

# Philosophy of Freedom

From the Science of Logic to Dialectical Naturalism

Usufruct Collective

PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM  
FROM THE SCIENCE OF LOGIC  
TO DIALECTICAL NATURALISM



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# Introduction

This essay will reason through a dialectical naturalist philosophy/worldview that develops from the general movements and determinacies of the *Science of Logic*, to natural philosophy, to social philosophy, to ethics, and politics. This essay will argue that dialectical naturalism— a philosophy initially developed by Murray Bookchin with significant influence from Hegel, Marx, and Kropotkin— is a worldview that is in harmony with the true and the good that can help us reason through plural wholes, parts, relations, social conditions, and possibilities towards practically changing the world through good processes towards good ends (creatively adapting universals to plural, particular, and unique contexts accordingly). Dialectical naturalism, as a whole is a system, is constituted by specific kinds of developmental/differentiating/unifying reasoning, ontology, and ethics. The spreading and development of dialectical naturalism can inform the ways we think and act and in turn be informed by further reasoning and practices to become more coherent.

This philosophical worldview of dialectical naturalism will be developed through the following order of operations. First, it will begin with a condensed rearticulation of the general movements and determinacies of the *Science of Logic* (with some slight addendums in regards to ecology and the good). However, It is important to note that, “No general account of dialectical reason can be a substitute for reading Hegel’s works on logic,” as “Hegel’s *Science of Logic* is dialectical reason in its most elaborate and dynamic form,” (Bookchin 2017). This foundation will be followed by a section moving from the *Science of Logic* to nature and natural philosophy. This prior section will be a bridge to a section on natural and ecological development more broadly. After the above, there will be a section on spirit and nature. Then there will be a section on social philosophy (in the sense of second nature as will be defined later on). The final section will be on the ethical life, the good life, the good place, and the development of the above including related political and economic dimensions/extensions thereof. This final section will move from social nature+potentiality+needs to the good life and the good place, social+ecological freedom and flourishing, as well as related means and ends. The final section will be followed by concluding remarks on the whole of the worldview developed (that can potentially help contextualize the next readthrough from the beginning to the end).

While this essay will in large part be working with the interplay between the philosophical worldviews of Bookchin and Hegel, this essay will also include unique lines of argumentation and will be informed by multiple sources, thinkers, as well as historical and contemporary social organizations+social constellations— enriched and glued together by a unique synthesis. And while this development of Dialectical Naturalism keeps all the necessary and sufficient features thereof, there will be aspects of this development of dialectical naturalism that differ from Bookchin.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> While this essay mostly agrees with Bookchin (and in fact agrees with what are arguably THE most crucial features of his worldview), there are some disagreements as well. To see core disagreements this essay has with Bookchin, see “A Friendly Critique of Murray Bookchin’s Politics”. In addition to such political critiques, this essay disagrees with some of Bookchin’s critiques of Hegel— but rather than spelling them out here, it is best for the reasoning to un-

The complexity of the philosophy espoused in this text, while likely to be out of the comfort zone of many, is indeed graspable to those less familiar with philosophy and political philosophy. However, this text will be a struggle in certain respects for both those familiar with the subject matter and those new to the subject matter.<sup>2</sup>

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fold itself. The differences in regards to evaluation of Hegel's notion of the Absolute will be apparent to those familiar with Bookchin's *"Philosophy of Social Ecology"*.

<sup>2</sup> However, people will get more out of this text if they are familiar with the subject matter and the sources cited. Given the scope of this synthesis, there are some radically condensed arguments and positions from said sources at times.

# The Science of Logic

*“The Logic...seeks to provide an immanent, presuppositionless derivation of the basic categories of thought and being. This derivation of the categories is ‘presuppositionless’ because it takes for granted no specific rules of thought and, indeed, is preceded by the act of setting aside all our familiar determinate assumptions about thought and being,” (Houlgate 2006).*

## Doctrine of Being (Hegel 1999, Hegel 2010)

Being without any determinateness is indeterminate being that “has no diversity within itself nor any with a reference outwards. It would not be held fast in its purity if it contained any determination or content which could be distinguished in it or by which it could be distinguished from an other,” (Hegel 2005). However, being without any determinations, by not having any determinations, passes into nothing. And nothing has an “absence of all determination and content – undifferentiatedness in itself,” (Hegel 2005). Nothing, by having the same content as indeterminate being passes into indeterminate being. Being has passed into nothing, and nothing has passed into being. And this coming to be and ceasing to be of being into nothing and nothing into being passes into becoming. Being and nothing are shown to be “absolutely distinct yet equally unseparated and inseparable” and are united in becoming (Hegel 2010). Being and nothing are sublated into becoming, and through this sublation: being is becoming and nothing becomes a processual negativity– through which being is processual and coming to be and ceasing to be. Negativity becomes part of the process of being in its movement of becoming.

\*Sublation is the negating and preserving that raises what is preserved to a ‘higher level’ in some respect. Sublation happens throughout the elaboration of the *Science of Logic* and the movement from indeterminate being to the absolute and the absolute idea via successive movements and moments in the doctrine of being, doctrine of essence, and the doctrine of idea.

Determinate being is being with quality. As revealed through the being-nothing-becoming dialectic, determinate being is qualified by becoming (and differentiates through becoming). From being as becoming, there is being with at least some determinate quality through its negation and becoming. Determinate being exists in relation to what it is not. Determinate being is what it is through its own becoming, determinateness, and not being what it is not, as well as through its relation to what it is not. And the negation of determinate being is itself negated through its becoming.

Determinate being, through determinacy, through becoming and negation, negation of negation, and its return to itself becomes self-related. This is a relation of quality to quality through its becoming and differentiation. In the self-relatedness of determinate being to itself, determinate being is something. Something is what it is through its relation to itself, relation to the becoming that constitutes it, the becoming that it gives rise to, and the other that it is in relation to. Something is being in relation to other (‘being for other’) and is something through not being what it is not. Something, through its negation, becomes other– and this other is a something that itself,

through its negation becomes other. Here there is something and other; but the limit of each is the limit of the other– and each is only what each is through becoming+determinateness as well as their self-relations and relations to other. Something is the other of its other; something and other each mediate each other. Something can only be something through its self-relation to itself, its relationship to other, and it being other than its other (something is by extension being within itself and being for other). This process of becoming other is becoming other than itself and other than other and is a process of change (Houlgate 2019a). Change generates what something is through self-relatedness in and through its movements, negations, determinateness, and relations.

Something is what it is through its determinateness/qualities, its relation to other/that which it is not, something and another’s negativity/becoming, and its self-relatedness– and the preserving of its self-relatedness in relation to all of the above. “Something is in-itself in so far as it has returned from the being-for-other back to itself,” (Hegel 2010). Something undergoes determination in relation to other; and in this determination in relation to other, something changes and is reconstituted– which becomes part of the constitution of something which becomes part of its further determinations (Houlgate 2019b). This happens to something and other in relation to each other– but each something and other are limited; the limit being what such a something is that preserves itself and makes it distinct from other in relation to other. The limit of something that makes something what it is: is the limit of something and other.

The relationship of something to its limit is finitude. That which is limited and finite has an ending. If there is only finitude, then there is absolutized finitude to infinity. In something ceasing to be itself ceasing to be, it becomes another finite something– which then ceases to be and becomes another finite something. But this series of finite somethings is its own limit– its own finitude. What is other and beyond each finite something becomes another finite something endlessly. The finite, and what is beyond it, each relate to each other and each relate to themselves in their other; the affirmative of each contains the negative of each and each relates to itself through the other by moving beyond themselves (Houlgate 2019c). This movement of ceasing to be, becoming other, and then continuing in one self-related process through self-related negativity is the ‘true infinite’ (in which there are finite moments in this self-related-process). In such true infinity, being relates to itself in its negation through the other– an infinity within a finite something through its self-relation that itself has finite moments. “Since there is negation in this being, the latter is existence; but, further, since the negation is essentially negation of the negation, self-referring negation, it is the existence that carries the name of being-for-itself,” (Hegel 2010). But as a self-relating process: being-for-self has finite moments which are “being-for-one” (in the sense of being-for-one moment thereof). And in this movement of the moments of being-for-self through its difference and negation, we get the one.

But one retains its self-relation while excluding and in that exclusion it both qualifies as well as relates to another one– an immanent process which continues onwards to give us the one and the many (Houlgate 2019d). “The One passes into a plurality of ones–repulsion–and this otherness of the ones is sublated in their ideality– attraction,” (Hegel 1999). The movement of repulsion (creating many ones) and attraction (the unity and relation thereof) of the one and the many give us a field that is both continuous with due discreteness. Continuity of units that are: separate from each other, with discreteness, in tandem with continuity, and external to what they determine is quantity (Houlgate 2019d). Any determinate quality of something always has related quantitative dimensions, just as any determinate quantity of something has qualitative

dimensions. At specific thresholds, change in quantity becomes a change in quality. The measure of something is the constitutive unity/ratio of quality+quantity of something. The measure of something is qualitatively determined quantity– and of qualities and quantities accordingly.

Something is determined as a unity of quality, quantity, and relations thereof– including relations to self and relations to others. The doctrine of being shows that there is a mediated unity through which something is what it is as distinct from something other; but something, others, and measures of something and others keep changing with new qualitative/quantitative relations giving rise to new determinacies (and new qualitative/quantitative relations and new measures). Measure, in tracing changing qualities, quantities, somethings, others, and relations reveals the lack of stability of measure and the measure relations of quality and quantity; and therefore passes over into essence– the overall movement of being and determinacy that comprises all being and determinacy as moments thereof and determines all determinacy accordingly.

## **Doctrine of Essence (Hegel 1999, Hegel 2010)**

Essence “posits itself in the following determinations: I. As simple essence existing in itself, remaining in itself in its determinations; II. As emerging into existence, or according to its concrete existence and appearance; III. As essence which is one with its appearance, as actuality,” (Hegel 2010).

Essence determines other determinacies and the determinacies of essence are of determined determinacy (Winfield 2012). Essence is only what it is through its negation/becoming, determinateness, relations, differentiation, mediation, and reflection. Essence has unity and identity through its self-related negativity and differentiations. Essence is what it is through a movement of reflection: in which relations of something and others (and the relation of essence to something and others) are moments of its own relation to itself through its differentiation. The movement of negativity is what essence is– rather than essence being some static, non-reflective, immediate substrate.

Differentiation of something constitutes its identity– identity is what it is through its differentiation. Differentiation posits a plurality of determinacies and movements thereof. Such plurality of differentiated determinacies have relations and oppositions to each other– each are what they are through their relations to each other (and what each are not). Through processuality, determinacy, and relationality (including self-related negativity and through relations to others) contradictions emerge. And only through negativity can something be posited (determined as a determined determinacy). Contradictions are both generated by and constituting determinations. Through contradictions, determinations pass over into grounds for further determinations, differentiations, relations thereof, oppositions, contradictions, and further grounds for further determinations.

“Something is... only in so far as it contains contradiction within it, and moreover is this power to hold and endure the contradiction within it,” (Hegel 2005). While there are such things as incompatible contradictions: contradictions are not inherently incompatible with each other. In fact, contradictions determine the determinacy of every determination and every something. Through negativity and relationality, each determination develops its own contradiction– and this contradiction is generative of its movement. “Every determination, every concrete thing, every Notion, is essentially a unity of distinguished and distinguishable moments, which by virtue

of the determinate, essential difference, pass over into contradictory moments,” (Hegel 2005). Every determination of something is in some sense also the determination of that which something is related to and by extension any determination of something is also the determination of others; something is mediated and mediating that which it is in relation to– both grounding others and grounded by others.

Determinacy reflected into essence is grounded by essence. If essence is ground and grounded as a purely internal relation, then this self grounding is insufficient to ground determinacies and insufficient to ground essence as determining determinacies. The determined determinacies grounded by essence in turn ground essence as determining determinacies. Essence cannot ground itself as a purely essential+internal relation; as to be both conditioning and to be conditioned is to exist. For essence to determine determinacies that are conditioned by essence that are also conditioning essence as well as other determined determinacies of essence that themselves are conditioned and conditioning: means that essence exists+posits existence and existents. Existence is posited+grounded by essence, grounds further grounds, and grounds essence as grounding what it grounds.

