routledge, 2006). pgs. 135, 286, 301.

<sup>32</sup> Rosendale, Steven. 'Introduction: Extending Ecocriticism'. *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory and the Environment*. Ed. Steven Rosendale. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002). xv-xxix. p. xxiv.

<sup>33</sup> Sharpe, Matthew. 'The Aesthetics of Ideology, or 'The Critique of Ideological Judgment' in Eagleton and Žižek.' *Political Theory*. Vol. 34. No. 1. (Feb., 2006): 95-120. p. 116.

indicative of the post-Kantianism that would inevitably succeed him, how precisely does his aesthetic turn relate to our ideological concerns? We have seen how for Zupančič the sublime can readily be conceived of in terms of the superego, yet how does this relate to the type of Marxo-Lacanian ideology critique we are prescribing for ecocriticism more broadly? If for a non-Lacanian Marxist like Eagleton, Kant's notion of beauty supports a *sensus communis*, or sense of a universal bond between individuals via agreements in *taste*, then this offers an understanding of ideology as that anticipation of a community of subjects similarly *affected*. For Žižek, however, it is a Lacanian understanding of the sublime that enables a 'politics of ineffability', or one in which the Master Signifier essential to the Law—in our case, that of 'Nature', which is essential to eco-ideology—and which is by definition a 'signifier-without-signified', or that someTHING about which we are never precisely certain, signals our acceptance of what others accept, or more precisely, '*identification with the very gesture of identification.*'<sup>34</sup>

It is in this way that such signifiers can be said to be 'sublime'; understood after Lacan's reading of the Freudian 'Thing' (*das Ding*), or an unapproachable, metonymical object that stands in for the Real, and which promises a sense of ultimate contact and fulfilment. Not only do they assure an ideological 'quilting' of all other signifiers in any network of political 'meaning', but they at once paradoxically trouble it. As Sharpe maintains, Žižek places 'a theoretical emphasis on how a political *sensus communis* is always constituted by reference to certain master signifiers, whose persuasive efficacy as the 'quilting points' of ideologies depend on the sublimity of what they (are taken to) invoke'.<sup>35</sup> It is key, then, to acknowledge how, although Lacan evidently neglects the strictly 'environmental' implications of the Kantian sublime, turning away from any immediate concern with the ecological implications of instrumental Reason, which by producing a concept of infinity or power sustains a sense of human mastery over nature, it is nevertheless the manner in which Žižek motivates his psychoanalytic theory that we can develop what Donougho terms a 'pragmatics of the sublime', or 'what is done or performed in judging or experiencing something to be sublime, along with the often tacit assumptions made about how others

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<sup>34</sup> Sharpe, *Aesthetics*, p. 112 and Žižek, Slavoj. *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters*. (London: Verso, 1996). p. 142.

<sup>35</sup> Sharpe, *Aesthetics*, p. 117.

will likely receive it.’<sup>36</sup> Such ‘structural’ awareness is crucial to our thesis, particularly given that the sublime ‘has usually been taken as implicating subjectivity or selfhood in some crucial way’, an implication that suggests why ‘a focus on performativity might prove revealing of this process.’<sup>37</sup> By looking to how the doctrine of the sublime relates to the Lacanian concept of sublimation we can begin to assess how it is that environmentalism and ecocritical approaches to literature are ultimately inscribed within the Symbolic Order.

Reversing Freud’s view of the process by which the libido is transferred from a material object (the body of the mother, for example) towards an object that has no obvious connection with this need (the love of God or ‘Gaia’), for Lacan the libido is instead shifted ‘from the void of the “unserviceable” Thing to some concrete, material object of need that assumes a ‘sublime’ quality the moment it occupies the place of the Thing.’<sup>38</sup> This shift, *is* sublimation, is in itself the essence of the Real-Symbolic relationship; as we saw in our introduction, it amounts to the creation of a signifier by way of a ‘phallic’ prohibition or Symbolic castration, enabling us to underwrite any psycho-cultural assessment of ideology. Not only can we acknowledge how desire invests the social field, but how linguistic, aesthetic and moral concerns are interlaced. Just as Freud followed Kant in characterising his discovery of the unconscious as ‘Copernican’ in magnitude, or one displacing man’s relationship to the cosmos, it is by way of *das Ding* that we can understand how for Lacan the sublime is integral to understanding the sublimation process, relating to his linguistic re-formulation of the unconscious, within which the Real, like the concept of infinity in the Kantian sublime, is constituted *negatively* in the formation of a signifier. As the primary absence or ‘wound’ at the centre of the Real, the Thing becomes that ‘sublime’ object without which signification could not occur: ‘the fashioning of the signifier and the introduction of a gap or a hole in the real is identical.’<sup>39</sup>

If the Real ‘is revealed in and through the limits of language’, then we can see how sublimation, or the investiture of desire that founds religion, science, culture, and art,

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<sup>36</sup> Donougho, Martin. ‘Stages of the Sublime in North America.’ *MLN*. Vol. 115. No. 5. Comparative Literature Issue. (Dec., 2000): 909-940. p. 910.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Žižek, *Reader*, p.157.

<sup>39</sup> Lacan, *Ethics*, p. 121.

remains integral to human processes of language and meaning making. Thereafter, we can acknowledge how sublime experience is paradoxically that which both founds and troubles meaning after a metonymical exposure to the Real by way of the Thing; ecocriticism then appears as a formation concerned less with meaning as with imparting a new relationship to sublimity, or to the constitutive ‘violences’ of non-human alterity. Moreover, the Real can be read as constituting a ‘critique of symbolic, signifying categories’ predicated upon the sense that ‘[w]e have become aware that language is not innocent, and we feel the effects in our words, in our actions, and in our bodies... even if we would prefer to deny this awareness.’<sup>40</sup> As the metonymical agent of the Real, the Thing therefore is therefore a key to broaching a link between aesthetic (critical) and pathic (clinical) approaches; it cannot be presented yet must be presupposed. It is therefore of the order of the unconscious yet sublime for being ‘impossible for us to imagine it.’<sup>41</sup>

As ‘interior’ as these concerns appear, it is through the Thing as ‘sublime object’, or as that which marks the limit of symbolisation, that we can check how a fundamental emptiness, ‘the-beyond-of-the-signified’ without which signification could not occur, relates not only to our concerns with literature, but to (eco)social formations more substantially.<sup>42</sup> As Philip Shaw puts it, ‘[o]bjects that come to signify this beyond become infinitely attractive, fearful, overbearing, or more simply ‘sublime.’’<sup>43</sup> From an ecological perspective we might therefore reconsider not only the sublimity that accompanies our experience of the boundlessness of the oceans or outer space, but equally when confronted with specific moments of ecological catastrophe, with the volcanic activity of Eyjafjallajökull, the devastations of Hurricane Katrina, or even the profligate spectre of burning Iraqi oil wells during the two gulf wars. In unpicking the relationship between inside and outside, between human interiority and environmental milieu, we might acknowledge how the sublimity of the Thing imparts a sense of strangeness, of unease, an uncanny force that marks an alienation that is primary and which is only partially mediated by our relationship to the Symbolic Order, which is itself effected by the detour of sublimation. So again, while Lacan never fully develops

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<sup>40</sup> Crockett, Clayton. *Interstices of the Sublime: Theology and Psychoanalytic Theory*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007). p. 160.

<sup>41</sup> Lacan, *Ethics*, p. 125.

<sup>42</sup> Lacan, *Ethics*, p. 54.

<sup>43</sup> Shaw, *Sublime*, p. 135.

his thesis on the sublime, there are substantial resources in his triad of Real, Symbolic and Imaginary registers for our eco-clinical project, not least insofar as the relationship between the sublimation of the Symbolic (or ‘Big Other’) and the sublimity of the Thing helps us to restore an emphasis upon subjectivity to ecocritical debate.

In this way we can begin to redress our concerns with *jouissance* and such concepts as ‘Nature’ after Žižek’s thesis on sublime objects of ideology. Given the centrality of the term to contemporary environmentalism as an ‘ideological fantasy’—Nature’s status as a Master Signifier—we must here stress how such networks of meaning are ultimately governed by our superegoic desire to ‘enjoy’ or share in the *jouissance* that a particular fantasy promises. For Žižek,

the Master-Signifier is the privileged site at which fantasy intervenes, since the function of fantasy is precisely to fill in the void of the signifier-without-signified: that is to say, fantasy is ultimately, at its most elementary, the stuff which fills in the void of the Master-Signifier: again, in the case of a Nation, all the mythic obscure narratives which tell us what the Nation is.<sup>44</sup>

In other words, ideology exceeds a subject’s confrontation with it. This is because it is raised to the power of a transcendental object and there is only a recognition of its incomprehensibility at the superegoic level which both demands and governs our desire for pleasure-pain (*jouissance*). For consensual political hegemony to exist there has to be an elevation of Things to a sublime transcendental status—as sublime objects that act as empty Master Signifiers functioning below the level of language and the imagination to shape and frame an ‘ideological fantasy’.

To the extent that there is belief in the sublime objects offered that remain incomprehensible, ineffable and therefore superegoic (God, the Great Leader, Democracy, Freedom, the Party), the subject remains interpellated within the system through desire to belong to it, willing to sacrifice its *jouissance*

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<sup>44</sup> Žižek, *Parallax*, p. 373.

so as to participate in its shared *jouissance*. To the extent that certain issues remain too important to question since social cohesion depends on them, subjectivization sticks since the confrontation with the Real, which is the subject of *jouissance* (enjoyment), is evaded. The Symbolic and the Imaginary remain in tune with each other—the result is political acquiescence.<sup>45</sup>

Where *eco-literary* research is our object, then, Kant's location at the dawn of modern aesthetic theory supplies us, largely by way of Žižek's Lacanian understanding of signification, with a clear reference as part of a broader diagnosis of the emergence of modernist subjectivity *per se* and its sustainment under a late capitalist, 'eco-social' epoch. If both Eagleton and Žižek extend the post-Lacanian lessons of Althusser, which is to say, the move 'from a cognitive to an *affective* theory of ideology', then they do so in such a way as to transform their forebear's approach by way of Kant, developing critical theories that whilst remaining dependent upon some notion of a psycho-cultural unconscious, re-assert the capitalist subject as one for whom certain *aesthetic* judgments remain essential, particularly under the moral and ethical dilemmas of post-modern consumerism.<sup>46</sup>

### **(ii) An Eco-Clinical Analysis of Lee Rozelle's *Ecosublime***

We might, then, begin to engage Žižek's approach more fully with a closer examination of Rozelle's *Ecosublime* (2006), a thesis which at first blush, would appear altogether 'eco-clinical' in scope:

What occurs for American spectators as scenes of material collapse permeate the media-enhanced image bubble is the

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<sup>45</sup>Jagodzinski, Jan. 'Struggling with Žižek's Ideology: The Deleuzian Complaint, Or, Why is Žižek a Disguised Deleuzian in Denial?'. *International Journal of Žižek Studies*. Vol. 4. No. 1. 1-18. p. 4.

<sup>46</sup>Eagleton's concerns with ideological 'naturalisation' bear upon the shaping of: '... our unconscious affective relations with the world,... the ways in which we are pre-reflectively bound up with the world ... how that reality 'strikes' us in the form of apparently spontaneous experience ... the ways in which human subjects are at stake in it, investing in their relations to social life as a crucial part of what it is to be themselves.' See Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology*. (London: Verso, 1991). Pgs. 18-19.

emergence of an ecocidal imagination, a toxic second self that festers just below the ego's surface until the awe and terror of environmental destruction moves members of American commodity culture from our extended adolescence.<sup>47</sup>

In addressing (amongst others) Isabella Bird, Edgar Allen Poe and Nathanael West—North American writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—Rozelle's study would appear to connect environmental concerns to literary research in important ways. Specifically, however, it is by way of the psychoanalytic vocabulary in which portions of *Ecosublime* is ostensibly couched—deploying such notions as 'ecocide', 'toxic selves' and 'ego'—that Rozelle's project appears to present precisely a post-Kantian concern with subjectivity under North American consumerism equal to a 'mature', second-wave approach. Where Rozelle describes environmental destruction to 'move' members of North American commodity culture, we might already infer how it is an *affective* approach that is supplying Rozelle with a means of addressing the relationship between non- and unrepresentable forces in relation to an experiencing subject. In fact, we might be forgiven for assuming that Rozelle is forging precisely the link between sublimity and psychoanalytic theories of desire that our thesis has thus far recommended: '...the ecosublime comes when the boundary between self and the postnatural world becomes permeated in a shock of transformation.'<sup>48</sup>

Prior, however, to considering how this is simply not the case, we might consider the positive aspects of a study that offers a number of refinements to its subject area. Much less bibliocentric than many of its forebears, *Ecosublime* proves exceptionally generous in scope, asserting that 'ecosublimity' remains obtainable beyond firsthand experience of awe-inspiring wilderness or the (post)romantic literatures that would attest to it. Not limited to 'mountain peaks, ozone holes [and] books', but equally encompassing such post-industrial 'texts' as films, advertisements, and even video games, *Ecosublime* is a project that usefully discerns as much ecological savvy in the unlikely figure of *Twin Peaks*' Agent Dale Cooper as in Edgar Allan Poe's frontier travelogue *The Journal of Julius Rodman* (1840) or the most 'geologically'-inspired

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<sup>47</sup> Rozelle, Lee. *Ecosublime: Environmental Awe and Terror from New World to Oddworld*. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006). p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 28.

passages of William Carlos Williams' *Paterson* (1946-58)—a generosity that itself suggests a broader concern with affective ecology, underscoring how the experience of Imaginative failure in the face of sensible immensity—the 'shock and awe' inspired by mountainous vistas, endless deserts, inhospitable oceans or the immeasurable tracts of infinite space—might then be recognised with equal relevance where the built environment is concerned.

In so doing, Rozelle leans to some extent upon the 'theoretical' work of William Bowen and Joseph Tabbi, both of whom extend the concept of the sublime beyond any simplistic connection to imperiled 'natural' ecologies. Productive of a 'technological' Sublime beholden to a sense of contemporary 'realism', which is to say, 'one whose psychology expresses itself in the material constructions of an emerging technological reality', the terror and futility provoked by 'present[ing] the technological culture in its totality' presents Rozelle with an opportunity to acknowledge the place of subjective negativity itself in the 'post-natural' milieu.<sup>49</sup> Engaging in a brief, preliminary discussion of Kantianism, Rozelle therefore aids the ecocritical second-wave in its rapprochement with theory, yet as we shall consider, ultimately keeps himself from drawing more substantially upon Freudian, Lacanian and Žižekian approaches, each of which, as we have noted, rely upon post-Kantian notions of subjectivity. Whilst the reasons for this may be strategic, retaining Rozelle an audience amongst his theory-wary 'first-wave' peers, it seems disappointing from a putatively 'second-wave' writer, forgoing him in particular the opportunity to benefit from the turn to sublimity made by Žižek in *The Sublime of Object of Ideology* (1989).

We can begin by considering how Rozelle's ecological insight of a 'limitless oceanic terrain', one that is somewhat begrudgingly borrowed from Freud, might then have found better extension. In the hands of different psychoanalysts, ecocritics and philosophers, the sublime's figuration of a subjective threshold or 'limit' pertains as much to a diagnosis of 'eco-virtuous' epiphany—supplying as it does, inspiration for 'a stark awareness that place matters'—as to a symptomnal revision of non-ecological approaches to literary aesthetics and semiology.<sup>50</sup> Where ecocritic Neil Evernden hoped

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<sup>49</sup> Tabbi, Joseph. *Postmodern Sublime: Technology and American Writing from Mailer to Cyberpunk*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). Pgs. x, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 50.

to obtain a key to extending ‘the boundary of the self into the ‘environment’’, we can consider the tenability of Rozelle’s politicised motivation of the sublime in this regard, one that would ultimately grasp its function in the ‘transition from contemporary inertia to energized consciousness’, a catalytic role central to his thesis as an ostensible work of second-wave ecocriticism, yet which fails to thoroughly investigate that which it otherwise names as problematic: the ‘un-ecological’ fact of modern *interiority*.<sup>51</sup>

Where the eco-literary conjunction is our concern, Rozelle’s first chapter can be taken metonymically for the unfulfilled promise of his fuller thesis. Entitled ‘Oceanic Terrain’, the abiding allusion is to Freud’s discussion of a universally-binding or ‘oceanic’ feeling in his renowned psycho-cultural study, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). The literary emphasis of the chapter is upon two works: Poe’s *The Journal of Julius Rodman* (1840), an account of an exploitative trapping expedition in the Rocky Mountains and which Rozelle identifies as a work of ‘nineteenth-century expansion literature’, and Isabella Bird’s *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879), a proto-environmentalist travelogue about an Englishwoman’s exploration of the Rockies in 1873.<sup>52</sup> Whilst acknowledging in brief Stephen Mainville’s work on Poe’s ‘interior frontiers’, or those of ‘the unconscious, the unknown, the limit of consciousness’, Rozelle himself resists developing such a psychoanalytical approach, asserting that ‘such bodies of criticism must be laid to rest in order to further a critique of that which lies outside: historical forces, cultural markers, and ecological processes’.<sup>53</sup>

In attempting a critique of precisely this sort, Rozelle establishes how Rodman’s accounts of ‘sights beautiful or awful’ are permeated with Burkean renderings of the sublime.<sup>54</sup> The distinction between the sublime and the beautiful in Burke, but also in Kant, whom he makes fuller recourse to in establishing his own, non-psychoanalytical

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<sup>51</sup> Both Rozelle and Hitt look to Neil Evernden’s early ecocritical essay, “Beyond Ecology: Self, Place, and the Pathetic Fallacy” for a key to extending ‘the boundary of the self into the ‘environment.’” For Evernden’s essay, see *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996). 92-104. p. 101. See also Hitt, Christopher. ‘Toward an Ecological Sublime.’ *New Literary History*. 30.3 (1999): 603-23. See also, Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 13.

‘ecosublime’, supplies Rozelle with a figure that ‘transcends disinterested beauty.’<sup>55</sup> It is in this way that Rozelle can address how Rodman’s initial expressions of ‘romantic sublimity’, discernible in his accounts of ‘the seeming infinitude of the river, the immensity of the territory, the divine presence in nature’, all of which render him a Romantic, ‘Wordsworthian vessel’, are less significant than his seemingly polar transformation into an instrumental capitalist, or an individual for whom the rift between the ideal and the material, the noumenal and the phenomenal, is much less significant than is ‘inscribing value upon the wild on the basis of exchange.’<sup>56</sup>

As Timothy Morton reminds us, ‘the birth of *consumerism* coincided with (and to some extent *was*) the Romantic period’, an insight which may run contrary to popular understandings of Romanticism, and which betokens its dialectical inverse, the hope that ‘[p]eople may eventually recognize in the Romantic period the beginning of “environmental” ways of understanding and acting.’<sup>57</sup> As a trapper of animals, Rodman’s relationship to the wild is similarly one of *aestheticisation*, of mediation and displacement; observing a colony of beavers at work on their dam, he marvels at the industry of the animals in a moment of high anthropomorphism. As Rozelle notes, this sees him ‘impose cultural markers onto ecological processes’ and therefore, he remains someone who ‘never sees the wilderness he explores; significant acts of displacement and projection keep him from experiencing ecosublimity.’<sup>58</sup> It is not until he experiences a violent encounter with a bear that a degree of sublimity, or a jolt sufficient to bring nature out of its depletionist aesthetic (or culturally-displaced) status as the backdrop for human cultural enterprise, is experienced.

Rozelle describes how ‘the clash that ensues titillates and horrifies Rodman’, a paradoxical sensation typical to almost all notions of sublimity since Burke, through Kant, to Schelling, Coleridge and the twentieth-century postmoderns, such as Lyotard, Jameson and Žižek.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, ‘[t]his spark of perverse bliss occurs where culture and nature glance off one another in conflict.’<sup>60</sup> While supporting a dichotomous

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<sup>55</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 32.

<sup>56</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 14-15.

<sup>57</sup> Morton, *Ecology*, pgs. 82-3.

<sup>58</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

opposition, Rozelle sees the ecosublime in a mostly unacknowledged, yet loosely Lacanian way, or in terms of an incursion of the unconscious Real into the Symbolic fabric: ‘...as metonym for the forest, the bear seeks to diffuse the crew’s enlightened destiny in the void.’<sup>61</sup> Although the ecosublime moment is not truly attained by Rodman, however, a degree of sublimity nevertheless serves to unsettle the expansionist, frontier Imaginary that would support Rodman’s assumption of human control over nature, rendering it distinct from the domestications implicit to judgements of beauty, which would in their own way capture and ‘tame’ the non-human biome, as can be extrapolated from Kant’s aesthetics.

It is in this preliminary fashion that Rozelle offers a diagnosis of North American expansionism by way of Poe’s literary invention, albeit without seeming to fully acknowledge the debt his project owes to twentieth-century symptomatological thinking: ‘By beautifying the substrate, debasing it as game, making anthropomorphic projections, and depicting Rodman’s perverse death wish, Poe reveals nascent pathologies of the American depletionist’.<sup>62</sup> Such statements, regarding nation-centered ‘pathologies’, are never followed up by any thorough analysis of the mechanisms of the drives, or of the basis of desire in representation, specifically as a thinker like Žižek would assemble these after a critique of the role of fantasy in supporting capitalist ideology. Moving to a reading of Isabella Bird, however, who ‘uses literary depictions of environmental apprehension and comprehension to litigate for increasingly domesticated spaces’, Rozelle offers something of an justification by discussing why Freud proves only halfway germane to his project.<sup>63</sup>

A proto-environmentalist text, which, in its emphasis upon the frontier miner, reports upon their ‘turning the earth inside out, making it hideous’, *A Lady’s Life in The Rocky Mountains* (1879) reveals ‘ecocidal vistas of horror’ of ‘a West being torn and discarded.’<sup>64</sup> It is the sublimity experienced by Bird’s narrator, that ‘supersedes’ the beautiful qualities of the ‘frontier symbolic.’<sup>65</sup> Rozelle expands upon his conception of an ecosublime by describing it as an ‘ecological “oceanic”’, once again drawing

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 19.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 20.

directly upon that ‘something limitless, unbounded’ that characterises the Freudian oceanic in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, and which Freud elsewhere describes as ‘a feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole.’<sup>66</sup> Although Freud recognised the necessity of studying such a universal human sensation, it was one that he himself deemed to be infantile and primitive, one that could only give rise to the ills of organised religion and which must therefore be repressed for the good of civilisation; such a clear statement of secular suspicion, particularly when supported by passages upon the need for separation under an individualistic logic of fulfilment, gives Rozelle to reject Freud, whom he denigrates on the basis that he unashamedly ‘embodies the anti-ecological posture of the post-Enlightenment West.’<sup>67</sup>

And yet inasmuch as the work of Poe and Bird dramatises ‘the *social realities* of clear-cutting, strip mining, and species decline in nineteenth-century America’, it would surely benefit from a reading after Lacan’s primary conceit of the Symbolic Order (or Big Other), which, in its dialectical relationship with the Real, enables analysis of such depletionism at the level of precisely those ‘social realities’ and the necessary sublimations and fantasies that inform them.<sup>68</sup> As we saw in our study of Žižek’s Lacanian understanding of Kantian aesthetics, this would enable us to understand how a Master Signifier draws together or ‘quilts’ all of the other elemental terms under a broader ideological rubric. Thus, whilst Rozelle’s text appears outwardly ‘ecocritical’, particularly in his undeveloped notion of a ‘frontier symbolic’, a term deployed but once in the entire chapter, he fails to acknowledge the link between sublimation, the Symbolic and sublimity in Lacanian psychoanalysis, and which, as we have begun to show, would truly enable us to renegotiate eco-ethical formation.

Having attributed first-wave ecocriticism to a particular cultural and historical milieu, we must therefore sustain the extension of our analyses in a *methodological* connection, considering what post-Kantian accounts of the sublime loan to the ecocritical second-wave. This enables us to explore more precisely the *metacritical* shortcomings of a thesis that, whilst initially promising, fails to foreground human

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<sup>66</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, pgs. 64-5. See also Freud, Sigmund. *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1962). p 12.

<sup>67</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, 21.

<sup>68</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, 12, emphasis added.

subjectivity in precisely the manner that would sufficiently dispel the ‘constructionist axiom’ its author claims to reject.<sup>69</sup> By citing Aaron Dunckel’s essay on Shelley in the light of ‘purely external aspects of the environment’, Rozelle admires his colleague’s conviction that such externality, achievable by way of a sublime epiphany, ‘enables if not permanent release from, [then] at least a deep questioning of cultural (perhaps even ‘multicultural’) solipsism.’<sup>70</sup> Yet Rozelle is the first to recognise the manner in which any ecological questioning of the ego and valorisation of the noumenal world is ‘undone’ by the first chapter of Lawrence Buell’s *Writing for an Endangered World* (2001), in which pure externality is chased away by the implication of the human subject in ‘essential networks’, in an interdependent web of biospheric being that knows no separation.<sup>71</sup>

Resting as it does upon the power of sublimity to inspire ethical advocacy, if Rozelle’s notion of an ‘ecosublime’ suggests a re-negotiation of the ‘stumbling block’ that would keep an ‘object-centred activity’ (mere experience of the sublime) from begetting a ‘subject-centred activity’ (sublime as spur to environmental advocacy), then we might ask if his difficulties are not chiefly Symbolic? Can Rozelle’s ‘failure’ not here be diagnosed (and perhaps even ‘cured’) by way of an ‘eco-clinical’ analysis that would not only understand the relationship between fantasmatic symptoms and unconscious drives, but moreover, do so without becoming enmeshed in ‘unecological’ discourses of interiority? Given the degree of egoic turmoil that Rozelle acknowledges the experience of ecosublimity to provoke—and thus the level of post-social, ecological awareness that this would in turn augur—his theoretical basis seems nothing short of inhibited, hampered by way of precisely the sort of anti-theoretical (yet deeply ideological) ‘innocence’ that we acknowledged at length in our first chapter, and oblivious, it seems, to how essential Lacan’s post-Freudian reading of sublimity might be in this regard—for the very fact, it seems, that it bears a relationship to Freud at all.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> Dunckel, Aaron. ‘‘Mont Blanc’’: Shelley’s Sublime Allegory of the Real.’ *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment*. Ed. Steven Rosendale. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002). 207-223. p. 221.

<sup>71</sup> Buell, Lawrence. *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. And Beyond*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). p. 6.

<sup>72</sup> Lacan addresses sublimity in his seminar on *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, describing it as ‘an object raised to the level of the (impossible-real) Thing’. That is to say, with Kant the Sublime designates the

Deeming it both ‘anachronistic’ and insufficiently ‘ecological’ to pursue psychoanalysis beyond the superficial supply of rhetorical terminology, the opening chapters of *Ecosublime* have, as we have seen, asserted that the psychoanalyst ‘embodies the anti-ecological posture of the post-Enlightenment West’ as part of a declaration that seems undeniably heartfelt, yet more than a little shortsighted where the relative *inhumanity* (or ‘pre-individual’ *non-humanity*) of the passions or drives—the ‘Real’ of the symptom for Freud, Lacan and Žižek—would impinge upon the sovereignty of the humanist ‘I think’ (be it ‘ecologically’-engaged or instrumentalist and depredatory in manifestation).<sup>73</sup> Two (admittedly brief) indictments of Freud’s negativity cement Rozelle’s general conviction that psychoanalytical nature-writing is tantamount to anti-ecologism, specifically where the ‘oceanic’ connectedness with the external world as given in *Civilization and Its Discontents* is ineffectual for being all too readily subsumed under organised religious and nationalistic frameworks; a purview that for Rozelle would neglect the interdependencies *sine qua non* to an enhanced sense of ecological embeddedness.<sup>74</sup> Žižek freely admits that ‘Lacanian theory is perhaps the most radically contemporary version of the enlightenment’, but this should of course be taken as part of a broader strategy undermining of capitalist ideology and thus by extension, of depredatory instrumentalism.<sup>75</sup>

Underwriting, as it does, much of Žižek’s ideological theory, sublimity can be said to mark ‘the impotence and nullity of Man (as a part of nature) when he is exposed to a powerful display of natural forces that evokes, in a negative way, his greatness as a

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relation of an inner-worldly, empirical, sensuous object to *Ding an sich* to the transcendent, trans-phenomenal, unattainable Thing-in-itself.

<sup>73</sup> Deleuze suggests that Freud’s interest in pathology indicates a break with the German Idealist tradition: ‘if Freud was completely on the side of an Hegelian post-Kantianism—in other words, of an unconscious opposition—why did he pay so much homage to the Leibnizian Fechner and to his ‘symptomatologist’s differential finesse?’ See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*. (London: Continuum, 2004). p.133.

<sup>74</sup> The reference is to the first chapter of *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* [*Civilization and Its Discontents*] (1930), in which Freud appears to valorise individuality as integral to the success of civilisation, denigrating the ‘oceanic’ feeling as infantile, primitive and spiritual, and recommending an emphasis on individual satisfaction or enjoyment as an index of independence from the world. See Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents. Vol. 21 of The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*. (London: Hogarth Press, 1961). pgs. 17, 20.

<sup>75</sup> Žižek, *Sublime*, p. 7.

noumenal ethical subject.’<sup>76</sup> If the ‘networks’ that Lawrence Buell would rightly advance in lieu of outmoded subject-object dichotomies are to be upheld, does the ‘supersensibility’ of the ‘noumenal ethical subject’—the fact that it is *not* an object but rather that which *gives* objects, and therefore precisely the *form* that would condition any ‘content’—not keep the sublime tied to the Freud-o-Lacanian dialectic of the Symbolic-Real?

This would at once both support *and* challenge Rozelle’s basic alteration of the essential question “Who am I?” to “Where am I?”, which he poses within ‘the context of our current crisis as it emotively and materially relocates the human self as ecological niche’, by way of a dialectical displacement.<sup>77</sup> If Rozelle’s desire is to explore how ‘crises of progress’ serve to ‘transfigure our conceptual hardware from delimitation to niche consciousness’, a desire that necessarily appears Symbolically-determined, then it is one that might benefit from the violent exchange of affects in Lacan’s late writings on art and literature, particularly when, as Ettinger shows, ‘we enter the drive, *jouissance* and art via the same cavity, where they exchange affects, where art by accumulating potentiality shakes frontiers of sense into becoming thresholds, and infuses changes in culture.’<sup>78</sup> Rozelle’s notion that ‘a realization of ecological crisis can also be acquired through mediated or represented environments’ then seems perfectly sympathetic when he states that ‘there is no affective difference between the natural sublime and the rhetorical ecosublime; both have the power to bring the viewer, the reader, or player to heightened awareness of real natural environments.’<sup>79</sup>

Whilst insisting that ‘[b]oth can promote advocacy’, Rozelle’s thesis nevertheless excludes an extended treatment on literary *form*, offering instead a non-formalist approach that again celebrates the mere *content* of a literary work; ‘Poe’s Julius Rodman and Nathanael West’s Miss Lonelyhearts are two characters [...] who do not

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<sup>76</sup> Žižek, *Parallax*, p. 164.

<sup>77</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Art, says Lacan, is related to *jouissance* through the ‘anatomy’ of a cavity (vacuole). An inaccessible trace of a lacking part-object—objet a—‘tickles the Thing (das Ding) from within’ and this is ‘the essential quality of everything we call art.’ See Ettinger, Bracha Lichtenberg. ‘Trans-Subjective Transferential Borderspace’. *A Shock To Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*. Ed. Brian Massumi. (London: Routledge, 2002): 215-239. p. 217.

<sup>79</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 7.

experience ecosublimity, but their inability to actualize the referent perhaps enables readers to perceive the world anew.<sup>80</sup> Other characters ‘do experience the ecosublime moment. This occurs because their interactions generate in them the awe of integration with the ecological (apprehension) and the terror in realizing the tentativeness and incalculable uncertainty of their world (comprehension).’<sup>81</sup> It must therefore be our business here to not merely critique Rozelle, but instead to affirm his premise as entirely worthwhile whilst extending it by offering a more thorough engagement with the formalist and ontological theories he would deem, as he does Freud’s psychoanalysis, un-germane and depletionist.

Such a strategic reversal, however counter-intuitive, serves to underpin any *ecological* orientation keen to account for desire *qua* ‘life’. As Colebrook has shown, we might obtain (at least) two philosophies of ‘vitalism’ (or ‘life’) with which to reinvigorate prevailing approaches to (eco)literature and which hinge upon contrasting understandings of ‘meaning’ and ‘sense’ as they express vitality.<sup>82</sup> On the one hand, a comforting because ‘self-enclosed’ relation to the world can be had, predicated as this typically is upon the satisfying and *identitarian* unities of meaning; on the other hand, we discern what Colebrook describes as the ‘dream of a pure and unimpeded becoming’, a properly ‘Deleuzian’ assertion that tallies in useful ways with Alfred Tauber’s observation that in Thoreau, for example, we obtain ‘competing claims for the self—one of independence and one of responsibility; one based on autonomy, the other on relation.’<sup>83</sup> Remaining concerned as it does with *meaning*, Žižek’s work, inspired in part by Freud’s dichotomy between the survivalism of the bounded ego and the promise of the ‘oceanic feeling’ obtainable through the annihilations of the death drive, the phenomenal/noumenal relation in Kantian aesthetics and moral philosophy is one that Žižek advances as essential to knowing the *meaning* of freedom for beings situated within Nature.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, pgs. 7-8.

<sup>82</sup> Colebrook, Claire. *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life*. (London: Continuum, 2010). pgs. 36-7.

<sup>83</sup> Colebrook, *Meaning*, p. 38; Tauber, *Thoreau*, p. 165.

<sup>84</sup> ‘[T]he ultimate parallax, the third space between phenomena and the noumenon itself, is the subject’s freedom/spontaneity, which—although, of course, it is not the property of a phenomenal entity, so that it cannot be dismissed as a false appearance which conceals the noumenal fact that we are totally caught in an inaccessible necessity—is also not simply noumenal’; and thus, ‘[o]ur freedom persists only in a space in between the phenomenal and the noumenal’. See Žižek. *Parallax*. pgs. 22-23.

If Rozelle's concerns amount to a 'materialist' rather than 'idealist' approach, ones that would reject psychoanalysis as evidence of the latter, then at the very least he might have made better use of Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964), a text published prior to the first-wave institutional rise of eco-literary research, and which supplies an important proto-ecocritical illustration of the mid-nineteenth-century 'technological sublime' as it pertains to the exhilaration prompted by the industrial networks of early capitalist America. Marx draws upon (amongst other sources) the literary figure of Melville's Ahab, the great avatar of American individualism and entrepreneurship at its most maniacally obsessive and who in 'identif[ying] his will with the power of machines', powerfully figures a sentiment shared by a great many of his fellow countrymen, who under the day's 'rhetoric of progress' held that the railways, steamboats, bridges, dams and other "improvements" confirmed that rapid New World industrialisation enabled the nation 'to see the sublime progress of the race.'<sup>85</sup>

This specific motivation of a pre-Futurist, technological 'sublime' should aid in maintaining a sufficiently problematic status for the concept, particularly where, as Jameson notes, 'revolutionary or communist artists of the 1930s also sought to reappropriate this excitement of machine energy for a Promethean reconstruction of human society as a whole', an essential consideration for any sense of the sublime as more than merely a preservationist spur to an idealised 'Green' eschewal of technological culture, and problematised further after Lawrence Buell's observation that Thoreau himself, the retiring 'hermit' of Walden Pond and 'sponsor of technological devolution', found 'railroads and telegraphs' more exciting than not.'<sup>86</sup>

It is this contradictory *desire* for that which would ultimately effect biospheric depredation—an industrial culture that would inspire its own propagation by way of a sublime exhilaration—that Rozelle elects *not* to pursue after the elementary eco-clinical approach his work hints at. Given his alleged concern with the American 'ecocidal imagination'—with that which subsists below the 'ego'—and as such with the 'nascent

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<sup>85</sup> Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). (1964). Pgs. 196-7.

<sup>86</sup> Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 36. See also, Buell, *Environmental*, p. 149.

pathologies of the American depletionist’, Rozelle invokes ‘ego’ along with what he terms ‘biocentric *jouissance*’ and therefore ‘lack’ as these notions relate to modernist descriptions of place in T. S. Eliot and Nathaniel West, even going so far as to link them with an un-referenced but surely Lacanian conception of the ‘signifying chain’.<sup>87</sup> Yet as we have noted above, such concerns would almost certainly initiate an *ecoclinical* perspective, despite (if they were endorsed in full) leaning towards a normative, Lacanian ontology. Such terms appear so fleetingly (in these three pages alone) as to offer little more than an indication of a potential approach rather than a mature thesis proper, and no sustained analysis follows their initial appearance.<sup>88</sup> Where, by contrast, a writer like Timothy Morton would acknowledge the degree to which ecocultural criticism must embrace psychoanalytic thought if it is to get at the ‘strange strangeness’ of our species’ biotic implication, Rozelle appears not so much allergic to any such suggestion, as quite simply stunned by the horizon to which his own project gestures—by trying to engage an eco-valent stripe of Kantian subjectivism in the present day, whilst circumventing a long century of psychoanalytic debate and conjecture.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, pgs. 8, 36, 38.

<sup>88</sup> In a personal correspondence with the author, Rozelle said: ‘The ecocriticism that I admire uses theory to ultimately foster scientifically learned and biocentric/ecocentric worldview & knowledge. It is finally political. So after reading Atwood’s *Surfacing* (1972), for example, I can definitely see how Lacan can be employed. I am skeptical of works that can’t quite decide whether their concerns are inward or outward, the result being a book with a sufficiently green title but really interested in anthropocentric models & theory.’ [personal email to the author 15/1/10].

<sup>89</sup> In fairness, Rozelle’s study pre-dates Morton’s by one year. See Morton, Timothy. *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

## **3: Violent Signs II**

### (i) Towards an Ecological Pathos: Stratoanalysis and Sympathy

There is no judgement in sympathy, but agreements of convenience  
between bodies of all kinds.

—Deleuze<sup>1</sup>

This chapter has two principal aims. Firstly, it considers how Deleuze and Guattari's impersonal and *productive* model of the unconscious breaks with the psychoanalytic logic of signification we have thus far prescribed. Whilst a psychoanalytic mode of ideology critique has enabled us to broach those historical and aesthetic concerns facing eco-literary research, Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project can help us to exceed any emphasis upon subjectivity and interpretation, which, we will argue, can only take us so far in understanding the 'eco-clinical' problematic. Secondly, therefore, we will emphasise how the schizoanalytic model of the unconscious advanced in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972/1977) is in many respects inherently 'ecological', particularly when we acknowledge its subsequent extension into the concept of 'assemblage' and the notion of 'stratoanalysis' presented in such later volumes as *Dialogues* (1977/1996), *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1975/1986), and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/1988).

The extent to which schizoanalysis and stratoanalysis remain broadly synonymous will prove decisive for the latter half of our thesis, particularly when we consider how both terms invoke highly specific conceptions of 'multiplicity' and 'exteriority', both of which remain principal to Deleuze and Guattari's thesis on desire, whether given in terms of 'desiring-production' in *Anti-Oedipus*, or in terms of assemblage in their later works.<sup>2</sup> These terms will have numerous implications for the eco-literary and eco-psychological conjunction, particularly when we acknowledge how Deleuze and Guattari indicate a non-personological 'pathos' or 'sympathy', a dynamic form of 'convenience' between bodies of all kinds and which enables us to exceed the

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<sup>1</sup> Deleuze, Gilles and Claire Parnet. *Dialogues*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Whilst it is useful to note that the latter term assemblage does to some extent replace the duality of desiring machines/BwO as given in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, we will not here concern ourselves with what is self-evidently a finer point in Deleuze studies per se.

Kantian-Lacanian emphasis on judgement and lack we acknowledged in Žižek's psycho-political theory in chapter two. Informed as it is in key ways by a highly literary, yet entirely non-signifying and 'pragmatic' conception of language, Deleuze and Guattari's 'machinic' ontology of assemblage, process or *agencement* motivates an altogether different ethico-aesthetic, offering an affirmative conception of desire qua Life and which underwrites their immanent account of the emergence, production and transformation of the actual world.

Crucially, this conception of desire informs Deleuze and Guattari's non-personological understanding of 'delirium', an affirmative revaluation of clinical pathologies that moreover emphasises their zoological, sociological and world-historical contents. Taken together with the ecological implications of Jakob von Uexküll's notion of *umwelt* and his studies of animal behaviour, the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and the ecologically-oriented psychology of Gregory Bateson, this already broadly 'eco-clinical' understanding of desire and delirium will lead us to insist upon the importance of multiplicity and assemblage for thinking about environmental writing, beyond our forgoing Marxo-Lacanian concerns with 'Green' ideology. Extending from Deleuze's earliest work, in which a 'transcendental empiricist' conception of 'habit' developed a Spinozist stripe of immanence in line with a British empiricist insistence upon 'procedures' or 'functions' rather than principles, Deleuze's resulting notions of 'contraction' and 'passive synthesis' emphasise the milieu or 'environment' from which all things, beings or entities are constituted and within which they continually 'become'.

