

HERCULES OF THE SURFACE: DELEUZIAN HUMANISM AND DEEP ECOLOGY

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Alcmaeon says that humans die for this reason, that they cannot join the beginning [*archê*] to the end [*telos*].

—pseudo-Aristotle, *Problemata* 17. 3. 916a33

Proponents of deep ecology, in attempting to articulate a metaphysics in support of their core intuitions, have seemingly managed instead to provide openings for critics whose attacks, though often facile, have begun for lack of an effective philosophical response to pass for conventional wisdom. Particularly damaging, although least accurate, has been the claim that deep ecology, because it opposes anthropocentrism, is thereby incompatible with humanism. In its cruder forms, this argument is simply a straw man, conflating non-anthropocentrism with misanthropy, whereas the first principle in the deep ecology platform states, "The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have a value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes" (Devall and Sessions 70). Ecosophists are far from failing to honor the human *qua* human; Arne Naess, the founder of deep ecology, affirms that "[t]he richness of reality is becoming even richer through our specific human endowments; we are the first kind of living beings we know of which have the potentialities of living in community with all other living beings" (Sessions 239). The charge that deep ecology seeks to undermine the structures of normativity is itself undermined by Naess, when he plainly states that "the significant tenets of the Deep Ecology movement are clearly and forcefully *normative*" (Sessions 154). The charge that the principles of deep ecology are somehow *irreconcilable* with normativity is a different one altogether, and goes rather to the question of mistakes ecosophists have made in attempting to articulate those principles in a metaphysical structure.

More salient is the criticism from friendly quarters (see, e.g., the critique of deep ecology in Hayden 126-8) that the metaphysics of deep ecology would dissolve individual living beings into an unmediated unity

with Nature conceived as a totalizing super individual. At its worst, this has amounted to a regrettable marriage of bad Spinoza and bad Vedanta, and would undermine the basic deep ecology thesis of the *intrinsic value* of living beings as species and as individuals. It is instructive in this respect to contrast the view of nature Deleuze traces to Spinoza and ultimately to the ancient atomists. According to Deleuze, what matters in Spinoza's thought "is no longer the affirmation of a single substance, but rather the laying out of a *common plane of immanence* on which all bodies, all minds, and all individuals are situated" (*Spinoza* 122). For the atomists, nature is not a totalizing super-organism but "an infinite sum, that is, a sum which does not totalize its own elements ... a sum, but not a whole" (*Logic of Sense* 267). Nature exists purely as "the principle of the diverse and its production," and "a principle of the production of the diverse makes sense only if it does *not* assemble its own elements into a whole" (266). Since the thesis of intrinsic value makes no sense without *intrinsic difference*, it is clear that this concept of nature is better suited to the purposes of deep ecology than one in which difference is denied. Accordingly, this essay offers suggestions toward a Deleuzian metaphysics of deep ecology incorporating basic elements of the deep ecology program, in particular the thesis of intrinsic value, into a post-anthropocentric humanism.

I. Ethics and the Plane of Immanence

The notion of a preconceptual *plane of immanence* which is the principle of individuation for concepts, subjects and facts alike could be considered Deleuze's philosophical first principle.¹ A plane of immanence, Deleuze explains, is "the image thought gives itself of what it means to think," which "retains only what thought can claim by right," i.e. "movement that can be carried to infinity" (*What is Philosophy?* 37). Deleuze characterizes such an "infinite movement" as expressing the "reversibility" of thinking and being: "movement is not the image of thought without also being the substance of being ... The plane of immanence has two facets as Thought and as Nature, as *Nous* and as *Physis*" (38). A plane of immanence is not itself immanent *to* something, to any subject or object, but rather is a selection of "diagrammatic" or "infinite" movements yielding a field of concepts (pertaining to thinking and to being), on the one hand, and facts (whether subjective "lived contents" or objective "states of affairs"), on the other. The plane of immanence as such, which is proper to philosophy taken in the widest possible sense, has complex relationships with other planes of formation,

such as the artistic "plane of composition" and the scientific "plane of reference," with which the present essay will not be concerned. The plane of immanence is germane to the present discussion because it is the site of normativity and provides the possibility of a Deleuzian ethics. Deleuze's ethics depends upon the idea of a *comparability* of planes of immanence based upon their intensive complexity, that is, the diversity of individuals and modes of individuation they are able to encompass, not in empty universality, but in concrete and mutually sustaining relationships.

In the moral framework Deleuze develops from his reading of Spinoza,² all *acts* are in themselves equally natural, equally perfect, and in that respect morally neutral, but this equality does not apply to the *agents* of these acts, the modal essences to which they are ascribable. In this model of action, the good act is one which brings the relations constitutive of the agent into "composition"³ with the relations constitutive of another being, and such an act *augments* the agent's power of acting, while the evil act, insofar as it *decomposes* the relations characteristic of some other being, diminishes the actor's very agency. The equality of acts from the standpoint of nature expresses the fact that there are only *really* relations of composition, insofar as it is only of these that there are adequate ideas, i.e., ideas that express their causes rather than indicating affections. Nature is thus, metaphysically speaking, intrinsically good, although it is by no means good *for* all things at all times: thus, there is an "agreement" between a poison and the new disposition it produces in the body, but not between that disposition and the organism's preservation.

