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The fact of the matter is that every attitude we have had toward nature has actually been an echo and, even more precisely, a reflection of the attitude we have had toward each other, and that there have been as many different views toward the natural world as there have been in society itself in the relationship between human and human.

Our attitudes are entirely a product of our own relationship to each other, our attitudes toward the natural world, but this can be traced back almost to prehistory, to tribal society itself, and we can see the evolution, not only of society, but with society and along with new and different social relationships, different attitudes toward nature. Among so-called 'primitive peoples' the natural world was seen almost as though it were nothing more than a food web. Egalitarian: reflecting the essentially egalitarian structure of so-called primitive society itself. The Algonquins organised in clans, saw the beaver as organised in clans, and saw other animals as organised in clans. Their image of the natural world, reflecting to the degree that their society was egalitarian, the egalitarian nature of that world – the natural world itself – stressed harmony, stressed mutual aid, saw nature not as a competing marketplace in

which all organisms were engaged in a struggle for existence, but as an arena for cooperation, an arena for community.

One has only to go further into the Greek world, for example, and there in the dualism of Greek society itself, in the basic split between master and slave, one witnesses again another attitude toward the natural world, but not one that comes from the natural world itself but one that comes from Greek society. Insofar as that Greek world was split between master and slave, between man and woman, between polis and countryside, so too nature was split between the cultivated and the wild, the orderly and the chaotic. So that the Greeks projected out on the natural world their own vision of their society.

In the medieval world again one finds the natural world organised hierarchically just as medieval society was organized hierarchically. One finds there a king of the beasts because one lives amidst kings, and one finds lowly ants because one lives in a social world built around the labour of lowly serfs. And finally with the emergence of the market economy, where all corporate ties are dissolved, where the guild ties are dissolved, and the clan ties are dissolved, and even the ties created by the extended family are dissolved all into free moving atoms who are buyers and sellers in a jungle called free enterprise, one emerges with another image of the natural world. The natural world too is a jungle of buyers and sellers, prey and predators, and the Darwinian description of it, particularly those who follow Darwin, Huxley and others with their emphasis on the survival of the fittest, with their emphasis on prey and predator, with their emphasis on natural selection, with their view of nature as a jungle, eat or be eaten, reflected exactly the relationships that existed in the 19th century marketplace between capitalists and between the capitalist class and the working class.

Now we are moving into a new era and this is the era of corporate capitalism, of state capitalism, of super planning and super quantification. A quantification which already began to emerge with Galileo and with the rising bourgeoisie with its concern for ac-

cumulation, with its concern for prices, with its laws of supply and demand. And we're creating a new quantified constellation that we call nature. This is a nature again that lends itself to quantification on the assumption that quantification is truth. That what cannot be put into an equation, what does not lend itself to systems analysis, what does not lend itself to rationalised planning and manipulation, numerical comprehension, is not truth, is not nature. We are foisting the paradigm of our society on the natural world and staking out the claim again that nature itself is a type of corporation, that nature itself is in fact a kind of computer, and it works through a reductionism with energy that finally turns complex ecosystems with qualitative distinctions between species and between plants and animals into the movement of energy within a whole system. A kind of plumbing of energy as it were, a new kind of energetics which reflects the new energetics of the corporate system, of the corporate system as a complete ecosystem economically involved in the process of natural exploitation and also of human exploitation.

The very idea that nature is an object to be dominated by man stems ultimately to begin with from the very domination of human by human, and throughout history we have been projecting our social relationships, the way we have visualised our society, onto the natural world just as Heaven was organised in the feudal system along feudal lines, and nature was organized in the feudal system along feudal lines; just as Greek dualism made its own distinctions between wild nature and tame nature, just as so-called early human beings, primitive man, created a more egalitarian system within the natural world that reflected the egalitarian system in the social world. So everywhere along the way we have to function self-consciously with the idea that whenever we talk about nature, we not only have created a second nature called society, but very importantly that in that second nature called society we have always added a social dimension onto that first nature, we have always made as its underpinnings our attitudes and our relation-

ships as the vision that we have of the natural world. We cannot have any social ecology today, we cannot have any biology today that is so free of social interpretation as to be a so-called science. We can state facts that are true, but above all we must always be aware of the fact that whenever we deal with nature we are dealing with it not from our experience with the natural world, not even from the laboratory experience of the natural world, but from our experience in our interaction with each other. And if we live in a society of domination then our attitude toward nature is going to be a domineering attitude as an outlook premise on the supposition that nature itself is mere object of manipulation.