This proves most significant for the literary-clinical emphasis of our project when we consider how Deleuze discerns this 'superior empiricism' in a selection of Anglo-American literary figures, a canon equal in many respects to the 'nomadic' philosophical tradition he discerns in Spinoza, Leibniz, Nietzsche and Bergson, and which is characterised by its habitual substitution of the multiplicitous AND over the indicative IS of discrete Being. Comprised of amongst other writers, T. E. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and Henry Miller, this experimental practice at the heart of Deleuze's 'literary clinic' delivers its 'wild' or superior empiricism by way of 'affects' and 'percepts' rather than concepts.<sup>3</sup> Significantly for this, our first engagement with Deleuze and Guattari, it will

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<sup>3</sup> 'Because empiricism is like the English novel. It is a case of philosophizing as a novelist, of being a novelist in philosophy.' Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 68.

be equally key to note how the Deleuzian literary clinic is informed by such honorary Anglo-Americans as Marcel Proust and Franz Kafka as by the science and psychology of Uexküll, Whitehead and Bateson. The clinical-critical syncretism that Deleuze and Guattari enter into draws the literary, the philosophical, and the scientific together in a manner that a number of ecocritics have tentatively attempted, yet hitherto without producing a sufficiently clinical analysis of such significantly ‘un-ecological’ factors as the nuclear family structure.

As we will see, by advancing literary usages of language, schizoanalysis posits its clinical-political critique after an a-signifying semiotic that dispenses with the psychoanalytic conception of the unconscious as the stage upon which the Oedipal psychodrama is played out. What this means for eco-literary research is that just as common-sensical notions of neurosis and psychosis are transformed by Deleuze and Guattari’s emphasis upon multiplicity and the exteriority of relations, by a reconception of desire that demotes interiority after the ‘pure’ exteriority of the virtual as the ‘transcendental’ field of emergence that exceeds Kant’s subjective transcendentalism, so too are those common-sensical assumptions pertaining to what ‘the environment’ amounts to. Schizoanalysis and after it stratoanalysis therefore enable us to recast notions of identity, literature and ‘bio-diversity’ in markedly eco-clinical ways, chiefly by delivering a post-Romantic ‘mechanosphere’ beyond any bio-centric ecological hypothesis.<sup>4</sup> Just as the representational logic inherent to the nuclear family is revealed to inhibit a more-than-human grasp of desire, such machinic diversity exceeds the merely biological register altogether, including consideration of all manner of geological and ‘cosmic’ flows, and again attesting to a more-than-human, non-anthropocentric orientation that views all of life as perpetually *intermezzo* or between becomings.

What the Deleuzian view of Life and literature affords us therefore is insight into how language and Life (or more-than-human desire) share a relationship given in terms of such becomings, or of active, machinic transformation rather than the passive negativities of mimesis and representation. For Deleuze and Guattari desire is an assembling, combining and arrogating force, always already inclusive of a range of zoological and other non-human elements, forces and affects in the production of all

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<sup>4</sup> ‘There is no biosphere or noosphere, but everywhere the same mechanosphere.’ Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 69.

manner of non-filiative hybridisations and which destabilise inherited Being via active experimentation. As we will see, whilst the literature of Proust enables us to exceed normative, or familial and Oedipal readings of desire, the writing of Kafka proves especially salient to understanding the dynamic commingling of utterances and bodies typically read in terms of the Symbolic Law or judgement. Productive of multiple ‘becomings-other’, such commingling will enable us to redress psychoanalytic approaches to such pressing concerns as Climate Change, concerns that are shaped and disseminated by scientific and media usages of language. Once we have considered the importance of Deleuze’s Proustian semiotic to our ‘ecological pathos’ or ‘sympathy’, we might therefore address the ‘eco-virtuous’ component of ‘eco-social’ transformation after Deleuze and Guattari’s Kafka-inspired thesis on ‘collective assemblages of enunciation’.

In this way, therefore, we have already begun to acknowledge how a Deleuzian eco-clinic differs from a nominally Marxo-Lacanian one. If schizoanalysis reconfigures our understanding of subjectivity after its already broadly ‘ecological’ outlook, then it in turn transforms our motivation of symptomatology as a core concern of our eco-clinic. Although Deleuze’s earliest writings on literature embrace the Nietzschean symptomatology of active and reactive forces, one that diagnoses cultural value-formation in terms of the affirmation or denial of Life processes, it is here our business to consider how whilst informed by such a symptomatology, Deleuze and Guattari’s schizoanalytic and stratoanalytic projects offer something equal to the concrete changes recommended by much environmental rhetoric. By exceeding a merely diagnostic approach, Deleuze and Guattari’s work comes to assert the ‘therapeutic’ potential imparted by a post-psychoanalytic grasp of pre-personal affects, singular points and the exteriority of relations. As we will see, stratoanalysis is in many respects the extension of schizoanalysis beyond the ‘internal’ critique of psychoanalysis presented in the *Anti-Oedipus*, offering a fully-fledged ‘geo-philosophical’ form of analysis that is as politically-engaged as it is clinically-informed, yet which obviates ‘the interiority of a substance or subject’, highlighting instead the pre-individual or virtual forces that are contracted, captured and stratified in the formation of actual bodies and objects.<sup>5</sup>

So let us begin to look more thoroughly at how an ‘eco-philosophy’ of this sort takes us beyond the privative, Oedipal orientation of the psychoanalyst, and which

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<sup>5</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 9.

sustains interiority qua *insularity*, aiding and abetting the ‘neurotic’ territories of the sheltered, suburban lifestyle.<sup>6</sup> We will shortly do so in a pointedly literary connection, marking the ways in which the literature of Proust has traditionally been read after a psychoanalytic bias and which is usefully redressed after Deleuze’s singular and in many respects, *revolutionary* reading of *la recherche*. What will remain crucial to understanding the ‘revolutionary’ nature of such a reading will be grasping the move it permits from the interpretation of symptoms as per the psychoanalytic mode to a machinic one acknowledging of assemblages and strata; Deleuze and Guattari’s principal conceptual innovation, the ‘body without organs’ (BwO), will serve to articulate this move, a term that is as literary as it is clinical in provenance.

Yielding ‘a physics of primary or bare matter’, and which speaks of an ‘outside’ or purity of matter and function prior to either forming or formalising, Deleuze and Guattari derive the BwO as much from Proust, Beckett and Burroughs as from their philosophical and scientific readings. A figure for the virtual body or ‘phase-space’ that is presupposed by any series of connections whatsoever, it again enables them to emphasise multiplicitous processes of emergence and becoming over the illusory foundation of static Being.<sup>7</sup> In doing so it is crucial to note the extent to which they draw on Antonin Artaud’s usage of the BwO as an appeal against the ‘judgement of God’, a judgement that in his own schizophrenic delirium Artaud felt to be imposed upon Life by organs and which Deleuze and Guattari extend to both organisms and organ-isation in general. Taken together with insights from the non-literary philosophies and sciences named above, the pathological provenance of the BwO therefore proves integral to a post-subjective philosophy of multiplicity that in turn begets a pragmatics focused upon the productivity of relations as the proper and primary concern of a machinic ontology.

The BwO will therefore remain key to our assertion of the ecological relationship between the ‘schizophrenic’ unconscious and literary production, chiefly insofar as it enables us to exceed personological and ideological concerns with the individual, the family and the State in favour of analyses of social and historical machines that have

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> The notion of the BwO vis-à-vis ‘phase-space’ is more precisely attributed to Manuel DeLanda’s markedly ‘scientific’ reading of Deleuze and which draws on Henri Poincaré’s terminology to elaborate the degrees of movement, freedom or dimensionality of a given system. See in particular DeLanda, Manuel. *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*. (London: Continuum, 2002).

proven productive of ‘stratified’ relations and formations. This is because the language of the personal register, which takes identity, representation and ideology as its focus, fails to account for the occupation of the individual by a non-individual, non-subjective pathos of virtual affects and singularities that are stratified by the territorialising and coding operations of a range of social machines. Whilst this analysis is in certain respects akin to the conditioning forces of the Althusserian ‘problematic’ field we considered in chapter one, and which was deployed towards analyses of ideological interpellation, the Deleuzian problematic extends to analysis of the more-than-human elements that comprise any field of relations whatsoever after the thesis on matter and emergence acknowledged above. Again, by critiquing identity *per se* as a ‘neurotic’ concern, one that is in many respects aided and abetted by psychoanalysis, we open up an already broadly ‘environmental’ sensibility, chiefly via an emphasis upon the immanence of diverse ‘milieus’, and from which all entities and individuals are contracted via social processes of capture and stratification.

Once more, the critique of neurotic culture implicit in this sensibility and the processes of extraction, capture or stratification integral to it will be shown to possess a no less clinical relationship to language, to literary ‘creativity’, or the actualisation of virtual forces via literary machines that operate within and against the strata, dramatizing the relationship between the unformed matters and non-formalised functions of the BwO after a conception of the book as literary assemblage. This will again turn upon an acknowledgement of language as a-signifying; the intensely literary derivation of Deleuze and Guattari’s otherwise Marxo-Freudian notion of desiring-production and its passage into a strata-critical geophilosophy turns upon an understanding of what language *does* rather than what it *represents*. By emphasising the *performative* dimension of language, Deleuze and Guattari are less concerned with literary symptomatology as a signifying practice of diagnosis than they are with a microphysics or ‘micropolitics’ of desire, and thereafter with the manner in which words, utterances and verdicts effect the *transformation* of bodies and the world or milieu in which they are situated.

Accordingly, this chapter marks a turning point in our thesis. As we have begun to acknowledge, it is after a micropolitics of actual-virtual relations that we might depart from a purely signifying symptomatology, reconnecting with our concerns with

surpassing dialectical negativity in chapter one, and engaging a critical-clinical positivity towards a more therapeutic orientation, one in which concerns with bodily capability and performance outweigh those of meaning and signification. Despite a degree of conceptual congruity between the earlier, schizoanalytic term ‘desiring-machines’ and that of assemblage in the later works, however, this chapter will privilege the latter term, as it appears to offer a more nuanced understanding of environmental language and literature, incorporating as it does notions of ‘collective utterances’ and ‘incorporeal transformations’ that situate and re-position material bodies.<sup>8</sup> Whilst both terms attest to the extent to which individuals, organisms and other entities evince ‘territorial’ captures of heterogeneous elements and all manner of animal, vegetable, and mineral flows, the latter enables us to consider the relationship between the immaterial domain of signs and semiotics and the organisation of such material conditions as natural resources and geographical boundaries that typically concern any eco-critic, and in a manner that the former does not:

In assemblages you find states of things, bodies, various combinations of bodies, hodgepodes; but you also find utterances, modes of expression, and whole regimes of signs. The relations between the two are pretty complex. For example, a society is defined not by productive forces and ideology, but by ‘hodgepodes’ and ‘verdicts.’ Hodgepodes are combinations of interpenetrating bodies. These combinations are well-known and accepted (incest, for example, is a forbidden combination). Verdicts are collective utterances, that is, instantaneous and incorporeal transformations which have currency in a society (for example, ‘from now on you are no longer a child’ ...).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> It is key to note how the French term *agencement* refers not only to constellations, arrangements and assemblages, but to their dynamic, non-static and processual nature. As such: ‘We will call an assemblage every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow - selected, organized, stratified - in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in this sense, is a veritable invention.’ See Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 406.

<sup>9</sup> Deleuze, Gilles. *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*. Trans. Hodges, Ames and Mike Taormina. Ed. Lapoujade, David. (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006). p. 177.

This imbrication of the material and the immaterial, and which transforms how we consider language and desire, chiefly in terms of the manner in which corporeal bodies are given new social status by incorporeal transformations, can be motivated for eco-clinical research in terms of how it equally revalues what we take ‘health’ to be. By first acknowledging language’s essential ‘redundancy’, which is to say, the manner in which language is repeated throughout the social field, such that it is without origin in individual minds, Deleuze and Guattari again invoke their very particular notion of delirium, drawing upon the register of the ‘fourth person’ singular. The association between language and schizophrenia in *Anti-Oedipus* relies upon the phenomenon of glossolalia in the schizophrenic unconscious, or the fact that humans are situated within flows of language that precede them, filling the allegedly ‘individual’ unconscious with national histories, myths, various discourses, and so on. As we will see, in this sense there are strong grounds for re-thinking Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of redundancy and such trans-cultural ‘memes’ as Climate Change, and moreover in far more literary a manner than the approach recently proposed by Joseph Dodds.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, prior to considering the debt that Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘anti-Oedipal’ conception of literature owes to Proust, an influence that enables them to postulate a ‘new earth’, or a psycho-social sphere of becoming, more precisely defined as ‘the world of transverse communications, where the finally conquered nonhuman sex mingles with the flowers, a new earth where desire functions according to its molecular elements and flows,’ let us first expand our sense of how the Deleuzian view of literary production attends to the nonhuman *in Man*, supplying a window onto an impersonal and largely ‘unliveable’ dimension of Life, and which nevertheless traverses and conditions the human.<sup>11</sup> Rather than serving to marshal all of those personal experiences, opinions, emotions and identifications that are typically seen to comprise the *bildungsroman*, the family history or other dramatic fictional accounts, the literary figure is for Deleuze simultaneously patient and clinician, an experimenter at the threshold or limit of bodily and psychic integrity and therefore automatically a cultural diagnostician insofar as psycho-social limits are continually addressed and tested.

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<sup>10</sup> Despite the timeliness of his work, Dodds draws chiefly on cinematic examples in making his case and then largely after a psychoanalytic bias that constrains the Deleuze-o-Guattarian aspects of his project. See Dodds, Joseph. *Psychoanalysis and Ecology at the Edge of Chaos: Complexity Theory, Deleuze/Guattari and Psychoanalysis for a Climate in Crisis*. (London: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pgs. 350-351.

The perspective that the author possesses upon bodily pathos and thinking logos, upon the dynamic relationship between the material and the immaterial, can give us to reconceive of literature as an assemblage of forces, but moreover as a *practice* of health, or as a commitment to a particular way of living. The act of writing is one of bricolage, yet therefore automatically one of becoming. Again, this more-than-personal notion of health extends Nietzsche's valetudinary concerns in such a way as to revalue cultural production. In their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate how a book is a machinic assemblage, or a multiplicity that has neither subject nor object.<sup>12</sup> What this assertion does is again insist upon the impersonal nature of language, but also of its outside, upon those 'sensations, percepts and affects' that make possible the human. One side of an assemblage faces the physico-chemical, organic and anthropomorphic 'strata', or 'acts of capture' that 'operate by coding and territorialization'; in the case of a book, such codes and territories would 'doubtless make of it a kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject.'<sup>13</sup>

Crucially, however, this relationship to the strata, which are 'beneficial in many respects and unfortunate in many others', is balanced by a relationship to the BwO as 'plane of consistency', that which Deleuze and Guattari first described in *Anti-Oedipus* as the agent of disjunction or 'anti-production', and which is 'continually dismantling the organism, causing asignifying particles or pure intensities to pass or circulate.'<sup>14</sup> In addition to the descriptions we have begun to give of it above, therefore, the BwO might be conceived of as a figure for the 'death' that coexists with and makes possible Life beyond the Freudian conception of the death drive. Such an impersonal conception of language, of desire, territories, books and the regimes of signs that Deleuze and Guattari describe, have great bearing upon our understanding of eco-literary production, chiefly insofar as they recast writing itself as becoming, as a 'delirious' negotiation with those material forces we habitually consider ourselves to be independent of.

In this way, then, our first point, concerning Deleuze and Guattari's break with

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<sup>12</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, pgs. 4, 40.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

interpretation, will be addressed in terms of their schizoanalytic project, particularly insofar as this enables us to reckon with the paranoid, Oedipal form that enforces a sense of separation from worldly forces and equally, the notion of writing as a signifying practice. Whilst Marxo-Lacanian ideology critique relies upon both conceits for its efficacy, Deleuze and Guattari aver that: ‘Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology. There is no ideology and never has been. All we talk about are multiplicities, lines, strata and segmentarities, lines of flight and intensities, machinic assemblages and their various types, bodies without organs and their construction and selection... Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come.’<sup>15</sup> Needless to say, such an approach takes its part in a ‘geo-philosophical’ project that is self-evidently ‘eco-philosophical’ in all but name.

As we have begun to indicate, Deleuze and Guattari’s project breaks in important ways with Žižek’s approach as considered in our last chapter, with its Lacanian emphasis upon master signifiers and ‘sublime objects of ideology’. Although it might appear that at this juncture our eco-clinic has simply substituted one clinical vocabulary for another, the truth of the matter is far more technical, turning upon the fact that Deleuze and Guattari’s *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project not only demotes ideology in its biopolitical analyses of organisms and the State, but in the process draws more substantially upon literature in both its formulation and exposition, whereas Žižek’s psychoanalytic engagement with German Idealism generally does not. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari privilege a model of the unconscious as a schizophrenic process of production, of pre-personal affects and ‘transverse communications’ that explicitly revalues our understanding of man/nature in a manner that Žižek’s symptomnal concerns with the structural ambiguities of Kantian moral philosophy do not.<sup>16</sup>

Again, not only does Deleuze and Guattari’s insistence upon a non-personological unconscious in *Anti-Oedipus* draw upon a great many literary figures in

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<sup>15</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, pgs. 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> ‘...we make no distinction between man and nature: the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man become one within nature in the form of production or industry, just as they do within the life of man as a species... man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other... rather they are one and the same essential reality, the producer-product. Production as process overtakes all idealistic categories and constitutes a cycle whose relationship to desire is that of an immanent principle.’ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pgs. 4-5.

its development, but in the process forges a link between a non-signifying semiotic and literary usages of language. As we have already suggested, understanding the distinction Deleuze and Guattari draw between normative linguistic models of language, in which an inherent order or equilibrium presides over the process of signification, and the power that high modern literary experimentation possesses to disarticulate dominant forms of expression, remains crucial to understanding the break their project makes with orthodox psychoanalysis. Not only will this subsequently enable us to understand the geophilosophical relationship between the organic and socio-political strata that stratoanalysis takes as its focus, but moreover to conceive of how a-signifying signs benefit our eco-clinic insofar as they can be said to trigger material processes of production.<sup>17</sup>

Crucially, therefore, we will consider how, amongst numerous other resources, the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project draws upon the literature of Proust, offering a critical-clinical position on the relationship between delirium and semiotic production, and which opens up the very sense of worldly embeddedness and emplacement that ecocritics typically seek to explore; the signs emitted by earthly, social and aesthetic ‘worlds’, and which *La recherche* is so renowned for cataloguing, can be seen to indicate, amongst other things, a productive delirium or ‘pathos’, and which after Deleuze again remains broadly ‘ecological’. Essentially, the ‘delirium of interpretation’ that Deleuze discerns in Proust opens up a significant conversion from a logic of interpretation to one of production, going on to underwrite the inherently political orientation of the broader, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project. In his earlier study, *Proust and Signs* (1964/1976, 1973/2000), Deleuze had already suggested Charlus as a schizophrenic figure who powerfully dramatises this process, and who therefore enables us to rethink the relationship between symptoms and signs, between effects and causes, between organised bodies (or ‘territories’) and unorganised matter.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> We will follow the work of Ronald Bogue, Mark Bonta and John Protevi in this connection. See Bogue, Ronald. *Deleuze and Guattari*. (London: Routledge, 1989). p. 138. Also, Bonta, Mark and John Protevi. ‘Preface’. *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Glossary and Guide*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004). vii-ix.

<sup>18</sup> ‘...anyone who listens to Charlus or who meets his gaze finds himself confronting a secret, a mystery to be penetrated, to be interpreted, which he presents from the start as likely to proceed to the point of madness. And the necessity of interpreting Charlus is based on the fact that this Charlus himself interprets, as if it were his own madness, as if that were already his delirium, a delirium of interpretation.’ Deleuze,

It is in this way that the notion of the symptom, tied as it typically remains to psychoanalytic concerns with a personological unconscious, will be supplanted by that of the BwO or plane of consistency. By bearing a very particular relationship to the unformed or 'formless' domain of matter that Deleuze and Guattari maintain as essential to grasping the relationship between bodily pathos and semiotic logos, between production and anti-production, it will be crucial to note how this domain is presupposed by any instance of writing practice, whether 'nature writing' or otherwise, but thereby how the literary relationship to collective assemblages of enunciation is potentially a utopian one, opening up, chiefly via the earlier, schizoanalytic concern with delirium, questions of individual and societal 'health' *vis-a-vis* new modes of expression adequate to new modes of life. The formal and semiotic experimentation that such writers as Kafka, Beckett and Proust engaged in are therefore shown to be more than simply symptomatological or diagnostic in the Nietzschean sense, a sensibility that Deleuze maintained throughout his earlier, individually-authored writings, but moreover, actively 'eco-clinical', chiefly insofar as they incorporate a 'therapeutic' concern with a form of impersonal transference that ultimately exceeds psychoanalytic subjectivism.

And so although a French rather than an American writer, this mode of transference and the concept of the BwO can be explored in terms of the 'sympathies' that Proust's writings make palpable. Beyond his status as an exemplary semiotician, and as a literary-philosophical thinker of temporality *par excellence*, Proust is afforded an honorary status in Deleuze's 'superior' Anglo-American literary canon, chiefly on the grounds that his writing offers more than a window upon the bourgeois social worlds of pre-war France, and rather a post-subjectivist understanding of delirium that proves crucial to Deleuze and Guattari's delirious notion of a 'new earth'; the example of Charlus, but also those of Albertine and Marcel in the pages of *La recherche* invests all of Deleuze and Guattari's later writings on individuation with a utopian sensibility, yet one in which the new earth relates to 'human' desire as much as to the world of material flows from which it is 'assembled', and which therefore contribute in key ways to the

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Gilles. *Proust and Signs: the Complete Text*. Trans. Richard Howard. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). p. 172.

BwO as their literary-political figure for the relationship between bodily organisation and unformed matter.<sup>19</sup>

At bottom, therefore, the BwO provides the key to understanding the connection we will here rely upon between schizoanalysis and stratoanalysis, between assemblages and literature, and thereby, to understanding the relationship between the human, the biome and the three principal strata—the physico-chemical, organic, and anthropomorphic. It will therefore prove decisive for the remainder of our thesis, not least where we emphasise the literary-clinical sensibility of Deleuze's notion of 'sympathy', which will prove essential to our notion of ecological pathos, and which marks the affirmation of both the non-equilibrium states of the biosphere and those of human delirium and other 'pathic' states; the world and the ego/self are more appropriately (and more *productively*) conceived of after the BwO than after psychoanalytic models of individual, social and biospheric wholeness, totality or equilibrium.

Where a stratoanalysis would begin by asking the seemingly absurd question 'who does the earth think it is?', we can then proceed to observe how this is a question that ultimately rests upon the schizoanalytic concern with delirium as much as upon the incorporeal transformations that Deleuze and Guattari attribute to regimes of signs in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and which take their part in the organisation and capture of life by way of 'order words' (*mots de ordre*). Taken together, these post-symptomatological and geo-philosophical terms and concepts will enable us to understand the eco-political consequence of aesthetic and semiotic experimentation in a manner that begins to connect them to scientific concerns with species and populations, and which will be key for our analysis of evolutionary biology and archetypal myth after Glen Love's ecocriticism in chapter four.

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<sup>19</sup> As Surin has acknowledged, a great many non-anglophone writers comprise Deleuze's honorary 'Anglo-American' canon, including Lautréamont, Hölderlin, Ghérasim Luca, Artaud, Genet, François Villon, Gombrowicz and Tournier. Surin identifies the omission of Proust from this roster after the negative remarks made by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* where they indict him 'for seeking a salvation through art, 'a still Catholic salvation', as opposed to finding a salvation 'in real life', which is where the Anglo-American novel locates it'. See Surin, Kenneth. 'The Deleuzian Imagination of Geoliterature.' *Deleuze and Literature*. Eds. Ian Buchanan and John Marks. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000): 167-193. p. 188. See also, Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 186.

## (ii) Proust as an Eco-Clinical Thinker?

Let us begin, then, by conceiving of how Proust's literature enables us to invoke Deleuze's notion of 'sympathy' as a geophilosophical link between schizoanalysis and stratoanalysis. We can do so by first considering how in *The Gardens of Desire: Marcel Proust and the Fugitive Sublime* (2004), Stephen Gilbert Brown presents a more orthodox, psychoanalytic reading of Marcel's 'Edenic childhood garden.' Given the great many heterosexual, homosexual and platonic relationships that populate and define Proust's *La recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927), it is curious to note how Brown ascertains a broadly 'eco-clinical' relationship from their exposition; by reading Marcel's epiphanous engagements with the infamous madeleine and cobblestone in terms of a certain sublimity, encounters that spur Marcel into involuntary flights of memory and epistemological inquiry, Brown offers a reading that appears to suggest a form of sublime experience after a neurotic emphasis upon the maternal body. In this way Brown recommends that the relationships in *La recherche* be interpreted towards a sense of a lost Edenic 'garden', a reading that is evidently implying a state of grace from which a modern individual like Marcel feels expelled by the encroaching, androcentric forces of industrial capitalism:

The profane desire to "merge" with the maternal sublime that is thwarted here enervates the "merger hunger" that is futilely displaced onto the opposite sex (Gilberte, Albertine), and then onto same-sex relationships (Saint-Loup, Charlus). The a priori desire that governs the self of *The Search* is a desire to surmount its own sexual differentiation: a desire repeatedly thwarted in reality until fulfilled on the illusory plane in art. The narrator's deepest neurotic fears are associated with the "drame coucher": a fear grounded in absence, in anxiety associated with separation from the beloved, and which establishes the pattern of separation anxiety for every love affair in the novel.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Brown, Stephen Gilbert, *The Gardens of Desire: Marcel Proust and the Fugitive Sublime*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004). p. 23.

This reading of desire in terms of human relationships, in terms of art as a platform from which to begin to consider in ethico-aesthetic terms the human relationship to the more-than-human world, would enable us to link back quite successfully to our Marxo-Lacanian approach in chapters one and two, to sustain in particular the issues we raised in the latter chapter over a political understanding of Nature and sublime aesthetics in our analysis of Lee Rozelle's *Ecosublime*. Where we saw how Žižek developed his thesis on 'sublime objects of ideology', we noted that he did so after a reading of the Freudian 'Thing' (*das Ding*). This in turn gave us to suggest that Rozelle's second-wave ecocriticism might make a more properly *political* utility of this approach, emboldening his own, loosely eco-clinical outlook with Lacanian concepts. Were we to sustain such logic, we might similarly acknowledge here how Brown's work on Proust might profitably connect with Žižek's work in this connection. Yet we are here presented with a perfect opportunity to explore how after Deleuze and Guattari, a schizoanalytic and thereafter stratoanalytic approach breaks with a number of Žižek's theoretical tenets, chiefly insofar as it does not lean upon Freudian and Lacanian concerns with the maternal body. This is because what Brown's reading appears to rely upon most problematically is the thesis on separation anxiety set out by another Brown, the post-Freudian psychoanalyst Norman O. Brown in his historical study, *Life Against Death* (1959).

Prior to invoking Deleuze and Guattari's impersonal unconscious and the ecological notion of sympathy it implies, then, we might first acknowledge, as the above reading of Proust does, the normative, Oedipal reading that psychoanalytic criticism would make of such literature. We can do so by considering how for Norman O. Brown, humans are historical beings because they disavow death; neurosis results from the prolonged nurturing and dependency of human children by and upon their parents. Because of this, children develop unreasonable expectations regarding gratification. Separation from the parents would imply death. Hatred for the parents emerges from a sense that they cannot provide the necessary succour, and a powerful sense of guilt ensues.<sup>21</sup> On this view, the repetition compulsion comes to be seen as the result of the repressed death instinct fusing with the pleasure principle; repressing death (via separation) affirms the drive for pleasure, often via a sustainment of infantile pleasures

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<sup>21</sup> Brown, Norman. O. *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History*. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), pgs 125, 171, 242 and 256.

and thus, ‘history/progress’ is readily determined as an analogical, cultural extension of these unconscious processes, chiefly after the manner set out by Freud in *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930). The instrumental and environmentally-damaging orientation of contemporary techno-capitalism can then be considered on these clinical grounds.

However, in the opening chapter of *Difference and Repetition* (1968/1994), Deleuze determines repetition as a positive, transcendental condition; the death instinct ‘is transcendently positive, to the point of affirming repetition... repetition [is] affirmed and prescribed by the death instinct.’<sup>22</sup> What this means is that when in his schizoanalytic project with Guattari, Deleuze shows how it is not the fear of physical death and its disavowal that inspires repetition, he therefore demonstrates how it cannot be separation anxiety that holds the key to understanding the socio-political role of neurosis and guilt under capitalist society. Rather, what is altogether mistaken is the assumption of a universal family structure. As one of the key insights of *Anti-Oedipus* and its immanent critique of psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari here reverse the Freudian etiology; rather than reducing socio-historical life to the mechanics of a universalising psychology, they instead ‘propose an apparently paradoxical model of the psyche... wherein the mechanisms that carry out repression at the same time free the human organism from instinctual determination, so that it is the form of social organisation that determines whether psychic repression serves social oppression or escapes it.’<sup>23</sup>

This emphasis upon Man as a species beleaguered by its familial organisation is one that will concern us throughout the remainder of the thesis; as we have already noted to some extent, Deleuze and Guattari enable us to break with a certain etiological basis that has dominated clinical thinking since Freud. What we might do now is consider in more detail how after Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari break with Norman O. Brown’s

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<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Deleuze refers to repetition as ‘a superior pathos and pathology.’ In other words, repetition gives to thought a pathos which allows it to think its own limits. See Deleuze, *Difference*, pgs. 5 and 16.

<sup>23</sup> To emphasise separation anxiety in the manner that both Browns do, is thus to remain within a Freudian purview wherein the causal relationship between psychic and social organisation is misunderstood, the prevailing aim being not to privilege the reorganization of social relations, so much as to remain committed to a therapy of ‘deep-seated “psychological regeneration,”’ and ‘the transformation of “historical consciousness...into psychoanalytic consciousness.”’ Holland, Eugene. *Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*. (London: Routledge, 1999). p. 10.

reading of Freud so as to sustain our eco-literary and stratoanalytic concerns with a non-Oedipal Proustian sublime. Thus, it is here important to note how if for Brown anxiety causes repression, then we can only hope to end repression (and one imagines, social oppression too) by overcoming our infantile fears of death and separation. That Stephen Gilbert Brown's reading of Proust retains precisely this logic reveals it as one that a schizoanalyst would entirely disagree with, particularly when we conceive of how for Deleuze and Guattari it is rather repression that causes anxiety and that we must therefore consider how social oppression generates such repression. We can then begin to see how any attempt to free the human organism from deadening forms of repetition might be attempted in precisely the manner that Deleuze and Guattari suggest in chapter three of *Anti-Oedipus*, where specific historical circumstances are upheld as determinate.

This reversal of a principal Freudian tenet becomes most significant for our non-Oedipal reading of Proust when we note how it informs the notion of the BwO, drawing significantly on Nietzsche's notions of the 'eternal return' and 'will to power.' As we will shortly see in our stratoanalytic concerns with literature and bio-political organisation, this is a key schizoanalytic insight insofar as the will to power and eternal return enable us to construe repetition in terms of creative variation and innovation, as a positive understanding of desire as a force for renewal and expansion.<sup>24</sup> As we have noted, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari had already drawn upon Proust in suggesting a 'new earth', or one that rests upon a non-neurotic and schizophrenic understanding of 'desiring-production' and which might lead us to escape the neurotic repetitions of the capitalist socius. By describing how the 'narrator-spider' of Proust's *La recherche*, figures 'the world of transverse communications, where the finally conquered nonhuman sex mingles with the flowers, a new earth where desire functions according to its molecular elements and flows,' they insist that 'such a voyage does not necessarily imply great movements in extension; it becomes immobile, in a room and on a body without organs—an intensive voyage that undoes all the lands for the benefit of the one it is creating.'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche himself expressed such variation in his own literary practice: 'Nietzsche's aphorisms shatter the linear unity of knowledge, only to invoke the cyclic unity of the eternal return, present as the nonknown in thought.' Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pgs. 350-351.

This schizoanalytic understanding of literature is one that gives them to acknowledge how ‘literature is like schizophrenia: a process and not a goal, a production and not an expression.’<sup>26</sup> Whilst this ‘earth’ refers to a specific understanding of desire, it is one that has significant implications for how we understand the relationship between human pathology, non-human affect, and the eco-literary pathos we have thus far only broadly alluded to. Thus, whilst Stephen Gilbert Brown would claim that ‘Proustian desire is neurotic in nature insofar as it foregrounds the sorrows of separation anxiety’, after Deleuze we would instead begin to acknowledge how it gestures towards a ‘schizophrenic’ desire, an impersonal, bio-energetic flow which shows how we might revalue *La recherche* as a modern literary opus that enables a schizoanalytic condemnation of Oedipal ‘territories’ and revaluing of schizophrenic ‘delirium’, recasting our abiding eco-literary concerns, specifically where the immanence of desire and semiotic processes makes the plane of literary composition a fundamentally ethico-political one. This becomes most significant from a stratoanalytic perspective when we see how Brown maintains a particularly ‘Idealist’ and neurotic understanding of Marcel’s creative imagination, specifically as it pertains to his material environs:

the need to cope with the romantic wounds of the material world prompts Marcel’s turn away from the material to the immaterial, as a means of satisfying his idealizing desire. This leads directly to the first works of his idealizing imagination: a Norman gothic Balbec church, a Turner-esque Normandy coastline, Berma’s reinscription of the classic Greek ideal in Phedre, Ruskin’s Venice, or the feudal sublime embodied in the names of Geneviève de Brabant and Guermantes.<sup>27</sup>

This emphasis upon neurotic interiority as a spur to a creative response to external places, to the more-than-human worlds in which we live, does not suggest the type of non-Idealist and material perspectives that we find in *Proust and Signs*, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. As such, we can now begin to reconceive of eco-sublimity in terms of a sympathy with environmental flora and fauna, those non-human elements that nevertheless impact upon our creativity after a logic of schizophrenic

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<sup>26</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, Stephen Gilbert, *Gardens*, p. 24.

‘becoming’ rather than neurotic ‘being’. In their reading of the Austrian author Hugo von Hofmannsthal, for example, Deleuze and Guattari speak of a form of zoological sympathy experienced by Lord Chandos, the protagonist of a high modern epistolary narrative who undergoes an epiphanous moment of eco-sublimity during an encounter with a cellar full of dying rats; looking down at the mother rat, surrounded by her ailing young, Chandos does not experience pity so much as what Deleuze and Guattari describe as an unnatural participation with a form of impersonal suffering, an ecological pathos that comes to a writer who is undergoing a crisis of language: ‘Then a strange imperative wells up in him: either stop writing, or write like a rat.’<sup>28</sup>

Where, as Deleuze does, Brown would acknowledge how Proust is a consummate semiotician, sensitive to the signs of his bourgeois social milieu, he nevertheless does so in an all-too-human way, neglecting the extent to which Proust begins to suggest the constitutive violence of pre-individual and impersonal forces. When Brown describes how in Proust, ‘[t]he real is supplanted by the ideal, which in turn seeks to superimpose itself upon the real—in vain, until the ideal and the real are reunited in the end through involuntary memory, their merger eternalized in a work of art whose principal aim and most salutary effect is to gratify the “merger hunger” of a disordered self’, he is concerned with retaining the creative act as gratifying of the neurotic familiarity Marcel feels abandoned by.<sup>29</sup> In Brown’s summation there is a great pathos and experience of pain informing Marcel’s creative work; the struggles to ‘liberate’ a self capable of bridging (yet not transmuting or exorcising) a sense of primary separation are ultimately negative and contrary to the becoming Deleuze and Guattari insist is the true vocation of literary production. As we will later see, Brown’s is a reading that ultimately ‘reterritorialises’ Proust’s revolutionary and eco-clinical potential upon a sense of lack and thus a desire for the maternal body.

Pain in the material world induces Marcel to search for pleasure in the realm of the symbolic, prompts the inward turn into the self, which evolves into an epic struggle to liberate from within itself that creative self which alone can eternalize the mother, can justify the sacrifice of the mother to art, can unite both mother

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<sup>28</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 240.

<sup>29</sup> Brown, Stephen Gilbert, *Gardens*, p. 24.

and son in an immortal embrace that gratifies forever the “merger hunger” of the soul. All prisoners in *Recherché* are surrogates for the ideal self imprisoned within itself: Genevieve imprisoned in her tower, the female imprisoned within Charlus, the lost selves of Marcel imprisoned in the petites madeleines, the steeples of Martinville, and the trees of Hudimesnil, etc.<sup>30</sup>

Again, what this implies for our eco-clinic is a point of departure from the sublime aesthetics we engaged in chapter two, marking a significant break with the emphasis we maintained there upon Kantian judgement, and with Žižek’s Lacanian extension of such in his thesis on sublime objects of ideology. When, for example, Deleuze and Guattari describe how the German pre-Romantic Karl Philipp Moritz, who ‘feels responsible not for the calves that die but before the calves that die and give him the incredible feeling of an unknown Nature affect’, they describe too how ‘affect is not personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel. Who has not known the violence of these animal sequences, which uproot one from humanity, if only for an instant, making one scrape at one’s bread like a rodent or giving one the yellow eyes of a feline?’<sup>31</sup> It is this power to ‘throw the self into upheaval’, one that may well appear to evoke the type of eco-sublime described by Lee Rozelle, which nevertheless exceeds the Kantian sublime insofar as it exceeds subjectivization *per se*. Moreover, it is one that augurs not only a reversal of our understanding of psychoanalysis and the political, of the human and the inhuman becomings that are available to it, but revalues our understanding of matter, enabling us to understand how the BwO proves to be a more sophisticated means of grasping eco-cultural relations.

Let us now turn to how these Proustian concerns enable a stratoanalysis adequate to understanding the relevance of eco-clinical literary research to such seemingly non-literary concerns as Climate Change. We can begin by remaining with Proust, whom, as we have begun to acknowledge, Deleuze owed a career-long debt to, upholding as no less a ‘cultural physician’ than Kafka. In *Negotiations* he is recorded as saying that ‘*la recherche* is a general semiology, a symptomatology of different worlds. Kafka’s work is

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 240.

a diagnosis of all the diabolical powers around us. As Nietzsche said, artists and philosophers are civilization's doctors'.<sup>32</sup> For the theory-wary ecocritic, therefore, Deleuze's volume on Proust proves noteworthy from the outset, suggesting as it does a clinical notion of 'worldliness' drawn as much from *La recherche du temps perdu* as from the ontology of Spinoza. Rather than bowdlerizing the text with a merciless application of 'theory', Deleuze instead demonstrates how Proust himself had already discerned (or 'diagnosed') those affective elements and processes of actualisation that *comprise* different 'worlds', both their social and non-human (or 'environmental') elements.<sup>33</sup>

But as we have already begun to suggest, a schizoanalytic approach to literature begets a stratoanalytic one, and that moreover, both are, in a sense, less concerned with symptoms and diagnosis as they are with a notion of *therapy*, specifically one that in *Anti-Oedipus* would promise to cure us of the very desire for the cure that psychoanalysis offers.<sup>34</sup> In order to understand how this post-symptomatological thesis relates to a stratoanalysis of organic and alloplastic (or cultural) strata, we must first acknowledge how for Deleuze, Proust and Kafka do more than simply diagnose signs of personal illness; because signs 'imply ways of living' they ultimately problematise the personological register itself, indicating other 'possibilities of existence... they're the symptoms of life gushing forth or draining away.'<sup>35</sup> In his final essay collection, *Critique et clinique* (1993/1997), Deleuze extends this 'vitalist' thesis in such a way as to suggest a quasi-eco-clinical view of Life, suggesting that whilst literature appears as 'an enterprise of health', it is a health that would be 'sufficient to liberate life wherever it is imprisoned by and within man, by and within organisms and genera.'<sup>36</sup>

It is here, with a sense of the organismic 'imprisonment' or capture of life, that we begin to acknowledge Deleuze and Guattari's stratoanalytic concern with 'differential

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<sup>32</sup> Deleuze, Gilles. *Negotiations*. Trans. Martin Joughin. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990). Pgs. 142-43.

<sup>33</sup> Describing *Logique du sens* as 'a convoluted story', Deleuze maintains the work is 'an attempt to develop a logical and psychological novel', premised on the notion that 'an evaluation of symptoms might be achieved only through a novel.' See Deleuze, *Logic*, p. 273.

<sup>34</sup> More precisely, they speak of 'the schizophrenization that must cure us of the cure.' Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 76.

<sup>35</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, pgs. 142-43.

