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THE THREE ECOLOGIES

TRANSLATED BY CHRIS TURNER, MATERIAL WORD

> *There is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there*
> *is an ecology of weeds.*
> (Gregory Bateson, in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*)

The human subject is not a straightforward matter; Descartes was wrong to suggest it was sufficient merely to think in order to be. On the one hand, there are all kinds of ways of existing that lie outside the realm of consciousness; and, on the other, a thinking which struggles only to gain a hold on itself merely spins ever more crazily. Like a whirling top, it gains no proper purchase on the real territories of existence, as they slide and drift like the tectonic plates that underpin the continents. We should perhaps not speak of subjects, but rather of components of subjectification, each of which works more or less on its own account. Necessarily, this would lead us to re-examine the relation between the individual and subjectivity, and, above all, to distinguish clearly between the two concepts. The individual would appear in his/her actual position, as a 'terminal' for processes involving human groups, socio-economic ensembles, data-processing machines: a terminal through which, of course, not all the vectors of subjectification necessarily pass. Interiority would appear as a quality produced at the meeting-point of multiple components which are relatively mutually autonomous - in certain cases, openly discordant.

It is of course still difficult for such arguments to find acceptance, particularly in contexts where there remains a lingering suspicion, if not indeed a prior rejection, of any specific reference to subjectivity. Subjectivity still gets a bad press; it continues even today to be criticized in the name of the primacy of infrastructures, structures, or systems. Generally speaking, those who do take it upon themselves to deal either practically or theoretically with subjectivity use the kid glove approach to the subject; they take endless precautions, making absolutely sure they never stray too far from the pseudo-scientific paradigms they borrow for preference from the hard sciences - from thermodynamics, topology, information and systems theory, linguistics. It is as if there were a scientist super-ego which demanded that psychical entities be reified, understood only in terms of their extrinsic co-ordinates. Unsurprisingly, then, the human and social sciences have condemned themselves to overlooking the intrinsically developmental, creative, at d self-positioning dimensions of processes of subjectification.

In this context, there is an urgent need for us to free ourselves of scientistic references and metaphors: to forge new paradigms which are instead ethico-aesthetic in inspiration. The best cartographies of the psyche - or, if you will, the best psychoanalyses - are after all surely to be found in the work of Goethe, Proust, Joyce, Artaud, and Beckett, rather than Freud, Jung, or Lacan; conversely, the best aspect of these latters' psychoanalytical works is surely their literary dimension - take Freud's *Traumdeutung,* for example, which can be read as an exceptional modern novel.

My problematization of psychoanalysis is based upon notions of aesthetic creation and ethical implications; yet it does not imply a 'rehabilitation' of phenomenological analysis. Phenomenology, I believe, is handicapped by a systematic 'reductionism', which leads it to view its objects in the narrow terms of pure intentional transparency. I myself have come to regard the apprehension of a psychical fact as inseparable from the enunciative assemblage that brings it into being, both as fact and as expressive process. There is a sort of relation of uncertainty between the apprehension of the object and the apprehension of the subject; thus, if we wish to articulate the two, we are forced to make a pseudo-narrative detour through the reference systems of myth and ritual, or through self-professedly scientific analysis - all of which have as their ultimate goal the concealment of the *dis-positional* arrangement through which discourse is brought into existence and from which it derives, 'secondarily' so to speak, its intelligibility.

I am not seeking here to revive the Pascalian distinction between *esprit de geometrie* and *esprit de finesse;* for I understand these as two modes of apprehension - the one via the concept, the other via the affect or percept - which are in fact absolutely complementary. What I am suggesting is that what I have called this pseudo-narrative detour *also* deploys mechanisms of repetition - infinitely varying rhythms and refrains - which are nothing more or less than the buttresses of existence, since they allow discourse, or any link in the discursive chain, to become the bearer of a non-discursivity which, stroboscope-like, cancels out the play of distinctive oppositions at the level of both content and form of expression. What is more, those mechanisms are the very condition of emergence and re-emergence of the unique events - incorporeal universes of reference - which punctuate the unfolding of individual and collective historicity.

There was once a time when Greek theatre - or courtly love, or the courtly romance - were the standard models of, or modules for, subjectivity. Today it is Freudianism whose ghostly presence is visible in the forms in which we maintain the existence of sexuality, of childhood, of neurosis. And although, for the time being, I do not envisage transcending Freudianism *(le fait freudien),* nor argue that we should write it off altogether, I do propose that we re-orient its concepts and practices - put them to another use, uproot them from their pre-structuralist attachment to a subjectivity wholly anchored in the individual and collective past. What is now on the agenda is a 'futurist' or 'constructivist' opening-up of fields of possibility. The unconscious remains bound to archaic fixations only as long as no assemblage exists within which it can be oriented towards the future; and in the future that faces us,

temporalities of both human and non-human nature will demand just such an existential reorientation. With the acceleration of the technological and data-processing revolutions, we will witness the deployment or, if you will, the unfolding of animal, vegetable, cosmic, and machinic becomings which are already prefigured by the prodigious expansion of computer-aided subjectivity. Those developments - the formation and remote-controlling of human individuals and groups - will of course also be governed by institutional and social class dimensions. In that context, we will have to play around with psychoanalysis, find ways of evading the phantasmatic traps of psycho-analytical myth, rather than cultivating and maintaining it like an ornamental garden.