From this perspective, beings do not decompose one another *qua* beings, and so insofar as there is an adequate idea of the evil act it must belong to a *different* being, a more *universal* one, as Deleuze explains:

[C]onsider bodies agreeing less and less, or bodies opposed to one another: their constitutive relations can no longer be directly combined, but present such differences that any resemblance between the bodies appears to be excluded. There is still however a similarity or community of composition, but this *from a more and more general viewpoint* which, in the limit, brings Nature as a whole into play ... As all relations are combined in Nature as a whole, Nature presents a similarity of composition that may be seen in all bodies from the most general viewpoint. (*Expressionism* 275)

The "agreement" between the poison and the consequent disposition of the body is a chemical *composition* but a biological *decomposition*, just like the reduction of a living thing to its raw materials, either by a physical *or* an intellectual process. The latter may in turn enter into relations of cultural composition, just as the former may enter into the composition of

a spider. We can come to grasp the *reality* underlying the processes of generalization constitutive of the "biological" or the "cultural" *as such* through the detours of the understanding necessitated by these complex relationships of decomposition and composition:

[E]ven in the case of a body that does not agree with our own, and affects us with sadness, we can form an idea of what is common to that body and our own; the common notion will simply be very universal, implying a much more general viewpoint than that of the two bodies confronting each other. It has nonetheless a practical function: it makes us understand why these two bodies in particular do not agree from their *own* viewpoint. (285f)

The language of "viewpoints" here can make it seem as though there is no more at stake than a matter of *perspective*, but in fact it is a matter of *individuation itself*. In Deleuze's reading of Spinozist ontology, the individuation of modal essences depends *wholly* upon their realization in existence—this is clearly a primary reason for Deleuze's preference of Spinoza over Leibniz. Deleuze sees the two philosophers as "radically opposed" on this issue:

In Leibniz an essence or individual notion is a logical possibility, inseparable from a certain metaphysical reality, that is, from a "claim to existence," a tendency to exist. In Spinoza this is not the case: an essence is not a possibility, but possesses a real existence that belongs to it itself ... Neither a metaphysical reality nor a logical possibility, *the essence of a mode is a pure physical reality*. Modal essences therefore, no less than existing modes, have efficient causes. (193)

Deleuze argues that Spinoza's modal essences are *intrinsically distinct* while denying that they are possibilities subsisting *a priori* in a divine intellect. Their intrinsic distinction, their individuation, is instead irreducibly existential—and hence assimilated by Deleuze to the atomic "swerve", or *clinamen*, which he refers to as "a kind of *conatus*" (*Logic of Sense* 269). This intrinsic and yet existential individuation expresses for Deleuze the peculiarly Spinozist sense of eternity: "The eternity of essence," Deleuze explains, "does not come afterwards; it is strictly contemporaneous, coexistent with existence in duration" (*Spinoza* 40)—neither *a priori* nor *a posteriori*, but contemporaneous: "You do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination" (*Spinoza* 125).

The value of this ontological perspective for Deleuze is that it renders existence "a physical or chemical test, an experimentation" (40) in which the essence of a mode expresses itself through the unique composition of extensive parts belonging to it in duration and the combinations it enters into, which are *eternal* although they *happen* in duration. There is a real genesis in time of the essence which is nevertheless truly eternal. Individuation—which is inseparable from essentialization—is thus fundamentally ethical:

If during our existence we have been able to compose these parts so as to increase our power of acting, we have at the same time experienced a proportionally greater number of affections that depend only on ourselves, that is, on the intense part of ourselves. If, on the contrary, we have always been engaged in destroying or decomposing our own parts and those of others, our intense or eternal part, our essential part, has and cannot help but have only a small number of affections that come from itself, and no happiness that depends on it. This is the ultimate difference, therefore, between the good man and the bad man: the good or strong individual is the one who exists so fully or so intensely that he has gained eternity in his lifetime. (41)

"Death is all the more necessary," Deleuze explains, "because it always comes from without" (42). But this exterior is defined wholly according to the limits of the plane of immanence constituted by an essence. "That a man, from the necessity of his own nature, should endeavour to become non-existent, is as impossible as that something should be made out of nothing" (*Ethics* IV, Prop. XX), Spinoza states. The individual in this respect is *absolutely atomic*, but there are individuals—or "bodies"—of many different orders and thus, as Deleuze memorably remarks, "the interior is only a selected exterior, and the exterior a projected interior" (*Spinoza* 125) —cf. the description of the plane of immanence as "the not-external outside and the not-internal inside" (*What is Philosophy?* 59f). Death is defined for an essence, not by its interior limitations, but by the interior it *projects*.

