Ecotopia Rising: An Ecocritical Analysis of Radical Environmental Activists as Ecotopian Expressions Amid Anthropocene Decline

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Abstract:

The current socio-ecological crisis that marks the Anthropocene era of extensive human impacts on natural systems, exhibited most starkly by the predicted loss of 67% of monitored vertebrate species by 2020 and anthropogenic climatic perturbations, suggests a multifariously distorted human-nature relationship that is in need of radical reconstitution. Radical environmental activists (REA's) from groups such as the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and EarthFirst! have arisen in response to the intrusion of socio-ecological breakdown into the 'Now' that marks the Anthropocene, fervently mobilising against the status quo of late capitalism and calling for fundamental transformations in the human-animal-nature relationship. This project employs the analytical lens of utopian and critical posthuman theory- which both variedly seek to critique oppressive and exploitative structures and modes of thought and explore more ethical modes of relationality - in order to critically assess the ecological sensibilities, diagnostic framing narratives, and ecotopian potentialities of radical environmental activists. The project draws on data in the form of 26 semi-structured interviews with radical environmental activists from a variety of groups, organizational documents and supplementary excerpts from canonical ecotopian literary texts for a thorough understanding of contemporary empirical manifestations of ecotopianism. An ecocritical-thematic analytical framework is utilized in order to assess the nature of REA ecotopianism, in particular how they as well as ecotopian texts posit and engage with the non-human 'other', and how they relate to central utopian concepts such as hope and futurity. REA's exhibit post-anthropocentric sensibilities that disavow the ontological centrality of the 'human' and call for extending bounds of ethical consideration to include all life and even non-living entities, although at times they fail to deconstruct and occasionally reproduce hierarchical and dualistic constructs of human-animal-nature relationality. REA's largely exhibit a critical and terrestrial modality of ecotopianism that seeks to dismantle growth and profit-oriented capitalist systems and enact more liveable worlds within the 'here and now'. Their transfigured relations to hope and futurity are in part a reflection of the pervasiveness of loss and ecological disintegration amid the present. Yet, while evincing a deep post-modern aversion to complete closure around desired alternatives, they nevertheless gesture towards more liveable worlds and express a desire for a future-to-come devoid of the widespread loss of cherished Earth kin. The extant widescale severing of cherished kinship bonds to Earth others engenders a critical modality of hope amidst REA's wherein grief over loss serves as fuel for their continued strivings against Anthropocene decline and towards more abundant worlds.

Key Words/Disciplines: *Utopian theory, critical theory, critical environmental politics, posthumanism, environmental sociology, environmental ethics, radical environmentalism*

Chapter 1: Intro- Setting the Stage

This thesis has been molded and inspired by a desire to address the unprecedented extent of socio-ecological disintegration characterizing our current era by investigating alternative- and arguably better- modes of human relationality and onto-ethical orientations towards the nonhuman world. As such, it is one that necessarily draws on insights from a multiplicity of disciplines such as ecology, environmental sociology, political ecology, environmental ethics, critical and utopian theory, and critical posthumanism. The latter, as one of the predominant theoretical orientations guiding this project, sees no such thing as a separate and/or superior 'human realm' divorced from its entanglements with the innumerable other actants- dogs, cybernetic systems, hurricanes, corporate capitalism, phytoplankton, plastics, etc.- with which

we inter-are (Latour 2004;2005; 2018; Braidotti 2013). From this perspective the human is *always* thoroughly implicated in the myriad phenomena which presently characterize the Anthropocene- in increasingly powerful storms fueled by profligate fossil fuel consumption, in the increasingly widespread absence of non-human life, as well as the plastics that pervade the bodies of those who still persist. As Latour (2018) so astutely puts it, amid the boundary-defying Anthropocene era the 'inside' and outside' of all borders are subverted. This project seeks to further investigate precisely the what's and why's surrounding the growing conviction- as expressed most starkly by radical environmental activists (REA's)- that *something* is fundamentally wrong with how contemporary (predominantly Western capitalist) societies are structured, subsist, perceive, and generally interact with the non-human world. For decades, REA's have been sounding the alarm of impending doom and engaging in high-risk mobilizations in order to stem further ecological decline. They seem to exhibit decidedly post-anthropocentric (Ferrando 2016) worldviews and modes of relationality which decentre the human vis-à-vis the natural world, thus warranting further investigation for potential insights into how we might live more ethically with one another- human and nonhuman alike- amid the precarious terrain ahead. However, when the word 'nature' is featured in this project, it is merely for the sake of convenience. In contrast to traditional uses of the term which have tended to denote a world separate from and either hostile to- or a romanticized counterpart of- the 'human' and the 'social', is used here as a referent for the intricate networks of assemblages (Morton 2010), actants, and interdependencies that constitute the earth system.

As a researcher occupying a generally critical-posthumanist onto-epistemological position, certain kinds of approaches and lines of enquery will naturally follow. For instance, a general interest is maintained in disavowing the centrality of the 'centre' (Ferrando 2013, pg. 30)- whether human-centredness or any other mode- in turn giving way to an interest in multiple centres of meaning and significance, in the porosity of boundaries and in deconstructing hierarchies and dualisms more generally. REA's are very much centres of significance navigating the periphery of the 'mainstream' in environmental politics. REA's are heterodoxical movement forms that appear to exhibit worldviews and employ tactics not typically associated with mainstream environmental movements, organizations and political groups. Most significantly, as will be further discussed, they exhibit an acute sense of urgency over extant and looming socio-ecological breakdown, one that seems to be largely absent amongst mainstream political and laymen discourses. For REA's, issues such as climate breakdown, species extinctions, and the intensifying decimation of 'wild' spaces seem to be of profound and multifarious significance. The loss of the nonhuman, in other words, weighs particularly heavily on them- the present interest is in why this is so and how this serves to fuel their often high-risk and physically interventionist direct-action feats. Moreover, their mobilizations, sensibilities and the like seem to be characterized by sweeping dissent and dissatisfaction- with the status quo, perceived government and wider societal inaction on ecological breakdown[1], etc. REA groups can thus be classed as contemporary manifestations of a contentious mode of politics (Tarrow & Tilly 2003; Leitner et al 2008) which levels multidimensional challenges- tactical, political, ideological- against the status quo and seeks to enact alternative imaginaries. Hence why utopianism- with its similar interest in fundamental critique, and the exploration and instantiation of radical alternatives- has been utilized as a core theoretical lens through which to investigate and critically assess REA mobilizations and sensibilities. Given the transformational nature of the socioeconomic, structural and political

[1] Indeed, a recent UN report found that a *fivefold* increase in national mitigation efforts would be required if the world is to stand a chance at meeting the Paris Accord's 1.5-degree target by 2030 (UNEP 2019).

changes mandated by organizations such as the IPCC (2018), REA's- who have been making such claims for decades- are prime subjects of investigation into needed post-anthropocentric modes of relationality.

