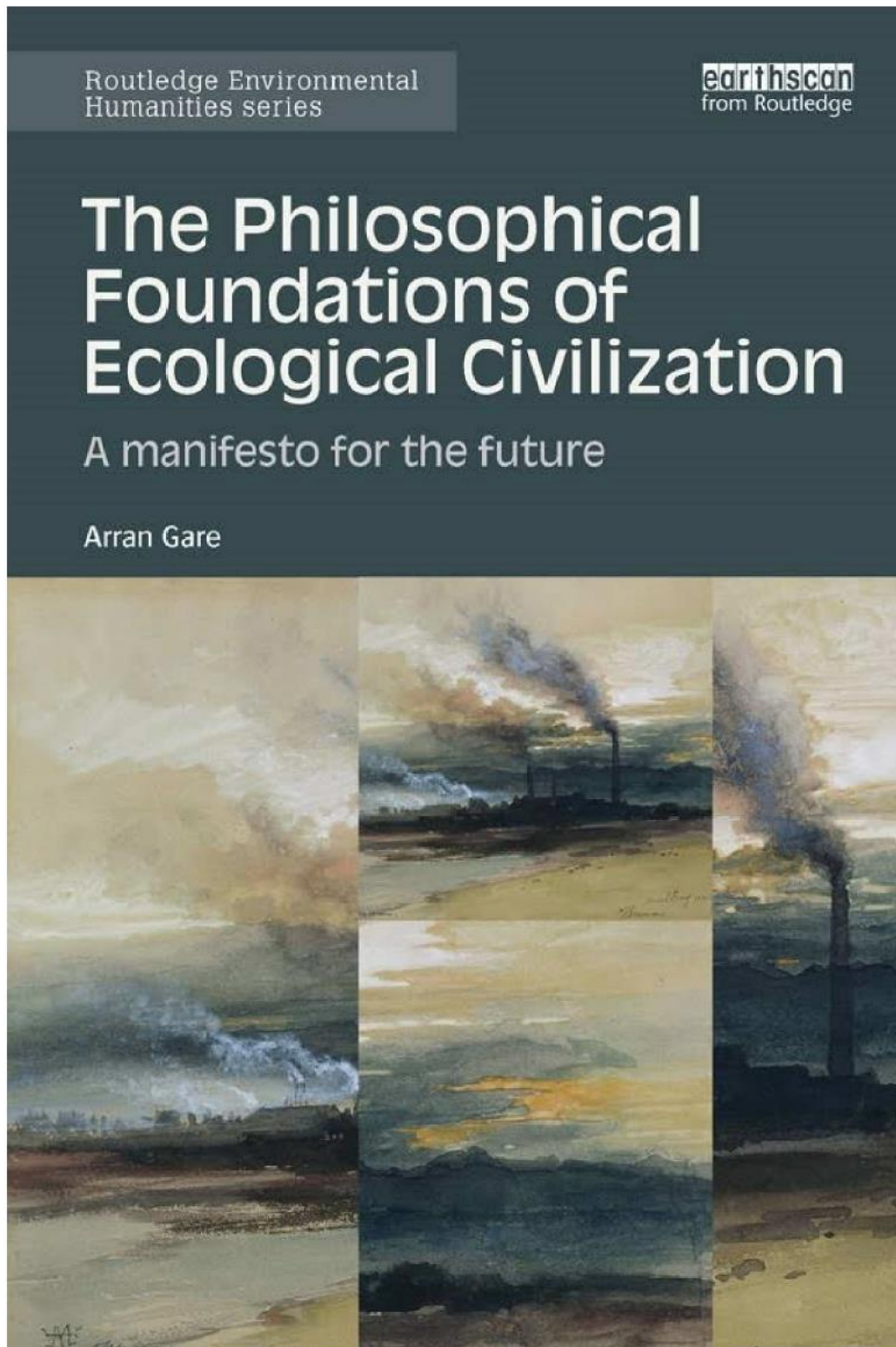


# The Ultimate Crisis of Civilization: Why Turn to Philosophy?

*Arran Gare*



## [Introduction]

[*The Philosophical Foundations of Ecological Civilization: A Manifesto for the Future*] supports, further articulates and advances the new vision of the future that, I believe, has the potential to unite humanity to overcome the greatest crisis it has ever had to confront, the immanent destruction of the current regime of the global ecosystem. This is the regime of which humanity is part, in which it has co-evolved with other species and produced a stable interglacial period that, for 10,000 years, has been ideal for humans. This is the period in which civilizations have emerged and flourished, and which maintains the conditions for their existence. It has become clear that to continue on our present path will accelerate ecological destruction until massive environmental changes, for instance a runaway greenhouse effect, will bring about a switch from one global ecosystem regime to another that will render human life in most of the presently populated world all but impossible, just as overfishing of cod around Newfoundland produced a switch that has all but eliminated cod (Holling, 2010). Such regime changes are increasingly common, with an almost total collapse of ocean ecosystems expected over the next 50 years. It can and is likely to happen to the global ecosystem unless there is a drastic change of direction of civilization (Gare 2014a). The possibility of such regime changes are conceptualized in complexity theory as bifurcations, or more dramatically, as catastrophes. Conceived as 'tipping points', this is the main focus of research of Germany's leading climate scientist, Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, who on the basis of his research published a paper titled 'Global Warming: Stop Worrying, Start Panicking?' (2008). It is inconceivable that ruling elites do not know that failing to deal with greenhouse gas emissions poses a threat to the lives of billions of people. It appears that many members of the new global ruling class who dominate the politics of nations tacitly accept climate destabilization as a Darwinian mechanism for culling excess human population, possibly serving as a weapon of mass destruction against Asians, with other vulnerable regions such as much of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Brazil and Australia being collateral damage. Spencer Weart in *The Discovery of Global Warming* (2016), has provided a continually updated hypertext explaining the advances in climate science showing why we face this threat.

If in two hundred years there has not been a catastrophic collapse of the current global ecosystem with all the complexity of its life, along with most of the world's human population, and people are living civilized lives, living in ways that augment rather than undermine the resilience of their ecosystems, it will be because there will have been a major cultural, social and economic transformation of the whole of humanity. The destructive dynamics of globalized capitalism with its intensive and extensive expansion of commodification, its managerialism, its consumerism, its debasement of culture, its corruption of public institutions, pulverization of communities and subversion of democratic processes, its plundering of public assets,

concentration of wealth, income and power in the hands of the global corporatocracy, and the domination of people and nations by transnational corporations imposing and then manipulating market forces, will have been overcome (Klein 2014; Kovel 2007). For this to have been achieved, a new vision of the future will have captured people's imaginations and inspired them to struggle for and achieve what two centuries earlier had appeared unimaginable, where, as one person observed, 'it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism' (Jameson 2003, p.76). While there are several contenders for this, the only vision at present to have this potential is the vision put forward by radical Chinese environmentalists and embraced at least in principle by the Chinese government, first as a goal of government policy in 2007, and in 2012, written into their constitution, the vision of an ecological civilization (Gare 2012a).

It is also becoming clear that what is standing in the way of articulating this vision and effecting this transformation are deep assumptions about humanity, its place in nature and its destiny inimical to such a future. These assumptions are embedded in and are continually reproduced not only by proponents of neoliberalism, neoconservatism and scientism, but by our institutions and forms of life, and are placed beyond questioning by the fragmentation of intellectual culture, making it almost impossible to comprehend the forces at work in modern societies and how their oppressive and destructive dynamics could be overcome. Only instrumental knowledge, the categories of economics, power politics, Darwinism and social Darwinism are taken seriously. We live in a culture where, as Ulrich Beck aptly put it: 'Concepts are empty: they no longer grip, illuminate or inflame. The greyness lying over the world [...] may also come from a kind of verbal mildew' (Beck 2000, p.8).