Sadly, of course, psychoanalysts today are even more entrenched than their predecessors in what we might call a 'structuralization' of unconscious complexes - a fact which produces a dryness and intolerable dogmatism in their theoretical writings, an impoverishment of their practical interventions, and a stereotyping which makes them impervious to the singular otherness of their patients. I have referred above to ethical paradigms; and in so doing, I want chiefly to emphasize both the responsibility and the necessary 'involvement', not only of workers in the psychoanalytical field, but of all those outside it who are in a position to intervene in individual and collective psychic agencies (through education, health, culture, sport, art, the media, fashion, etc.). It is ethically unacceptable for anyone operating in the field of subjectivity to shelter - as so many do - behind a transferential neutrality whose professed basis is the corpus of scientific work that has achieved mastery over the unconscious: unacceptable not least because any 'psychoanalytical domain' is grounded in the extension of - 'interfaces' with - the domains of the aesthetic.

My insistence on the need for aesthetic paradigms is based on an attempt to stress the importance of perpetual reinvention - of always starting from *tabula rasa* - particularly in the register of psychoanalytical practices. The alternative is entrapment in deathly repetition. Thus the necessary precondition for any regeneration of analysis - through schizoanalysis, for example - is to acknowl-edge the general principle that both individual and collective subjective assemblages have the potential to develop and proliferate far beyond their ordinary state of equilibrium. By their very essence, analytical cartographies reach beyond the existential territories to which they are assigned. Like artists and writers, the cartographers of subjectivity should seek, then, with each concrete performance, to develop and innovate, to create new perspectives, without prior recourse to assured theoretical foundations or the authority of a group, school, conservatory, or academy. . . . Work in progress! An end to psychoanalytical, behaviourist, or systemist catechisms!

To be sure, those who operate in the world of psychoanalysis, if they do indeed wish to find common ground with artists and writers, will have to shed their white coats - the invisible uniforms they wear in their heads, in their language and ways of being. The ideal of the artist is never to reproduce the same work *ad infinitum* (unless s/he is the Titorelli figure in Kafka's *The Trial*, who repeatedly paints identical portraits of the same judge!). Similarly, any

educational or therapeutic institution, or any individual course of treatment, should strive to achieve the permanent evolution of both practice and its theoretical framework. (Paradoxically, it is in the 'hard sciences' that we may well encounter the most spectacular rethinking of processes of subjectification. Prigogine and Stengers, for example, talk in their latest book of the necessity of introducing into physics a 'narrative element': an element which, they argue, is indispensable for a theorization of evolutionary irreversibility.[1])

My argument, then, is that, with the increasing development of the machines of production of signs, images, syntax, and artificial intelligence, the question of the enunciation of subjectivity will pose itself ever more forcefully. In what follows, I shall classify what I see as this reconstitution of social and individual practices under three complementary headings: social ecology, mental ecology, and environmental ecology.

If today, human relationships with the socius, the psyche, and 'nature' are increasingly deteriorating, then this is attributable not only to objective damage and pollution but to the ignorance and fatalistic passivity with which those issues are confronted by individuals and responsible authorities. The implications of any given negative development may or may not be catastrophic; whatever the case, it tends today to be simply accepted without question. Structuralism, and subsequently postmodernism, have accustomed us to a vision of the world in which human interventions - concrete politics and micropolitics - are no longer relevant. The withering away of social praxis is explained in terms of the death of ideologies, or of some supposed return to universal values. Yet those explanations seem to me highly unsatisfactory. The decisive factor, it seems to me, is the general inflexibility of social and psychological praxes - their failure to adapt - as well as a widespread incapacity to perceive the erroneousness of partitioning off the real into a number of separate fields. It is quite simply wrong to regard action on the psyche, the socius, and the environment as separate. Indeed, if we continue - as the media would have us do - to refuse squarely to confront the *simultaneous* degradation of these three areas, we will in effect be acquiescing in a general infantilization of opinion, a destruction and neutralization of democracy. We need to 'kick the habit' of sedative consumption, of television discourse in particular; we need to apprehend the world through the interchangeable lenses of the three ecologies.

For there are limits - as Chernobyl and AIDS have savagely demonstrated - to the technico-scientific power of humanity. Nature kicks back. If we are to orient the sciences and technology toward more human goals, we clearly need collective management and control - not blind reliance on technocrats in the state apparatuses, in the hope that they will control developments and minimize risks in fields largely dominated by the pursuit of profit. It would of course be absurd to formulate this in terms of a desire to retrieve past forms of human existence. In the wake of the data-processing and robotics revolutions, the rise of genetic engineering, and the globalization of markets, neither human work nor the natural habitat can return, even to their state of being of a few decades ago. As Paul Virilio has pointed out, the increased speed of

transport and communications, and the interdependence of urban centres are, equally, irreversible. The proper way to deal with what we have to acknowledge as a *de facto* situation is to reorient it - which implies a redefinition in terms of *contemporary conditions* of the objectives and methods of each and every form of movement of the social. This, precisely, was the problematic symbolically formulated in a television experiment once performed by the television presenter Alain Bombard. The experiment involved two glass bowls, one filled with polluted water from the port of Marseilles or somewhere similar, in which a clearly very healthy octopus was swimming around - virtually dancing - and the other filled with pure, unpolluted water. Bombard caught the octopus and transferred it to the 'normal' water; within a few seconds, it curled up, sank to the bottom, and died.