Externality and determined determinacies of essence are needed for essence to be the ground of its reflections and itself and for essence to have any reflective determinacy whatsoever– and this externality is existence. The insufficiency of self-grounding of essence as a purely internal relation to essence unfolds into a plurality of distinct yet related determinacies and conditions. Existence is thus immanently posited from the movement of reflection of essence and is grounded by essence while in turn grounding essence as grounding determinacies. The unity of differentiated, distinct, and related conditions and determinations constitutes existence; a unity of differentiated and interacting processes/moments/determinacies that are conditioned and conditioning. Just as essence posits the externality of existence; externality of existence must have due internality of essence that determines its determinacies– each requires the other to exist and each grounds the other. Existence, including differentiations thereof, is a determined determinacy of essence just as essence and its reflections exist (and are themselves given such determinacy by existence which essence posits).

The self-related immediacy of existence is richly mediated with due differentiation and plurality of existents, conditions, determinacies, and relations. From the *Science of Logic* up until here we can derive processuality/becoming/negativity, determinacy, relationality (including to self and others), something, others/plurality, quantity, measure, reflective essence, the movement of contradictions and determinations, existence and conditions, conditioned by and conditioning webs of determinacies and relations.

Existence is qualified by all the above dimensions of the *Science of Logic* thus far– and as the *Science of Logic* develops, will be further qualified. However, there are distinctions and connections between some existent thing’s essence, some existent thing’s existence, the form of something and its contents, wholes and parts, the thing and its properties, force and expression, as well as what a thing is and how it appears, as well as the inner and outer dimensions of something. Essence appears just as appearance is of essence. That which exists has form and content mutually which mediate each other; content can only be through form just as all form has content. The processual differentiated unity of form and content have related wholes and parts that compose them– which exist in relation to each other as well as to other wholes and parts. Things, with due essence, existence, form, and content, wholes, parts, and processuality/determinacy/relationality: by extension have properties– and those properties exist through being determinacies of things.



Things appear through their properties. Things and properties have forces and expressions which generate further forces and expressions and also relate to other things and properties as well as their forces and expressions. The inner only exists through the outer and the outer only exists through the inner. And all of the above are part of a unity that includes essence and existence, form and content, wholes and parts, things and properties, force and expression, inner and outer dimensions thereof. Actuality is the whole of all of the above including the unity and whole of essence and existence as well as reality and appearance thereof. Actuality also exists in various modalities: there is what is possible abstractly regardless of conditions, what is really possible given conditions, and what is necessary given all mediations, determinacies, and relations. These modalities are internal to actuality; actuality includes its own potentiality. The movement of actuality is also the movement of its real potentiality. Actuality and potentiality continuously posit each other. Existent beings, relations, and constellations thereof exist through relations to other existential beings, relations, and constellations thereof– encompassing the whole web of existential relations, determinacies, and existence. For the determinacies of the doctrine of essence to relate to each other and interact, there must be a unity of this whole web of relations and determinacies– which is substance.

The whole of substance is not a mere static substrate; it is the self-moving, differentiated, and enduring whole that is the unity and field of all relations, determinacies, and determinations including all of existence and essence. Substance as a whole has its own attributes (including other substances which are determinacies of substance as a whole). In this movement there are relational causes and effects; but a cause is only a cause through its effect just as an effect is only an effect through its cause– and “Causality is conditioned and Conditioning,” (Hegel 2010). There is reciprocal causality between cause and effect, a thing and that which it is related to, and between determinations mediated by and mediating other determinations.

In a thing determining itself, it has self-determination. The whole of substance reveals itself to be such a self-developing and self-differentiated Whole– where all becoming, determinacies, and relations develop through the self-development of the Whole. The determinations within and between the differentiations of such a whole are moments of the self-determination of such a Whole. While determinations of and between wholes, parts, and relations are sublated into self-determination of the Whole, such determinations are moments of the self-differentiation of such a whole relating to itself and determining itself as a unity-in-diversity. Each determination is a moment of self-determining whole conditioned by and conditioning other determinations.

## **Doctrine of the Idea (Hegel 1999, Hegel 2010)**

From the doctrine of being and the doctrine of essence and all their movements, we have in some sense been dealing with the concepts thereof. Rather than assumed, being, essence, their determinations, and concepts thereof have been developed from indeterminate being onwards in the doctrine of being and doctrine of essence.

The doctrine of the idea reasons through self-determined determinacy which begins with subjectivity and by extension the concept, followed by judgement, and then the syllogism; then self-determined determinacy moves into objectivity with related mechanism, chemism, and teleology– and then moves into truth as a unification of subjectivity and objectivity (Hegel 2010, Winfield 2012). The concept of the concept is itself universal in character: Concepts

determine themselves and differentiate themselves through their universality. The universal first appears as abstract. However, even such abstract universality of the concept and the universal is a particular universal. Additionally, any particular/particularity has its own related universality that determines it and composes it– and any particularity/particulars without universality/universals would lack determinate content that make them what they are. Universality and particularity are mutually needed for each to have determinate content. Universality and particularity also concretize in individuals (each individual being a unity of universality and particularity through negativity, differentiation, determinateness, and relations to self, others, conditions+possibilities, etc.). “Concrete universality contains its particularization and applies to an individuality that contains the particularization that binds it to the universal,” (Winfield 2012). Within the self-movement of the absolute and the concept, universality, particularity, and individuality are interrelated in such a way that each of the above mediates and is mediated by each other.

The self-developing Whole of processes/determinacies/relationality and reasoning through the above is a process that includes universality, particularity, and individuality as mutually qualifying and related. Judgements are subject-predicate relations where there is a universal determination relating universality, particularity, and individuality with related content. Judgements have universality, particularity, and individuality as related distinctions and dimensions thereof (not mere “empty ps and qs”). Syllogisms can sublate judgements by connecting predicate and subject of a judgement through their shared particularity; developing subject and predicate into their own judgements connected by a shared particularity. Syllogisms, distinct from mere judgements, let us relate multiple judgements. In Syllogism, “the abstract “is” of the copula has become “fulfilled” insofar as subject and predicate have each become tantamount to judgments connected to one another by the particularity they share,” (Winfield 2012). From here there are three syllogisms that follow: syllogisms of determinate being related to qualities, syllogisms of reflection and their category membership, and syllogisms of genus and species which relate to necessity and necessary connections. Universality, particularity, and individuality are mutually needed for any wholes, parts, and individuals– each in fact qualifies each other (via I-P-U, I-U-P, and P-I-U syllogisms). “Universality, particularity, and individuality have each shown themselves to be what the other two are, and in doing so, they have further proven to each be the whole. This is as expected, for if we are dealing with self-determination, every determination is a determination of the self. It is the whole that has determined itself,” (Winfield 2012).

Something and its moments are objective in that their universality, particularity, and individuality are what they are through their determinations of each other– where there are universal, particular, and individual determinations of something that are all self-determinations of itself by extension. As objects develop and persist: Even as objects are in various ways effected by and partially determined by various determinacies and relations distinct from themselves, they are also determined by themselves. Objects are determined determinacies of the self-determined determinacy of the Whole that themselves have their own self-determined determinacy.

Objects in externality move, attract, repel, impact, and interact through mechanism. However, mere mechanism on its own cannot account for rich qualifications of objects beyond determinations of placement in space+time and mass; nor can mere mechanism account for formal causes, nor final causes, nor freedom, nor right (Winfield 2012). Objectivity also includes chemism: interactions of different forms of objective entities that are relationally brought together and transformed through them being the chemical objects they are. The movement of objectivity via mech-

anism has related determinate means and ends (the necessary features of mechanism to continue to develop). Additionally, the movement of objectivity via chemical interaction has determinate means+ends as well (the necessary features for chemism and chemical interaction to continue to develop). In the development of both mechanism and chemism, the ends they develop become means towards further ends of themselves. The means and ends of objectivity are additionally qualified by the prior movements of logos and the whole of processes/determinacies/relationality (which structure conditions and possibilities accordingly– that help to determine actuality in tandem with natural history and all the necessities, possibilities, and contingencies thereof). Such means/ends of objectivity, which are themselves qualified by the determinacies of the *Science of Logic*, have tendencies towards self-organizing processes.

Processes of objectivity and tendencies towards self-organizing-processes give rise to living organisms: self-organized and self-active beings that are self-producing and self-reproducing (in the sense of reproducing life processes). “The unification of means and ends in the organs sustains the unity of the organism, which itself consists of this specific complementary differentiation of the organs. The organs sustain not only one another but also the whole to which they belong. The organs do not have an existence apart from the whole but grow into being with the organism’s own development. The organism thus has a very concrete unity. The living whole determines the individual being of its components in a very exhaustive way and continually sustains them and ultimately itself,” (Winfield 2012). Life forms also exist through negativity, determinateness, self-relatedness, relations to others, relations to conditions+possibilities, with due unity through differentiation and due self-maintenance to sustain and exist. In relations of life to life to non-life, we can derive ecological relationality.<sup>1</sup> And it is the case that, a “living organism will interact with other objects,” and “its interaction will involve mechanical and/or chemical processes,” but it is also the case that “metabolism is not just a mechanical pulverization and chewing, nor just a chemical neutralization and reduction of nutrients,” (Winfield 2012). Every living being has a genus (general features that makes it a specific kind of organism and not another kind of organism) which is further concretized in particular species as well as individuals (which also have due general features that make them some specific kind of organism or a specific organism rather than another– which exists in tandem with various kinds of qualitative continuums, patterns thereof, qualitative transformations, and exemptions/further qualifications). Through differentiation and development of life forms and processes, there are related plural genera, species, and individuals + relations and determinacies thereof (which, in philosophy and science of nature, will be further elaborated and determined by the theory of evolution).

Life without cognition does not give us thinking about thinking, nor thinking about being, nor thinking about life. However, through the development of life, thinking and cognition can develop as well as their relation to the truth– which is coherence and correspondence with the Whole (preserving coherence and correspondence theories of truth in a higher mode). Such coherence with, correspondence to, and adequate unity of concept and object is “the idea”. “The idea is the adequate Notion, that which is objectively true, or the true as such... Idea is the unity of notion and objectivity...” (Hegel 2005). Cognition is required for thinking through+knowing the adequate unity of concept to object. The unfolding of thinking and consciousness is the process

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<sup>1</sup> This content of this sentence is an addendum to Hegel’s *Logic* but derivable from the existence of relations of life to life to non-life–although to know the specific determinacies of ecological relations, we must engage in natural philosophy.

through which the Whole can know itself as a self-differentiated unity of subject and object.<sup>2</sup> Logical development is, “analytic because it is all contained within the encompassing subject that pervades everything and constitutes itself in pervading everything. Nothing in the logical development ever stands outside it nor moves beyond it. On the other hand, the development is equally synthetic because it is developing. It is determining itself, as opposed to remaining inertly fixed,” (Winfield 2012)

Theoretical cognition is thinking aimed at truth; correspondence/coherence/adequate unity with objectivity. Practical cognition aims to change the world through thinking in tandem with practical activity. Analytic cognition does not add anything in conclusions beyond the premises; synthetic cognition does. Cognition includes 1. analytic cognition, where the conclusion is contained in the premises, and 2. synthetic cognition, where thinking mediates premises into conclusions beyond what is already given in the mere premises alone. Theoretical and practical cognition are each analytic and synthetic; dealing with universals, particulars, individuals in their relations+interactions+mediations, differentiations, and developments. Theoretical cognition transforms subjectivity which changes practical activity, and practical cognition transforms objectivity through subjectivity. Subjective willing of thinking/willing beings is not itself sufficient for the good; the good requires related reciprocal freedom between people as well as institutions, right/duties, nomoi, social relations, collective practices, and means thereof that enable such self-determining willing to actuate politically, economically, and socially for each and all. Without such objective freedom and the means thereof, overall subjective freedom of collectives and persons cannot flourish.

Social/Thinking/willing life forms can cognize through reasoning and theorizing about what is correct and true. And through theoretical and practical reasoning via self-determined thinking and volition, social/willing/thinking beings can change themselves, social relations, and the world. Purposeful telos develops via cognized thinking/willing through self-determining/thinking/willing beings– beings which are needed for thinking through any thought about anything as well as thinking/willing in relation to reasons and purposes that drive action (in tandem with as well as in relation to relevant conditions and variables).