In the plane of immanence constituted by Nature itself there is no nonbeing (Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus* 38f); but for individual essences the situation is very complicated. Since all particular essences are comprised in the production of each (*Expressionism* 198), the individuation of each involves, by definition, a normative disposition to *all* the individuals in every order of being, and *produces itself* in and through this normative or ethical disposition, indeed *as* this ethical disposition. The fullness or intensity of such an individual essence can, in turn, be measured by the criterion of the diversity of wills compossible with it,

with death expressing the essence's limits of compossibility, a limitation which is not passive but in effect an active negation or exclusion by which it defines itself. The more perfect essence, the more *living* essence, is that in which the greater diversity of wills is compossible, individuation according to such an essence generating a plane of immanence with a greater intensive complexity. Individuation involves the recognition and articulation of the diverse orders of being.

II. Intrinsic Value and Valuation

We now possess the tools for an appraisal of deep ecology as a plane of immanence. The most fundamental principle of deep ecology is the thesis of *intrinsic value*. As Arne Naess remarks in his essay, "Equality, Sameness, and Rights,"

I have injured thousands of individuals of the tiny arctic plant, *Salix herbacea*, during a ten-year period of living in the high mountains of Norway, and I shall feel forced to continue stepping on them as long as I live there. But I have never felt the need to justify such behavior by thinking that they have less of a right to live and blossom (or that they have less intrinsic value as living beings) than other living beings, including myself. (Sessions 223)

Notice that Naess's recognition of the intrinsic value of the plant does not force him to stop treading on them. As he states elsewhere, "We might agree upon rules such as will imply different behaviour towards different kinds of living beings without negating that there is a value inherent in living beings which is the same value for all" (Naess 168). The recognition that beings having the same value will not be *valued the same* is thus the threshold of an ethical maturity. The anthropocentric hypothesis that the plant only has value insofar as it serves some human purpose, whether material or aesthetic, obscures the moment of valuation by presenting it, not as an existential choice, but as something given by virtue of a reified human essence. Thus Luc Ferry, in attempting to articulate his own anthropocentric environmental ethic in opposition to deep ecology, calls upon us to create "a phenomenology of human signs in nature ... to obtain a clear awareness of that which can and must be valued in it" (143). The actual moment of *valuing* nature has here been reduced to finding *signs* in nature of a reified human essence. The role of thought itself is thus devalued inasmuch as it is reduced to the anthropomorphic *representation* of humanity instead of its *production*, the labor of the spirit which was

embodied in Pico della Mirandola's description of humanity as the *indefinite* essence (on which see below, sec. III).

The recognition of intrinsic value thus does not mean that one does not make relative value judgments, but rather that the judgment is explicit and the costs of the choices not hidden. Valuing other individuals in and through the concrete relationships I establish with them, I individuate myself. But this valuation has itself no assignable *value* if it does not begin from the recognition of intrinsic value, for it is only against this background, with these stakes, that thought and action can themselves be ethically measured or valued. Similarly, in questions of culture, to recognize that cultural formations have an intrinsic value is not to cease making value judgments concerning them and their effects; it is, rather, to begin making value judgments about them *explicitly* rather than obscuring them. The way in which to make these choices coherent is to understand that our own essence and individuation depend upon the harmony or dissonance we establish between the different orders of being at whose nexus we exist and act; and on this point the Deleuzian ethic of individuation and the deep ecology ethic of intrinsic value are functionally indistinguishable.

While affirming the intrinsic value of species and individuals, Naess cites the "rich variety of acceptable motives for being more reluctant to injure or kill a living being of kind A rather than a being of kind B," as well as the paucity of general norms for this sort of decision: "The more narrow and specific the questions posed, the less vagueness there will be" (Sessions 224). General norms individuate whole orders of being, while individuals must be dealt with to the greatest degree of specificity possible if we are to do justice to them, and the orders of being which must be taken into account in such ethical judgments are diverse. Here is where a kind of phenomenological practice makes sense. As Naess remarks in a paper on the philosophy of wolf management, discerning the possibilities for "mixed communities" of humans and other animals is more important than the abstract concept of "a general 'life community' embracing all kinds of life" (Naess and Mysterud 24). Fundamental norms such as "severe suffering endured by a living being x is of no less negative value than severe suffering endured by a living being y, whatever the species or population of x and y" (26) have an operative value particularly when they can help to shift the terms in which a dispute is conducted. For example, as Naess points out, "wolf enthusiasts" may not always take seriously enough the suffering of sheep attacked by wolves and the effects of such attacks on entire herds. Taking up the issue in these terms does not resolve the dispute, but it individuates the sheep as objects of ethical regard

irrespective of the outcome, enriching a debate which might otherwise only value them economically and aligning argumentation with ontology.

