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Deep in the anthropocene

Deep in the anthropocene (the human centred period on Earth), proclamations of environmental catastrophe abound (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000). Human demands on 'the planet's living resources, our ''ecological footprints'', now exceed the planet's regenerative capacity by about 30 per cent' (WWF 2008, p. 2). This devastating assessment is followed by predictions that up to 30% of plant species (SCBD 2002) and 25% of mammals are facing extinction (mainly through habitat loss and over-exploitation; IUCN 2008), and that over 30% of species are at risk of extinction through anthropogenic climatic change (Thomas *et al.* 2004). Despite the threat to biospheric integrity, the overshoot between our ecological (resource) demands and ecological reality is increasing (WWF 2008). The greater the overshoot, the greater the environmental degradation, the greater the loss of diversity and complexity, the greater the risk of global ecosystem collapse. The massive clearance of forest lands, the rapid depletion of oceanic life, the failure to check CO2 emissions, the inability to control human population and consumption are pushing (or have already pushed) the biosphere towards a precarious ecological state. The prospect of this collapse is increasingly associated with notions of scarcity, instability, uncertainty, disorder and chaos, both ecologically and socially (Diamond 2005).

Environmental philosophers assert that hierarchical orderings of the natural world have played a major role in the ongoing human project of dominating nature (Warren 2000, Plumwood 2002, Hall 2011). Philosophical hierarchies of the natural world are often anthropocentric, with humans regarded as superior on the basis of possessing 'uniquely human' characteristics. Non-humans are situated below humans because they 'lack' such attributes. An example from antiquity is the 'great chain of being'. Reasoning humans are at the top of the

chain, followed by animals incapable of reasoning, and insentient plants (Hall 2011). It is a feature of such hierarchies, that they are associated with claims that non-human are purely resources for humans. Lower in the hierarchy of mind and presence, plants and animals are presumed to have no purpose of their own and so their existence is entirely subverted to human ends. This enforces the binary dualism of humans/nature – one existing solely as an instrument for the other (Plumwood 2002). It is also a feature of such hierarchies that human 'superiority' is based upon a partisan assessment made by human beings (Taylor 1981). Humans are only superior because they deem themselves to be so.

Anarchists reject imposed authority, hierarchy and domination and seek to 'establish a decentralised and self-regulating society consisting of a federation of voluntary associations of free and equal individuals' (Marshall 2008, p. 3). Anarchism is therefore a promising political philosophy for undermining the human hierarchy and domination of the natural world and exploring the exclusion and subjugation of the non-human.

I begin with a survey of anarchism's fundamental principles, thorough the eyes of two key anarchist thinkers, Kropotkin and Bakunin. From this foundation I examine a brief selection of some key anarchist writings relating to human–nature relationships. Against the background of Brian Morris's claims that anarchism holds an inherently ecological attitude, I provide a rapid survey of the ever-growing eco-anarchist literature. Using Val Plumwood's eco-feminist work on dualisms and hierarchy as a basis, I analyse the nature of human–non-human interactions in eco-anarchist writings. In conclusion, I advocate that there should be greater focus on human interaction with other-than-human beings and suggest a number of strategies for implementing nonhierarchical relationships.

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Anarchism: authority, hierarchy and power

Peter Marshall's (2008) wide ranging history of anarchism makes it clear that there is no singular anarchist position on political, social or environmental issues. As we may expect from a tradition of radical politics that rejects overbearing authorities and celebrates the freedom of the individual, anarchism is multitudinous. It is a collection of ideas, arguments, theories and calls to action that overlap, concur and conflict. But, in this diversity of anarchist thought there is a unity of purpose. Regarding anarchism as a way of life, an attitude as well as a social philosophy, Marshall (2008, p. 3) draws together some of the common concerns of anarchists:

> All anarchists reject the legitimacy of external government and of the state, and condemn imposed political authority, hierarchy and domination. They seek to establish the condition of anarchy, that is to say, a decentralised and self-regulating society consisting of a federation of voluntary associations of free and equal individuals. The ultimate goal of anarchy is to create a free society which allows all human beings to realize their full potential.