Self-determining thinking beings have wills and act through their thinking wills. However, mere subjective freedom of thinking+willing is insufficient for the actualization of freedom; the actualization of such subjective freedom requires due objective freedom– the conditions for freedom to actualize through communities, institutions, decision-making-processes, nomoi, rights/duties, practices, and social relations. The development thereof is constitutive of the becoming of “the good life” and “the good place”. Actualization of objective+subjective freedom is not merely abstract choosing or mere internal thinking/willing or merely of one person’s thinking/willing being: but thinking/willing/acting/relating of thinking/willing collectives and persons in harmony with mutual freedom with other thinking/willing collectives and persons. From thinking/willing beings we can derive the good in relation to the flourishing of such thinking/willing beings through their flourishing and the flourishing of subjective and objective self-determination of the will for thinking/willing beings and collectives thereof (which is constitutive of the the overall flourishing of such beings and collectives thereof). Such good ends require the constitutive means thereof. The actualization of the potentiality for objective/subjective freedom of thinking/

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<sup>2</sup> Reasoning through the concept requires cognition, which requires thinking life which requires life and the development thereof

willing beings and collectives thereof requires there to be mutual-freedom of each and all on every scale— as well as related relevant kinds of institutions, decision-making-processes, nomoi, rights and duties, practices and social relations constitutive of, in harmony with, and conducive to mutual-freedom + corresponding mutual non-domination (including the political, economic, and social dimensions thereof as well as the developmental prefiguration thereof).<sup>3</sup>

The absolute is the whole of determinacy, the whole of determined determinacy, and the whole of self-determined determinacy, including the self-knowing thereof, the totality of truth, and the totality of knowing of the truth (Winfield 2010). The absolute idea is the conceptual self knowing of the absolute through concept that corresponds to its object.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of this process, we can then go back to the beginning and re-quality/integrate all prior determinacies as moments of the whole (with all the determinacies and relations thereof).

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<sup>3</sup> There was significant liberty taken in this paragraph to begin the development of an approach to ethics related to social freedom into political, economic, and social self-management of each and all as well as the means thereof. These ethics will be further developed later in the essay.

<sup>4</sup> The absolute idea is, “not a knowing of everything. It is not philosophy in its entirety, but only the science of logic. The consummation of the absolute Idea is therefore the point of departure for a further development of specific domains of truth and specific philosophical disciplines of truth, the first of which is going to be nature and philosophy of nature, to be followed by something that incorporates nature, namely mind or spirit. Hegel will therefore distinguish between the science of logic and nonlogical science, calling the latter Realphilosophie, the philosophy of what is real in the sense of being nonlogical. Realphilosophie will consist of the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of spirit,” (Winfield 2012).

# ***Towards Dialectical Naturalism***

## **Moving from Logic to Nature**

Paraphrasing Winfield: The *Science of Logic* is sufficient to be a self-knowing of truth: but this is the departing point for further domains of truth (in regards to nature, spirit, sociality, and the good)– where other determinacies are added onto the foundation developed by the *Science of Logic* (Winfield 2010).

Quoting Winfield at length: *“Taking the differentiation of determinacies into itself, the method thereby expands itself into a system (p.838). The resulting self-knowing totality does not stand over and against anything else but is purely self-related and self-differentiated (p. 840). Finally, on the concluding pages, Hegel describes how the logical totality gives itself the form of being, of immediacy, precisely in virtue of completing its own self-mediated, self-comprehended self-constitution (pp. 842–44). Engendering a determinacy beyond logic by adding being to logical totality, this transition provides the only nondogmatic access to something more than*

*merely logical determinacy. With the science of logic thereby achieving closure, the stage is set for philosophy to move beyond the thinking of thinking to the systematic conception of nature.”* (Winfield 2012).

Paraphrasing Houlgate: By the end of the *Science of Logic*, we realize that logic is not just logic; the development of the logic shows (among other things...) nature to be logically necessary– what we start with in abstraction develops through reasoning into natural determinacies (such as those of physics, chemistry, life, ecology, etc. already); Nature and spirit exist and reason is immanent within each (Houlgate 2019a). “Logic works through its determinations and then reaches a point in which it makes necessary a constellation that is not purely logical. It turns into its ‘opposite’ which is nature; and then nature has its own dynamic which is structured by but not reducible to the logic,” (Houlgate 2019a).

Quoting Houlgate at length: *“For Hegel, therefore, there is no ‘being’ prior to nature: nature is all there actually is (though later, of course, we shall see human consciousness or ‘spirit’ emerge out of nature). We reach this conclusion, however, by starting not directly with nature as such, but with pure indeterminate being and discovering that, logically, such being cannot be anything but nature. This may seem to be a somewhat roundabout way to proceed. Why not begin straight away with nature? Because in a presuppositionless philosophy we cannot simply assume from the start that being is nature, any more than we can assume that it is substance or will to power. We must begin with sheer indeterminate being, about which no assumptions are made, and wait to see what such being proves logically to be. Furthermore, such philosophical patience brings its own reward: for it leads to a distinctive conception of nature that we might never have gained without undertaking the presuppositionless study of being.*

*It becomes clear, for example, that nature is an absolute logical necessity and not just a happy accident. It also becomes clear, however, that nature has no transcendent ground or cause that exists ‘apart’ from or ‘prior’ to it. The Idea ‘grounds’ nature by proving to be nothing apart from or less*

than nature itself. The Idea cannot, therefore, have an independent existence prior to nature. On the contrary, it must inhabit the very nature it makes necessary and so, to borrow the words of Spinoza, be the ‘immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things.’” (Houlgate 2006).

The general determinacies and movements of the *Science of Logic* spill over into nature: with related externality, space, time, mechanism, chemism, organism/life, spirit, and sociality. Nature is the idea externalized in development; In the reasoning process from the *Science of Logic* to philosophy of nature (already of course developing in and through the *Science of Logic*), the absolute/ absolute idea becomes externalized as the whole of natural development. Nature as a processual, determinate, relational, differentiated unity both conditions and is conditioned by its own processes, determinacies, differentiations, and relations. Natural development coheres with the general structure of the *Science of Logic* with all its richness in terms of determinacies, possibilities, and conditions; as the *Science of Logic* is structured by actuality and nature (and reasons through underlying determinacies of ontology and natural development). The categories in the *Science of Logic* exist in and through nature; they exist naturally in and through specific historically constituted wholes/parts/individuals/relations. As Houlgate notes, for Hegel: “the ‘object’ with which philosophy is always concerned – itself turns out to be nothing but nature. Nature, as it emerges in Hegel’s philosophy, is in turn understood to be not just brute contingency or sheer givenness, but actually existing *reason* – ‘the Idea as being’,” (Houlgate 2006). Nature is the idea as actual and existing, and idea is the adequate unity of concept and object. But “only ecology can ventilate the dialectic as an orientation toward the objective world by rendering it coextensive with natural evolution, a possibility that arose...with the appearance of evolutionary theory,” (Bookchin 2017). Additionally, a dialectical approach to thinking, being, nature, and society can justify and reason through wholes, parts, relations, development, differentiation, and unity – and in doing so round out ecological and social thinking and practices towards the true and the good.

It is important to note that, “Reason does not transform itself into nature gradually over time, nor does it precede nature in time and bring nature into being through a creative act. Rather, absolute reason discloses itself actually *to be* nature itself by proving logically to be immediately self-relating being,” (Houlgate 2006). While nature is ontologically prior to thinking: through thinking about thinking and being, we can derive the logical determinacies, conditions, and possibilities for how nature is structured (distinct from knowledge of all specific natural/‘extra-logical’ determinacies, contingencies, existence/existents, history etc.) from reasoning about reasoning and being. Such reasoning grounding reasoning is crucial to grounding concepts and determinacies in reasoning without recourse to dogmatic presuppositions.

## Natural Development

Nature is itself developmental and relational and can be traced by developmental reason. “Precisely because it is also a system of causality, dialectic is ontological, objective, and therefore naturalistic as well as a form of reason. In ontological terms, dialectical causality is not merely motion, force, or changes of form but things and phenomena in development. Indeed, since all Being is Becoming, dialectical causality is the differentiation of potentiality into actuality, in the course of which each new actuality becomes the potentiality for further differentiation and actualization. Dialectic explicates how processes occur not only in the natural world but in the social,” (Bookchin 2017).

Nature is qualified by determinacies of the logic accordingly as well as “extralogical” dimensions of natural development which are themselves qualified by the determinacies of the logic (and graspable through reasoning). In addition to being qualified by the general determinacies of the *Science of Logic*, nature is the whole gestalt of natural development more broadly in all its unity and differentiation/diversity. Nature, as the wholeness of natural development is a conceptualization of the natural world that sociality and spirit are part of+arise from+participate within. And spirit, as thinking and as self-knowing, can retain its particularities as spirit as in, through, and part of natural development. This naturalism is not a crude reductionist kind but a differentiated whole with processual+determinate+relational wholes/parts/individuals as well as a notion of natural development that includes due physical, chemical, biological/ecological, thinking/willing/spiritual, and social+cultural+institutional+political+economic dimensions.

From reasoning about reasoning and being, we obtain knowledge of the gestalt of movements and determinacies of “*The Science of Logic*”— including the necessity of externality, existence, actuality, wholes, parts, individuals, and relations thereof (and the processual, determinate, relationality of all of the above). From externality, we can derive space and from space we can derive three dimensions as any point in externality has due breadth, height, and depth (Hegel 2005). The negative and movement of space is time (Hegel 2005). The combination of a particular location of time and space is place. Space, through becoming, is temporal and the movement of space/time is motion (Hegel 2005). Space is related to matter which differentiates itself via attraction and repulsion (Hegel 2005). This includes the mechanical interactions of mechanism and the chemical interactions of chemism (Hegel 2010). “This externality of determinate being constitutes the special determinacy of matter. But in this it does not remain limited by a quantitative difference, rather the difference is essentially a qualitative one, so that the determinacy of matter constitutes its being,” (Hegel 1990). In addition to matter, determinacies of physics, which are knowable through natural philosophy and scientific processes through theory, practice, and observation, include gravity, light, shape, electricity (Hegel 1990, Hegel 2004)— as well as various determinacies discovered since Hegel’s time such as those discovered by relativity and quantum physics (which in specific ways relate to and qualify other determinacies accordingly<sup>1</sup>). It is out of physical and chemical world that organic chemistry, geological nature, living organisms, ecology, and animal organisms develop and evolve (Hegel 1990, Hegel 2004, Bookchin 2017).

The self-organization, processuality, determinacies, relationality, actuality, and potentiality of nature gives rise to life as self-maintaining metabolism and self-reproducing — which gives rise to animate and sentient life as well as thinking and willing life (Bookchin 2017, Hegel 2005). Life has related individuals, species, and genera; and the self-reproducing and self-maintaining processes thereof distinguishes life (Hegel 2010). Natural development gives rise to ecological communities: relations of life to life to non-life— which society and spirit develop from, are part of, and in relation to. “Biological nature is above all the cumulative evolution of ever-differentiating and increasingly complex life-forms with a vibrant and interactive inorganic world,” (Bookchin 2017). Life takes varying forms including single celled life, to multicellular life, to fungi and plants, to animals, to political/economic/social/thinking/willing life, etc. Life develops through natural evolution via participation, self-maintenance, reproduction, adaptation to conditions, and relations

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<sup>1</sup> With or without a unified field theory in physics, truths from relativity and quantum physics can be retained and harmonized together by the core determinacies and movements of the *Science of Logic* (which underpin the determinacies of thinking and being) and dialectical naturalism (which reasons through core features of a ecological and social philosophy+science).



of beings to self+others+conditions+possibilities (Bookchin 2017). Evolution happens through interaction in relation to ecological dimensions as well as on multiple scales rather than being reducible to merely genes, or merely individuals, or merely collectives (Bookchin 2017, Atkins, Sloan Wilson, Hayes 2019). Life processes can take on a plurality of forms of symbiotic relations; including, but not limited to, that of mutual aid (Kropotkin 1902, Bookchin 2017). “A resplendent literature now exists that reveals the enormous extent to which symbiotic mutualism is a major factor in fostering ecological stability and organic evolution. That plants and animals continually adapt to unwittingly aid each other (be it by an exchange of biochemical functions that are mutually beneficial or even dramatic instances of physical assistance and succor) has opened an entirely new perspective on the nature of ecosystem stability and development,” (Bookchin 2005). The overall flourishing of webs of mutual aid, freedom, subjectivity, unity-in diversity: give rise to flourishing ecological communities and the overall flourishing of participants thereof (Bookchin 2005, 2017). “Mutualism, freedom, and subjectivity are not solely human values or concerns. They appear, *however germinally*, in larger cosmic or organic processes,” (Bookchin 2017). It is important to note that reasoning through mutual aid as a tendency in evolution that is related to and in fact necessary for mutual flourishing of living beings is not to claim that it is the only tendency or only factor related to the flourishing of living beings. Mutual aid can develop in relation various processes/determinacies/relations within first nature and second-nature; a fuller gestalt of the good includes other dimensions qualifying and qualified by mutual aid. Different conditions and interactions (which shape each other) can enable mutual aid tendencies and other liberatory tendencies to flourish or diminish.