It must be noted that REA's are far from the most significant or longest-standing actors at the front lines of ecological defense. Indigenous communities and similar 'subaltern subjects of resistance' (Mattiace 2003; Dinerstein 2017) the world over have been and continue to vehemently resist the onslaught of colonial and capitalist exploitation, associated extractive industries, and their decimation of local ecological, cultural and onto-epistemological systems- from the 'Standing Rock' resistance against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) (Estes 2019) to Kanak opposition to Nickel mining in New Caledonia (Ali & Grewal 2006), the Achuar people's opposition against rampant deforestation and annihilation of Earth kin in the Ecuadorian Amazon (Armstrong et al 2010) and the Wixárika people's ongoing fight against open-pit mining in Western Mexico (Gasparello 2017). The significance of local and indigenous struggles against capital exploitation and expropriation should not be understated. The decision to investigate Global North radical environmental mobilisations against ecological decline stemmed from a profound personal as well as academic interest in the nature and origins of their seemingly post-anthropocentric worldviews (Ferrando 2016) as denizens of Western industrial societies with long-standing anthropocentric underpinnings. Of particular interest was the precise nature of REA ecological worldviews (to what extent do they deconstruct dualistic constructs of the human/non-human?), what motivates their high-risk interventions on behalf of the natural world, their diagnostic framing narratives, and precisely what mode of ecotopianism- if any- they exhibit. The latter, which operates firmly within the normative domain of the ought, leads to further queries that I attempt to shed light on throughout, namely: how- according to REA's and in dialogue with post-human scholars such as Latour and Derrida- *should* one conceive of and relate to the (animal) 'other' amid the messy entanglements of the Anthropocene? In other words, if REA's indeed propose a relational ontology with no definitive boundaries between the human 'self' and nonhuman 'others', what does this mean politically and ethically? What *should* post-anthropocentric modes of human-animal-nature relationality entail? These queries not only guide the forthcoming investigation of REA's but are also applied in the analysis of landmark ecotopian literary works which serve as supplements to the data gathered from REA's. Similarly, regarding REA motivational drivers, I was intrigued and wanted to further understand why- despite their apocalyptic narratives of impending ecological collapse- REA's don't descend into apathy or nihilism but rather continue to vehemently resist further loss of life.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the latest empirical findings regarding the current state of our biogeophysical environment and nonhuman life amid the Anthropocene, designed to 'set the contextual stage' in order to provide a clearer understanding of the historical and biogeophysical conditions giving rise to REA mobilizations. For a brief space I focus specifically on the modern catastrophe that is biological annihilation largely for three reasons: it's a crisis whose implications for life on earth and the very functioning of natural systems are particularly profound, because of my interest in how we (particularly REA's) view and interact with nonhuman life, and crucially, because it is a crisis with particularly ethico-political implications. Subsequent sections feature a delineation and periodization of the unprecedented era that is the Anthropocene, the era of humanity's geological-scale impacts on natural systems and non-human life. Delineating and assessing crises is also an essential aspect of utopianism, the overarching theoretical framework of this project (see Chapter Two), as utopianism in its myriad manifestations is predicated on identifying and critically assessing the 'key wrongs' of the present as well as on an exploration and projection of more desirable (and

ethical) alternatives (Sargisson 2013). Lastly, in line with an overarching interest in boundary exploration and deconstruction, the final sections of this chapter feature a critical discussion of competing Anthropocene theorizations and what the 'Anthropocene' actually entails- philosophically, politically, conceptually, etc.; in Chapter Two I explore utopian and critical posthuman theory and underlying theoretical tributaries constituting the project's overarching theoretical framework, while Chapter Three features a brief overview and analysis of the history of environmental movements from whence REA groups bifurcated, and the unique political and philosophical characteristics of REA's as denoted by existing literature, followed by Chapter Four which denotes the project's qualitative methodological framework, three data chapters, and a final discussion chapter wherein I further analyse core themes elicited from the data obtained largely through the lens of green utopian theory, Derridean deconstruction, and Latourian cosmopolitics.

Paroxysms and Perturbations of a Planet in Peril

It is increasingly undeniable that we are presently living in an age characterized by multiple and unprecedented forms of precarity. The sheer extent of the impacts of modern human civilizations on the earth's natural systems[2], and on the myriad life forms we share the planet with, have led scientists to conjure a new term for the unprecedented geological era we find ourselves in: the Anthropocene (Crutzen 2006; Crutzen and Stoermer 2000). Amid the Anthropocene, humans have essentially become a 'geophysical force' (Steffen et al 2007) due to the combined and mutually reinforcing effects of unfettered (and grossly uneven) economic growth (Gorz 1987), a predicted global human population of 9.7 billion by 2050 (UN 2020), and overall rapacious production and consumption patterns particularly on behalf of the planet's plutocratic elite (Piketty & Chancel 2015). Our climate system is increasingly in disarray (Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 2013) due to greenhouse gas concentration levels not seen for the last 800,000 years (IPCC 2018), promising more frequent and violent storms, prolonged droughts, raging wildfires, crop failures, melting glaciers, and rising seas across the world that will quite literally rewrite arbitrary national boundaries and create millions of climate migrants- human and non-human alike (Christmas 2017). Current atmospheric levels of CO2 more closely approximate those of the Pliocene climate of three to five million years ago when the Greenland, West Antarctic, and parts of the East Antarctic ice sheets had melted entirely, with sea levels that were between ten and twenty meters higher than they are today (WMO 2017). The latest IPCC report (2018) has warned that the planet could reach 1.5 degrees of warming by as early as 2030 based on current rising levels of warming without urgent global political action and fundamental structural transformations. At 500 ppm or after 1.5 degrees of warming, climate models predict the crossing of a dangerous 'heat threshold' wherein forests' and marine phytoplankton's[3] abilities to store carbon and regulate the earth's climate become severely imperiled, with severe ecological and socioeconomic disturbances predicted to follow (Roxy et al 2016; Baccini et al 2017; IPCC 2018)[4]. Anthropogenic climate and ecological

[2] The Anthropocene, denotes Hamilton (2016), is the era of unprecedented human interference in the *earth system,* the totality of interrelated natural cycles- rock, water, atmosphere, etc.- that perpetuate matter and life on earth.