Characterised as a 'moral protest against oppression and injustice . . . between those who wanted to rule and those who refuse to be ruled' (Marshall 2008, p. 3), as a political tradition, anarchism has directed much of its energy towards the problems of the State. In his seminal work *The State*, the influential anarchist thinker Peter Kropotkin (1969, p. 10) characterised the State as a 'whole mechanism of legislation and policing . . . in order to subject some classes to the domination of others'. The State is to be rejected because of this domination and the

territorial concentration of power '*as well as the concentration of many functions of the life of societies in the hands of a few*' (Kropotkin 1969, p. 10, my emphasis). Kropotkin viewed the State as a monolithic entity that restricted the freedom of individuals and communities to determine themselves and that effectively infiltrated and monopolised all human activity. Such a rejection of an oppressive State stands in agreement with another influential anarchist thinker Michael Bakunin, who wrote that 'The state denotes violence, oppression, exploitation, and injustice . . . ' (Maximoff 1953, p. 224). Bakunin regarded the state as an embodiment of violence and domination; a 'negation of humanity', not only because of state led violence and concentrated power, but because of its direct opposition to self-determined freedom and solidarity between human beings.

Understanding power as 'force relations' or the ability to force compliance, power is embodied and crystallised 'in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies' (Foucault 1990, pp. 92–93). Like Foucault, anarchist thinkers recognise that 'power is everywhere', but they focus their criticisms on political and social power which uses force and compulsion to execute actions against the will of others. Fundamentally, Bakunin rejected such concentration of power because of power's ability to corrupt. In his short essay 'Power Corrupts the Best', Bakunin (1867) writes that 'power and the habit of command become for even the most intelligent and virtuous men, a source of aberration, both intellectual and moral'. On this analysis of power, Marshall (2008, p. 45) comments that for anarchists in general, 'Their awareness of the corrupting nature of power is the basis of their criticism of concentrated power and their reluctance to relinquish any power to leaders and rulers'. Anarchists reject political and social power because of its ability to corrupt. Through the use of force and compulsion to execute actions against the will of others, power 'destroys both the executioner and victim of

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power' (Marshall 2008, p. 45). The abuse of coercive power is also criticised because it can lead to domination, which in the Foucauldian sense is a state of complete subjugation in which all resistance is foreclosed (Foucault 1988).

As well as power-problems, the State and its government are rejected because of anarchist suspicions of assumed authority. Marshall notes that in contrast to power as the ability to compel action, authority is the assumption of the right to command and for those commands to be obeyed. As well as its assumptive basis, authority which issues commands (most often in terms of laws) is rejected by anarchists because it is the actual basis of disorder in society. In 'On Order' Kropotkin notes that 'order' is established by authority and force, but that this 'order' results in the domination of the majority by a minority and servitude for the masses.

> Order is an infinitesimal minority raised to positions of power, which for this reason imposes itself on the majority and which raises children to occupy the same positions later so as to maintain the same privileges by trickery, corruption, violence and butchery.
>
> Order is the continuous warfare of man against man . . .
>
> Order is slavery, thought in chains, the degradation of the human race maintained by sword and lash. (Kropotkin 1890)

In these resolute attacks on hierarchical order established by assumed authority, Kropotkin regards the established order as disorder because it is a state of deep disharmony which ultimately causes criminal, violent and destructive activity within society (Kropotkin n.d.). Thus Kropotkin contrasts this (dis)order with the 'disorder' of anarchy. What 'they' call disorder:

> It is the rising of the people against this shameful order, bursting their bonds, shattering their fetters and moving towards a better future.
>
> It is the rebellion of thought on the eve of revolution; it is the upsetting of hypotheses sanctioned by unchanging centuries . . .
>
> Disorder is the abolition of ancient slavery . . . (Kropotkin n.d.)

Whereas anarchy is often associated negatively with disorder and chaos, anarchism as a broad social and political attitude is concerned with rejecting domination and establishing a fair, free and equal society. In this struggle, the fundamental anarchist positions (put forward by Kropotkin and Bakunin and shared by the majority of anarchists) can be very briefly summarised as:

- refusing the state and imposed government;
- condemning all imposed power relations; and
- rejecting the legitimacy of authority and hierarchy – which are viewed as means to domination.

In place of centralised political authority, anarchists advocate the decentralisation (and localisation) of power so that people may govern themselves in a way that allows freedom for all.

