

“Foucault and the Defense of Deep Ecology”

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Abstract:

The relationship between man and nature has long been a breeding ground for scholarly debate. Since the publication of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, alternatives to the consumer culture have been abundant. One of the most intellectually compelling, yet not popularly embraced alternatives is that of the deep ecology movement. Deep ecology argues for a shift in consciousness from an anthropocentric point of view to one that emphasizes a holistic ecosystem. It is in addressing this failure of widespread acceptance that the work of Michel Foucault becomes vital to environmentalism. While there has been literature published focusing on notions of Foucauldian 'governmentality' and 'biopower' in relation to the contemporary environmental movement (Darier 1999) and on the power relations that exist between humans and their pets (Tuan 1984), the use of Foucault's method to demonstrate that the dualism created by scientific taxonomy is fabricated and ultimately detrimental to empowering the environmental movement, has largely been ignored. This paper aims to address this gap in the literature. Unlike earlier studies whose foundations relied on the implicit belief that environmental consciousness was already a normalizing phenomenon in society, this work does not assume that such a full actualization exists. This essay seeks to conduct an analysis of the origins and implications of the taxonomy of living organisms following Michel Foucault's methodological model, as exemplified in Discipline and Punish and Madness and Civilization. As Foucault deconstructs the development of penal institutions and asylums, this paper develops a similar framework to deconstruct the development of the taxonomy of living organisms and prove it a fallacious edifice. With the use of such 'genealogical' and 'archaeological' investigative techniques, this paper tentatively concludes that taxonomy is an unstable justification for disregarding movements such as deep ecology.

Despite society's persistent actions and attitudes towards the environment to the contrary, man is not the center of the universe. The environmental consciousness of contemporary society is an environmental consciousness that is unreflective and unaware of both the historical and theoretical foundations that limit society from fully embracing movements such as Deep Ecology. It is the purpose of this paper to attempt to create a space for movements like Deep Ecology to become a viable alternative for the consciousnesses of society on the whole. This work assumes that the major stumbling block for embracing movements such as Deep Ecology is rooted in the enlightenment attitude embodied in Immanuel Kant's 'What is Enlightenment?'. Kant's work, the original enlightenment project, presumes the fundamental superiority of the human species. This is still reflected in contemporary society. The belief, by man, that the outside world is there to be known *by* man relies on the notion that man is the being best suited to subjugate others by knowing them. This attitude is unacceptable to movements such as Deep Ecology. Deep Ecology argues for a shift in consciousness from an anthropocentric point of view to one that emphasizes a holistic ecosystem. How should these movements attempt to produce a change of consciousness throughout society?

In his version of 'What is Enlightenment?' Michel Foucault lays out the foundations for what will become the solution to that question for these movements. In it, Foucault offers an archeo-genealogical 'critical ontology of ourselves' that provides

potential environmental consciousnesses the opportunity to expose the origins of the attitudes that disallow an acceptance of their positions on a society-wide level. This essay seeks to conduct an analysis of the origins and implications of the taxonomy of living organisms following Michel Foucault's methodological model, as exemplified in both *Discipline and Punish* and *Madness and Civilization*. As Foucault deconstructs the development of penal institutions and asylums, this paper develops a similar framework to deconstruct the development of the taxonomy of living organisms and prove it a fallacious edifice in order to clear room in society's consciousness for new approaches towards the environment to take hold.

Previous thinkers that have analyzed Foucault and the environment have seemingly been Foucauldians first, and environmentalists second. They have merely applied Foucault's theories to issues pertaining to the environmental movement (Darier 1999). When reading their works, there is a sense of rushed research. It seems as though they are simply looking for another realm in which to apply Foucault's theories. Although there is intellectual value in their work, they are neither trying to critique contemporary society by using Foucault's methodology, nor do they attempt to defend environmentalism by continuing the critique of contemporary consumer culture. These authors also rely on the [incorrect] assumption that environmental consciousness *has* taken hold throughout society and Foucault merely offers a warning of domination and power to those wary of their individualism. 'Governmentality' of an environmental nature is the primary concern for these thinkers. However, it is misguided on their part to assume that an environmental consciousness has already taken hold throughout society. Thus their concerns with governmentality and the domination of the individual by

environmental movement(s) are moot. It is only after societal adherence to environmental governmentality, whatever form that may take, that the issues of domination and control over the individual can become the primary concern.