Now we are beginning again in the so called ecology movement, and what I would more properly call the environmentalist movement, to try to examine the natural world within the framework of the given situation as we have it now in society. We live in a world of wars, so we impute war to nature. We live with certain values called profit, so we impute profitability to nature. We live with certain emotions that we emphasise, and we impute these to nature as such without any cognizance of the fact that many of these concepts which we regard as value free are products of our own society and products of our own relationship with each other.

The most striking example in all of this is the whole population issue, and I couldn't think of perhaps a more dramatic example of how we have taken our social views and projected them upon the natural world and then permitted them to bounce off, to reinforce these social views again. We have a population problem only in a certain sense to begin with, and German fascism and fascism generally saw this. As machinery began to replace labour, as labour itself became increasingly superfluous with the advance of technology in the 19th century and then going into the 20th century, the problem of how to deal with masses of unemployed who were restless, how to occupy them, how to keep them from becoming a threat to the social system became one of the most pronounced features of fascism. One does not have to go to Ehrlich and one does not have

transcend the biological, not with a view toward dominating it, but with a view toward bringing a new input into it, and that input is consciousness. We in a sense have a destiny in the biological world, oddly enough, and this is perhaps the most relevant biological goal that we could aim for in our analysis of society. That is that having come out of nature, having come out of the kinship systems of clans, having come out of the sexual division of labour, having come out of age groups, into a new type of territorialism in which people can associate with each other not on the basis of blood ties, not on the basis of sexual ties, but above them on the basis of a genuine community of interests and consciousness.

This can give us a new freedom, and without a free society that can then react upon nature, not to demolish the natural world, not to simplify the natural world, but on the contrary to reconstruct, to help it develop, to promote variety to do in 10 years what it may take nature a million years, to recolonise and still further colonise and variegate the world of life, placing it not in our service – indeed placing nothing in our service, neither thing nor being – but on the contrary developing a new mutualistic relationship with each other and with the entire world of life.

You cannot have biology today without remembering that you have society. You cannot reduce society to biology any more than you can reduce biology to society. Both interact with each other, both have become dimensions of a humanised nature and, hopefully, in Marx's words, a naturalised humanity. And a new balance has to be struck so that the liberation, the freedom that we can introduce into our own society can be returned to nature to enrich the natural world and thereby create an even more substantial stable base for a pacified, a peaceful, a harmonised, natural and social world.

to go to Garrett Hardin. Quite accurately, previous speakers have gone back to Hitler himself, but not so much to Hitler but to a problem that Hitler faced. From the standpoint of German fascism in the 1930s, even though population was declining, even though France was giving bonuses at that time for larger families, Europe was excessively populated. It was excessively populated with respect to the technology that was all around. It was excessively populated when one had 14%, 15%, and 16% unemployed, even though at time the birthrate was going down. Out of this German fascism built a whole demographic system based upon racism which involved the readjustment of population to the realities of the industrial system of the 1930s and, sinisterly enough, to realities which exist to this day. The supposition and the ideological base for all of these concepts which finally led to Auschwitz, which finally led to Bergen-Belsen, which finally led to the gas chambers of Europe in which millions of people were destroyed not only on the basis of ethnic reasons but on the basis of overpopulation, the rationale for that was an image of nature and an image of the natural world and population dynamics in the natural world that was imputed to the social world because of social needs, not because of natural facts.