Ecologically oriented anarchism

Despite the complete rejection of centralised power, hierarchy and domination within the realm of human society, anarchism has historically had a more ambiguous set of power relations with the natural world. Bakunin (Maximoff 1953, pp.

for reversing the hierarchy which pervades human ecological action. Importantly, these non-instrumental relationships are vital for correcting the rapacious human consumption of other-than-humans. In actively giving over more of the Earth to non-humans, the restoration of natural ecosystems is perhaps the strongest way to hand power back to other species and to provide them with the space to continue their resistance to human domination.

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erarchically with non-humans and thus holds plenty of anarchic promise. The actions of a spontaneous ecological anarchy can be small. Perhaps the best starting point for enacting anarchic relationships with non-humans is to offer meaningful, and continual, thanks and appreciation to the other species which die to support human lives. In a ritualised context, this can take the form of enacted symbolic gestures, e.g. raising up a crop above human heads, or bowing the head in thanks beneath the tree which provides us with oxygen to breathe. Whilst a small and seemingly insignificant act, a symbolic reversal of the hierarchies which have placed plants 'beneath' human beings allows us to embody non-hierarchical relationships with non-humans rather than simply talk about them. Consciously repeating such acts, as well as engaging in dialogue with non-humans (a common feature of many Indigenous peoples interactions with the natural world), is one route to realising the nonhierarchical kinship of humans and non-humans.

Such small acts make way for the larger pragmatic actions needed to properly decentralise our relationship with the natural world, such as the reclamation, conservation and restoration of spaces for free living (or wild) plants, animals and fungi. The conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems is crucial for repealing the dominant instrumental relationships with the natural world, for it involves recognising the needs and purposes of other-than-humans and putting them first. Such instances of altruistic solidarity open up the possibility of ongoing 'non-use' relationships, because the maintenance of these spaces for non-humans (in particular the re-claimed spaces of restoration) rests upon the deep personal involvement of humans. Repeated altruistic involvement with non-humans builds up a relationship of care and responsibility, which resembles a friendship or a kinship relationship between persons. Although anarchists such as Max Stirner may reject a call to morality, situating non-humans in ethical relationships is one of the most powerful methods

88, 90) stressed the perpetual struggle of humanity against nature in order to transcend poverty; 'Man . . . can and should conquer and master this external world. He, on his part, must subdue it and wrest from it his freedom and humanity.' Whilst he recognised that humans are 'part of nature', Bakunin emphasised the uniqueness and separateness of mankind as the only species capable of conscious self-determination. The other components of the natural world were incapable of such action. In Bakunin's eyes, this self conscious human freedom should be directed towards mastery of nature, sacrificing the freedom of nature for the freedom of humanity.

Similar ambiguity exists in the writings of Kropotkin. In order to create a civilised world, Kropotkin depicts the natural world as something that humanity has to grapple with, to fight and to colonise. He argues that humanity has done this in the past and so must ontinue to do so. This conquest is Kropotkin's blueprint for human–nature relationships. In *Conquest of Bread* Kropotkin (1926, p. 4) extols the anthropogenic landscape as superior, domesticated non-humans preferable to their wild-living relatives: 'The wild plants, which yielded nought but acrid berries, or uneatable roots,have been transformed by generations of culture into succulent vegetables, or trees covered with delicious fruits.' In such perspectives, the natural world is depicted as passive and stingy. Without its own volition and purpose it is bettered by being made to serve human ends. This view is founded upon a mechanistic view of the natural world, upon which Kropotkin based his idea of anarchism (Marshall 2008, p. 318).

However, like Bakunin, Kropotkin also locates great value in non-human nature. In particular, Kropotkin is famous for his view of sociality and active cooperation in the natural world. Writing that 'Man did not create society, society existed before Man' (1902), he alludes to the existence of society in the animal kingdom a social organisation that is characterised more by mutual aid and reciprocity than by Darwinian struggle and

competition. As he based his idea of an anarchist social organisation on these principles, it can be argued that Kropotkin greatly valued these non-human societies. Drawing direct inspiration from the animal kingdom also positioned humanity as another animal species, as a part of nature.

From 1906–1917 (along with Alexander Berkmann), anarchist pioneer Emma Goldman published the journal *Mother Earth*, including work by authors such as Thoreau (an inspiration for many eco-anarchists such as Zerzan), who resisted materialism, championed wild nature and verged towards vegetarianism. Goldman (2005, p. 13) does not overly concern herself with the relationship between humanity and the natural world, but in *Anarchism and Other Essays* she claims that 'Anarchism is therefore the teacher of the unity of life; not merely in nature, but in man'. In this line, influenced by the work of Thoreau and contemporaries such as Whitman, Goldman asserts a commonality and unity in all life, both human and non-human.