This paper begins with an exploration of Kant's 'What is Enlightenment?' and moves to the version Foucault offered in response. The analysis stresses the anthropocentric viewpoint from which Kant originally answers the question and shows how such a human-centered viewpoint is weak when the critique of anthropocentrism (derived from movements such as Deep Ecology) is weighed against it. In Foucault's response to Kant, he does not explicitly embrace, endorse or defend anything closely associated to an environmental movement. Still, we should not imply from his response to Kant that he would ever exclude an environmental critique of 'who we are' at any given historical period. Foucault leaves the door open for such a critique despite his own disinterest in the natural world. In this sense, it is important not to confuse Foucault's own politics with his methodology. A Foucauldian should not say, 'Since Michel Foucault did not love nature, or was not concerned with nature, I will not waste my time applying his work to environmental issues.'" On the contrary, a Foucauldian would/should should seek answers to questions of society's fundamental existence and be constantly critiquing his world and asking questions that entail him innocent to the point of seeming unintelligent. In this sense, he should become Nietzsche's child in the "The Three Metamorphoses". This is a characterization of the 'attitude' and 'ethos' Foucault sets out in his version of 'What is Enlightenment?'

The tenets of the enlightenment that Kant describes rely directly upon anthropocentrism. For the methodological Foucauldian, the question becomes: what

happens when you deconstruct the very foundation of the original enlightenment as embodied in Kant's work? Because anthropocentrism is the foundation of the work, it is important to look for archival evidence that embodies this foundational element of the original enlightenment project. The table of taxonomy, this paper argues, is that tangible material remnant of the original enlightenment project that needs to be analyzed in order to uncover the narrative that directs the historical mission of contemporary society. The narrative that was begun with, or at least laid out in the original enlightenment project is that man is the center of the universe—that his existence is necessary—and the taxonomy of living organisms is really just a creation born of this construction. The belief that man has the right to envision or construct such a table personifies this notion and the table's material existence allows for a deconstruction of what its presence personifies for contemporary society.

Georg Lukacs said that the purpose of western philosophy was the justification of the bourgeois class/system. However, it is the intent of this paper through Immanuel Kant's description of the enlightenment and the use of Foucault's methodology as laid out both in 'What is Enlightenment?' and as utilized in his works *Madness and Civilization* and *Discipline and Punish*, that the purpose of all, or most of philosophy is to justify the dominance/existence of mankind. Again, I will discuss what composes the enlightenment attitude for Kant, and refer back to Michel Foucault's very different interpretation of what enlightenment is. The 'attitude' of the enlightenment that Foucault proposes, unlike Kant and most of philosophy, allows for a questioning of the necessity of man's existence and subsequent dominance.

Kant declares that mankind thinks that they are superior to all the creatures

because of their sporadic use of rationality, but are equivalent to creatures because humans proceed without a plan. “In the end, one does not know what kind of conception one should have of our species which is so conceited about its superior qualities.” (Kant 1959b, 117) For Kant, the introduction of such a plan, or guide, to history for the human species would allow them to claim their superiority over all other creatures. Kant’s plan to allow man to rightfully declare his superiority over all creatures is the natural faculty of man (reason) and it is “destined to unfold completely and according to their end.” (Ibid., 118) Man does not live in an enlightened age, only an age of enlightenment,¹ allowing for the development of the use of reason by mankind as a whole.