[3] Phytoplankton alone account for approximately half of the planet's primary productivity (Beardall et al 2009).

[4] Indeed, it appears that we're not so far from such a scenario as we might have previously thought, as a recent study has found that the carbon balance of tropical forests has shifted and forests are now releasing more carbon than oxygen (Baccini et al 2017).

perturbations are set to considerably reconfigure marine and terrestrial ecosystems around the globe. Increased uptake of CO2 by the world's oceans and resulting chemical alterations such as increased acidification portend deleterious impacts on the developmental trajectories of myriad marine invertebrate species (Gibson et al 2011).

Decades before choking in anguish in 1973 upon witnessing the extent to which his beloved dunes had been swallowed up by Rotterdam Harbor's steady expansion, wherein he'd painstakingly studied gulls, terns, and various bird species, Dutch biologist Nikolaas Tinbergen issued the haunting omen: "it will all go, irrevocably" (de Waal 2016). Today, three quarters of the terrestrial environment (and 66% of our seas) have been 'severely altered' by human activity (IPBES 2019). Deforestation primarily for the expansion of agriculture and timber extraction has consumed forested areas equivalent to the size of South Africa between 1990 and 2015 alone, with some estimates citing the loss of one football-pitch-sized area of forest per second in 2017 (Weisse & Goldman 2018). These trends are accelerating in vital biodiversity hotspots such as the Amazon Basin under the new hyper-development fervor of right-wing Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro (Cohen 2019) and in Southeast Asia (Hansen et al 2014; Rosa et al 2016). The razing of forests and other flora has become so severe that Bar-On et al (2018) have documented a twofold decline in plant biomass since the start of human civilization. Loss of forests lead to disastrous impacts on the climate through CO2 release, further disruptions to terrestrial biogeochemical and water flows, and threaten the long-term viability of some of the most complex and biodiverse ecosystems on the planet. Industrial humanity's collective Ecological Footprint, a function of both population size and particularly consumptive profligacy, has been exceeding the planet's carrying capacity since the 1970s. At present the resources demanded by the 'explosion of human consumption' as seen in the near exponential increase in the demand for energy, water, and land (WWF 2018, Pg. 6) require the regenerative capacity of 1.75 planet earths for their continuation (Global Footprint Network 2020). WWF's 2018 Living Planet Report goes on to presage an exacerbation of these trends unless urgent transformative action is taken, particularly with regards to food and energy. The earth simply would not be able to support a global population wherein all have adopted the same energy and resource-intensive lifestyles as residents of wealthy industrial nations. Doing so would require four to five additional planet Earths (Ehrlich & Ehrlich 2013), though one can hardly blame long struggling nations in the Global South for desiring to do so given that the Global North has historically and presently enriched itself at their expense (Agarwal & Narain 2017).

Fossil fuel extraction is the second most significant driver of environmental degradation via GHG emissions (especially CO2 and Methane CH4, which is 34 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide) from fuel combustion for electricity, heat, and transport. In the fossil industry's desperate scramble for the last remnants of increasingly scarce oil reserves we've seen the emergence of particularly disastrous (socially as well as ecologically) unconventional fuel sources and extraction techniques such as hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling (fracking) (Willow & Wylie 2014). If we are to limit planetary warming to below two degrees as is necessary in order to avoid catastrophic socio-ecological breakdown, CO2 emissions must remain below a maximum of 1,240 giga-tonnes (Gt) by 2050; this would require leaving a majority of known fossil fuel reserves- which contain an estimated 11,000 Gt of CO2- untouched (Jakob & Hilaire 2015). Otherwise, climate-related disruptions such as droughts, floods, and famines portend mass social dislocations the world over, with rising sea levels alone set to displace tens of millions at the conservative end worldwide (Ehrlich & Ehrlich 2013; McLeman 2018). In 1992, the nongovernmental organization, the Union of

Concerned Scientists, gathered 15,575 of the world's most eminent scientists to issue a report entitled "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity". The report featured pleas for a radical overhaul in human production and consumption patterns which were then already posing severe threats to the planet's life support systems. It noted that if fundamental changes weren't made such as more equal resource distributions, stabilization of human population growth, and a vast scaling-back of environmentally destructive activities, serious risks would be posed to the future of life on earth (UCS 1992, pg. 8). Today, nearly three decades later on the eve of their fateful warning, they've issued a 'Second Notice' denoting that the situation has severely worsened, especially with regards to climate change and biodiversity loss. Though they somewhat uncritically place primary emphasis on human population growth as a key driver of ecological decline, they further cite our collective failure to "reassess the role of an economy rooted in growth" (Ripple et al 2017, pg. 1026) as another key factor. The growing consensus is thus that our presently 'failed' trajectories must be radically reconstituted, and that time is quickly running out for avoiding mass human and animal misery on an increasingly inhospitable planet.

An era of Unprecedented Biological Annihilation: The 6th Mass Extinction

"Exactly a hundred years ago, the rate of dying out of biological species began to increase exponentially; as a result of which in the mid-1980s a species vanished every day, and by the year 2000 this will have increased to ***a species every hour****. We are* ***monopolizing the earth for our species alone****. The dying off of species is the most fundamental indicator of the general exterminating tendency: the growth of the industrial system has pushed it to a galloping race" (Bahro 1994, pg. 21).*