More problematic in his approach to the natural world is the individualist anarchist Max Stirner (1982, p. 205), who recognised 'no other source of right than – me, neither God, nor the State, nor nature nor even man himself'. For Stirner, humanity has no obligation to be ethical, least of all towards the natural world. Power over others (whether human or non-human) determines right conduct, and by extension the most powerful are entitled to their lot. Power enables possession and this can equally be of an object, a fellow human or an animal. Stirner's view of a human individualism echoes the work Hobbes, whose atomistic society has been criticised for promoting social disconnection, both within humanity and between humans and the wider natural world. Yet in
The Ego and Its Own Stirner (1982, p. 296), briefly expresses solidarity and connection between himself and other-than-humans: 'I sing as the bird sings. That on the bough alights.'

article 'Being Prey', an account of her attack by a saltwater crocodile in the Northern Territory of Australia. Plumwood (1999b) writes that 'Crocodiles and other creatures that can take human life also present a test of our acceptance of our ecological identity' – that is, they challenge us to accept our position as part of a food web, rather than maintaining our position at the top of a hierarchy.

A good second step is to take ourselves away from the domain of philosophy into the realm of direct encounter, to experience the presence of non-human activity and purpose. As Patrice Jones recommends, we should focus our awareness on the active natures of our non-human kin and marvel at their ingenuity. A single hour spent alongside the feeding habits of seabirds, the foraging of our mammalian relatives, or ruderal plants attempting their recolonisation of industrial wastelands may be enough to kickstart the dismantling process. Eventually we may follow Jones (2006, 2009) and Solli (2010) in working collaboratively alongside these non-human actors in our environmental activism.

Although perceptions and behaviour clearly interconnect, 'for attitudes to become definitive they must be cultivated by practice' (Grimes 2004, p. 33). More than anything, we need the construction and the practice of ecologically anarchic relationships to connect with the physical world of plants, animals, rocks, fungi, beetles and water. The actual, realised, everyday interactions between humans and non-humans need to be fully infused with the spirit of anarchy. Anarchic relationships reject the master–slave command– obey paradigm, are decentralised (not centred on the human) and reject domination in favour of freedom.

Entry points into such relationships abound. Ronald Grimes (2002) recommends personal, spontaneous ritualising in an ecological context, in order to take part in non-human experience with a view to deep empathy. Performing with the aim of losing the sense of human superiority, presents a way of behaving het-

erarchy and centralisation leads to ecological corruption; not only the corruption of ecological systems, but the distortion of humanity itself. As Plumwood (2002, p. 98) notes, 'Both dominating and sub-ordinated parties are deformed by centric constructions, not only the obvious sufferer, the one exploited in the relationship.' Humanity is deformed in many ways by its hierarchical ordering and domination of non-humans. In our corruption, we lose sense of ourselves as ecological beings, we lose opportunities for enriching, dialogical, embodied relationships with non-humans.

The remaining question is, how can we go about reversing this corruption? A good place for any anarchist to start is by dismantling hierarchies and anthropocentric accounts of the world. Philosophical hierarchies that cast nonhumans as inferior rely on accounts of the world that portray plants, animals, earth, soil, sky and rocks as insensitive, passive and un-minded. As inert, directionless lumps, their purposes are then easily colonised by human intent. Across the spectrum of environmental philosophy, narratives that promote hierarchy have been found in Platonic, Aristotelian and Enlightenment philosophies as well as in both Christian and neo-Darwinian accounts of creation (Hall 2011). The first step in countering these is to become acquainted with an array of scholarship which demonstrates that, animals (Bekoff 2002, Noble 2006), plants (Trewavas 2005, Hall 2009) and even bacteria (Vertosick 2002) are minded, volitional, agentic beings with their own purposes for existing. More probing anarchists may wish to consider the animist and panpsychic scholarship which contends such qualities of personhood (Harvey 2005) and mindedness (Mathews 2003) also penetrate rocks, winds and sky. To overturn the hierarchy we can also reflect on the reality that human beings are actually prey for a number of animal species, such as lions, crocodiles and mosquitoes. A vivid account of such hunter–prey relationships involving the human as prey is given by Plumwood (1999b) in her