<sup>36</sup> Deleuze, *Essays*, p. 3.

ratios of rate of capture over rate of escape’, and thus after a paradox principal to both the science of ecology and Deleuze’s ‘critical and clinical’ hypothesis: Some notion of an organism and a subjectivity *must* prevail if we are to creatively work against them. During a public roundtable on Proust in 1975, Deleuze underscored this broadly ‘ecological pathos’ in terms of a recognition of limits, specifically in a statement pertaining to *La recherche*: ‘At the end, the narrator offers a glimpse of his method: to be open to what hurts him. That is a method.’<sup>37</sup> As we have seen, whilst for a writer like Stephen Gilbert Brown, Proust’s narrative supplies a diagnosis of the Oedipal organisation of desire in the social ‘worlds’ of bourgeois France, Deleuze’s notion of ‘worldliness’—his Spinozist distinction between individual social ‘worlds’ and the immanent ‘world’ of primary substance from which they are actualised—enables us to enjoin instead a strata-critical reading of human and inhuman desire, to apprehend flows of ‘pre-personal’ intensities and affects, of pre-individual forces that are selected, captured and deselected by the abstract machine of stratification.<sup>38</sup>

Where our concerns remain eco-clinical, then, we can explore the pathic relationship between the organic and ‘alloplastic’ (or cultural) strata by considering how for Deleuze and Guattari our organs are deterritorialising machines that ultimately beget culture as a compensatory and reterritorialising movement.<sup>39</sup> By remaining with the notion of Oedipus and Brown’s neurotic reading of Proust, we can see how organs can be conceived of after a certain stratification (or selecting and consolidating) of material flows, functioning as part of an historically-contingent social machine that determines which connections and patterns of different organs remains permissible. Where in *Anti-Oedipus* the BwO was put forward as a means of understanding unconscious desire as a ‘factory’, one that has at its core a tripartite process of synthetic production in which the three syntheses of connection, disjunction, and conjunction enable an understanding of the investments of desire and capital after a Nietzschean reading of Kant, Freud and Marx, in *A Thousand Plateaus* we find that, just like the organism which it would logically appear to oppose, the BwO is given as a ‘representation of limits of

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<sup>37</sup> Deleuze, Gilles. *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*. Trans. Hodges, Ames and Mike Taormina. Ed. Lapoujade, David. (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006). p. 48.

<sup>38</sup> It is important to emphasise the Spinozan aspect of stratoanalysis, because ‘all BwO’s pay homage to Spinoza.’ Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 154.

<sup>39</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, pgs. 60-61.

processes.’<sup>40</sup> Where in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ usage of the three syntheses, they are at pains to develop the thesis on passive synthesis that Deleuze had outlined in *Difference and Repetition*, after a critique of the negativity and lack that psychoanalytic approaches to desire would constrain by way of exclusive and inhibited connections and disjunctions. In doing so, they at once name two regimes of ‘molar’ and ‘molecular’ production that in turn supplies any ecological approach to literature with a means of reckoning with the ‘capture and escape’ dynamic of the strata. If the organism corresponds to a pure, ‘actualised’ fixity of the molar regime then the BwO can be conceived of as the non-captured, ‘virtual’ potentiality of the molecular flow.

What the movement from schizoanalysis to stratoanalysis offers our eco-literary clinic, therefore, is a means of retaining the former’s concerns with Oedipal social organisation and the illegitimate (or non-immanent) usage of the syntheses, whilst at once enabling us to grasp how the material flows that organisms draw off in their constitution belong to the earth itself as a BwO. Increasingly, Climate Change is forcing humanity to recognise how the world that we once took to be composed of relatively stable entities (‘bodies’, or beings) is in fact a multitude of flows moving at various speeds: rocks and mountains appear as very slow-moving flows; organic things as flows of biological material through developmental systems; discrete languages as flows of information, words, etc. Where an ‘ecological pathos’ of a literary sort is concerned, then, we come to see how the forces that ‘excite’, ‘move’ or ‘hurt’ us indicate a ‘transcendental’ or ‘virtual’ field of pure, or molecular differences that simultaneously inform *and* resist crude subject-object and nature-culture dichotomies. Insofar as ‘[t]he writer returns from what he has seen and heard with bloodshot eyes and pierced eardrums’ Deleuze acknowledges an openness to excessive forces; discernible through instances of weakness and exhaustion, through interruptions, ‘schizzes’ and breaks, and via such (dis)articulations as stammering, vibrating and trembling, writing bears a privileged relationship to this sense of ‘Life’, which is registered in its struggle with that which blocks and inhibits it: ‘Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed’.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Protevi, *Organism*, p. 38.

<sup>41</sup> Deleuze, *Essays*, p. 1.

By emphasising how Proust's method necessitates remaining open to such 'becomings', to the energetic struggle with limits that are imposed by 'organisms and genera', we might already, at this preliminary stage, begin to infer that a Deleuzian 'sublime'—if it remains necessary to call it that—is not simply concerned with the limits of the human organism, with recognising Life as 'something more than personal', but moreover, is automatically in excess of subjectivist ontologies. By acknowledging the *constitutive* violences that all beings are obliged to undergo—violences of capture, stratification and folding—we can here deepen our understanding of why Deleuze dispenses with a pre-established self or subject and how literature and language draw us to acknowledge the capture of Life in terms of form and content. Proust's Charlus, for example, despite his 'imperial individuality', is described by Deleuze as a 'galaxy', a 'pathos' comprised not only of the keen affects of his flashing eyes and resonant voice, but ultimately by a delirious and 'vegetal' force that knows no *logos*. Similarly, Albertine 'slowly extracts herself' from a 'galaxy of girls', her 'jealousies' and 'lies' that differentiate her from the field of '*jeunes filles*' are not mere character traits, but paradoxically precede her, intensive components of a pre-personal field from which her character is actually synthesised.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, prior to exploring how this in turn relates to Deleuze and Guattari's work on Kafka and how his writing enables us to reckon with 'collective assemblages of enunciation' for such concerns as Climate Change, we can begin to outline an eco-clinical orientation that would acknowledge an account of 'passive synthesis', or one that gives us to acknowledge how signs and their affects are ultimately *productive* at both the 'perceptual' and 'organismic' levels.<sup>43</sup> Pre-dating his work with Guattari on the formation of social machines, *Proust and Signs* supplies useful insight into *relations* of affect, acknowledging not only how they concern our mind and perception, but how through a range of 'involuntary' and 'unconscious' syntheses, prove constitutive of our being.<sup>44</sup> Again, such 'forces' are of the 'outside', which is not to say that they are merely

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<sup>42</sup> '[Charlus'] verbal interpretative madness masks the more mysterious signs of the non-language working within him; in short, the enormous Charlus network.' Whereas Albertine is extracted from '[a] whole delirium of action and demand, quite different from Charlus's delirium of ideas and interpretation' (ibid.). See Deleuze, *Proust*, pgs. 175-80.

<sup>43</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 142-43.

<sup>44</sup> It is key to note here that Deleuze and Guattari do not conceive of matter as pure receptivity, and which of course defines their break with Kantian hylomorphism. We might think of this in terms of a degree of synthetic self-causality that resists / obsolesces Kant's insistence upon the conscious imposition of form.

*exterior* to humans or other entities, but of an order of ‘Reality’ that retains a fundamental freedom from form, or which necessarily *precedes* identity.<sup>45</sup> Just as Deleuze states that ‘the forces within man do not necessarily contribute to the composition of a Man-form, but may be otherwise invested in another concept of form’, so we may say that literature and language are also possessed of these forces that may enter into relations with other forces of the outside.<sup>46</sup> Whilst in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss *relations* of forces in terms of ‘diagrams’, or ‘abstract machines’ that ‘pilot’ cultural ‘assemblages’, it is here useful to provisionally remain with his Proustian semiotic, for it pertains more specifically to the relationship between signs, literature and ‘worldliness’.

Thus, we can begin to understand ‘worldliness’ by considering how for Deleuze, Proust’s *la recherche* cannot be referred ‘to a system of subjectivity... that is alien to it’.<sup>47</sup> Literature is a negotiation of the capture and shaping of forces, a largely ‘stratified’, yet potentially revolutionary affair. Considered in ‘diagrammatic’ terms, we would acknowledge this as an enveloping of ‘unformed matters’ and ‘non-formalized functions’, yet at this juncture we might instead emphasise the non-subjective emphasis Deleuze identifies in Proust’s narratology:

There is less a narrator than a machine of the Search, and less a hero than the arrangements [*agencement*] by which the machine functions under one or another configuration, according to one or another articulation, for one or another purpose, for one or another production. It is only in this sense that we can ask what the narrator-hero is, who does not function as a subject. The reader at least is struck by the insistence with which Proust presents the narrator as incapable of seeing, of perceiving, of remembering, of understanding... etc.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Deleuze, Gilles. *Foucault*. Trans. Sean Hand. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). pgs. 86, 101.

<sup>46</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*. p.124.

<sup>47</sup> Deleuze, *Proust*, p. 181.

<sup>48</sup> Deleuze, *Proust*, p. 181.

Broadly ‘ecological’ in many respects, this a-subjective, ‘machinic’ or ‘schizoanalytic’ understanding of the text is therefore inherently ‘eco-clinical’ for being ‘strata-critical’; in its ‘machinism’, it exceeds any orthodox psychoanalytic model, having at its core this pre-personal figure of the BwO as its non-subjective motor. Shortly, Kafka will give us to acknowledge the ethical consequences this has for our notion of eco-virtue, one that is intensified under the prospect of imminent Climate Change. It is therefore at the perceptual level, or that which is more commonly associated with the semiological register, that we will initially remain.<sup>49</sup> This is because, in *Swann’s Way*, the first volume of *la recherche*, Deleuze shows how the narrator is compelled to ‘seek’ out the answers to a variety of affective ‘sign-problems’ following his encounters with such everyday objects as a madeleine and a cobblestone, objects that appear to conceal signs that for him are nothing less than mnemonic transports. How might the ‘encounter’ with a particular ‘sensuous impression’ transport Marcel so fully into environs beyond those he presently inhabits?

Evoking the memory of aunt Leonie and Sunday mornings in Combray, it is the *taste* of the madeline that prompts Marcel to recall ‘immediately the old grey house upon the street... the garden which had been built out behind it... and with the house the town, from morning to night and in all weathers, the Square where I used to be sent before lunch, the streets along which I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine’, etc.<sup>50</sup> More importantly, perhaps is the question of how that which inspires these memories of other ‘worlds’, operating as it does at the level of *la recherche’s* narrative content, relates to Deleuze’s concerns with *formal* experimentation—with nonstandard syntax, the fragmentation of words, or the proliferation of figures of speech? Just as Proust’s use of language cannot be likened to the high modernism of Gertrude Stein or Samuel Beckett, to what Gaudlitz terms the ‘liminal expression’ or ‘stuttering’

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<sup>49</sup> It is important to note at this juncture, however, that in *Proust et les signes* Deleuze does not develop the ‘materiality’ of signs as completely as in his later work, *Spinoza et la problème de l’expression* (1968/1990), nor, it must be said, necessarily present us with a generalisable theory of signs and symptoms. Nevertheless, by proposing the sign as that which affects us and tracking its implication within the pluralism of ‘worlds’ that comprise modern societies, it remains a significantly ‘materialist’ treatment that underwrites the later ‘synthetic’ philosophy of *Différence et répétition* (1968/1994) and *L’Anti-Oedipe* (1972/1977).

<sup>50</sup> Proust, Marcel. *In Search of Lost Time Volume I: Swann’s Way*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1998). p. 64.

of bodily affectivity, neither can Marcel's character be described as 'valetudinarian'—or as someone for whom issues of health and sickness are paramount.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, it is by delivering a complex taxonomy of signs, signs that bear upon *involuntary* relations with specific environments, that Proust reveals affect—that which *moves* Marcel—as the key to unraveling the apparent 'solipsism'—or tendency towards 'interiority'—of high modernist culture. Equal to the existential grip that a particular sign has upon him, its 'signing' does not simply reflect upon the movements of his individual consciousness, but highlights its reciprocal dynamic with the particular 'world' in which it is embedded. Whilst this is typically a 'social world' for Marcel, it is nevertheless in his 'encounter' with a range of signs that he experiences feelings that separate them from other objects and that impel him to better understand the *forces* they reveal, or the 'something more than personal' that people, things and places are necessarily pervaded by.<sup>52</sup> It is through analysis of such forces that we can ascertain how specific traditions of interpretation have constructed and valorised the human 'individual' as the primary territory, and thus contributed to environmentally-*unaware* relations to the *more-than-human* world, relations supported by those historical processes that Ian Watt identifies in the suburbanization of eighteenth-century England and which increased cultural emphasis upon private, inward life.<sup>53</sup>

It is the relationship between the literary, values and this 'inhuman' dimension of force that must concern us here, therefore, particularly where the great works of literature have proven so putatively 'human' in scope. Whether the class struggles of Zola, the *bildungsroman* of Dostoyevsky and Dickens, the exfoliation of social mores in Woolf, or the lamentation of rampant bureaucracy in Kafka, we must consider how such socially-

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<sup>51</sup> Gaudlitz, Erika. 'Stuttering in Beckett as Liminal Expression within the Deleuzian Critical-Clinical Hypothesis.' *Deleuze Studies*. (Special Issue: 'Deleuze and the Symptom.'). Vol. 4. No. 2. (2010): 183-205. p. 184.

<sup>52</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, pgs. 142-43. We will not elaborate here upon the different types of sign Deleuze identifies in this early text on Proust. It serves our purposes at this juncture to merely indicate the materiality of an a-signifying semiotic, and to acknowledge the constitutive and perceptual 'violences' that all beings are obliged to undergo.

<sup>53</sup> "'Urbanity' denotes the qualities of politeness and understanding which are the product of the wider social experience which city life makes possible; with it goes [for example] the spirit of comedy which, in Italian, French or English comedy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries centers on the gay life of the streets and the squares, where the walls of houses afford a purely nominal privacy. "Suburban," on the other hand, denotes the sheltered complacency and provinciality of the sheltered middle-class home.' See Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957). p. 187.

oriented writing can be *valued differently*, not only with acknowledgement of how these works transmit pre-individual affects, but with an eye to how such forces form part of a broader, ethico-aesthetic ‘ecology’. As such, we must be careful when reading the apparent antithesis of ‘humanist’ literature—‘nature-writing’ or ‘wilderness narratives’—not to *negatively* posit the plant, the animal, the rock (or even the ‘machine’) as those nonhuman forms of alterity against which the human is all too unsatisfyingly defined. Rather, it is with that which is nonhuman *within the human*, those forces that sustain, yet overflow and escape us, and that contribute towards the *overcoming* of such a being, with which an ‘eco-clinical’ project must begin.

### (iii) Regimes of Signs / Signs of Change

‘...by means of the family photo, a whole map of the world.’<sup>54</sup>

Let us now consider, then, how literary form or specific usages of language can aid us in understanding how bodies of all kinds are organised and transformed by diverse social machines. In particular we will consider how Deleuze and Guattari’s move from linguistics to ‘pragmatics’ enables us to reconceive of what we have tentatively described above as ‘eco-virtue’ and largely after their notion of ‘incorporeal transformation’. Despite John Protevi’s recent work on Hurricane Katrina, the eco-virtuous attitudes and activity that have emerged under the media-enhanced spectre of Climate Change remain largely unexplored in terms of the stratoanalysis we have begun to describe and nominate.<sup>55</sup> What is more, there is a means of approaching this shortfall after a concerted *literary* engagement, something that Protevi, but also such scientifically-minded Deleuzians as Mark Bonta and Manuel DeLanda, do not broach, and which draws together many of our prevailing concerns, better preparing us for further eco-clinical analysis of specific examples of North American literary production in chapters four and five.

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<sup>54</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Protevi, John. ‘Katrina’. *Deleuze/Guattari & Ecology*. Ed. Bernd Hozengenrath. (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 165-181.

We will again commence here with Deleuze and Guattari's reading of another non-American author, Franz Kafka, whom like Proust, is nevertheless accorded an honorary 'Anglo-American' status in their work, and yet whose influence differs from the latter's inasmuch as his particular 'stratoanalysis' and subsequent method of deterritorialisation / destratification suggests a means of renegotiating eco-social desire under late capitalism as the shift in the operations of certain social machines and the collective assemblages of enunciation they mobilise. Such stratacritical literature exceeds the emphasis upon the exfoliation of signs as per Deleuze's Proustian semiotics, particularly where Kafka's works indicate an experimental line beyond the Oedipal impasse after a 'becoming-animal' that forms part of a 'minor literature' with surprising implications for rethinking such North American nature-writers as Henry David Thoreau, and which therefore profoundly revalues our critical-clinical understanding of form, content and expression.

Thus, on first reading Kafka's work after an engagement with the fundamentals of schizoanalysis, ecocritics might be given to seize upon the great many zoological affects in Kafka's already much celebrated, but also, *over-interpreted* bestiary; Gregor the beetle, Josephine the Singer (who is a mouse), the musical dogs etc., all have met with psychoanalytic and therefore Oedipal reductionism. And yet it is also Deleuze and Guattari's central assertion that Kafka's work offers an exemplary case study for those wishing to grasp a species of literature that is 'minor', or one in which 'language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization', but moreover, that when taken together such an oeuvre resembles an animal's 'burrow'.<sup>56</sup> Conceived of after the 'multiple entrances' that it offers, none of which, like the rhizomatic and non-arboreal structures that Deleuze and Guattari advance throughout their writings, is privileged over another, we find in Kafka's work much less an analogical resemblance than a 'revolutionary' and 'therapeutic' statement of intent that appears to correspond to the threat posed by a predatory animal with the 'enemy' of Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalytic approach, or the much-maligned Signifier: 'Only the principle of multiple entrances prevents the introduction of the enemy, the Signifier and those attempts to interpret a work that is actually open to experimentation.'<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, pgs. 3 and 16.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Whilst an eco-clinical pursuit of this line would certainly yield a further understanding of the importance of multiplicity and of a non-interpretive, a-signifying means of approaching Kafka's high modernism, for our purposes here we will emphasise instead how his literary experimentation contributes more broadly to Deleuze and Guattari's revolutionary thesis, or the extent to which it enables us to find *another* path, *another* approach to our clinical concerns with the eco-political destratification of the anthropocentric stratum. This it will do by contributing towards an understanding of 'regimes of signs', chiefly after the extent to which by determining cultural codes, behaviors and practices, such regimes (or 'collective assemblages of enunciation') play a significant role in the constitution of the anthropomorphic stratum more generally. By developing upon their discussion of form and content outlined in *Kafka: Toward A Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari go on to discuss in *A Thousand Plateaus* how forming and formalising forces capture an 'unformed material of expression', or how the pre-individual intensities and affects we have acknowledged in our preliminary discussions of the BwO may or may not 'serve to express contents that will reveal themselves to be relatively less and less formalized.'<sup>58</sup>

Thus, just as 'the animal is part of the burrow machine'—which is to say, whether inside or outside of it, the animal's diverse states of movement, fleeing and approach effect the coordinates of a larger machine—so too are we bidden to acknowledge how a 'Kafka-machine' demonstrates how 'states of desire' can be stratoanalysed in a literary manner that nevertheless remains 'free of all interpretation.'<sup>59</sup> As we will recall from chapter one, this anti-hermeneutic orientation retains the Spinozist ethology of bodily longitudes and latitudes, or one that retains an emphasis upon analyses and measurements of bodily performance and capability, insisting that we ask how diverse machines *work* rather than what they may or may not be purported to 'mean'. Yet here, this ethology is adopted with regard to those machines, which, like Kafka's 'Penal Colony', reveal the extent to which 'men are themselves pieces of the machine,' an observation given most memorably, perhaps, in *The Trial*, where Herr K is confronted with 'the single machine of justice.'<sup>60</sup> It is in this way that Deleuze and Guattari overturn the accumulated influence of 'so many

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<sup>58</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 8.

unfortunate psychoanalytic readings’, and which have come to govern, in key respects, approaches to psycho-cultural research that would clinically consider bureaucratic and other social mechanisms and the micropolitics of their operation.<sup>61</sup>

As we saw in our discussion of Deleuze and Guattari’s reversal of the Freudian etiology, specifically with regard to the link between social oppression and psychic repression, the reading of Kafka that schizoanalysis makes obtainable is one that does not reterritorialise his experimentation upon a neurotic and overdetermined relationship to the Father, as per the ‘Oedipalization of the universe’ that Deleuze and Guattari characteristically find so wrongheaded, debilitating, and ultimately saddening, and which we have here begun to reveal as a primary hurdle to the development of a more-than-human ecological outlook.<sup>62</sup> Although we will not concern ourselves too greatly here with Kafka’s ‘Letter to the Father’ and the ‘exaggerated Oedipus’, which, like the ‘blow up’ photo Deleuze and Guattari invoke in this connection, enlarges the paternal figure to ‘the point of absurdity’, it is nevertheless a key consideration if we are to prolong our simultaneously eco-clinical and geo-philosophical approach in a manner that would engage and inspire those ecocritics working on projects with a markedly geographical or bioregional emphasis. Again, this is perhaps best expressed in a formulation that exceeds the Lacanian concern with the Symbolic Order or Law as a matrix with which one must sufficiently identify in order to obtain a ‘healthy’ subject position within the prevailing Symbolic economy: ‘The question of the father isn’t how to become free in relation to him (an Oedipal question) but how to find a path where he didn’t find any.’<sup>63</sup>

This formulation, with its implications of escape over liberty, with the unblocking of a socio-libidinal impasse that the father may well have succumbed to, but in the face of which the son may construct a new mode of experimentation that ‘invents a way out... putting it into connection with a whole underground network, and with all the ways out from this network,’ remains one that in key respects shows the complexity of all ‘environmental’ milieus, and in which physical and psychic terrains are shown to interlock and interpenetrate. Not only do we find the image of the ‘animal’ burrow, or

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<sup>61</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

the ‘becoming-animal’ that is often extracted from Deleuze and Guattari’s in many respects already ‘ecological’ grasp of the Kafka-machine, but at once an implicit schizoanalysis of the ‘city-county’ and ‘countryside-city’ relations that, for example, marked the Lawful distinction between the ‘devout’ yet entrapping ‘rural ghetto’ and the comparatively lucrative, yet oft-times ‘betraying’ opportunities to be had in city-living that shaped the transitional Jewish diaspora.<sup>64</sup>

Evidently, what we begin to discern here is the lineaments of a stratagical understanding that again opens up our sense of how to *clinically* account for human-environmental relations in a manner that does not ultimately support the old bi-univocal relationships that would sustain interiority qua *insularity*. As we have recommended, the unblocking of the impasses that Kafka demonstrates through his literary experiment therefore reveals how deterritorialisation is more or less synonymous with destratification and thus, how it subsequently appears key to proposing a path beyond the cultural patterns and habits that lock individuals, families and communities in a circuit that reproduces an economic base predicated upon an unsustainable attitude to resources and a blithe indifference to eco-systemic pollution. If the planet-wide yet in-explicit pollution of the oceans remains easier to overlook or deny than the impact of tsunamis and other seismic activity that impacts more explicitly upon human habitation, then the further reaching yet subtle phenomenon of Climate Change, which is itself tied to complex processes of oceanic precipitation and increases/decreases in planetary temperature, has proven irrefutably linked to human activity, then all of the denials that keep us from recognising and transforming our habits might be considered in terms of an-Oedipal modes of post-psychoanalytic thought, those that would bid us to destratify (or experiment with) our patterns of connection towards the creation of new ‘eco-social’ habits.

Where Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of Kafka begins to lead us, then, is towards their notion of a ‘regime of signs’ and the transition it marks from linguistics to pragmatics, or from the assumption of language as a system of communication to one that issues ‘order words’ (*mots d’orde*). The semiotic coordinates that are imparted during secondary-school grammar lessons install a host of basic dualisms that enforce an understanding of life and the human place in the world. This they do after codes that

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

impose a sense of collective order, and it is in this way that Deleuze and Guattari draw together the Stoic theory of incorporeals with the non-standard linguistics of Labov, Austin, Searle and Markov to inform their impersonal thesis on societal power. What this thesis enables us to acknowledge, then, is how the machinic assemblages which refer to the domain of *physical* objects, interrelate, or affect and are affected by, the collective regimes of enunciation, which by contrast, refer to the order of language or what psychoanalysis terms the Symbolic. What is crucial to this interrelationship for Deleuze and Guattari is how order words effect ‘incorporeal transformations’, as in the example of a juridical verdict that sentences the condemned man by way of ‘the expressed element [*l’exprimé*] of the sentence of the judge.’<sup>65</sup> As Ronald Bogue continues, ‘...the awarding of a degree, the passage of a law, the arrival at one’s majority – all are incorporeal transformations of bodies effected through language.’<sup>66</sup> Such order words form part of a ‘collective assemblage of enunciation’ or ‘regime of signs’ that Deleuze and Guattari deem to be ‘the set of *incorporeal transformations* which are in effect in a given society, and which *are attributed* to the bodies of that society.’<sup>67</sup>

As political as this process already appears, it is therefore key to note how literary usages of language intervene in this process. Again referring to Proust, Deleuze and Guattari deploy their conception of assemblage [*agencement*] to describe an impersonal ‘free indirect discourse’, a movement of the fourth person singular that

...is not explained by the distinction between subjects; rather, it is the assemblage, as it freely appears in this discourse, that explains all the voices present within a single voice, the glimmer of girls in a monologue by Charlus, the languages in a language, the order-words in a word. The American murderer “Son of Sam” killed on the prompting of an ancestral voice, itself transmitted through the voice of a dog.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 80.

<sup>66</sup> Bogue, *Deleuze & Guattari*, p. 138.

<sup>67</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 80.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

What this post-linguistic turn indicates is an understanding of the power of expression to affect, and therefore to *effect* change in bodies of all kinds; extracted from a great many literary sources, not least those of Proust and Kafka, this non-representative and performative understanding of language and society in terms of two types of assemblage enables us to glimpse how our attitudes towards more-than-human processes such as that described as ‘Climate’ might be clinically analyzed without recourse to signifying semiotics. Ecocritic Timothy Morton has attempted to offer a means of grasping climate in a manner that might sit well with this analysis of assemblages, if only he were to connect the emphasis we are placing here upon eco-social transformation after Deleuze and Guattari’s profoundly *non-ideological* understanding of desire and the State to his proposal of the phenomenon as a ‘hyper object’, or as a ‘non-local’ object that is ‘massively distributed in time and space such that any particular (local) manifestation never reveals the totality of [it].’<sup>69</sup>

In his recent work, Morton contrasts the experience of individual raindrops or other climatological phenomena with that of climate ‘in itself’; by extension therefore, he suggests that we might use the hyperobject to rethink phenomenological relations more broadly, notably those pertaining to our (in)ability to experience and *know* climate change as a field event or ‘effect’ of complex biospheric relations.<sup>70</sup> As fellow eco-philosophical author and blogger Levi Bryant puts it: ‘We are aware of *weather* without being aware of climate. Climate requires a sort of leap and a detective work that ferrets out all sorts of traces.’<sup>71</sup> And yet where our concerns remain with how we may or may not be responding to Climate Change in an ‘eco-virtuous’ manner, or in one that would see us act in accordance with a transnational ethical mandate, we might consider here why Morton, and similarly, a psychoanalytic ecocritic like Joseph Dodds, does not pursue the link between Deleuze and Guattari’s thesis on collective assemblages of enunciation and Bateson’s work on an ‘ecology of mind’, particularly given the brief

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<sup>69</sup> Morton’s blog is a vital extension of his published academic work and serves as a widely subscribed to forum for ecocritics of all walks and persuasions to advance, discuss and contest theoretical approaches to ecological and environmental concerns. For this particular citation see: <http://ecologywithoutnature.blogspot.com/2010/11/hyperobjects-are-nonlocal.html>

<sup>70</sup> If the discrete events that comprise the effected phenomenon (glacial melting, earthquakes, volcanic events etc) do not supply access to climate change *as such*, then Morton’s hyper-objectivity suggests a means of separating out our *experience* of a phenomenon from the *thing in itself*, or ‘entity in its own right’.

<sup>71</sup> See Bryant’s unpublished reading of Morton’s work @ <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2010/11/18/class-and-hyperobjects/>

mention Dodds makes of both approaches in his book-length study.<sup>72</sup>

Like Dodds, Morton has repeatedly made recourse to a more classical mode of ideology critique, one that, as we saw in chapters one and two, draws significantly upon Žižek's uniquely post-Lacanian, but ultimately *negative*, Hegelian approach to subjectivity. What this again yields in Morton's work is a laudatory, but mostly ideological critique of the concepts of 'Nature' and any environmental ideology that would sustain reactive thinking. Yet where a Lacanian ideology critique would remain more or less dialectically-predisposed, a Deleuzian approach would hope to renegotiate the tension between the diagnosis of a pathology, and the prescription of a remedy that if it is to paradoxically 'cure us of the cure', or to depart from the interminable analysis of the neurotic, subjectivist orientation, requires as part of its self-overcoming an understanding of the rhizomatic line of flight immanent to any system and the limits and impasses that define it, and which we acknowledged in prefatory fashion in the literary experimentation of Kafka above. Deleuze and Guattari's 'noological' thesis of assemblages might therefore be seen as an experimental continuation of a project that is as literary as it is normatively 'sociological' and which moreover would rather study 'images of thought and their historicity' than any normative thesis on interpellation, therefore bidding us to recognise noology as a creative destruction of prior images, or as an a-subjective potential of thought necessarily 'confronted by counterthoughts, which are violent in their acts and discontinuous in their appearances, and whose existence is mobile in history.'<sup>73</sup>

Again, it is here a complex, 'nomadic' relationship between desire, thought and the captures of the State that concerns Deleuze and Guattari, one powerfully dramatised by the acts of the

"private thinker," as opposed to the public professor: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, or even Shestov. Wherever they dwell, it is the steppe or desert. They destroy images. Nietzsche's Schopenhauer as Educator is perhaps the greatest critique ever directed against the image of thought and its relation to the State. "Private thinker," however, is not a satisfactory

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<sup>72</sup> Dodds, *Psychoanalysis and Ecology*, pgs. 196-197.

<sup>73</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, pgs. 415-416.

expression, because it exaggerates interiority, when it is a question of outside thought. To place thought in an immediate relation with the outside, with the forces of the outside, in short to make thought a war machine, is a strange undertaking whose precise procedures can be studied in Nietzsche (the aphorism...)<sup>74</sup>

This latter reference to the ‘desert’ that is palpable in the aphoristic prose style of Nietzsche, once again invokes the ‘outside’ (or exteriority) of the BwO; where ‘the Nietzsche case’ instructs us clinically, it speaks of a dangerous and extreme de-stratification, taken so far as to lose touch with the dominant reality: ‘We knew the schizo was not oedipalizable, because he is beyond territoriality, because he carried his flows right into the desert.’<sup>75</sup> Significantly for any discussion of subjectivity and the State, we find the image repeated again in that of ‘... the deterritorialized socius, the desert at the gates of the city.’<sup>76</sup> Noology is then a nomadic ‘war machine’ that bespeaks of the more or less controlled violences that mark all creative experimentation, and which leads us once again to the privileging of the superior empiricism Deleuze identifies in his own literary canon, yet which in his work with Guattari nevertheless emphasises the *failure* that almost always attends the deterritorialisation of territories psychic and geographical, that must attend such movements if the absolute deterritorialisation, or the catatonic degree-zero of clinical schizophrenia that marks the ‘completion’ of the process is to be kept at bay:

Strange Anglo-American literature: from Thomas Hardy, from D.H. Lawrence to Malcolm Lowry, from Henry Miler to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, men who know how to leave, to scramble the codes, to cause flows to circulate, to traverse the desert of the body without organs. They overcome a limit, they shatter a wall, the capitalist barrier. And of course they fail to complete the process, they never cease failing to do so. The neurotic impasse again closes—the daddy-mommy of

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> References to the ‘desert’ of the BwO are numerous in Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*. See in particular pgs. 95, 142-144, 178, 210, 364. For this particular citation, see p. 75.

<sup>76</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 112.

Oedipalization, America, the return of the native land—or else the perversion of the exotic territorialities, then drugs, alcohol—or worse still, an old fascist dream. Never has delirium oscillated more between its two poles.<sup>77</sup>

What we might do here, then, is consider how in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari extend their discussion of the three major social machines in *Anti-Oedipus*—the savage, the feudal and the capitalist—by offering analysis of a range of regimes of signs that exceeds the relative dualism between the desiring-machines and BwO in the earlier text as acknowledged above. In the later volume they emphasise two regimes in particular, the ‘signifying’ and ‘post-signifying’, and which for them correspond to despotic and authoritarian or ‘passionate’ social formations respectively. This emphasis takes part in a stratoanalysis when we consider how the anthropomorphic stratum is that through which we code the world and all of the affects, forces, objects and relations that comprise it through specific relations of signs; if on Deleuze and Guattari’s account, primitive societies do not relate all signs to the human face as privileged body-part in the manner that modern, despotic societies evidently do (typically those of monarchs and other important notaries such as military leaders etc., but which also remains palpable in the form of today’s ‘talking head’ politicians and television news reporters etc.), then this is because the limits of signification are entirely different to those recognised in the latter social machine, which decodes or deterritorialises the primitive sign and reterritorialises it upon the body/face of the despot.

This can begin to help us understand the processes by which we code the signs that comprise such non-local, yet eminently ‘interpretable’ phenomena as Climate and the ‘Changes’ it is measurably undergoing in line with certain libidinal (molecular) and thus political (molar) biases. Whilst we will consider the relationship between the literary and the functional analyses and measures of the sciences in the following chapter, again, we can here begin with the basic tendency towards totalising forms of reading qua interpretation. As a centre of codification, the face proves key to the anthropomorphic stratum when we consider how despite the fact that it does not offer a universal centre in the sense that all peoples across the globe interpret its expressions

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<sup>77</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 144.

equally, it nevertheless comes to haunt popular (if not scientific) modes of interpretation. If by contrast, primitive societies reveal a tendency to instead relate signs to a host of different body parts, to animals, forms of plant-life, inanimate objects and also geographical places or regions, then we can begin to see how the French terms for face (*visage*) and landscape (*paysage*) supply Deleuze and Guattari with a crucial link through their euphonious resonance, giving rise to their own stratacritical elaboration of *visag  it  * and *paysag  it  * (or ‘faciality’ and ‘landscapicity’ respectively). As unwieldy as the latter term might initially appear, it nevertheless offers key insight not only into how specific languages differ in their representation / signification of actual forces and affects, but also, how a particular regime of signs would then begin to suggest creative or non-representative and a-signifying lines of experiment (or ‘lines of flight’) as a direct result of the particular impasses, blockages or limits they necessarily attest to.

The extent to which human dwellings and other constructions demarcate, populate and therefore stratify the earth as BwO must lead us to consider architecture after the a-signifying logic we have thus far promoted. In the following passage, Deleuze and Guattari present an analysis that bears citing at length, for it encapsulates almost all of our abiding geo-philosophical and eco-clinical concerns with territories, art and environments:

Face and landscape manuals formed a pedagogy, a strict discipline, and were an inspiration to the arts as much as the arts were an inspiration to them. Architecture positions its ensembles – houses, towns or cities, monuments or factories – to function like faces in the landscape they transform. Painting takes up the same monuments or factories – to function like faces in the landscape as a face, treating one like the other: ‘treatise on the face and landscape’. The close up in film treats the face primarily as a landscape; that is the definition of film, black hole and white wall, screen and camera. But the same goes for the earlier arts, architecture, painting, even the novel: close-ups animate and invent all of their correlations. So is your mother a landscape or a face? A face or a factory? (Godard.) All faces envelop an unknown, unexplored landscape; all landscapes are populated by

a loved one or dreamed-of face, develop a face to come or already past. What face has not called upon the landscapes it amalgamated, sea and hill; what landscape has not evoked the face that would have completed it, providing an unexpected complement for its lines and traits?<sup>78</sup>

Just as the infant child might be forgiven for interpreting the face of the nurturing mother as a 'landscape' owing to the sheer physical fact that it fills the naive gaze during the suckling phase of its development, so too might we begin to acknowledge those tendencies towards a comforting / disconcerting state of environmental affairs on the basis of Deleuze and Guattari's notions of *visag  it  * and *paysag  it  *. When they paraphrase Godard and ask 'is your mother a landscape or a face? A face or a factory?', they are clearly concerned with advancing the productive factory over and against the signifying theatre of the Oedipal psychodrama that has so long constrained our attempts to relate differently to each other and here, to the non-human environment from which we are ultimately contracted.<sup>79</sup>

We can reconnect with Kafka's literary experiment by acknowledging how Deleuze and Guattari also name a 'post-signifying' or 'passionate' [*passionnel*] regime that departs from signification by way of a process of 'subjectification' after which signs become liberated or deterritorialised from their previously despotic coding as in the example of the Jews in exodus from Egypt, who became wandering or migrant after following a line of flight from the social machine of which they were once a key element. This 'real' migrancy enjoins the migrant nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari's geo-philosophical position on deterritorialisation to effect an eco-clinical approach that fully grasps language as more-than-signifying and therefore also contributes to our grasp of an 'ecological pathos' as a relationship between the material and the immaterial that is no less 'real' or productive of concrete social and political change. Crucially, In the latter part of chapter four, this analysis will again enable us to consider the reterritorialising tendency that eco-social change exhibits towards an eco-liberal bias and which we first began to identify and describe in chapter two, with the Kantian/Lacanian critical-clinical heritage that,   i  ek's work notwithstanding, in many

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<sup>78</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, pgs. 172-173.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

respects inhibits a revolutionary eco-politics, or one equal to a more-than-eco-liberal overhaul of capitalist economics *per se*.

Kafka's example enables us to prolong these concerns when we consider how in her book *Thoreau's Nature: Ethics, Politics, and the Wild* (2002), Jane Bennett has attempted to bring Deleuze and Guattari's Kafka-inspired notion of a minor literature and the deterritorialisation of language / destratification of the subject that it implies to her study of North American nature-writer and activist Henry David Thoreau. Moreover, in doing so, Bennett motivates a specific form of 'sympathy', deploying Thoreau's own relational eco-epistemology in such a way as to enable us to sustain the non-interpretive pragmatics advanced above. Bennett begins by describing how in the Thoreau Room of the Concord museum (above the case in which they keep Thoreau's last pencil etc.) there is a plaque that reads: "It was not objects themselves that concerned Thoreau; 'the point of interest is somewhere between me and them.' This point of interest, this felt relation, Thoreau called sympathy."<sup>80</sup> Broadly speaking, this would seem to remain consistent with the Deleuzian view of desire qua assemblage, although Bennett appears to pursue this point of resonance only as a means of forging her own unique reception of Thoreau, or so as to excuse/embolden her lack of fidelity to the canonic Thoreau. We find no discussion of anything like the 'unnatural participation' we discerned in Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Hofmannsthal, although over the course of four brief pages Bennett does attempt to make a case for Thoreau's writing as a species of 'minor literature'.<sup>81</sup>

What is perhaps most interesting to our eco-clinical project is that she does so initially in terms of 'Wildness': 'The problem of a minor literature is not how to become major, but how to delay the reterritorialization of deterritorialized words and thus keep their radical potential—their Wildness—alive.'<sup>82</sup> 'For what is Wildness if not the experience of deterritorialization?'<sup>83</sup> Yet this correspondence seems too tidy somehow. Bennett then connects it to her notion of 'sojourning', which she identifies as Thoreau's 'preference', and which she compares with Deleuze and

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<sup>80</sup> Bennett, Jane. *Thoreau's Nature: Ethics, Politics, and the Wild*. (revised edition). (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002). p. 79.

<sup>81</sup> Bennett, *Thoreau*, pgs. 95-99.

<sup>82</sup> Bennett, *Thoreau*, p. 96.

<sup>83</sup> Bennett, *Thoreau*, p. 97.

Guattari's thesis on nomadism: 'The former is the activity of collective assemblages of enunciation and the latter a part of the recrafting of an individual subject, albeit an artificially and artfully unified one.'<sup>84</sup> She then asks if what Thoreau described as 'a kind of doubleness' might amount to the sort of mutual, non-human becomings in Deleuze and Guattari, but rightly acknowledges that Thoreau did not push for the revolutionary; Deleuze and Guattari say they admire literature that pushes language 'toward a deterritorialization that will no longer be saved by culture or by myth, that will be an absolute deterritorialization', and therefore Bennett seems right to note that 'Thoreau valorizes Wildness in conjunction with crafting a mythic heteroverse.'<sup>85</sup>

She then suggests that Thoreau's 'charm', or the 'rhetorical effect' of his prose, 'is best described as somewhere between the poiesis of Heidegger and the revolutionary potential of Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature.'<sup>86</sup> This notion of charm Bennett suggests as a form of enchantment and which 'increases one's susceptibility to the Wild', but that it also 'memorializes' it by erecting a monument to it in memory: 'At its best, it memorializes a temporally and temperamentally unique instance of the Wild; it gives it more weight, more body, and thus sinks it deeper into one's character. It is in this way that writing about the Wild helps to engender a will to Wildness, a bodily urge to deterritorialize.'<sup>87</sup> These observations of Bennett's are by no means offered in a strictly eco-clinical way (she does not explicitly discuss the virtual-actual materiality of the BwO, and therefore misses, perhaps, the opportunity to discuss the debt American Transcendentalism owes to post-Kantianism, and thereafter the Deleuzian critique of such), but they nevertheless seem useful to us perhaps, insofar as they contrast the revolutionary with the 'mythic' tendency towards non-human alterity that she intimates, even if she does not go so far as to develop its implications for thinking about Climate Change. Whilst Bennett is evidently no fool about Thoreau's didactic politics, she remains keen to suggest him as someone who insists that we craft a new sensibility informed by the 'Wild', yet one that retains the markedly liberal distance between art and politics 'needed to sustain the positive relation between them.'<sup>88</sup> As a Thoreau scholar rather than a Deleuzian, she then caricatures the first volume of their joint

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 26; see also Bennett, *Thoreau*, p. 98.