Over three decades ago, French sociologist André Gorz (1987) enquired, "Did you know that, according to Cousteau, half of the marine life he filmed in 1956 had disappeared by 1963 (and what is left today)?" (pg. 64). The situation today, decades after Gorz (1987) and Bahro's (1994) fateful observations, is scarcely imaginable. From the late Pleistocene onwards and particularly amid the post-1950s 'great acceleration' era, the ever-expanding human enterprise has been associated with the gradual simplification, range-reduction, and disappearance of megafauna populations across the globe (Ripple et al 2019)[5]. Precipitous global declines in amphibian populations (i.e., frogs and salamanders) offered early warning signs that something was seriously amiss (Wake & Vredenburg 2008). Authors Wake & Vredenburg (2008) noted that, while multifactorial, the primary driver of amphibian collapse- augur of an emerging sixth mass extinction crisis- was "one weedy species, *Homo sapiens*, which has unwittingly achieved the ability to directly affect its own fate and that of most of the other species on this planet" (Pg. 11472). The tragic irony is that amphibians, like sharks, are among the most ancient vertebrates the Earth has ever known, having emerged hundreds of millions of years ago and survived five previous extinction events; now amid the Anthropocene, they have become the world's most endangered class of animals. In their more recent analysis of current rates of species loss in comparison to those seen during previous mass extinction events on Earth[6], Ceballos et al (2017) have observed an 'extremely high degree of population decay' in countless observed vertebrate species that vastly exceeds that of previous numbers as well as

[5] A phenomenon that biologist Norman Myers referred to as the 'great dying' in his pioneering and aptly named work on the subject, *The Sinking Ark* (1979)

[6] Such as the devastating Permian-Triassic event around 250 million years ago which wiped out 95% of all living species (Wake & Vredenburg 2008)

normal background rates of extinction, offering irrefutable evidence of a 6th mass extinction. WWF's 2018 Living Planet Report utilizes the findings from such indices as the Living Planet Index (LPI), which measures the global state of biodiversity and ecological health (Collen et al 2012) via an extensive compilation of over 3,000 data sources monitoring 14,152 populations of 3, 706 vertebrate species (mammals, birds, fishes, amphibians, reptiles) across the globe (WWF 2018). WWF list the LPI's latest findings as follows:

> "The latest index shows an overall decline of 60% in population sizes between 1970 and 2014. Species population declines are especially pronounced in the tropics, with South and Central America suffering the most dramatic decline, an 89% loss compared to 1970. Freshwater species numbers have also declined dramatically, with the Freshwater Index showing an 83% decline since 1970" (Pg. 7)[7].

In May 2019, a landmark and unprecedentedly comprehensive report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) uncovered the truly dire state of life on earth, with approximately 1,000,000 known animal and plant species threatened with extinction. Ceballos et al (2017) continue their use of moral-ethical language in reference to the present extinction crisis, citing recent 'catastrophic declines' in both the numbers and sizes of monitored vertebrate populations. This era of biological annihilation, also referred to as 'defaunation' (Dirzo et al 2014; Ceballos et al 2017), is particularly unique in that 'a preponderance of evidence' suggests that rather than resulting from some external threat or cataclysmic climatic event, this time a single species- humanity- is the leading cause (Cafaro 2015; Young et al 2016; Bar-On et al 2018). As previously denoted, the most common threats to species include anthropogenic over exploitation, the fragmentation and degradation of their habitats especially for agricultural intensification and expansion (WWF 2018), pollution, toxification, climate change and related diseases, threats which often interact iteratively in complex ways, thus further exacerbating the deleterious impacts on species and natural systems. As Ceballos (2016) laments, "we are in the midst of a massive assault on living things, causing the loss of millions of populations and thousands of species", species which are "our companions in our travel across the universe" (pg. 290;1). Thus, and despite the anthropocentric framing of many of these reports wherein they refer to other species and the wider earth system as 'stocks' and 'resources', Ceballos (2016) alludes to the notion that this is no mere existential crisis threatening the continuity of human life but, fundamentally, an ethical one implicating the steady erosion of intricate multispecies relations forged over vast swaths of co-evolutionary time. The extension of the human carrying capacity has come not merely at the hands of technological innovation and more accurate manipulation of natural processes but, most insidiously, via our expropriation of ever larger portions of the Earth accompanied by the systematic displacement and annihilation of nonhuman life (Crist 2016, pg. 5). In place of an abundance of life forms, humans and livestock have increasingly taken center stage, whose collective biomass now exceeds that of all other vertebrates apart from fish (Bar-On et al 2018). It has, in multiple senses of the phrase, become a largely human planet marked by a growing absence of nonhuman others and ever fewer spaces not thoroughly (and dangerously) altered by us. Such myriad deficiencies, which not only threaten the very existence of much of life on Earth as we've known it but, crucially, can be framed as egregious

[7] While comprehensive measures of the state of the world's invertebrates tend to be limited, a recent study documented 'catastrophic' declines in global entomofauna (insects), with over 40% threatened with extinction, particularly species in the Lepidoptera taxa, which includes butterflies and moths (Sánchez-Bayo & Wyckhuys 2019).

ethical transgressions (Plumwood 2010; Cafaro & Primack 2014), are what REA's have arisen in response to, proclaiming that things can, and indeed must, be otherwise.

The Anthropocene: A Homogenous *Homo Sapiens* as Geological Force?

"The immemorial, fixed Earth, which provided the conditions and foundations of our lives, is moving, the fundamental Earth is trembling" (Serres 1995, pg. 86).

Though there is a growing consensus that the Anthropocene has indeed emerged full-force, theorizations surrounding the precise origins, nature, and implications of this unprecedented era vary. As poignantly suggested by Serres' (1995) timely observation above, a defining feature of the Anthropocene is not merely the ubiquitous and destabilizing influence of human activities[8] by which the Earth *is moved* but, crucially, the mounting realisation that the Earth *moves* in response. Some (Broswimmer 2002) have sought to associate the beginnings of the 'Anthropocene' with the development of human language and conscious intentionality, a notion that lacks a necessary correlation to the current state of affairs. Steffen et al (2011) and Glikson (2013), on the other hand, contend that even prior to the development of language came modern humans' discovery and manipulation of fire, the 'evolutionary trigger' that allowed us to tap the powerful energy reserves stored in detrital carbon (Raupach & Canadell 2011, pg. 210–211), and thus "fundamentally altered our relationship with other animals on the planet" (pg. 846). Such momentous developments, which effectively transformed *homo sapiens* into bio-cultural beings with increasingly sophisticated weaponry, modes of organization, and a growing capacity to greatly alter our surrounding environments engendered a dramatic shift in our relationships to the natural world and our animal counterparts (Dawson 2016, pg. 20;1). Another competing theorization seeks to establish the periodization of the Anthropocene around the Pleistocene megafauna extinction event that took place during the last ice age, wherein mass die-offs of numerous large mammals across Asia, Australia, and the Americas coincided with the arrival of humans on these continents (Roberts et al, 2001; Steffen et al 2011, pg. 847)[9]. Indeed, one can detect numerous inklings of extant crises in the activities of many ancient and pre-industrial civilizations, which often effected large-scale environmental transformations and were thus by no means ecologically benign (Tuan 1970, pg. 247). For instance, pre-industrial civilizations tampered with the energy-rich fossil fuels that now power modern industrial societies, most notably the Song dynasty's use of coal in China between 960 and 1279 (Wright 2012). However, the impacts of such developments were relatively minor in comparison to the monumental transformations that followed the industrial revolution and associated large-scale extraction of atmosphere-altering fossil fuels from the Earth (Crutzen 2006).