Natural history is ecological history including evolutionary processes, social processes, and social history. Natural Evolution is participatory through the differentiated wholes, parts, individuals, relations, forms, and contents that develop through ecological processes. While life forms are in various ways conditioned by their relations to others and ecological communities and determinacies external to themselves, life forms in various ways participate in their own development and their relations to+interactions with others and ecological communities. Participation, self-maintenance, reproduction, symbiotic relations, and ecological interaction/adaptation constitute key dimensions of natural evolution. Participatory development is realized on a new qualitative level through sociality, related thinking/willing beings, and second nature more broadly with due institutions, conceptual thinking, self-determined volition, etc– where there are self-determining willing/thinking beings whose potentiality for self-management can be actuated in and through a social constellation of political, economic, and social self-management of each and all in tandem with the means thereof (the development of the related gestalt of liberatory determinacies constitutive of self-management of each and all on every scale; a development that includes due universality creatively tailored to a plurality of contexts, conditions, and relevant variables) (Bookchin 2017, Hegel 2002).

*“In the organic world, the metabolic activity of the simplest life-forms constitutes the sense of self-identity, however germinal, from which nature acquires a rudimentary subjectivity. Not only does this rudimentary subjectivity (which reductionism necessarily cannot encompass) derive from the metabolic process of self-maintenance, a process that defines any life-form as a unique whole; it extends itself beyond self-maintenance to become a striving activity, not unlike the development from the vegetative to the animative, that ultimately yields mind, will, and the potentiality for freedom. Conceived dialectically, organic evolution is, in a broad sense, subjective insofar as life-forms begin to exercise choices in adapting to new environments,”* (Bookchin 2017).

## Nature and Spirit

Spirit, as thinking and spirit as self-knowing and self-determining will, participates within and is developed from natural, ecological, as well as social relations. Consciousness, conceptual thinking, the true, the good, activities for reasons: while having due qualitative distinctions and determinacies that make them what they are and not something else, are nonetheless wholly naturalistic according to a notion of nature as the whole of natural development (Bookchin 2017). There is a certain sense in which spirit can be conceived in a naturalistic+broad way as the continuum of thinking (distinct from theistic or otherwise woo notions of spirit) developed through natural evolution– natural evolution is itself a continuum that develops the broad continuum of spirit as thinking and the richer notion of spirit as thinking/willing in itself, for itself, knowing itself/aware of itself, externalized in nature+society, in relation to others and conditions, in relation to itself as a self-determining+differentiating unity (Hegel 1977). The above can be retained without some notion that such spirit is non-natural; through the notion of nature as the whole of natural development, spirit is in fact nature self-relating to itself in specific ways. Without a naturalist notion of thinking as active, creative, self-determining, related to broader social and ecological relations and conditions, and at the same time determining acts persons partake in while changing the actors interacting and the world in the process: we cannot make coherent sense of causal history, nor everyday life, nor the history and potential of deliberate wilful social development.

Spirit can retain its due relevant qualitative distinctions as developing from, within, through, in relation to, and part of nature. There is no false reductionism in this move; there is instead a phased, graded, and cumulative development of life into social life and thinking/willing life (Bookchin 2017). The differentiated whole of nature includes first nature, graded development of thinking and volition, and second nature and spirit in itself, aware of itself, and for itself. Second nature's forms/contents of sociality and spirit develop from first nature, are distinct from first nature, and yet are part of nature more broadly as natural development and evolution (with all its due externality, internality, form, content, wholes, parts, processuality, relationality, determinacy, contradictions, conditionality, possibility, etc). All contradictions and relations within and between spirit, second nature, first nature, and nature as whole can be retained while integrated into a notion of nature more broadly conceived.

Nature is not just externality; the externality of nature is qualified by the determinacies developed by the *Science of Logic* in tandem with the unfolding of nature in existence and all of the determinacies that develop via natural development and evolution. The process of natural development includes the whole of determinacies, determined determinacies, and self-determined-determinacies from the Science of Logic instantiated in natural processes, beings, qualities, and relations. And beyond such rich logical qualifications of natural development, there is also the actual movement of natural development, natural evolution, wholes+parts+individuals+relations, ecological communities, and differentiated determinacies thereof. It is out of and through natural evolution that spirit is developed– which is thoroughly part of nature, conditioned by nature, conditioning nature, and conditioning itself through processes of self-determined thinking and willing. According to the above there is a uniqueness to second nature + spirit in itself/aware of itself/for itself in relation to social and ecological communities (Hegel 1977, Bookchin 2017) AND at the same time there is also a graded development of thinking and willing that exists in the ecological/evolutionary continuum (Bookchin 2017).

## The Social/Second Nature

Thinking/willing life develops in and through natural evolution and participation in relations to self, others, and conditions (Bookchin 2017). Out of first nature, second nature develops with related qualitatively distinct institutions, malleable social relations, meta-cognition+volition, conceptualization, language, and complex technology (Bookchin 2017). Second nature has evolved through increased mutual aid, and related interaction, dialogue, reasoning, and care and cooperative+communal caregiving+social reproduction (Kropotkin 1902, Hrdy 2011). Social life and society are part of and emerge from ecological life+ecological communities and then participate in and relate to social and ecological communities; and in doing so, social relations, practices, institutions, and culture develop and transform themselves+each other, as well as related ecological communities. The way social life relates to social life determines how social life relates to the broader ecological world (Bookchin 2007, 2017). In relation to eudaimonia and wellbeing of social life, there are certain objective trans-contextual social needs (needs of second nature) for sustenance/reproduction of daily+community life and the objective/subjective actualization of freedom (Bookchin 2017, Ryan and Deci 2022, Usufruct Collective 2023); however it is also the case that various specifics of social needs and how to adequately meet them for mutual-flourishing changes according to processual, contexts, specific needs+desires, conditions, and possibilities. The movement of nature is one of natural and social history– the latter having its due qualitative distinctions while being part of the former. “The fact that first and second nature exist and can never be dualized into “parallels” or simplistically reduced to each other, accounts in great part for my phrase *social ecology*,” (Bookchin 2017).

“It is eminently *natural* for humanity to create a “second nature” from its evolution in “first nature.” By *second nature*, I mean the development of a uniquely human culture, with a wide variety of institutionalized human communities, effective human technics, richly symbolic languages, and carefully managed sources of nutriment,” (Bookchin 2017). This notion of “*Society*, in turn, is more than mere consociation or community. It is *institutionalized* community, structured around mutable organizational forms that may range from totalitarian despotism to libertarian municipalism. As such, society is specific to human beings,” (Bookchin 2017). On one level, thinking/willing and sociality evolve on a continuum. On another level, there is a qualitative distinction between social nature as institutional in contrast to more thin notions of the social (for example, how the ascribed conceptual content of the phrase “social animal” is commonly utilized in evolutionary theory<sup>2</sup>).

“The basis [Boden] of right is the realm of spirit in general and its precise location and point of departure is the will; the will is free, so that freedom constitutes its substance and destiny [Bestimmung] and the system of right is the realm of actualized freedom, the world of spirit produced from within itself as a second nature,” (Hegel 2005).

Quoting Bookchin at length:

*“That second nature is the outcome of evolution in first nature and can thereby be designated as natural does not mean that second nature is necessarily creative or even fully conscious of itself in any evolutionary sense. Second nature is synonymous with society and human internal nature, both of which are undergoing evolution, for better or worse. Although social evolution is grounded*

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<sup>2</sup> All insights about “social animals” as commonly defined by contemporary evolutionary theory can be retained while making a conceptual distinction between Bookchin’s notion of social and the more vague+thin notion of social that is often employed by people.

*in, indeed phases out of, organic evolution, it is also profoundly different from organic evolution. Consciousness, will, alterable institutions, and the operation of economic forces and technics may be deployed to enhance the organic world or carry it to the point of destruction. Second nature as it exists today is marked by monstrous attributes, notably hierarchy, class, the state, private property, and a competitive market economy that obliges economic rivals to grow at the expense of each other or perish,”* (Bookchin 2017).

The History of social nature includes a history of freedom and domination. Hierarchy is historically constituted under specific conditions and not an inevitable order of social life and its potentiality for freedom; in addition to humans evolving through increased mutual aid and cooperative social reproduction (Hrady 2011), most of temporal human history has been largely non-hierarchical (Boehm 2001, Bookchin 2005, Knight 2021).<sup>3</sup> The development of domination altered relations of complementarity to relations along hierarchical lines (Bookchin 2005). The development of hierarchy (defined in the social sense of institutionalized domination and exploitation<sup>4</sup>) has included gerontocracy, patriarchy, statecraft, imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, racism, and various forms of oppression along multiple lines that are entangled in politics/economics/culture in various ways (Lerner 1986, Marx 1992, Bookchin 2005, Wolf 2010, Fields and Fields 2022). Hierarchical institutions, social relations, practices, cultural, and ideological dimensions interact and shape each other in specific processual constellations. Hierarchical institutions and relations have developed in uneven and combined ways into contemporary forms of capitalist mode of economics, politics in the mode of varying forms/contents of capitalist-statecraft (managing, reproducing, and enforcing capitalist+statist politics and economics), the interstate system, world market, with related core-periphery hierarchies/relations, entangled with various imperial, colonial, as well as patriarchal, nationalist, racist (or otherwise ethnically-xenophobic) dimensions/relations/divisions of power and labor (Bookchin 2005, Ocalan 2016). Institutional hierarchies have related epistemologies and cultural and ideological dimensions that help to both generate and uphold them (Bookchin 2005).

In relation to the emergence of generalized hierarchical society on a world scale: there are other kinds of institutions, relations, and practices that are prior to, alongside, within, against, and pointing beyond hierarchical society. There have been ways libertarian/egalitarian societies have become authoritarian/hierarchical and ways authoritarian/hierarchical societies have become libertarian/egalitarian. And there are ways societies have developed in libertarian/egalitarian directions and ways societies have developed in more authoritarian/hierarchical directions.

Contra the history of hierarchy: there have been self-managing+non-hierarchical forms of organizing, relations, and practices in multiple modes of subsistence, among many communi-

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<sup>3</sup> This rich history of non-hierarchical societies over hundreds of thousands of years does not mean various societies that have existed in the past were in every which way the best of all possible worlds– they were not freed from all strife and limits on possibilities, episodic domination, nor always free from warring between groups, nor always free some or more stifling traditions, etc. ; a romantic primitivist or quasi-primitivist return to the past is neither in harmony with the true, nor the good, nor what is possible, nor what is desirable. We must “get our poetry from the future” as we sublimate the history of freedom and actualize our potential for mutual-freedom and mutual aid in all its universality and particularity. At the same time, it would be the height of foolishness to write off the extent of egalitarianism in human history, what it can teach us, and what it means about our potentialities for social transformation and different ways of becoming under different constellations of conditions.

<sup>4</sup> This social notion of hierarchy is related to institutionalized domination, rulership and authoritarianism. Such a social definition of hierarchy is distinct from differentiation and ways of organizing differentiation, leadership as such, delegation distinct from hierarchical policy making, teaching as such, ecological stewardship, etc.

ties, across many cultures, on all inhabited continents, and for long periods of time. The history of freedom—including self-managed dialogue and decision making as well as related direct-collective-action and mutual aid+commoning— includes the ways that freedom has existed in foraging societies, village societies, cities, agricultural societies, within varied and changing subsistence patterns and lifeways, as well as within contemporary commons (Kropotkin 1902, Boehm 2001, Bookchin 1992, 2005, Federici 2018, Knight 2021, Ostrom 2021, Graeber and Wengrow 2023). Commoning+practices/relations of self-management+mutual aid+direct-collective-action have existed both in earlier human history and within the 3000ish years since the state has become the main mode of politics people live under on a planetary scale.<sup>5</sup> The content of the above demonstrates the potentiality for self-managed communal politics, economics, and social relations as well as diffusion and convergent evolution of libertarian/egalitarian processes and practices.