More than ever today, nature has become inseparable from culture; and if we are to understand the interactions between ecosystems, the mechanosphere, and the social and individual universes of reference, we have to learn to think 'transversally'. As the waters of Venice are invaded by monstrous, mutant algae, so our television screens are peopled and saturated by 'degenerate' images and utterances. In the realm of social ecology, Donald Trump and his ilk - another form of algae - are permitted to proliferate unchecked. In the name of renovation, Trump takes over whole districts of New York or Atlantic City, raises rents, and squeezes out tens of thousands of poor families. Those who Trump condemns to homelessness are the social equivalent of the dead fish of environmental ecology.

Further disasters of social ecology include the brutal deterritorialization of the Third World, which simultaneously affects the cultural texture of populations, and devastates both climate and human immune defences. Or child labour - now growing far beyond its nineteenth-century proportions! We find ourselves repeatedly on the brink of situations of catastrophic self-destruction. How then do we regain control? International agencies have only the weakest of purchase on phenomena which call instead for absolutely fundamental rethinking. There was a time when international solidarity was a major concern of trade unions and left parties; today, it is the sole province of humanitarian associations. Marx's writings remain of enormous value; but Marxist discourse has gone into qualitative decline. The task facing the protagonists of social liberation is to re-forge theoretical references which light a way out of the current, unprecedently nightmarish historical period. We live in a time when it is not only animal species that are disappearing; so too are the words, expressions, and gestures of human solidarity. A cloak of silence has been forcibly imposed on emancipatory struggle: the struggles of women, or of the unemployed, the 'marginalized', and immigrants - the new proletarians.

Why, then, is it so important, in mapping out reference points for the three ecologies, to abandon pseudo-scientific paradigms? The reason is not simply the complexity of the entities under consideration; more fundamentally, the three ecologies are governed by a *different logic* from that of ordinary communication between speakers and listeners. Their logic is not that which makes possible the intelligibility of discursive sets, the indefinite interlocking

of fields of signification; it is a logic of intensities, the logic of self-referential existential assemblages, engaging non-reversible duration; it is the logic, not of the totalized bodies of human subjects, but of part objects in the psychoanalytical sense - Winnicott's transitional objects, institutional objects ('subject groups'), faces, landscapes. Whilst the logic of discursive sets seeks to delimit its objects, the logic of intensities - or eco-logic - concerns itself solely with the movement and intensity of evolutive processes. Process, which I here counterpose to system and structure, seeks to grasp existence in the very act of its constitution, definition, and deterritorialization; it is a process of 'setting into being', instituted by sub-sets of expressive ensembles which break with their totalizing frame and set to work on their own account, gradually superseding the referential totality from which they emerge, and manifesting themselves finally as their own existential index, processual lines of flight. . . .

Ecological praxes might, in this light, be defined as a search to identify in each partial locus of existence the potential vectors of subjectification and singularization. What is generally sought is some quality that runs counter to the 'normal' order of things: a discordant repetition, information of particular intensity which summons up other intensities to form new existential configurations. What I term dissident vectors of subjectification divest themselves to an extent of their functions of denotation and signification; they have no material or bodily existence. As experiments in the suspension of meaning, they are certainly risky; there is the risk of an overly violent deterritorialization, of the destruction of existing assemblages of subjectification (viz. the implosion of the Italian social movement in the early 1980s). More gradual forms of deterritorialization may, on the other hand, produce a more constructive, processual evolution of subjective assemblages. At the heart of all ecological praxes is an a-signifying rupture, in a context in which the catalysts of existential change are present, but lack expressive support from the enunciative assemblage which frames them. In the absence of ecological praxis, those catalysts remain inactive and tend towards inconsistency; they produce anxiety, guilt, other forms of psychopathological repetition. But when expressive rupture takes place, repetition becomes a process of creative assemblage, forging new incorporeal objects, abstract machines, and universes of value. At this point, the existential event which gives rise to these new assemblages becomes invisible; they confront us as having been 'always already' in existence.

A poetic text is one example of just such a catalytic segment of existence - one which at the same time remains the bearer of denotation and signification. Poetry is ambiguous: while it may transmit a message or denote a referent, it functions at the same time precisely through redundancies of expression and content. Proust's work, for example, analyses with extra-ordinary skill the ways in which particular existential refrains (Vinteuil's 'little phrase', the church towers of Martinville, the taste of the *madeleine)* work as catalysts in the crucible of subjectification. What we should emphasize, however, is that the work of locating the points of emergence of these recurrent existential refrains is not the sole concern of the arts and literature. Eco-logic is equally at work in everyday life, in social life at all its levels; it

comes into play at every point where the constitution of an existential territory is in question. Let us add that these territories may already have been massively deterritorialized; they may encompass celestial Jerusalem, the problematic of good and evil itself, or any ethico-political commitment. Their only common feature is their capacity to sustain the production of singular existents, or to re-singularize serialized ensembles.