<sup>86</sup> Bennett, *Thoreau*, p. 98.

<sup>87</sup> Bennett, *Thoreau*, p. 99.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

project by asserting that this very point renders Thoreau altogether different from Deleuze and Guattari who would ‘simply tear down the curtain’ between the two domains.<sup>89</sup>

Let us now consider the relationship between literature and science in chapter four, where we will further explore the difficulties presented by the memorialising tendencies of human desire in relation to non-human nature.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

## **4: Instruments of Desire**

## (i) Interdisciplinarity and Desire

Interpretation is the logical channel of consilient explanation between science and the arts.

—Edward O. Wilson<sup>1</sup>

The State imposes a specifically artistic Oedipus, a specifically scientific Oedipus.

—Deleuze and Guattari<sup>2</sup>

For Carolyn Porter, we today ‘confront a virtually horizonless discursive field in which ... the traditional boundaries between the literary and the extraliterary have faded.’<sup>3</sup> Nowhere might this sense of a ‘horizonless’ field appear more consequential than upon the interdisciplinary terrain charted by ecocriticism, which, as veteran ecocritic Glen Love has it, ‘claims as its hermeneutic horizon nothing short of the literal horizon itself.’<sup>4</sup> Paraphrasing ecologist Eugene P. Odum, Love goes on to describe the field as one of a number of ‘new interface territories’ given to an extraordinary degree of interdisciplinary ferment—a ferment that appraises North American literary reception of the ‘extraliterary’ disciplines principal to broader environmentalist studies, particularly those of climatology and the life sciences, and which would ‘contribute to the study of values in what we increasingly find to be a world where, to cite an ecological maxim, everything is connected to everything else.’<sup>5</sup>

Yet how does the relationship between literature, science and value-formation relate to our forgoing discussion of desire for ecocriticism? How might our concerns with the capitalist social machine, with deterritorialisation and decoding, with Oedipus and the legitimate and illegitimate usages of the passive syntheses, bear upon these interdisciplinary concerns? What this chapter will do is consider how environmentalist

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, Edward O. *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. (New York: Knopf, 1998). p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 414.

<sup>3</sup> See Porter, Carolyn. ‘History and Literature: After the New Historicism’. *New Literary History*. 21. (1990): 253-78. p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 7.

concerns with ‘instrumentalism’, or with the subordination of non-human life to human use qua ‘resources’, might give us to address our concerns with libidinal economics in view of what C. P. Snow once characterised as the ‘two cultures’ debate, or the professional compartmentalisation that in key respects keeps the nominally ‘literary’ and the nominally ‘scientific’ spheres from fruitful dialogue and interaction.<sup>6</sup> As we shall see, whilst for Snow, the polarization of the sciences and humanities remains bound to a legacy of specialisation that has its roots in the industrial revolution, one tied to drives for social standing and status, to the domestic and political values of an emergent middle class, after Deleuze and Guattari, the cultures responsible for their specific ‘planes of immanence’ are afforded a certain parity, entering into transversal moments of resonance and exchange that promise further deterritorialisations.<sup>7</sup>

Whilst this chapter will privilege the ‘anti-oedipal’ and ‘stratacritical’ vocabulary of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, noting the distinction they draw there between ‘nomadic’ (or itinerant) and ‘royal’ (or State) science, it will nevertheless supplement this with the refinements of their final collaborative venture, *What is Philosophy?* (1994), in which a discussion of these planes is given in greater detail. It is hoped that this elaboration of the two planes, particularly in conjunction with a third plane, that of philosophy, will enable us to make a technical, yet altogether necessary distinction between common sense or external conceptions of science and those particular or internal to the life sciences in question. Moreover, such an approach will enable us to distinguish between what Freud meant by science in his bid to secure legitimacy for his psychoanalytic project, and moreover what Deleuze and Guattari mean by it as post-Althusserian Marxists. As technical as these distinctions shall no doubt appear, they nevertheless remain essential to our project when we consider how in the context of the French Marxist and philosophical scenes within which Deleuze and Guattari were writing, the terms ‘science’ and ‘scientific’ retain, as we saw in chapter one, a meaning or sense that relates not only to the production of rigorous

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<sup>6</sup> Just as we opened this chapter with Carolyn Porter’s testament to interdisciplinarity in the early 1990s, so too does it seem appropriate to draw here upon the 1990 re-publication of the introduction to Snow’s *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, an unmodified extract from a work first published in the 1950s. See Snow, C. P. ‘The Two Cultures.’ *Leonardo*. Vol. 23. No. 2/3. New Foundations: Classroom Lectures in Art/Science/Technology for the 1990s. (1990): 169-173; Also, Snow, C. P. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

<sup>7</sup> Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). pgs. 117-199.

knowledge, but more precisely to a non-ideological, or much less biased, ‘mature’ and clinically-inclusive mode of critique, one qualified by a sense of ‘adequation’ after the Spinozism that has guided our project. Although in what follows we will certainly concern ourselves with science as a popularly misconceived of and homogenized cultural preoccupation, we will more concertedly address the spread of instrumental values that accompanies this misconception, looking at how Deleuzian noology might enable us to eco-clinically approach ‘scientific nihilism.’

This later point appears key when we consider how ecocriticism’s core contribution to broader environmental debate is its highlighting of ecology as a rubric or meme that is *more than scientific*, which is to say as a term marking an epistemic shift that is impacting across almost all scholarly discourses, and which has significant implications for the manner in which they intersect and co-operate. As our eco-clinic has repeatedly suggested, it is through a literary grasp of language that bodily pathos and the ‘sympathies’ between forces can be rendered palpable and moreover, effect change via incorporeal transformation of bodies within diverse social machines. As we have worked to show above, the ‘humanities’ are thus traversed by an infinite variety of already ‘inhuman’ flows, and which render literary production intimately linked to a ‘delirious’ apprehension of impersonal forces and structures, to a sense of machinic assemblages and regimes of signs that obviates discrete being after an ontology of becoming.

It is in this way that we acknowledge too the becoming of the assemblages popularly and academically compartmentalized as discrete disciplines. As ecocritic Lawrence Buell had it in 1995, ‘during the past two decades [ecocritics] have ranged freely across the human sciences, subjecting ethnography and phenomenology and even scientific monographs to literary analysis almost as readily as sonnets and short stories.’<sup>8</sup> Whilst such ‘co-operation’ might all too readily be subjected to classical ideology critique, and thereby characterised as that ‘peculiar to, and specifically distinguishing, the capitalist process of production’, we have seen how such a characterisation might nevertheless be read after a number of post-Althusserian lines with wholly divergent hermeneutic (or ‘anti-hermeneutic’) programmes.<sup>9</sup> The emphasis on force that gave Deleuze and Guattari to depart from signification (or to postulate an

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<sup>8</sup> Buell, *Environmental*, p. 85.

<sup>9</sup> Marx, Karl. *Capital*. (3 Vols). Trans. Ben Fowkes. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990). p. 452-53.

‘a-signifying’ symptomatology), for example, suggests that the extraliterary disciplines of the sciences might now be addressed in terms of their pertinence to theories of literary reception and interpretation and specifically, beyond narrow, post-Althusserian (or Žižekian) concerns with ideology.<sup>10</sup>

We might begin, then, with the relationship between instrumental value and this sense of heightened connectivity, with the interdisciplinary *hybridity* that decades of cultural and political pluralism have enabled, and yet which proves paradoxical somehow when we consider the perversely inhibited or *conservative* tendencies capitalism exhibits with respect to scientific innovation, largely through the ‘retarding’ or reterritorialising effect that certain universalisms—such as the Oedipal subject and the nuclear family structure—might be seen to have at the cultural level. This might then shed further light upon the emergence of ecocriticism as a response to (as much as a prolongation of) late capitalist cultures in which certain technologies and other cultural fruits of ‘science’ stimulate the continual demand for further ‘progress’ and development. In this way, our proposed eco-clinical orientation might then appear as no less of a ‘line of flight’ born of the paradoxical impasses that subtend an otherwise apparently unregulated free-market economy; as Jameson remarked of Cultural Studies in an essay of 1993: ‘[I]t came into the world as the result of dissatisfaction with other disciplines, not merely their contents but also their very limits as such. It is thus in that sense postdisciplinary.’<sup>11</sup>

This image of ecocriticism as somehow ‘postdisciplinary’ is therefore one that recalls our discussion of North American cultural and political pluralism in chapter one; not only might it give us to inspect ecocriticism *per se*, but moreover in this chapter we might suggest a stratoanalysis of the root disciplines that the movement would typically marshal and operate between. We can here bring our stratoanalytic bias to bear upon the

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<sup>10</sup> For Althusser, in order to be ‘scientific’—which is to say, to be beyond all ideology—a theory must be verified by purely internal criteria, such as those that are applied in mathematical demonstration. Whilst this amounts to an important observation of value to a Deleuzoguattarian approach to interdisciplinarity, it nevertheless pays to acknowledge how Guattari’s denouncement in the 1970s of Althusser’s structuralist opposition between ‘a conceptual field that is purely scientific and a purely illusory and mystifying ideology’ will pave the way for a Deleuzoguattarian ecocriticism that denies science its hegemonic role in North American culture, yet one informed by a diagnosis of structuralism as an ‘illness that has been ravaging the sciences of language, anthropology, psychoanalysis, etc., for quite some time’. Guattari qtd. in Dosse, François. *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives*. Trans. Deborah Glassman. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). p. 233.

<sup>11</sup> Jameson, *Ideologies*, p. 599.

postdisciplinary exchanges in question, considering in particular how in his essay on the superiority of Anglo-American literature, Deleuze speaks of the call for interdisciplinarity in the sciences. The fact that Deleuze enters into discussion of the sciences in an essay concerned for the most part with literature and philosophy provides us with a means of understanding the relationship between social and technical machines in this regard. Whilst in his earliest works, Deleuze might be said to propose ‘an ontology that corresponds to contemporary physics and mathematics’, throughout his collaborative ventures he remains concerned with the social implications of biology, chemistry, geology and a host of quantum and complexity sciences. Yet crucially, the findings and potential of such fields are never put to work in a metaphorical way; Deleuze and Guattari are concerned with the ‘internal validity and coherence’ of science, art and philosophy, yet also with the ‘relations of resonance and exchange’ between them.<sup>12</sup>

On Deleuze’s view, then, there is a co-operation at work here that requires a respect for the internal difference of a discipline; science might then be demoted, in certain respects, from the hegemonic status it is often afforded in contemporary society, and restored as a power, style of thought, or methodological orientation that compliments and intersects with those of art (productive of sensory aggregates) and philosophy (productive of concepts). In this way many of the sciences are therefore recast as much less the reductive and diminishing forces that some humanities scholars might fear them to be, so much as ones that open up and disrupt, contributing in profound ways towards the destabilisation of the stable identities that constrain and ‘crucify’ Dionysian difference as per the political thrust of Deleuze’s broader project. Like the understanding of literature we advanced in chapter three, Deleuze’s view of the sciences is therefore as libidinal-political as it is methodologically-informed by them; integral and differential calculus, the ideas and hypotheses of Riemann, Monod, Prigogine and Stengers, but also Simondon’s thesis on individuation and Bergson’s work on intensive multiplicities, movement and time, all contribute towards the ‘palpation’ of difference and the virtual/actual relations that occupied Deleuze throughout his career, and which as we have shown, lend us significant resources in our own examination of the societal body.

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<sup>12</sup> Marks, John. ‘Introduction.’ *Paraglyph*. Vol. 29, No. 2. (July, 2006). *Special Number: Deleuze and Science*. 1-18.

We might, then, already infer an approach to our concerns in this chapter with the privileged or hegemonic role of the ‘earth’ and other ‘hard’ sciences that remains so prevalent in the work of a number of ecocritics. Like the arts, interdisciplinarity in the sciences once again turns for Deleuze upon a discussion of ‘heterogeneous assemblages’, of science as rhizomatic (‘increasingly like grass’) and thus as ‘in the middle, between things and between other things’, ‘between domains’ and ‘interregnums.’<sup>13</sup> Yet when he notes that ‘it is true that the apparatus of power will increasingly demand a restoration of order, a recoding of science,’ we might once again recognise the loaded nature of the term ‘earth’ in the stratacritical vocabulary he developed with Guattari, particularly where the ‘*terre*’ of territory bespeaks of certain cultural and political sedimentations; the ‘failures’ or *reterritorialisations* that must follow any deterritorialisation that is not ‘absolute’, and which we acknowledged briefly in chapter three, would deny the ‘revolutionary’ movement of a range of sciences, and potentially inhibit an active form of eco-critique that reckons with the relationship between the eco-cultural unconscious and the economic base productive of art.<sup>14</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of recoding will therefore remain essential to our analysis of the ecocritical ‘cooperation’ between the life sciences and literary scholarship. This will have particular relevance when we again consider how social machines remain the proper concern of a stratoanalysis, or more precisely, how ‘tools always presuppose a machine, and the machine is always social before being technical. There is always a social machine which selects or assigns the technical elements used.’<sup>15</sup> In this way we can further develop the concerns we began to raise in chapters two and three, wherein we discussed the all-too-human and thus, typically *eco-liberal* tendencies of much environmentalism, paying particular attention wheresoever the deterritorialising powers of science would intersect with those particular to philosophy and literature. Our relationship to tools and technologies remains of clear *eco-clinical* concern when we consider how for Deleuze

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<sup>13</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 68.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 70.

science has never ceased to be delirious [*délirer*], to make completely decoded fluxes of knowledge and objects pass along lines of flight, continually going further afield. There is thus a whole politics which demands that the lines should be blocked, that an order should be established. Think, for example, about the role which Louis de Broglie had in physics, in preventing indeterminism from going too far, in calming the madness of particles: a restoration of order.<sup>16</sup>

The power of high modern literature to disarticulate dominant modes of expression might then be reconceived of in line with the powers that Deleuze here attributes to the sciences. If ecocriticism would acknowledge both powers, marking the ways in which the literary and the scientific compliment yet challenge one another in line with a ‘unifying’ ecological mandate, then it is surely our business here to acknowledge the extent to which the retarding or reterritorialising movement of Life (or the strata) inculcates the ‘restoration of order’ that Deleuze describes in the passage above. As we considered in our concerns with eco-piety in chapter one, after Deleuze and Guattari, the pseudo-scientific desire for an ‘eco-psychology’ risks an archaic and theological reterritorialisation, largely by virtue of a stubbornly humanistic propensity: ‘Scientific knowledge as nonbelief is truly the last refuge of belief, and as Nietzsche put it, there never was but one psychology, that of the priest.’<sup>17</sup> When we considered the legacy of Kantianism in chapter two, we suggested ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ as much less the goal of thought as defined under Enlightenment epistemology, but rather, that thinking be conceived of as a power of Life to create, and therefore at once to deterritorialise and destratify existing connections and relations.

In this way, E. O. Wilson’s notion that interpretation is that which conjoins the sciences and the arts (through what he terms ‘consilience’), might be read after Deleuze and Guattari’s assertion that the State is that entity which ultimately renders the revolutionary potential of both planes of immanence neutralised, recapturing them in line with its domesticating, paranoid, and ‘neurotic’ schema. Which is to say that for all

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<sup>16</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 122.

of the revolutionary power that both the arts and sciences possess, certain cultural forces—namely those upholding of the organism, the subject, Oedipus, and the State—force what we might here term a ‘hermeneutic corridor’ of interpretation, delivering a form of eco-critique that remains shackled, in many respects, to a typically ‘humanistic’ orientation that, we might suggest, would benefit from a little more of the ‘asceticism’ that Deleuze and Guattari prescribe, the ‘desert’ (or ‘experimentation on oneself’) that would remedy the inhibited tendencies of the State, and which therefore calls to us from beyond the domestic securities of the city limits, a simultaneously destratified and destratifying influx of that more-than-biological ‘Life’ that would, somewhat paradoxically perhaps, allow a little more Dionysian blood to flow in Apollonian veins.<sup>18</sup>

Before turning to Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of the three ‘planes’ of art, science and philosophy in *What is Philosophy?* (1994), therefore, and to consideration of how their concerns with the powers particular to each discipline might develop and extend their earlier, schizoanalytic and stratoanalytic emphases, let us first look at some of the genealogical concerns that ecocritical interdisciplinarity raises for an eco-clinical approach. If certain psycho-cultural values remain implicit in Darwinian evolutionary theory, then we must address how these values are effected by social machines that precede the technical machines of the sciences they give rise to, and which code, decode and re-code in line with their specific economic orientation. Because the symptomatological moment of Deleuzian schizoanalysis owes much to Nietzschean genealogy, and because this in turn leads Deleuze and Guattari beyond a merely diagnostic approach to cultural production, Nietzsche’s views on the active and reactive characteristics of conscious and unconscious life prove key to this post-psychoanalytic analysis of social machines and how it opens up our understanding of eco-cultural

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<sup>18</sup> Our reference here is to Deleuze’s underlying philosophical concern with the representational practices of the arts and sciences, and the degree to which they fail to obtain ‘difference in itself’: ‘The greatest effort of philosophy was directed perhaps at rendering representation infinite (orgiastic). It is a question of extending representation as far as the too large and too small of difference; of adding a hitherto unsuspected perspective to representation—in other words, inventing theological, scientific and aesthetic techniques which allow it to integrate the depth of difference in itself; of allowing representation to conquer the obscure; of allowing it to include the vanishing of difference which is too small and the dismemberment of difference which is too large; of allowing it to capture the power of giddiness, intoxication and cruelty, and even of death. In short, it is the question of causing a little of Dionysus’s blood to flow in the organic veins of Apollo.’ Deleuze, *Difference*, p. 331. See also Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 11.

criticism, particularly where the procedures and functions of the non-humanitarian disciplines would appear to better enable it. In this way, we might then proceed to make a close reading of Glen Love's ecocriticism in the latter section of the chapter, dependent as it is upon a Darwinian outlook.

## (ii) Instrumental Reason, Nihilism and Cultural Declension

To hope to characterise the 'greening' of literary studies, or what it means to read in an ecological connection, not only necessitates that we apprise ourselves of as much interdisciplinary complexity as we are professionally able to absorb, but moreover, remain adequate to the challenge posed by the relations between disciplines that evince a pronounced difference in *kind*. Whilst ecocriticism seeks to make *literary* engagements with complex ecological systems—systems that, by virtue of their extra-literary nature, point up the limits of literary or philosophical erudition—it does not follow that its proponents must necessarily fall prone to homogenizing tendencies. And yet as a recent paper by Mario Biagioli demonstrates, largely through its own neglect of the term, the *ideological* basis for such homogeneity remains overlooked in this regard.<sup>19</sup>

To attempt a 'noological' analysis of this collapsing of the differences particular to the arts and sciences is to exceed a classical mode of ideology critique, largely after a *genealogical* emphasis, or what in Deleuzoguattarian we have termed a 'stratoanalysis'. We might begin, then, by considering how despite offering useful clinical lines of approach, Freudian psychoanalysis may well aid and abet some of the instrumentalist attitudes that we have raised as core eco-clinical concerns throughout the thesis. We can begin to address the relationship between interdisciplinarity and the Freudian 'science' by first considering if the only 'solution' to Climate Change appears to be the neo-liberal 'market solution', or the reprehensible profit-making of the 'cap and trade' response to carbon emissions, then the profit-motive itself must be recognised in terms of the decoding process specific to the capitalist social-machine, or what Deleuze and

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<sup>19</sup> Biagioli, Mario. 'Postdisciplinary Liaisons: Science Studies and the Humanities'. *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 35, No. 4, The Fate of Disciplines. Eds. James Chandler and Arnold I. Davidson (Summer 2009): 816-833.

Guattari term the ‘axiomatic’.<sup>20</sup> By simultaneously stimulating over-production by way of decoding *and* at once inhibiting such production by way of anti-production, the capitalist axiomatic requires a sense of lack where there is plenitude, which is to say that it needs to sustain a certain sense of need *per se* as a stimulus for production.<sup>21</sup> That a sense of lack remains so fundamental to consumerist culture has been the focus of certain other Marxo-Freudian analyses throughout the twentieth-century, not least those writers comprising the Frankfurt School; that Freud’s American nephew, Edward Bernays, was almost single-handedly responsible for the birth of public relations and the psychologically-savvy orientation of contemporary marketing practice, remains a key consideration for us, however, not least where we would oust the complicity of psychoanalysis and its sustainment of Oedipalisation with instrumentalist attitudes towards material resources, or what in his mildly eco-clinical project, Lee Rozelle has termed ‘depletionism.’<sup>22</sup>

Whilst the suggestion that Freudian psychoanalysis constitutes a science would today be one that most cultural, political and scientific critics would scoff at, its cultural hold upon the popular imagination remains substantial. In view of this, we might reconsider how by initially striving to present itself as ‘scientific’, the Oedipalisation of psychoanalysis has loaned a certain post-theological authority to the capitalist axiomatic, chiefly via one of its basic paralogisms:

Freud puts Oedipus before culture, before history; every child, regardless of sex, irrespective of where or when they are born, despite all differences of culture, religion, ethnicity, race, class, education and parenting, must resolve their desire to replace mummy or daddy (depending on sex) in their relation with the parent of the opposite sex. Achieving this is the principal aim or function of psychic repression as psychoanalysis conceives it. Social repression, on the Freudian view of things, comes to bear

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<sup>20</sup> Buchanan, *Deleuze and Guattari*, pgs. 111-112.

<sup>21</sup> Buchanan, *Deleuze and Guattari*, p. 113.

<sup>22</sup> As we saw in chapter two, Rozelle’s project is hamstrung in many respects by his deep mistrust of Freudian but also Lacanian psychoanalysis. Again, the denials that he seeks to address with his term ‘depletionist’ are given here: ‘Nature, the depletionist assures us, will magically become the source of infinite renewal and reliable productivity.’ Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 29.

later, in a secondary fashion, to keep in check the manifold  
'returns of the repressed' psychic repression is liable to.<sup>23</sup>

From a certain perspective, this 'universalism' is itself the most heinous of ideological effects. And yet beyond any classical form of ideology critique, the 'scientific' status that Freud sought for his discipline remains equally questionable, chiefly because he fails to allow for the deterritorialized, productive unconscious, and for the BwO that would enable a properly post-Kantian discernment of matter as 'hylozoic', which is to say the degree to which an element of it resists and rejects the imposition of conscious form, and which Deleuze and Guattari suggest Freud opened up with his initial findings, yet which he ultimately reterritorialised in line with his bourgeois familial ideals.<sup>24</sup> On Deleuze and Guattari's noological account, the 'reactive', Oedipalising moment of the Freudian science is of course no real surprise, chiefly insofar as it remains consistent with the reactive bias that its own metaphysical limits place upon scientific operation *per se*. As such, if Deleuze and Guattari advance a universal, then it must be in terms of schizophrenia as process, a universalism of difference rather than one of identity.

Again, this is of more than simply 'ideological' concern insofar as such metaphysical reactivity betrays the essentially 'active' domain of the unconscious; it is consciousness itself that thwarts the attainment of adequate ideas or images of thought, chiefly via the Oedipal paralogism: 'The only true science is that of activity, but the science of activity is also the science of what is necessarily unconscious. The idea that science must follow in the footsteps of consciousness, in the same directions, is absurd. We can sense the morality in this idea.'<sup>25</sup> This genealogical assessment gives us to nuance further what might be meant by 'science'; if we are here concerned with ecocritical interdisciplinarity and the extent to which discrete disciplines may or may not retain a level of compartmentalized 'identity' for being the symptoms of a

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<sup>23</sup> Buchanan, Ian. *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*. (London: Continuum, 2008). p. 71.

<sup>24</sup> 'The great discovery of psychoanalysis was that of the production of desire, of the productions of the unconscious. But once Oedipus entered the picture, this discovery was soon buried beneath a new brand of idealism: a classical theater was substituted for the unconscious as a factory; and an unconscious that was capable of nothing but expressing itself—in myth, tragedy, dreams—was substituted for the productive unconscious.' Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 25.

<sup>25</sup> Deleuze, Gilles. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson. (London: Continuum, 2006). p. 39.

consumerist culture that owes much to Freud's identitarian metaphysics, then Deleuze's genealogical reading of the term here leans on Nietzsche's view of the sciences as potentially threatening to reduce and 'equalise' forces, chiefly by way of moral imperatives that inhere within the putatively 'secular' age of (post)modernity.<sup>26</sup>

Deleuze's great debt to Nietzsche's genealogy contributes to a stratoanalysis of the 'hard' sciences on these terms. Outwardly, genetic science would appear to suggest itself as the quintessentially secular arm of a politics of difference, conferring freedom from 'unscientific' beliefs, and scotching such universal 'creation myths' as Oedipal castration. Again, whilst it might be true to suggest that in their emphases upon the 'machinic' nature of desire in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari are themselves advancing something on the order of a universal of this type, the relational ontology they propose would nevertheless resist a reductive, identitarian tendency towards cultural homogenization and thus the subordination of difference in itself. As Deleuze acknowledges in his study of Nietzsche, the philosopher 'criticises Darwin for interpreting evolution and chance within evolution in an entirely reactive way.'<sup>27</sup> In other words, it might be that the lessons regarding molecularity and molarity that Deleuze and Guattari impart are ones that philosophers of science might here apprise themselves of. For our purposes, it is not so much the *reintroduction* of the reactive metaphysics of Oedipus into the sciences that might concern us, so much as the extent to which such a metaphysics has remained latent within the capitalist economy, and therefore as a clandestine influence upon Darwin as much as the next 'modern' thinker. As such, the paradoxical desire to retain a certain level of 'humanity', one that so evidently beleaguers the properly post-human (or deterritorialising) potential of the sciences, might be considered in this regard.

Here, then, we see how our *eco-clinical* concerns with desire might begin to reckon with interdisciplinarity. Whilst from a 'vulgar' Marxian perspective, the relationship between such 'interface territories' as those ecocriticism describes might initially be read as symptomatic of pluralist modes of exchange, we have intimated how a Deleuzian approach might differ and exceed it. If for orthodox Marxism it is not simply the economies *of* interdisciplinary exchange that should concern us, but the material economies (or conditions) that give rise *to* them, then for a Deleuzian approach

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<sup>26</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, pgs. 39, 77.

it is rather the metaphysical image of Oedipus and its power to triangulate and yoke the lacking subject that requires a noological violence sufficient to demystify and overturn it. Thus as we saw in our last chapter, Nietzsche's example as a 'private thinker' supplies Deleuze and Guattari's noological project with a more-than-ideological evaluation of thought's exterior, and which thus calls for a genealogy of images of thought. In *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Nietzsche shows how no less than the ascetic priests of Christianity, the ideologues of science have fashioned a modernist world in which they too appear wholly essential.<sup>28</sup> Despite how hyperbolic such an observation might initially appear, we might nevertheless consider how now more than ever before, the earth and life sciences are being looked to for solutions to environmental problems; the implicit question being, 'who *else* is 'qualified' to save us?'

Therefore, whilst technical, scientific 'salvation' to the issues raised by Climate Change—but also to associated issues of over-population, fuel and other resource shortages—is proffered in the form of sustainable technologies etc., what the majority of 'hard' sciences seem ill-equipped to attend to is the formation of eco-social values themselves. As they compete for exclusive means of access to 'the truth', the physical, chemical and biological sciences risk *reactively* impacting across all forms of cultural production, again enforcing nothing short of what we have hitherto referred to as a 'hermeneutic corridor' of interpretation. Where the biological and physical sciences are concerned, not least when we take into account the immensely *lucrative* human genome and Hadron Super Collider projects—the complicity of which with capitalist funding, particularly in terms of pharmaceutical and military development, proves undeniably leading—we find very few clinical examinations of the libidinal, or 'willful' dimension that a Nietzschean critique would necessarily emphasise.

Thus the suggestion of a further 'science', that of 'ecology', remains one that we are beginning to assert as a philosophical, as much as a scientific and artistic assemblage comprised of both physical or bodily (and machinic) elements, but which is also traversed and transformed by the immaterial elements that comprise the regime of signs operant within a capitalist milieu. Our concerns with Kafka's literary contribution to understanding collective assemblages of enunciation in chapter three enable us to re-

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<sup>28</sup> See Section II of Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Genealogy of Morals / On the Genealogy of Morality*.

emphasise the importance of grasping ecology as a more-than-scientific assemblage, one that we might duly reconnect to our schizoanalytic concerns with delirium, particularly if we sustain the more-than-liberal perspective of Nietzsche's 'Dionysian pessimism', or his refusal to deprive life of its 'enigmatic' character, a refusal that leads us to acknowledge that 'the effect of the work of art is to *excite the state that creates art—intoxication*'.<sup>29</sup> But how does such 'intoxication' relate to the surely more 'sober' business of cultural transformation under the phenomenon of Climate Change? Whether or not a broadly 'Eco-topian' future (or one in which the humanly-contributed factors cease to outweigh those brought about by such 'blameless' factors as shifts in solar output and cosmic radiation etc) remains either possible or *desirable*, we might also enquire, does this not somehow suggest one from which life's chaos is excised? As Deleuze and Guattari have it: 'What would thinking be if it did not constantly confront chaos?... chaos has three daughters... the Chaoids - art, science, and philosophy... [Each] cut through the chaos in different ways. The brain is the junction - not the unity - of the three planes.'<sup>30</sup>

When, in the latter half of this chapter, we turn to Glen Love's reading of Willa Cather's literature after a markedly Darwinian paradigm of interpretation, and which, after E. O. Wilson's notion of 'consilience' between the arts and sciences, levels a form of 'evolutionary psychology' at the literary text in such a manner as to prove undeniable creative and deterritorialising, and yet at once reductive and all too moral in its familial emphases, we will once again consider how Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis upon delirium in relation to literary form enables us to renegotiate the specifically capitalist variety of Oedipal interiority that sustains 'unecological' attitudes. Prior to making this close analysis, however, we might first consider a little further the difficulties facing an 'environmentalist' epoch that would continually valorise the techno-sciences, often at the expense of the humanities, particularly insofar as it is only from within the latter, surely, that we might acknowledge how values

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<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will To Power*. Trans Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. Ed. Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Vintage Books, 1968). pgs. 262, 434. Moreover, Nick Land here recommends Bataille's Nietzscheanism as a form of Dionysian Pessimism, or what he also describes as an 'active nihilism', largely on the basis that the writer was concerned 'with value as the annihilation of life' and with challenging 'the utilitarianism that finds its only end in the preservation and expansion of existence.' It is therefore 'active' inasmuch as it avers 'the promotion of a violently convulsive expenditure rather than a weary renunciation.' See Land, *Fanged*, p. 170.

<sup>30</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 208.

emerge? Surely it is such *non-scientific* disciplines as history, ethics and law that would not simply promise an ‘antiscientific’ denial of capitalism as ‘the only game in town’, but teach of its formation and the existence of historical alternatives to it?

In his preface to *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau* (2008), U.S. presidential candidate and environmental activist Al Gore emphasises the affective impact Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) had upon his developing sense of ecological networks of interdependency long before the word ‘environment’ had sufficiently entered the public lexicon.<sup>31</sup> Like many ecocritics whose ostensibly *literary* motives would challenge scientific hegemony, Greg Garrard considers Carson’s book vital for being as literary as it is scientific: ‘... the rhetorical strategies, use of pastoral and apocalyptic imagery and literary allusions with which Carson shapes her scientific material may well be amenable to a more ‘literary’ or ‘cultural’ analysis. Such analysis is what we call ‘ecocriticism’.’<sup>32</sup> Lee Rozelle appears typical of North American ecocritics who would uphold scientific bases for developing ‘acceptance one of personal convergence with ecological principles’, to which ‘vital is the active remembrance of place by becoming learned in the biological sciences.’<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Rozelle even appears to suggest that all other discourses lead to his newly-adopted specialism as a critical ‘Rome’ of sorts: ‘On the road to ecological insight, critics like Bakhtin and notions such as the ecosublime are mere turns that lead to the science of ecology.’<sup>34</sup>

Where we have acknowledged that ideology is insufficiently considered by such ecocritics as Rozelle, however, what we have begun to highlight instead is a *noological* discussion of scientific instrumentalism as part of an androcentric cultural hegemony, taking into account what Nietzsche termed the ‘will to truth’ as a primary symptom of cultural declension after his career-long diagnosis of nihilism. In this regard, we might take into consideration North American ecologist Murray Bookchin’s assertion that it is via the interdisciplinary fusing of sociological and scientific disciplines that we have formulated one ‘unique to our age: *social ecology*.’<sup>35</sup> As laudable as a social ecology no

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<sup>31</sup> Gore, Albert Jr. ‘Foreword’. *American Earth*. (Library of America, 2008). p. xvii.

<sup>32</sup> Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. (London: Routledge, 2004). p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 63.

<sup>35</sup> As Bookchin has it: ‘Our own era needs a more sweeping and insightful body of knowledge—scientific as well as social—to deal with our problems.... We must seek the foundations for a more reconstructive

doubt appears, we might be given to wonder if the very drive to extrapolate from the findings of a ‘scientific’ ecology—typically the principles of systemic interdependency that characterise ecology’s break with atomistic values—might itself be considered after Nietzsche’s notion of the will to truth, specifically as this might condition any purview that would seek an ethics extracted from a sense of ‘natural’ order. We might mark in particular the degree to which such a venture might be subtended and conditioned by the methodological biases of ecology as more precisely a ‘scientism’, one that perversely threatens to obscure or deny the indifference and violence of non-human Nature, and which therefore paradoxically risks a form of Kantian hylomorphism, denying the virtual differences constitutive of becoming. Again, it is in this way that the ‘inclusivity’ of a generalised ecology proves entirely symptomatic of the cultural crisis it would seek to overcome: as Timothy Luke has noted, despite remaining ‘one of the most vital projects on the scene today’, Bookchin’s environmentally-valenced social ecology ‘essentially sees humanity as the consciousness of a purposive and ordered Nature.’<sup>36</sup>

The sort of hazy, ‘unity of being’ that Bookchin assumes—and in which humanity nevertheless retains its privilege—betrays a will to truth that after our Deleuzoguattarian vocabulary we might described as an ‘inhibited synthesis’, or a limited mode of connectivity operating after the paralogism of lack [*manque*] and as such un-apprised of the plurality of ‘givings’ that a transcendental empiricism would allow for, thus sustaining precisely the anti-ecological mode of Kantian, transcendental narcissism we denigrated in chapters two and three. Again, on a Nietzschean view, this tendency might be diagnosed as an historically-contingent symptom: ‘Observe the ages in the history of peoples when the scholar steps into the foreground: they are ages of exhaustion, often of evening and decline.’<sup>37</sup> As such, it is useful to note how in the section on critique in his book on Nietzsche, Deleuze discusses just how a

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approach to the grave problems posed by the apparent “contradictions” between nature and society. We can no longer afford to remain captives to the tendency of the more traditional sciences to dissect phenomena and examine their fragments. We must combine them, relate them, and see them in their totality as well as their specificity. In response to these needs, we have formulated a discipline unique to our age: social ecology’ (20-21). See Bookchin, Murray. *The Ecology of Freedom*. (Palo Alto, CA: Cheshire Books, 1982). Pgs. 20-21.

<sup>36</sup> Luke, Timothy W. *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). p. 178.

<sup>37</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, p. 68.

symptomatology is a new ‘science’, an *active* science that engages with forces and values.

Again, in our previous chapter we considered how schizoanalysis surpasses a broadly symptomnal approach. We have thus begun to demonstrate how we might rethink literary-scientific relations after *Anti-Oedipus* and also those of *A Thousand Plateaus*, in which Deleuze and Guattari themselves embrace Darwinian ideas. Whilst we might consider the slight shift they make in this regard later in the chapter, some of their final remarks in the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* bear repeating here:

we hold in the first place that art and science have a revolutionary potential, and nothing more, and that this potential appears all the more as one is less and less concerned with what art and science mean, from the standpoint of a signifier or signifieds that are necessarily reserved for specialists; but that art and science cause increasingly decoded and deterritorialized flows to circulate in the *socius*, flows that are perceptible to everyone, which force the social axiomatic to grow ever more complicated, to become more saturated, to the point where the scientist and the artist may be determined to rejoin an objective revolutionary situation in reaction against authoritarian designs of a State that is incompetent and above all castrating by nature. (For the State imposes a specifically artistic Oedipus, a specifically scientific Oedipus.).<sup>38</sup>

Unpacking this statement and its relation to the ‘new earth’ we acknowledged in chapter three will enable us to pursue further the positive potential science and art (especially literature) share, whilst reckoning with those retarding forces of reterritorialisation that would inhibit them. Part of the attainment of the new earth presupposes ‘[a]n active point of escape where the revolutionary machine, the artistic machine, the scientific machine, and the (schizo) analytic machine become parts and

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<sup>38</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 414.

pieces of one another.<sup>39</sup> If we are to examine utility and servility in a symptomatic manner that benefits any examination of instrumentalist hegemony, then this schizoanalytic insight might surpass any broadly Nietzschean emphasis on declension and specifically as it might relate to scientific instrumentality: ‘We can guess the source of ‘utility’: it is the source of all passive concepts in general, *ressentiment*, nothing but the requirements of *ressentiment*.’<sup>40</sup> After schizoanalysis, such *ressentiment* remains attributable to Oedipus, the metaphysical spectre haunting the operations of desire, sustaining domesticated circuits of reactive passivity, productive of unthinking and ‘enlightened’ Green consumers alike.

And so once again, it is the deterritorialising powers of philosophy and literature that might aid us in sloughing off the common sensibility that the sciences have come to contribute to so powerfully. Nick Land, a contemporary Nietzschean philosopher, might equally be referring to contemporary scientists when he writes that what State philosophers have never understood is that ‘it is the *unintelligibility of the world that gives it worth*.’<sup>41</sup> In the notes posthumously published as *Der Wille zur Macht* [*The Will to Power*], Nietzsche writes that we must strive ‘not to desire to deprive the world of its disturbing and enigmatic character.’<sup>42</sup> This prescription against scientific nihilism would appear to remain an *active* one; in his study of Nietzsche, Deleuze develops his symptomatology in precisely this connection: ‘...science is part of the *nihilism* of modern thought... part of the ascetic ideal and serves it in its own way... Physics is reactive in the same way as biology; things are always seen from the petty side, from the side of reactions.’<sup>43</sup>

As we have seen, this acknowledgement of Nietzsche’s position by Deleuze does not keep him and Guattari from celebrating the revolutionary potential of the sciences and the decoded flows they help to circulate. With this tension in mind, then, let us now examine the work of Glen A. Love, a leading ecocritical figure who brings the lessons of the life sciences to his literary and cultural analyses. Considering the primacy that Love affords the sciences in his work, the valorisation of the sciences beyond the eco-literary sphere—their ‘truth function’ in contemporary society—appears a worthy

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<sup>39</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pgs. 353-54.

<sup>40</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, p. 69.

<sup>41</sup> Land, *Fanged*, p. 167.

<sup>42</sup> Nietzsche, *Will*, p. 419.

<sup>43</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, p. 42.

consideration. We might therefore begin by asking if their invocation is often largely *strategic*, or if they merely serve to substantiate and authorise the eco-political practice of those working in the humanitarian disciplines? As Terry Gifford has it in his reading of ecocritic Greg Garrard's work: 'Garrard typifies the pragmatic position of most ecocritics in facing the conundrum of whose version of ecology to use when he suggests that ecocritics must assess and then defer to scientific consensus, 'even as they analyse the ways such results are shaped by ideology and rhetoric.'<sup>44</sup>

This might lead us to enquire after the 'empirical evidence' of evolutionary biology—as motivated by Love in his *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment* (2003)—on these grounds. Does such a deference to scientific consensus not problematically enchain literary ecocriticism to a particular paradigm of interpretation, to a 'royal' or 'state' science over and against the philosophy of 'involutionary' becoming that Deleuze and Guattari describe as characteristic of a 'transversal', non-filiative and 'nomadic' alternative?<sup>45</sup> How might a 'nomadic' (or schizoanalytic) science relate to an ecoclinical orientation to literature? This distinction seems worthy of Love's work, particularly inasmuch as he begins his defense of science in general by avowing that he does not 'feel compelled to endorse [its] role [...] in the technological engine of perceived prosperity and progress', asserting that this is rather because he 'would affirm the role of *science*—literally *knowledge*—in revealing how we, and nature, function, so that we are better able to think our way through the staggering environmental changes we face.'<sup>46</sup> Whilst he confesses to a certain deficiency 'in scientific aptitude and interests', one shared by many of his eco-literary peers, he goes on to affirm ecology as much less another science than as 'one of the most important correctives' of the monolithic, technocratic edifice, describing it as '*The Subversive Science*' after the title of a volume edited by Paul Shepard.<sup>47</sup>

Taking these concerns together, Love hopes to deter 'antiscientific' sentiments amongst his readership; it is methodology that initially concerns him: 'To defend science is not to endorse the sins of its camp followers—such as a runaway technology—but to affirm its methods of investigation as the best means we have for

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<sup>44</sup> Gifford, *Recent*, p. 17; see also Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p. 107.