The fundamental test of the Anthropocene is whether human activity affects earth system functioning to the extent that such impacts lie *outside the range of natural variability* (Hamilton 2016; Steffen et al 2015) through, for instance, producing notable stratigraphic signatures in ice and sediments (Waters et al 2016). The now widely established periodization of the Anthropocene around 1800 following the momentous productive transformations

[8] Among the first to depict humanity as a source of 'profligate waste' (Marsh 2003, Pg. 170) rather than superior entity was George Perkins Marsh in his landmark environmental work, *Man and Nature* (2003), originally published in 1864, wherein he documented the longstanding and growing impacts of human civilizations on natural systems

[9] The present-day biomass of wild land mammals is actually sevenfold lower than it was during this period (Bar-On et al 2018).

ushered in by the Industrial Revolution (Steffen et al 2011, pg. 849) was initially made by Crutzen (2006; Crutzen & Stoermer 2000) precisely because this is when ice core data reveal considerable spikes in global concentrations of CO2 and Methane (CH4) arising from the industrial-scale burning of fossil fuels (Hamilton 2016, pg. 2). While carbon is not the most useful tool for identifying the precise starting period of the Anthropocene because of the influence of natural carbon sinks which absorb and mask heightened levels of CO2, nevertheless by 1850 atmospheric CO2 concentrations were at 285ppm (parts per million), at the upper reach of natural Holocene variability of 260-285 ppm. By 1900, this number had climbed to 296 ppm, denoting an "unmistakable human imprint" (Steffen et al 2011, pg. 848-9) on the earth's atmosphere. The industrial revolution is significant as a marker because it was from this moment onwards that humans developed the capacity to alter the very chemical composition of the earth's atmosphere (Steffen et al 2011, pg. 846). Of course, humans are not the first or primary Earth movers; organisms such as cyanobacteria and phytoplankton have long since possessed this capacity, although not to the detriment of much of life on Earth. Since the 1800-marker, a new periodization has taken center-stage: the post-1945 era of considerable and mounting socio-ecological upheaval known as the 'Great Acceleration' (Steffen et al 2015) marked by an 'explosion' of the human enterprise, particularly through near exponential increases- especially in the Global North- in consumptive and productive activities particularly after the 1970s (Steffen et al 2007; Steffen et al 2015). The post-war era of mass production and consumption has led to stratigraphic deposits that now contain novel materials such as plastics and concrete (Waters et al 2016). Human bioturbation ('anthroturbation'), or significant disturbances of landscape, soil morphology and earth sediments resulting from such activities as deep mining for mineral extraction and fracking, has far exceeded that of any non-human organisms and placed unprecedented pressures on keystone bioturbators such as earth worms (Zalasiewicz et al 2014). It appears that no places, not our food (Karami et al, 2017), our bodies (Anbumani & Kakkar 2018), or even the earth's crust are devoid of the ubiquitous presence of the human. What's more, our inscription in deep geological time scales is all the more curious in light of our 'absent presence in the geologic' and the likely lingering traces of our presence long after we are gone (Oppermann 2018, pg. 2).

Others (Mal & Hornborg 2014; Alvater et al 2016; Moore 2017; Chakrabarty 2017; Miéville 2015) problematize the totalizing 'we' implicated in dominant Anthropocene discourses, shedding critical light on the structural- and colonial- roots of contemporary socio-ecological disintegration. Moore (2017) locates its origins in capitalism's early modern period, beginning with Columbus' conquest of the Americas and the "epochal transitions in landscape transformation after 1450", which marked the greatest watershed since the rise of agriculture[10] and the first cities (pg. 596). The year 1610, to be precise, saw the widescale reforestation of the American continent- and subsequent mass sequestration of CO2 from the atmosphere- following the systematic extermination of the region's native populations (Lewis & Maslin 2015). The violent dispossessions and land-grabs characterising the early years of the Anthropocene (Mann 2011) highlight the extent to which contemporary socio-ecological breakdown remains an environmental and social justice issue. Similarly, referring to the current epoch as the 'Capitalocene', Moore (2017) challenges the Eurocentric nature of predominant Anthropocene discourses, enquiring: "Are we really living in the Anthropocene- the 'age of man'- with its Eurocentric and techno-determinist vistas? Or are we living in the Capitalocene- the 'age of capital'- the historical era shaped by the endless accumulation of capital?" (Pg.596; McBrien 2016; Žižek 2011). Central to Moore's (2017) apt diagnosis is a Marxist critique of

[10] The rise of agriculture or 'Neolithic Revolution' is yet another purported marker designating the onset of the Anthropocene (Ruddiman, 2003).

the socio-metabolic reproduction of capital and its necessarily continuous erosion of labour as well as the natural world in its boundless quest for expansion and profit maximization. These dynamics are further exacerbated by capital's iteration of the Cartesian separation of humans from nature (Plumwood 2002) and producers from the means of production (Soriano 2018). Indeed, decidedly unequal power relations, and vast geographical, cultural, structural, socioeconomic and historical imbalances have driven and continue to drive the differential use of biophysical resources and the related impacts on the biosphere stemming therefrom, thereby challenging the "assumption of humanity as a homogenous driver" (Pichler et al 2017, Pg. 32). For instance, the explosive proliferation of human economic activity that marked the 'Great Acceleration' period denoted earlier overwhelmingly took place in the Global North (Pichler et al 2017); similarly, the latter stages of the fossil economy- electricity, internal combustion engine, the petroleum complex- were effected through investment decisions by owners of commodity production with occasional involvement by certain governments, not through widespread democratic deliberation and consent (Pg. 64). Significant swaths of the world's population still remain excluded from the fossil economy, even lacking access to electricity (Mal & Hornborg 2014, pg. 65)[11], while the planet's top emitters- North America, Europe, and China (with considerable socioeconomic imbalances even within these nations)- account for nearly half of global CO2 emissions (Piketty & Chancel 2015; Davison 2016).