Another general norm articulated by Naess in relation to wolf management is that "Humans have an obligation not to place their domestic animals in a situation where there is a significant risk of severe suffering." Here the general norm makes the specific relationship of *domesticity* an object of ethical regard. The degree to which there can be an adequate idea, in the Spinozist sense, of the relationship of "domesticated animal" must be assessed in such an ethical inquiry; that is, the degree to which there is something in the machine of domestication which transcends mere *domination*. Insofar as there are species which exist in no other fashion than in the relationship of domestic animal, there is some degree of "composition", in the Spinozist term, in this relation. The powers and limitations of such a machine become apparent when it is put to the ethical test. The responsibility incumbent upon humans in this relationship may require, in the specific situation, hiring shepherds to protect the sheep, in which the machine of domestication meets a threat from its exterior—the wild predator—by *intensifying*: the shepherd brings domesticated dogs to guard the domesticated sheep. But the limitations of the domestication machine are explicit in its projected exterior, the wild predator, for whom—just as for the human consumer—the domesticated animal is decomposed into a mere captive food source. The wild predator, at the same time, is a pestilential, chaotic outsider from the viewpoint interior to the relationship of domestication, due to the impossibility of constituting the ethical relationship characteristic of humans and their domesticated animals with respect to the wild animal—and which may suggest the limitations of the attempt to constitute an ecological ethic based on the concept of "stewardship."

Rather than an abstract concept, or, worse, a mystical construct, intrinsic value can thus be seen as a kind of regulative ideal. Furthermore, it can be applied beyond the confines of ecology in the narrow sense. Félix Guattari posited three ecologies, pertaining to the environment, social relations and human subjectivity respectively. The constitution of planes of immanence permitting the richest intensive complexity corresponds to what Guattari calls "singularization" or, in many cases, "re-singularization." Guattari's notion of singularization has been perversely conflated by certain critics (e.g., Ferry) with nationalistic chauvinism or even with racism and fascism, or simply with a relativism incapable of critique, but these criticisms fail to understand that the ethic of singularization is applied at every level, not just on the level of nationalities. The ethic of singularization in fact represents the apex of

individual rights, insofar as it demands that we secure to the degree possible all of the existential territories which empower individuals in pursuing their life projects. This necessarily involves both the preservation of tradition *as well as* the liberation from it. Moreover, the ceaseless effort to strengthen diversity in every cultural field as well as in every order of being guarantees the relentless subversion of hegemonies. Hegemonic ideologies will always continue to exist; but where their natural antagonists flourish, hegemonic ideologies are forced back upon their own existential territories, their opportunities for expansion curtailed. The truly effective critique of hegemonic ideologies comes not from countervailing universalizing discourses but from *their own projected exteriors*, which undermine them existentially and locally rather than attempting to co-opt them through overcoding. The projected exterior is both exterior and interior; thus, for example, a projected exterior of religious fundamentalism is esoterism or occultism, interior to fundamentalism inasmuch as they share the latter's intensive cultivation of the text, but repressed for their recourse to transformation.⁴

As a broad ethical perspective, recognizing the diversity of the orders of being means recognizing that the way we make value judgments differs in different orders according to the different ways in which we participate in them. In a society that is our own, we speak and are understood and seek change from within. With the power we possess in social institutions comes an ethical demand to act on a scale commensurate with our personal influence. The more central we are in such a social group the more action is demanded of us and the less restraint, insofar as we play a larger share in constituting the group itself. Where we are peripheral, or an outsider, we have nevertheless a role to play, but there is much we cannot do or which it would be unwise to attempt. At the limits one could say we act on the basis of a common humanity; but this universal is really just a placeholder for whatever degree of understanding has already been established between myself and the other prior to the exchange—if there were a more specific basis for the intervention, one would not appeal to such a universal. The universal thus expresses the sphere of *interest* in which we engage the other—recall that in Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, recourse to the universal implies the relationship of antagonism or decomposition between individuals.

In the relation to the other animal, there is also a universal, a common *animality* presupposed in the encounter and embodying relations established in many cases prior to our thematic awareness—the perception of, e.g., living motility being phenomenologically very primitive. The type of universal to be deployed here is not that which is formed by subtracting

differentiae, but that which is integral in each individual, and is transcendent *in just this fashion*—e.g., the Platonic *autozōion*, "Animal Itself", which is "one and visible, containing within itself all animals which are by nature cognate with it" (*Timaeus* 30 D).⁵ The wider sphere of interest expressed by this animality means that the most basic elements of value must hold proportionally more weight. Issues of physical integrity, habitat preservation, and so forth, thus necessarily dominate our ethical engagement with the non-human animal. When dealing with our fellow humans, by contrast, we feel free to override these matters for the sake of cultural concerns. Humans choose to make war with one another over such matters and it does not surprise us much when they sacrifice their physical integrity to an ideal. We cannot expect someone else to sacrifice herself for our ideal, however; and *a fortiori* we cannot ask this of another species. For we could ask the other's sacrifice as the price of being a member of our community, and upon acceptance a certain agreement would have been reached. However, no agreement is ever made solely among its immediate participants, and thus no social contract or compact achieves real, but only ideal or hypothetical closure. This failure of closure means that everyone has something to say about everyone else's culture. But to a member of another species we can only offer very limited participation, the "mixed community" of humans and other animals usually being defined more by the capacity to tolerate diverse uses of a common space than a community of purpose. Culture's role in according value to the non-human cannot therefore be absolute, and is in fact more curtailed than in the case of according value to a custom or tradition.