Where Hobbes sees the natural antagonism between men as a foundation for what this generation would see as a negative i.e. absolute monarch, Kant sees the natural antagonism between men as a positive because it produces the society that allows for his plan of history to develop culminating with the “*use of reason...fully developed in the species, not in the individual.*” (Ibid., 118)

Interestingly, one could develop a plan for all the creatures of the world, not limited to humans, and according to Kant’s logic, no creature could be superior over another. A striking example of this would be the Deep Ecology movement. This movement sees the world not in the dualistic man vs. nature bifurcate framework but as a holistic ecosystem where everything within it is valued equally. Therefore, in Kant’s words, “We shall leave it to nature to produce a man who would be capable of writing history in accordance to such an end.” (Ibid., 117) Nature produced a movement, or movements centered not on man, but rather, around the ecosystem. This is a plan that

¹ Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment? In Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Bobbs-Merrill. New York, 1959. p. 90.

satisfies Kant's *criteria* and is a plan no less impressive, but is not in accordance with Kant's desired *end*. From such plans the importance of man is greatly reduced from its high level in the present consciousness of society.

Kant states that man is "*the only rational creature on earth*" (Ibid., 118) but also states, "Since men in their endeavors do not act like animals merely according to instinct, nor like rational citizens according to an agreed plan..." (Ibid., 117) It does not necessarily have to follow that because man is able to utilize rationality, then the purpose of mankind is to fully develop this one aspect of the ability of the human species. Why is not the plan of history Kant devises call for the complete development of the instincts that are also used by mankind?

This history of nature that Kant proposes is based on the full development of his sparingly used rational faculty that he says derives directly from the use of the *actual* natural faculties of mankind (instincts).

"Thanks are due to nature for his quarrelsomeness, his enviously competitive vanity, and for his insatiable desire to possess or to rule, for without them all the excellent natural faculties of mankind would forever remain undeveloped." (Ibid., 121)

The actual natural faculties laid out by Kant in these lines are his 'quarrelsomeness,' 'enviously competitive vanity,' and his 'insatiable desire to possess...' not what he claims to be the natural faculties of mankind (rationality) that are to be fully developed throughout the course of history. Thus, there is no plan of history needed that would explain how the full development of man's superior characteristic would be actualized because the natural faculties are the 'negative' ones that Kant believes allow reason to become manifest.

Kant's insistence that the purpose of mankind is to fully develop the use of

reason is an attempt to quell the “hell of evils, evil in an ever so civilized state because perhaps nature will destroy, by barbaric devastation, this state and all advances of culture.” Enlightenment for Kant is then the perpetuation of human species and his persuasive use of inflating the ego of man by telling him he is superior to all creatures is the means to an end. The full development of reason, despite Kant’s claims, is not the end (guide to history) he is truly fighting for, but what he is really fighting for is the incessant existence of mankind. Plenty of examples abound in Kant’s work that illustrate this point: ‘future generations,’ ‘our descendants,’ and ‘transmission of enlightenment.’ Also his last principle in his *Idea for a Universal History* drives this point home. And it can be said that since it is his last major principle and a lead-in to his conclusion, this is his definitive answer to ‘What is Enlightenment?’

“A philosophical attempt to write a general world history according to a plan of nature which aims at a perfect civic association of mankind must be considered possible and even helpful to this intention of nature.” (Ibid., 129, Emphasis left out mine)

Kant says that his attempt is to write a history that’s goal is to attain ‘a perfect civic association of mankind’ and has nothing to do with mankind fully developing his reason in order to give purpose for those members of the age of enlightenment striving for the enlightened age.

In ‘*What is Enlightenment?*’ Kant uses religion as an example as the most binding force that inhibits man from actualizing his (Kant’s) plan of history, the development of full use of reason. He calls it an immutable law that cannot have absolute control over the people indefinitely. The reason it would not be able to do so is because “That would be a crime against human nature, the proper destination of which lies precisely in this progress...” The human nature Kant is talking about is the natural faculty that makes man

superior to all creatures laid out in his *Idea for a Universal History*, the sparing use of reason. But as I had argued above, it could be defended that man's purpose is not to fully develop his use of reason, but to fully develop the use of instinct. More importantly, the current status of science in the present society has attained a status that can be regarded as the religion of said time, with money as the god. So, all the reasons that Kant uses to dismiss religion, we can apply to the religion of science, which is founded upon his principles of the enlightenment.