The more precise concept of 'Capitalocene' constitutes a notably critical refinement of more general 'Anthropocene' discourses by shedding crucial light on the socio-ecological depredations of a particular set of exploitative socioeconomic and historical forces, rather than designating an undifferentiated 'humanity' as the driver of global ecological decline (Moore 2017, pg. 597). As Haraway (2015) poignantly observes, such totalizing categorizations as 'Anthropocene' risk concealing vast complexities, agencies and degrees of culpability with regards to the great unravelling of the earth system. Perhaps more problematically, mainstream 'Anthropocene' discourses often fail to challenge the centrality of human agency implied in the concept, leaving intact the notion of humans as the primary Earth-movers. However, to speak of species culpability is not to resist the politics of 'common but differentiated responsibility' (Chakrabarty 2009 Pg. 218). The climate and biodiversity crises are a common predicament; the global plutocratic elite will still suffer in an impoverished biosphere, for "even they are subject to biological processes" like the need for oxygen (Chakrabarty 2017 pg. 30; 31), even though the socio-economically disadvantaged will suffer far more from violent weather events, food shortages and the like. Though culpability for the precarious 'Now' is distributed wildly unevenly historically as well as presently across vast geographic and socioeconomic divides, it is nevertheless the 'Anthropos' *as a species*, as a collective-turned-geological-force, who are largely responsible for the current tides of loss afflicting the globe (Morton 2016)[12]. In a mere handful of generations, our species alone has virtually exhausted fossil fuel sources that took hundreds of millions of years to accumulate (Crutzen 2002), and until now no single species had ever so significantly and systematically eradicated planetary-

[11] "Depending on the circumstances in which a specimen of Homo sapiens is born, then, her imprint on the atmosphere may vary by a factor of more than 1000 (Satterthwaite 2009, pg. 564)" (Mal & Hornborg 2014 Pg. 65).

[12] Hence Morton's (2016) contention that capitalism is a symptom of modern ecological decline, and that humans alone are the cause. In one sense it is true that humans are key actors implicated in Anthropocene disintegration. However, humans never act alone. Without other actants- CO2 molecules, factories, etc.- we would never have been able to effect such fundamental and widespread biospheric disturbances.

level biological diversity[13] (Cafaro 2015, pg. 387; Chakrabarty 2017). Moreover, to recognize *homo sapiens* as the primary drivers of the modern ecological crisis is not "to treat humankind as merely a species-being determined by its biological evolution" (Mal & Hornborg 2014, pg. 66); the historical, cultural, socioeconomic trajectories that have led to the Anthropocene were by no means inevitable (Chakrabarty 2009). Industrial capitalism is not predetermined but a socio-historical contingency initiated largely by particular segments of the population and bolstered by unusually favourable environmental conditions throughout the Holocene that paved the way for our industrial-agricultural ways of life (Chakrabarty 2009). Thus, crucially, the current predicament *can be otherwise*; an equitable post-capitalist future conducive to the flourishing of life *can* be brought forth.

Navigating Inter-Actant Imbroglios Amid the Anthropocene

"…what is totally missing from the description of the Anthropocene is that it modifies the scale, the speed, the rhythm and, more importantly, the distribution of active agents in any political conversation have about the entanglement of humans and non-humans. Even though the label and the date are still disputed, in terms of political philosophy its effect is to bring on stage a set of actors that reacts fairly quickly and fairly unexpectedly to the action of the earlier protagonists, namely the historical agents of history, formerly known as "humans" (Latour 2015, pg. 223).

Whether the origins of the Anthropocene lie in pre-industrial landscape modifications or subsequent chemical alterations of the atmosphere, what is clear is that 'human' impacts on the environment and on other species, especially over the last few decades, have reached unprecedented dimensions (Steffen et al 2015; Chakrabarty 2009). Dominant public and academic discourses surrounding the Anthropocene reveal curious paradoxes that allude to the profoundly anxiety-inducing nature of a time lacking both precedents and a clearly discernible future. A growing chorus of anxious voices bemoan widespread and irrevocable loss- of baselines from which to make objective assessments of the world, socio-ecological stability, and nonhuman life. Exhortations are made for the urgent existential as well as ethico-political imperative to intervene in human-induced ecological disintegration, itself largely stemming from excessive human 'interventions', in order save the Earth *from* ourselves and largely *for* ourselves (Davison 2015; Cohen & Duckert 2015). In a paradoxical and somewhat hubristic overstatement of the significance of human agency, homo sapiens are simultaneously presented as the dominant global actant and Earth-mover, whose extensive reach is both disavowed and yet called upon as a remedy for helping to stem further decline, alongside recognitions of humanity's utter powerlessness in the face of increasingly unpredictable socio-ecological perturbations. Crucially, the onset of the Anthropocene signals no mere geological event characterized by material reality's 'vengeful reassertion of itself' (Žižek 2011, pg. 330) but, more fundamentally, a philosophical earthquake that has "unsettled the tectonic plates of conceptual convention" (Johnson et al 2014, pg. 447). With the arrival of the Anthropocene has come the "public death" of age-old humanist presumptions of Nature as separate from a privileged Social realm (Latour 2018; Beck 2010), of a 'natural' history as distinct from 'human' history (Lorimer 2011, pg. 1; Chakrabarty 2009). Now we are increasingly presented with an animate earth that 'vibrates underfoot' and reacts, sometimes violently, to our actions (Latour 2017, pg. 149). For some the ubiquitous presence of humans and hybrid nature-culture

[13] Though of course, other powerful actants like the Yucatan meteorite have been responsible for widescale devastation and species extinctions (Zalasiewicz & Freedman 2009)!

entanglements that proliferate amid the Anthropocene herald the welcome death of 'Nature' itself as a problematic symbolic construct designating an Edenic state of pristine natural harmony preceding the arrival of humans that never really was (Cronon 1995; McKibben 2003; Latour 2018; Bennett 2010; Morton 2010).[14]