In certain cultures the *sacrificial act*, inherently an act of decomposition and hence of evil, is made good upon precisely such an according of membership in the society to the non-human victim, in which the same limitations and lack of closure are to be observed as in the case of the compact according to which humans become members of society. No such compact succeeds in determining all of the "bodies" ascribable to an individual, and hence *human rights* form an irreducible remainder in relation to any cultural organization; and the gap in determination is of course far greater in the case of a non-human participant. It would be a mistake to fail to recognize that non-humans *do* participate in human culture, even above and beyond phenomena such as domestication or the "mixed community" of coexistence. The mere production of symbols pertaining to non-humans already constitutes their participation in the social, albeit to a minimal degree—but not so minimal as that it does not already compound the ethical responsibilities toward "the animal" as such with responsibilities toward a participant in a social order. The symbolic

order, like every other order of being, is not composed of static essences but of multiple planes of immanence proving themselves; hence there is an ethics of symbolic production which encompasses not only religious and artistic symbols but also, e.g., mathematics.

III. Deep Ecology as Humanism

The emergence of human ecological consciousness is a philosophically important idea: a life form has developed on Earth which is capable of understanding and appreciating its relations with all other life forms and to the Earth as a whole. (Naess 166)

Far from being a challenge to humanism, deep ecology ought to be seen as its fulfillment, for the *telos* of humanism cannot lie in an anthropocentrism embodying a reified notion of the human essence. This truth is recognized by a "humanistic" critic of ecology such as Ferry (see Chap. 1, "Antinatural Man"), who however proceeds to use it to exacerbate the ideological opposition of humanity and nature which he regards as indispensable to preserving the democratic values of the Enlightenment. But the true value of indeterminacy in the human essence is that the latter *acquires* determinacy through the ethical judgments made by human beings, with the regulative ideal of a maximal coexistence and flourishing of species and individuals on the earth expressing the maximal value of the human essence itself and the individuals constituted as humans according to it. The ecosophical concept of intrinsic value derives its ethical force from affirming an individuating striving in natural beings that is *at once* and *as such* the striving to recognize others, to constitute a plane of immanence whose intensive complexity expresses the maximal multiplicity of values.

The indefinite essence of humanity is the symbol of this striving, and has no inherent bond to the taxonomic designation "human." In just this fashion Kant distinguishes between the predisposition to *humanity* and the predisposition to *personality* (*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, AK 6:27-28). Although Kant did not extend personhood to non-human animals, he did extend it beyond humans to *any other rational beings*, as well as criticizing *anthropomorphism* in morality (AK 6:65n). "Rationality" indeed is not an empirical, but an intelligible characteristic, and to that degree *a rational being* is the same as *a being rationally conceived*, conceived, that is, in its autonomy, as an autopoietic individual, rather than in its heteronomy, as either an instrument *or* as a mere moment or aspect of a totalizing whole. Where we recognize autonomy we recognize an end, a *telos*, but in the case of a living being that *telos* is not,

as in the case of abstract beings, expressible as a *separate* end of which the individual is a means, but as something unique and inseparable, that is, "existential", expressing intrinsic distinction. In autonomy of the "merely" biological kind, therefore, we also inescapably find an intrinsic value which puts us to the test, the test of the compossibility of our *telos* with that *telos*, the experiment which determines our exterior, our mortality, our own degree of "autonomy."

Moreover, in the absolute positivity of nature there is a plenitude, as well as an *anonymity*, of "natures." Any possible nature is actual; and if humanity, or any particular human, turns out not to be what it might have been, it is necessarily the case that something or someone else, of whatever order of being, *has* that nature, that essence. Arne Naess expresses this intuition in a provocative thought-experiment about humanity and an imaginary alien species:

Homo sapiens may be capable, in suitable circumstances, and upon the basis of a wide perspective, of recommending its own withdrawal as the dominant living being on earth. By such an act humans would confirm (just as we do in many other actions) that mankind is not bound to the values "useful for human beings" or 'suitable to human self-preservation' when "utility" and "self" are taken in a narrow sense ... Would we as human beings subject ourselves freely to the political will of an alien species which had more or less the same characteristics as us, but which lacked our tendency to torture, torment and exploit one another? The decision would perhaps take a few centuries, but I believe it would be positive. We would abdicate, if we were sure of them ... Human beings would lose something of their own essential nature if they refrained from abdication. (169)

It is not a question here of some determinate other species, nor of an elite within ours, but rather of whether "humanity" is to be identified with whatever humans do or have done, however sordid, or must stand for an ideal irreducible to the all-too-human, and one which thereby cannot help but be open to the non-human other from the moment that the latter becomes distinct. What the thought-experiment affirms is that if *we are* not human, someone or something else nevertheless *is*; but *what* the human is, in *which* order(s) of being it exists, is indeterminate in order that its value might range *across* these orders.