Human beings will not multiply like fruit flies. Social conditions enter into birthrate just as much as they enter into a death rate. Turn women and to reproductive factories, reduce them to nothing more than domestics of men, convert them into mere machines, biological devices for taking care of the male and procreating a family, and at that particular point under certain social conditions your birthrate may soar. Change the status of women, see them not as objects but a subjects, view them as human beings, give meaning to the life of a woman and even to the life of a man in a family, and the population rate begin to decline, especially if that family has material security, has concerns other than problems of old age and support, is interested not nearly in raising children and being a family for the express purpose of breeding but as a family, as part of a community, to enjoy the culture, to assimilate

the knowledge of that society and hopefully of an emancipated society. So then birthrates, unlike the case of fruit flies, birth rates in human beings are not unresolvable owing to a pair reproducing and then exponentially increasing until you finally have an overcrowded planet and you have to edge into the Atlantic and Pacific oceans or whatever oceans happen to be adjacent to your continent. Change the social conditions materially, change the spiritual conditions, change the cultural conditions and a birth rate will go down.

The sinister aspect of a popular, purely biological approach to human birth rate is not that we are dealing with biological facts when we discuss human beings as being fruit flies. The sinister aspect of it is that we are dealing with social facts. What would it mean if a birthrate were not diminished owing to progress and cultural conditions, owing to the emancipation of women, owing to the improvement of economic conditions? What would it mean to reduce the birthrate then? What if the birthrate had to be reduced or an argument were cited to reduce the birth rate for ecological reasons under present social conditions? The logic of that would be totalitarianism. The logic of that would be a population bureau as Erlich has essentially suggested. It would be triage. Don't think only of the lifeboat ethic, think of the famous triage system which the paddocks borrowed from the army. The walking wounded who can be kept on a side, the near dead who should be permitted to, die, and those who you should concentrate on because if you work on them you have a chance of rescuing them. Applied from the field hospital to demographic theory this turns out to be one of the most sinister techniques, a social technique, not a biological fact. A social technique for dealing with population.

So population is not a neutral biological fact. It is not merely a matter of education, because how can you educate people in the third world, for example, who are literally on the edge of starvation if not actually starving? How can you educate them into various practices of birth control when the primary needs that they have

very nuclear basis of society itself, the family, the commune, the community, on its most local level.

It would mean creating, in a sense, ecological structures, structures in which there are no kings and there are no lowly ants. No kingly beasts, no lowly ants, no kingly lions, no lowly ants. It would mean a new regard for human individuality, a recognition of distinctions between people, of differences in potential which are not hierarchically organised, but which in fact take on the form of a gestalt in which everyone has to contribute or can contribute what we today would normally regard as failings to the society. One can go back for example to the winter Indians. Among them there is no such thing as a village idiot. There is no such thing as a cripple. There is no such thing as a lunatic amongst them, rather each one has something to really contribute to the society, is touched in some way by some degree of uniqueness and insofar as it doesn't affect the harmony of the society, is not ranked pyramidally as above or below but nearly as part of the group as a whole. It's an entirely different sensibility, an entirely different way of thinking.

Weakness has its attributes; strength has other attributes. Intelligence or quickness of mind may be one attribute, wisdom may be another, craftsmanship may be a third, but none is superior to the other and from that point of view the very pyramidal ranking with which we organize reality in our everyday experience dissolves into a gestalt, into a harmonious integration of many different features of individuals so that each pools into the common fund a unique individuality called the community itself through their own uniqueness as individuals. The problem with biological determinism, of trying to reduce everything in our culture or most things in our culture, from population to emotions, from family structure to class structure, to genetic material, to the morphological apparatus of the individual, this reductionism validates the status quo, it accepts the given and fixes it eternally in the genetic material of humanity. The essential achievement of human beings and ultimately their essential destiny, as it were, is their ability to

understand, grasp all the conditions of life around us. This implies the decentralisation of our cities and it implies the decentralisation of our technologies, both with a view toward making it possible for all of us to control and understand how we interact with nature through our technologies, but also that we can control these technologies directly, completely comprehend all their aspects, or as many or enough of their aspects so that we can form a judgment about them, form an opinion about them, and have something to say about what their destiny would be.