Despite such historical ambiguity, in his collection of essays *Ecology and Anarchism*, Brian Morris (1996) regards anarchy as having an ecological attitude. Morris finds similarities between anarchist theory and the ecological view of naturalists such as Seton andMuir and ecologists like Tansley and Elton. He links anarchist theory to environmental concern, by referring to the principles of decentralisation, heterarchical social organisation and interdependence which he regards as key ideas in the ecology movement. As these ecological ideas are found in anarchism, he claims that anarchism is ecologically oriented. Morris also connects notions of ecological interdependence with anarchist ideas of non-exploitation, but significantly there is little further explanation about how anarchist thought could generate actual ecological attitudes and relationships that are oriented toward the natural world. In commenting upon Kropotkin's notions of reciprocity and mutual aid (both derived from observations of the natural world), like Kropotkin, Morris is concerned with their application in human communities rather than between humans and nonhumans. In terms of their realisation, there is no zone of contact between human and non-human society.

Ecological sensibilities

Murray Bookchin's *social ecology* is one of the most prominent strains of eco-anarchist thought. Social ecology advocates the removal of hierarchy from human society, partly on the basis that scientific ecology recognises a non-hierarchical interdependence between living and non-living beings in nature. Bookchin (like Morris) locates principles of interdependence in nature and transfers them into human–human interactions. In doing so he regards his brand of ecological anarchism as having an 'ecological sensibility'. Social ecology principally targets the hierarchy in human society as Bookchin identifies the hier-

archy between humans as the precursor to human domination. Significantly, Bookchin (1989: 44) regards this human domination as the historical forerunner of our domination of nature:

> All our notions of dominating nature stem from the very real domination of human by human . . .As a historical statement [this] declares in no uncertain terms that the domination of human by human preceded the notion of dominating nature.

In this particular interpretation of history, Bookchin regards the first act of domination to be human–human. From this starting point, the domineering mindset is purported to have then expanded from Homo–Homo relationships to human interactions with the natural world. For this reason, Bookchin prioritises the dismantling of all forms of human–human hierarchy. Therefore, according to Bookchin, all ecological problems would be resolved following an anarchist revolution. Once the position of non-hierarchy has been established between humans, the sensibility would naturally extend itself to the non-human world.

The strength of Bookchin's claim is dependent on the notion of a singular, non-hierarchical organic society which existed before the emergence of hierarchy. The argument of an organic society is supported by selectively presented evidence from contemporary tribal peoples. For the humans in this hypothetical organic society, 'their outlook was distinctly ecological' because they held notions of interdependence with the natural world; 'as part of the natural world. They were neither above nature nor below it, but within it' (Bookchin 1982, p. 5). As seen in the writings of Morris, adopting principles that are borrowed from the natural world is enough to claim that a society is ecological, even if the application of these principles is restricted to human–human interaction.

However, in *The Ecology of Freedom*, Bookchin (1982) briefly remarks on how interdependence and embeddedness within

of their likeness to humans, but because they are our close kin, keen associates and collaborators in the activities of the ecoanarchist movement. Similarly, Solli (2010) describes the construction of hybrid protest collectives against wind farm projects in Norway. In the activist world, Jones (2009, p. 239) makes it clear that these other-than-human kin are in no way lesser than humans. 'Natural anarchists' do not simply talk and talk, they act in their own ways, with their own armouries of 'feet, trunks, teeth and tendrils'. In their authenticity, audacity and intelligence, human beings have much to learn from their other-than-human kin.

Echoing eco-feminist theorists such as Chaone Mallory (2006), Jones (2006, p. 323) argues for the virtue of empathy for all other-than-humans, including the plants, which, as she rightly speculates, are active, autonomous, intentional and intelligent (Trewavas 2005, Hall 2009). In line with Plumwood's call to ethically resituate non-humans, Jones (2006, p. 322) rightly asserts that the most pressing concern of ecological anarchism is to reverse our estrangement with our non-human kin, 'We must recognize and cultivate our relationships with each other, with other animals and with the ecosystems in which we are enmeshed'.