By contrast, Ferry, in his defense of "humanism" against the threat to it he imagines coming from deep ecology, finds it adequate to find our duties toward all other animals in the degree to which they present to us an "analogue" of humanity (54), but fails to appreciate what is radical in the Kantian notion he appropriates inasmuch as for Kant we, too, for our own

part possess only *analogous humanity*, since we are animals as well. Ferry makes humanity in the ethical sense merely a property of our *species* rather than a problem posed to the *individual*. To be human is a mere *status* for Ferry. But humanity is an indefinite essence, not because we are exempt from nature, but because the essence of the human is inseparable from the project of humanity, which transcends any particular species, including our own, but is nevertheless a project at once natural, metaphysical and historical. Heidegger says, with Ferry's approval, "The stone is without world, the animal is poor in world, man is creator of world" (55), but a "world" is a trivial thing indeed if only humans have one. The stone has *created* our world, as has the animal, in a different sense. Nothing is without world.⁶ The geological world, the biological world, the mathematical world—nothing has given philosophers license to hold themselves aloof from acknowledging them, nor would there be anything "humanistic" in doing so.

Again, Ferry quotes with approval Philip Elder's ironic remark that it is anthropocentric to presume that objects such as mountains are opposed to the development from which ecologists would seek to preserve them, and argues that since "[a]ll valorization, including that of nature, is the deed of man ... consequently, all normative ethic is in some sense humanist and anthropocentric" (131)—but in *what* sense? Is it merely a question of attempting to find any sense at all in which ecology, in aspiring to transcend anthropocentrism, could be said to be anthropocentric in spite of itself? Beyond this rhetorical tactic, is it Ferry's claim that the humans who oppose the development of the mountain—or even simply those who do not stand to benefit financially from it and thus passively fail to support it—no longer human? Are their values a performative contradiction?

It is reasonable to say that a mountain, taken purely as stone—that is, as the very raw materials on account of which it is being targeted for development—is not "opposed" to development, but it is irrational to suppose that the animals who would lose their habitat would favor it, or that the continued existence of the mountain as a cultural asset is compatible with such development; and so it is unclear where the contradiction is supposed to lie. Rather, it is Ferry who seems caught in a fundamental contradiction when he attempts to determine the "subjective moment" in valuation as an *objectively human* moment, a moment, that is, in the *natural history* of the human *species*, and to deduce from the fact that ethical discourse is a human activity that the outcome of all ethical decisions must benefit, above all, any human asserting even the most trivial claim, lest the deliberation undermine its own conditions of possibility. Just as the deep ecology thesis of intrinsic value sets a

regulative ideal of the widest possible scope for ethical-ontological individuation, so too the refusal of anthropocentrism in deep ecology ought to be seen, not as anti-humanist, but as the fulfillment of the most profound ethical potential within humanism itself, because it rejects the thanatophoric moment in which a humanism all-too-human would seek to determine with finality the limits of ethical concern according to abstract taxonomical designations. From a Deleuzian perspective, a post-anthropocentric humanism is particularly desirable inasmuch as it accomodates both the becoming-animal of the human⁷ as well as its reciprocal movement, the *becoming-human* of the animal, which is a matter neither of anthropomorphism nor of domestication, but of the animal's deterritorialization of humanity *via*, e.g., the abstract machine of Kantian morality.⁸

Deleuzian humanism, as a frankly *metaphysical* humanism, can also be seen as expressing the conditions of the possibility of a project such as that of Halliwell and Mousley's *Critical Humanisms*,⁹ viz., their remarks concerning the "amorphous" nature of the human, which is to be conceived not as "a given entity" but as "an open-ended and mutable process"; the concept of the human is to retain its "critical edge" while resisting "becoming a reified and prescriptive category." Similarly, Deleuzian humanism as I have sought to articulate it in this essay holds open a critical space for multiple humanisms, critical because it speaks to what is at stake in any conception of the human, open and multiple because the human essence is viewed as a product of ethical individuation, as an appropriation in the Stoic sense (*oikeiosis*). Although Deleuzian humanism as I have described it does not fit any of the diverse humanisms Halliwell and Mousley describe, they do discuss *A Thousand Plateaus* briefly under the rubric of the "transhuman"—the "transhuman" being, in effect, nothing other than the metaphysics of the human properly understood.

Coda: Philosophy at the Surface

In the Eighteenth "series" of *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze offers a sketch of three paradigmatic "images of philosophers" rooted in antiquity. Following Nietzsche, Deleuze typifies the Platonist as a philosopher of the *ascent* to the intelligible and the Presocratic as a philosopher of the *descent* into the maelstrom of the forces animating life. Deleuze sublates the Nietzschean opposition, however, by adding a third image, typifying the Hellenistic philosophical schools of Stoicism and Cynicism as philosophies of the *surface*. Deleuze offers here—as he does in other

places and in diverse ways—a genealogical account of the emergence of his own philosophical position. This particular account is an appropriate conclusion to the present essay because it offers an image of the activity of philosophy as rooted in a relationship to nature, rather than solely as the working out of the implications of a certain set of concepts.