It is of course true that existential cartographies which assume certain existentializing ruptures of meaning have always sought refuge in art and religion. But the subjective void produced today by the accelerating production of material and immaterial goods is both unprecedentedly absurd and increasingly irremediable; it threatens both individual and group existential territories. Not only has the growth of techno-scientific resources failed absolutely to produce social and cultural progress; it seems equally clear that we are seeing an irreversible degradation of the traditional forces of social regulation. The response to the more modernist 'capitalist' formations is, in various ways to place their bets on a return to the past: on a reconstitution of modes of being, handed down from ancestors in history. Certain hierarchical structures, for example, have become the object of an imaginary hypercathexis, both in the upper echelons and indeed in the lower ranks of management. Even in a situation where such hierarchies have lost most of their functional efficiency (mainly through the computerization of information and organiz- ation management) they are regarded - as the Japanese example demonstrates - with something often bordering on religious devotion. At the same time, segregationalist attitudes towards immigrants, women, young people, and even the old are on the increase. This resurgence of what might be called subjective conservatism is not simply attributable to an intensification of social repression; it is connected, too, with a kind of existential rigidification of actors in the domain of the social. In a situation in which post-industrial capitalism - which I myself prefer to call *integrated world capitalism* (IWC) - is tending increasingly to move its centres of power away from the structures of production of goods and services, and towards structures of production of signs, of syntax, and - by exercising control over the media, advertising, opinion polls, etc. - of subjectivity, we would do well to examine the modes of operation of earlier forms of capitalism, since they show the same tendency towards the accumulation of subjective power, both at the level of the capitalist elites, and in the ranks of the proletariat. (If this propensity of capitalist development has never been fully appreciated by labour movement theorists, then that is surely because it is only now revealing itself in its full significance.)

What then are the mechanisms on which integrated world capitalism is founded? I would suggest grouping them under the headings of four main semiotic regimes:

economic semiotics (monetary, financial, and accountancy mechanisms)
juridical semiotics (property deeds, various legislative measures and regu- lations)
technico-scientific semiotics (plans, diagrams, programmes, studies, research)

the semiotics of subjedification, certain of which are listed above. We should add a number of others, including architecture, town planning, public amenities, etc.

The first thing to acknowledge is that models which propose the notion of a causal hierarchy between these various semiotic regimes are out of step with reality. The Marxist postulate which argues that economic semiotics - the semiotics of production of material goods - occupies an infrastructural position in relation to juridical and ideological semiotics has, for example, been increasingly discredited. Today, the object IWC has to be regarded as all of a piece: it is simultaneously productive, economic, and subjective. Its determin-ants might be formulated in old, scholastic categories; they are at once material, formal, final, and efficient.

What, in this context, are the key analytical problems now confronting social and mental ecology? The first is that of the introjection of repressive power by the oppressed themselves. The principal difficulty here relates to the way in which unions and parties which are, in theory, struggling to defend the interests of the workers and the oppressed, reproduce pathogenic models which stifle freedom of expression and innovation in their own organizations. It may of course take the labour movement some considerable time to recognize that the economic-ecological vectors of circulation, distribution, communication, and supervision operate on precisely the same level, from the point of view of the creation of surplus-value, as labour which is directly embodied in the production of material goods. And that delay will be due in no small part to those theorists whose dogmatic ignorance has stoked the workerism and corporatism of recent decades, and thus profoundly disfigured and handicapped emergent anti-capitalist movements of liberation.

The hope for the future is that the development of the three types of ecological praxis outlined here will lead to a redefinition and refocusing of the goals of emancipatory struggles. And, in a context in which the relation between capital and human activity is repeatedly renegotiated, let us hope that ecological, feminist and anti-racist activity will focus more centrally on new modes of production of subjectivity: that is to say, on modes of knowledge, culture, sensibility, and sociability - the future foundations of new productive assemblages - whose source lies in incorporeal systems of value.

Social ecology should never lose sight of the fact that capitalist power has become de-localized, deterritorialized, both in extension - by extending its grasp over the whole social, economic, and cultural life of the planet - and in 'intension' - by infiltrating the most unconscious levels of subjectivity. In working towards the reconstruction of human relations at all levels of the socius, social ecology cannot simply take up a position of external opposition - as do, for example, existing trade union and political practices. It has become imperative to confront the effects of capitalist power on the mental ecology of daily life, whether individual, domestic, conjugal, neighbourly, creative, or personal-ethical. The task facing us in future is not that of seeking a mind-numbing and infantilizing consensus, but of cultivating *dissensus* and the singular production of existence. Capitalistic subjectivity, no matter in

what dimension or by what means it is engendered, is manufactured to protect existence against any event intrusive enough to disturb and disrupt opinion. Singularity is either evaded, or entrapped within specialist apparatuses and frames of reference. The goal of capitalism is to manage the worlds of childhood, love, and art: to control the last vestige of anxiety, madness, pain, and death, or the sense of being lost in the cosmos. From the most personal - one might almost say infra-personal - existential data, integrated world capitalism forms massive subjective aggregates, which it hooks up to notions of race, nation, profession, sporting competition, dominating virility, mass media stardom. Capitalism seeks to gain power by controlling and neutralizing the maximum possible number of subjectivity's existential refrains; capitalistic subjectivity is intoxicated with and anaesthetized by a collective sense of pseudo-eternity.