Additionally, there are social movements and social movement organizations in the last several hundred years that organize in self-managed ways towards goals of self-managed politics and economics. The above includes the six large scale revolutions influenced by libertarian socialism: the Morelos Commune, Makhnovia, Shinmin, the anarchist+syndicalist+communist revolution in Spain, Zapatista Revolution (ACGAZ), and the Rojava Revolution (DAANES) (EZLN 2005, Gilly 2006, Skirda 2003, Leval 2006, Arshinov 2011, Dolgoff and Bookchin 2011, Hwang, 2016, Sixth Commission of the EZLN 2016, Min 2021, Zapata and Montano 2021, Dirik 2022, Aslan 2023, DAANES 2023, Usufruct Collective 2025). The above revolutions developed out of struggling against hierarchy while reconstructing self-management. These revolutions all radically increased social+individual freedom, needs met, and wellbeing, while demonstrating the possibility of large scale libertarian/egalitarian social transformation (Usufruct Collective 2025). And these revolutions all included communal-self-management/commoning as major parts of their development on the mass/social/popular scale. The internal self-managing politics/economics of the above revolutions satisfy criteria of Self-Determination-Theory (Ryan and Deci 2022) as well as Ostrom’s core-design principles for governing the commons (Ostrom 2021). These revolutions, for all their internal flaws and external limits, demonstrate internal well-functioning of self-management within and between specific assemblies and localities and the potential of communalized reconstructive and oppositional practices as part of liberatory social transformation on large scales. These revolutions also demonstrate ways that hierarchical powers will attack these revolutions; the major inhibiting factors of the above revolutions have been external-hierarchical violence in tandem with lack of sufficient worldwide movement development in solidarity. The goal of liberatory revolutionary social transformation points to the need for local, interlocal, and worldwide liberatory revolutionary movement development and solidarity— as well as due collective defense against hierarchy in tandem with the development of liberatory means, ends, practices, tactics, strategies, and goals.

In addition to the above, there are many other social constellations and organizations on smaller and/or less revolutionary scales rooted in communal-self-management, commoning, direct democracy, mutual aid, direct-collective-action, and opposition to domination. An approximate history of community self-management and commoning is a history that has yet to be fully written due to its living nature+potential, its historical scope, the extent of data from multiple sources, the nature of the research question and how broad it is, the theoretical lenses used and not used by people when doing social inquiry, the multiple practical constraints into doing such

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<sup>5</sup> The source for this timeframe is James C. Scott (Scott 2011)

social science+philosophy, etc. Despite the significant contemporary and living developments of liberatory politics+economics+social relations and related successes in meeting needs, solving social problems, developing self-managed decision-making processes+commons: the contemporary constellations of politics and economics worldwide means that liberatory communities/liberatory community organizations+federations of the above, radical unions+federations of the above, etc. are surrounded by hierarchical politics and economics and a broader hierarchical world order until further interlocal social transformation. Until sufficient local, interlocal, and worldwide social transformation: liberatory developments are inhibited in various ways from their full flourishing due the content of hierarchical politics and economics as it relates to the world, to specific locales, to pockets of freedom, and struggles against hierarchy. Local, interlocal, and worldwide hierarchical society can only be overcome through sufficient local, interlocal, and worldwide solidarity via liberatory prefiguration with a content of strategic reconstructive and oppositional practices.

In addition to historical and living communalist/commoning approaches to meeting needs and solving social problems, there are broader social movements and other kinds of social movement organizations that aim for liberatory social change from below through self-managed forms of organizing that struggle against capitalism, statecraft, class society/class relations, and hierarchical society more broadly— such as but not limited to radical labor and workplace organizing. Self-managed struggles for grander freedom against hierarchy can take place where people live, work, and play in communities, workplaces, schools, and beyond. Movements+organizations+power from below struggling against hierarchical conditions are needed for liberatory social transformation and revolution while also being needed so that people can meet their needs and solve social problems directly before, during and after revolutions. Additionally, movements+organizations+power from below struggling against hierarchical conditions has been the major way towards enacting the most liberatory social reforms (such as better labor conditions, increased civil rights, grander freedom from racism, advances towards freedom+equality in regards to issues of gender and sexuality, etc).

Second nature includes immense political, economic, social, and cultural variation. Depending on conditions and volitions (which can be given social force through organizations, social relations, politics, economics, collective practices, etc): Political/economic/social/thinking/willing beings have potential to develop various libertarian/egalitarian institutions and social relations as well as various authoritarian/hierarchical institutions and social relations. Within and through both libertarian/egalitarian and authoritarian/hierarchical forms of organizing, there are pluralities of forms/contents and possible determinacies thereof (a practically endless amount of different possible ensembles/constellations of determinacies). In addition to the variations in regards to the above, there is also the immense array of plurality within and between ecological-communities, plurality within and between social communities, collectives, and individuals, plurality within and between social-ecological constellations and local + interlocal conditions, plurality of specific needs/desires/wills/abilities/capacities (and specific aggregates thereof), plurality within and between cultures and subcultures, ways of making decisions, of practices/ways of engaging in practices, ways of acting/interacting collectively to meet specific needs/desires/ob-

jectives, and a plurality of ways of becoming and doing in harmony with mutual freedom of each and all and the means thereof etc.<sup>6</sup>

Second nature grants political/economic/social/thinking/willing beings immense potential for restructuring social-becoming through spirals of organizing, social relations, cultural transformation, dialogue, actions/practices, strategies, and tactics (Bookchin 2005, 2017). However, we can only act in relation to our conditions; and our potential to self-manage the reproduction of daily life+communal and inter-communal politics+the making of history is inhibited by hierarchical society and related domination+exploitation+dispossession+vicious alienation. Different kinds of politics, economics, and social relations produce and reproduce determinate means and ends and patterns of political, economic, and social life (related to freedom or domination of collectives and persons, needs met or obstructed, wellbeing and illbeing, cultivation of virtues/virtuous practices and vices/vicious practices of organizations and persons, etc.). Developing liberatory spirals of organizing, social relations, cultural transformation, dialogue, actions/practices, strategies, and tactics requires iteratively developing liberatory determinacies as processual ends through liberatory means while opposing/struggling against spirals of hierarchical (or otherwise vicious) form/content. Spirals of organizing, social relations, cultural transformation, dialogue, thinking, willing, actions/practices, strategies, and tactics can develop into virtuous or vicious determinacies of politics, economics, social relations, institutions, practices, and persons— and such virtuous and vicious determinacies in turn develop and co-determine conditions for action as well as patterns of thinking, willing, and acting. Virtuous spirals and vicious spirals can be overthrown by each other.

## The Ethical Life<sup>7</sup>

*“Dialectic explains, with a power beyond that of any conventional logic, how the organic flow of first into second nature is a reworking of biological into social reality. Each phase or “moment” pressed by its own internal logic into an antithetical and ultimately a more transcendent form, emerges as a more complex unity-in-diversity that encompasses its earlier moments even as it goes beyond them. Despite the imagery of strife that permeates the Hegelian version of this process, the ultimate point of the Hegelian Aufhebung is reconciliation, not the nihilism of pure negation. Moreover, norms—the actualization of the potential “is” into the ethical “ought”—are anchored in the objective reality of potentiality itself, not as it always “is,” to be sure, but as “should be,” such that speculation becomes a valid account of reality in its truth. Hegel, I would argue, radically expanded the very concept of Being in philosophy and in the real world to encompass the potential and its actualization into the rational “what-should-be” not only as an existential “what-is,” (Bookchin 2017)*

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<sup>6</sup> In the following section on ethics there will be plurality of dimensions of the good, plurality of goods, plurality of instantiations thereof, plurality of good-enough ways to meet needs through collective practices, plurality of good-enough decision making processes and specific policies of self-managed organizations etc— as well as plurality of collective and individual thinking/willing/acting in harmony with the means and ends of mutual-freedom+social freedom. Variegated social arrangements and ways of doing and being in harmony with mutual-freedom and mutual-non-domination would be able to flourish in, through, and because of the development of the gestalt of the good.

<sup>7</sup> This section is in large part about how political, economic, and social freedom requires the prefiguration of self-community assemblies and related commons as well as the abolition of capitalism, the state, and hierarchical society more broadly. Despite core differences with Hegel, the content of this section nonetheless upholds the criteria of social freedom and related institutions, rights+duties, and nomoi related to social freedom.

The good for thinking/willing and political/economic/social beings includes their flourishing which is constituted by objective freedom and subjective freedom (Hegel 2002). Subjective freedom requires objective freedom in order to flourish. Actualization of objective freedom and subjective freedom is constituted by the self-management of each and all on every scale and the means thereof. Such self-management means people making decisions about what they do and are affected by on every scale. The flourishing of the actualization of mutual-self-management of each and all requires related flourishing of mutual non-domination/non-hierarchy (as domination and hierarchy develop at the expense of self-management). The actualization of the self-management of each and all requires mutual self-management as well as collective forms thereof. Such self-management is related to politics, economics, and social life– the institutions and social relations that enable us to collectively dialogue, reason, coordinate, make agreements, take action, and reproduce daily/community life by meeting needs, solving social problems, and acting upon collective/individual self-determined wills. The means of communal self-management require sufficiently communalized social re/production and commoning within as well as between communities; Common means and fruits of existence+production+decision-making distributed to communities, collectives and persons according to mutual-needs are objective conditions for freedom of each and all needed for the overall flourishing of objective and subjective freedom. Self-management of each and all on every scale includes self-management of communities+related commons, the self-management of other variegated kinds of collectives, and the self-management of persons– and related mutual self-management of each and all within and between communities (and related intracommunal/intercommunal dialogue, decision-making, and action-taking). Self-management on organizational/collective scales entails horizontal, participatory, and directly democratic forms of organization– where collective decisions are decided upon through collective dialogue as well as direct-collective decisions which are then implemented in agreed upon ways. Horizontality/non-hierarchy, participatory agreements+free association, as well as direct-democracy (as in direct-collective-decision-making) become a gestalt that round each other out. The forms and contents of the above are constituted by collective action and mutual aid towards free-social-development, meeting needs, and solving problems, and opposing domination+exploitation– and the development and re/production+recreation of the above requires sufficient content of mutual aid and collective action accordingly.

Influenced by and building off of Kropotkin's ethics of mutual aid→justice→morality (Kropotkin 2009) we can develop a dialectical naturalist ethics of mutual aid→mutual freedom (and the means thereof)→ethics. The flourishing of mutual aid is constitutive of the overall flourishing of life forms, ecological communities, and social communities of second nature (Kropotkin 1902, Bookchin 2017). Mutual aid is constitutive of mutual freedom. The related objective+subjective freedom of mutual-freedom is a further qualification/adaptation/extension of mutual aid in relation to social and self-determining volitional beings. Mutual freedom and the means thereof bloom a gestalt of determinacies and universals to be developed within and adapted to a plurality contexts (Usufruct Collective 2023). The development of mutual freedom requires the processual development of free institutions+social relations+practices to meet needs, solve social problems, and freely develop through the mutually-free-becoming of each and all. From the needs, nature, conditions, and possibilities of social/political/economic/thinking/willing beings, our social-relations, our institutions, the ecological webs we are part of, and our social-ecological relations: We can derive an ethics related to such mutual aid, mutual-freedom, mutual-non-domination, and direct-collective-action. Furthermore, from there we can derive



related community assemblies and commoning as related to the flourishing political/economic freedom– as well as the unity of means and ends constitutive of the development of such ends. The virtue of justice in the above development is sublated into mutual-freedom; however, the virtue of justice becomes thoroughly retained as it becomes qualified by mutual-freedom and related political, economic, and social freedom, and the gestalt of determinacies the above gestalt entails (including universal, particular, objective, and subjective dimensions).