It means for us, in addition, more passive systems of technology which can best be utilised on a decentralised basis: solar energy, wind power, methane digesters, and with that along with such sources of energy, organic gardens in our cities, around our cities, and breaking up our cities, not into distant and far removed homesteads or hamlets but real communities where we can get to know each other, where in terms of population, where in terms of the very geometry of these cities it is possible in the old Hellenic sense that you can take the community in in a single view, as Aristotle would put it, in the politics. It means also, not only these new technologies, a new integration of town and country, of technology and agriculture. Small is beautiful in Schumacher's words, I would add small is indispensable to our survival. It would mean not only that, it would also mean the elimination of domination as a mode of human operation, as a mode of sociation, as a mode of interrelating with our fellow human beings. That elimination of domination is not only a classless society such as the Marxist would have us fight for, it means even more significantly domination within the family, the domination of the young by the old, the domination of women by men, not only the domination of man by man and the factory, in the office, in the academy in whatever. It means not only the abolition of exploitation in its economic sense, it means the abolition of domination in its spiritual sense, and with that we would have to go not back to the factory, we'd have to go much further, much further than Marx would have us go, down to the

consist not only of getting food, but even the simplest and only pleasures, as Gandhi pointed out long before anyone else, was to engage in sexual activity? They have no TV, they have no movies, they have none of those marvellous instruments for the pursuit of happiness that marked the first world. Gandhi's understood that about India decades ago, pointing out that if you want to solve our population problem please solve the material conditions that underpin the growth in population in India. The fact is that there is general neglect. The fact is that population soared during the period of the Industrial Revolution almost 170 years ago, even when tuberculosis was pandemic and the death rate began to soar in all the great cities of Europe, particularly of England, yet population continued to grow. Because life itself was spiritually empty, because life itself had no meaning, because the social conditions of life were impoverishing to the spirit and impoverishing materially. And it's not a recent fact to be accredited strictly to Barry Commoner, it's an old demographic theory called the Theory of Demographic Transition, that as you improve the material conditions of a community, as you change the status of women – and this represents a new dimension – as you even change the status of children in the community and what their purpose is, then population will begin to decline, or will become stabilised, or the rate of increase will begin to decline and finally there will be population stability.

So we are not talking when we discuss population of a natural fact alone, and to reduce population dynamics to society, population dynamics to biology, is not simply an act of reductionism of the most vulgar sort but has the most sinister implications in terms of a lifeboat ethic, in terms of a triage system, and ultimately, and let us not kid ourselves about this, in terms of an Auschwitz, in terms of a Bergen-Belsen, in terms of the ovens and the gas chambers of German fascism. And you do not have to be a fascist to provide a stepping stone to fascism. Liberalism has provided more stepping stones to fascism in the form of state control, in the form of state interference, in the form of centralisation of authority, in the form of

disarming populations, in the form of creating more and more bureaucracies than anything the fascists have done until they finally came to power themselves. You can be the most well-intentioned person in the world and still create this type of stepping stone toward extreme reaction.

Now let me reverse the picture. Let us say that it were magically possible to reduce the American population from 200-odd million to about 100 million. We finally fulfilled every hope of the population bombers, if you like, or the neo-Malthusians, if you like, or the ZPG demographers, if you like. I submit to you that if you did that you would no more diminish the ecological crisis today in the United States than if you double the population over what it is today. Our society is a market society, a society built around buyers and sellers. Its whole rationale is grow or die. Despite the whole literature around limits to growth, its most essential purpose is to produce for the sake of production because if you do not produce, even if you don't know what you're producing, you will perish because your competitor will swallow you up. And you don't need a free market economy to do that: it happens between the best monopolies. And it happens not only between the best monopolies but study this petroleum situation and you'll find that it happens between the best cartels.