Individuals from all spheres of life and from a variety of academic disciplines are beginning to question these assumptions and are struggling against this intellectual fragmentation. Fighting this verbal mildew, some are turning to philosophy. This includes ecologists. As David Abram observed almost twenty years ago:

*The ecological crisis may be the result of a recent and collective perceptual disorder in our species, a unique form of myopia which it now forces us to correct. For many ... the only possible course of action is to begin planning and working on behalf of the ecological world which they now discern. And yet ecological thinking is having a great deal of trouble taking root in the human world – it is still viewed by most as just another ideology; meanwhile, ecological science remains a highly specialized discipline circumscribed with a mostly mechanistic biology. Without the concerted attention of philosophers, ecology lacks a coherent common language adequate to its aims; it thus remains little more than a growing bundle of disparate facts, resentments, and incommunicable visions. (Abram 1996, p.82)*

Traditionally, philosophers concerned themselves with the major problems confronting their civilizations, struggling to overcome one-sided, fragmented forms

of thinking that had led to disasters, enabling people to find meaning in their lives whatever the circumstances while providing them with the means to orient themselves to create the future. Philosophers are (or were) the 'physicians of culture', as Nietzsche observed. Philosophy was not just one discipline among others. It was the transdiscipline that questioned the assumptions and interrogated the values and claims to knowledge of all other disciplines, revealing their significance in relation to each other, integrating their insights, asking new questions and opening up new paths of inquiry and action. In accordance with its origins in Ancient Greece, the goal of philosophy was to provide the foundations for an integrated understanding of the cosmos and the place of humanity within it through which people could define their ultimate ends. It had the responsibility for engaging with the broader culture and its problems and contradictions, for investigating the relationship between culture, society and civilization, and for working out how people could and should live and how society could and should be organized. It was also an end in itself, the culmination and affirmation of the spirit of free inquiry urged by curiosity to question all received methods, beliefs and institutions in its passionate quest to understand the universe and achieve wisdom. For such reasons, Schelling proclaimed: 'Philosophy must enter into life. That applies not only to the individual but also to the condition of the time, to history and to humanity. The power of philosophy must penetrate everything, because one cannot live without it' (Karl Jaspers 1993, p.144). Philosophy was central to the formation of individuals and society, and it was the core of the university.

## **The Crisis of Philosophy and the Humanities**

What those who turn to philosophy looking for guidance find, however, is that except in rare instances, philosophers who have the privileged conditions provided by universities to address this greatest of all challenges, have redefined philosophy. In Anglophone countries in particular they have transformed it into a multiplicity of subdisciplines and specializations that exclude the questions that challenged the greatest philosophers of the past and exclude engagement with the greatest challenges of the present - as unscholarly. Environmental philosophy, usually characterized as environmental ethics, has been channeled into a minor sub-sub-discipline where, even if radical positions are adopted, they are impotent. Philosophy as a whole has continued its trajectory from the early Twentieth Century, where Robin Collingwood (1939) lamented, philosophers were producing 'a philosophy so scientific that no-one whose life was not a life of pure research could appreciate it, and so abstruse that only a whole-time student, and a very clever man at that, could understand it' (p.51) while at the same time they were claiming philosophy as 'a preserve for professional philosophers, and were loud in their contempt of philosophical utterances by historians, natural scientists, theologians, and other amateurs' (p.50). Turning their backs on ethics, political philosophy and

even epistemology, they reveled in the uselessness of philosophy. The consequences of this are with us in the present. As John Cottingham observed :

*Philosophy is among the fastest-growing A-level subjects in Britain. This suggests that despite the pressure from governments to increase the teaching of technical, career oriented subjects, a lot of sixth-formers have a stubborn interest in more traditional enquiries about the meaning of life. ... But frustration often ensues as the aspiring philosophy student climbs higher. The university study of philosophy in the anglophone world now offers little by way of a grand synoptic vision of human life and our place in the scheme of things. Instead, the subject has fragmented into a host of highly technical specialisms, whose practitioners increasingly model themselves on the methods of the natural sciences. By the time they reach graduate studies, most students will be resigned to working within intricate, introverted "research" programmes, whose wider significance they might be hard pressed to explain to anyone outside their special area. (Cottingham 2012, p.25)*

Effectively, mainstream academic philosophers in Anglophone countries are proselytizing a debilitating, passive nihilism while denigrating and censoring any questioning of this nihilism, either from professional philosophers or anyone else, undermining not only philosophy but the humanities, universities, education, democracy and civilization, and the capacity of humanity to deal with the threats that are now facing it. Perversely, professional philosophers have aligned philosophy with anti-intellectualism and anti-intellectuals.

The contention of this manifesto is that the resurrection of philosophy, and along with it the humanities, the liberal arts and genuine science, will only be achieved by reviving natural philosophy. So, as well as being a manifesto for ecological civilization, this is also a manifesto for natural philosophy, or more precisely (distinguishing it from the naturalism of analytic philosophers), for speculative naturalism. This is the philosophy required to redefine the nature of humanity and its place in nature and the cosmos, to support, integrate and further develop disciplines and professions which have defied the fragmentation, overspecialization and dogmatism of current intellectual inquiry, to open the way to a post-nihilist culture. Only in this way can we achieve a comprehensive understanding of our current situation, open new horizons and enable people to envisage a future in which they will not be in a permanent state of economic insecurity and will have the liberty to augment rather than undermine the conditions for life, and to orient them to battle successfully for this future.

Speculative naturalism is distinguished both from the kind of philosophy that eschews speculation and focuses entirely on critical analysis, and from Idealism. Idealism developed largely as a reaction to the Cartesian/Hobbesian/Newtonian cosmology forged in the scientific revolution of the Seventeenth Century, while critical analysis developed as a reaction against Idealism. While eschewing speculation does not imply support for Newtonian cosmology, or support for

speculative philosophy imply support for Idealism, in recent decades there has been a strong tendency to assume these linkages. The dominant figures in the tradition of critical analysis, or analytic philosophy as it is now called, particularly in the USA and other Anglophone countries, have vigorously upheld a reductionist naturalism based on largely Newtonian assumptions (without being aware of this), and defended the claims of mainstream science to be able to extend its methods to explain every aspect of reality, including human consciousness. That is, in the tradition of positivism and logical positivism, they have defended 'scientism', the view that science has a monopoly on the methods required to acquire and accumulate genuine knowledge, including defining what is genuine knowledge. Despite analytic philosophy itself originating in Austria and Germany, philosophy that is not analytic and naturalist tends to be labeled 'continental philosophy', with the usually tacit assumption that 'continental' philosophers (many of them in Anglophone countries) are continuing a tradition of philosophical thinking that upholds intuitions, claims to knowledge or forms of reasoning that transcend any naturalistic or scientific explanation. In doing so, it is upholding some form of Idealism. This is evident in the recent histories of continental philosophy by Braver (2007) and Redding (2009), both of which characterize continental philosophy as Idealist. At its worst, Idealism is seen to be speculative. Speculative naturalism not only brings into question the correlation between these oppositions but rejects this categorization as the root cause of the paralysis, trivialization and marginalization of philosophy, and along with this, the undermining of the humanities and the entrenchment of nihilistic assumptions of mainstream reductionist science in the broader culture and society. Acting on these nihilistic assumptions is now producing effects that threaten the future of democracy, civilization, humanity and the current regime of the global eco-system. Alive to these threats, speculative naturalists, many of them eminent scientists and mathematicians, are concerned to revive and reinstate 'philosophy' as the quest for a comprehensive understanding of humanity and its place in nature to challenge and replace the prevailing world-view, to overcome this nihilism and to avoid a global eco-catastrophe.<sup>1</sup>