In his version of '*What is Enlightenment??*' Foucault's use of Baudelaire to define the modern man highlights the constricting nature of the enlightenment when he says that:

"Modern man...is not the man who goes off to discover himself...he is the man who tries to invent himself. This modernity does not liberate man in his own being; it compels him to face the task of producing himself." (Foucault 1984, 42)

Man is thus bound to be active in trying to define himself via the outside world. The enlightenment thus becomes a constant critique and the 'attitude' or 'ethos' of the people. Foucault sees the criticizing as a positive in the sense that it can be used "as a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying." (Ibid., 46)

Finally, Foucault calls for the "critical ontology of ourselves" (Ibid., 50) to be seen not as a dogmatic approach or body of knowledge, but as the attitude where the "critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them." (Ibid., 50) The enlightenment as Kant describes is included in Foucault's 'limits that are imposed on us' and not protected from this attitude. A deconstruction, as exemplified above,

² Paul Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, Pantheon Books. New York, 1984.

regarding Kant's enlightenment, because it requires the existence of mankind, defends/encourages the acceptance of environmental movements in the spirit of Deep Ecology.

Now is the point in this discussion to focus on contemporary society's latent assuming of the superiority of mankind as laid out above. 'God is Dead,' after Nietzsche wrote this the purpose of humans, supposedly, and academics became to think of ways to live without a plan. The idea of narratives or becoming one's own author dominated discourse because everyone believed Nietzsche. Did they really need to do this? Was there, in fact, a plan intact despite Zarathustra's proclamation that we killed god? Do movements like Deep Ecology need to find out if there were in fact narratives in tact after we supposedly killed god? Deep ecology needs to find out whether or not there is a narrative because if a narrative does not exist, was obliterated by Nietzsche, an environmental governmentality would have already developed societally, correctly bringing about, correctly, the concerns of previous Foucauldian environmental analyses discussed above.

Unfortunately, for environmental movements, the enlightenment did not undermine itself. The purpose of the enlightenment was to bring about an overarching narrative that forms a community among all the humans that inhabit the earth. It achieved this. The enlightenment produced something that gives meaning to human life. This endeavor succeeded, up to this point, in producing such a narrative. The meta-narrative that binds all humans together is the one that declares humans as superior to all other living organisms. This meta-narrative not only proclaims that they are superior to all living organisms, but that the existence of humans is necessary. Thus, to answer, for

example, whether or not MacIntyre's, and others, proposal of community based narratives is the alternative to a 'failed' enlightenment is moot from this perspective because the enlightenment already brought about a significant meta-narrative that binds the human community together.

Foucault asks us to look into what makes us who we are, what/how we think, and why we think what we think and do. This includes the transcendence of mankind by experiment. Unlike his fellow philosophers, Foucault is not afraid of what the enlightenment could bring about (the end of mankind). Actually, Foucault may be afraid of what the actual failure of the enlightenment could bring about. For example, Foucault talks about 'forced' labor—the idea of labor is seen as a necessity (life is seen as a necessity). Foucault is doing the same thing that Kant is doing, but believing that he is critiquing Kant's proclamation, 'think but obey.' It is just that Foucault is not obeying authority but obeying life, the idea that the existence of mankind is necessary via labor. (Foucault 1979, 115) Foucault is just as guilty of perpetuating the meta-narrative as the others are because he obeys the idea of human life. Even if he wishes to transgress by throwing himself down a flight of stairs, chances are he is still going to live, but if he were to jump off a building, the chances that his life would not end are highly suspect. Foucault wishes to push the limits, but the limits are themselves limited by human existence. Goals place limits upon man. This includes the goal of life. Despite, his own politics the 'attitude' or 'ethos' laid out in 'What is Enlightenment?' would suggest no such fear. Accordingly, to not be afraid of what the enlightenment could bring about is again, the intention of this paper.