The new ecological praxes will have, then, to articulate themselves across the whole range of these interconnected and heterogeneous fronts. Their objective should be to activate isolated and repressed singularities: singularities that have been left simply spinning on their axes. (The principles of the Freinet schools are one example of a practice which aims to produce singularity out of a general functioning, through co-operative management, assessment meetings, a regular newspaper, student freedom to organize individually or in groups, etc.) We shall have similarly to consider symptoms and indices lying outside the norm as indices of a potential work of subjectification. It seems essential to me that we organize new micro-political and micro-social practices, new solidarities, a new gentleness, while at the same time applying new aesthetic and analytical practices to the formations of the unconscious. If social and political practices are to be set back on their feet, we need to work for humanity, rather than simply for a permanent re-equilibration of the capitalist semiotic universe. The objection might be, of course, that large-scale struggles are not necessarily in synchrony with ecological praxes and the micro-politics of desire. But this is precisely the point. Not only is it necessary *not* to homogenize the various levels of practice - *not* to join them under the aegis of some transcendent instance; we have also to engage them in processes of *heterogenesis*. There will never be a point at which feminists will be able to be said to have committed sufficient energy to feminine becomings; nor should the immigrant population be called upon to renounce the cultural features of its being, or its membership of a particular nationality. Our objective should be to nurture individual cultures, while at the same time inventing new contracts of citizenship: to create an order of the state in which singularity, exceptions, and rarity coexist under the least oppressive possible conditions.

The aim of Hegelian and Marxist dialectics was the 'resolution' of opposites. This is no longer the objective of eco-logic. Certainly, in the field of social ecology in particular, there will be times of struggle in which all men and women feel a need to set common objectives and act 'like little soldiers' - by which I mean good activists. But there will also be periods of re-singularization, in which individual and collective subjectivities will ' eclaim their due', and in which creative expression as such will take precedence over

collective goals. This new logic - and I wish to stress this point - has affinities with that of the artist, who may be induced to refashion an entire piece of work after the intrusion of some accidental detail, a petty incident which suddenly deflects the project from its initial trajectory, diverting it from what may well have been a clearly formulated vision of its eventual shape. There is a proverb which says that 'the exception proves the rule'; but the exception can also inflect the rule, or even re-create it.

The generalized ecology I am arguing for here has in my view barely begun to be prefigured by environmental ecology in its contemporary form. The ecology I envisage will aim radically to decentre social struggles and assumptions about the psyche. Existing ecological movements certainly have many virtues; but the wider ecological question seems to me too important to be abandoned to the archaizing, folkloristic tendencies which choose determinedly to reject large-scale political involvement. Ecology should abandon its connotative links with images of a small minority of nature lovers or accredited experts; for the ecology I propose here questions the whole of subjectivity and capitalist power formations - formations which, moreover, can by no means be assured of continuing their successes of the last decade. Not only may the present financial and economic crisis lead to substantial upheavals in the social status quo and the media-based imaginary that underpins it; at the same time, neo-liberalist ideology may well be hoisted on its own petard, as it espouses such eminently recuperable notions as flexible working' hours, deregulation, etc.

I stress once again: the choice is no longer between blind fixation to the old forms of state-bureaucratic supervision and generalized welfare on the one hand, and despairing and cynical surrender to yuppie ideology on the other. All the indicators suggest that the increased productivity engendered by current technological revolutions will continue to rise exponentially. The question is whether new ecological operators and new enunciative assemblages will succeed in orienting that growth along paths that avoid the absurdity and the impasses of integrated world capitalism.

The principle common to the three ecologies is therefore the following: each of the existential territories with which they confront us exists, not in and of itself *[en-soi]*, closed in on itself, but as a precarious, finite, finitized entity for itself *[pour-soi];* it is singular and singularized; it may bifurcate into stratefied and death-laden reiterations; or it may open, as process, into praxes that enable it to be rendered 'inhabitable' by human projects. It is this praxic openness that constitutes the essence of the art of the 'eco';[2] it subsumes all existing ways of domesticating existential territories - intimate modes of being, the body, the environment, the great contextual ensembles of ethnic groups, the nation, or even the general rights of humanity.

Having said this, let me make clear that what is important is not to lay down universal laws as a guide to ecological praxes but, on the contrary, to highlight the basic antinomies that exist between the ecological levels, or, if you like, between the three visions or lenses under discussion here. Specific to mental ecology is the principle that its approach to existential territories derives from a pre-objectal and pre-personal logic: a logic evocative of what Freud described

as a 'primary process'. This might be described as a logic of the 'included middle', in which black and white are indistinct, in which the beautiful coexists with the ugly, the inside with the outside, the 'good' object with the bad. In the particular case of the ecology of the phantasm, each attempt to locate the phantasm cartographically requires the elaboration of a singular or, more precisely, a singularized expressive framework. As Gregory Bateson has clearly stated, what he calls the 'ecology of ideas' cannot be circumscribed within the field of individual psychology; it is organized in systems or 'minds', the boundaries of which transcend the boundaries of the individual.[3] I part company with Bateson, however, at the point where he defines action and enunciation as mere segments of the ecological sub-system known as context. I myself see existential 'context creation' as, invariably, the product of a praxis which arises out of the fracturing of a systematic 'pretext'. There is no overall hierarchy of enunciative ensembles and their sub-sets, whose components can be located and localized at particular levels. Those ensembles are made up of heterogeneous elements which acquire consistency and persistence only as they cross the thresholds that bound and define one world against another. They are produced in the crystallization of fragments of a-signifying discursive chains - Schlegel's 'little works of art' ('Like a little work of art, a fragment has to be totally detached from the surrounding world and closed upon itself like a hedgehog'.[4])