Deleuze here uses Empedocles and the Orphic theologians as exemplars of Presocratic thought. He singles out in Empedocles the complementary images of, on the one hand, the isolated limbs and organs offering themselves up for exotic combinations in a prior and also (due to the cyclical nature of becoming) future phase of cosmogenesis (Empedocles frags. 50-52 Wright); and on the other, the *phrên hierê* (frags. 22, 97), the "body" of divine thought into which the cosmos is formed by the waxing strength of Love, dubbing the *phrên hierê* the "body without organs," in the first use of this familiar Deleuzian concept (*Logic of Sense* 129).¹⁰ Paralleling these two Empedoclean perspectives on the "body", the one dismembering and recombining, the other an indivisible and ideal totality, Deleuze cites "two faces" of Dionysus: "his open and lacerated body, and his impassible organless head ... Dionysus dismembered, but also Dionysus the impenetrable" (129).¹¹

In the reciprocity of these two "bodies", the one disintegrated into its molecular relations while the other expresses nothing other than the mind capable of thinking all these syntheses and decompositions, Deleuze sees something requisite to Presocratic thought but which remained unthought in it, namely the torsional *surface* of thought which connects them, and which he sees as having been made explicit by the Hellenistic schools.¹² With this shift to the surface, there comes at first a crisis of relativism as Platonic intellectual ascesis and Presocratic practices are both subsumed in the Stoic science of *mixtures*:

This thesis ... establishes that in the depth of bodies everything is mixture. There are no rules, however, according to which one mixture rather than another might be considered bad. Contrary to what Plato believed, there is no measure high above for these mixtures and combinations of Ideas which would allow us to define good and bad mixtures. Or again, contrary to what the Presocratics thought, there is no immanent measure either, capable of fixing the order and the progression of a mixture in the depths of Nature (*Physis*); every mixture is as good as the bodies which pervade one another and the parts which coexist. How could the world of mixtures not be that of a black depth wherein everything is permitted? (130-1)

This "black depth" is a consequence of the interpenetration of everything; since all elements are contained in all things and pervade one

another, everything is impure, everything is "cannibalism" and "incest." Thus the supposed Platonic essentialism is undermined, as well as the Presocratic cosmological organization of forces. What is left appears to be solely the pure positivity and relativity of Nature.

What presents itself to the Stoic as more fundamental than either abstract essentialism or "natural law" is the modes of mixture or synthesis: "imperfect mixtures which alter bodies" and "perfect mixtures which leave bodies intact and make them coexist in all their parts" (131). The ultimate "perfect" mixture is, Deleuze explains, "the unity of corporeal causes ... wherein everything is exact in the cosmic present" (131). The perfect mixture, Nature, is in effect the *hierê phrên* of Empedocles reterritorialized. Nature is the perfect mixture because it is guided by no transcendent hidden hand but by the strivings interior to individuation, and divine thought is that which attempts to approximate this absolute polycentricity. The intelligibility of causality on the ultimate scale was, in Empedocles, the absolute transparency of the cosmos to itself at the acme of Love's power, but is now individual and contemporaneous, just as Eleatic Being and Nonbeing are reterritorialized as Atom and Void. This is the moment, in effect, when the plane of *individuation* transcends that of *speciation*—hence the significance Deleuze accords to the Epicurean doctrine of an infinity of atoms, but not of atomic *shapes* or *sizes* (270), for the metaphysical individual must be free from final determination either by the universal (shape) or by the phenomenal (size, because if the atom could be of any size, there would be *sensible atoms*). From a different perspective, the Empedoclean body-without-organs, the *unique individual*, presents itself as the precondition for the ideality of the universe in Platonic thought through a movement of *eros* producing the Idea in temporality.

But on any level less comprehensive than the totality—a paradoxical totality, moreover, that does not assemble its elements into a whole—there are no perfect mixtures, nor absolute states of bodies which would render transformation intelligible (as, e.g., in Heraclitus frag. 36 DK: "For souls it is death to become water, for water it is death to become earth; from earth water comes-to-be, and from water, soul"):

Bodies caught in the particularity of their limited presents do not meet directly in line with the order of their causality, which is good only for the whole, taking into consideration all combinations at once. This is why any mixture can be called good or bad: good in the order of the whole, but imperfect, bad, or even execrable, in the order of partial encounters. (131)

At first, all of the moves seem to exacerbate this opposition between the universal, an apocalyptic body-without-organs, and the order of particular relations, a realm that would seem to be ungovernable by any science or morality. If everything is coherent and justifiable on the ultimate scale, then our plane lacks justice and coherence altogether. Can the Stoic science of mixtures supply a science, much less an ethics? A little later, Deleuze remarks that