Why does Nietzsche see the culmination of the enlightenment as a failure?

Nietzsche claims that God is dead. Not only is god dead, but also we (humans) killed him. Of course, Nietzsche sees this as a positive development for it substantiates his ideal and entirely stagnant viewpoint of society. Once he is able to justify his belief this objective viewpoint he can be ignorant and blissful and not think about any alternatives. Does MacIntyre see alternatives? MacIntyre, it seems, would prefer to be ignorant and blissful, but since he is not, he proposes a way to be ignorant and blissful given the unwanted (on his part) failure of the enlightenment. Foucault sees the enlightenment as an attitude that should live forever, not a negative or something to overcome as MacIntyre and Nietzsche see it. MacIntyre believes that it failed because it did not fulfill something. So, what did it not succeed to fulfill? For both of these thinkers it did not give mankind a purpose. To say something is a failure implies that it was supposed to succeed in something. Contrary to both Nietzsche and MacIntyre the enlightenment did not fail. It succeeded. It succeeded in bringing about the objective viewpoint (the subjective viewpoint of mankind, not individual subjectivity), or what I call *species subjectivity*. It persuaded mankind into believing that he is the center of the universe. Therefore the enlightenment succeeded in deriving values from facts, or deriving values from simply pursuing facts. By believing that you can pursue facts in the outside world presupposes the superiority/importance of the preservation of the human species over all other living organisms.

Did the enlightenment fail to give purpose to mankind? Nihilism—relativism with a bad conscience—is not relativistic/nihilist because they (mankind) sees the end as mankind perpetually existing as he exists presently. There is already one overarching narrative that plagues mankind. We do not live in a nihilistic world as Nietzsche posits (a point that motivates MacIntyre's thesis). The direction or narrative that drives society

now is the belief, the perpetuation of man as we know him, that the end is an unending of late 20th century man. “The true end of man can no longer be completely achieved in this world, but only in another. Reason can supply, *no* genuine comprehension of man’s true end...” (MacIntyre, 53) but it does, the *pursuit* of reason asserts superiority, this is the narrative that binds humans together and creates a community.

Survival is society’s value. It is not possible that man would actually extinguish all of society; someone can only posit the idea. Whoever is left recognizes the importance, believed necessity, of mankind’s existence. The Athenians for instance are not asking to die—just kill—someone would still be around to kill them, this idea requires there to be human existence. This is humanism. If push came to shove we would be able to see empirically that this meta-narrative is accepted by mankind.

The enlightenment undermines itself (but hasn’t done so yet) because it starts with the supposition that it is man’s purpose to subdue the outside world for his benefit. The Enlightenment is founded upon man knowing the outside world, or the believed notion that the outside world is knowable by man. This leads to the classification of living organisms by man; this foundation has not been adequately exposed by society the way religion had been discredited. A discrediting of the enlightenment’s foundation on the same level of religion’s discrediting will allow movements like Deep Ecology to take hold in society.

Religion acknowledges its arbitrariness or it has been refuted by science and lost credibility in society. The enlightenment, on the other hand, does not (or has not) acknowledged its arbitrariness on a society-wide level despite a small sector of society’s recognition of the arbitrariness of the enlightenment. This occurrence does not equate to

the level of recognition, refutation, of religion's arbitrariness that spawned this train of thought which the small sector of society (Nietzsche, Foucault, MacIntyre, academia in general, etc.) is now trying to refute.