Mental ecology has the capacity to emerge at any given moment, beyond the boundaries of fully formed ensembles or within the bounds of individual or collective order. Freud invented the rituals of the analytical session - free association, interpretation - as a means of apprehending the fragments that act as catalysts in existential disjunction in terms of the reference myths of psychoanalysis. Today certain post-systemist tendencies in family therapy have set about creating a different milieu and a different set of references within which to understand those fragments. This is all well and good; yet these rudimentary conceptual structures are incapable of accounting for the productions of 'primary' subjectivity, as these unfold on a positively industrial scale at the instigation, particularly, of the media and public institutions. What is shared by all existing bodies of theory is the unfortunate characteristic of closure against potential creative proliferation. As myths, or as theories with scientific pretensions, models of mental ecology should be assessed in terms, first, of their capacity to identify discursive links at the point of their breaking with meaning, and, second, of the extent to which the concepts they deploy permit theoretical and practical self-construction. Freudianism meets the first of these conditions reasonably well, but not the second; post-systemism, on the other hand, seems more likely to meet the second condition, but underestimates the importance of the first. In the wider social and political field, meanwhile, the 'alternative' milieu remains blissfully ignorant of the whole range of problematics that pertain to mental ecology.

If mental ecology is to have an impact, either on individual or collective life, however, it will not be necessary to import concepts or practices from the specialist field of psychoanalysis. Mental ecology demands rather that we face up to the logic of the ambivalence of desire *(I'ambivalence desirante)* wherever it

is found (in culture, everyday life, work, sport, etc.); that we re-evaluate the ultimate goal of work and human activities in terms of criteria other than those of profit and productivity; that we acknowledge the need to mobilize individuals and social segments in ways that are always diverse and different. It raises the question of the place we give to phantasms of aggression, murder, rape, and racism in the world of childhood and regressive adulthood; the question of whether and how to promote a true ecology of the phantasm - one that works through transference, translation, the redeployment of the materials of expression - rather than endlessly invoking great moral principles to mobilize mechanisms of censure and contention. Clearly, certain kinds of repression, if they prevent the 'acting out' of particular fantasies, are legitimate. But even negativistic and destructive phantasmagorias require modes of expression which allow them to be 'abreacted' - a process which, as in the treatment of psychoses, realigns hitherto dislocated existential territories. This 'transversalization' of violence requires, of course, that we abandon any notion of an ever-watchful intra-psychic death drive, which lies in wait ready to ravage everything in its path the moment the territories of the ego lose their consistency and vigilance. Violence is always the product of complex subjective assemblages; it is not intrinsically inscribed in the essence of the human species. There are any number of enunciative assemblages within which violence is constructed and maintained; the baroque constructions of de Sade and Celine, for example, are two (by no means equally successful) attempts to transform the negative phantasms of their authors - attempts which qualify these two as key figures for a mental ecology. A society that fails to use tolerance and permanent inventiveness to 'imaginarize' violence in its various manifestations runs the risk of seeing violence crystallize in the real - in the form, for example, of the repulsively fascinating one-eyed man whose implicitly racist and fascist messages are currently circulating in the French media and the political arena.[5] It is better here to face up to the truth: the power of a character of this type derives from his ability to interpret a whole montage of drives which do indeed pervade the whole of the socius.

I am not so naive and Utopian as to claim that there might be an analytical methodology guaranteed to eradicate the most deeply ingrained phantasms of reification of women, immigrants, the mad; nor that we might ultimately abolish either penal or psychiatric institutions. But it does seem to me that a generalization of the experiences of institutional analysis (in the hospital, the school, the urban environment . . .) could profoundly shift the terms of the problem of mental ecology. A fundamental reconstruction of social mechanisms is necessary if we are to confront the ravages produced by integrated world capitalism - a reconstruction which cannot be achieved by top-down reforms, laws, decrees, or bureaucratic programmes. What it requires is the promotion of innovative practices; the proliferation of alternative experiments which both respect singularity, and work permanently at the production of a subjectivity that is simultaneously autonomous, yet articulates itself in relation to the rest of society. Making space for violent fantasy - for brutal deterritorializations of the psyche and the socius - will be unlikely to be followed by some miraculous

feat of sublimation; what we will engender is a new set of reorganized assemblages which spill out across the existing boundaries of the body, the ego, and the individual. Ordinary methods of education, or training in good manners, will never significantly dislodge punitive super-egos or death-laden guilt mechanisms. The great religions, too - with the exception of Islam - are losing their purchase on the psyche; as the world witnesses an apparent return to totemism and animism, human communities, thrown into torment, tend to retreat inward, leaving the job of organizing society to the professional politicians. (Trade unions, meanwhile, have simply been left behind by changes in a society that is universally in latent or manifest crisis.)

One symptom of this is the proliferation of spontaneous organs of 'co-ordination' wherever great social movements are evident. It will simply be noted in passing here that these frequently have recourse to computer communications to facilitate the expression of 'grass-roots' feeling. Readers should key in 3615 + ALTER on Minitel[6] for a working example. The principle particular to social ecology is that of affective and pragmatic cathexis of human groups of various sizes. The 'group Eros' presents itself, not as an abstract quantity, but as a qualitatively specific reorganization of primary subjectivity as constituted in the order of mental ecology. There are two forms of group organization of subjectivity: its personological triangulation in the I-YOU-ME Father-Mother-Child mode; or its constitution in the forms of *subject-groups* open to the broader spectrum of the socius and the cosmos. In the former case, the ego and other are constructed through a set of standard identifications and imitations; the father, the leader, the mass media star become the focus for the organization of primary groups - the malleable crowds of mass media psychology. In the second case, identificatory systems are replaced by features[7] of diagrammatic efficiency. In part at least, these allow the subject to escape semiologies of iconic modelling, and to engage instead with processual semiologies (which I shall refrain from terming symbolic for fear of falling back into the bad old ways of structuralism). What characterizes a diagrammatic feature, as compared with an icon, is its degree of deterritorialization, its capacity to transcend itself, and to constitute its own discursive chains. There is a distinction, for example, between a piano student's identificatory imitation of the teacher and the transference of style that branches off on to some original trajectory. Similarly, there is a more general distinction between imaginary crowd aggregates, and collective enunciative assemblages which combine both pre-personal traits and social systems or their mechinic components (by which I mean 'living' mechinisms, not mechanisms of empty repetition).