Encountering our kin

As ecosystem collapse is underpinned by authority, hierarchical ordering, centrism and domination of non-humans, eco-anarchist activists must focus on applying the principles of anarchy to our relationships with non-humans. As well as removing hierarchy from human society we must remove it from ecological society. We do this not just for our other-than-human kin, but also for ourselves as human beings. Anarchists have long noted that the concentration of power leads to corruption. In this context, the concentration of power through hi-

a little to include those most like us humans; animals. In an anarchist context, Best (2009: 191) is certainly right to point out that 'While condemning hierarchical domination and professing rights for all, the Left fails to take into account the weighty needs and interests of billions of oppressed animals.' However, by focussing on 'speciesism' solely in relation to animals, he follows other animal rights theorists such as Peter Singer, in their neglect of the ecologically dominant plant kingdom, which underpins all biospheric life (Hall 2011). In his inclusion of animals within the moral domain, plants (and all other other-than-humans) are firmly excluded because they are considered far from human. They are what Peter Singer (1979, p. 92) calls 'a subjectively barren form of existence'. Not only does this set up an animal/plant dualism, as plants are ecologically dominant, it reinforces the problematic dualism of human/nature.

Maintaining all these anthropocentric dualisms from social ecology, deep ecology and animal rights theory is particularly problematic for anarchist theory because of the human centred hierarchies which they perpetuate. A more promising turn in broadly eco-anarchist writings is the work of writers such as Patrice Jones, whose political solidarity with the natural world is framed using predominantly eco-feminist theory. In particular, Jones' work 'Stomping with the elephants: feminist principles for radical solidarity' (2006) and 'Free as a bird: natural anarchism in action' (2009) both situate plants, animals and other non-humans as active anarchist collaborators, working alongside (not beneath) humans to halt the collapse of local and global ecosystems. Jones (2009, p. 238) skilfully dissolves hierarchies between humans and animals by describing animals as 'natural anarchists, sentient beings who neither recognize nor accede to the rules devised by governments'.

The animals and plants that Patrice Jones praises are intelligent, aware, and communicative. For Jones, they are to be valued not because of their utility to human beings, nor because

the natural world was (or is) enacted. Bookchin (1982, p. 49) remarks that pre-literate people 'lived in a kinship relationship' with nature, as part of an animistic culture in which humans and non-humans 'are both subjects – hierarchy and domination are totally absent from their relationship'(Bookchin 1982, p. 98). However, in his discussions of human domination of nature, Bookchin has little to say about these kinship ties and person–person interaction. He presents his historical organic society as one founded on strong kinship ties (between humans), with egalitarianism and parity marking out social relations. Again, it is this human–human solidarity rather than human–nature solidarity which is important in an ecological context.

Bookchin highlights the instrumentalisation of non-humans as a threat to an ecological society but he does not offer any way of connecting human society to non-human society in non-instrumental ways. This is partly as a result of his insistence on the prioritisation of human–human hierarchy and also because of Bookchin's subtle ranking of the human as superior to the nonhuman (Plumwood 1993, p. 15). In his writings, Bookchin (like Morris) retains the humanism of the Enlightenment in his ('ecological') attitude to non-human nature. Although claiming interdependence with the natural world, his earlier work emphasises discontinuity between humanity and the rest of nature, as in the familiar claims of human superiority criticised by Taylor (1981).

> Humans are vastly different from other animals in that they do more than merely adapt to the world around them; they innovate and create a new world . . . A return to mere animality – or shall we call it 'decivilization' is a return not to freedom but to instinct, to the domain of 'authenticity' that is guided more by genes than by brains. (Bookchin 1995, p. 47)

Plumwood (1993, p. 15) argues that this 'Maintains the traditional role of reason as the basis of human difference and identity and the chief justification of human superiority over nature.' As beings thought to lack reason, Bookchin regards nonhumans as implicitly inferior: Bookchin (1982, p. 315) does later assert that 'We slander the natural world when we deny its activity, striving, creativity, and development as well as its subjectivity', but it is unclear whether this completely redresses the established superiority of the human. Humans are still regarded as the only ones capable of society, of reason and intelligence. One significant problem with this is that the denigration of non-human nature as unaware, incapable of freedom, blind, passive and lacking in mental faculties has been a significant factor the human instrumentalisation, colonisation and appropriation of the natural world (see Mathews 1991). In the context of eco-anarchism this human centred hierarchy is very problematic, because even at the most basic level, hierarchy and anarchism do not mix.