On the surface of it, the generality of the categories defining these oppositions and the difficulty of categorizing all philosophers in terms of these oppositions would make such strong claims, and such a strong agenda, highly questionable. World-wide, philosophy in recent decades has been characterized by an immense diversity of ideas and approaches (Habermas1992b). It is possible to point to a whole range of philosophers who cannot be pigeon-holed by these categories. This is particularly true of philosophies and philosophers lumped together as 'continental philosophy'. Paul M. Livingston (2012) argues that poststructuralism has converged with the metalogic of analytic philosophy, while James Bradley (2012) has argued that 'continental philosophy' is an Anglo-American invention, and French 'continental philosophy' has converged with analytic philosophy in denying any status to subjects. The structuralist reaction led by Claude Lévi-Strauss against neo-Hegelians,

phenomenologists and proponents of hermeneutics have almost completely swept aside such Idealist and humanist philosophies, most importantly, the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre. According to orthodox structuralism and poststructuralism, the world and human subjects are nothing more than the effects of those functional structures that define their behaviour. While structuralism was a form of reductionism, it was antithetical to the kind of naturalism promoted by Anglophone philosophers. Under the influence of Peirce, Scandinavian analytic philosophy has converged with phenomenology, hermeneutics and semiotics. Marxist philosophers are generally opposed to reductionist naturalism and to speculative Idealism and have developed a range of philosophical positions. Promising developments have included the dialectical critical realism of Roy Bhaskar, which has been applied to the problems of dealing with climate change and achieving sustainability (Bhaskar 2010). The recent proponents of 'speculative realism' or 'speculative materialism' do claim to promote speculative thought while being anti-Idealist, although what they mean by 'speculative' is by no means clear (Bryant et al. 2011; Johnston, 2014). This is an anti-Kantian philosophy very different from speculative naturalism, however. There is an assertive group of philosophers promoting revolutionary developments within science who are influenced by process metaphysics, complexity theory and Peircian semiotics who do value speculation, although such philosophers are barely tolerated and have only a marginal influence (Hooker 2011). However, from the perspective defended here, this diversity is symptomatic of the marginalization of philosophy and simply serves to disguise which ideas really dominate, and how speculative naturalism, which could effectively challenge the dominant ideas, has been marginalized.

## **The Two Cultures and the Triumph of Scientism**

It is not just the overt and explicitly defended views that are the problem, (although these certainly are a major part of the problem), but tacitly held assumptions that constrain the way people think and the way debates are framed, the way disciplines, universities and research institutions are organized, and the way some views are taken seriously by academics, people in power and the broader public, while other, often better defended views, are ignored and then forgotten. The tacitly assumed polar oppositions manifest the deep rooted Cartesian dualism that permeates our culture (Mathews 2003, p.173ff.) This is manifest in the disjunction between mainstream science, as defended by positivists, and the humanities and arts as defended by Idealists. These are evident in the recurring debates between what C.P. Snow referred to as the two cultures, that of scientists and that of literary intellectuals, Snow's debate with F.R. Leavis echoing the earlier debate between T.H. Huxley promoting scientific materialism and Mathew Arnold, who was aligned with the British Idealists, which in turn resonated with debates in Germany, France and Italy and the earlier critique by Idealists of Newton and of Goethe by Helmholtz. This opposition is manifest also in the opposition between neo-classical and

institutionalist economics, mainstream and humanistic psychology and physical and human geography. It is also manifest in the opposition between orthodox, structuralist and analytical Marxism and Hegelian, phenomenological and humanist Marxism. The tendency to misrepresent philosophies as either analytic, naturalist and aligned with science or 'continental', Idealist and aligned with the arts and humanities is a manifestation of these deeply held assumptions. Philosophies that do not fall on one side or the other of this divide tend to be ignored and marginalized. In all cases, this opposition has upheld a fundamentally flawed understanding of humanity's place in nature. Because more recent philosophers questioning this divide, such as the speculative realists, are insufficiently radical in their thinking, they have not succeeded in overcoming such tacitly held assumptions and thereby escaping what has become an intellectual ghetto. Only other philosophers read their works.

The outcome of the struggle between these polar oppositions has been the triumph of mainstream reductionist science over the humanities, particularly in Anglophone countries. This is evident in the virtual self-destruction of the humanities in these Anglophone countries in the last decades of the Twentieth Century, legitimated and helped along by both proponents of the American form of analytic philosophy and of French structuralism and post-structuralism. In all cases, despite the differences between them, these developments were really the triumph of scientism. The triumph of analytical and structuralist Marxism over humanist Marxism was also a triumph of scientism over the humanities. While the humanities have not been so completely defeated in France, Germany, Italy and other European countries as in North America, Britain and Australia, the trend towards marginalization of the humanities is clear in these countries also, a situation well analysed by Jerome Kagan (2009). The consequence has been the collapse of career prospects for those educated in the humanities in the civil service, institutions of education, media and politics. The marginalization of the humanities has been associated with the almost complete triumph in status accorded to algorithmic thinking (which can be performed by computers) along with claims to specialist expertise, particularly in economics, over imagination, understanding, insight, comprehension, wisdom and good judgment and the education required to foster these. The breaking up of non-analytic philosophy into multiple schools and directions characterized by a rapid succession of fashions is really a manifestation of its marginalization. This is also evident in the dissolution of the Humboldtian model of the university where the Arts and Science faculties were regarded as central because of their commitment to truth, the transformation of science into nothing but techno-science, the decline of democracy, the rise of managerialism, the unprecedented authority of neo-classical economists and the revival of social Darwinism.

To reveal what is tacitly assumed, how these oppositions have played out and why, and how these assumptions have structured culture and society and have influenced



the trajectory of civilization, it is necessary to provide a schematic historical perspective on how they originated and co-evolved. To do so, it is first necessary to examine the form of analytic philosophy and scientism that triumphed in USA. It is here that the influence of this philosophy with its destructive impact on the humanities has taken its most extreme form. At the same time, this has revealed most clearly the threat posed by this trivialization of philosophy. Alasdair MacIntyre (1977) in an address to the American Philosophical Association noted that philosophy is now seen to be:

*... a harmless, decorative activity, education in which is widely believed to benefit by exercising and extending the capacities for orderly argument, so qualifying those who study it to join the line of lemmings entering law school or business school. The professor of philosophy, on this view, stands to the contemporary bourgeoisie much as the dancing master stood to the nobility of the ancien regime. The dancing master taught the eighteenth-century expensively brought up young how to have supple limbs, the philosophy professor teaches their twentieth-century successors how to have supple minds. (p.85)*

John McCumber published an account of the development of philosophy in USA, titled *Time in the Ditch* (2001), in which he tried to account for the apparent marginalization of philosophy. It is almost universally accepted that philosophy has been marginalized in USA and is of little significance in the modern world.