Having said all this, it is of course true that the oppositions between the two modalities of group formation are not always so clear-cut:'a crowd may be inhabited by groups of opinion-leaders, while subject-groups may take forms that are amorphous and alienating. Capitalist societies - amongst which I include not only the western nations and Japan, but also countries under so-called actually existing socialism as well as the new industrial nations of the Third World - produce and deploy both types of subjectivity: the serial

subjectivity that is the province of the wage-earning classes and the immense mass of the 'insecure', and the elitist subjectivity of ruling social strata. The accelerating mass mediatization of global societies tends at the same time to create an increasingly pronounced distinction between these two categories of the population. The provision for the world's elites of adequate material goods and access to culture (though levels of reading and writing are minimal) affords them a sense of competence and legitimate decision-making power; the subject classes, by contrast, are imbued with a sense of resignation, hopelessness, and absence of meaning.

Any social ecological programme will have to aim therefore to shift capitalist societies out of the era of the mass media and into a post-media age in which the media will be reappropriated by a multitude of subject-groups. This vision of a mass media culture redirected towards the goal of resingularization may well seem far beyond our scope today; yet we should recognize that the current situation of maximal media-induced alienation is in no sense an intrinsic necessity. Media fatalism seems to me to imply a misundertanding of several factors:[8]

(1) the potential for sudden upsurges of mass awareness;

(2) the possibilities for new transformative assemblages of social struggles - possibilities that arise out of the progressive collapse of Stalinism in its various incarnations;

(3) the potential use of mass media technology for non-capitalist ends, as a result of declining costs and continuing technological advancement (miniaturization in particular);

(4) the increased production, both on the individual and collective level, of a 'creationist' subjectivity: a subjectivity that arises out of the reconstruction of labour processes - the introduction of continuous training, skill transfer, the search for non-traditional sources of labour, etc. - as early twentieth-century systems of industrial production fall into obsolescence.

In early industrial society, it was the subjectivity of the labouring classes that was smothered and serialized. Under today's international division of labour, it is the Third World that is exposed to production-line methods. With the data-processing revolution, the rise of bio-technologies, accelerated creation, new materials and an ever more intricate 'machinisation' of time, new modalities of subjectivization are emerging; on the one hand, they demand higher levels of intelligence and initiative, whilst on the other, they imply the increased control and monitoring of the domestic life of couples and nuclear families. We face a future, in short, in which working-class subjectivity will be maximally bourgeoisified through a massive re-territorialization of the family in the media and the welfare system.

The effects of re-individuation and familialization will not of course be uniform; they will differ according to whether they are deployed on the terrain of a collective subjectivity devastated by the industrial era of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, or in areas which retain the archaic inheritance of pre-capitalist ages. The examples of Japan and Italy are significant here; for both countries have successfully grafted 'high-tech' industries on to a collective

subjectivity that maintains links with an often far distant past (with Shinto-Buddhism in the case of Japan, and with patriarchalism in the case of Italy). In both countries, the transition to post-industrialism has been less brutal than in France, for example, where whole regions have lain economically fallow for long periods before converting to post-industrialism.

Some Third World countries represent similar instances of the super-imposition of a post-industrial on to a medieval subjectivity, with its demands, for example, for submission to clan authority, or, in some cases, for the absolute alienation of women and children. For the time being, these new industrial powers are localized primarily on the fringes of the South China Sea; in future, the same formation may emerge around the shores of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic coast of Africa. If it does, the tensions produced across vast areas of Europe will be immense, since this new form of industrial power poses a radical threat, both to the financial base of European countries, and to their status as Great White Powers.

Where then are the inersections between the various ecological problematics outlined above? Left to themselves, upsurges of social and mental neo-archaisms may produce the best of all possible worlds - or the worst! The distinctions are enormously difficult to draw: we should remember for example that the fascism of the ayatollahs was introduced only on the back of a profoundly popular revolution in Iran. Similarly, the recent uprisings amongst Algerian youth have maintained a double symbiosis between western ways of life and various forms of Islamic fundamentalism. Spontaneous social ecology works towards the constitution of existential territories which substitute themselves, so far as they can, for the old religious zoning of the socius. Clearly, then, social ecology must be opened up to politically coherent collective praxes; if it is not, it will in the end always be dominated by reactionary nationalism and the oppression of women and children.