<sup>45</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 263.

<sup>46</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 38.

<sup>47</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 40. See also Shepard, Paul. 'Introduction: Ecology and Man—A Viewpoint.' *The Subversive Science*. Ed. Paul Shepard and Daniel McKinley. (Boston: Houghton, 1969). 1-10.

understanding our world and for finding solutions to the growing problems of pollution, overpopulation, and despoliation'.<sup>48</sup> During a brief discussion of reductionism as part of his argument for scientific methodology, some of the techniques of which 'may be required' in studying complex systems, Love cites the infamous reductionist Edward O. Wilson, and with whose notion of 'consilience' we opened this chapter: 'Complexity is what interests scientists in the end, not simplicity. Reductionism is the way to understand it. The love of complexity without reductionism makes art; the love of complexity with reductionism makes science'.<sup>49</sup> This leads Love to posit something of a broadly Deleuzian statement insofar as he suggests that like literary realism, science is concerned with 'understanding the system that works'.<sup>50</sup> Love's 'metacriticism', however, extends only to the suggestion that articles published in the field of ecocriticism might be doubled-refereed, 'increasing our efforts to end political polarization in the disciplines.'<sup>51</sup>

Yet as we have considered above, it is with the social machine that is presupposed by our technical machines that gives us to consider how certain universalising assumptions, such as those of Oedipus and the nuclear family structure, condition and influence scientific research. Love's work becomes most interesting, then, when he speaks of the relationship between evolutionary biology, ecology and literature, the former of which he asserts is necessarily 'ecological' after Darwin's own recognition that 'ecological principles were inseparably intertwined with evolutionary development'.<sup>52</sup> It is here, with the 'fact' of evolutionary biology, that he most lumpenly polarises the scientifically-minded and everyone else as mere 'humanists', the latter of whom he tends to caricature, somewhat surprisingly for a literary thinker, as a myth-obsessed species of 'creationist', and who sustain at best little more than a 'smug ignorance'.<sup>53</sup> Beyond such simplistic readings, however, we might ask a more properly philosophical question: namely, why Love did not apprise himself of the work of such writers as Stephen J. Gould, who have argued against teleologism in evolutionary

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<sup>48</sup> As Love has it: 'I hope there is room in ecocriticism for accommodation between a nature-endorsing postmodernism and the practice of scientific verification... ecocriticism should [...] work in the direction of that spirit of rigorous methodology'. See Love, *Practical*, p. 44.

<sup>49</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 46-7; Wilson, *Consilience*, p. 54.

<sup>50</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 44.

<sup>51</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 48.

<sup>52</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 50.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

theory?<sup>54</sup> Love's reactionary position renders the following statement, regarding whether or not those working in literary studies will be inclined to accept Darwinism as inviolable fact, somewhat insensitive to the immanent *specificities* of literary and scientific production: 'Whether those of us in literary studies are inclined to accept this prediction or not, we need a better scientific understanding of our own and related fields, an ecologically expanded awareness of the social and biological context within which literary acts take place.'<sup>55</sup>

Citing Melville's abundance of 'whale-centered cetology' in *Moby Dick* (1851) and Steinbeck's ability, as a biologically-trained writer, to explore 'strongly conflicted humanistic and scientific allegiances in the part-whole rhythm' of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Love discerns 'common instances of the subtle interconnections between science and art that affirm the possibilities of deeply rewarding unities between them.'<sup>56</sup> He then acknowledges Aldous Huxley's statement of 1963, in which the author called for the discovery of 'the raw materials for a new kind of Nature literature', to which Love adds, 'and presumably, a new kind of criticism.'<sup>57</sup> Here he champions Joseph Carroll's *Evolution and Literary Theory*, which 'includes a formidable argument to dismantle poststructuralism, finding it based upon unsound principles.'<sup>58</sup> Where Carroll would 'replace' poststructuralism with 'the evolutionary explanation of human experience as the most adequate and complete theory of life', Love takes this to amply counter charges that ecocriticism, like ecology, 'has no widely accepted underlying theory.'<sup>59</sup>

As such, it is with controversial American evolutionary psychologist and 'sociobiologist' Edward O. Wilson's 'attention to literary and humanistic themes', which 'mark him as a notable presence in the humanities', that Love finds a role model for his own interdisciplinary ecocriticism.<sup>60</sup> He takes into account the 'gene-culture coevolution' theory of Wilson and Lumsden's *Promethean Fire* (1983), but emphasises

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<sup>54</sup> Gould, Stephen J. *Wonderful Life: the Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989).

<sup>55</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 51.

<sup>56</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 52.

<sup>57</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 53.; see also Huxley, Aldous. *Literature and Science*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1963). p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 55.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 57.

the significance of Wilson's more recent work, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (1998), the title of which refers to 'the linking of causal explanations across all disciplines.'<sup>61</sup> As Love has it, Wilson 'posits that the study of culture, assuming consilience is a correct description of the direction of world knowledge, will divide itself between the natural sciences and the humanities'.<sup>62</sup> As Wilson writes:

These domains will be the two great branches of learning in the twenty-first century. The social sciences will continue to split within each of its disciplines, a process already rancorously begun, with one part folding into or becoming continuous with biology, the other fusing with the humanities. Its disciplines will continue to exist but in radically altered form. In the process the humanities.... Will draw closer to the sciences and fuse with them.<sup>63</sup>

Not only has this 'consilience' of knowledge come under internal attack by ecocritics such as Wendell Berry, but it would appear to run entirely against Deleuze and Guattari's rigorous separation of the powers particular to art, science and philosophy in their final collaborative venture, *What is Philosophy?* (1991/1994).<sup>64</sup> As we have thus far only acknowledged in brief, whilst Deleuze and Guattari preserve what is particular or immanent to these disciplines, they nevertheless emphasise the relations of resonance and exchange between them. So how do Deleuze and Guattari advance and justify such separation? How might it relate to their anti-Oedipal *historicisation* of desire and which appears wholly at odds with the universalising of human nature that Love's ecocriticism inherits from Wilson's evolutionary psychology?

We might proceed, then, with Buchanan's acknowledgment that against the concerns of anthropologists to examine 'what the codes mean to the peoples whose lives are structured by them', or the 'local knowledge' of 'what natives think (in Clifford Geertz's sense)', Deleuze and Guattari are themselves trying to discern

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<sup>61</sup> Love, *Practical*. p. 59.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Wilson, *Consilience*, p. 12.

<sup>64</sup> In fairness, Berry's reservations are spiritual, rendering the debate somewhat easy to dismiss for many ecocritics. See Berry, Wendell. *Life Is A Miracle*. (Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 2000).

‘something on the order of the universal... By universal they mean non-psychological and indeed non-cultural. If a label has to be applied, then their choice would be ‘machinic.’<sup>65</sup> Thus, whilst Deleuze’s relationship to science is complex, beyond the remit of the present thesis, he nevertheless remained concerned throughout his work with relations. In fact it seems almost impossible to separate out percepts, affects, concepts and functions from the harlequin cloak of his nominally ‘philosophical’ project.<sup>66</sup> In the appendix to his book on *Foucault* (1986), for example, Deleuze supplies an explicitly Nietzschean discussion of a post-human overcoming that acknowledges how it is that literary invention as much as ‘scientific’ development brings Man into contact with the forces of the outside, with ‘those of silicon which supersede carbon’ or ‘agrammaticalities which supersede the signifier’, and which must thus look as much to Nietzsche and Rimbaud as to ‘genetic components which supersede the organism.’<sup>67</sup>

Art and science should be distinguished from philosophy, therefore, as ‘nonphilosophical’ modes of thought. As we saw in our discussion of Proust, art—and in our case literature—has at its core a non-representational power to produce affects but also ‘percepts’, the corollary to the philosophical concept: ‘Percepts can be telescopic or microscopic, giving characters and landscapes giant dimensions as if they were swollen by a life that no lived perception can attain.’<sup>68</sup> A strictly *a-conceptual* force, the percept is of the order of sensation and remains qualifiable on the basis of its *effect*, which is to say, on the grounds that it *works*. Ian Buchanan has examined the extent to which certain of Deleuze’s concepts are both explained by, and depend for their rigour upon, percepts.<sup>69</sup> Buchanan’s work on the debt Deleuze owes to Leslie Fiedler’s *The Return of the Vanishing American* (1968) can shed some light on Deleuze’s particular brand of ‘interdisciplinarity’, namely in showing how a particular percept, that of ‘America equals the west’, renders Fiedler an artist rather than either a ‘theorist’ (philosopher), or a ‘scientist’ (geographer), chiefly because it brings together

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<sup>65</sup> Buchanan, *Deleuze and Guattari*, p. 94.

<sup>66</sup> In response to Bergson’s claim that modern science had not yet found its metaphysics, Deleuze remarked that it was precisely this metaphysics that interested him. See Bonta and Protevi, *Preface*, p. vii-ix.

<sup>67</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, pgs. 131-132.

<sup>68</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 171.

<sup>69</sup> See Buchanan, Ian. ‘Deleuze and American (Mythopoeic) Literature.’ *Southern Review: Communication, Politics & Culture*. Vol. 34, No. 2, 2001: 72-85.

two ‘implications’, both of which ‘are geographical in origin, but of a mythopoeic rather than strictly topographical kind.’<sup>70</sup>

This ‘mythopoeic’ percept, drawn from the seemingly strange assertion that ‘Europeans thought of themselves as inhabiting a world without a West’, and which defies any merely *geographical*, or scientific reckoning, informs Deleuze’s *philosophical* notion of the ‘line of flight.’<sup>71</sup> If, as Buchanan maintains, we see ‘that in discovering America, Europe did not discover the West itself, but only found its expression’, what he is leading us to recognise is ‘a pure expression that has affect, but not content’, or in other words, the process by which ‘the name *West* was transferred, step by step, to whatever part of the continent lured men on just over the line of settlement, to the unexplored space behind the next natural barrier.’<sup>72</sup> Buchanan clarifies this further: ‘it is not geography that gives us ‘the West’, but ambition.’<sup>73</sup> As Deleuze puts it, ‘geography is no less mental and corporeal than physical in movement.’<sup>74</sup> This ‘mythopoeic’ understanding of what impelled Europeans to leave for the *geographical* ‘West’ nevertheless relies on an evaluation of ‘the West’ as percept, or as a specifically *literary* perception ‘in place of the cumbersome cause and effect scheme dear to traditional historians’, and which instead ‘offers inner necessity, a kind of inhuman momentum (or line of flight) that propels people into action in spite of themselves.’<sup>75</sup>

In addition to the ‘inhuman momentum’ of an *impersonal* desire that the percept attests to, do we not here see something of the ‘limited consilience’ that Love discerns between biology and ecocriticism in Deleuze’s literary-geographical approach? Perhaps, were we to concede a certain rigour to his analyses of science, might we even consider Deleuze a member of C. P. Snow’s ‘third culture’, one in which scholars from diverse fields possess working knowledge of both humanitarian and scientific disciplines?<sup>76</sup> Given that Love himself began his ecocritical career by publishing a

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<sup>70</sup> Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*, p. 76. See also Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. pgs 282-3, 520 n18, and Deleuze, Gilles and Claire Parnet. *Dialogues*. p.37.

<sup>71</sup> Fiedler, Leslie. *The Return of the Vanishing American*. (New York: Stein Day, 1968). p. 26.

<sup>72</sup> Fiedler, *Return*, p. 29; Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*, p. 77.

<sup>73</sup> Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*, p. 77.

<sup>74</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 38.

<sup>75</sup> Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*. p .78.

<sup>76</sup> See Snow. C. P. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959). pgs. 70-71.

moratorium on poststructuralism and postmodernism more generally, and which we considered at the outset of this thesis, it proves key to note that where critical theory *per se* is concerned, Love briefly exhumes Alan Sokal's infamous article for the journal *Social Text*, in which the deliberate misuse of scientific terms in an article that was ultimately accepted for publication served to underscore his perception of the generalised misuse of such by 'postmodern' critics.<sup>77</sup> He does so to illustrate how it is precisely because the scientific method was *not* followed within the context of cultural studies that the bogus article was published.<sup>78</sup>

Therefore despite the importance of this methodological point to Love's argument, it is significant to note how, writing in 2003, he agrees that it now seems difficult to accept that, as Robert Storey, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone and Joseph Carroll have also indicated, that 'the radical edge of the reigning poststructuralist explanation of things is incompatible with the Darwinian/ecological paradigm.'<sup>79</sup> That Love is more prepared than he once was to allow for certain forms of poststructuralism is encouraging, despite the fact that we continue to find no further engagement with thinkers who have followed in the wake of Nietzsche and Lacan. Again, for all of his generosity towards a successive generation of ecocritics, and a somewhat broader endorsement of the very lines of investigation he had once more or less consigned to the same 'depletionist' dustbin to which Rozelle had dismissed psychoanalysis, Love nevertheless remains a good distance shy of the type of clinically-informed, metacritical ecocriticism this thesis has proposed as more necessary than ever before. Again, the fact that our scientifically-produced technical machines presuppose a social machine remains something that Love appears unable to account for without some form of socio-political theorisation, particularly if he would recognise a cultural unconscious in libidinal-materialist terms, or that a form of poststructuralism might be far less textual

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<sup>77</sup> Love, *Practical*, pgs. 39, 45-46.

<sup>78</sup> This debate has been considered somewhat settled, a fact that Love himself concedes: "Sokal... later identified himself as a political leftist who thus might be considered sympathetic to the ideological leanings of *Social Text*, but one who, he claims, continues to believe that the left has been and should continue to be identified with science in its historical role of opposing "obscurantism." (46). In his own words Sokal said: "The recent turn of many "progressive" or "leftist" academic humanists and social scientists toward one or another form of epistemic relativism betrays this worthy heritage and undermines the already fragile prospects for progressive social critique. Theorizing about "the social construction of reality" won't help us to find an effective treatment for AIDS or devise strategies for preventing global warming. Nor can we combat false ideas in history, sociology, economics, and politics if we reject the notions of truth and falsity." see Love, *Practical*, p. 46.

<sup>79</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 63.

than the Derridean species that were so very popular at the time of North American ecocriticism's first emergence. Love might, at the very least, have acknowledged the extent to which such important cultural formations as those he neglects intersect with Darwinism. As both Bruce Fink and Gregory Elliott have shown, the relationship between the hard sciences and psychoanalysis, for example, is as complex as the one Marxism shares.<sup>80</sup> Just as psychoanalysis since Freud has staked its claims for legitimacy by way of its 'scientific' status, the development of the Marxist 'science' of historical materialism owes much to the Darwinian turn; as Elliott indicates: 'The 'general laws' of the dialectic were taken from Hegel's *Logic* and held by Engels to be verified by contemporary scientific developments (most portentously, Darwin's theory of evolution).'<sup>81</sup>

It is here, then, that Deleuze and Guattari again aid us in assessing the distinctions or differences in kind between the disciplines in question, and by extension, their relative influence upon the socius. Let us first consider how Deleuze and Guattari determine science in *What is Philosophy?*:

A scientific notion is defined not by concepts but by functions or propositions.... It is this idea of the function which enables the sciences to reflect and communicate. Science does not need philosophy for these tasks. On the other hand, when an object—a geometrical space, for example—is scientifically constructed by functions, its philosophical concept, which is by no means given in the function, must still be discovered.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> '... once, Marxism had been all-powerful because it was true – and engendered such marvels as the Cultural Revolution; now Marxism was all-powerful because it was scientific – and gave birth to monsters. By a simple reversal of moral signs, an angelic was converted into a diabolical scientism. Marxism, totalitarian science and science of totalitarianism, remained the demiurge of history. 'If we have any objection against Marxism,' Foucault confided in 1976, 'it lies in the fact that it could effectively be a science'. Qua scientific discourse, Marxism secreted a will-to-power whose truth was the Gulag''. See Fink, Bruce. *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995). P. 138.; Also, Elliott, Gregory. *Althusser: The Detour of Theory*. (Leiden: Brill, 2006). p. 259.

<sup>81</sup> Elliott, *Althusser*, p. 63.

<sup>82</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 117.

Following this assertion, Deleuze and Guattari show how philosophy, science and art offer wholly different, if not entirely opposed approaches to nature as ‘chaos’. They later describe these as ‘three thoughts’, each with their corresponding ‘plane’ of implication, characterising thought *per se* as a ‘heterogenesis.’<sup>83</sup> Let us first remain with the distinction between philosophy and science, before returning to their characterisation of ‘art’ (inclusive of literature) in the following paragraph. Whilst philosophy retains ‘the infinite’, giving consistency to the virtual through concepts, science relinquishes it, and instead ‘gives a reference to the virtual, which actualizes it through functions. Philosophy proceeds with a plane of immanence or consistency; science with a plane of reference.’<sup>84</sup>

Further to this isolation of the ‘function’ (or ‘functives’) as the scientific equivalent of the philosophical concept and literary percepts and affects, scientific thought is characterised by a ‘slowing down’, which owes something to Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of Cantor; despite ‘advancing accelerations’ with certain technologies, science sets ‘limits’ in chaos, establishing workable coordinates and degrees after the ‘abscissa’, a mathematical term which refers to the x-axis, enabling coordinate systems that enable a particle to ‘touch down’: ‘The first functives are therefore the limit and the variable.’<sup>85</sup> Acknowledging Cantor himself to have attempted to ‘unite philosophical concept and scientific function’, Deleuze and Guattari insist that a difference in *kind* remains, ‘since the former unfolds on a plane of immanence or consistency without reference, but the other on a place of reference devoid of consistency.’<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 199.

<sup>84</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 118.

<sup>85</sup> ‘...the primordial slowing down is not for these phenomena a zero-instant with which they break but rather a condition coextensive with their whole development. To slow down is to set a limit in chaos to which all speeds are subject, so that they form a variable determined as abscissa, at the same time as the limit forms a universal constant that cannot be gone beyond (for example, a maximum degree of contraction’. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 118.

<sup>86</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 121. Moreover, although there is a difference in kind between disciplines, each nevertheless possesses the power to return us to immanence. This power can be seen to dismiss any ‘quasi-theological’ understanding of immanence, particularly when Deleuze and Guattari claim to ‘doubt the unitary vocation of science’, to which they should be taken to mean that like religion, scientific functives are unlike concepts inasmuch as they are ‘figural’, to which they add the image of a necessary ‘reading’, yet unlike religion, science thwarts its own unification by enacting ‘the substitution of reference for all transcendence’ See Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 125.

What this means is that whereas science is ‘paradigmatic’ (after Thomas Kuhn), or concerns the (re)negotiation of accepted facts as references and their relationship to ‘states of affairs’, philosophy is by contrast ‘syntagmatic’, or concerned with ‘events’, particularly if understood after Deleuze’s highly idiosyncratic conceptions of ‘becoming’ and ‘sense’.<sup>87</sup> Literature, then, with its percepts and affects as the corollaries of scientific functions and philosophical concepts, retains a unique relation to *sensation*. Whilst the plastic arts such as painting are wrought upon an aesthetic plane of composition that can come to ‘cover up’ or ‘absorb’ the ‘technical plane’, literature is no less concerned with percepts and affects given as blocs or compounds of sensations: ‘There are indeed technical problems in art, and science may contribute toward their solution, but they are posed only as a function of aesthetic problems of composition that concern compounds of sensation and the plane to which they and their materials are necessarily linked. Every sensation is a question, even if the only answer is silence.’<sup>88</sup>

It may be curious for eco-literary critics, therefore, to note how amidst their otherwise very ‘dry’ discussion of scientific limits and variables, Deleuze and Guattari use a deeply *affective* image drawn from the animal kingdom: ‘The most closed system still has a thread that rises toward the virtual, and down which the spider descends’.<sup>89</sup> This usage, which itself might be seen to attest to the ‘rich tissue of correspondences [that] can be established between the planes’, and which might be read as a prime instance of their intersection and intertwining, should nevertheless be considered ‘without synthesis or identification’.<sup>90</sup> In this way, then, it seems wrongheaded after Deleuze and Guattari to privilege either a scientific or literary approach over the other, as to do so would suggest a misapprehension of their differences in *kind*.

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<sup>87</sup> ‘Far from distributing cardinal points that organize syntagms on a plane of immanence, the scientist’s proper name draws up paradigms that are projected into necessarily ordered systems of reference.’ See Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 124-5.

<sup>88</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 196.

<sup>89</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 122.

<sup>90</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 198-199. This would go against Deleuze’s earlier (and far more Althusserian) usage of the term ‘science’ in an interview with Arnaud Villani in November 1981: ‘...philosophy might be considered a science: the science of determining the conditions of a problem’ (Q 41). See Deleuze, Gilles. ‘Response to a Series of Questions’. *Collapse III*. (2007). 39-43.

...art should not be thought to be like a synthesis of science and philosophy, of the finite and infinite routes. The three routes are specific, each as direct as the others, and they are distinguished by the nature of the plane and by what occupies it. Thinking is thought through concepts, or functions, or sensations and no one of these thoughts is better than another, or more fully, completely, or synthetically “thought.” The frames of art are no more scientific coordinates than sensations are concepts, or vice versa. Abstract art and conceptual art are two recent attempts to bring art and philosophy together, but they do not substitute the concept for the sensation; rather they create sensations and not concepts.<sup>91</sup>

It is in this way, then, that we are bidden to accept that whilst there is intersection between the planes, it is ultimately one without synthesis: ‘With its concepts, philosophy brings forth events. Art erects monuments with its sensations. Science constructs states of affairs with its functions.... [T]he network has its culminating points, where sensation itself becomes sensation of concept or function, where the concept becomes concept of function or of sensation, and where the function becomes function of sensation or concept.... Philosophy needs a nonphilosophy that comprehends it; it needs a nonphilosophical comprehension just as art needs nonart and science needs nonscience.’<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 197-198. Yet as ecocritic Timothy Morton has suggested: ‘Ultimately, ambient [or ‘environmental’] art becomes science, pure and simple. Many modern artists pose themselves in a scientific manner’. See Morton, *Ecology*, p. 192.

<sup>92</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy?* pgs. 199, 218.

### (iii) Evolutionary Biology and Archetypal Myth in Willa Cather's

#### *The Professor's House*

Let us bring these insights to bear upon Love's chapter on 'Place, Style and Human Nature in Willa Cather's *The Professor's House*' (1925). Outwardly a modernist novel about a mid-western history professor of advanced years, the work offers several examinations of human relationships to the biome, specifically to the Mesa Verde region of Colorado in the U.S.A. Suggesting Cather's narrative as 'much more than a pastoral interlude in the lives of urban subjects and readers', Love is here ostensibly concerned with literary *form*, yet in a manner that sustains his commitment to evolutionary biology and scientific methodologies *per se*.<sup>93</sup> Initially, Love invokes the scientific-literary work of Robert Storey, a literary critic and evolutionary biologist, who writes on affect in terms of its measurable impact upon the human nervous system. Yet this tantalising literary-scientific conjunction goes undeveloped, proving merely tributary to Love's central recommendation that Cather's modernism incorporates an 'environmental imagination', one that is both 'biological and topographical.'<sup>94</sup> This he proceeds to explore by taking up two other stories within Cather's novel, "Tom Outland's Story" and "the secret of the Blue Mesa", which he deems to be inserted in such a way as to suggest to him a number of, at times, complimentary methodological positions; not only is the work an instance of 'memorable' literature, but one of 'mythic' or 'archetypal' stature, the appeals of which 'may be shaped by culture but whose origins are often subcultural, epigenetic, in the language of evolutionary biology.'<sup>95</sup>

By this 'epigenetic' origin, Love hopes to assert a biological basis for a 'universal' human nature, a literary-scientific argument that retains an ecocritical edge, and one that he believes might benefit his reading of Cather's own 'treatment of human nature and embodied place in [Tom Outland's] relationship to the Cliff City.'<sup>96</sup> As an amateur archaeologist, Tom's story proves ideal ecocritical material, revealing

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<sup>93</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 89.

<sup>94</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 95.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 98.

‘something of [Cather’s] keenly archetypal and place-centered imagination.’<sup>97</sup> Recognising the perilous ethical ground he is on, however, Love looks to philosopher of science Mary Midgley to try and allay any residual “fear of biology” as an over-determining scientific discourse.<sup>98</sup> Here he hopes that such terms as ‘epigenetic’ and ‘universal’ will not render his study dismissible, but also that in doing so he might reassert a position against human behaviour as purely social in development. Taking into account Patrick Hogan’s essay “Literary Universals”, he then suggests that ‘such classifications carry no evaluative judgments.’<sup>99</sup> This somewhat vague claim rests upon the observation, supported further still by ‘bioethicists’ Peter Singer and Steven Pinker, that it is not because certain ‘undesirable’ tendencies—such as hierarchy or male dominance—prevail in human cultures that we should affirm them as somehow biologically-‘inevitable’, but rather that a more ‘honest’ approach to human culture and morality is therefore possible; in other words, that the sort of ‘archetypal’ elements he discerns in Cather’s *literature* can be understood *scientifically*, with a basis in research on human adaptation to specific environments.<sup>100</sup>

Let us look more closely, then, at how the Tom Outland chapter of *The Professor’s House* supplies Love with both literary-archetypal and scientific-biological insights upon human-environmental relations. How does he ‘synthesise’ them and is his doing so somehow problematic after Deleuze and Guattari’s non-synthetic position? The ‘scientific’ appeal that the ‘Cliff City’ of the Blue Mesas has upon Tom Outland leads Love to attempt a fusion of scientific and formal, literary concerns; the imposing cliffs of the Mesa Verde had been home to aeons of pueblo civilization; as such, Tom is exposed to ‘the long ages of evolutionary development, during all of which time, place, and geography were life-and-death matters, and the ability to read the landscape correctly amounted to a survival factor.’<sup>101</sup>

Not only is Cather’s tale ‘a particularly packed meditation upon on biological-cultural evolution’, however, but it is also one in which ‘the thing that teases the mind

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Midgley, Mary. *Evolution as a Religion: Strange Hopes and Stranger Fears*. (London: Methuen, 1985). p. 95.

<sup>99</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 97.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 98-99.

is the archetypal element.’<sup>102</sup> Love then seizes upon the relationship between this *biological* fact of survival and traces it through its cultural instantiation; cultural specifics are here deprivileged and yet the *universality* of human biological response promises a key to understanding the *specificity* of a North American ecocritical reading. This seemingly paradoxical position leads Love to acknowledge Tom Outland as ‘a version of the code western hero.’<sup>103</sup> As Love maintains, “Tom Outland’s Story” ‘reminds us that “The Western” in fiction and film is a clear example of the appeal of archetypes across cultural lines, leading to The Western’s position by the mid-twentieth century as what was called at the time the only contemporary worldwide myth.’<sup>104</sup>

As such it is evidently through the *archetype* that Love believes he can link literary and biological ‘universals’. Yet as Deleuze and Guattari make clear in *What is Philosophy?*, ‘The first principle of philosophy is that Universals explain nothing but must themselves be explained.’<sup>105</sup> This can be usefully linked back to chapter three of *Anti-Oedipus*, in which we are bidden not to overlook the significance of historically-specific forms of social repression and their relation to psychic repression in favour of any universalising psychology.<sup>106</sup> It is thereby with respect to our prevailing culture-nature discussion that we might engage such insight, one that often goes under-inspected where universalising assumptions prevail. In unpicking Love’s scientific-literary reading, one steeped as it is, in both evolutionary psychology and talk of the Western as a mode of archetypal literature, we might initially refer back to Buchanan’s Deleuzian clarification of the relationship between the mythopoeic register, the science of geography and the literary percept in his discussion of the American West. Where Buchanan *historicizes*, we retain awareness of how for Deleuze and Guattari it is social oppression that begets psychic repression and not vice versa. This will have

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<sup>102</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 105-6.

<sup>103</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 105.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> As Holland notes with respect to the examples of despotism and fascism: ‘Positing a “universal nature of human infancy” to explain why “the slave is somehow in love with his own chains” amounts in Deleuze and Guattari’s view to justifying in advance total resignation to any and all forms of social oppression. Their solution will be not to subordinate socio- historical explanation to universalizing psychology, but to propose an apparently paradoxical model of the psyche... wherein the mechanisms that carry out repression at the same time free the human organism from instinctual determination, so that it is the form of social organization that determines whether psychic repression serves social oppression or escapes it.’ Holland, *Introduction*, p. 10.

significance for how we redress Love's ecocritical concerns with *form* in Cather's novel.

Following Fiedler, but also Richard Slotkin, Buchanan distinguishes the Western from the Northern, the Eastern and the Southern, neither of which are as quintessentially 'American' as the former.<sup>107</sup> What this non-geographical distinction of the Western affords us is again the West as percept; as we noted above, a certain misrecognition attends our understanding of the West wherever we persist in a merely geographical apprehension of it: 'it is not geography that gives us 'the West', but ambition.'<sup>108</sup> As Deleuze puts it, 'geography is no less mental and corporeal than physical in movement.'<sup>109</sup> Love might, then, have used his 'scientism' to address the *reality* of abstraction here, or the manner by which a virtual mechanism is linked, by way of percepts and affects, to the 'inner necessity' that Buchanan, following Deleuze, speaks of: 'a kind of inhuman momentum (or line of flight) that propels people into action in spite of themselves.'<sup>110</sup>

This affective relationship to unconscious desire might be clarified further in any bid to understand Love's confluence of literary and scientific concerns. By invoking 'The Western' mid-way into his discussion, Love fails to satisfyingly connect this affective cultural coding of human peoples in a desert terrain with those of his scientific-biological orientation; when he dispenses with Freud in a brief passage on the snake 'archetype' in Cather's novel, he does so by way of E. O. Wilson's mostly scientific, yet putatively 'interdisciplinary' studies in *Consilience* and *Biophilia*. Amongst other topics, in those books Wilson considers human reactions to poisonous snakes in terms of genetic heritage, enabling Love to affirm the links between biology and culture insofar as he recognises not only how such reptiles have brought man to an awareness of his mortality in harsh, desert environments, but thereby sufficiently impressed themselves upon his psyche: 'Close attention to them, enhanced by dream

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<sup>107</sup> '...there have always been four kinds of American books: Northerns, Southernns, Easterns, and Westerns, though we have been accustomed, for reasons not immediately clear, to call only the last by its name.' See Fiedler, *Return*, p. 16. See also Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

<sup>108</sup> Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*, p. 77.

<sup>109</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 38.

<sup>110</sup> Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*, p. 78.

serpents and the symbols of culture, undoubtedly improves the chances of survival.’<sup>111</sup> Whilst in that same text, Wilson states that he and natural scientists share ‘the common goal to turn as much of philosophy as possible into science’, he nevertheless reserves a certain methodological value for the humanities, leading him to propose a mythic labour for his project of consilience, invoking the image of ‘the Cretan labyrinth, which can also serve as a metaphor for consilience... Consilience among the branches of learning is the Ariadne's thread needed to traverse it. Theseus is humanity, the Minotaur our own dangerous irrationality.’<sup>112</sup>

And yet amidst the branches of learning, the ‘nebula of pathways through the social sciences, humanities, art, and religion’ remain retraceable, ‘back through the behavioral sciences to biology, chemistry, and finally physics.’<sup>113</sup> This retraceability that culminates ‘finally in physics’ suggests Wilson’s labyrinth metaphor as one casting the interdisciplinary researcher as an humanitarian hero like Theseus, a spirit of tutelary stature and yet whom Nietzsche castigated as the ‘sublime’ or ‘higher man’, he who assumes the weight of an heroic burden and thus, as Deleuze writes in his essay ‘The Mystery of Ariadne According to Nietzsche’, is one who ‘claims to carry humanity to perfection, to completion.’<sup>114</sup> Yet for the thinker of the eternal return, such a hero, particularly as an agent of ‘knowledge’, proves himself subject to reactive forces and thus the bearer of the ‘products of nihilism’:

The higher man claims knowledge as his authority: he claims to explore the labyrinth or the forest of knowledge. But knowledge is only a disguise for morality; the thread in the labyrinth is the moral thread. Morality, in turn, is a labyrinth, a disguise for the ascetic and religious ideal. From the ascetic ideal to the moral ideal, from the moral ideal to the ideal of knowledge, it is the same enterprise that is being pursued, that of killing the bull, that is, of denying life, crushing it beneath a weight, reducing it to its reactive forces.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Wilson, *Consilience*, p. 127.

<sup>112</sup> Wilson, *Consilience*, pgs. 12 and 72-73.

<sup>113</sup> Wilson, *Consilience*, p. 73.

<sup>114</sup> Deleuze, *Essays*, p. 100.

<sup>115</sup> Deleuze, *Essays*, p. 101.

As we have considered above, knowledge for Deleuze cannot be the goal of thought anymore than its forces be allied with the upright, good will, or ‘truth.’ To relate learning and conscious thought to the goal of knowledge is to think according to the eighth postulate of the ‘dogmatic’ image of thought. Thought is rather an event of pure difference, a power or potential of Life to undermine and transform itself, one that recasts learning after a *paideia*, or ‘violent culture of learning’ that proceeds by way of the unconscious, and requires an experimentation that enables us to find what works; the conscious faculties must be taken beyond their limits after what Deleuze deems their ‘transcendental exercise’ and yet which crucially does not presuppose a universalism of those faculties. Not only does learning exceed the Kantian thesis on recognition, as to learn something new cannot be explained by recognition, but it does not take into account the *differences* that mark individual learners and their diverse, complex milieus or ‘environments’ in the broadest of senses: ‘We never know in advance how someone will learn: by means of what loves someone becomes good at Latin, what encounters make them a philosopher, or in what dictionaries they learn to think.’<sup>116</sup>

It is in this way, then, that Glen Love’s use of E. O. Wilson as a principal resource for his own brand of interdisciplinary ecocriticism suffers from a morality that is ultimately ‘unscientific’ in the post-Althusserian sense we have been at pains to elaborate. What is more, for all of the interdisciplinary promise of Wilson’s *Consilience*, we do not find in his ‘evolutionary psychology’ an approach to the ‘inhuman momentum’ enabled by our Deleuzian account of the West as percept. Thus Love’s ‘archetypal’ concerns are foreshortened where he plays down the importance of psychoanalysis to both the production and reception of modernist literature. Emphasising Cather’s articulation of certain ‘primal memories’ in *The Professor’s House*, namely ‘with the intrusion of the snake-serpent into the relationship between Professor St. Peter’s two daughters’, Love employs ‘science’ to oust ‘traditional Freudian interpretations of snakes as phallic representations and forbidden wishes that

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<sup>116</sup> Accordingly: ‘There is no more a method for learning than there is a method for finding treasures, but a violent training, a culture or *paideia* which affects the entire individual... Method is the means of that knowledge which regulates the collaboration of the faculties. It is therefore the manifestation of a common sense or the realization of *Cogitatio natura*, and presupposes a good will as though this were a ‘premeditated decision’ of the thinker.’ For both references see Deleuze, *Difference*, p. 205.

evade the brain's censorship', largely on the grounds that these 'have recently been seriously questioned or replaced by biological explanations'.<sup>117</sup> Not only is this 'scientific' reading woefully lopsided, but it appears to fall entirely short of the mark when he addresses the rattlesnake that kills old Henry Atkins, Tom and Roddy's cook and companion, as they are exploring the Blue Mesa ruins: despite his own admission that 'the "terrible"<sup>118</sup> death of old Henry seems another example of Cather's heightening the mythic trials of Tom's quest', he does not deem it worthy of any *clinical* analysis.<sup>119</sup>

Brought together as they are in Love's work 'under the sign of nature', we might now extend our concerns with literature *and* science as they relate to Deleuze and Guattari's *revaluation* of the Oedipal unconscious. Firstly, we might consider how desire, that which Love omits prolonged consideration of, is nevertheless hinted at in his concerns with the *style* of Cather's novel. Despite how neglectful Love is of psychoanalysis, his intimation of *The Professor's House* as a piece of proto-generic writing, as an eco-Western perhaps, lends us a first level of formal analysis. If for Fiedler, the Northern was concerned with a form of socio-political reassurance, reporting how the Puritans who penned them had not succumbed to the evils of nature and hostile savages—reports of prime importance for their colonist and Old World audiences—then it maintained a connection to the old ways. The Eastern then, also tied to the past, nevertheless contrasted the New World with its trans-Atlantic heritage: 'Customarily, the Eastern treats the return of the American to the Old World (only then does he know for sure that he *is* an American)'.<sup>120</sup> As Buchanan has shown, such works emphasised how Europe somehow failed its people, emphasising the benefits of the New on those terms.<sup>121</sup> The Southern, then, equally dramatised such failings, offering the New World as a zone in which the desire for decadence of Europe might receive the moral guidance it had long lacked; American Gothic tales, often articulated about the physical potency, yet at once mulish and passive spectre of the Negro and all of the heated socio-politics particular to slave-uprisings, nevertheless appear beholden to a

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<sup>117</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 102.

<sup>118</sup> Cather, Willa. *The Professor's House*. (New York: Random, 1973). p. 216.

<sup>119</sup> Love, *Practical*, p.102.

<sup>120</sup> Fiedler, *Return*, p. 19.

<sup>121</sup> Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*, p. 80.

‘miasmal’ nostalgia: The Southern ‘Big House’ remains haunted by the glories of a ‘cultivated’ European heritage.<sup>122</sup>

These distinctions render the Western a genre born of true ‘independence’, a literary testament to contact with an ‘outside’ that threatens established traditions, yet one nevertheless dependent upon an unshirking acceptance of the Otherness of the Indian, who darkly mirrored the Puritan. Paradoxically, this often came by way of tales of relative intimacy with them, yet in the case of such frontier heroes as Daniel Boone and Natty Bumppo, by way of a ‘regenerative violence’, an encounter with tribal alterity in which the adversary tested the mettle of the hero—a ‘hunter’ archetype—against the ‘seductions’ of the native’s contagious atavisms, and whom therefore remained a creature of suspicion, whose proximity with the Other had surely contaminated him.<sup>123</sup> Although such regenerative violence as that expressed in the frontiersman narrative is not present in Cather’s novel, Tom nevertheless reconstructs a sense of the pueblo peoples as a sort of ‘foil’ against which a sense of ‘heroism’ could safely be tested and proven.<sup>124</sup> In other words, it is via them that his own, ‘heroic’ sense of ecological ‘emplacement’ comes to appear both hard-won and ennobling. What Love might be said to do on this view, then, is marshal such heroism in a manner that risks the fantasy of the ‘ecological Indian’, or (ecologically)-noble savage.

Beyond its generic status, however, it is in the book’s physical construction that we might obtain further apprehension of desire in a connection that exceeds Oedipal readings. Enclosed by Books One and Three of *The Professor’s House*, ‘where the characters in [a] modern setting are also uneasily experiencing the necessity of coming to terms with the implications of place’, Love notes that the novel’s sections are themselves ‘emplaced’.<sup>125</sup> By this, he reminds us that they are each ‘focused [...] upon a house, either a literally physical dwelling or an emblem of human emplacement.’<sup>126</sup> Book One concerns the Professor’s familial and professional life; Book Two details Tom’s discovery of the Cliff City in the Blue Mesa; Book Three is set in the Professor’s old study, where he ponders the grave. Despite their content, the relative lengths of the novel’s three sections—“Book One: The Family” is 166 pages long; “Book Two: Tom

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*, p. 81.; Slotkin, *Return*, p.189.

<sup>124</sup> Buchanan, *Mythopoeic*, p. 81.

<sup>125</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 107.

<sup>126</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 106.

Outland's Story" is 75 pages; "Book Three: The Professor" is a mere 27 pages—attest to a certain asymmetry, a lack of balance that Cather herself said suggested the Tom Outland section as an enlivening respite, a gust of 'fresh air that blew off the Blue Mesa.'<sup>127</sup>

How does Tom's story effect this 'fresh air? How might this relate to Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that 'a schizophrenic out for a stroll is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch'?<sup>128</sup> How might Büchner's Lenz supply an alternative literary example via whom we might understand a path beyond 'the man-nature dichotomy', a 'machinic' path for which 'there is no such thing as either man or nature... only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together'?<sup>129</sup> Tom's relationship to the 'lost' settlements of the Blue Mesa, his bid to preserve the remains of the Cliff City, the bond he develops with the forgotten peoples (and which Love reads from his sense of a universal, biological bond), can, of course, be read as broadly symptomatic of modernity *per se*, attesting to Cather's individual sense of the era's increasing, technological distance from actual 'place' under the market-intensified encroachments of interchangeable, commodifiable 'space'. In positioning his story at the heart of the novel, and by breaking with the laboured, overlong syntax of Book One, however, Cather not only contrasts Tom's outdoor experiences at the level of her content with the interior, indoor life of the Professor, but invokes Tom as a fictional character *through* style, through shorter, less complicated sentences (Tom's is a monologue). Attesting to Tom's fictive persona—he is an unobtrusive, much under-stated individual, taciturn yet affable, with great economy of speech, often appearing almost monosyllabic—he suggests someone who requires a degree of 'reading', of interpretation perhaps, yet who remains ultimately elusive.