The proclamation 'God is Dead' is not yet known to society. It is possible that it is known on an individual level, but the individuals who know, do not know or think that others know, still do not discuss this with other individuals on a public level. This type of public discussion about God's death needs to occur. Everyone needs to read Kant. However, it is not just Kant that needs to be read and comprehended, but also all philosophy since then—all that which MacIntyre cites that have failed to justify the enlightenment (Kierkegaard, Hume, etc.). Until such a point of realization is reached by society, 'God is Dead' will not be known. Nihilism *is* the result of the inevitable failing of the enlightenment, but it has failed to actualize itself society-wide, and thus this regression to the arbitrariness of the enlightenment has not taken place.

Taxonomy is the foundation of the enlightenment. Thus, eliminating the validity of the taxonomic system will lead to the undermining of the movement, and accordingly, to the undermining of the existence of mankind. "The celebrated, transparent, *circular cage*, with its high tower, powerful and knowing, may have been for Bentham a project of a perfect disciplinary institution..." (Foucault 1979, 208, added) Earth is the 'circular cage' through which man (society) has set out to observe everything. "But the penitentiary Panopticon was also a system of individualizing and permanent documentation." This is the hierarchal classification system of living organisms that man has devised in order to justify his place above all living organisms and thus create the assumption that his existence is necessary. The organisms that have not been found are

free of power, control and discipline (even though upon being classified, they will not know it species wide because man still controls them. Still, individual animals can *feel* the affects of this classification).

“The prison,³ that darkest region in the apparatus of justice, is the place where the power to punish, which no longer dares to manifest itself openly, silently organizes a field of objectivity [taxonomy] in which punishment [of living organisms] will be able to function openly as treatment and the sentence be inscribed among the discourses of knowledge.” (Ibid., 256) Does exposing the purpose, or outcomes, of classifying all living organisms result in the destruction of the societal belief that the existence of mankind is not superior or necessary in relation to all other living organisms?

“It was the emergence or rather the institutional specification, the baptism as it were, of a new type of supervision—both knowledge and power—over *individuals* who resisted *disciplinary normalization*.” (Ibid., 296) The ‘individuals’ are all living organisms that are not humans, and the ‘disciplinary normalization’ that they resisted was that they were not humans. They (the other living organisms) really did not (could not) resist, thus enabling humans to easily be able to classify them, and likewise assert their power and superiority over them. Because all these other organisms were unable to voice resistance, they were not able to participate in the creation of the classification system. The only option left to them was to get caught and be dissected in order to advance the knowledge

³ Prison here is not denoting the actual prison Foucault refers to, but rather, the prison that is earth for man. It is the prison because man is forced to live with other animals, constantly reminding him that he is a variation of degree not of kind. Thus forcing mankind to produce the taxonomy to assuage his superiority complex.

that man has over the outside world.⁴ By undertaking the classification of living organisms, humans by way of this ‘superiority’ (that they created by classification) also establish the belief of the necessity of mankind’s existence. The fact that humans are themselves a part of the classification system is irrelevant because they are the creators of the system and thus enter the system on top.

The enlightenment’s ultimate culmination of success is the creation of the classification of living organisms: taxonomy. Foucault says that if we can expose the foundations of what we think makes us who we are then we have succeeded in de-reifying the ways in which we see our individuality. Does that mean that once this version of the culmination of the enlightenment is exposed, and respected, mankind will cease to feel superior to all living organisms and further, begin to doubt that his existence is necessary?

Once the enlightenment’s greatest success, taxonomy, is exposed the full culmination of enlightenment will take place. This complete development of the enlightenment is the death of mankind; god is not really dead until man dies. This will happen if mankind fully recognizes (societally) the way that it recognized religion’s arbitrariness, this is true nihilism, the enlightenment really undermining itself. It has not done so yet because there is still the meta-narrative of species subjectivity that pervades present society, a meta-narrative begun by the undertaking of enlightenment project.