My aim here is not to propose a fully constituted model of future society; what I am arguing is simply that we should use our expanded understanding of the whole range of ecological components to set in place new systems of value. A market system which regulates the distribution of financial and social rewards for human social activities on the basis of profit alone, is becoming less and less legitimate. The time has come to take serious account of other value systems: of 'profitability' in the social and aesthetic sense, of the values of desire, etc. Until now, of course, domains of value not governed by capitalist profit have been dominated by the state: viz. the state-fostered appreciation of the national heritage. We have, however, reached a point where new social associations - with charitable foundations, for example - should be drawn upon to expand the financing of a more flexible third sector which is neither private nor public. The third sector will in any case constantly be forced to expand as human labour gives way to machine technology; and the question posed by its expansion is not only that of how to achieve recognition of a universal minimum income - recognized as a right, not a means of reintegrating individuals into the workforce. It begs the question, too, of how to stimulate the individual and collective organization of a develop-ing ecology of re-singularization. The search for an existential territory or

homeland is not necessarily synonymous with the search for ancestral roots or a native land - though external antagonisms have certainly often led national-itarian movements (Basque, Corsican, Irish) to turn inward and neglect other molecular revolutions, such as women's liberation, environmental ecology, etc. All sorts of deterritorialized 'nationalities' are conceivable - music or poetry might be two examples. We live now under a capitalist system of valorization, in which value is based upon a general equivalent. What makes that system reprehensible is its crushing of all other modes of valorization, which thus find themselves alienated from capitalist hegemony. That hegemony, however, can be challenged, or at least made to incorporate methods of valorization based on existential productions, and determined neither in terms of abstract labour time, nor of expected capitalist profit. Computerization in particular has unleashed the potential for new forms of 'exchange' of value, new collective negotiations, whose ultimate product will be more individual, more singular, more dissensual forms of social action. Our task - one which encompasses the whole future of research and artistic production - is not only to bring these exchanges into existence; it is to extend notions of collective interest to encompass practices which, in the short term, 'profit' no one, but which are, in the long run, vehicles of processual enrichment.

It should be stressed here that the promotion of existential values and the values of desire offers no ready-made global alternatives. Any such alternatives will be the product of more general shifts in existing value systems; of the gradual -emergence of new poles of valorization. The most spectacular changes of recent years have been the product precisely of longer-term shifts in value-systems: political changes in Chile or the Philippines are one example, the resurfacing of the national question in the Soviet Union another. A thousand revolutions in value-systems are within reach; it is up to the new ecologies to define their co-ordinates and to make their weight tell within the political and social balance of forces.

There is a principle specific to environmental ecology which states that everything is possible - the worst catastrophes or the smoothest develop-ments.[9] Increasingly in future, the maintenance of natural equilibria will be dependent upon human intervention; the time will come, for example, when massive programmes will have to be set in train to regulate the relationship between oxygen, ozone, and carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere. In this perspective, environmental ecology could equally well be re-named 'machinic ecology', since both cosmic and human practice are nothing if not machinic - indeed they are machines of war, in so far as 'Nature' has always been at war with life! But however we name it, the race to conquer the mechano-sphere will have to begin imminently, if we are to deal with such immediate and simultaneous issues as the acceleration of techno-scientific 'progress', and the massive growth surge in the global population.

What is required for the future is much more than a mere defence of nature. If the Amazonian 'lung' is to be regenerated, the Sahara desert made fertile again, we need, immediately, to go on the offensive. Even the human creation of new plant and animal species looms unavoidably on the horizon; the urgent task we face is, then, to fashion an ethics appropriate to a scenario that is both

terrifying and fascinating, and, more importantly, a politics appropriate to the general destiny of humanity. At a time when the biblical myth of creation is giving way to new fictions of a world in the permanent process of re-creation, we can do no better than listen to Walter Benjamin condemning the reductionism that necessarily accompanies the privileging of information:

> *When information supplants the old form, story-telling, and when it itself gives way to sensation, this double process reflects an imaginary degradation of experience. Each of these forms is in its own way an offshoot of story-telling, which is one of the oldest forms of story-telling.* Story-telling . . . does not aim to convey the pure essence of a thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the story-teller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the story-teller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.[10]

To bring into being worlds other than those of pure abstract information; to engender universes of reference and existential territories in which singularity and finitude are embraced by the multivalent logic of mental ecologies and the social-ecological group Eros principle; to face up to a dizzying confrontation with the cosmos in order to make it in some way liveable; these are, in short, the intertwining paths of the triple ecological vision to which we should now turn all our attention.

NOTES

1   *Entre le Temps et I'Etemite* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 41, 61, 67.
2   The root 'eco' is here used in its original Greek sense of *oikos,* 'house, domestic property, habitat, natural milieu'.
3   Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (London: Paladin, 1973).
4   Quoted by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'absolu litteraire* (Paris: 1978), 126.
5   The reference is to the National Front party leader Jean-Marie Le Pen.
6   Minitel is a computer communications network available free to telephone subscribers throughout France.
7   *Translator's note:* the term 'feature' is used here in the sense outlined by Roman Jakobson in *Selected Writings,* Vol. 1 (The Hague: Mouton, 1962), 464-505.
8   On these four rapidly changing areas, see Thierry Gaudin, 'Rapport sur l'etat de la technique' ('Report on the state of technology'), a special issue of *Sciences et Techniques.*
9   Comparing the ecological system to an acrobat on a wire, Gregory Bateson spoke of a 'budget of flexibility' *(Steps,* 473).
10   Walter Benjamin, 'The story-teller', in *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1973), 91-2. *Translator's note:* the italicized portion of the quotation does not appear in the Fontana English translation.