What makes Cather's form interesting *eco-clinically*, is that as readers, we are never given the final satisfaction of having full disclosure of his humanity, but rather, rewarded with the 'understated ardor of Outland's Blue Mesa.'<sup>130</sup> Whilst this never reaches the schizo-machinic proportions of Büchner's Lenz, from whom Deleuze and Guattari extract a delirious experience of the non-human forces and affects as

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<sup>127</sup> Cather, Willa. *On Writing*. (New York: Knopf, 1949). p. 31-2

<sup>128</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 2.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 109.

inseparable from his sense of self after a radical, modernist decoding that leaves him at risk of madness and dissolution, it nevertheless imparts a sense of the dual importance of both the exterior world beyond the Oedipal hearth, and of the radical exteriority that the ‘desert’ passage of the BwO would figure. So, although Love seizes upon these formal aspects of Cather’s writing, noting that it is the “‘unfurnished” quality of Tom’s story [that remains] its primary stylistic feature’, what remains unsatisfying in his ecocritical reading is the degree to which he *returns* all of these literary insights to his commitment to evolutionary biology.<sup>131</sup>

Suggesting that the Tom Outland section might itself appear as something of an ‘archaeological’ element at the formal level, particularly as in Book Three, Professor St. Peter feels a backwards longing for those ‘rugged, untamed vistas dear to the American heart. Dear to *all hearts*, probably—at least calling to *all*’, Love plays down any recognition of the book in relation to his briefly invoked notion of a ‘literary universal’, or to the ‘archetypes’ that he had begun to explore in terms of the novel as a proto-Western, so that he can retain his broader commitment to a scientific ‘methodology.’<sup>132</sup> Skimming over Cather as an influence on Hemingway, who might also be reckoned as a writer of distinct value to ecocritics, Love turns instead to the scientific writing of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone and the biomechanics of Steven Vogel. Here he extracts some good points about human animality, about bodily relations to the desert environment, yet does so by describing them as ‘a novelist’s corroboration’ of such science.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, an imposition of the order of Wilson’s consilience returns us to Love’s earlier, establishing argument in the opening of his chapter; much less a writer fashioning percepts and imparting affects, Love renders Cather a heroic scientist in her own right, one whose ‘position anticipates that of many of today’s evolutionary biologists and psychologists who find in all human cultures the expression of a heritage of commonly evolved tendencies.’<sup>134</sup>

Moreover, when in Book Three Professor St. Peter himself reverts to an almost mute, pre-intellectual, ‘pre-symbolic’ state, Cather may, as Love reads her, be ‘anticipating, and undercutting, the assumption that culture and language have somehow lifted us above our biology and rendered our bodies and their elemental

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Cather, *Professor’s*. p. 270.; also Love, *Practical*, p. 99.

<sup>133</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 112.

<sup>134</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 99.

displacement inconsequential.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, Love deems Book Three's 'dominant thematic note [to be] that of a deterministic corporeality of human life, conveyed in a stylistic devaluation of language and dispensability of words.'<sup>136</sup> The novel's transition through Book's One to Three sees the passage from third person, to first person, to interior monologue, which is also 'a progression toward a prelinguistic and prehuman muteness.'<sup>137</sup> It is not until the close of his chapter, when reckoning with the approaching death of Professor St. Peter himself, that Love invokes by name only the work on archetypes of psychologist Carl Jung. In the slim pages of Book Three, the Professor 'regresses into a Jungian primitive dream state.'<sup>138</sup>

This second acknowledgement, whilst not entirely a dismissal, is nevertheless so insignificant as to again warrant a mere half paragraph, highlighting Cather's own handling of St. Peter's decline in such a way as to again attribute its affects to the fantasy of the (ecologically)-noble savage: 'He was a primitive. He was only interested in earth and woods and water. Whenever sun sunned and rain rained and snow snowed... Desire under all desires, Truth under all truths... He was earth, and would return to earth.'<sup>139</sup> Love is, however, attentive to the style of these pages, noting its 'extremely short sentences and clauses, devoid of sequentiality or the logic of subordination.'<sup>140</sup> One might here suggest Deleuze's thesis on the infinitive verb form and the extent to which it would enable us to consider the logic of sense particular to Cather's 'sun sunned', 'rain rained', and 'snow snowed', or in terms of the event, the BwO and becoming. Love's own reading, whilst theoretically-encouraging, is again somewhat too cursory, failing to connect its intuitions with any strong clinical insight: 'The Professor's utterances seem drawn from a kind of primal language... they reveal a kind of denial of style, a refusal to reach out for graceful synonyms.'<sup>141</sup> 'From the perspective of the writer, Cather has carried her unfurnishing process almost to the point of having to renounce her medium.'<sup>142</sup> This is part of a Symbolically-biased association of the approach of death with silence: 'a wordless sensory existence, but

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<sup>135</sup> Love, *Practical*, p.101.

<sup>136</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 113.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Cather, *Professor's*, p. 265.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Love, *Practical*, pgs. 113-114.

<sup>142</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 114.

also a kind of rhetoric of obliteration, a paring down of place and action and style to the vanishing point.<sup>143</sup>

Yet both of these concerns, the latter of which might, we would suggest, be read in terms of Lacan's notion of the 'unary trait', remain unexplored clinically.<sup>144</sup> Whilst this is perfectly in accordance with much ecocriticism to date, particularly from Love as an outspoken anti-poststructuralist, this nevertheless seems part of an ecocritical disavowal that would benefit immensely from the metacritical tools Deleuzian thinking would lend such reading, particularly when both of Love's hermeneutic avenues, the biological and the mythopoeic, remain Oedipalised. Acknowledging the 'verification' of Tom's universalist sentiments by way of the DNA in 'our Darwinian bodies', Love does not make good on the promise of his section heading, 'Style and the Darwinian Body.'<sup>145</sup> Instead he appears to retain the 'scientific' concerns with a sense of shared 'human bonds' that he had set out earlier in the book, in which he made recourse to Steven Olson's *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past Through Our Genes* (2001), a study that not only affirms the commonality of all human beings by tracing them to 'a common pool of ancestors', but renders Tom's 'reverential naming of the mummified body of the woman among the ruins as "Mother Eve", simply 'prescient.'<sup>146</sup>

Of course, we are not here refuting such mitochondrial 'evidence', nor the place of it in an ecocritical reading that would tie 'human nature'—however problematically universalized—to an emphasis upon the specificity of place; on the contrary, it is here that science would offer a positively 'anti-human' materialism, a deterritorialising movement that promises to free life from its bondage to certain cultural codes, yet

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> As Verhaeghe indicates, for Lacan the function of the 'unary trait' turns upon an understanding of it as 'the simplest form of mark, which properly speaking is the origin of the signifier.' As Lacan himself suggests, it is most simply referred to as 'the insignia of the Other', or as a sign betokening a negative difference after Saussurean linguistics. With regard to language and silence in Love's reading of Cather, then, we could readily engage in a discussion of how the Symbolic is inherently totalising and how pre-Symbolic jouissance by definition betokens a certain 'silence'. See Verhaeghe, Paul. 'Enjoyment and Impossibility: Lacan's Revision of the Oedipus Complex.' *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis*. Eds. Justin Clemens and Russell Grigg. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006): 29-49. p.46; Also, Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 523.

<sup>145</sup> Love, *Practical*, p. 110.

<sup>146</sup> Love, *Practical*, p.100. Olson's study details the 'mitochondrial Eve' of 200,000 years ago, a lineage to which all 6 billion human mitochondrial DNA sequences can be traced. See Olson, Steve. *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past Through Our Genes*. (Boston: Houghton, 2002). Pgs. 23-27, 237.

which nevertheless proves painfully at risk of being *reterritorialised* upon reactive social representations (Oedipal mother, family, tribal hearth). Here we are merely arguing that the relationship between bodily, pre-symbolic substantiality and symbolic insubstantiality might be read differently after the post-Lacanianism of Deleuze, in which the productive, immanent unconscious of connections is detached from the triangulating familial yoke of the transcendent Oedipal schema, and which is therefore suggestive of an altogether less domesticated (and domesticating) ‘western’ by way of the schizoanalytic ‘desert’ of the BwO.

If we have begun to demonstrate how an ecocritical usage of science might nevertheless betray an ‘illegitimate’ usage of the syntheses of desire, then we have begun to offer both a metacriticism of what remains a putatively ‘literary’ movement and at once, an ‘eco-clinical’ position on the interdisciplinarity it has necessarily entered into. With these insights in mind, we might now consider how the instrumental attitudes we have acknowledged open onto the concerns of our fifth and final chapter, which will entail an eco-clinical assessment of the relevance of humour to ecocritical debate. Insofar as the picaresque literary form has been motivated throughout a range of seminal environmentalist writings, we will consider the extent to which certain ‘humoral’ dispositions, but also humour in the prosaic sense, and as it is manifest in forms of irony, satire and comedy, serve to draw together many of our prevailing noological concerns.

## **5: Towards an Earthly Humour**

**(i) The Eco-Clinic and the Eco-Comic:  
Melancholy, Irony and Humour**

They sat and watched [the] mighty engine in motion, conveying coal at the rate of 50,000 tons per day across the mesa and down to the plain and up in to the towers. Fifty thousand tons. Everyday. For thirty-forty-fifty years. All to feed the power plant at Page.

‘I think,’ said Doc, ‘these people are serious.’

—Edward Abbey<sup>1</sup>

Humour is treacherous, it is treason.

—Gilles Deleuze<sup>2</sup>

We open our fifth and final chapter with a preliminary discussion of melancholy, or the Galenic humor most commonly attributed to the Romantic outlook and which much ecocritical writing appears to remain conditioned by. The yearning of Hegel’s ‘beautiful soul’ [*Schöne Seele*]<sup>1</sup>—an ethico-aesthetic figure for whom the gap between humanity and nature proves intolerable—gives ecocritic Timothy Morton to propose a dialectical critique of environmental ideology that would remain enthralled to an eco-mimetic orientation. Where Morton insists the beautiful soul remains that undiagnosed disposition underwriting contemporary environmentalism, specifically where the desire to close the gap between ourselves and the non-human world remains palpable in our consumerist habits of consumption, we then consider how Deleuze’s own critique of the beautiful soul *vis-à-vis* his differential literary clinic enables us to reconsider the pastoral and tragic modes for eco-literary research, chiefly after the

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<sup>1</sup> Abbey, Edward. *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. (London: Penguin, 2004). p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze and Parnet. *Dialogues*, p. 68.

philosopher's markedly Nietzschean bias. First-wave ecocritic Joseph Meeker supplies a significant resource in this connection; bearing many affinities with our Deleuzian framework, not least in his denigration of such tragic heroes as Hamlet, and his subsequent proposal that the picaresque literary form suggests a path beyond narcissistic anthropomorphism, Meeker would appear to suggest in all but name a 'humour of descent' of the type Deleuze himself identifies, one that moreover appears highly commensurate with Deleuze's own privileging of an embodied humour over an Idealistic irony.

With these considerations in mind, we move in the final section of the chapter to a reading of Edward Abbey's own ribald interpretation of the picaresque, chiefly in *The Monkeywrench Gang* (1975), a work that details the exploits of a crew of bawdy eco-saboteurs and which is popularly credited with inspiring the earliest instances of *Earth First!* activism in the United States of the 1970s. Given the 'oppositional ethos' typically attributed to Abbey's work, and from which the term 'monkeywrenching' has since entered the ecocritical lexicon, we attempt to promote an altogether different, *noological* reading of the book after our examinations of Morton, Meeker and Deleuze-Guattari, one in which we recommend Abbey's humorous reevaluation of the tragic-pastoral mode and extension of the generic form of the Western as altogether pertinent to an eco-clinical outlook. Moreover, it is suggested that such an analysis enables us to conclude our thesis by dramatising the distinction between the seriousness and 'labour' of the Hegelian dialectic and the Zarathustran joy and levity of Nietzschean eternal return.

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In *Ecology Without Nature* (2007), Timothy Morton develops his central conceit of a 'Dark Ecology' by invoking certain archaisms, reminding us that for Galenic medicine, 'melancholy' was the humor 'closest to the earth.'<sup>3</sup> However tenuous it might initially appear, the connection Morton draws between the melancholic and the

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<sup>3</sup> Morton, *Ecology*, p. 76.

‘earthly’ is a tantalising one indeed for a study such as ours, concerned as it is with an eco-clinical relationship to literature. Alongside the sanguine, the choleric and the phlegmatic, the melancholic humor would appear to offer a ready-made category via which to account for those feelings of anguish and injustice particular to the ecocritical orientation, suggesting something of a complementary account of affects not entirely at odds with our Deleuzian critical-clinical framework. Moreover, where our concern with an ecological pathos remains pressing, it seems particularly valuable to note how Galen’s ‘humorism’ paired each of the four dispositions with climatic differences in temperature and moisture, while also showing them to possess a corresponding bodily organ and season. This he did by dogmatically synthesising the humoral pathology of Hippocrates, who thought ‘that the understanding of the body presupposed an understanding of surrounding nature.’<sup>4</sup>

And yet Morton’s suggestion of a melancholy quality to ecocriticism appears informed in key respects by the negative dialectics of Adorno, who in *Minima Moralia* (1951/1974) described his own fragments as the expressions of a ‘melancholy science’, seemingly in direct opposition to Nietzsche’s ‘gay science’.<sup>5</sup> This humoral classification stems, of course, from Adorno’s infamous definition of dialectics: ‘Its agony is the world’s agony raised to a concept.’<sup>6</sup> As our thesis has indicated, a dialectical approach to ecocriticism might be surpassed by one informed by the Zarathustran spirit of eternal return, a power of selection and transformation that does not push difference all the way to contradiction. Prior to examining Morton’s thesis on melancholy, therefore, and which incorporates a significant attempt to diagnose contemporary environmentalism in terms of a syndrome that owes much to Hegel’s notion of the ‘beautiful soul’ [*Schöne Seele*], or the ‘unhappy consciousness’ that marks the separation of humanity from Nature, we might first make a few further

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<sup>4</sup> A clinician of the second century A.D., Galen of Pergamon was the self-confessed heir of Hippocrates, whose system of the four humors, blood (*sanguis*), phlegm (*phlegma*), yellow and black bile (*chole* and *melan chole*), embodied pairs of the contrasting qualities warm-cold and moist-dry. This humoral pathology is given its environmental valence in Plato’s *Phaedrus* when Socrates asks if appreciable knowledge can be gained of the human soul without knowing the nature of the whole. There remains some dispute over what was meant by ‘the whole’ in this dialogue: ‘if by “the whole” is meant the universe, then Hippocrates thought that the understanding of the body presupposed an understanding of surrounding nature.’ See Temkin, Owsei. ‘Greek Medicine as Science and Craft’. *Isis*. Vol. 44. No. 3. (Sept., 1953): 213-225. p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> Adorno, T. W. *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*. (London: Verso, 2005). p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Adorno, T. W. *Negative Dialectics*. (London: Routledge, 1990). p. 6.

remarks on how this correspondence between a humoral bearing and environmental experience might remain one that is invoked almost daily, that remains palpable in our everyday speech, colouring the common sensibility.<sup>7</sup>

We might do so by eco-clinically evaluating a recent news item, one concerning the case of Ivar Pall Bjartmarsson, part-time fire chief for the Icelandic town of Vik, which lies beneath the Myrdalsjökull glacier. Bjartmarsson was recently described by *Financial Times* columnist Andrew Ward as appearing ‘phlegmatic’ about the risk of a full-scale eruption from the island’s Katla volcano, the larger and more powerful neighbour of Eyjafjallajökull, and which proved so disruptive to Northern European aviation in the spring of 2010. As Bjartmarsson has it: “‘We’ve lived with the threat all our lives so we’re not scared of it.’”<sup>8</sup> Described by Galen as wintry, cold and moist, but also as rational, calm and unemotional, the phlegmatic humor appears entirely apposite for an Icelandic community, cultural stereotypes of Scandinavian character notwithstanding. This common sense usage of humoral pathology proves most interesting to our thesis, however, when we consider how it underpins the economic focus of Ward’s article. Whilst unsurprisingly sensationalistic, the title of the piece, ‘Volcano Brings Catharsis for Iceland’, marries bodily, Galenic humor and fiscal concerns—namely, the aftermath of the 2008 banking crisis that ‘left its economy in ruins’—to a figure that recalls the *katharsis* of the Aristotelian poetics.

This everyday usage of humoral terms might give us to consider the extent to which the common sensibility retains elements of such a pre-critical orientation. Also taking his cues from the humoral pathology of Hippocrates, Aristotle famously developed a bio-political thesis informed by an embodied theory of affect, and which has persisted most notably in our common notions of the relationship between *katharsis* and tragedy, which as Protevi has noted, ‘is the imitation (*mimesis*) of important actions of a man better than most who commits an error (*hamartia*) and brings down upon himself an undeserved evil; seeing this performed has a particular emotional effect on the spectators: it is a purging/purification (*catharsis*) of pity and

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<sup>7</sup> Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). Pgs. 383-409; See also Morton, *Ecology*, p. 117-118.

<sup>8</sup> Originally published in the *Financial Times*, April 23 2010, the article is archived @ <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f38acad2-4ef0-11df-b8f4-00144feab49a.html#axzz1YljJl00>

fear. In a nutshell, seeing the bad effects of an error purges our feelings.’<sup>9</sup> Whilst dependent upon an outdated model of human biology, such cathartic purging has remained linked to a sense of purification that remains palpable throughout many of today’s cultural assumptions concerning health and social ritual, informing the consumption of celebrity ‘reality TV’ culture as much as our passion for televised sporting events; for Aristotle, ‘bileless’ animals were longer lived because their blood was not impure, a sentiment which despite the rigours of contemporary medicine appears to haunt the popular imaginary, with its continual need to affirm its youth, growth, and productivity.<sup>10</sup>

In this way we can consider the extent to which our ‘environmental’ epoch is no less interpreted in terms of such affects, particularly where a more-than-melancholic characterisation of environmental imperilment as ‘tragedy’ is concerned. Darkly bilious, melancholy (*melan chole*) was conceived by Galen as splenetic and yet at once as ‘autumnal’, suggesting a further range of associations that, we will consider, all too readily support the type of negative, dialectical eco-critique that Morton would recommend, and which might therefore benefit from an encounter with our Deleuzian position on difference. If Morton’s motivation of the ‘melancholic’ seems especially interesting, then it is again because he would appear to promote a type of eco-clinical thinking hitched to yesterday’s *kultur kritik*. And yet beyond facile, anthropomorphic associations of melancholy with the ‘suffering’ or anguish of a biospheric Gaian spirit (as ailing ‘earth mother’, perhaps), the humoral pathology Morton names after Adorno might be recognised as having come to underpin an altogether *unsentimental*, ‘speculative realist’ eco-philosophical turn—one in which Morton is evidently a principal figure—and which would promise to unite a broadly ‘noological’ approach to ecological thinking with humoral theories of affect.

Presently being referred to in the philosophy blogosphere as part of a ‘Dark Materialist’ movement, the highly suggestive, if somewhat unrefined notion of ‘Melancology’ promises to bridge a great many of the post-psychoanalytic concerns of

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<sup>9</sup> Protevi, John. *Aristotle’s Poetics & Rhetoric* [online] @ <http://www.protevi.com/john/FH/PDF/AristotlesPoeticsRhetoric.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> See Groarke, Louis. *An Aristotelian Account of Induction: Creating Something from Nothing*. (Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009). pgs. 124-125.

this thesis with humoral approaches to eco-cultural research.<sup>11</sup> However antiquated it might initially appear, what Galen's thesis on the temperaments and humoral constitution lends a dark materialism is an emphasis upon health, one that should give us to reconsider those literary modes that would impart a humour of a second, or 'molar' type, namely the tragic-pastoral, the picaresque, and the knowing contrarianism of the ironic mode (*eironeia* / *ironia*). Again, in this way we identify the Galenic humors, but also comedic humour, as significant for any critique of the common sensibility, particularly where the tragic-pastoral and ironic modes would suggest paranoid, identitarian subjectivities that would keep us from developing a sense of openness to the 'outside' of Man, and thus an ecocriticism apprised of an actual/virtual ontology.

The issue of the 'labour' of the dialectic therefore remains pressing; if a dark ecology is to take its part in aiding us in further surpassing reactionary eco-liberal attitudes to eco-systemic 'imbalance' or disequilibrium, then it seems we must once again consider how a philosophy of difference promotes an alternative for a theoretically-informed type of eco-cultural criticism. As we have considered throughout the thesis, on the one hand are the 'bloody struggles' of history, the dialectical recognition of historical progress as a process of negation, and which therefore would enable us to diagnose our eco-cultural epoch accordingly; on the other hand, however, we find the non-dialectical, non-totalising philosophy of difference, one that speaks of 'pure differences' that remain 'independent of the negative and liberated from the identical', and yet which Deleuze himself feared might ultimately risk the liberal pitfalls of the beautiful soul.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond any simplistic equation of health with equilibrium, therefore, or of 'therapy' with the cathartic 'purging' of poisons (*vis-à-vis* Lawrence Buell's first-wave ecocritical trope of 'toxicity discourses'), the characterisation of melancholy proposed by such 'dark materialists' as Morton appears one tied up with the distinction between

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<sup>11</sup> Although something of a lone voice amongst literary ecocritics, Morton's work finds affinity with the 'dark' or 'true' materialisms that are presently being extracted from diverse academic fields. Such disciplines as physics, astronomy, psychoanalysis and literature all contribute towards a materialism in which matter and objectivity are conceived of as possessing a strict independence from mind, or the Kantian 'correlation'.

<sup>12</sup> Deleuze, *Difference*, p. xviii.

dialectics as a properly ‘earthly’ materialism and a philosophy of difference as by contrast an avatar of liberalism. It is therefore a key theoretical concern with which our thesis opened and with which our final chapter will wrestle. If a dark ecology would appear to surpass in key ways any sentimental, all-too-human apprehension of the more-than-human world, opening up a properly post-Romantic evaluation of bodily health and the environment, then it would appear to do so by challenging the beautiful soul syndrome that would keep ecocriticism from the proper business of a dialectical critique. And yet as the insights of our Deleuzian eco-clinic have shown, a noological approach, informed as much by Marx as by Nietzsche, would suggest a further path beyond mere ideological concerns with subjectivity, instrumental utility and nihilistic patterns of consumption.

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Given our prevailing concerns with affect and post-Kantian forms of sublimity, then, with a pathos that, in exceeding the experiencing subject by way of Deleuze’s immanent notion of ‘sympathy’ exceeds transcendental and phenomenological epistemologies, let us develop an understanding of the relationship between melancholy, the tragic, irony and humour, chiefly by continuing to eco-clinically challenge the ‘correlationist’ *weltanschauung* of subject and object.<sup>13</sup> By doing so initially in terms of humoral pathology, we might usefully retain the distinction between Hegelian dialectics and our preferred Deleuzian approach. This seems valuable where we would note that the melancholia of Morton’s dark ecology is not necessarily one defined by a *resignatory* sentiment, by the reactive desire to become more greatly complacent in the face of a number of environmentally-‘inconvenient’ and altogether insurmountable ‘truths’. Whilst Morton’s own attention to Nietzschean lines of thought constitutes little more than a paragraph here or there, we might nevertheless consider if his ‘dialectics’ do not in fact suggest an ‘earthly’ orientation that, like Nietzsche’s ‘Dionysian pessimism’, affirms an impersonal form of intoxication, echoing the ‘delirium of interpretation’ that our Proustian ecology began

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<sup>13</sup> The term ‘correlationist’ is Meillassoux’s and not Deleuze and Guattari’s. It does, however, provide an extremely useful shorthand term when describing any attempt to exceed or break with the subject/object correlation that has dominated modern epistemology. See Meillassoux, Quentin. *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*. Trans. Ray Brassier. (London: Continuum, 2009).

to render explicit in chapter three, and which despite first impressions, ultimately possesses a lightness of spirit that would contrast Morton's own avowed preference for Hegelian melancholia.<sup>14</sup>

As our concerns remain literary, we might proceed by once again making an epistemological / aesthetic distinction. Influencing the comedies of Menander and Plautus, Theophrastus is credited with reading the humors toward particular character types. Evidently, in such classic literature we find a 'pre-critical' position upon eco-literary affect.<sup>15</sup> As we considered in chapter two, any pre-critical emphasis upon character of this sort was more or less supplanted by Kant's transcendental Idealism; the Romantic era owed much to Kantian aesthetics, not least such 19<sup>th</sup> century American transcendentalists as Emerson, Thoreau, Dickinson and the Alcotts. After what Rozelle describes as a 'post-natural' ecosublime we considered how the sublime as Kant conceived of it can be read as a deontological calling, a spur to our conscience, and specifically one that might lead us to act on behalf of the environment. And yet such ethico-aesthetic concerns might here be read after our humoral emphasis, particularly when we consider how in *The Romantic Sublime* (1976), Thomas Weiskel characterises the periodic taste for the sublime amongst cultural and literary critics as itself 'an episode in melancholy.'<sup>16</sup> If, since Kant, the 'inescapability' of our subjecthood induces feelings of melancholy, then the deontological calling we considered in chapter two is again affirmed as an eminently *Romantic* one, implying that if we are to come to terms with it that must strive to become better acquainted with the laws of aesthetic theory.

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<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche, *Will*, pgs. 262, 434. Moreover, Nick Land here recommends Bataille's Nietzscheanism precisely in this sense as an 'active nihilism', largely insofar as the writer was concerned 'with value as the annihilation of life' and with 'challenging 'the utilitarianism that finds its only end in the preservation and expansion of existence.' It is therefore 'active' inasmuch as it avers 'the promotion of a violently convulsive expenditure rather than a weary renunciation.' See Land, *Fanged*, p. 170.

<sup>15</sup> Theophrastus was a Peripatetic philosopher who attempted 'character-drawing' with some relation to Galenic humoral pathology. As Diggle acknowledges, attributions of 'moral theorising' by his later readers may be erroneous and amount to simple projection. See Diggle, James. *Theophrastus Characters*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> Weiskel, Thomas. *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence*. (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1976). p. 97.

As we have begun to suggest, however, the relationship between the transcendental subject, aesthetics, and an ‘empirical’ biome of non-human objects ‘out there’—objects which remain barred to us by virtue of their very phenomenality—becomes one that is altogether circumvented by the onto-aesthetic implications of the Deleuzian virtual. As Simon Sullivan has suggested, the transcendental subject might ultimately be considered a ‘melancholy’ one, or as ‘a being barred from the infinite in its very finitude.’<sup>17</sup> With the lessons of the BwO in mind, therefore, we might already infer that the melancholy humor privileged by such writers as Morton might begin to suggest a noological sublime without explicitly naming it as such. Such a sublime confers a means of revaluing what is meant by the ‘tragedy’ of environmental imperilment, one that is itself born almost entirely of the instrumentality inherent to the correlationist episteme, and which he and other ‘speculative realists’ would by definition interrogate.<sup>18</sup>

As we saw in our analysis of Kant, it was the sublime experience that gave him to wrestle with this aporia late in his third and final *Critique*, and thus to begin to articulate a sense of the unconscious (*vis-à-vis* creative ‘genius’) as an unrepresentable ‘Real’ or beyond that exceeded his categories of aesthetic judgement. Similarly, for Edmund Burke, sublime experience was largely *bathetic*; this would also support Morton’s broadly Galenic notion of a dark materialism as one conceptually strong enough to affirm the ‘darkness’ of an exteriority beyond the narcissisms of subjective separation, yet only, it would seem, as a prelude to a negative dialectics inspired by Adorno and therefore capable of overturning those cultural assumptions that have hitherto insulated us (as subjects) from it. If few ecocritics have touched upon this connection between the humors as predispositional or affective categories and the clinical dimension of aesthetics—or aesthetics as an epistemological key to the historically-determined episteme and the subsequent aestheticisation of a particular

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<sup>17</sup> See O’Sullivan, Simon. ‘Guattari’s Aesthetic Paradigm: From the Folding of the Finite/Infinite Relation to Schizoanalytic Metamodelisation.’ *Deleuze Studies*. 4.2 (2010): 256-286. p. 266.

<sup>18</sup> Whilst beyond the remit of the present thesis, it remains expedient to note how Speculative Realism (or ‘Object Oriented Ontology’) suggests a useful extension of the lines of flight indicated by our Deleuzian eco-clinic. Volume 2 of the journal *Collapse* is perhaps the single best introduction to Speculative Realism, but also such texts as Graham Harman’s *Tool Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (2002), *Guerilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* (2005) and *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (2009). Also Ray Brassier’s *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (2007) and Quentin Meillassoux’s *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (2008).

locale, bioregion or ecology—then as our thesis has suggested, this can only be because their ‘anti-theoretical’ stance has precluded the type of experiment it would necessitate.

With these epistemological considerations in mind, then, we might now press on with an analysis of the difference between an approach informed by Adorno’s ‘melancholy science’ and our Deleuzian philosophy of difference. By doing so with respect to Hegel’s figure of the beautiful soul, we might reconnect with our opening discussion of liberal pluralism in chapter one, marking the ways in which Adorno and Deleuze would countenance different understandings of cultural change, before moving to consider how a humour of the second type, or that given in molar terms as cultural expressions of irony and comedy, proves altogether problematic for ecocriticism, a movement preoccupied with the nominally ‘serious’ business of environmental imperilment, not least inasmuch as the latter type of humour serves as a form of social adhesive, routinely supporting of the common sensibility, or those manifest and dogmatic images of thought that would typically preclude the emergence of different forms of thought, whether more properly ‘ecological’ or otherwise. If as we have shown, this passage must include the construction of concepts that possess a greater sense of adequation, or which prove far less constrained by the epistemological poverties of the common sensibility, then an emphasis upon humour in this final chapter of our thesis should give us to make the fullest encounter with the eco-cultural shortcomings of the pop cultural alembic, or the retarding movement of reterritorialisation that draws together the findings of the arts and sciences without permitting their radical exteriorities to expose the routine production of ‘what everybody knows’.

**(ii) Beautiful Soul Syndrome and the Revaluation of the  
Tragic-Pastoral Mode**

In Morton's 'dark ecology' we find the suggestion of a path *beyond* Hegelian dialectics, yet which nevertheless maintains a variety of negative dialectics after Adorno's self-described 'melancholy' brand of *kultur kritik*. In this way Morton asserts a manner of redressing the consumerist subsumption of Life under concepts allied with the dominant mode of subjectivity, insisting that we examine that 'consciousness raising' process by which environmentalists would insist we take greater responsibility for our cultural hand in Climate Change. At first blush, Morton might appear to suggest little more than a 'warts and all' mode of ecological thinking, one that by ousting the conceptual complacencies of neo-liberal environmentalism, would ultimately enable us to theoretically interrogate the cynical 'green washing' of environmentally-indifferent business concerns, pollutive and ethically-questionable operations that have lately grown fearful of losing their profit margin by failing to cater for 'environmentalism' as self-evidently the latest in a series of post-war 'lifestyle choices'.

And yet such a process is one that Morton himself is at pains to theoretically account for; equal to the 'coming to consciousness' of the epistemic form that begets our profligate and wasteful culture, he follows Adorno in deeming such a position as itself ultimately hypocritical, for as Hegel demonstrated 'the beautiful soul... cannot see that the evil that it condemns is intrinsic to its existence.'<sup>19</sup> In other words, contemporary environmentalism is, as we ourselves have also considered, insufficiently prepared to address the very form of contemporary subjectivity itself as the single greatest hurdle to thinking ecologically. Further to this, therefore, it is useful to note how Morton presents a critical-clinical emphasis upon melancholy as the humor accompanying the sense the beautiful soul has that phenomenal objects (or 'things') can never be fully 'immediate' to his experience, that the subject can never be reconciled to the object, and as such can only ever promote doubt as to whether or

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<sup>19</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology*, pgs. 383-384; Morton, *Ecology*, p. 118.

not ‘they are real, originals, or copies’, something that first-wave ecocriticism felt it could overcome by way of an ‘hyper-aesthetic’ ‘ecomimetic’ turn: ‘In the sadness of its very capacity *not* to present immediacy, the aesthetic dimension gives body to the immediacy that hyper-aesthetic ecomimesis, pretending to be anti-aesthetic, wishes to force down our throats.’<sup>20</sup>

Necessarily, then, this nominally ‘aesthetic’ enquiry gives Morton to take up the debt consumerism owes to the material consequences of Romanticism, chiefly after an assessment of the development of plate glass in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and which enabled the growth of 19<sup>th</sup> century retail culture by making window displays possible, confirming the distance between subject and object as an eminently *consumerist* one, and which perversely stimulates our no-less ‘aesthetic’ desire for the recuperative powers of such wilderness preserves as zoos, national parks and other ‘nature spots’: ‘To the extent that wilderness spaces and the laws that created them persist, we are still living, literally, within the Romantic period. It is strange to discover a secret passage between bottles of detergent and mountain ranges. But there is one, and it is called Romantic consumerism. Green consumerism is only one kind of environmental consumerism. Environmentalisms *in general* are consumerist.’<sup>21</sup> Necessarily, this observation insists that we accept the paradoxes principal to an eco-subjectivity that nevertheless retains a subject: ‘If reason, devoid of sadistic instrumentality, is openness to nonidentity, that is still a kind of subjectivity. We cannot come up with a “new and improved” version of identity that will do without the paradoxes and aporias associated with it.’<sup>22</sup>

This bid to circumvent Idealism is what gives Morton to suggest his position as akin to Adorno’s ‘melancholic science’, informing the ‘melancology’ we noted above, and which extends the paradox-denying fantasies of Hegel’s beautiful soul as a fully-fledged syndrome, one informed as much by the literature of Shaftesbury (the

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<sup>20</sup> Morton, *Ecology*, p. 182.

<sup>21</sup> Although plate glass was first developed in France in 1688, its manufacture would not be perfected until the industrial revolution, during which time it also became more greatly affordable, and therefore amenable for commercial use. As Morton has it: ‘It is Romantic consumerism that makes of the forest a shop window—and allows the ambience of a shop window to be experienced as the temple of nature.’ See Morton, *Ecology*, p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> Morton, *Ecology*, p. 182.

virtuoso), as by the aesthetic theory of Novalis and Schiller. Defined most precisely by its fusing of ‘the aesthetic and the moral’, beautiful soul syndrome enables Morton to theoretically reproach (or revalue) the ‘ambient poetics’ of proto-environmentalist nature-writing—or the ‘ecomimesis’ we considered in chapter one—for ever suggesting that we can ‘actually achieve ecology without a subject’, one dispersed into ‘the’ environment and yet which therefore suggests by way of a negative dialectic the path beyond any unconscious reproduction of ‘bohemian Romantic consumerism.’<sup>23</sup> Yet it is where Morton continually raises dialectics that our thesis might attempt an intervention of sorts, particularly when Morton states that: ‘Dark ecology... is a perverse, melancholy ethics that refuses to digest the object into an ideal form... [it] diverges from those Romanticisms that follow a Hegelian dialectic...’; it ‘undermines the naturalness of the stories we tell about how we are involved in nature. It preserves the dark, depressive quality of life in the shadow of ecological catastrophe. Instead of whistling in the dark, insisting that we’re part of Gaia, why not stay with the darkness?’<sup>24</sup>

Morton’s ‘melancholic’ emphasis might outwardly suggest a ‘noological’ analysis, aiding and abetting his basic insistence that we overturn the woefully inadequate concept of ‘Nature’, yet it does so by way of a negativity that as we have shown, remains tied to dialectical reductionism. It is in this sense that his call for an ‘ecology without nature’ is an eminently eco-clinical one; such an ecology maintains a clinical apprehension of an eco-cultural unconscious, or reproaches environmentalism *per se* as a largely consumerist streamlining of an already Romantic instrumentality. Informed by the lessons of Freud and Lacan, Morton’s work moreover gestures towards the post-Kantian ‘ecosublime’ we considered in chapter two, naming the unrepresentable ‘Real’ of artistic, philosophical and scientific production; and yet it is here, perhaps, that we might assert Deleuze’s observation that ‘...real revolutions have the atmosphere of *fêtes*’, and that ‘contradiction is not the weapon of the proletariat but, rather, the manner in which the bourgeoisie defends and preserves itself.’<sup>25</sup> The importance of advancing Deleuze’s lighter, non-melancholic ‘revolution’ proves more interesting still when we consider as Bonnet notes, how liberalism is ‘a ghost that

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Morton, *Ecology*, pgs. 195-196; 187.

<sup>25</sup> Deleuze, *Difference*, p. 268.

haunts Deleuze, namely in his repeated precautions against the figure of the beautiful soul.’<sup>26</sup>

Deleuze himself acknowledges this when discussing the pitfalls of ‘invoking pure differences, which have become independent of the negative and liberated from the identical’: ‘The greatest danger is that of lapsing into the representation of a beautiful soul: there are only reconcilable and federative differences, far removed from bloody struggles. The beautiful soul says: we are different, but not opposed...’<sup>27</sup> Crucially, however, Deleuze writes: ‘Nevertheless, we believe that these problems attain their proper degree of *positivity*, and when difference becomes the object of a corresponding affirmation, they release a power of aggression and selection which destroys the beautiful soul.’<sup>28</sup> Moreover, it is *Marx* as much as Nietzsche, who keeps us from this: ‘...the philosophy of difference must be wary of turning into the discourse of beautiful souls: differences, nothing but differences, in a peaceful co-existence in the Idea of social places and functions... but the name Marx is sufficient to save us from this danger.’<sup>29</sup>

Because ‘affirmation is itself difference’, Deleuze goes on to enlist Nietzsche in the destruction of the beautiful soul: ‘There are two ways—[Nietzsche] claims—to appeal to ‘necessary destructions’: that of the poet, who speaks in the name of a creative power, capable of overturning all orders and representations in order to affirm Difference in the state of permanent revolution which characterizes eternal return; and that of the politician, who is above all concerned to deny that which ‘differs’, so as to preserve or prolong an established historical order, or to establish a historical order which already calls forth in the world the forms of its representation.’<sup>30</sup> Whilst it may be beyond the remit of this thesis to elaborate upon these concerns at any length, it is

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<sup>26</sup> Bonnet, Alberto R. ‘Antagonism and Difference: Negative Dialectics and Post-Structuralism in View of the Critique of Modern Capitalism.’ *Negativity and Revolution: Adorno and Political Activism*. Eds. John Holloway, Fernando Matamoros and Sergio Tischler. (London: Pluto Press, 2009). p. 49.

<sup>27</sup> Deleuze, *Difference*, p. xviii.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Deleuze concedes that commentators on Marx have rightfully acknowledged how in *Capital* ‘the category of differentiation (the differentiation at the heart of a social multiplicity: the division of labour) is substituted for the Hegelian concepts of opposition, contradiction and alienation.’ Deleuze, *Difference*, pgs. 259, 207 and 52.

<sup>30</sup> Deleuze, *Difference*, p. 52.

nevertheless key to note how Deleuze follows Pierre Klossowski in presenting the eternal return as a 'selective doctrine' which 'deselects' whatever falls short of affirmation. Where our eco-clinic is concerned, selection is, in critical-clinical parlance, essentially a kind of 'immanent evaluation' (or self-diagnosis) which effects an overcoming of what is diagnosed. In other words, if negation is itself transformed into a power of affirming under the sign of eternal return, then we see how self-overcoming points toward the actual/virtual 'therapy' of Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalytic position, and which we here prescribe over and against the interminable analysis of the subjectivism of the psychoanalytic 'cure'.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, these Marxian and Nietzsche positions on the problem posed by the beautiful soul enable us to connect back to our concerns with North American cultural and political pluralism in chapter one; as Bonnet writes, after a Nietzschean perspective it is the affirmation of difference 'with its potential for aggression and selection' that 'is precisely what would dissolve this pluralism of differences into a peaceful coexistence which is common to the beautiful soul.'<sup>32</sup> And yet Bonnet too acknowledges that Nietzsche cannot be enough, for 'the capitalist market and democracy are the quintessential names which denote the habitat of this coexistence of difference within liberal ideology.'<sup>33</sup> It is therefore crucial to note how Deleuze uses Nietzsche to circumvent any sense of selection governed by the quasi-Darwinian selectivity of the market; Bonnet is not entirely convinced by this approach: 'Of course, in Deleuze's philosophy of difference, it is not staff management but the eternal return that makes the selection.'<sup>34</sup> To which we might nevertheless add Deleuze's assertion that 'Nietzsche reproaches all those selection procedures based upon opposition or conflict with working to the advantage of the average forms and operating for the benefit of the 'large number.' Eternal return alone effects the true selection, because it eliminates the average forms and uncovers 'the superior form of everything that is.'<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Not only does Deleuze draw upon Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche at key points throughout *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, but also throughout his schizoanalytic work with Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*. See Klossowski, Pierre. *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*. (London: Continuum, 2005).