We moved too quickly as we presented the Stoics challenging depth and finding there only infernal mixtures corresponding to passions-bodies and to evil intentions. The Stoic system contains an entire physics, along with an ethics of this physics. If it is true that passions and evil intentions are bodies, it is true that good will, virtuous actions, true representations, and just consents are also bodies. If it is true that certain bodies form abominable, cannibalistic, and incestuous mixtures, the aggregate of bodies taken as a whole necessarily forms a perfect mixture, which is nothing other than the unity of causes among themselves or the cosmic present ... If there are bodies-passions, there are also bodies-actions, unified bodies of the great Cosmos. (143)

With this in mind, Deleuze formulates a fundamental Stoic problem, an index for reason and morality alike. He asks with respect to Chronos, that is, discrete time, the time of particulars,

Do the bodies which fill it possess enough unity, do their mixtures possess enough justice and perfection, in order for the present to avail a principle of an immanent measure? Perhaps it does, at the level of the cosmic Zeus. But is this the case for bodies at random and for each partial mixture? (163)

Stoicism, Deleuze explains, reinterprets the Presocratic cosmos "through a physics of mixtures in depth" (132). These "mixtures" are essentially ways of analyzing larger aggregates into smaller ones and composing smaller aggregates into larger ones. The heir to the Stoic science of mixtures, at once ethics and physics, is thus ecosophy and the science of testing the value of the human essence and of one's own essence as a human in the crucible of Nature.

For Deleuze, therefore, the essence of the Hellenistic moment in philosophy relative to its historical predecessors is to have brought Presocratic physics and Platonic idealism alike to the "surface" of an ethical and individuating plane of immanence on which hybrid discourses concerning the ontology of ethics and the ethics of ontology come to life.

Deleuze chooses Hercules, an important symbolic figure for the Stoics, to personify this moment in the history of thought. Hercules, he explains,

is always situated relative to the three realms of the infernal abyss, the celestial height and the surface of the earth ... He always ascends or descends to the surface in every conceivable manner ... It is no longer a question of Dionysus down below, or of Apollo up above, but of Hercules of the surface, in his dual battle against both depth and height: reorientation of the entire thought and a new geography. (131f)

The "Herculean" individual—the subject of deep ecology—carries on her back at all times her own individuation in eternity, at the nexus of intrinsic value and unfathomable Nature, with nothing whatsoever to predetermine the outcome of her struggle.

Notes

¹ On the plane of immanence, see especially Deleuze and Guattari (*What is Philosophy?* 35-60).

² Deleuze's ethics are to be discerned chiefly through his readings of Spinoza, Nietzsche, and the Epicureans. In the following account, I accord a certain primacy to Deleuze's Spinozist ethical thought, because there he speaks in a more conventionally normative language of *good* and *evil*, rather than in hedonic terms of *joy* and *sadness*. Another reason to accord primacy to the Spinozist side of Deleuze's ethics is that it shall be seen from the following that it is possible from within this ethical framework to motivate Deleuze's adoption of an ontology synthesized from the Epicureans and from Hume—i.e., from two different varieties of atomism.

³ Note that the sense of "composition" in Deleuze's readings of Spinoza is completely distinct from the sense of "composition" as it applies to art (the "plane of composition").

⁴ Cf. "Prohibitions on Transformation," 379-83 in Canetti.

⁵ Compare the Deleuzian "body without organs" as discussed in the Coda of the present essay. The universal in question expresses the complementarity of the first two kinds of universal in Simplicius's commentary on the *Categories*, 82. 35–83. 20, in contrast to the third; see the discussion in Lloyd, 67; see also Moyle's remarks on the problem of conceiving the commonality between humans and other animals as a generic "first nature" to which the specific difference of "second nature", or reason, is added in humans.

⁶ It should be noted that theorists of deep ecology have their own readings of Heidegger; see in particular Zimmerman 1983, though there is more incompatibility to be found between Heidegger and deep ecology in Zimmerman 1993.

⁷ See Chap. 10, "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...", in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (232-309).

⁸ For the characteristics of abstract machines, see *A Thousand Plateaus* (141ff).

⁹ My thanks to Tim Matts for bringing this issue to my attention.

¹⁰ "For two branches do not spring from his back, he has no feet, no swift knees, no organs of reproduction, but is equal to himself in every direction, without any beginning or end, a rounded sphere, rejoicing in encircling stillness," (frag. 22, trans. Wright); "For he is not equipped with a human head on a body, he has no feet, no swift knees, no shaggy genitals, but he is mind alone, holy and inexpressible, darting through the whole cosmos with swift thoughts," (frag. 97).

¹¹ In point of fact, Deleuze confuses here the fate of Dionysus, dismembered and consumed by the Titans but for his heart, preserved by Athena, with that of Orpheus, the "prophet" of Dionysus, dismembered by the Maenads while his oracular head was preserved.

¹² That is, the Stoics and the Cynics. Deleuze does not discuss the Epicureans here, but would obviously regard them as capable of being assimilated to the other Hellenistic schools in the salient respects upon his own reading of them.

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