While this is true if one considers philosophy as originally understood, in another sense, nothing could be further from the truth. To begin with, as Paul Livingston (2012) pointed out, the form of life in the modern world is the outcome of 'the technicization of *information* made possible by the logical-mathematical *formalization* of language' achieved by philosophers. The consequences of 'the material and technological *realization* of some of these very same formal structures *on* the actual organization of contemporary politics' have been enormous. 'This includes, for instance, the actual communicational and computational technologies that today increasingly determine social, political, and economic institutions and modes of action around the globe.' (p.4) This has not brought about a diminution of the role of intellectuals in society, but a massive expansion of their role, but in a completely new form. This has been well described by Carl Boggs who also pointed out the effects of this on universities:

*The ideological influence of intellectuals has grown enormously during the past century, especially in the industrialized world, where modernity has meant the eclipse of isolated strata of traditional elites and the rise of an expanding stratum of rationalizing intellectuals attached to Enlightenment values of reason, secularism, scientific and technological progress, and control of nature. ... [N]owhere has the impact of modernization been felt more than in the structure of higher education, where the traditional intellectual as classical scholar, philosopher, cleric, or literary figure has been replaced by the technocratic intellectual whose*

*work is organically connected to the knowledge industry, to the economy, state, and military.* (Boggs 1993, p.97)

This transformation is carried out under the banner of scientism, claiming that only scientific knowledge based on empirical evidence and deductive logic deserves to be taken seriously as knowledge.

However, while crippling the humanities in the name of scientism, this is not the triumph of science. What we are seeing is nothing like the science of the past in which great scientists challenged received assumptions to advance whole new ways of understanding the world, revealing unity in diversity and enabling people to better understand themselves and their place in the cosmos. What we now have is 'techno-science', science as portrayed and defended by analytic philosophers and directed by markets and human resource managers. It is the form of science that Norbert Wiener (1993) warned would be the outcome of 'Megabuck Science' dominated by people with well-defined missions, ultra-specialisation, short-term perspectives and indifference to science for its own sake. What has been the outcome of this? Bruce Charlton, a medical researcher, recently published a book *Not Even Trying: The Corruption of Real Science* (2012) decrying the current state of scientific research. He compared it to a factory in Poland before the collapse of communism: 'The factory was producing vast quantities of defective drinking glasses *which nobody wanted*. Nobody wanted to even use them. So the glasses were simply piling-up in gigantic stacks around the factory building – using-up resources, getting in everybody's way, and taking-up all the useful space' (p.14). Evidence in support of this claim is provided by Philip Mirowski in *Science-Mart: Privatising American Science* (2011). Charlton suggested that science now is so bad it would be better to pay researchers to do nothing than to continue with what they are doing. This is not the worst of it. Publishers Springer and IEEE have removed more than 120 refereed papers from their subscription services after it was discovered that they were computer generated nonsense by SCiGen (Noorden, 2014). Such science has not produced any deeper understanding of the world but the mass production of fragmented knowledge and pseudo-knowledge, providing corporations with the means to make profits, governments with the means to make weapons, and power elites generally with the means to control or confuse people. It has been complemented by the almost complete domination of public policy by the revived pre-Keynesian form of neo-classical economics that has been used to justify imposing markets on every facet of life. Science that implies limits to the quest for domination and profits, such as ecology, human ecology, climate science, institutional and ecological economics, has been undermined and marginalized.

As Boggs argued in a later work, *The End of Politics: Corporate Power and the Decline of the Public Sphere* (2000) this new techno-science has facilitated corporate colonization that 'has achieved qualitatively new levels of power, accelerated by growing

economies of scale, mergers among corporations, the great resilience of the permanent war economy, massive corporate entry into media and popular culture, and ... the process of globalization' (p.68). At the same time, this technology has created a media centred world with its decentred subjects, fragmented culture, the transformation of everything possible into commodified spectacles, an increasingly fragmented public life, fragmentation of the public sphere, depoliticization and paralysis of transformative politics, and the hollowing out of democracy. In short, '[g]rowing corporate power has been accompanied (and legitimated) by a return to Nineteenth Century laissez-faire principles of material self-interest, extreme individualism, and social Darwinism' (p.257) and '[t]he sad reality is that progressive movements in the United States have been able to sustain only the most feeble ideological and organizational presence ... [and] no national coalition or party has emerged that is capable of making political inroads or framing durable visions or strategies of change' (p.256). Boggs summed up the consequence of this:

*As the world system becomes more rationalized at the top owing to the enhanced fluidity and mobility of capital – and to the integrative power of the technological and informational revolutions – transforming it seems more and more impossible. The centers of power have become more remote and inaccessible, seemingly beyond the scope of tangible political opposition. The splintering of meaning, so celebrated in the postmodern age, is also splintering the public sphere, and only serves to aggravate this historical impasse, helping to account for deep cynicism and pessimism among intellectuals and ordinary citizens alike. (Boggs 2000, p.212).*

What Boggs is describing is the triumph of neoliberalism with its agenda of creating one global market, or *One Market Under God* (2000) as Thomas Frank described it, dominated by transnational corporations and their managers, the corporatocracy, most importantly, the financial sector of this, defining the rest of the population as consumers rather than citizens of democratically organized communities. They have succeeded by manufacturing consent, eliminating the economic security required for citizenship, while subverting by coöpting potential opposition and marginalizing and undermining those who they have not been able to coöpt. That is, they have embraced the arguments of Walter Lippmann from 1920s who argued, in opposition to John Dewey, that democracy is impossible and that ruling elites must 'manufacture consent' of the masses through public relations while disempowering them.

This points to a second way in which philosophy is far from a harmless activity. By withdrawing from the quest for a comprehensive understanding of the world (which is essential to the quest for wisdom) and censoring philosophers who still strive for this, philosophers have left the broader population without the means to orient themselves in this new world order, to identify the agenda of those in the centres of power, to resist and overcome the splintering of meaning or to work towards the

creation of a better future, and to govern themselves. While overtly postmodernist cultural theorists promoting bowdlerized versions of French philosophy are the visible defenders of this splintering of meaning and of the public sphere, a far more potent force has been Anglophone analytic philosophy. Philosophers have left people powerless in the face of the mind-control industries of advertising and public relations, and effectively rendered democracy impossible.

While in reality, neoliberalism, along with neoliberal strategies, are complex with many divisions and conflicts, only the willfully blind cannot see that this has been the most powerful driving ideological force in the world since the 1970s (Plehwe et al. 2006). The ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ proclaimed by postmodernists is an expression of the defeat of any alternative hegemonic discourse. Without a new master discourse opposing neoliberalism able to replace those that have lost their credibility, a discourse which can unite people into a major political force, opposing actions fizzle out without having any lasting effect. Examining one oppositional event, Boggs noted it resulted in ‘nothing of a political legacy – “politics” referring here to far more than simple electoral activity. With no articulated vision or program, no organizational strategy, no perspective on issues of power or governance, the catharsis of rebellion quickly vanished’ (Boggs 2000). The only real challenge to all this, Boggs observes, is the Green movement. As he noted in *Ecology and Revolution*:

*[T]he Greens have for three decades embodied the closest thing the world has seen to a mature, strategically defined ecological radicalism. Despite limits and flaws, they seem to constitute the only political force, with some global presence, dedicated to reversing the modern crisis – and the only force with a coherent strategy for change. (Boggs 2012, p.149)*

In fact, though, Green activists attempting to grapple with global ecological destruction wrought by this global neoliberal regime and corporate power have been almost totally ineffectual, as Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus in *The Death of Environmentalism* (2004), Christine MacDonald in *Green, Inc.* and myself in ‘Colliding with Reality’ (Gare 2014a) have argued.