<sup>32</sup> Bonnet, *Antagonism*, p. 51.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Deleuze, *Difference*, pgs. 54-55.

This might then give us to value differently the pure exteriority of the arts and sciences, which would, after Deleuze and Guattari, promise something far ‘darker’ in alignment than a ‘melancholic science’ of negative dialectics, something with the power to disturb and overturn the manifest or dogmatic image of thought as one *comprising* the representational mode that guarantees dialectical contradiction, opposition and analogy. As we have seen, for Deleuze and Guattari, an emphasis upon the exteriority of relations also marks a departure from any signifying symptomatology that would retain a correlationist subjectivity, or one that would in many respects, remain complicit with an ‘un-ecological’ subject/object relation by way of an Oedipal metaphysics.

It seems curious, then, that Morton does not extend his ‘melancholy ethics’ in a schizoanalytic connection; as our thesis has shown, by retaining the nuclear family structure we retain the locus of a paranoid, insular form of desire that forecloses on a pure, unrecuperable exteriority of the sort that a truly ‘dark’ ecology must surely imply. In precisely this way, then, a dark ecology of the sort we are here proposing not only suggests freedom from a biologically-biased vision of Life, and which on Deleuze and Guattari’s account is evidently already more-than-organic, more-than-biological, and which cannot moreover remain tied to the organismic domain, but from the relationship between the Subject and the State we recognised as key to an eco-valent stratoanalysis. At the very least, (and as vulgar as it sounds) such a ‘phlegmatics of the virtual’ would suggest a grasp of the more-than-biological world, of an an-organicist, post-organismic realm that is dark yet not melancholic, and which as we saw in chapters three and four, remains enabled by certain pathological percepts and affects, chiefly after the risk-laden ascesis of the Artaudian BwO.

Let us move, then, to a discussion of humour at the molar level, that which we attribute to cultural manifestations of comedy, irony and a sense of ‘play’. All too readily diagnosed as a *reactive* humor, melancholy may, where Morton’s thesis is overlooked in this connection, appear to betoken feelings of impotent rage and despondency, affects confirmed by way of Galen’s own ‘splenic’ attribution. Yet as we have begun to suggest, our Deleuzian concern with a path beyond the dialectic offers a circumvention of ‘negative dialectics’ by way of Nietzsche; if a ‘Deleuzian

ecology' can be considered at all 'dark', then its darkness amounts to that of an *affirmative*, Spinozo-Nietzschean position, yet one moreover championing of the ribald, the picaresque and the absurd, qualities that after Nietzsche we would again associate with an *active* rather than *reactive* orientation. In the distinction Deleuze draws between irony and humour we find an extension of the Nietzschean critique of the 'higher man' and of the life-denying values that would valorize the burden of a struggle over and against the lightness and gaiety that Nietzsche attributed to the Zarathustran spirit, free of *ressentiment*. Whilst we broached these concerns in chapter four, we might now take up their implications more fully towards an analysis in which we consider the place of such eminently 'literary' styles and tropes as the 'picaresque' for eco-clinical thinking.

Although leaning on Nietzsche in its postulation of a 'geology of morals', it will be vital to emphasise here how Deleuze and Guattari present stratoanalysis after an undeniably humorous 'theory-fiction', a provocative disquisition upon the earth itself as BwO, and which features to great comic effect Arthur Conan Doyle's pulp fiction hero Professor Challenger, an inveterate polymath 'who made the earth scream with his pain machine', and who now dramatises Deleuze and Guattari's own brazen interdisciplinarity by giving 'a lecture after mixing several textbooks on geology and biology in a fashion befitting his simian disposition.'<sup>36</sup> In this way we might assert how stratoanalysis ultimately retains a Zarathustran joyfulness in its seemingly perverse assertion that 'god is a lobster', or that the process of double-articulation that we considered in chapter three remains provocative wheresoever prevailing religious (and scientific) orthodoxies would maintain an outmoded and morally-biased relationship between form and content. We might therefore suggest that humour of a comedic yet decidedly non-Aristotelian (or non-cathartic) sort also supplies a key strategy in the affirmation of difference. It is on this very basis that such eco-clinical matters as those presented by our dispositions, moods and temperaments might proceed by way of a Deleuzian engagement with Galen's humoral pathology as by a post-structural analysis of literary preferences for irony and comedy, and moreover how these might give us to revalue and reapproach such critical-clinical tropes as the pastoral and tragic modes.

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<sup>36</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 40.

Given our bid to demonstrate an a-signifying symptomatology, one that opens onto a ‘therapeutic’ or schizo / stratoanalytic approach, we might now begin by acknowledging how, as Deleuze says, the ironist ‘has a particular tone, always of the signifier. Humour is completely the opposite: principles count for little, everything is taken literally, the consequences are expected of you (this is why humour is not transmitted through plays on words, puns, which are of the signifier, and like a principle within the principle).’<sup>37</sup> Just as we saw in Deleuze’s quasi-canon of preferred Anglo-American literary figures, the empiricism that he discerns in their production of percepts and affects would deny principles in favour of an experimental pragmatics. As such, the humorous sensibility he gestures towards might profitably extend the ‘humoral’ pathology we have begun to consider above, or in terms of an affective bearing that ultimately imparts an affirmative spirit; where a ‘dark ecology’ suggests one that would destabilize and disrupt the manifest cultural image of a negatively-defined Nature, one in which a sense of ‘equilibrium’ promises the fantasy of ‘salvation’ of an un-ecological humanity from the lack by which his ‘unnatural’ subjectivity is constituted, the ‘revolutionary joy’ that Deleuze discerns in Nietzsche, but thereafter in certain literary-philosophical affects, supplies a noological alternative with an uplifting *joire de vivre*, revaluing the tragic mode *qua* joy, and therefore dramatising the cultural and political power of a potent *vis comica* or ‘comic force’:<sup>38</sup>

The tragic is not to be found in [...] anguish or disgust, nor in a nostalgia for lost unity. The tragic is only to be found in multiplicity, in the diversity of affirmation *as such*. What defines the tragic is the joy of multiplicity, plural joy. This joy is not the result of a sublimation, a purging, a compensation, a resignation or a reconciliation. Nietzsche can attack all theories of the tragic for failing to recognise tragedy as an aesthetic phenomenon. *The tragic* is the aesthetic form of joy, not a medical phrase or a moral solution to pain, fear or pity. It is joy that is tragic.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, pgs. 68-69.

<sup>38</sup> Deleuze, *Desert*, p. 258.

<sup>39</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, p. 16.

For Deleuze, therefore, humour is contrasted with an irony that would keep us tied to the negativities of yesterday's ideology critique, or of a nominally Hegelian Marxo-Lacanianism. This is because humour is rather 'the art of consequences or effects... [it] is atonal, absolutely imperceptible, it makes something shoot off. It never goes up or down, it is on the surface: surface effects. Humour is an art of pure events. The arts of Zen, archery, gardening or taking tea, are exercises to make the event surge forth and dazzle on a pure surface. Jewish humour versus Greek irony, Job-humour versus Oedipus-irony, insular humour versus sadist irony, Proust-humour versus Gide-irony, etc.'<sup>40</sup> Just as we have acknowledged how Deleuze critiques the subordination of joyful 'difference in itself' to the labour of the negative, or the 'crucifixion' of Life upon the four-fold cross of representation, we will here note how literary studies can again aid us in clinically approaching issues of subjectivity for ecocriticism, initially by pursuing this important distinction, in which irony appears as a comic mode symptomatic of the logic of representation, and thereby of a dialectical negativity beyond which the eco-clinical noologist must be compelled to travel:

irony ensures the individuation of the represented or the subjectivation of the representer. Classical irony, in fact, consists in showing that which is most universal in representation is the same as extreme individuality of the represented which serves as its principle (classical irony culminates in the theological affirmation according to which 'the whole of the possible' is at the same time the reality of God as singular being). Romantic irony, for its part, discovers the subjectivity of the principle of all possible representation.<sup>41</sup>

For Deleuze, humour breaks with the common sensibility, with the manifest or dogmatic image of thought. It is therefore allied with the minoritarianism of the outside, with the pure exteriority of the event, with the already more-than-human flows that evental-becoming presupposes. Such a minoritarianism thus implies an ethos of sorts, one in which the superiority of the higher man is supplanted by that of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

the joyful Zarathustran, whose humour has ‘always undermined games of principles or causes in favour of the event and games of individuation or subjectivation in favour of multiplicities. Irony contains an insufferable claim: that of belonging to a superior race, of being the preserve of the masters (a famous text of Renan says this without irony, for irony dries up quickly when talking of itself). Humour, on the other hand, claims kinship with a minority, with a minority-becoming. It is humour which makes language stammer, which imposes on it a minor usage, or which constitutes a complete bilingual system within the same language.’<sup>42</sup> In this way we can see how for Deleuze, philosophy itself becomes what Kirby Olson has described as ‘an impious and pagan performance.’<sup>43</sup>

Because it is only bad conscience that would render tragedy life-denying, a Dionysian conception of it is one that enables us to draw together all of our forgoing eco-clinical concerns, chiefly after its relationship to the literary mode of the picaresque, with its ribald and ‘joyful’ sensibility.<sup>44</sup> Yet where, following Nietzsche, Deleuze would describe a joy that is ‘not the result of a sublimation, a purging, a compensation, a resignation or a reconciliation’, we see how these bodily predispositions relate to the tragic as part of a schizoanalytic form of eco-critique apprised of a genealogy of values. Again, our ‘anti-Oedipal’ stratoanalysis of literature then begins to impart a therapeutic orientation that enables us to surpass normative notions of the tragic mode where environmental depredation would typically prompt feelings of despair. In *Anti-Oedipus*, for example, Deleuze and Guattari describe how the ‘narrator-spider’ of Proust’s *La recherche*, figures ‘the world of transverse communications, where the finally conquered nonhuman sex mingles with the flowers, a new earth where desire functions according to its molecular elements and flows. Such a voyage does not necessarily imply great movements in extension; it becomes immobile, in a room and on a body without organs—an intensive voyage that undoes

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Olson, Kirby. *Comedy After Postmodernism: Reading Comedy from Edward Lear to Charles Willeford*. (Texas: Texas Tech University Press, 2001). p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> ‘According to Nietzsche it has never been understood that the tragic = the joyful. This is another way of putting the great equation: to will = to create. We have not understood that the tragic is pure and multiple positivity, dynamic gaiety. Affirmation is tragic because it affirms chance and the necessity of chance; because it affirms multiplicity and the unity of multiplicity. The dicethrow is tragic. All the rest is nihilism. Christian and dialectic pathos, caricature of the tragic, comedy of bad conscience’ Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, p. 34.

all the lands for the benefit of the one it is creating': 'This very movement is humor, black humor.'<sup>45</sup> Significantly, they later describe 'Marx's black humor' as 'the source of *Capital*.'<sup>46</sup>

It remains unclear, however, if in this passage Deleuze and Guattari are referring to a Galenic humor, to *melan chole* (or black bile), or rather, to a knowingly humorous sensibility, and which itself might suggest a life-denying form of cynicism. In the first instance, the 'new earth' of which they speak is that of desire freed from the paranoid form of Oedipal representation; we saw in chapters three and four how this means that its syntheses be permitted their legitimate operation. In the second case, the 'symptoms' that Althusser and Balibar discerned in their reading of *Capital* prove highly suggestive where Deleuze and Guattari would suggest the dismantling of the BwO as somehow equivalent to cathartic purging; we have shown above how this is not so where the Zarathustran spirit prevails. Whether or not this reference is, therefore, in fact an allusion to the black bile of Galenic pathology, and thus merely an assertion that the melancholy disposition requires the purging of a tragic spectacle so as to be 'longer lived' appears less important to our thesis than does the abiding sentiment that the affirmation of the tragic is the path beyond the dialectic. The affirmation of chance, *amor fati* and the experimental praxis of 'counter-actualisation' that is figured by the BwO thwarts the planning and labour, the *bad conscience* of capitalist instrumentalism as itself an avatar of dialectical negativity.<sup>47</sup>

To sustain the Galenic humors in this way therefore appears useful if we are to grasp Deleuze and Guattari's more specific position on *comedic* humour; whilst humoral pathology today appears superannuated, it might nevertheless supply an affective bearing beyond the supplantation of such a clinicism by Enlightenment rationality and the scientific determinations of contemporary medicine. What is more, it again supplies a means of approaching the tragic beyond Symbolic accounts of human interiority (Oedipus, Hamlet) by contemporary psychoanalysis. Let us continue here, then, to connect them to contemporary, post-renaissance conceptions of humour

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<sup>45</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pgs. 350-351.

<sup>46</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 408. Deleuze and Guattari also discuss schizophrenic laughter after a lengthy citation from Michel Cournot's work on Chaplin's *Modern Times*. See pgs 348-49.

<sup>47</sup> 'A true renaissance is needed in order to liberate the tragic from all the fear and pity of the bad listeners who gave it a mediocre sense born of bad conscience.' See Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, p. 16.

with respect to the comedic, the ironic and the picaresque. Although in-explicitly ‘ecocritical’, Ian Watt’s study does, however, emphasise the historical transition from different types of civic and social organisation in this regard:

“Urbanity” denotes the qualities of politeness and understanding which are the product of the wider social experience which city life makes possible; with it goes the spirit of comedy which, in Italian, French or English comedy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries centers on the gay life of the streets and the squares, where the walls of houses afford a purely nominal privacy. “Suburban,” on the other hand, denotes the sheltered complacency and provinciality of the sheltered middle-class home.<sup>48</sup>

The kind of ‘self-conscious identification between mood and environment’ of Trollope’s Louis Trevelyan, therefore, who in *He Knew He Was Right* (1869), holds up alone in a secluded house in the hills above Sienna, sheds further light upon the humours as both relational ‘styles of life’ and historical symptoms; as Jonathan Bate observes, Trollope’s ‘is not characteristic of older representations of melancholy.’<sup>49</sup> Rather, it is as Trollope’s contemporary John Ruskin showed, attributable to the ‘pathetic fallacy’, which, as Bate points out, ‘is distinctly a mark of the modern—we would say the Romantic—artist.’<sup>50</sup> If first-wave ecocritics were preoccupied with analyses of the Romantic relation to the non-human world, one chiefly characterised by critiques of industrial modernity, then as Morton’s work has shown, Romanticism must itself be recognised as one with the birth of consumerism; the correlationist spirit of the Romantic modern must be acknowledged wheresoever it retains the point of view of the alienated self (or ‘character’) for whom alienation is but a necessary (and eminently *dialectical*) pre-condition to personal transfiguration. Such ‘environmental’ interdependency unconsciously reproduces the consumerist dynamic (shop windows, national parks, nature reserves, digital nature photography), remaining blithely

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<sup>48</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 187.

<sup>49</sup> Bate, Jonathan. *The Song of the Earth*. (London: Picador, 2000). p. 124.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

unaware of the *bourgeois* idealism that underwrote it, and which Morton's work would suggest must meet with a more-than-ideological critique after his own, clinically-informed brand of eco-justice.

Taken together, the work of Morton and Deleuze-Guattari might thus be brought into contact with that of first-wave ecocritic Joseph W. Meeker, who broached such concerns in the 1970s, and chiefly after what he described as a 'play ethic'. Whilst it might seem barbarous to suggest that perceptions of environmental impairment and the social inequities suffered by those who are subject to its ravages might be given differently through a humorous lens, this is precisely what Meeker recommends in his *The Comedy of Survival: Literary Ecology and a Play Ethic* (1974/1997). For Meeker, picaresque modes of literature might endow eco-literary thinking more broadly with a *modus comica* or 'comic way' that undermines the cultural legacy and ideology of tragic heroism and its prolongation by Romantic ideology. Where the interpretation of environmental-literary relations are concerned, such a view presents an important, if somewhat misunderstood strategy of engagement, a form of *detournement*, perhaps, incorporating humour and play as vital, transformative forces that appear equal, we will argue, to the Deleuzian approach we have hitherto nominated.

Arguing that literary comedy as a plot pattern provides an important dramatisation of a particular philosophical bearing, Meeker might be said to moreover discern within it a first-order of 'anti-humanism'. While tragedy 'imitate[s] man insofar as he is a creature of suffering and greatness', comedy 'imitates man's innate stupidity and ignorance and emphasizes the triviality of human passions by reducing them to the level of street-corner disputes.'<sup>51</sup> Whilst this would, broadly speaking, appear commensurate with Deleuze's Nietzschean-inspired position on the tragic, for Meeker tragedy emphasises human mastery over greater forces for the end of human transcendence; comedy emphasises human adaptation to greater forces for the end of survival. And yet we here risk a certain moral tonality; Meeker extracts an ethos for his *modus comica*, something that after Deleuze we might be given to treat with a measure of post-moral caution. Insofar as the comic pattern mimics ecology's vision of the 'natural ecosystem' as accommodat[ing] not only the complete life of every

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<sup>51</sup> Meeker, Joseph. *The Comedy of Survival: Literary Ecology and a Play Ethic*. (Third Ed.) (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997). pgs. 21-22.

species within it, but also provid[ing] for relatively harmonious relationships among all its constituent species', Meeker suggests that it provides a 'model for human behaviour' with regard to the nonhuman world.<sup>52</sup>

However, as well as imitating an ecological pattern of existence, Meeker appears to suggest that comedy dramatises Life's foundation in chance and chaos. While tragedy ultimately presents a triumph of human understanding and knowledge, comedy, in its deflationary attitude toward anthropocentric hubris, investigates the options for living in a suspended state of provisionality or contingency, a state marked by continuing irresolution. This would certainly appear commensurate with Deleuze and Guattari's experimental pragmatics, with their observation that as the three daughters of chaos, the disciplines of art, science and philosophy 'cut through the chaos in different ways', and never with more affirmative spirit than when he again invokes the notion of *amor fati*, chiefly by claiming that '[t]he comic point of view is that man's high moral ideals and glorified heroic poses are themselves largely based upon fantasy and are likely to lead to misery or death for those who hold them. In the world as revealed by comedy, the important thing is to live and to encourage life, even though it is probably meaningless to do so.'<sup>53</sup>

So how does this relate more precisely to the *picaresque* literary mode? What examples might we cull from modern literature and how might these relate to the specifically Northern American milieu we have taken as our focus? In developing his argument, Meeker himself begins in consideration of the tragic, principally after Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, before going on to contrast pastoral and picaresque literary modes towards broadly politicized, eco-cultural conceptions. Enthralled to the inherited cultural morality of tragic heroism, Hamlet's story would remain one of feted familial vainglory if not, it seems, for Meeker's active interpretation, which discerns how '[s]omewhere within him... is a force that resists and looks for alternatives.'<sup>54</sup> It is this affirmative desire to resist dominant historico-cultural traditions, and the sense that there might be 'alternative' strategies despite prevailing instrumental and

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<sup>52</sup> Meeker, *Comedy*, pgs. 29, 39.

<sup>53</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, p. 208; Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 26.

<sup>54</sup> Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 42.

utilitarian views of nature, that inspires Meeker's novel eco-cultural position, and in a manner that is again suggestive of the Deleuzian journey across the intensive desert figured by the BwO. Subsequent to his demoting of the tragic mode on the grounds that it remains tied to a certain instrumentalist economy, and having noted the tragic orientation of Virgilian attitudes and 'heroism', his work looks to comic-picaresque writing against the anthropocentric, aristocratic, and altogether morally-conservative pastoral tradition, and specifically to Johann Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelhausen's *Simplicius Simplicissimus* (1668), Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* (1955), and Thomas Mann's *Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man* (1954/1955).

What Meeker obtains from these works is variety of picaresque strategies, celebrating their assertion of the picaro's 'roguish' relationship to the world that 'presents life as a continuous process' informed by animal intelligence, and as such is playful and adaptive, yet accepting of social and biological uncertainties, and therefore ultimately inconclusive insofar as it promises no guarantees beyond itself.<sup>55</sup> Stemming from what he discerns as the protagonist's 'gamesmanship,' Hamlet's example yields an 'attempt to find a comic resolution to his problems [that] mocks the tragic and heroic ideals of Western civilization.'<sup>56</sup> What this reading does, therefore, is enable Meeker to achieve a fairly exceptional position on humour for ecocriticism, tying together the ethological work of Konrad Lorenz, the writing of James P. Carse on 'finite' and 'infinite' games, and also the notion of 'psuedospeciation' in sociobiological psychologist Erik Erikson.<sup>57</sup> Evidently, these writers enable Meeker to reconsider the picaresque in ethological terms that bear some similarity to the becoming-animal we noted in Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Kafka: 'Picaresque life is animal existence augmented by the imaginative and adaptive powers of the human mind.'<sup>58</sup>

Hamlet's resistance to the murderous solution that would solve his again, nominally 'tragic' familial and stately problems are therefore transformed in terms of

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<sup>55</sup> Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 71.

<sup>56</sup> Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 47.

<sup>57</sup> See Lorenz, Konrad. *Studies in Animal and Human Behaviour*. 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); Carse, James P. *Finite and Infinite Games: A Vision of Life as Play and Possibility*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986); Erikson, Erik. 'The Ontogeny of Ritualization in Man.' *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, ser. B, 251, no. 722 (1966): 147-526.

<sup>58</sup> Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 68.

an affective (yet non-zoomorphic) ethological view, one that again returns us to Kafka's experimental path beyond the Oedipal impasse. The 'sentimental journey away from present pain in search of past peace' that would for Meeker characterise the tragic-pastoral mode seems reactive and Oedipal after Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis.<sup>59</sup> The tragic-pastoral is estranging through its emphasis upon the ennobling function of suffering and the self-absorbedness that characterises the pursuit of human dignity as an end in itself, a mode that would persuade us that we might control the forces of nature and obtain respect and power. Thus the ideology of the Protestant work ethic demoted play, enforcing the belief that virtuous struggle in service to God would alone 'raise' humanity in dominion over the natural world: 'The pastoral mode looks something like an ideology, for pastoral writers often claim to know how people should live and expect them to mend their ways; they often assume life to be perfectible, however great their despair at discovering that people often reject their chances for perfection.'<sup>60</sup>

Where our thesis has maintained a schizo / stratoanalytic emphasis upon historically-contingent social machines, it seems altogether significant to note how Meeker's ethology was ill-received in 1974 when his work was first published, but that it would go on to meet with greater acceptance later in the decade as part of an emergent trend in sociobiological research that began in the mid-1970s and which included E. O. Wilson's *Sociobiology* (1975) and Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene* (1976).<sup>61</sup> From the standpoint of Deleuzian noology, what Meeker was attempting with his own ethologically-informed eco-philosophy supplies a further example of how we might break with normative modes of ideology critique predicated upon dialectical negativity:

Unlike the pastoral mode, in which the mind is used to create alternatives to a dangerous present reality, the picaresque mode

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<sup>59</sup> Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 71.

<sup>60</sup> Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 70.

<sup>61</sup> The issue of free will versus genetic determinism was central to such debates. The 'evolutionary psychology' of later sociobiological writers such as Robert Wright—author of *The Moral Animal* (1994)—views human behaviour as little more than a device to ensure the replication of genes from one generation to the next. Significantly, Meeker finds no discussion of play in Wright's work. See Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 79.

expresses acceptance of the present and adaptation to its conditions without concern for abstract ideologies or sentimental moralities. The comparison of the hero to animals, an almost universal feature of picaresque fiction, emphasizes the picaro's acceptance of biological limitations that define the nature of life and suggest the proper purposes that should govern the human use of intellect. Faulkner's rats and mules, Grimelhausen's calf and goose, and the many other animals that recur in picaresque literary art are most often used as models of appropriate action rather than as images of debased life that threaten some conventional standard of human dignity.<sup>62</sup>

It is key to note how Meeker allies the tragic with the pastoral mode as part of his broader critique of instrumental values. Meeker's view of the comic-picaresque is immanent and affirming of the powers of this world: 'it is an image of human adaptation to the world and acceptance of its given conditions without escape, rebellion, or egotistic insistence upon human centrality.'<sup>63</sup> Given this clear demonstration of the importance of the picaresque to a broader eco-critique, it seems disobliging indeed that excepting Meeker's study of the implications of the picaresque for eco-literary research, we find few other research projects of this type.<sup>64</sup> As such, the question for us must now be: how then might we draw together Meeker's work with that of Deleuze and Guattari's schizo / stratoanalytic conception of literature to make an eco-clinical reading of a seminal work of eco-literature? How might the outline we have provided above of the relationship between the BwO, melancholy and the affirmation of the tragic relate to a specific example of eco-literary humour, and how might this relationship enable us to reconsider the environmental activism inspired by Edward Abbey's hugely influential work, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*?

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Meeker, *Comedy*, p. 103.

<sup>64</sup> The second edition of the book includes a meditation on the work's increased relevance to eco-literary debate since its first publication in the 1970s: 'When *The Comedy of Survival* first appeared in 1974, some people were shocked and angry at comparisons between animals and literary characters, or at the idea that something so undignified and trivial as comedy could be presented as a philosophy of life.' See p. 77.

Emboldened by the points of resonance between Meeker's work and Deleuze and Guattari's, we might therefore experiment further with how the comic-picaresque 'works' after Deleuzian schizoanalysis, and therefore despite its overtly 'eco-defensive' theme and manifest concerns with environmental imperilment, consider how it is that Abbey's putative 'eco-text' might qualify as more than merely 'symptomatological' after its frequent moments of bawdy humour, and therefore moreover as *stratacritical*, as ultimately 'therapeutic' after its wildly picaresque reevaluation of the tragic mode. This seems achievable not only after Meeker's connection of animal play instincts with sovereign and non-instrumental views of nature, but equally where we have seen how for Deleuze a conception of literature as 'a health' makes discernible the impersonal, virtual dimension of Life after the post-symptomatological figure of the BwO.

To consider how the critical-clinical dimension of Deleuzian philosophy might sit with Meeker's conception of an eco-literary 'play ethic' provides an important dimension to the concerns of this thesis thus far. If in the course of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*—with its comic portrayals of eco-defense across the Utah canyon lands and mesas—Abbey would seem to unambiguously nail his shades of green to the ideological mast, then a schizoanalytic view would reveal instead how Abbey's transformation of the Western genre serves to open up the work beyond such normative political readings as those that would keep the Western tied to an identitarian interpretation, and through a 'play ethic', towards instead the noological notion of Life that we have ourselves advanced in preceding chapters. Enabling us to consider such an ethology in terms of desire and experimentation, and after the relationship between the Oedipal impasse and creative becoming, we might ultimately discern a more-than-instrumental value of humour for our eco-clinic.

Moreover, following such a reading, we might consider how the question of an ethics of levity is one that might not so much be specific to Abbey, but useful to any conception of ecocriticism that would attempt to overcome a normatively tragic or 'Jeremiad' orientation. This should thereafter enable us to suggest a schizoanalytic approach to 'reading under the sign of nature' that again confronts the operation of those presuppositions that serve to underwrite our habits of reading and thinking in

this connection more generally. Concerns with presupposition and habit are, as we have seen, central to a schizoanalysis of eco-literature and can be nowhere more crucial, surely, than where our conceptions of environments are being constructed *through* a work of literature, and which ultimately function as the ideal against which we measure and judge a particular text as of ‘Green,’ ‘ecological’ or ‘environmentalist’ worth. It is our habits that we fall back upon, often despite our best, and most ‘progressive’ intentions. Therefore, to argue for a view of literary ecocriticism that is in certain respects at odds with the prevailing, manifest view—in this instance one that embraces humour and play—requires that we deepen our understanding of experimentation (*qua* play) in this regard.

**(iii) Activism and the Picaresque in Edward Abbey’s  
*The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975)**

If the picaresque suggests a means of exceeding the negativity and ‘labour’ of the dialectic, how then might it give us to revalue Edward Abbey’s *The Monkeywrench Gang*? Edward Abbey (1927-1989) remains a figure of significance for scholars working with and assessing the amenability of North American nature writing to ecocritical argument. An account of his two summers as a novice park ranger in the canyon lands of south eastern Utah in the late 1950s, Abbey’s *Desert Solitaire* (1968) remains an important eco-literary touchstone, considered by such ecocritics as Scott Slovic to exceed the propagandism of Thoreauvian nature writing, chiefly by supplying instead an ‘unruly’ form of post-transcendental environmental writing, a literature that was more precisely ‘intended to alarm and disorient his readers—precisely the opposite of what a tour guide or an ordinary rhapsodic publicist would try to do’.<sup>65</sup> Abbey’s literary attention to landscape and bioregion therefore appears less constrained by a desire to cherish and celebrate than it does informed by a creative project of invention and defamiliarisation, resulting in something of a noological attempt to overturn the commonplace misapprehensions, personifications, and other anthropomorphisms of the non-human world. This assertion seems more valid still when we consider how in a 1977 interview and again in the introduction to *Abbey’s*

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<sup>65</sup> Slovic, *Seeking*, p. 93.

*Road* (1979), Abbey claimed that he ‘never wanted to be an environmental crusader, an environmental journalist’, but rather that he ‘wanted to be a fiction writer, a novelist.’<sup>66</sup>

Despite this confession, however, Abbey’s outspokenness against the strip-mining of the mesas and canyon lands, the clear-cutting and river-diversion projects that came to encroach so forcibly across his own portion of the American West throughout the 1960s and 70s reinforced for him a certain notoriety, earning him the ‘expert’ moniker ‘Cactus Ed.’ This professional attribution continued to obscure the ‘more-than-environmental’ bearing of his creative output; despite having published four novels some years previously—*Jonathan Troy* (1954), *The Brave Cowboy* (1956), *Fire on the Mountain* (1962) and *Black Sun* (1971)—Abbey would only achieve widespread recognition as a novelist for *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975). Detailing the exploits of a group of Ned Ludd-inspired industrial saboteurs—the novel features an opening dedication to Ludd—the group initially refer to themselves as the ‘Wooden Shoe Conspiracy’ after Ludd’s 18th century act of ‘sabotage’ by throwing a wooden shoe (or *sabot*) into a piece of Leicestershire mill machinery.

Although a Deleuzian analysis must remain less concerned with anecdotal evidence about Abbey the man, it nevertheless seems pertinent in this case to note the extent to which his bid to remain unassociated with the first-wave of environmental crusades seems more futile still given that he elected to preface *The Monkey Wrench Gang* with Walt Whitman’s oppositional dictum from *Leaves of Grass* (1900), words he claimed his father had lived by: ‘Resist much. Obey little’. That these words have been taken to summarise Abbey’s attitudes seems fair, if a little caricatural; Abbey was indeed a disputatious figure, and the many unlawful transgressions he was remanded for during the course of his private life amply attest to this. Given its ostensible content, therefore, the work’s publication reinforced an image of Abbey as a staunch preservationist with a curmudgeonly demeanour, all too readily cementing a reputation as an anarchic, humorless champion of eco-defense and eco-sabotage, and thus as a

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<sup>66</sup> Hepworth, James. “The Poetry Center Interview.” *Resist Much, Obey Little: Some Notes on Edward Abbey*. Ed. James Hepworth and Gregory McNamee. (Salt Lake City: Dream Garden Press, 1985). Pgs. 33-42. p. 39.

difficult, socially-antagonistic figure who moreover in 1959 wrote his Master's thesis on 'Anarchy and the Morality of Violence', a fact that undoubtedly contributed in no small part to his being monitored by the FBI throughout his adult life. Such a sensational image of the man was self-evidently responsible for his inspiration to an entire generation of eco-saboteurs, above and beyond the formal ingenuities that might be attributed to his most widely-read text.

And yet ultimately such a characterisation, particularly where emphasising his curmudgeonly misanthropy, tends to detract from the importance of humour to Abbey's work, and most particularly in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* wheresoever it is read as an 'eleventh hour' attack upon instrumental progress and the environmental depredations attributable to it. Some commentators have deemed the novel's form strategic in tenor, and Scott Slovic notes how 'Abbey seems to take advantage of his readers' perception of him as 'an environmental crusader' to defy facile wish fulfilment.'<sup>67</sup> Whilst the book is self-evidently comic, it is again in many respects a contemporary Western, albeit perhaps of a type more closely resembling the Deleuzian sense of the term we advanced in chapter four. Featuring a bevy of outrageous and picaresque characters, we might therefore consider here whether or not *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is simply a picaresque retelling of events that Abbey was privy if not party to, or if perhaps there remains something akin to the impersonal 'ambition' of Buchanan's reading of the Deleuzian 'West' as percept, an impersonal force that remains palpable in its ribald moments of defamiliarisation and disorientation by way of bodily slapstick and scatology.

This generic concern seems to permit an important, eco-clinical reevaluation of the book, particularly, as Robert Macfarlane has indicated, that it otherwise appears as a consummate mixture of genres: 'spaghetti westerns tangled up with the *Keystone Cops*, the Cervantean romance tradition and Acme cartoon capers (in an ending that comes straight from the Wile E Coyote school of resurrection, Hayduke plummets over a canyon edge and falls thousands of feet – only to reappear a few pages later,

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<sup>67</sup> Slovic, *Seeking*, p. 107.

wounded but well).<sup>68</sup> Yet where Macfarlane considers how ‘Abbey had gorged on the pulp tradition of the western novel... [taking] from the yellowbacks a Manichaeian world of good (in his case, wilderness and the Pleistocene) and evil (techno-industry and the Anthropocene)’, we might pause to consider if there is in fact a more Deleuzian reading of ‘Abbey’s wild west’, in which ‘four lone rangers (the joke is his) ride out to administer frontier justice.’<sup>69</sup> Although we might all too readily follow Macfarlane’s assessment that ‘[l]and-grabbers replace cattle rustlers, mining corporations substitute for ‘injun’ tribes, sandstone swaps for sage-brush’, and what is more, in such a manner that ‘the basic Western traits of self-sufficiency and casual misogyny persist’, we might instead attempt to perform a noological reading that exceeds his conclusion that ‘the novel’s overall effect comes to resemble a pair of riding chaps woven from hemp and sported by Kropotkin.’<sup>70</sup>

Rather than pursuing Macfarlane’s ‘anarcho-Western’, then, we might sustain our Deleuzian conception of humour as a force that works against the ironic and the tragic meets with that of Meeker, enabling us to consider in non-identitarian terms how each of the four principal characters qualifies as impersonal avatars of the picaresque. The novel’s anti-hero, George W. Hayduke, a ‘pyromantic,’ and ‘a good healthy psychopath’ is an ex-Green Beret and veteran of the Vietnam conflict, given to incessant drinking and foul language, but whom we are informed has never (yet) killed a man.<sup>71</sup> In what would otherwise constitute a character-establishing scene, Hayduke takes revenge on a policeman who had humiliated him prior to his enlistment and tour of duty in Vietnam. After stealing and destroying the officer’s patrol car, he drives wildly and drunkenly, climbing the mountains toward ‘the heartland of his heart,’ where he faces ‘the mysterious, solemn, inhuman nobility’ of the Vermilion Cliffs, and from his vantage on a bridge suspended across the canyon, there ‘unzips... send[ing] a four-hundred foot arc of filtered Schlitz’ into the Colorado river, a feat he deems ‘[n]o sacrilege - only a quiet jubilation.’<sup>72</sup> This humorous detail marks from the outset the

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<sup>68</sup> Macfarlane, Robert. ‘Rereading: Robert Macfarlane on The Monkeywrench Gang’. Originally published in *The Guardian*, Saturday 26th September 2009, the piece is archived @ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/sep/26/robert-macfarlane-monkey-wrench-gang>

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, pgs. 150, 181, 264.

<sup>72</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 29.

ambiguity of the character's motives; 'Forgetting to rezip' he descends the canyon, going down on his knees to eat a pinch of red sand before howling into the twilight stillness.<sup>73</sup> These are the first of Hayduke's urinary epiphanies, and after numerous acts of eco-sabotage, such scatological habits continue unabated, ultimately reaching cosmo-comic proportions, after which curious moments of eco-existential indifference follow:

Alone at last (Jesus *Christ* what a relief) Hayduke unbuttoned the fly of his jeans and fumbled it out and staled proudly, like a stallion, upon the hard ground, the beer cans and pop bottles, the squashed aluminum and broken glass, the plastic six-pack carriers and forgotten wine jugs of Navajo-land USA (Jesus Christ what a *relief*). As he pissed he saw particulated images of stars a hundred thousand light years beyond our solar system glittering briefly, but bravely, on the trembling mirrors of his golden dew. He pondered for a moment the oceanic unity of things. Like the witch doctors say, we are truly all one. One what? What difference does it make?

The grandeur of his reflections gave him solace as he bent to his lonely and ill-rewarded labors. Reconstituted, the chain saw in one hand, the loaded duffel bag in the other hand and an eighty-pound pack on his broad mortal back, George W. Hayduke tramped forward—a staunch and unplaced force— toward the clanking apparatus the tough red eyes the armored jaws the tall floodlit and brazen towers of... the Enemy. His enemy? Whose enemy? The Enemy.<sup>74</sup>

On Deleuze's view, humour returns the human subject to its corporeality, but a non-enclosed corporeality, unlike that of irony. Whilst Hayduke (as character) is marshaling himself towards a formal assault upon 'The Enemy', the preceding moment of irreverence and flagrant bodily slapstick positions him as a *picaro* for

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 274.

whom the more-than-human world is a cosmi-comic sphere in which his act of political defiance *qua* ‘eco-defense’ is indissociable from the ignoble necessity of his defecatory functions. But such bodily descent is not limited to Hayduke; Abbey also presents a religiously-contentious figure in the form of Seldom Seen Smith, a ‘polygamous Jack Mormon river-guide’—whom he elsewhere describes as being to a Mormon what a Jack Rabbit is to a cotton-tail—and whom repeatedly prays to God to do something about the Glen Canyon Dam, the focus of much of the monkeywrencher’s environmental activism in the latter portion of the novel. Making the frequent and ultimately *stammering* request for a ‘little pre-cision earthquake,’ Smith evokes, even if only faintly, the emphasis Deleuze places on stammering at the syntactical level, and which as Gaudlitz reminds us, again points up the world-historical content of delirium.<sup>75</sup>

In a scene of attempted sabotage with A. K. ‘Doc’ Sarvis, M.D., himself a middle-aged and unrepentantly lecherous figure whose questionable appetites add much affective brio to the narrative, Smith appears as much less a human character as a strategic assemblage of libidinal affects designed to explode the dam as itself a figure of instrumental impasse tied to an implicit moral program, chiefly after an experimental testing of the limits of his own faith and of the natural order itself *qua deus siva natura*:

‘All we need is to make one little crack in it, Doc. One crack in that dam and nature she’ll take care of the rest. Nature and God.’

‘Whose side is God on?’

‘That’s something I wanta find out.’<sup>76</sup>

The lecherous Doc Sarvis is perhaps the most explicitly ‘perverse’ quantity in the book, smoking Marsh-Wheeling ‘Conestoga’ cigars (or ‘stogies’), the oldest American cigar brand, and which he takes much pride in announcing were ‘hand-rolled in the wagon seat, westward bound.’<sup>77</sup> The impersonal ‘ambition’ that might be

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<sup>75</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, pgs. 33, 34, 157-58, 270; Gaudlitz, *Stuttering*, p. 186.

<sup>76</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 280.

<sup>77</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, pgs. 280-281.

discerned in the affects comprising Sarvis impart a sense of the West as simultaneously an erotic and over-eroticised landscape. At his most antinomian, Sarvis proclaims, 'I want to bugger a Baskin-Robbins girl. While she's scooping out the last of the caramel nut fudge. *Before lunch*.'<sup>78</sup> The exaggerated pederasty of Sarvis clearly offers a slapstick caricature of the 'freedoms' promised by the puritanical move 'Westward', or, despite their clear chauvinism, suggesting them as implicitly 'Anti-Oedipal' for all their unchecked experimental (or 'polymorphously perverse') intensity, or as being inherently at variance with the deeply familial morality of the Puritan traditions the first settlers remained bound by. At the novel's outset, a good while before Hayduke is introduced, this evocation of history and European heritage serves to revalue Westward ambition when we find Sarvis demolishing commercial advertising billboards with his 'nurse and buddy' Ms. Bonnie Abzug, a Bronxite Jewess, holder of 'an M.A. in Classical (yech!) French Lit,' and most significantly where his own advanced years are concerned, an 'old crone of twenty-eight.'<sup>79</sup>

We can already discern, then, how such ribald characters and their largely salacious exploits might then be considered after notions of irreverence, indecency, and thus after the 'humour of descent' as Deleuze conceives of it. As we have noted, in his literary references Deleuze looked predominantly to high modern writers such as Beckett, Woolf and Joyce. Might so putatively 'ecological' a work as Abbey's not also qualify as a critical-clinical example of populist genre writing, echoing, albeit faintly, the formal experiment of the high moderns in its own, scatological subversion of the Western form? Despite its lack of syntactical experiment, the very title of *The Monkeywrench Gang* comes to suggest a forceful 'wrenching' of its anthropomorphic elements, at once a diagnosis and exaggeration of human desires that nevertheless remains neither judgemental nor moralising in tone. The passages we have cited might be read as examples of Deleuze's humour as one descending not merely down towards the body, but to another ontology of becoming and quasi-causal relations. As the unruly crew proceed en route to one particular act of sabotage, Abbey indicates with a bawdy emphasis upon culturally-censored bodily regions, an uneasy relationship between these proto-environmentalists and their pollutive machine, describing how

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<sup>78</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 141.