Perceptions of the nonhuman world as mere 'standing reserve' (Heidegger 1977) that is the solid objective foundation for fuelling human expansion-oriented socio-economic activity (Serres 1990, pg. 86) are not only ontologically false but, crucially, ethico-politically problematic. Neither can humans be posited as the only dominant global actants making things happen in a largely mute and inanimate world. The litany of ecological crises proliferating amid the Anthropocene in the form of super hurricanes, droughts, raging wildfires, and rapidly vanishing flora and fauna constitute a '*generalized revolt of the means*'- protests by recalcitrant entities who no longer consent to being treated as mere inert objects for furthering human *ends* (Fromm 1976; Latour 2004, Pg. 156). Dominant ethico-political discourses and institutions have yet to seriously consider more-than-human entities as central and meaningful agents. Yet, ethics demands that these entities be viewed as meaningful players rather than the inert stage on which the drama of the human enterprise plays out[15] (Plumwood 2010; Johnson et al 2014, pg. 447; Bennett 2010). Thus, contrary to autophobic scientific discourses that aim to purge normative and political language from the sciences' (and wider society's) responses to Anthropocene crises (Robbins & Moore, 2013), the present era of socio-ecological breakdown and our responses to it can rather be said to be fundamentally ethico-political in nature (Latour 2004; 2014). A return to a mythical state of ecological harmony devoid of human presence is neither possible nor desirable (Latour 2010). However, we must also reckon with past "discursive-material processes of annihilation, displacement, and replacement" driven by imperial capitalism that have led to our current state of 'ruination and ecological impoverishment' (Collard et al 2015, pg. 323). Though ecosystems have always been characterized by flux and periods of relative upheaval, the current state of changes and extent of breakdown are indeed unprecedented in their essential nature, scope, and sources, and they pose essential new queries: how are we to respond to and navigate the hybrid human-animal-nature entanglements that characterize precarious life-ways in the Anthropocene in ways that are far less destructive? How to we build a world "literally filled to the brim with different creatures" not only for our sake but, crucially, for theirs as well (Collard et al 2015, pg. 323)? Might an 'amodern politics of sustenance' featuring trans-actant relations of interdependence (Davison 2015, pg. 302; van Dooren 2014) wherein living and even non-living actants help co-construct the coming collective for a true 'democracy of all things' (Latour 2004) be more ethically desirable?

This project aims to scale down from grand Anthropocene narratives in an attempt to further elucidate the complexities, trials and tribulations of this unprecedented era from the

[14] Though as a *referent* for places, beings and attributes that precede and exceed the human, it is posited that the construct 'Nature' is still useful, as for humans to come into being in the first place the non-human must have existed prior to our arrival. We know that what preceded us was an abundance of life, of which a mere fraction remains. Now, however, with our increasingly ubiquitous reach, the 'non-human' becomes not only scarcer but ever more difficult to delineate.

[15] "Meaning is a property of all agents in as much as they keep having agency; this is true of Kutuzov, of the Mississippi, as well as of the CRF receptor. For all agents, acting means having their existence, their subsistence, come from the future to the present; they act as long as they run the risk of bridging the gap of existence—or else they disappear altogether. In other words, existence and meaning are synonymous. As long as they act, agents have meaning" (Latour 2014, pg. 12).

perspective of those fervently organizing against widespread decline (Oppermann 2018). As will be posited, REA's appear to exhibit ontological and ethico-political orientations and modes of being that move considerably beyond extant antagonistic and exploitative modes of human-animal-nature relationality (see Chapters Three & Five). Of particular interest is precisely where they draw boundaries of moral-ethical valuation, or who matters and why, as well as what the collective 'we' that should constitute the *demos* of a better society includes according to them- all sentient animals? All living, or even all agentic components of our planet (Bennett 2010; Sargisson,2013)? In their varied and fervent strivings against the perturbations of the Anthropocene and their myriad driving forces, REA's in many ways refute what Morton (2010) terms the contemplative 'Heideggarian environmentalist' modes of 'letting things be', about which he enquires, "Do we let Exxon be? Do we let global warming be? Do we let the Sixth Mass Extinction event (for which we ourselves are responsible) be?" (Pg. 280). Though a careful reading of Heidegger's masterful essay, 'The Question Concerning Technology' (1977), would indicate that entities like Exxon and their transformation of the natural world into mere standing reserve is precisely what one should not 'let be'. During these times of a deeply political 'Nature'-turned-historical simultaneously marked by an extension of neoliberal rationales onto Anthropocene crisis governance (Collard et al 2015) and a consequent post-political paucity of radical critiques and alternatives (Blühdorn 2014), merely 'letting be' virtually equates to implicit support of the status quo (Morton 2010, Pg. 280). REA's refuse to let things be even when hope in successfully mitigating ecological breakdown increasingly seems an exercise in futility; I am interested in why that is, how and why these individuals act and think the way they do and, most importantly, how they would propose to reorganize society (as well as how socio-ecological arrangements have been set forth in key ecotopian texts). The utopian discipline serves as an apt theoretical lens from which to more closely examine such seemingly ecotopian expressions amid the eco-dystopian realities of the Anthropocene, and which seem to variedly suggest that another world is possible if we muster the will to refute the purported immutability of the 'Now'.

"The appearance of ecological crises on the multiple fronts of energy, climate change and ecosystem degradation suggests we need much more than a narrow focus on energy substitutes. We need a thorough and open rethink which has the courage to question our most basic cultural narratives" (Plumwood 2010, pg. 111).

Chapter 2- Theoretical Underpinnings

"The dark clouds are threatening, coming closer and closer, but they have a silver lining which, though narrow enough, is increasing in luminescence" (Lorenz 1974, pg. xi).