So cut the population in half and the whole thrust of the society will be that if you have two cars, you should have three, and if you have a colour television set in every single room, you should have one in every corner, and if finally you have three or four coats, be safe, have five or six. And if you don't consume it, the so-called Department of Defense will, and if the Department of Defense doesn't consume it, it will be the broker for Israelis and Arabs, for African states, and Latin American military dictatorships to consume it for you. The Mesabi Range will operate full-steam, the marketplace will burgeon, prices will soar, the factories will boom, with or without people in them, even with massive unemployment, but growth will take place.

planet, and that means above all our society so that we will be living in a harmonised relationship with the natural world. Fundamentally that means we have to develop a society in which we live in a harmonised relationship with each other. An ecological society ultimately is one in which domination, which has no meaning in ecology, classes which have no meaning in ecology, go to a food web and tell me what is the kingly animal and what is the lowly animal, all of the components of the food web are interdependent. So too in society we have to eliminate those very castes, those hierarchies, and those systems of domination as well as exploitation which will lead to a harmonised society and with that harmonised society we will have developed not only the social relationships but the spiritual and cultural equipment to project out on the natural world a harmonized relationship between humanity and nature.

As long as we have domination in this society we will try to dominate nature. As long as we have a market society, where production exists for the sake of production, we will turn nature into natural resources and mine these natural resources and simplify nature until we make the planet uninhabitable for advanced forms of life. Until such time that we homogenise and quantify, reducing forever to a lower common denominator what things have in common, ignoring their differences, ignoring their qualitative distinctions, this whole mentality of the buyer-seller relationship, this whole mentality of a moneyed society, then too we will deal with nature, not only as resources, but as sources of energy and undermine all the distinctions within the natural world.

If we were to follow through what it means to produce an ecological society that would be in balance with the natural world we would have to work with certain definite assumptions. First of all there can be no domination, if people cannot directly control the society in which they live, they cannot take in in a single view the conditions of their own social existence. And what I'm presenting here is no more than the Hellenic attitude, that we have to think small, think on a human scale so that we can begin to comprehend,

I wish to make this defence of qualitative science. I wish to invoke the rights of intuition. I wish to invoke the insights of what might be called your seventh sense, and demand that they have an authority quite equal to that and at times even superior to that of what would be called the purely mathematical paradigm. I've stressed that I believe this world, as one who has been deeply concerned with ecology and not just environmentalism, can well be undermined by simplifying it. The biggest problem we face right now, if there is to be any nature mathematical or qualitative, if there is to be any biological fundament for what we call society, at least for soil that will give us food that is qualitatively superior, at least an atmosphere that is breathable, at least a flora and fauna around us that is not only aesthetically refreshing but biologically and socially renewing, is to actually go to work on the society itself. The problem is not so much our understanding of nature as it is our understanding of each other. If there is any intrinsic good in the fact that we as conscious creatures of nature can act upon nature, to diversify the environment, to enrich it, to fulfill the whole thrust of biological evolution, which has been for life to assume so many different forms that it can colonise almost every area of the planet, it's very atmosphere itself and some of its hottest springs, cover the whole surface of the earth with a sheet of life with what we call a biosphere. If there is any intrinsic good in that intent, in that goal, then we have to try in some way or other to harmonise our own relationship with each other and to respect the diversity of society itself, its potential for diversification, its potential ultimately for liberation. It means that if we are going to have a sound ecological relationship with nature we need an ecological society, and that is what social ecology is all about.

Fundamentally it means this: not that we accept the existing conditions and merely try to analyse them, not that we work with a methodology that assumes that what is here must be here and how we going to manipulate it, use it, either make it better or beneficial or less harmful, but how we are literally going to change this

The mystery in America, by the way, about the idle factories is that they've simply moved them over to Taiwan, and they moved them over to Hong Kong where labour is cheaper. They've moved them over to the Near East or they've moved them over or are in the process of selling new ones to China and to Russia and what have you. But the basic fact is that that growth will take place if you brought the American population down to 50 million, and with that growth would occur the same ecological dislocations, the same ecological disequilibrium, the same pollution, the same waste that marks our economy today, and marks most economies in the world today, particularly in the West but no less so almost everywhere else in the world to one degree or another.