For political, economic, and social beings: for mutual freedom to be on every scale, mutual-freedom must exist politically, economically, and socially. Such ends require the development of liberatory forms/contents of organizations, social relations, and related practices as means and processes. The development of the above requires sufficient strategic prefiguration (unity of specific determinate means and ends) and development of community assemblies and related commons– communalized politics and economics for continuously meeting needs, deliberating, making-decisions, taking collective-action, solving social problems, opposing domination, reproducing daily/communal life, AND for the flourishing of collective and individual freedom in harmony with as well as through/part of such political/economic/social freedom (and the objective contents thereof) (Bookchin 2007, 2017, 2018, Federici 2018, Ostrom 2021, Usufruct Collective 2023, 2024a, 2024b). If communities, and co-federations of communities, do not directly manage political and economic life through dialogue and communal decisions/agreements : then communities, collectives, and individuals are alienated from such communal+intercommunal self-management as well as the means and fruits thereof (depriving persons of communal freedom and means+fruits of existence and production and politics persons need for their full political, economic, and social freedom in harmony with the mutual freedom of others). Without rationally communalized politics and economics, the means of politics, existence, and production persons and communities need and use become arbitrarily privatized in various ways. In addition to a liberatory unity of means and ends being needed for the overall development of good ends, it is also the case that the development of hierarchical means and ends reproduce hierarchical form and content at the expense of self-management as well as various liberatory determinacies part of the gestalt of the good.

Community assemblies, functioning according to communal-self-management with related commons/commoning, function through direct-collective-deliberation, direct-collective-decision-making, and direct-collective-action-taking to meet needs and solve social problems. Deliberation includes people expressing needs, abilities and capacities, reasons, arguments, desires, preferences, proposals, alternative proposals, amendments, agreements, disagreements, communication of relevant variables to make informed decisions, etc. so that persons and collectives can reason through what to do to make good-enough or better decisions about meeting needs and solving social problems. Specific direct-collective-decision making processes can vary according to needs and desires of participants but often includes: decision making that searches for consensus but can also fall back to majority decisions within free association of persons and collectives when consensus is not reached. Such assemblies (functioning according to communal-self-management) can as needed and desired create, mandate, reorganize, and recall embedded mandated and recallable councils and rotating delegate roles that implement policies and decisions from below– in such a way where all policy making power is in the hands of community assemblies and participants directly through direct democracy with related rights and duties along non-hierarchical lines (Bookchin 2007). Such embedded councils of community assemblies and participants thereof would then self-manage the implementation of

communally-decided policies. Given the need for self-managed decision-making processes and decisions related to politics and economics and protection of rights of communities, collectives, and persons to self-determine their activities free from domination: functioning community assemblies and commons develop related *nomoi* (such as constitutions, rights/duties, ‘bylaws’, protocols, “core-design-principles”, agreed upon decision-making processes, policies, and related customs) in harmony with free and non-hierarchical form and content (Bookchin 2007, Ostrom 2021).

Mutual-freedom, mutual-non-domination, and mutual-aid+collective-action within and between communities includes co-federated forms of communal politics/economics– where inter-communal-policies and implementation thereof on inter-communal scales in such a way where all policy making power is held by communities and participants directly (Bookchin 1992). Decentralized and co-federated webs of community assemblies co-manage co-federated commons together through communal+intercommunal deliberation, agreements, and mutual aid/collective action (Bookchin 2007, Ostrom 2021). Ethical and functional development of co-federal webs of community assemblies and embedded councils engaging in commoning and related mutual aid+dialogue+agreements to share in common re/production will accordingly develop various instantiations/adaptations of the core-contents of core-design-principles of the commons (in tandem with sufficiently collective theoretical and practical knowledge) in such a way that ensures that every commune and every person will have due access to the means and fruits of self-managed politics/economics according to needs (Kropotkin 1906, Bookchin 2018, Federici 2018, Ostrom 2021, Usufruct Collective 2024b).

Persons and communities cannot be objectively free (politically, economically, and socially) without self-managed means and fruits of re/production. Distribution of means and fruits of existence and production to persons and communities according to needs leads to sufficient communalization of the economy. To meet needs of all, community assemblies (on scales of neighborhoods, blocks when applicable, villages, towns, cities, regions, inter-regions, etc.) and co-federations of community assemblies would communalize social re/production by communalizing political-economic decision-making, means of existence and production, mutual aid, as well as agreements to share in labor/work/action to meet collective needs and desires. Co-federated assemblies would use decentralized+co-federated planning as part of making inter-collective decision making processes– enabling planning to happen in such a way where all policy making power is held by participants and assemblies directly. In order to meet needs of all (including needs for self-management) through mutual-freedom, mutual-non-domination, and mutual aid: the means and fruits of such communal economics would be developed through self-managed processes via co-federations of community assemblies and related commons and the fruits of such communal economics would be distributed to all according to needs and mutually-free access (without commodification, commodity production, nor money). Sufficient communalization+intercommunalization of the economy would enable all communities and persons to have access to what they need– including the means and fruits of community-self-management and commoning. The overall and general flourishing of such communalization+commoning in tandem with liberatory technology could and should develop a post-scarcity society (Bookchin 2005, Bookchin 2018). Given needs for political, economic, and social freedom and the re/production thereof: Sufficient communalization and commoning are extensions of objective and subjective freedom politically and economically that are also necessary for and part of the developmental social reproduction and flourishing of objective freedom and subjective freedom.

The flourishing of liberatory processes as developmental ends requires the flourishing of such processes as means; that is, the developmental ends of political/economic/social freedom require the overall flourishing of specific developmental means overtime through due prefiguration, reconstruction of community assemblies+the commons and the liberatory qualities of self-management+mutual aid+direct-collective-action, and due opposition to hierarchy+domination+exploitation– including commoning through opposition to domination as well as opposing domination through means of self-management+mutual aid towards processual self-management, mutual aid, commoning, and further opposition to domination towards revolution and liberatory social transformation that develops continuous flourishing of objective/subjective/collective/individual freedom.<sup>8</sup> Liberatory organizations, actions/practices, social relations, and cultural transformation in spirals can help each other multiply and flourish. In fact for the development of liberatory organizations, actions/practices, social relations, and cultural transformation to flourish, each of the above must jointly flourish as a processual gestalt. Such prefiguration would include the prefiguration of determinate liberatory qualities within social movement organizations and social movements, as well as the prefiguration of common forms of decision making+action taking, politics, and economics constitutive of communalized political/economic self-management. On a strategic level: Self-managed community assemblies can participate in and communalize reconstructive and oppositional practices in relation to many dimensions of life towards commoning and opposing hierarchical rule; This includes variegated strategically+tactically adapted reconstructive and oppositional measures in regards to reproduction of daily life+community life, how resources are acquired, production processes, distribution, and consumption. This enables community assemblies to both build the new world in and against the shell of the old as they engage in oppositional forms of direct-collective-action against multiple kinds of hierarchical institutions, specific hierarchical institutions, and specific authoritarian measures while also reconstructing self-management as well as variegated mutual aid+commoning practices in the process. The above form and content can help arrive at long-term, mid-term, and short-term needs/goals and can strategically link more long-term and more short-term needs/goals accordingly– with oppositional and reconstructive content helping each other bloom through liberatory processes towards liberatory ends (ends which are themselves constituted by the continual development/reproduction/recreation of liberatory processes). Opposing hierarchy without creating sufficient alternative+liberatory forms of decision-making+mutual aid+social re/production leaves a power/politics/economics/collective practice vacuum; and in the context of hierarchical society, merely developing the commons without opposing hierarchy/ domination/exploitation leaves most means of political/economic decision making, existence, and production under hierarchical control. The flourishing of both liberatory reconstructive practices as well as liberatory oppositional practices are needed for the flourishing of each. And as much as the above answers, the question remains: given determinate ethical objectives and related criteria, how should reconstructive and oppositional dimensions be jointly+strategically/tactically combined by various groups in various specific moving social conditions (that are of course related to and affecting and affected by other moving social conditions in various direct and indirect ways) via spirals of organizations, actions, social relations, and cultural transformation? This needs to be worked out in practice by self-managed

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<sup>8</sup> “The continuous flourishing of freedom” being the contents in harmony with the essential features of libertarian communism and lower case c communalism.

collectives and participants thereof as they creatively adapt liberatory universals to a plurality of contexts and relevant variables.

The development of community-self-management and commoning against hierarchical society is a development that can harmonize self-interest and social interest as well as community interest and inter-community interest— where the freedom, virtues, and wellbeing of each is enriched by the freedom, virtues, and wellbeing of others (and related institutions+rights+duties+agreements+actions in harmony with the above). Political, economic, social, thinking/willing beings have objective common needs in common freedom/politics/economics constitutive of the common good. Even if not subjectively cared about or endorsed by some or more particular persons, the flourishing of such common freedom is constitutive of the flourishing of the good life+good lives and the good place+good places and the objective conditions for freedom of communes/collectives/individuals to develop in harmony with the objective/subjective freedom of each and all. Despite such long-term common interest in mutual aid, mutual freedom, mutual non-domination, and the good place conducive to the good life (and constitutive of the overall flourishing of the good life): under hierarchical society, common humanity is divided into classes and other forms of unfree/unjust/hierarchical social stratification (along gendered, ethnic, racialized, national, and sectoral lines, etc). Under hierarchical society, there relations of rulers and ruled in regards to politics, economics, and decision-making. Within such a context, the political and economic ruling classes govern within hierarchical political and economic institutions (within the broader context of relevant conditions and determinacies) while the non-ruling-class are free from access to political and economic decision making power + free from common means of existence and production. Within such a context, the politically/economically dominated, and/or exploited, and/or dispossessed comprise most all people. In such a context, people generally are free from mutual freedom and non-domination (and related mutually-free access to means and fruits of common politics and economics). In such a context, social-ecological constellations are continually attacked by social and ecological crises that are part of a generalized crisis of capitalism, the state, and hierarchical society. The dominated, exploited, dispossessed, and the non-ruling class more broadly jointly have the potential to re/produce daily/community life via communalization/commoning+have the potential to communalize opposition to domination, exploitation, dispossession, and hierarchy in its various forms+instantiations. In the context of capitalism, the state, and hierarchy more broadly as dominant political economic determinacies on a global scale: The movement of liberatory social transformation is the evolutionary and revolutionary development of the dominated, exploited, dispossessed, and non-rulers more broadly in solidarity to build a new world in the shell of the old via due reconstructive practices as well as due oppositional practices against class-relations and hierarchy more broadly— a process of emancipation from class relations and hierarchy that also constitutes the general flourishing of humans and mutual political, economic, and social freedom (the objective and subjective actualization of the ethical potential of self-determined becoming based on us being the kind of beings that we are; political/economic/social/thinking/willing beings). As needed, community assemblies and other organizations struggling against hierarchy can establish some form of non-domination clause excluding those who are in specified positions of rulership/domination until if and when they choose to leave such hierarchical positions and join a given community assembly (or other organization) as fellow free and equal participants.

For the overall flourishing of common freedom and the means thereof to develop as processes and ends, there must be sufficient co-development of mutualistic social-ecological relations and the ecological communities second nature is part of and dependent upon. Through hierarchical institutions, relations, and practices: persons, communities, and the ecological world are instrumentalized towards power-over others and profit through means and ends of institutionalized domination and exploitation. In the process of hierarchical rule and accumulation of private profit+power-over others via domination, exploitation, and commodification, ecological and social communities are alienated from their potential for mutual-freedom and flourishing while social-ecological constellations and participants become damaged and even decimated in a generalized social-ecological crisis that is both composed of and composing many crises (with various specific instantiations and proximate causes). It is a core insight of social ecology that contemporary ecological problems are caused by social problems– predominantly capitalism, statecraft, as well as hierarchy more broadly (Bookchin 2007, 2017, 2018). Our potential to relate to each other according to mutual-freedom and mutual-aid points to different ways we can and should relate to each other and ecological communities accordingly; with radically distinct processes of social re/production related to developmental mutual-freedom and mutual-flourishing. Such mutual-freedom creates the potential for harmonious social-ecological relations that are constitutive of the long-term flourishing of social and ecological communities as well as participants thereof (Bookchin 2017).