Wild primitives and social nature

Perhaps the problem here is with our classification of eco-anarchism. In his recent insightful review of eco-anarchism, Mick Smith (2007) regards Morris and Bookchin more as ecological humanists than as eco-anarchists, because of their focus on the primacy of reason and the priority of the human. Smith (2007, p. 472) identifies a more authentic ecological anarchism in the works of the self-styled anarcho-primitivists who 'deem ''civilisation'' in all its various guises to be inherently destructive to biological and cultural diversity and to individual freedoms' and 'refer positively to a pre-civilised past presumed to have existed before settled patterns of agriculture emerged'. Whilst the boundaries between social ecology and eco-primitivism are not as clearly defined as this classification

> unity, identification and self-realisation to provide a foundation for activist concern for nature . . .

Two problems with this approach to political solidarity with other-than-humans stem from the method of human identification with the Earth as a project of human self-realisation. First, the net is cast far too wide. Identifying our human selves with the entire Earth gives us no way of distinguishing between our political solidarity for coal mines and chainsaws, and our solidarity with grasslands and buttercups. As well as this practical deficiency, there are philosophical problems in the platform underpinning deep ecoanarchism. One of the main problems is that the criteria 'for inclusion are based on similarity to or unity with the human and give poor recognition to nature's independence and difference' (Plumwood 2002, p. 197). Through its basis on human self projection, the deep ecological standpoint therefore retains many of the problems of anthropocentrism and its concomitant human/nature dualism.

This dualism is also maintained by Stephen Best (2009) in his 'Rethinking revolution: total liberation, alliance politics, and a prolegomena to resistance movements in the twenty-first century'. Best's arguments against animal cruelty are both passionate and necessary in the drive to re-situate other-than-humans in ethical terms. Again, the goal of eco-anarchist animal emancipation is promisingly aimed at restructuring the relationships between humans and other-than-humans. However, Best attempts to do so by simply extending human centred criteria for moral consideration towards animals.

Best's (2009) goal is one of 'moving the moral bar from reason and language to sentience and subjectivity' (p. 197). In short, animals are deserving of moral consideration because they are sentient beings; beings like humans that are capable of feeling pain. In effect, Best maintains the priority of the human (and human ethical concerns) and simply extends this

Renewed ecological anarchism

A promising alternative to the Smith's division of eco-anarchism into the camps of social ecology and eco-primitivism is an emerging body of ecoanarchist literature which is moving beyond the dualisms of civilisation/ wildness and humans/nature. This work has been shaped by a variety of philosophical influences, most notably deep ecology, animal rights theory and eco-feminism.

Mark Somma's (2006) 'Revolutionary environmentalism: an introduction' lays forth the principles of deep ecology as formulated by Devall and Sessions (1985) and highlights the challenges thrown down by deep ecologists to reduce consumption and to 'self realise' by expanding our human consciousness to identify with all other beings. Whilst criticising deep ecology for not providing an alternative to capitalism, Somma (2006) champions the political message of deep ecology's bio-centric outlook; that nature has intrinsic value, that nonhuman life has inviolable rights and that biodiversity conservation matters more than consumption. This deep ecological influence is shared with other anarchist writers, including George Bradford (1989) and is notable because the explicit cherishing of all biospheric life appears to finally lead eco-anarchism towards the zone of contact between the human and non-human. Deep ecological anarchism is employed by Somma (2006) as a justification and explanation of the political solidarity between humans and the Earth, enacted by anarcho-activist groups such as Earth First!, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and the Earth Liberation Front. Yet, as Plumwood (2002, p. 196) points out, the deep ecological basis of solidarity with non-humans (as exemplified in the work of Arne Naess) is itself problematic.

> For his account of solidarity, Naess appeals to features of the human self, and to concepts of

suggests (see Watson 1998), for the purposes of this discussion of human centeredness, I will use the framework provided by Smith (2007).

Anarcho-primitivists such as John Zerzan and Derrick Jensen regard civilisation and the idea of progress to be the root of all ecological problems. To combat these roots they broadly advocate the following strategy. First, a return to a more primitive lifestyle – as styled on the 'pre-civilisation' hunter gatherer lifestyles that are hypothesised in Zerzan's (1994) *Future Primitive*. To achieve this, industrial society either requires dismantling, or as Jensen (2005) asserts, it will collapse of its own accord. Active or passive dismantling is the promotion of re-wilding (Jensen 2005). Not only does this involve ripping out basic infrastructure and teaching people how to identify plant foods in the city, it also concerns the 'recognition of experiences of wildness as the inspirational source of individual freedom, a wildness that rejects all attempts to impose a ''civilising'' moral order' (Smith 2007, p. 479).