## **Continuing the Struggle Against Nihilism**

The rise of neoliberalism and the consequent paralyzing of efforts to grapple with the ecological crisis manifest the deeply rooted nihilism of the civilization of modernity, and the present work continues the quest of my earlier works to understand and overcome this nihilism. In *Nihilism Incorporated: European Civilization and Environmental Destruction* (1993a) and *Beyond European Civilization: Marxism, Process Philosophy and the Environment* (1993b) (later combined in *Nihilism Inc.* (1996)) I traced and attempted to explain the evolution, triumph, world domination and ecological destructiveness of European civilization, engendering, embodying and reproducing a nihilistic culture indifferent to the prospect of ecocide. These books

were written when two branches of European civilization, one led by USA, the other by the Soviet Union, were vying for total world control. The first volume, drawing upon Marx, Nietzsche, Whitehead, Heidegger, the Frankfurt School philosophers, Joseph Needham, Robert Young and Pierre Bourdieu, was a genealogy of this nihilism. The second volume was a study of Marxism and its implementation, together with a defence of process philosophy. Despite the Soviet Union purporting to be influenced by Marx, the triumph of Marxist-Leninism over other, more radical forms of Marxism, was shown to have produced a culture surprisingly similar to that dominating the West. Only if Marx's insights are situated in the broader philosophy of some form of process metaphysics, it was argued, could a genuinely different path into the future be charted. Process metaphysics, influenced by Chinese thought, was shown to be the philosophy required to transcend European civilization to create an environmentally sustainable global civilization. A version of this, building on the work of earlier process philosophers, was elaborated, defended, and its implications revealed.

My third book, *Postmodernism and the Environmental Crisis* (1995), was a response to what appeared to be the final crisis of the civilization of modernity, a crisis engendered, it was argued, by the looming global ecological crisis, accentuated by the growth of transnational corporations and the globalization of the economy destroying the middle class dream in affluent countries. The incredulity towards metanarratives, taken to define postmodernity, was shown to equate to the collapse of belief in progress which, as Nietzsche pointed out, had taken the place of God in the modern world. 'Postmodernists' responded to this crisis in two different ways. Deconstructive postmodernists embraced the fragmentation of culture as liberating, the constructive postmodernists argued that we now have to rebuild the sciences, overcome the division between science and the humanities, and redefine progress through process metaphysics. The most influential philosophers embraced by deconstructive postmodernists were Foucault and Derrida, who were strongly influenced by Nietzsche and Heidegger, philosophers devoted to diagnosing the nihilism of modernity. Their diagnoses, that modernity is characterized by the will to power turned against itself, or that through enframing the world to reveal it only as standing reserve to be exploited, offered some direction for overcoming this nihilism. However, the development of their ideas by Foucault and Derrida, at least as appropriated by deconstructive postmodernists in USA, amounted to an assault on the arts and humanities. Deconstructive postmodernists helped cripple opposition to the nihilistic implications of mainstream science. To defend the humanities and support the constructive postmodernists, a synthesis of the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Paul Ricoeur, influenced by the same philosophers who influenced Foucault and Derrida, was shown to provide an alternative and more creative and more defensible response to the disorientation generated by the postmodern condition. Drawing up work of Mikhail Bakhtin, Alasdair MacIntyre

and David Carr to further develop Ricoeur's work on narratives, a new, dialogic environmentalist grand narrative was proposed and defended.

Despite success in predicting the future, there was a certain naivety in the conclusions of each of these books. It was assumed that if it could be shown that nihilism is not objectively valid but follows only from highly questionable and ultimately defective assumptions, if it could be shown that major thinkers of the past had been misinterpreted and their ideas were far more profound, critical and illuminating than their followers appreciated, if attention were drawn to great thinkers and the implications of their work spelt out, then as people became more aware of the precarious situation humanity is now in, these arguments would be welcomed as part of a struggle to create a less belligerent and more ecologically sustainable global civilization. This optimism was not justified by the arguments of these books, however, which pointed out that orthodox Marxists and deconstructive postmodernists were not really challenging the assumptions of the dominant culture of modernity. In this regard, there was a peculiar affinity between orthodox Marxists and deconstructive postmodernists that only became fully apparent as neoliberalism increased its stranglehold on countries and the world's dominant institutions. The proponents of each, despite the claims of the philosophers they purported to be inspired by, were not only aligned with, but shared the same assumptions as neoliberals, and in fact, in furthering their own interests were strengthening the dominant order. So, it should not have been surprising that, as Alain Supiot noted, in the European Union, former Eastern European communists and many Western Marxists allied themselves with neoliberals against social democrats, social liberals and traditional conservatives in their efforts to impose markets on every facet of life (Supiot, 2012). And Theodore Dalrymple noted in *Our Culture, What's Left of It* (2005, p.14), 'there has been an unholy alliance between those on the left, who believe that man is endowed with rights but no duties, and libertarians on the right, who believe that consumer choice is the answer to all social questions.'

## **Castoriadis and the Challenge of the Radical Enlightenment**

Why are communists, purportedly radical postmodern intellectuals and right-wing neoliberals aligned with each other? The key lies in their attitudes to democracy. In complex modern societies, there are three ways of coordinating large numbers of people: through bureaucracies, through markets, and through democratic institutions and processes. Neoliberalism is really a fusion of bureaucracies and markets against democracy. Managers of transnational corporations, the new globalized corporatocracy dominated by its financial sector, with the assistance of technocrats, have taken power from the institutions of democratic governments. Subverting democracy has been promoted by transferring the site of freedom for the masses from the political realm and the realm of work, to the realm of consumption, effectively enslaving them to the corporatocracy. At the same time the

corporatocracy gained the freedom to control politicians, plunder public assets and redistribute wealth and income to the super-wealthy, and if they so choose, to destroy the global ecosystem. The figure who displayed the deepest insight into this transformation was Cornelius Castoriadis, a former Marxist who, influenced to some extent by Heidegger, became highly critical of Marxism. Castoriadis (1987) identified two opposing social imaginaries dominating modern civilization, one, the emancipatory project of autonomy whereby people put into question and take responsibility for their institutions and beliefs, a project begun in Ancient Greece; the other, pseudo-rational mastery of the world. As he put it in 'The Pulverisation of Marxism-Leninism':

*Contrary to a confused prejudice still dominant today – and which is at the basis of the contemporary version of classical “liberalism” – the capitalist imaginary stands in direct contradiction to the project of emancipation and autonomy. Back in 1906, Max Weber derided the idea that capitalism might have anything at all to do with democracy... Capitalism subordinates everything to the “development of the forces of production”: people as producers, and then consumers, are to be made completely subordinate to it. The unlimited expansion of rational mastery – pseudomastery and pseudorationality – as is abundantly clear today – thus became the other great imaginary signification of the modern world, powerfully embodied in the realms of technique and organization. (Castoriadis 1997b, p.61)*

Communists, as opposed to Marx who often said that all he knew was that he was not a Marxist, have simply embraced the capitalist imaginary of (pseudo-)rational mastery of nature and people. People are evaluated as producers. What communists created in the Soviet Union, Castoriadis argued, was bureaucratic capitalism. Consequently, former communists are entirely at home in a world dominated by neoliberals who have created a new form of bureaucratic capitalism run by corporate managers promising rational mastery of the world by intensifying competition, applying scientific (Taylorist) management principles, quantifying all work activities and forcing workers to compete with each other for employment while heavily in debt and without a security net. Supposedly radical postmodern intellectuals who have no interest in promoting democracy are tacitly supporting this same imaginary, looking at it from the perspective of consumers rather than producers. They cannot see any role for an education in the humanities, the education designed to cultivate the virtues of people so that they can take their place in and uphold the liberty of self-governing communities, taking responsibility for themselves, their communities and the future. Consequently, they condemn those who attempt to foster such virtues as elitists who transgress the freedom of individuals to have their own preferences, consume what they like and live lives of self-indulgence. By invoking the Ancient Greeks, Castoriadis was really calling for a new renaissance, that is, a 'rebirth' of the quest for autonomy. But his is only the latest of a whole series of such quests, of which the Florentine Renaissance, which gave birth to the humanities and civic humanism, was only one. In modernity, there is a suppressed tradition, the 'Radical Enlightenment' that has struggled to uphold this