Why is the death of mankind ‘bad’? Because mankind says so? Clearly, this is a biased opinion- what else would a species say? Thomas Hobbes said ‘no man would believe he is not right, correct’ (best/necessary) He was not referring to individuals as much as he was referring to society/mankind/species. “Only man place values in things to

⁴ Non-humans can act wild, however, this merely reinforces humanity’s assertion that they are not rational, and therefore inferior.

preserve himself—he alone created a meaning for things, a *human meaning*. Whoever must be a creator always annihilates.” (Nietzsche, 171) Since man himself creates the superiority of his existence within taxonomy, the artifice of this taxonomy will eventually be exposed and will then lead to the annihilation of his existence.

“His [Nietzsche’s] answer is that there is a human need to believe in such judgements, not because they are in fact ‘true,’ *but because they increase our feeling of power in the world*. A judgement about the world can be false, Nietzsche argues, and *nevertheless still be ‘life-promoting’ and ‘species-preserving’* (BGE, 4).” (Ansell-Pearson 16, added) So the point for Nietzsche, which he misses about the enlightenments’ true purpose, is the preservation of mankind.

What do we do without the narrative? Do we kill one another because that is what the realization of the narrative that I propose was produced by the enlightenment would lead to? The reason that people get caught in the will vs. plan discussion is due to the believed necessity of the preservation of mankind—because if everyone did actually act without a plan, or embracing something fully, man would cease to exist (war against all, eye for an eye). Do we just stand side-by-side, equal, with all other living organisms?

The way of life *is* life. Biological needs should take precedent over other approaches to existence because there is no difference between man and all other living organisms, despite the anthropocentric nature of Kant’s enlightenment. The latter live their life based on a means for survival, man should also live his life based on the biological, due to overwhelming numerical superiority of those living organisms that do live according simply to biological needs over mankind (who suppresses the biological by means of other constructed values). Biology is a construction that man places on living

organisms, but still he believes that he is above the rest of the living world. But if he is not above the rest of the living world would then man construct a way of living that is not biological for the rest of the living world, thus justifying his way of life? But if he did this (saying that man is not above the rest of the living world, that it does not act solely according to biological needs) then mankind is *not* different than the rest of the living world and should live equally with rest of living organisms. Communities that include the interests of all living organisms (a.k.a. the acceptance of Deep Ecology as a societal consciousness) could be the result of exposing the anthropocentric foundations of the enlightenment as outlined by Kant.

This is what Kant needs to ‘overcome’. Man is primitive because he is concerned with perpetuating species (and that he relies on natural resources). Mankind needs to overcome this characteristic if he wishes to rise above the rest of the living organisms on this planet. If he does this he will be able to claim his superiority over the natural world, but this realization- of overcoming or de-alienation, results in his/the species’ death. Until this happens, he is a part of the natural world. Until he accepts his fate of death and steps beyond the earthly, he will continue to be of the subaltern kind and nothing more despite his rantings.

“Praiseworthy is whatever seems difficult to a people; whatever seems indispensable and difficult is called good; and whatever liberates even out of the deepest need, the rarest, the most difficult—that they call holy.” (Nietzsche, 170) Man unabashedly calls himself holy with respect to the rest of the earth’s living organisms. This superiority complex seems to rest on the false and egotistical notion that Man does not live on the same planet with the other living organisms, or that the other living

organisms do not live on an equal level with him.

The purpose of this paper has been to identify the element(s) hindering society from accepting movements such as Deep Ecology and deconstruct this element-taxonomy- to a point where it loses all validity. The enlightenment as a holdover into contemporary society was depicted to be latently assuming the necessity of mankind's existence. By using the methodology of Michel Foucault to explore the inconsistencies within the attitudes and claims of the enlightenment, from its anthropocentric genesis to its subsequent creation- taxonomy, one can begin to understand the origins of the societal consciousness that previously disallowed the acceptance of environmental movements like Deep Ecology. Once the faulty foundations of contemporary consciousness are exposed, it becomes increasingly difficult to unknowingly or justifiably dismiss Deep Ecology as easily as it had previously done before.

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