<sup>79</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, pgs. 13, 270, 275.

‘[t]hey roared down the high-centred road, bristly blackbrush and spring prickly pear clawing at the truck along the greasy perineum of its General Motors crotch.’<sup>80</sup>

There are passages too that appear to target more explicitly the late capitalist mode of domestic organisation. In a further pair of vignettes in which the protagonists are described in their relationships to their living quarters, Abbey appears at pains to render the very act of habitation and the psychic territories principal to it altogether absurd. In ‘Dr. Sarvis at Home’ we find a plainly slapstick comic chase; alone without Bonnie Abzug to chauffeur him, Sarvis cycles through the city of Alberque, New Mexico and is harried by the driver of a Duke City Reddy-Mix cement mixer. Objecting to the man’s bullyish driving, he responds with a series of lewd hand-gestures. Enraged, the driver gives chase until Sarvis leads the truck into a collision with a pair of advertising billboards.<sup>81</sup> In ‘Seldom Seen at Home,’ Smith dreams of a bizarre persecution by the monocular ‘Director’ whilst sleeping with Susan, one of his three wives, for the first time since embarking upon his spate of eco-sabotage with Hayduke, Abzug and Sarvis.<sup>82</sup> In this bizarre sequence he receives a cathode ‘[h]alf a meter’ ‘up the rectum’ and an ‘anode’ is inserted into his penis, whereafter he receives an ‘[i]mprint [of] the flip-flop circuit on his semi-circular canal.’<sup>83</sup> Joined by additional cables and sensor wires by his coccyx and nostrils to a computer bank before him, Seldom receives a ‘program... [r]ight up through the old perineum.’<sup>84</sup>

All of which clearly marks Abbey’s text for a revaluation on picaresque terms. And yet given these self-evidently picaresque moments, we might now turn to a more typical reading of the text, to consideration of how all of this seemingly ‘irrelevant’ human lust sits with the far more ‘serious’ business of ‘eco-defense’, marking how at the level of its narrative content, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* nevertheless inspires the image of the assiduous or ‘noble’ eco-saboteur as an agent whose clearly-defined ethics might jar with their treatment in terms of Meeker’s ‘play ethic’, appearing as it does to endorse an oppositional ethos of a putatively ‘sober’ sort. Eco-critic Lee

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<sup>80</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 132.

<sup>81</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 235.

<sup>82</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 255 onwards.

<sup>83</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 257.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

Rozelle appears blithely indifferent to the bawdy humour we have here acknowledged when he considers Abbey's contribution to 'eco-tage' or 'monkeywrenching' to be one 'explicitly defined as non-violent direct action employed under specific circumstances to slow or halt development.'<sup>85</sup>

In playing down the work's humour, Rozelle instead focuses, evidently out of a bid to extract something 'useful' from the text, upon the 'eco-terror' he identifies in Abbey, upon 'the terror associated with the destruction of functioning ecosystems',<sup>86</sup> upon the 'slack-faced shock and rage' that his protagonists exhibit in response to witnessing the 'massacre of the pines' over a two hundred acre plot.<sup>87</sup> Whilst such moments are evidently prevalent throughout the book, providing a concerted contrast with the levity of its protagonists' more-than-'ecological' desires, it seems key to note how Rozelle reads this particular response under the 'eco-sublime' rubric we considered in chapter two, with its emphasis upon ecocriticism as a deontological calling. Despite acknowledging an undeniably burlesque moment in which Abbey's character Bonny defaces a Smokey the Bear sign by painting onto his crotch a limp pet-cock with hairy but shrivelled balls, Rozelle remains concerned primarily with the seriousness and violence of the monkeywrenchers' oppositional politics: 'The fantasy of halting widespread development through sabotage manifests itself in the same way that anti-nuclear pathos has evoked the sublimity of revolutionary mass movements... Through destruction, Abbey's Monkeywrenchers seek to provide stark reminders of the potential might of radical activism.'<sup>88</sup>

It proves perhaps more salient to note, therefore, how Rozelle then cites the Unabomber, Theodore Kaczynski, who had read and endorsed Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, to engage in a brief assertion that Kaczynski's own activities of ecotage went unacknowledged by Chris Waits and Dave Shors in their book *Unabomber: The Secret Life of Ted Kaczynski* (1999). This he emphasises in terms of 'the connection between the terrorist's post-ecocidal trauma, seeing his environs opened around him' and 'Waits' own acts of deforestation (or 'depletion')'; a claim he bases

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<sup>85</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 84.

<sup>86</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 83.

<sup>87</sup> Abbey, *Monkeywrench*, p. 230; Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 84.

<sup>88</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 86.

upon Waits' confession of his own position as an incarnation of a depletionist archetype from *The Monkey Wrench Gang*.<sup>89</sup> What seems crucial here is that for Rozelle, 'Kaczynski's acts of sabotage confirm Waits' anti-ecological values, suggesting to the logger, his crew, and Waits' readership that an overriding irrationality pervades those dedicated to deep ecology and conservation.'<sup>90</sup>

This dialectic appears key where our revaluation of ecocriticism after a 'play ethic' is concerned; Rozelle emphasises how Kaczynski acknowledged the killing of people as a necessary tactic in 'jar(ing) his audience from their sedation' and thus allow(ing) them to experience the vicarious terrors of a post-ecocidal "death world."<sup>91</sup> Our earlier concerns with regimes of signs and incorporeal transformations would enable us to sustain the a-signifying semiotic of stratoanalysis in this regard, particularly where Rozelle asserts how '[n]ot unlike Abbey's Monkeywrench gang, Kaczynski attempts to provide negative feedback to the runaway processes of technology on both material and semiotics levels.'<sup>92</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari, humour might intervene in the process of judgements passed after the manner of the 'exaggerated Oedipus' we find in Kafka, in the marginally slapstick image of Herr K before the aging judges in *The Trial*.<sup>93</sup> Although he acknowledges the 'ethical gap between Abbey's literary sabotage and Kaczynski's actual murders', Rozelle nevertheless sustains their respective seriousness; the violence of the Unabomber and Abbey's gang alike takes its part in transforming 'the conditions of consciousness' after a 'logic of explosions and terror as negative feedbacks in media culture.'<sup>94</sup>

This outlook would clearly benefit from the relatively slapstick figure of Herr K, most especially where Rozelle sustains Kaczynski as a noological enemy of representation: 'Through violence, the Unabomber sought to present the postnatural unrepresentable, to mediate between the transcendence of ecological collapse and the

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<sup>89</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, pgs. 87, 86.

<sup>90</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, pgs. 87-88.

<sup>91</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 88.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka 'is an author who laughs with a profound joy, a *joie de vivre*, in spite of, or because of, his clownish declarations that he offers like a trap or a circus.' See Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 41.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

tangibility of forms. At the limits of imaginable catastrophe, the bomb “short-circuits thinking with itself.”<sup>95</sup> It is a ‘violence to cognitively and spiritually revive ecological law’; in other words, Rozelle’s eco-sublime moment retains a negativity that is ultimately that of the burdened Higher Man that Nietzsche’s Zarathustra marshalled against, one that he theorises after Lyotard’s assertion that to promote ‘the sublime, the imagination must be subjected to violence, because it is by way of its suffering, the mediation of its violation, that the joy of seeing—or almost seeing—the law can be obtained.’<sup>96</sup> The somewhat smugly discerned ‘irony’ being that ‘(b)ecause of the Unabomber’s noxious deeds, environmentalism in its more benign manifestations suffered an un-just disgrace.’<sup>97</sup>

Evidently, it remains important to note the extent to which Rozelle acknowledges Abbey’s Hayduke as ‘often-comic’, but that no prolonged examination follows this observation. Moreover, he does not acknowledge this in terms of picaresque literary form, which seems an oversight from an ostensibly literary scholar. Again, it seems most revealing when Rozelle notes the irony in the positions of both Hayduke and the Unabomber: ‘Ironically, the fantasies of Kaczynski and Hayduke echo Standard Manifest Destiny and Western expansion rhetoric of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; in both contexts the frontier functions as repository and playground for the desires of an oppressed populace.’<sup>98</sup> In many respects abjuring the basis for our ‘play ethic’, Rozelle takes the notion of ‘WILD life / WILD nature’ from the Unabomber’s manifesto, and in such a manner as to assert a self-evidently ascetic notion of ‘the playground for ... desires’, which seems key to Rozelle’s ultimately dialectical grasp of his concerns with eco-tage and eco-activism more generally.<sup>99</sup> Hayduke’s ‘anthropomorphic tantrums’ are not what Rozelle values; evidently, he requires from his protagonists more seriousness and the labour of the negative.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 89. See also Rozelle’s citation of Kaczynski.

<sup>96</sup> Lyotard, Jean-Francois. ‘The Interest of the Sublime.’ *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*. Eds. Rodolphe Gasche and Mark C. Taylor. Trans. Jeffrey S. Librett. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993): 109-132. p. 124.

<sup>97</sup> Rozelle cites Kaczynski’s manifesto ‘Industrial Society and its Future’, and although it found publication in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, ‘was written off as paranoid rant.’ See Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 89.

<sup>98</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 91.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus the ‘violence’ that our Deleuzian affirmation of the tragic would propose by way of the picaresque literary form is at bottom *noological*. If for Rozelle, ‘Ecotage, both literary and literal, ultimately obscures at-risk ecologies and creates a green carnival that more often than not alienates potential allies’, then, we will argue, it is because in the final assessment his position remains identitarian and subjectivist; although he speaks of the non-dialectical manner by which ‘proponents of an ecological worldview must infiltrate rather than annihilate’, he continues to do so after a logic of ‘agency’ that again betrays in key respects his failure to grasp the importance of an *affirmative* theoretical framework, and thus by extension, how it is an ecstatic, embodied humour rather than a knowing, world-weary irony that would open his inhibited form of eco-clinical research to new considerations, and which would ultimately enable an affirmation of even the most keenly felt sense of environmental ‘injustice’, an affirmation adequate to the revaluation of Man as much less a ‘Higher’ being burdened by a morally-constrained deontological calling, than one actively dispersed into the Dionysian joy of a ‘post-natural’ eternal return.<sup>101</sup>

And so where a Deleuzian eco-clinic might supplant a nominally Marxo-Lacanian one, it is essential to acknowledge how Deleuze motivates Nietzsche’s eternal return beyond simplistic identitarian readings, conceiving of it as an idea or thought adequate to the endless becoming of differential forces. Enabling us to reconceive of desire for eco-literary research in terms of a-signifying affects and multiplicities, Deleuze’s conception of being affirmed of becoming implies eternal return as the movement of a becoming-active, a power that ultimately eliminates reactive states. In both his purely philosophical writing and the schizo and stratoanalytic works co-authored with Guattari, Deleuze recognises in the relationship between the eternal return and the will to power a ‘double selection’ that ultimately overcomes negation in a spirited, yet more-than-vital process of transvaluation, and which in chapter three we saw dramatised to some extent in Kafka’s line of flight born of the Oedipal impasse. If we subsequently extended this process towards an eco-clinical sensibility, then we did so by acknowledging how the Thoreauvian line followed by a great many ecocritics remains, to a greater extent, beset by a markedly *liberal* reterritorialisation, productive of a monumentalising form of ‘nature writing’

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<sup>101</sup> Rozelle, *Ecosublime*, p. 92.

that in many respects ‘memorializes’ the Wild and Wilderness, and which thus retains a sense of the ecocritic as little more than the reactive champion of a Romantic cast, one who ultimately appears bereft of the strength to actively create new values by willing the negative out of being.

For Deleuze, if the becoming-active of reactive force moves by way of the practice of *amor fati*, Nietzsche’s Stoic sentiment that calls upon us to affirm Life with all of our will, and which by valuing the tragic differently, can ultimately enable us to countenance the paradoxical activity of affirming negation itself, then we might thereby acquire the strength adequate to counter-actualise those morally-enforced judgements and relations that keep us in search of salvation, that underwrite a capitalist social machine in which neurotic circuits of desire reproduce modes of living inspired by transcendent, Oedipal values. Inaugurating an experimental ‘pragmatics’ or creative ethics that *does not yet know what a body might do*, an immanent eco-cultural revaluation would by contrast ultimately expand the life of ‘living’ bodies of all kinds—including those non-biological forms and forces—freeing Life from the ‘heroic’ burdens of a negativity that sustains certain forms of guilt, duty and slavishness. That Deleuze’s preference for Anglo-American literature directly imparts such an immanent pragmatics should rouse North American ecocritics from their anti-theoretical slumber; certain formal qualities particular to the writers Deleuze selects deprivilege the mind and consciousness in such a way as to reassert the Spinozan *parallelism* we considered in chapter one, imparting a non-arborescent, rhizomatic sensibility that effectively disarticulates or destratifies the forces of capture, or those ‘strata’ that would imprison life within organisms, individuals, and genera.

In this way, D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Antonin Artaud are as much ethicists as Spinoza and Nietzsche; equally opposed to the psychology of the priest, the system of ‘cruelty’ that their work indicates promises a rhizomatic path beyond that of transcendental judgement, or of any aesthetic theory predicated upon it, encouraging us to turn our attention instead to the manner in which our knowledge of the body has been blocked as much by a cultural preoccupation with a signifying mode of psychoanalysis as by popular emphases upon egoic consciousness. Aided and abetted by a ‘Royal’ or State Science, one that typically retains fealty to a liberal humanist morality, we have seen how the common sensibility prevails wherever a

critical-clinical understanding of literature and language is denied its potential to challenge, disarticulate and transform those forces that would reterritorialise the pure exteriorities that art, science and philosophy would otherwise open onto. This has necessarily included a study of humour insofar as it remains perhaps the single greatest key to acknowledging how our patterns of enjoyment remain principal to our daily lives and politics, providing as it does a form of social cohesion by way of an articulation of common gestures, attitudes and ambivalences, most often affirming of rather than posing any substantial challenge to, the dominant mode of expression.

If one seeks to grasp environments on Deleuzoguattarian terms as ‘milieux’, and therefore as mobile constellations of forces or points, of intersections between lines and planes, then Gilbert Simondon’s eco-political assertion proves wholly germane to our concluding summation of the degree to which the Deleuzoguattarian thesis on expression, hylomorphism, and incorporeal transformation turns upon the hubris of human pride and the humourous disposition that would typically support it: ‘form corresponds to what the man in command has thought to himself, and must express in a positive manner when he gives his orders: form is thus of the order of the expressible.’<sup>102</sup> Thus, when the State ‘operates by stratification’, it does so by way of judgements made from a stratum beyond the substance of the milieu, the expression of which enact incorporeal transformations. If our concerns with a distinction between identitarian melancholy and a phlegmatism of the virtual proved useful to our critique of Timothy Morton’s discussion of ‘beautiful soul syndrome’, a largely Hegelian thesis with which we contrasted Deleuze’s Nietzschean heritage, then it highlighted the degree to which a secular humanist preoccupation with form, chiefly after a Romantic liberalism, might be contrasted with the ‘formlessness’ of the schizophrenic joy that would embrace the eternal return as part of a hylozoic affirmation of Life in all of its manifestations.

Whilst Edward Abbey’s example gave us to contrast a Deleuzoguattarian reading of a humour of descent following a discussion of how it was equal to, if not theoretically more advanced than Joseph Meeker’s notion of an ecological ‘play ethic’, we might here provide a few more concluding remarks on the importance of grasping

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<sup>102</sup> Simondon qtd. in Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 555, n 33.

this relationship between form and formlessness, between the emergent, or hylozoic properties that an immanent world view would concern itself with and the top down or transcendently imposed values that the hylomorphic imperative implies. This is because in *A Thousand Plateaus* the example of a town is given primarily to articulate the relationship between built structures and State regulation of territory.<sup>103</sup>

As Andrew Ballantyne has it: ‘Our sense of form derives not only from the emergent properties of the *milieu*, but also from the regimes of signs that surround us, and that we deploy.’<sup>104</sup> If Engels’ concerns with, for example, the extent to which the English town of Manchester became a metropolis in the nineteenth-century are given almost solely in terms of class privilege, then this is because he was characteristically concerned with the socio-economic relationship between emergent properties at the level of those who populated the milieu and the architectonic judgements imposed by the transcendent values of town planning authorities; this ‘social ecology’ is self evident in Engels’ elementary discussion of ‘the circumstances that through an unconscious, tacit agreement as much as through conscious, explicit intention’ can give us to understand how ‘the working class districts are most sharply separated from the parts of the city reserved for the middle class.’<sup>105</sup> Here the Deleuzoguattarian concern with incorporeal transformation, or the ordering of material bodies by the immaterial force of expression, would give us to exceed Marxist-humanist class interests by asserting how the already more-than-human Life of desiring-machines is brought into line with the hylomorphic schema as a consequence of the metaphysical, Oedipal paralogism.

Beyond Engels’ identitarian concerns with class, therefore, we might consider more generally how, as Ballantyne has suggested, ‘heroic architects’ deploy a self-consciousness in their engagements with matter, informed ultimately by the illusion of individual authorship; as Deleuze and Guattari’s hylozoic thesis insists, forms are already ‘implicit’ and ‘folded’ (or virtual) within the relative pathos of materials, an enfoldedness that is discernible in the French term ‘pli’, and which we find

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<sup>103</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, p. 433.

<sup>104</sup> Ballantyne, Andrew. *Deleuze and Guattari for Architects*. (London: Routledge, 2007). p. 89.

<sup>105</sup> Engels, Friedrich. *The Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844*. Trans. Florence Wischnewetsky. (Moscow: Progress, 1973). pgs. 84-86.

etymologically in the words ‘imply’, ‘implicit’, ‘multiply’, ‘duplicate’, ‘replicate’ etc. Thus, our linguistic and semiotic articulations, particularly as conceived of in line with literary production vis-à-vis the common sensibility, and moreover, as this is informed by the persistent Kantian assumption of the alliance of thought with the ‘good’ and which contributes to the notions we hold of ‘good form’, can be diagnosed after an historicising symptomatology, or after a broadly Marxo-Lacanian conception of the symptom, but be more fully, more complexly conceived of after the molecular or micropolitics of the Deleuzoguattarian BwO.

As a virtual, relational or synthetic figure that would subvert the transcendent judgements of the hylomorphic imperative, the BwO draws attention to the paradoxes of immanence and embodiment, and in our case, after the experimental repetitions that certain literary ingenuities imply. Our notion of an ‘ecological pathos’ thereby becomes one after which a certain therapeutic acknowledgement of formalism is reached; the unintelligibility of the undifferentiated, the schizophrenic, confirms the Lacanian sense that the social plane is already decided in advance, that castration is the constitutive process by way of which a sufficiently hylomorphic sensibility is adopted, begetting a diagnosis of instrumentalism that would thereby draw attention in terms of the conscious intentionality and therefore ideological shortcomings of such an orientation, rather than at the level of the relationship it clearly bears with the forces and affects of the pre-individual domain, and the molecular genesis of subjectivity as part of a post-Kantian thesis on limits that actively acknowledges the constitutive influence of those intensities that remain Real despite our inability or unwillingness to talk about them.

If inter-personal decorum is something that remains key to understanding the limits of the Symbolic after the Lacanian schema, then we might extend it to the built environment in the way that Ballantyne’s Deleuzoguattarian thesis indicates, developing a sense not only of the civic decorum certain architectural forms remain bound by, but of the social habits and attitudes that they subsequently remain productive of. If for the great modern architect Le Corbusier, housing tenements were ‘machines for living in’, then after our Deleuzoguattarian concern with social machines we confirm how under hylomorphic instrumentalism, formlessness

ultimately appears an un-decorous materiality awaiting its correct form, implying a type of substantial and libidinal ‘irresponsibility’ that, after our Deleuzian distinction between the tragic-pastoral literary mode and the affirmation of tragedy as a deterritorialising or counter-actualising power or potential, contributes to the ethics of the BwO as an altogether ‘de-monumentalising’ force.

As a figure upon which only longitudinal and latitudinal lines are registered, drawing in the cartographic nature of literary experiment as we have conceived of it after Deleuze, the BwO enables us to advance a post-symptomatological relationship to repetition, to the differences that refrains and concepts provide a sufficiently adequate expression for, and which take their part in an ecology of ideas as much as in any liberal-humanist ecology that would privilege a negatively-defined ‘biosphere’ of non-human flora and fauna. Literary style, specifically after the examples of Nietzsche’s aphorism, Beckett’s stuttering, Kafka’s exaggeration, and Proust’s formal concerns with temporality and the limits of the social world, all indicate a material / immaterial relationship of sense and expression that would suggest an identity of the critical and the clinical after a concept of production that would profoundly reorient issues of desire and the unconscious for ecocriticism, one with a particular set of implications for North American literary production, with its inherent preoccupations with westward ambition, with cultural renewal, and a mythopoeic affirmation of desert life.

# Conclusion

This thesis has called for the assemblage of an ‘eco-clinic’, a post-psychoanalytic, speculative-materialist construct that draws upon the lessons of immanent critique. It is suggested as an attempt to produce a theoretical approach adequate to the ethico-aesthetic problematic presupposed by the ‘environmental’ turn that has swept across the humanities in recent years, and which promises to revalue issues of desire, literature and ecology. This proposal is advanced more precisely on the grounds that the embryonic first-wave of ecocritical scholarship—a timely, yet markedly nation-centred and theoretically-conservative literary specialism, and which first emerged under the North American cultural and political pluralism of the mid to late 1980s—proved insufficiently apprised of a critical-clinical dimension adequate to the ontological paradoxes presupposed by its nominally ‘environmental’ alignment. By drawing in a robust, yet self-reflexive and experimental way upon the economic, psychoanalytic, and cultural theory of such post-Althusserian thinkers as Fredric Jameson, Slavoj Žižek, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, our eco-clinic is suggested as a theoretical mode of reception that is conceptually adequate to the analysis of what we have hitherto described as an ‘ecological pathos’, an ontological and aesthetic sensibility that calls for a concerted re-emphasis upon those issues of desire and subjective constitution that have been actively neglected by the ecocritical turn under its ostensibly ‘post-anthropocentric’ orientation.

As paradoxical as the notion of an ‘active neglect’ might remain, therefore, it was one that nevertheless proved key to our initial postulation of the eco-clinic. Having constitutively excluded or ‘disavowed’ the post-structural principles that had otherwise proven so prevalent throughout its particular institutional context, first-wave ecocriticism presented our thesis with the lineaments of an institutional-disciplinary case study. Forming the principal symptom in a psycho-cultural pathology that, we argued, had ultimately given rise to a specific ‘ideology of the text’, one exerting an influence *beyond* its manifest ideological orientation as a ‘literary-environmentalist’ discourse, it was our contention that the movement’s predominant, and largely under-acknowledged liberal-humanist orientation had paradoxically delimited its broadly ‘post-human’ aims and objectives. The apparent reluctance of first-wave ecocritics to acknowledge the constitutive *failures* that comprised their own psycho-cultural ‘pre-history’, one that remained indexical or ‘symptomatic’ of a liberal-pluralist subjectivity, suggested the subsistence of a

cultural-libidinal blockage or impasse, a conditioning set of relations that remains productive of the cultural and political unconscious in question. Self-evidently productive of an inhibited and constraining first-wave of the movement, this impasse should, we suggested, ultimately prove no less productive of the criteria by way of which a subsequent, more ‘eco-clinically’-attuned pathway might be forged.

This somewhat rudimentary presentation of immanent critique gave us to subsequently propose a series of post-Althusserian approaches to pre-history for ecocriticism, and moreover, to do so as part of a broader assertion that the specialism must itself seek to develop a greater ‘metacritical’ sensibility. By attending to their own grounding in an historically-specific liberal-humanist milieu, ecocritics might subsequently obtain a libidinal-materialist perspective upon the production of environmental values, specifically with respect to their abiding concerns with the literary-critical consequence of ecological equilibrium and systemic interdependence. If first-wave ecocriticism’s basic charge was to ‘challenge interpretation to its own grounding in the bedrock of natural fact’, then this might be brought into line with literary-clinical concerns with the psycho-pathological consequence of interpretation, emphasising the degree to which the ecocritical emphasis upon more-than-human ecologies might be conceived of as a response to issues of history qua totalising teleologies of Spirit, specifically insofar as the movement would tend in large part to remain neglectful of the pluralistic ideological biases that would colour any nominally eco-political motivation of particular concepts.

In chapter one, therefore, we considered how, as an avowedly ‘non-’ or ‘post-theoretical’ orientation, first-wave ecocriticism largely abjured deconstructive or psychoanalytic approaches to literature, or those that emphasised discourses of interiority and signification, but also that gave strong philosophical analysis to concepts of Nature and Totality. Nevertheless favoring an inherently *totalising* valuation of non-human environmental phenomena by way of an emphasis upon eco-mimetic representation, first-wave ecocritics sought to distance their enterprise from the critical-clinical practices of the Lacanian and Derridean schools, chiefly on the grounds that such post-structural orientations appeared unduly concerned with matters of socio-linguistic representation as part of a broader, clinical-deconstructive trend in continental theory. Deeming such close textual analysis to be not simply ‘un-

ecological' for being more typically preoccupied with issues of semiotics and signification, but more precisely as something of a socio-political acerbic, we identified post-structuralism as a molecularising force that would ultimately threaten to dissolve the particular species of 'alliance politics' that, as Jameson himself gave us to acknowledge, had underwritten the ecocritical desire for a form of totalising discourse, emergent as the movement was within an 'already molecular' cultural-political milieu. If the concept of totality proved so principal to our nation-centered analyses in chapter one, therefore, then it did so inasmuch as it supplied a focus upon environmental immanence qua unity, or upon the production of an ecocritical desire and discourse that, by 'reading under the sign of Nature', would risk the reductive lamination or 'green-washing' of inter-cultural difference.

It was on precisely this basis, therefore, that our first chapter asserted a more or less orthodox mode of ideology critique for ecocriticism, striving to identify the movement's specific disciplinary pre-history with respect to the Althusserian conception of the 'problematic field', and placing particular emphasis upon the broadly 'eco-psychological' yet typically conservative and constrained contributions of the mere handful of eco-literary researchers who had attempted such work. Beyond any hasty denigration of these projects, however, we elected to pursue a discussion of the covert humanism that demonstrably haunts ecocritical attempts to promote non-theoretical approaches to 'environmental awareness', emphasising in particular the inhibitions such projects retain with regard to Freudo-Lacanian psychoanalysis, suggesting that this owed much to a basic misapprehension of the merits of Lacan's own, broadly Spinozan grasp of part-to-whole relations, principally by way of Althusser's nominally 'post-structural' desire to break with normative Hegelian views of pre-history. Bringing Althusser's Lacanianism to bear upon dialectical progression and the 'manifest destiny' of North American Spirit, we elected to draw out the Marxo-Spinozism with which he had developed a post-Hegelian thesis on history and causal relations, and which gave him in his work with Étienne Balibar to develop an altogether different cultural symptomatology after their seminal reading of Marx's *Capital*.

By developing their thesis in terms of Marx's textual *catachresis*, this important study ultimately suggested a first-order of symptomatological diagnosis for our

project, specifically where the theoretical-immaturity of first-wave ecocriticism remained consequential for the ostensible ‘maturation’ of its burgeoning second-wave, one that after Marx’s example, would ultimately be left behind following his ‘epistemological break’, thereby productive of a more mature, and on Althusser’s view, more properly *anti-humanist* political economics. The Spinozan elements of Althusser and Balibar’s thesis therefore enabled us to begin to address the liberal-humanist foundations of ecocriticism as part of precisely such a phase of theoretical-immaturity (qua conceptual adequacy) and moreover, to proceed to consider the broader consequence of dialectics for any ‘un-ecological’ indictment of capitalist instrumentalism.

Towards the chapter’s close, Ellen Rooney’s Althusserianism lead us to acknowledge the climate of ‘general persuasivity’ that had so palpably characterised the cold war cultural and political milieu out of which North American ecocriticism had initially emerged, and to which a sense of theoretical ‘innocence’ remained key, suggesting ecocriticism as more broadly symptomatic of the desire to resist the Marxist-Socialist tenor of much post-structural theory. This insight proved pivotal for our grasp of the ecocritical reluctance to address in any strong, conceptual way, issues of Nature vis-à-vis Totality as part of its elementary methodological practice. In this way, our first chapter remained concerned with relatively orthodox ideological issues, seeking to redress the balance somewhat for a movement that had so evidently neglected to reckon with the consequence of its own nation-centered conceptualisations of such concepts, and in a manner that might subsequently enable a genealogy of that which ecocriticism had to date necessarily implied but not in any strong sense confronted: the legacy of transcendental Idealism and the degree to which issues of subjectivity and aesthetics must be principal to any discussion of ideology since the Kantian critical turn.

If, at the close of chapter one, therefore, we asserted Althusser’s Spinozan notion of ‘relative autonomy’ as a means of allaying, to some extent, the fears of theory-wary ecocritics who would continually resist psychoanalytically-informed modes of immanent critique, principally insofar as their promotion might somehow involve the abject bowdlerisation of the cultural and literary productions in question, then this was so as to pave the way for the development of our Kantian discussion of

ideology and aesthetics in chapter two, in which we began to consider the relationship between the critical and the clinical in more formal terms. Whilst a certain psychopolitical Hegelianism clearly remains problematic for an eco-literary orientation that would seek to de-emphasise issues of interiority for its cultural and political work, we considered that it would nevertheless prove altogether remiss to neglect the influence of Kantian Idealism upon such a legacy, particularly insofar as it had given rise to a bourgeois humanist subjectivity so principal to the instrumentalist attitudes that almost all ecocritics stood united against. Furthermore, it was our contention that by deliberately seeking to investigate the limits of the finite subject as given by Kant's 18<sup>th</sup> century critical turn, that we might subsequently better apprehend the ecopolitical consequence of those psychopathological theories that, since at least Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, but most visibly since Freud and Lacan, had worked to account for the inverse of Enlightenment reason, or to theoretically address those productions of the Will or libidinal drives that might, where understood in line with a properly immanent, post-Kantian critique, give us to extract a thesis upon a specifically ecocritical 'will to truth'.

Following a discussion of the structural ambiguities of the concept of Nature in Kant's critical philosophy, we advanced the amenability of transcendental critique to grasping the infelicities of instrumental reason vis-à-vis the capitalist mode of production. This important, prefatory discussion enabled us to then turn to the psychoanalytic work of Žižek and Zupančič, two post-Lacanian psycho-political theorists whose emphasis upon the ethical dimensions of psychoanalysis gave us to develop a sense of how the deontological thesis of Kant's categorical imperative might explain the very desire for a specifically 'ecocritical' mode of engagement beyond its ostensibly 'environmentalist' necessity, and specifically after Kant's influential conception of the aesthetic judgement of the sublime in his all important third and final Critique. It was in this section that we moved towards an analysis of Freud's thesis on the guilt-inducing ethical agency of the super ego with its dual compulsions toward moral rectitude and social enjoyment, and which, we suggested, might give us to reckon with the 'disinterestedness' that Kant attributes to the triumph of reason following imaginative failure in the face of sublime experience, and thereafter how this might enable a fuller treatment of that which ecocritic Lee Rozelle

named, but seemed altogether reluctant to realise in strict Marxo-Lacanian terms, namely the prospect of a fully-fledged, libidinal-materialist ‘ecosublime’.

If Rozelle named Freudian psychopathology as a key, contributory factor in the rise of what he usefully, yet perhaps all too liberally terms ‘depletionist’ cultural values, then we were largely in agreement with his thesis, particularly over the issue of subjective interiority, and which would form the focus of our concerns with Oedipal metaphysics throughout the remainder of the thesis. Yet it was imperative to suggest that Rozelle need not have departed so completely from Freudian and Lacanian clinical theory, at least not without first having considered the psychopolitical mode of immanent critique that Žižek’s thesis on ‘sublime objects of ideology’ had prescribed. If, in his readings of Edgar Allen Poe and Isabella Bird, Rozelle developed a series of eminently useful eco-literary analyses of ‘the stark awareness that place matters’, principally after the eco-literary accounts of sublime experience in *The Journal of Julius Rodman* (1840) and *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879), and in which the sublime appears as little more than an epiphanous instance of ‘shock and awe’ via which the protagonists of those works summarily obtained eco-cultural values, then we sought to suggest that he might have better developed his thesis after the lines that both Žižek and Zupančič had proposed, namely those drawing attention to the *genesis* of subjectivity *per se*, onto-ideological lines that had themselves been developed upon the onto-ethical implications of the Kantian categorical imperative for the Freudian super-ego, and which itself gave rise to Lacanian concerns with *jouissance*, or the manner in which a society organises its enjoyment.

If at this juncture, our thesis returned to a more or less dialectical analysis after a Marxo-Lacanian stripe of critical negativity, then this was again, mostly strategic, or so as to prepare the way at the ontological level for our post-symptomatological apprehension of an ‘ecological pathos’, specifically after the ‘body without organs’ (BwO) that Deleuze and Guattari posit in line with their non-personological conception of desire. By engaging the BwO, we began to acknowledge the shortcomings of the symptom as advanced by Žižek’s Marxo-Lacanianism, principally insofar as the BwO called upon us to privilege a positive conception of *production* over the negativities of signification and the lack [*manque*] that is

presupposed by it. It is here that our thesis reached its theoretical turning point, specifically over the single most important issue of the strict *identity* of the critical and the clinical, and which Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis upon production implies. Not only does such an identity revalue interpretation in terms of impersonal delirium, supplanting normative conceptions of discrete being and the linear history such an ontology would presuppose, but moreover, simultaneously enables us to emphasise the significance of an experimental subjectivity for ecocriticism, principally by way of the relationship between Deleuze's conception of a 'superior empiricism', or one that valorises the 'exteriority of relations', and how this imparts a conception of diagnosis as the creative formalisation of symptoms, a process that ultimately implies a therapeutic or 'saving repetition' that is extracted as much from the formal ingenuities of his preferred Anglo-American literary canon as from the 'nomadic' philosophical lineage that he and Guattari privilege throughout their collaborative work.

Presenting the 'singular' case of the author as one by which issues of literature necessarily meet those of health, specifically after the immanence of *pathos* and *logos*, or the extent to which the relative 'stupidity' of embodied, libidinal processes remains productive of a type of thought that must be philosophically distinguished from general cognition and therefore the 'common sensibility', Deleuze and Guattari's impersonal account of authorial style draws from Deleuze's earlier, Nietzschean symptomatology of active and reactive forces. Most significantly where the BwO would supplant a symptomatology, however, is the emphasis the Deleuzian literary clinic presupposes upon Nietzsche's reevaluation of repetition after his concept of the eternal return, and which specific examples of authorial style render palpable, connecting specifically literary concerns with percepts and affects to properly philosophical ones after a noological grasp of the production of images of thought that is significantly distinct from an ideological analysis. In order to acknowledge the relationship between deterritorialisation, concepts, and the BwO in this connection, however, it proved necessary to initially acknowledge the importance of 'honorary' Anglo-American author Marcel Proust, chiefly insofar as his diagnosis of bourgeois social worlds offered perhaps one of the key contributions to the BwO beyond that of Artaud.

Opening onto a ‘new earth’ that would give us to develop a conception of eco-critical desire beyond the ‘maternal sublime’ that Stephen Gilbert Brown had developed in his own, moderately ‘eco-clinical’ reading of Proust’s *la recherche*, chapter three therefore marked the transition from the signifying symptom to the BwO in such a way as to surpass any psycho-political thesis that would uphold a signifying semiotic after an Oedipal metaphysics that would presuppose literary language vis-à-vis socio-symbolic castration. This is because for Deleuze and Guattari, Oedipus itself presupposes an illegitimate usage of the syntheses of desire, one that problematises the relationship between form and content for any analysis of desire, and which literary disarticulations of the dominant mode of expression would uncover and render amenable to a schizoanalysis of texts. Identifying how a certain ‘inadequacy’ attends the psychoanalytic concept of the symptom, which on the Lacanian view serves a securing role, binding the subject together, we asserted how the BwO enables us to exceed the subjectivist type of psycho-political theory and speculation that Žižek and Zupančič recommended, beyond the diagnosis of eco-literary ideology in terms of the sublime objects of ideology that had held a key to understanding the ethico-aesthetic role of master signifiers and their quilting of the ideological fabric.

This is because the BwO presents an understanding of the earth itself as a BwO or plane of consistency from which all other BwOs draw their flows, thereby enabling the extension of schizoanalysis into a stratoanalysis that takes its conceptual cues as much from geology as from genealogy. The more-than-human nature of such flows presupposes what Deleuze and Guattari describe as ‘transversal’ lines that draw them together as already broadly ‘ecological’, chiefly insofar as an a-signifying conception of machinic ‘assemblages’ turns upon the notion of a productive ‘sympathy’ between bodies of all kinds. Whether we are primarily concerned with the Organism, the Subject, or the State, such entities are ultimately limits whose socio-political authority is reinforced by the paralogistic usage of the three syntheses of desire, and which our literary sense of an ecological pathos and the sympathy principal to it would enable ecocritics to subsequently attend to after the personological and sociological limitations to which Proust and Kafka responded so creatively. Possessing the potential to produce a difference that is enabling and empowering, and yet all importantly that presupposes an engagement with a non-familial and world-historical

delirium that points up the inherent ‘redundancy’ of language, for Deleuze and Guattari repetition is inherently linked to a creative process of symptomal formalization that connects desire to the world historical and political domains, and thus, particularly in the case of Kafka, to a form of impersonal ‘transference’ that enables us to subsequently propose a reevaluation of those tentative, eco-clinical orientations that had proven so frustrating in chapters one and two. As an ‘honorary’ Anglo-American author by virtue of his literary ‘becoming-animal’, Kafka’s ability to expose the transformative power of order words under the capitalist social machine and the regime of signs particular to it would in chapter three enable us to reconsider Jane Bennett’s ecocritical reading of ‘sympathy’ in Thoreau, which we analysed in terms of its ultimately ‘monumentalising’ predisposition, one that despite her useful, and tentatively Deleuzoguattarian suggestion of an identity between the concept of the Wild and deterritorialisation, nevertheless appeared to remain all-too-liberal after Thoreau’s own, principally bourgeois-liberal subjectivity.

This emphasis upon monumentality and reterritorialisation gave us in chapter four to consider the degree to which the earth and life sciences are looked to by a great many ecocritics as a hermeneutic guarantor, specifically where their cultural and political hegemony would seal a type of secular humanist mode of interpretation, not least where genetic science would beget an evolutionary psychology with a range of implications for those seeking to culturally-authorise eco-literary research. We therefore moved to consider Glen A. Love’s advancement of such a ‘scientific’ stripe of eco-psychology, specifically in his reading of Willa Cather’s *The Professor’s House* (1925). As promising as this reading initially appeared, it ultimately gave us to motivate a Deleuzoguattarian discussion of the degree to which Love appeared to homogenise the powers particular to the arts and sciences, an ultimately reductive approach that in its concerns with evolutionary science and archetypal myth appeared authorised to a significant degree by E. O. Wilson’s notion of ‘consilience’, and which emphasised interpretation as the logical channel of explanation between the arts and sciences. After Deleuze and Guattari, we attempted to suggest that such homogenization was inextricably linked to the imposition of the Oedipal paralogism by the State, productive of an inhibited synthesis that, in key respects, retained a passive cast of instrumental nihilism, and which reneges upon the pure exteriorities

that art, philosophy, and science would open onto after a domesticating drive to retain a liberal-humanist subjectivity.

In this way, therefore, our final chapter, and which was ostensibly concerned with the tragic-pastoral literary mode and its relationship to ecocritical concerns with environmental despoilment, flagged up the degree to which the legacy of such Idealism returned us to our abiding concerns with the dialectical ‘binding together’ or totalising imperative of the subject in her love for her symptom as itself symptomatic of a culturally-contingent tendency to afford status and respect to that which has form. Following a discussion of the legacy of Romantic subjectivity and the manner in which it has contributed so fundamentally to the sustenance of the gap that contemporary modes of consumerism require, chiefly after a discussion of the relative merits of dialectical melancholy and Deleuzoguattarian affirmation of the tragic, we elected to reconceive of Edward Abbey’s own revaluation of the tragic-pastoral mode, drawing from the work of veteran ecocritic Joseph Meeker on a ‘play ethic’. If Deleuze and Guattari’s work enabled us to extend Meeker’s own thesis, then it did so by emphasising the BwO, the virtual figure that gave us a purchase upon desire adequate to our eco-clinical concerns with difference and repetition and by way of which we were able to exceed Rozelle’s broadly symptomnal reading of Abbey’s influence upon the ostensibly ‘serious’ business of eco-tage. We were thereby able to present a concluding discussion of decorum and form, and which drew together our forgoing analysis of instrumental attitudes after the hylomorphic imperative, summarizing the abiding concerns of this thesis with issues of architecture and environments, language and literature, neurosis and psychosis.

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