In addition to Social Ecology: Reasoning and practice in relation to the good can be informed by and backed up by other findings in social science, such as but far from limited to the following:

1. Self-Determination-Theory looks at objective needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competency and their relationship to wellbeing/happiness/eudaimonia. The large body of research in this field shows the meeting of such needs to be necessary for the overall flourishing of persons (Ryan and Deci 2022, Ryan et al. 2022). Given the extent to which these objective needs relate to the flourishing of social animals: they have immense political, economic and ethical implications.
2. There is also the history of self-managed societies in multiple modes of subsistence (as noted earlier). This includes the history of the commons and contemporary commons. This history and the extent of community self-management and commons cross continentally over hundreds of thousands of years over multiple modes of subsistence shows us the potentiality and functionality of libertarian/egalitarian forms/contents of self-governance. The history of mutual aid more broadly is even more expansive and has been crucial towards political/economic/social/thinking/willing beings evolving and meeting their needs in multiple modes of social relations. Social science in regards to the commons (Federici 2018, Ostrom 2021, Usufruct Collective 2024b) has shown that there are core-design-principles related to flourishing commons. These core-design-principles include: participants knowing the group they are in and what the group is about, agreements for sharing in labor/work/action and fruits thereof, direct collective decision making processes by participants through deliberation, organizational transparency so that participants can know about relevant information to make informed decisions, adequate opposition to and defense against domination and exploitation, good enough conflict resolution (including organization-wide forms thereof when the conflict is on an organization-wide level as well as direct dialogue between persons, agreed upon mediation, and

restorative/transformative justice approaches), co-federation, and sufficient autonomy to self-organize (Ostrom 2021, Usufruct Collective 2024b). Additionally, the flourishing of various kinds of theoretical and practical knowledge can help people make better decisions. And beyond just theoretical and practical knowledge among participants and sufficient/good-enough development of certain virtuous institutional qualities entangled with the above core-design-principles, the development of organizational forms/contents utilizing instantiations of such core design principles can be developed in more wise ways through the further development and generalized flourishing of institutional, theoretical, and practical virtues of collectives and individuals as well as related development of virtuous practices of collectives and individuals. And in further addition to the above, adapting such universals to particular contexts according to conditions, possibilities, needs, and desires in good enough and better than good-enough ways is crucial for the actualization/development of the commons.

3. There are also the psychosocial effects of structural violence and abuse and unmet needs on wellbeing and illbeing (Galtung 1969, Wilkinson and Pickett 2011). Increased structural violence (absolute and relative deprivation of access to needs): decreases social trust, increases violence+murder, creates less childhood wellbeing, worse education, increases infant mortality, decreases life expectancy, decreases life satisfaction, increases addiction, and increases psychological illbeing (Wilkinson and Pickett 2011).
4. In addition to the problems of structural violence on social health: We have potential to have sufficiently decent standards of living for all in ecological ways (Rao and Min 2017, Hickel and Sullivan 2024). And far beyond mere decent standards of living for all, through wise commoning and liberatory technology tailored to ecological contexts and human needs (including an expanded and continuously transforming notion of human needs related to mutual-flourishing and mutual-freedom and the given conditions and possibilities of social life): we can arrive at a post-scarcity economy rooted in social and ecological flourishing where mutual-freedom of communes and persons harmonizes with and helps to enrich the ecological world (Kropotkin 1906, Bookchin 2017, 2018)
5. And much more.

The above social science can be integrated with each other in various ways: for example, community-self-management via community assemblies and related commoning are constitutive of the flourishing of self-determination theory's criteria of autonomy on political and economic scales. Additionally, the overall flourishing of community-self-management and commoning helps develop political, economic, and social relatedness as well as effective collective and individual practices related to meeting needs and solving social problems– further fulfilling the criteria of Self-Determination Theory. The above social science can be qualified by the gestalt of the good and the general political, economic, and social philosophy of freedom– qualifying core-design-principles of the commons with the means and ends of self-management of each and all (and the means thereof) accordingly (Usufruct Collective 2024b).

Capitalism, statecraft, and hierarchical institutions, social relations, and cultural dimensions form in uneven and combined ways to produce and reproduce absolute and relative deprivation of people from access to the means and fruits of social life (structural violence, which is itself

enforced by systematized direct violence) which can only be overcome through distribution of means and fruits of politics and economics according to needs (and by extension the flourishing of the commons and the abolition of class society, the commodity form, and hierarchical society via corresponding reconstructive and oppositional politics). On a social and technological level, we can meet all needs through self-managed decision making, agreements and action taking in tandem with ecological and liberatory technology (Kropotkin 1906, Bookchin 2005, 2018)– however this requires shifts in social relations, institutions, means and ends of politics+social re/production (in tandem with the blooming of general and specific knowledge that can enrich decision-making and action-taking).

Concluding this section<sup>9</sup>: Political, economic, and social mutual-aid, mutual-self-management, mutual-non-domination, and direct-collective-action are a gestalt; the overall flourishing of those processual means is constitutive of the flourishing of those features as ends (ends which are constituted by processes of freedom to be re/produced and recreated). The above gestalt is constitutive of the overall development of mutual flourishing, the good life, and the good place (socially and ecologically). Given potentiality and conditions of political/economic/social/thinking/willing beings: The above dimensions can+should be developed as means and ends; and as necessary features of good ethical criteria, the above dimensions (in tandem with other good criteria) can evaluate means and ends. Social and ecological processes are ethically relevant as processes related to the flourishing or withering of the good life and the good place and as processes that are part of/developing further processes related to the flourishing or withering of the good life and the good place. The means and ends of social interaction are ethically relevant– the means are relevant as their own processes related to the good life and the good place and as they relate to other processes+ further processes related to the good life and the good place. In addition to the prefigurative argument that the overall flourishing of good ends requires and is constituted by the flourishing of corresponding good means (organizations, organizational qualities, social relations, practices, etc.), it is also the case that the gestalt of those liberatory determinacies are strategically and tactically useful to opposing domination while also reconstructing self-management; in fact, the gestalt of the above liberatory determinacies in tandem as well as adapted to contexts and relevant variables in wise ways has the potential of organizing collective capacities in participatory ways– unleashing a gestalt of qualitative and quantitative inter-collective, collective, and individual thinking, willing, and acting to meet needs and solve social problems. The above can actuate through the iterative development of liberatory and virtuous organizational forms, contents, thinking, willing, acting, goals, strategies, and tactics.

Upon critical reasoning in regards to the good, the good life, and the good place in relation to thinking/willing political/economic/social beings, social communities, and ecological communities: the good reveals itself to be the flourishing of political, economic, and social freedom, related ecological flourishing, related virtues of persons and organizations + liberatory (and virtuous) rights/duties/practices/rules/acts/social relations/institutions/institutional qualities+the means thereof and by extension a gestalt of the good related to the self-management of each and all on every scale, related non-domination, related collective-deliberation, direct-collective-decision-making, collective-action-taking, and mutual-aid scaled politically, economically, and socially on community and intercommunity scales through the strategic prefiguration thereof via both liberatory reconstructive politics/practices and liberatory oppositional politics/practices

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<sup>9</sup> For practical reasons, this section is coming to a close; there is much more to be said.

creatively adapted to a moving plurality contexts/variables/conditions/possibilities/needs/abilities/wills (Usufruct Collective 2023, 2024a). Through prefigurative+strategic spirals of organizations, collective practices/actions, social relations, and cultural transformation: there can be an iterative development of local+interlocal movements towards the self-management of each and all through self-managed processes—a process of meeting needs and solving social problems through both reconstructing such freedom while opposing domination. The above constitutes a “process ethics” of political, economic, and social freedom. The above process ethics is related to a prefigurative imperative to develop the means and ends of mutual-freedom and to develop one’s practices to be in harmony with the freedom of each and all, the means thereof, as well as the development thereof in “UniPluriversal” (universal+pluriversal) ways. Developmental ends of the good, and the processual political/economic/social freedom that constitutes the good, determine the means needed to develop good ends (Malatesta 2021). The development of specific good processes constitutive of good ends are raised into the development of good processes+ends to continuously develop accordingly. There is a unity of specific means and ends by extension; as the flourishing of the gestalt of self-management, mutual aid, direct-collective action, non-domination (with related opposition to domination as needed), and commoning/communalization+co-federation etc. are developmental means and ends that are constitutive of the development of the overall flourishing of the good life and the good place (and related political, economic, freedom + distribution according to mutual needs through self-management/mutual aid/collective action).

Adequately good-enough forms/contents of self management (with related deliberation, direct democracy/direct collective decision making, direct collective action taking), non-domination, and mutual aid are all virtuous determinacies of institutions/social relations/politics/economics that qualify each other and are jointly necessary for overall flourishing of means/ends (and processual prefiguration) of freedom and the good (Usufruct Collective 2023). Institutional, theoretical, and practical virtues of collectives and individuals can be developed (and further developed after they have been developed) through spirals of organizations, actions/practices, social relations, as well as cultural transformation. There are virtuous actions, virtuous rules, and virtuous ends (Hursthouse 2010); and the above gestalt are constituted by and constitutive of the overall flourishing of virtues, virtuous practices, and virtuous institutions, relations, and persons (Usufruct Collective 2023). In this gestalt of the good, one can move from multiple (non-arbitrary + rationally ordered) pathways from various liberatory, virtuous, and ethically relevant determinacies to the others as part of a mutually qualifying web. One can also move from the gems of truth within multiple normative theories and through immanent critique arrive at a robust process ethics of freedom and the means thereof. Because the development of the good is a gestalt with plural dimensions that mutually qualify and uphold each other: reasoning through and immanent critique of various features of the gestalt of the good can lead to pathways towards the development of the gestalt of the good and its wholeness+plural determinacies that virtuously round each other out. And one can also move from reasoning about reasoning and being, to nature philosophy, to social philosophy, to social-ecological needs, conditions, and potentialities towards a notion of social-ecological flourishing/mutual-freedom+means thereof.

*“Dialectical naturalism not only grasps reality as an existentially unfolding continuum; it also forms an objective framework for making ethical judgments. The “what-should-be” becomes an ethical criterion for judging the truth or validity of an objective “what-is.” Thus ethics is not merely*



*a matter of personal taste and values; it is factually anchored in the world itself as an objective standard of self-realization.” (Bookchin 2017).*

The good is at once naturalistic and objective while also being the flourishing of collective and individual subjectivity and forms of self-managed-decision-making and action-taking in harmony with the mutual freedom of each and all and the means thereof. It is both universal and adaptive to pluriversal contexts and conditions according to needs and volitions of collectives and individuals. It is at once non-hierarchical and yet also enshrined within institutions as well as rights and duties, and nomoi. It has certain kinds of nomoi/rules without rulers and as well as certain forms of ‘leadership’ distinct from authoritarian forms of leadership. It is political (in the sense of related to community management and decision making) without being statist. It is both social and ecological. It consists of developmental ends and means+processes constitutive of those ends. The good is related to virtues, it is related to acts, it is related to rights and duties, it is related to the flourishing of happiness/joy/pleasure, and it is related to the flourishing of various good goals and ends– and the flourishing of such plurality of good ends is constituted by the overall flourishing of strategically prefigured processes of self-management, non-domination, mutual-aid, and direct-collective-action on political/economic/social scales. The overall flourishing of the processual gestalt of objective+subjective freedom is constitutive of the overall flourishing of various other goods. The good is at once the flourishing of common freedom and individual freedom. The good is richly qualified while also being in various ways “unwritten” and constantly developed/co-authored by collectives and individuals through the actualization of objective and subjective freedom. The good is the development of the good place/good places, the good life/good lives, good means, good ends, and good social-ecological relations through an overall “process ethics” of political/economic/social freedom+the means thereof (which forms a moving gestalt of the good).

Dialectical naturalism is a philosophical worldview rooted in dialectical (developmental, differentiating, and unifying) reasoning+ontology (and related natural+ecological+social+thinking/willing dimensions) in tandem with a dialectical ethics of freedom emerging out of nature, needs, conditions, and possibilities related to the good place and the good life via the development of mutual political/economic/social freedom of each and all (and the means thereof) in all its universality, particularity, individuality, plurality, objectivity, and subjectivity. Dialectical naturalism is also the living movement of such a philosophy being adapted and updated while keeping its core features that make it what it is. Dialectical naturalism enables us to move from reasoning about reasoning and being, to nature and natural development, to second nature/the development of social nature, to political/economic/social freedom and the means thereof (through which subjective and objective freedom, as well as other goods, can flourish).

# Conclusion

Through thinking about thinking and being, beginning with indeterminate being, the *Science of Logic* rationally grounds and dialectically reasons through contents+relations of specific logical/ontological/speculative concepts and determinacies that people can, often do, and also should utilize in philosophical, scientific and practical reasoning—determinacies which are instantiated in conditions, existence, actuality, and natural/social/historical processes in richly variegated ways.