quest against the atomism, utilitarianism and instrumentalists thinking of the dominant 'Moderate Enlightenment', and it has not been powerless. It has effected a sequence of renaissances. Currently, each of these has attracted historians concerned to rescue democracy as the very meaning of this term is being destroyed by misuse of the term. These renaissances are required because from the very beginning, the quest for autonomy had powerful opponents who were very often successful in suppressing it. This is one reason why history is so important to the emancipatory social imaginary; as a means to recover and inspire the suppressed quest for autonomy, and also to expose the illusions and decadence that follows its suppression. Its opponents are hostile to or contemptuous of history, or try to neutralize it, along with the humanities and arts generally, for the very same reason. In 'The Greek *Polis* and the Creation of Democracy', Castoriadis (1997a, pp.267-289) showed that philosophy itself is a product of the quest for autonomy. It is when people question and take responsibility for their beliefs and institutions that philosophy emerges, and it becomes indispensable to a democratic society. Democracy requires notions of justice and truth, and the quest to define and advance them and to reach consensus is a condition of the possibility of effective collective decision-making and solidarity in action. Science itself, when it is understood as more than instrumental technological knowledge, is a byproduct of this search for truth. The quests for justice and truth have always been a threat to tyrants and oligarchs, although they still want the payoffs generated by these quests.

Once the social imaginary of rational mastery is understood, its sinister side soon becomes apparent. People themselves become objects to be manipulated and controlled. Effectively, they are to be conceived of as, and then rendered, totally predictable, devoid of real life, and with the quest for rational mastery, this is how not only humans but the whole of nature is understood. This social imaginary of rational mastery cannot acknowledge real life, and insofar as there appears to be life, it is committed to transforming it into something lifeless, for instance, transforming animals into machines for converting low priced grass into high priced flesh, or if possible, carrying out this process without living animals as intermediaries. This explains the peculiar ambiguities in the policies of neoliberal (or neoconservative) governments, their commitment to reducing producers into efficient, low cost transformers of low priced materials into high priced products, and then if possible, replacing them altogether through advanced technologies. Even as consumers, people are to be made into predictable instruments of the economy; their preferences and decisions are controlled by advertisers. In the most recent form of capitalism, advertising is important for goading consumers into accumulating debt, which effectively enslaves them and makes them far more controllable (Lazzarato, 2015). And they are expendable. If developments in robotics replace people while advances in medical technology extend the lives of the ruling elites indefinitely, people who reproduce themselves will no longer be needed.



Understanding this, another feature of this social imaginary of rational mastery becomes intelligible. While opposed to the social imaginary of the quest for autonomy, it has co-evolved with it. Since the quest for rational mastery cannot present itself in its naked form without revealing its sinister side, it advances by appropriating the language of the quest for autonomy, disguising itself while neutralizing the language it has appropriated. Those moved by the social imaginary of autonomy are not totally disempowered by this strategy as they can then attempt to recover and further develop the original meaning of this language. Such a dialectic was evident in communist countries where opponents of managerialism, legitimating their claims through Marx's philosophy, could point to Marx's work, particularly to Marx's 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844' and the *Grundrisse*, to show that technological mastery of the world was not Marx's main preoccupation; it was with emancipation and autonomy. Similarly, with the destruction of democracy by corporate powers with the complicity of liberals in USA promoted as the advance of freedom enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence. Michael Sandel (2005a, 2005b) and more rigorously, J.G.A. Pocock (1975) have pointed to the influence on the founding fathers of the republican philosophy of Renaissance civic humanism and what liberty meant to them – it meant freedom from slavery, and self-governance. However, those concerned with rational mastery deploy a range of other strategies to achieve their ends. The quest for truth is transformed and undermined, not by attacking it, but by equating it with scientific knowledge gained by applying the scientific method, elevating technoscientists, including economists, into a priesthood whose claims to knowledge are placed beyond questioning by the general public, while simultaneously promoting extreme skepticism about all other claims to knowledge. While the social imaginary quest for technological mastery has had its committed defenders (most importantly, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and Herman Kahn), it often serves its proponents better to simply get rid of or cripple the work of those who effectively criticize their beliefs, while simultaneously allowing those whose ideas serve their interests to flourish. This is particularly effective when those augmenting the power of the power elites portray their work as radical, such as vulgar Marxists who promote a Hobbesian view of humans and the deconstructive postmodernists who, promoting skepticism about ideals, have undermined the humanities.

Neither Marxism nor postmodernism are now at the centre of intellectual debates. Nihilism (or the claim that all values are equal, which is nihilism in disguise) and cultural fragmentation are being actively promoted to free privileged elites from ethical claims and to subvert efforts to challenge the current state of society and its ecologically destructive tendencies. However, the success of the global corporatocracy has revealed the extent that proponents of the social imaginary of autonomy had advanced their cause, evident in the greater humanity and greater appreciation of all life achieved by European civilization, notwithstanding the advance of the mechanistic view of the world. Despite the subordinate position of

this social imaginary, there had been an irregular, but slow advance of the quest for justice, liberty and democracy. Herder and Hegel had been right to identify this tendency to progress in freedom and humanity. With neoliberalism, these advances are being demolished faster than they can be put on the endangered list. Institutions such as universities that upheld higher values, that in the past educated the people who constrained markets and bureaucracies to serve the common good, are being subverted by transforming them into transnational business corporations, acknowledging no other ends than maximizing profitability and maintaining the conditions for this end. Institutions of government are being transformed into instruments to extend the global market and augment the wealth and power of transnational corporations, financial institutions and their managers. The redefining and marginalization of philosophy is part of the process by which not only philosophy, but the arts, the humanities and genuine science are being sabotaged. The niches where the broad intellectual work required to counter the fragmentation of culture and replace defective assumptions could be carried out, where people could assert themselves without fear of retribution, expose corruption and oppression and reveal new possibilities for the future, are disappearing. Without powerful public institutions strongly committed to truth, justice and liberty, the market is concentrating wealth and power, becoming a machine for destroying local and global ecosystems, on land, in the oceans, and in the air.

Defending speculative naturalism is therefore not merely a matter of presenting arguments in terms of the quest for truth. There is the deeper problem of defending the practice of pursuing the truth; that is, the practice of questioning received beliefs to reveal their deficiencies and then developing better alternatives. It is necessary also to defend the niches (or cultural fields) in society where truth can be pursued. This involves defending the autonomy of cultural fields from economic and political fields, defending the Humboldtian form of the university, defending the humanities and defending genuine science and its institutions as more than means to develop profitable or military technology to serve power elites. Defending the quest for truth and its conditions is central to defending genuine democracy and the public institutions required for its functioning, to maintaining control over national economies against efforts by transnational corporations and the global corporatocracy to subvert such control, and to defending civilization. It involves defending the social forms required for people to participate in the adventures of ideas and the political actions necessary to create and sustain an ecological sustainable world-order. Opposing nihilism is not just an intellectual exercise; it is itself political action and involves political struggle.