Ecological anarchists of the primitive persuasion cherish wild places. Their philosophy of re-wilding mirrors that employed by eminent conservation biologists (Donlan et al. 2005) and ecological anarchists often take part in active initiatives for the conservation of wild places. This orientation towards the preservation of wildness (places occupied by non-humans primarily for the purposes of non-humans) is one of the primary strengths of anarcho-primitivist eco-anarchism and other strains of eco-anarchism which promote re-wilding. In seeking out, and revelling in wildness as an antidote to oppressive notions of civilisation and progress, ecological primitivists such as Greenbrier (2006) attempt to re-situate humans as sensual, embodied, wild beings. As humans, rocks, animals and plants are all regarded as interdependent wild beings, there seems to be great promise in this branch of eco-anarchism.

However, not only is re-wilding perhaps an 'uncritical reversal' of the status quo (Plumwood 1993), from the perspective of an environmental culture, rewilding once more misses the zone of encounter between humans and the nonhuman natural world. Wildness as an exemplary principle is not focussed on the construction of ecological relationships that form the bedrock of an environmental culture (Plumwood 2002, Harvey 2005, Heyd 2007). Wildness is primarily concerned with the liberation of humans and non-humans from domestication – a strategy underpinned by a view that civilisation–culture entails domination and suppression of our natural wild state. For Zerzan (1994), becoming wild is going back to our natural state. Becoming wild must therefore entail a rejection of culture–civilisation because they both arose from the domestication and cultivation of plants and animals, that is via the domination of nature (Zerzan 2002).

As well as the practical problem of a world without agriculture leading to the starvation of millions (Chomsky 2005), there are philosophical problems too. Agriculture need not necessarily entail domination. Building upon Foucault's (1988) idea of domination as the foreclosure of resistance, domination must involve straitjacketing and silencing the other. If agriculture pacified the natural world in this way then it could be classified as domineering. But there are many instances of agriculture in which the domesticators and those domesticated engage in active dialogue rather than a human centred monologue of domination. In many Indigenous cultures, which anarcho-primitivists look to for inspiration, domestication and agriculture are pursued as partnerships in which the non-human partners are vocal, active and communicative (Descola 1992, Koha´k 1997, Rival 2001, Harvey 2005, Hall 2009). With this in mind, a wholesale rejection of agri-culture and domestication for wildness is unnecessary, a fact recognised by pioneering anarchist thinkers such as Thoreau.

A major positive to the championing of wildness is the stress on situating humans in sensorial contact with nonhumans. Another advantage of promoting wildness is the implicit advocacy for the cultural and physical space where sensorial contact can be experienced. Despite this, it is unclear whether wildness itself is a suitable framework for engaging with non-humans. In its uncritical reversal of civilisation, the principle of wildness risks backgrounding the social aspect of the natural world. In the Indigenous societies that are such an important inspiration for anarcho-primitivists, social encounters with other-than-humans, in the mode of person to person, situate human and non-human in the relationships that are the foundation of an environmental culture (Descola 1992, Bird-David 1999, Harvey 2005, Rose 2005). In many cultures, social interaction (between beings recognised as relational and intelligent) ensures that the necessary killing of non-humans does not slide into hierarchy, corruption and domination (Plumwood 1999a, Harvey 2005, Hall 2011).

In these Indigenous cultures, a flourishing non-human natural world is not viewed or encountered as wild, but as a network of social and ethical relationships (Detwiler 1992, Descola 1992, Rose 1996, Harvey 2005). In fact, in Aboriginal Australia, the healthy country is viewed as 'quiet' country (country that humans still have active care relationships with), whereas the eroded, damaged landscape is perceived as 'wild' (Rose 1996). Thus the network of social relationships not only allows humans and non-humans the freedom to flourish but it engenders responsibility for the flourishing of the other (Rose 1999, Salmon 2000). These ecological responsibilities engage humans (and their culture) actively and allow us to 'imagine giving more to the world around us than the gift of our mere absence' (Visvader 1996, p. 18).