The *Science of Logic* provides a coherent method and system for reasoning through processes, determinacies, and relations. The self-sufficient scaffolding of the Science of Logic provides grounding for further reasoning in regards to natural and social development. The *Science of Logic* provides non-dogmatic reasoning and grounding for ‘realphilosophie’ and future philosophy and science.

While there are various ways of obtaining knowledge—such as through deduction, induction, abduction, eduction,<sup>1</sup> philosophy and its various subfields including natural and social sciences and the various subfields, practices, through our social relations (and through interacting with, relating to, and learning from/with others in variegated social constellations), dialogue, practical problem solving, imagination, introspection, observations/senses, experience, art/applied art, etc.: collectively and individually reasoning through the above and related processes, determinacies, wholes, parts, individuals, relations, differentiations etc. to find out what is true, good, and practical becomes a crown cardinal way of thinking through thinking and practices as well as mediating+synthesizing the various ways of knowing which can then assist in practical reasoning and action taking. Multiple ways of knowing can be integrated into the general method of dialectical reasoning towards the true, the good, and the practical.

We can develop a worldview from the *Science of Logic* (where reasoning about reasoning and being in fact grounds reasoning and being in reasoning) into natural and social philosophy. And, through doing nature+social philosophy/science as well as reasoning through+interacting with the world and various ways of obtaining knowledge: we can think about being and thinking as well as the categories we are using and the determinacies we are relying on and then develop the determinacies of the *Science of Logic* from there through reflecting upon the qualities of thinking and being as such (and from there, we can think through the general movements and determinacies of the *Science of Logic* including that of truth). There are various non-arbitrary pathways from reasoning about nature+social philosophy to the contents and determinacies of the Science of Logic (and even the Science of Logic as such if reasoned through from indeterminate being onwards) and back again.

While the general movements and determinacies of *Science of Logic* are shown to be true through reasoning grounding itself as system in reason and its own method: the determinacies of the *Science of Logic* can also be verified through their coherence with natural and social de-

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<sup>1</sup> See Bookchin’s use of this concept in *Philosophy of Social Ecology*

velopment, explanatory power, predictive power, and practical/reasoning applicability. The harmony between inductive and natural+social scientific methods and findings, as well as other ways of obtaining knowledge, and the determinacies/determined determinacies/self-determined determinacies of the *Science of Logic* show further reasons that the contents of the *Science of Logic* correspond to/cohere with/are in adequate unity with natural and social development.

The developing ecological and social world+developing ecological and social problems+developing practical endeavors related to daily life as well as multi-dimensional study of logic, epistemology, metaphysics, ontology, ethics, aesthetics, and technics related to the above: constitute a never-ending need for contemplative and practical philosophy and science (the latter being part of philosophy proper by an expanded conception of philosophy). Just as we are in need of philosophy (broadly conceived of as ethics, metaphysics/ontology, logic, epistemology, aesthetics, and technics etc.) for our reasoning and acting towards the good, philosophy broadly conceived is in need of continuous ecological and social thinking/philosophy/science to be in grander harmony with the true and the good in relation to developing social and ecological processes.

In the movement from the absolute to natural development: the whole of natural development is a differentiated unity that includes all wholes, parts, individuals, relations/history/processes/negativity, forms and contents thereof, all determinations, contradictions, conditions and possibilities, all mechanism, chemism, life, thinking/spirit, and sociality. Life forms have related genera, species, and individuals and evolve through their self-relations, self-determination, and relations to others and broader ecological conditions. The good life and the good place, the flourishing of life forms and ecological communities, happens through webs of direct and indirect mutual aid, unity in diversity, non-hierarchical relationships, subjectivity, volition, self-organization, and spontaneity (Bookchin 2017).

Sociality (as in second nature) and spirit are part of, caused by, and causally effecting natural development. Sociality and spirit are developments of nature participating within nature. Knowledge of logic, nature, sociality, spirit, and philosophy can be grasped through contemplative and practical reasoning of political/economic/social/thinking/willing beings. Based on the nature, needs, functions, and potentialities of political/economic/social/thinking/willing life processes: the good consists of mutual-freedom, mutual-non-domination, mutual aid, and direct-collective-action. And politics, economics, and social relations can be developed into the good place conducive to and constitutive of the overall flourishing of the good life through prefigurative spirals of community-self-management+commoning and the liberatory determinacies and means thereof strategically+creatively tailored to plural contexts.

Nature is the differentiated whole of natural development including all ecological and social processes, determinacies, and relations. And through ecological and social development, there become potentials for social and thinking/willing beings to develop political, economic, and social freedom constituting a third nature rooted in mutualistic flourishing of social and ecological processes (Bookchin 2005, 2007, 2017, Usufruct Collective 2023). The flourishing of liberatory institutions, social relations, and practices within and between social-ecological communities towards the mutual flourishing of first and second nature is constitutive of a free and ecological society (Bookchin 2017).

*“In a very real sense, an ecological society would be a transcendence of both first nature and second nature into a new domain of a “free nature,”...In this new synthesis, where first and second nature are melded into a free, rational, and ethical nature, neither first nor second would lose its*

*specificity and integrity. Humanity, far from diminishing the integrity of nature, would add the dimension of freedom, reason, and ethics to it and raise evolution to a level of self-reflexivity that has always been latent in the emergence of the natural world,”* (Bookchin 2017).

## **Additional comments in regards to the means and ends of Social Transformation**

The overall means and ends of the good are constituted by political, economic, social, community, collective, and individual forms of self-management, the constitutive means thereof, and the mutual-flourishing of each and all of the above. The overall development of community self-management+embedded councils+commoning via unity of liberatory means and ends are nothing less than crucial to the above vision of the good life, the good place, and good politics. Over time, the overall flourishing of spirals of self-managed community assemblies and related communalized+liberatory forms of reconstructive and oppositional practices are necessary for the overall flourishing of the above. Through the sufficient flourishing of the above, communal, collective, and individual self-management can flourish. The sufficient flourishing of communal freedom and commoning can enable the flourishing of variegated forms of communal, collective, and individual projects+practices as well as the overall flourishing of variegated social arrangements according to needs and volitions.

The iterative overtime development of means and ends of co-federal community-self-management+commoning+opposition to domination can happen in tandem with other forms of liberatory organizations and broader social movement ecosystems; including syndicalist means/radical workplace organizing as well as various liberatory specific and multi issue based social movements and social movement organizations struggling around needs and solving social problems. Community assemblies and commoning (via reconstructive and oppositional practices) are not a replacement for broader social movement ecosystems; nor are broader social movement ecosystems a replacement for community assemblies and commoning.

Social movement organizations and social movements, be they community based, labor/workplace based, or otherwise, can only be developed in liberatory ways through them being, at least overtime, qualified by determinate liberatory qualities in regards to form and content; including self-management, mutual aid, direct action, federalism/co-federalism, opposition to domination/hierarchy (and independence from endorsing hierarchical politics/economics/social stratification), etc. Social movement organizations and social movements must be ethical, strategic, and tactical in relation to their conditions, possibilities, and goals– which requires due adaptation to context to get from where they are towards liberatory ends through liberatory means. Additionally, they must be reinvigorated by the thinking and wills of participants and related individual+collective knowledge and practices (and development of virtues and virtuous practices) collectives and individuals cultivate over time. The cultivation of this liberatory form and content strategically and tactically adapted to context, related to community assemblies reconstructing the commons and opposing domination (that is, lower case c communalism<sup>2</sup>), as well as broader

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<sup>2</sup> Similar in most respects to Bookchin’s communalism although differing in other respects; See “*Friendly Critique of Murray Bookchin’s Politics*” by Usufruct Collective for more information on the small yet important divergences (despite a shared core politics in regards to most essential features).

liberatory social movement organizations and ecosystems can develop through multiple routes converging upon such liberatory form and content.

The development of liberatory form and content can be significantly catalyzed by ideologically and theoretically specific libertarian communist organizations that spread liberatory organizations and practices, processes, strategies, and tactics within social movements and various social movement organizations that have a liberatory thrust (FARJ 2008). This kind of group would not rule over social movement organizations and social movements but instead spread liberatory processes, practices, and goals through dialogue and action— a process the espcifsmo tendency calls social work and social insertion (FARJ 2008). Social work and social insertion can take the form of initiating/forming organizations, filling them with a liberatory spirit and content, as well as invigorating social movements and social movement organizations with a liberatory spirit towards their own liberatory objectives + towards long-term liberatory objectives of a libertarian/egalitarian society (FARJ 2008). In addition to practices of social work and social insertion, these ideologically and theoretically specific libertarian communist organizations also have functions of producing and reproducing theory— helping to study and spread the idea of freedom, its forms, its contents, and its constitutive means and ends. The need/extreme desirability for liberatory social work and social insertion by ideologically and theoretically specific libertarian communist organizations points to the political importance of organizational dualism comprising two kinds/levels of organizing: 1. The popular/social/mass level, (including community assemblies, radical labor organizing etc.) based on shared processes, practices, meeting needs, solving social problems and reconstruction of self-management and mutual aid + opposition to domination and exploitation. 2. the ideologically and theoretically specific level related to libertarian communist organizations that have core functions of social work, social insertion, and producing, reproducing, and spreading liberatory theory and practice. The popular/social/mass level organizations, movements, and participants thereof are the main protagonists of reconstructive practices+oppositional practices to meet needs and solve social problems and bring about a free society through processes of political, economic, and social transformation. The ideologically and theoretically specific libertarian communist organizations function as organized catalysts for the development and defense of liberatory means and ends (and participants thereof are side by side with others as fellow-members within popular/social/mass level organizations).

Given the development of the whole of the above, this argues for a strain of libertarian communist ideology/theory/practice rooted in community-self-management/lower case c communalism as means and ends to be developed (with due universals adapted to plural contexts and iteratively developed overtime), syndicalism/radical workplace and labor organizing as means, variegated kinds of social movement organizations rooted in self-management, mutual aid, and direct-collective-action to meet needs and solve social problems as means, and organizational dualism. The most crucial features of social ecology and dialectical naturalism can potentially be accepted in whole or large part by all, or most, or many members of ideologically and theoretically specific libertarian communist organizations.

## A brief note on theory and practice

As revealed by the end, the wholeness of what this philosophy is engaged in is not merely related to theory; it is indeed deeply related to practices of various kinds, ethics, politics, as well as social transformation.

Having a true and good philosophy and worldview is no replacement for practical endeavors that are essential to means and ends of liberatory politics. True, good, and practical philosophy (and related good reasoning) without sufficient social force lacks sufficient power to transform the world. However, good philosophy and reasoning can have significant effects on thinking and acting— including spirals of organization, deliberation, and collective action (informing means and ends of action accordingly). As true, good, and useful as dialectical naturalism is: Fortunately for us all, people can participate well in regards to liberatory/ethical practice and social transformation by collectively acting in community organizations, workplace organizations, and other organizations that utilize self-management, mutual aid, direct-collective-action in opposition to domination to meet needs and solve social problems without having a full dialectical naturalist worldview.<sup>3</sup>

Theory and practice should inform each other through liberatory means towards liberatory ends. However, just as theory is no replacement for practice, it is also the case that practice is no replacement for theory. The content of decisions that collectives develop will be related to the reasoning persons and collectives develop which will guide deliberation, decisions, and action. The development of wise reasoning and philosophical thinking (in tandem with the development of webs of virtues/virtuous practices) helps us in reasoning towards the good and making better practical decisions in relation to conditions and possibilities; the flourishing of true, ethical, and useful knowledge, philosophy, science, reasoning, and practices are beneficial to the development of the good life, the good place, as well as related social transformation.

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<sup>3</sup> And fortunately for us all, there are more simple and complex ways to think about and communicate this whole worldview and parts of it— as well as different ways a dialectical naturalist worldview and parts of it be expressed (such as via different languages, different words, and different mediums). On a related tangent, when it comes to ethics and politics: The gestalt of the good can be communicated with various kinds and degrees of qualification and detail; as for one liberatory determinacy to develop and flourish to become good-enough and beyond, sufficient others must also develop and flourish; and with several of the most crucial liberatory determinacies as a moving mutually qualifying gestalt, they will develop/include other determinacies and in fact require some other determinacies as part of what is needed for the overall movement/flourishing thereof (and additionally, benefit from other determinacies).

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