### **Reconfiguring the History of Philosophy After Kant**

With this in mind, [*The Philosophical Foundations of Ecological Civilization*] continues the search to understand the civilization of modernity and to reveal what is blocking

efforts to transform culture to confront the problems we face. The argument of the second, third and fourth chapters of this work is that the main traditions of modern philosophy should be understood as divergent responses to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, and when examined in this way, speculative naturalism can be shown to be the most defensible of these traditions. The second chapter, 'From Analytic Philosophy to Speculative Naturalism' examines analytic philosophy, its roots, and the naturalistic turn it took in USA under the influence of Willard van Ormand Quine. Really a development of logical positivism, this form of analytic philosophy originated as a form of neo-Kantianism that radically downgraded the role of synopsis and eliminated the role accorded to synthesis by Kant, then attempted to develop a formal language which it claimed to be universal, identifying this universal language with the language of mainstream science. In doing so it has locked in the assumptions of current reductionist science, and of the broader culture insofar as it is influenced by scientism. It has eliminated any place in the world for subjective experience or consciousness, or even life, and eliminated any values apart from efficient calculation in the service of the struggle for survival and domination by 'gene machines', machines by which strings of DNA reproduce themselves, along with 'pleasures' which are the byproduct of this struggle. It has produced one of the most nihilistic cultures that has ever existed.

Understanding the dominance of this philosophy reveals why any effort to defend the humanities through any form of Idealism, whether neo-Kantian, neo-Hegelian, hermeneutical or phenomenological, is bound to fail. However, by tracing analytic philosophy back to Kant and drawing on Jaakko Hintikka's work to bring into question the claim to being able to provide a universal language, the questionability of assumptions these US analytic philosophers had placed beyond questioning is revealed. Also revealed is the existence of a very different philosophical program, also deriving from Kant that, while giving a place to analysis, does not eschew synopsis or synthetic thought. It makes speculation central to philosophy, and is naturalist rather than Idealist. This challenges the nihilism of reductionist science and analytic philosophers at its roots and provides the basis for defending the status of the humanities and the ideals they stand for. Speculative philosophy, associated with the revival of dialectics, took both Idealist and naturalist forms. Most commonly, it is the Idealist forms that people associate with speculation, but here it is argued that the naturalistic form of speculative philosophy, defended by Friedrich Schelling in his effort to forge a new synthesis of natural philosophy, art and history, is far more promising than Idealism for achieving a comprehensive understanding of the world and our place and significance within it.

The third chapter, 'Dialectics: From Marxism to Post-Marxism', examines the career of Marxist dialectics as traditionally the most influential alternative to Anglophone analytic philosophy. It is simultaneously an analysis of the failure of Western

Marxism and the failure of French philosophy, despite promising development. Dialectics was embraced by Marx, Marxists and post-Marxists; consequently, we would expect a defense of speculative naturalism from these thinkers that could have served to liberate humanity from its nihilistic culture. However, it is shown that dialectics was embraced by Marxists in a truncated, problematic form (with a few exceptions, notably Aleksandr Bogdanov, Joseph Needham, Ernst Bloch, Richard Levins, and then later, eco-Marxists such as André Gorz, James O'Connor and Joel Kovel) that generally eschewed speculation, equating this with Idealism, and even Marxists' materialism is problematic. Marx's own dialectics was essentially critical, and efforts by his followers to go beyond this resulted in fierce debates, with some Marxists following Engels and assimilating dialectics to scientism and treating its principles as universal laws of development, while others, turning to Hegel and then phenomenology and giving a central place to subjects and agency, aligned Marxism with the humanities and treated 'nature' as merely a social category.

While originally these debates took place in the Germanic world, the most important debates on Marxism occurred in France, and France is usually seen to be the centre of opposition to Anglophone analytic philosophy and to the scientistic naturalism of the US variety. Examining these debates, it is shown that Marxist dialectics and French philosophy produced their own opposition between defenders of the humanities associated with existential phenomenology, notably Jean-Paul Sartre, and scientism associated with the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Louis Althusser and, to a lesser extent, Maurice Godelier. The dialectic between these opposing positions generated major advances in dialectics, with the development of the genetic structuralism of Jean Piaget, Lucien Goldmann and Pierre Bourdieu, and with advances in hermeneutics in Paul Ricoeur's work on metaphors and narratives. The synthesis of these could be even more promising. However, while highlighting the deficiencies of Germanic and Anglophone analytic philosophy, these thinkers were ambivalent toward naturalism (even when they claimed to be materialists). They did give a limited place to speculative thinking, but no French philosopher (with the partial exceptions of Gaston Bachelard and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who died before he could fully develop his ideas) succeeded in formulating a fully non-reductionist naturalism that could transcend the opposition between science and the humanities and provide the foundations for a new social order. It is suggested that for this reason neither Marxism nor French philosophy has been able to combat the influence of analytic philosophy and reductionist scientism, overcome the destructive dynamics of a reinvigorated global market, or, most importantly, effectively combat the now prevailing nihilism and its ecologically destructive consequences.

After assessing the achievements and limitations of the best Marxist and post-Marxist work on dialectics, the following chapter examines the efforts of three speculative naturalists, Robin Collingwood, C.S. Peirce and Alfred North Whitehead

to characterize philosophy. While none of these identified their characterization of philosophical thinking as dialectical, it is argued that this is the best way to understand their philosophical work, and it is argued that, influenced by the tradition of thought that goes back to Schelling, these philosophers, developing radically new conceptual frameworks to understand the world, were advancing dialectical thinking. With their insights revived and further developed by post-positivist philosophers of science, they have provided a far better understanding of the reasoning required to genuinely advance science and mathematics than analytic philosophers. Also, they have provided many of the concepts required to transcend the limitations of current science. The naturalism of analytic philosophy is compared to speculative naturalism, showing just how crippling analytic philosophers have been to intellectual and practical life, particularly to science and the arts. Speculative naturalism, particularly as this was developed by the theoretical biologist, mathematician and the natural philosopher Robert Rosen, is also compared to the speculative materialism of Badiou, the leading figure to emerge from the French tradition of structuralist Marxism and the leading proponent of speculative materialism. It is argued on this basis that the speculative naturalists not only provide a better basis for understanding the greatness and achievements of mathematics, which Badiou argues should be at the centre of philosophy, but open the way to further advances in mathematics and science that align these with the humanities. For this reason, they provide a much stronger basis for appreciating the achievements of Marx and the Marxists while transcending their deficiencies. And they provide the basis for the revival of genuinely democratic politics. Speculative naturalism, focusing on the nature of life, enables humans to be understood as conscious, reflective and creative beings emergent from other life forms, participating in the dynamics of ecosystems, nature and history. This involves conceiving both nature and humans as complex processes of creative becoming.

### **Speculative Naturalism, the Radical Enlightenment and Ecological Civilization**

This defence of speculative naturalism provides the basis for the Fifth and Sixth chapters, 'Reviving the Radical Enlightenment Through Speculative Naturalism' and 'From Speculative Naturalism to Ecological Civilization: Creating the Future'. These provide a broader perspective to understand and advance the debates examined in the first three chapters. It has become evident that there were two, antithetical Enlightenments. While the Moderate Enlightenment, inspired by John Locke and Isaac Newton and committed to the technological domination of nature and possessive individualism, that is, rational mastery of the world, to use Castoriadis' characterization of this, claimed to break with the past and to inaugurate a new era based on a new notion of reason, the Radical Enlightenment, based in the humanities rather than science, sought to uphold and advance the Renaissance quest for liberty as self-governance inspired by the Ancient Greeks and the republican Romans. In

Castoriadis' terminology, it was a struggle to revive the social imaginary of autonomy. The importance of Kant for the Radical Enlightenment is that he brought back and gave a central place to freedom in his philosophy, thereby upholding the humanities. This brings us back to the humanities and claim of this work to be a manifesto. It also brings us back to Epstein's claim, quoted in the introduction of this book, that manifestos are performative rather than descriptive, proclaiming new eras. There are two eras being proclaimed in this work: within philosophy, an era of speculative naturalism, reinstating philosophy in particular and the humanities in general to their proper position in intellectual and cultural life, encompassing and transforming the sciences and reviving the Radical Enlightenment and the quest for liberty (the focus of Chapter Five), and following this, an era in which humanity will begin to create an ecologically sustainable civilization; an ecological civilization (the focus of Chapter Six).