So what I'm getting at is that if we cannot deal with population dynamics, and when I speak of population dynamics I can talk of almost any other biological dynamic, we cannot deal with these dynamics and we cannot form our vision of nature as though we were passively dealing with a scientific fact or scientific phenomenon. We are really projecting our views everywhere along the way: our market economy, our patriarchal society, our class society, our whole system of hierarchy, and our whole system of domination onto the natural world, and then we go back to the natural world and mine it to reinforce the very things we've projected on it in the first place. That is the supreme irony, that is the real feedback of what is called environmentalism today, and biological determinism.

Let me stress a very important fact here, that we don't have to be polluters to undermine this planet. We have only to simplify it, we have only to replace soil by sand, we have only to replace vegetation by concrete we have only to replace trees by steel buildings or reinforced concrete structures eating up our best arable land, we have only to spread over, however thinly, this planet and simplify it. Breaking down complex ecosystems and reducing them to simple ecosystems, turning the organic into the inorganic to undermine the natural basis for life on this planet. We can get every gizmo or

every widget you could think of, and stick it into any car you like, put it in any smokestack you wish, and yet as we go around increasing or changing the ratio of gases in the atmosphere, turning the oceans into a barren wasteland and, without even polluting, building our structures along shores and destroying vital estuaries, forever simplifying the planet and we will have undermined at least a natural basis for any type of social life.

This simplification is no less important than the amount of pollution to which we are exposed and the amount of pollution that we are creating. A second feature which is terribly important in my eyes, and which I'd like to stress, is that we who come out of a quantified, financial society in which numbers have never been more important (whether they be statistics or stock market reports) stemming out of that mentality and applying that to nature and calling that science, as it were, may well find that we have lost hold of qualitative truths which cannot be reduced to statistics, which cannot be reduced to energy flow, which cannot be reduced to equations. Our existing science, far from being value free, is not only very much a product of our own social relations as we project them upon nature, but even in its methodology represents a very limited vision of this planet and of experience. I feel very strongly that men like Goethe and Rudolf Steiner, in spite of the current trend today toward the mathematical paradigm, are correct in stressing that there are qualitative aspects of nature, that there are qualitative aspects of experience. Aspects which cannot be reduced to equations, aspects which cannot be quantified, that are as profoundly true, if not truer,than those that can be quantified.

It is only since Galileo's time that we have suddenly put on a pair of glasses which we call mathematics and the mathematical paradigm, and in which we have excluded everything that we cannot see with those glasses. Not only do we have social presuppositions to our image of nature, we also have philosophical presuppositions for our methodologies. Quantitative science has not said the last word. Mathematical paradigms are not the culminating conclu-

sion of human knowledge and the human experience, and insofar as we coming out of a completely quantified world in which human resources are literally statistics and census tables, in which nature reduced to natural resources is quantified in so many barrels of oil, so many tons of iron, in that world we have projected for ourselves a very limited view of nature itself as being nothing but the quantifiable, and what is not quantifiable is unreal. I submit this to be false. I submit that just as an ecosystem is not simply a flow of energy to be encompassed purely by systems analysis, valuable as many of these mathematical tools may be, I argue that there is in nature itself distinct qualitative differences between species, plants and animals, the organic and the inorganic, humans and also even between those individuals themselves.

There is nothing more revealing for anybody who has a quantitative mentality than to read Roger Williams' work 'Biological Individuality', nothing more compelling to shake your faith in what is the minimum daily requirement you are supposed to have of vitamin A, B, C, D, or whatever, for what is regarded as the normative stomach, or the normative liver, or the exactly correct electrocardiogram, than to read that work and see for yourself the immense variety that exists not only between species but within a species, within same age groups of the same ethnic background, and even the same social background. One of the most compelling things we are fighting for today is the recognition of that individuality, the recognition of that diversity, not its subsumption. Not its reduction into quantities that are manageable purely on the basis of an already prejudged and preaccepted philosophical premise. I would ask you too to read Burtt's 'Metaphysical Foundations of Science' to see how science itself, which we accept as holy truth in its quantified mathematical form, actually is built around fakeness philosophy and marks a reaction to Aristotelianism and also marks a very distinct bias, namely that the world is mathematical and what is not mathematical is not of this world.