Epstein pointed out that while the practical outcome of the natural sciences is technology through which nature is transformed, and the practical outcome of the human sciences is the transformation of society through politics, the practical outcome of the humanities is the transformation of culture. With culture, the object and the subject are one, and to transform culture is to transform ourselves, to create new subjectivities. Transforming culture can and will involve transforming our conceptions of natural science and technology, social science and politics, the humanities and culture, and how we conceive our relationship to the rest of nature. This puts political philosophy and ethics at the centre of philosophy and the centre of the humanities, as not merely concerned with how we should organize society and how we should live, but with what we should be striving to become and what kind of civilization we should be striving to create. It is necessary for philosophy to provide people, who are always situated and acting within institutions, cultural forms and naturally and socially created physical environments, with the conceptual frameworks to orient or re-orient themselves in the world, to define their goals and to act and live well and effectively. Chapter Five promotes a dialectical synthesis of Aristotelian thought and the republican ideas of Rome as revived in the Florentine Renaissance with the communitarian ideas of neo-Hegelian philosophy of the German Renaissance, defended on naturalist foundations. Chapter Six utilizes advanced work in ecology, largely inspired by speculative naturalists, to reformulate the Radical Enlightenment. It provides a unifying conceptual framework through process relational theoretical ecology for an ecological political philosophy and an ethics of virtues able to produce the subjectivities with the character necessary to defend current institutions from corruption (for instance, universities), to develop these in new directions, and to create and sustain new institutions embodying a commitment to liberty and to augmenting the conditions for life. This is presented as the politics and ethics of 'eco-poiesis' or 'home-making' which can serve as the foundation for creating an ecological civilization, and inspiring people to realize this.

This manifesto is partly (although not only) a work in metaphilosophy, showing how philosophy has lost its way and defining what it should be. It is also a work in philosophy concerned to orient people to create the future. It is a rejection of scientism, a defense of the humanities, and a defense of the location of philosophy in the humanities, providing the humanities incorporates natural philosophy and engages with and encompasses the sciences. In arguing for speculative naturalism I have deployed all the methods available to philosophers: analysis, synopsis and synthesis, to show how recent philosophers, by refusing to acknowledge a role for synthesis and by devaluing synopses, have not only crippled themselves, but have crippled science as well as the humanities, and damaged culture and society. Not only analytic philosophers (who clearly, are the most culpable) are responsible for this, but also many 'continental' philosophers. Marxists, for instance, in promoting dialectics tend to be skeptical of speculative thought. To highlight these deficiencies I have described the work of some philosophers who did avail themselves of all these methods, notably Schelling, Collingwood, Peirce and Whitehead, while Bogdanov, Needham, Bloch and Merleau-Ponty are also alluded to. However, this manifesto is not a defense of their work as such, nor a total rejection of analytic philosophy or of the dialectical philosophy of the Western Marxist and post-Marxist 'continental' philosophers I have criticized. Both analysis and critical dialectics are defended dialectically as components of philosophy that should include analysis, synopses and synthetic thinking as essential to speculative philosophy.

That is, far from being a rejection of critical dialectics, an expanded form of dialectics that makes speculation central has been defended, and it has been deployed. The whole manifesto is a work in dialectics, involving synopses to 'view together' different philosophers and philosophical traditions, in this way defending, deploying and developing dialectical thought. From being defined in opposition to analysis and speculation, dialectics as deployed and defended in this work encompasses analysis, synopsis and synthesis and is essentially speculative. The work begins with the approach to philosophy exemplified by Quine that is most abstract and therefore most one-sided. However, the critique of this is not meant to deny completely the value of Quine's work. While the equation of naturalism with scientism is attacked, the promotion of naturalism is taken to be an advance in philosophy. Furthermore, there is value in analysis, but it is argued that Hintikka's form of analytic philosophy is superior, overcoming much of Quine's one-sidedness. While Hintikka is an analytic philosopher, his work opens the way for and even embraces some aspects of dialectics and speculative philosophy. After showing the promising start to speculative dialectical philosophy by the post-Kantians, Fichte and Hegel, and to the naturalist version of this developed by Schelling, it is shown in the following chapter how most Marxists again truncated the potential of both dialectics and philosophy by excluding any role for speculation in the creation of the future. The dialectical philosophers Georg Lukács and Sartre, the structuralists Lévi-Strauss, Althusser and Godelier, the genetic structuralists, Piaget, Goldmann and

Bourdieu and the hermeneutic narratologists Ricoeur, David Carr and Mikhail Bakhtin, are examined and criticised, again, not to reject them, but to draw attention to their achievements while showing that their thinking also is one-sided. Their insights also need to be incorporated into a broader perspective. It is to address this one-sidedness that the speculative naturalists, carrying on the tradition that originated with Schelling, are defended, but in a way that is designed not to idolatry them but to require that speculative naturalists incorporate the advances of analytic, phenomenological, structuralist and hermeneutic philosophy, contributing to an ongoing quest for comprehensive understanding of ourselves and the world. This should be seen as the process of humanity's (and nature's) self-creation that can never be complete and can never be finalized. Recognizing this is in itself wisdom.

So long as the importance of such speculative philosophy and wisdom are acknowledged, then the Marxist point that philosophy should not be just contemplation but should also orient people to live and to change the world; that is, to create the future, should be embraced. The failure to appreciate the importance of ideas to orient people manifests the residual Cartesian dualism of orthodox Marxism. To change one's understanding of the world is to participate in the transformation of culture, which is to change the world, and is the condition for social and political action to create new social forms and to develop new forms of technology. On this assumption alone the work of Robert Rosen must be judged not only more profound and more defensible than the work of the French Marxist philosopher, Alain Badiou, but also more relevant to praxis. This leads on to the humanities, including political philosophy and ethics, which are specifically concerned with our self-creation through the transformation of culture.

The introduction to [*The Philosophical Foundations of Ecological Civilization*], this chapter and the last two chapters highlight the crises facing us in our everyday lives and as participants in history. The last chapter identifies major work underway in theoretical ecology, eco-semiotics, human ecology, eco-Marxism, ecological economics and political ecology. While this chapter is designed to point to the most promising work in specific disciplines, it is also designed to show why philosophy, including metaphysics, natural philosophy, philosophical biology, philosophical anthropology, social and political philosophy and ethics, is required to overcome the isolation and marginalization of such work, to link it together and integrate it with the humanities so that it can effectively challenge current orthodoxies and their proponents and constitute a new grand narrative of emancipation. It also shows that philosophy is required to transform culture and produce new subjectivities. It is shown how a naturalistic form of speculative dialectics can orient those engaged in specialist work and in political action and provide an alternative hegemonic culture, a culture that can challenge, overcome and replace, not only intellectually but in practice, the hegemonic 'anti-culture' that has locked us onto a path of decadence



and enslavement to powers that are driving us to a global ecological disaster. The last chapter and the conclusion set forth the basic ideas required to create an ecological civilization.

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## NOTE

<sup>i</sup> Because the term 'philosophy' is claimed by members of philosophy departments who have redefined it to match their preoccupations, scientists and mathematicians who are engaged in this project often do not characterize their work as philosophy, although it would have been recognized as such by the great philosophers of the past. Many academics who call themselves philosophers, which after all means 'lovers of wisdom', bring to mind what was called the Ministry of Love in George Orwell's 1984, the place where people showing any sign of dissidence were taken to be tortured and then vaporized.