This chapter will attempt to delineate- and situate REA's as the subjects under investigation within- the project's overarching theoretical framework: utopian- or more precisely ecotopian- theory and critical posthumanism. I engage specifically with the scholarship of Bruno Latour (2004; 2017; 2018), Jacques Derrida (1994; 2002; 2016), Val Plumwood (1993; 1995; 2002) and Rosi Braidotti (2013; 2016) here and throughout in light of their varied discussions of key concepts such as hope, futurity, and boundary construction/deconstruction particularly in relation to nonhuman otherness, which are crucial for further understanding REA ecotopian and posthuman modalities. As will be further explicated below, utopianism is the longstanding striving and hope, predicated on critiques of extant social (and ecological) arrangements, for better worlds. A key catalyst for such strivings, which manifest most palpably during times of considerable social, political, cultural, and/or

ecological upheaval, is the experience by individuals, groups, or whole societies of lack or absence (Levitas 2010)- such as the lack of relative socioeconomic equality and security, future prospects, and environmental stability. Hence utopianisms's close affinity with the wider tradition of critical theory (Fromm 1976; Held 1980; Levitas 2013) which, as a core inspirational foundation for New Social Movement theoretical and empirical manifestations discussed in Chapter Three, has sought to denaturalize the reified present- frequently taken as a given- and through critique open the space for fundamental transformation beyond the existing order. Both harbor emancipatory desires, which for REA's and related ecotopian manifestations extends beyond the 'human realm' towards exploited and oppressed Earth others. It is perhaps no longer controversial to posit that the current era that is the Anthropocene, marked by a multiplicity of severe and growing socio-ecological dislocations, is one pervaded by lack and instability for a growing segment of the earth's inhabitants- human and non-human alike. Hence, the resurgence of utopian and in particular green utopian or ecotopain thought and action as exhibited by the emergence of REA's from around the 1970s onwards in response to intractable threats posed by anthropogenic climate change, deforestation, ubiquitous pollution, extreme energy and resource extraction (fracking, etc.), and the sixth mass extinction (Garforth 2018), and loudly proclaiming that other modes of subsistence and relationality are possible.

(Critical) Posthumanism

Utopianism shares a close affinity with critical theory (Fromm 1976; Marcuse 2013) more generally in its aims to critique, deconstruct antagonistic dualisms, unequal, oppressive and exploitative structures and modes of relationality (Braidotti 2016; Ulmer 2017), in this case with regards to the nonhuman world. Its normative 'ought' posits that ways of relating to nonhumans that are more egalitarian and respectful are desirable and preferable to the above. As discussed in the following chapter, in response to the myriad socio-ecological dislocations wrought by industrial capitalism, 'critical ecologies' in the form of radical green movements and discourses have emerged seeking fundamental reconfigurations of existing sociopolitical institutions and modes of perceiving and relating to the nonhuman world (Biro 2011). Thus, in conjunction with the project's overarching utopian theoretical approach (see below), a critical-posthumanist (Braidotti 2013; Botz-Bornstein 2012) lens is adopted for assessing REA mobilisations, ecological worldviews and ecotopian projections. Though stemming from a multiplicity of theoretical tributaries and traditions, critical posthumanism can be associated with certain core characteristics. In particular I draw largely on Braidotti's (2013) approach which posits the posthuman dimension of post-anthropocentrism (Ferrando 2016) as a 'deconstructive move' that especially deconstructs "species supremacy, but it also inflicts a blow to any lingering notion of human nature, *Anthropos* and *bios*, as categorically distinct from the life of animals and non-humans, or *zoe*" (Pg. 65). Critical posthumanism instead avows a non-hierarchical, non-dualistic and relational ontology that recognizes a 'deep zoe-egalitarianism' between humans and nonhumans (Braidotti 2013, pg. 71). The self and the 'we' are thus seen as neither unitary or universal but rather as 'nomadic assemblages' that are always "relational, transversal and affirmative" (Braidotti 2016, pg. 16). Many strands of posthumanism express a fundamental "dissatisfaction and/or rejection of the 'two central tenets of humanism': namely, the belief that humans are the center of the world (i.e., anthropocentrism) and that, as superior rulers of existence, we have the right to subdue, exploit, and/or otherwise reduce the unruly 'other' to the status of object (Taylor 2012, Pg. 37). The related and more precise term 'post-anthropocentrism' similarly refers to orientations that are

concerned with critiquing and deconstructing human-exceptionalist worldviews as well as species hierarchies (Braidotti, 2016; Ferrando, 2016).

Posthumanism as it is referred to throughout does not necessarily entail the view that humans are insignificant within the wider universe (Oliver in Fritsch et al 2018, pg. 344); rather, it denotes and seeks to bring about an ethical and ontological re-alignment of the human vis-à-vis the nonhuman world. Post-humanism rejects such longstanding assumptions (Heidegger 1983; 1995) as that human ways of knowing and being in the world are *essentially* different from and superior to those of nonhuman entities (Chiew 2014; Plumwood 2002). Critical posthumanism is to be distinguished from certain strands within posthumanism such as transhumanism, which celebrate the continuation of the human via non-human means such as bio-technological advancements (Botz-Bornstein, 2012; Ferrando, 2013). Such approaches avow an 'extension' of the human and are concerned less with attempts to respect and relate more ethically to nonhuman beings. Of interest for the purposes of the current research- and as will be elucidated in subsequent chapters- is the degree to which REA's (and canonical ecotopian literary texts) adopt critical-posthumanist approaches to the nonhuman world and in their delineations of ecotopian alternatives. Particular attention is given throughout not only to the posthuman thought of Bruno Latour (2004; 2011; 2017; 2018) and Jacques Derrida (1995a; Derrida & Wills 2002; 2016) but also Val Plumwood (2002; 2008), whose philosophical animism (Rose 2013) and explorations of the politics and ethics of dwelling in ecological communities with multiplicities of nonhuman persons are deemed especially pertinent in relation to subsequent discussions. Such expansive and radically 'other' approaches to human-animal-nature relations offered by critical posthuman thought, which seek to deconstruct oppressive anthropogenic hierarchies, harbor considerably transformative potential and thus remain of interest for discussions surrounding the ecotopian 'Not-Yet'.

From Hierarchies to Assemblages: Latour's Irreductionist Ontology

Within the tradition of posthumanist scholarship, few (in my position) have engaged in such a thorough and far-reaching critique of the structural and onto-epistemological foundations of anthropocentrism as Bruno Latour (2004; 2011; 2017; 2018). In Latour's flat ontology- which operates on a plane of immanence- existence, other beings, objects, etc. simply *are*, with no hidden essence, underlying reality or structures that shape them and their various doings (Harman 2009). Therefore, the Aristotelian-Leibniz schism between matter and form (Garber 1997; Harman 2009, pg. 106), wherein 'primary matter' serves as the essential and enduring corporeal substance that underlies the 'secondary matter' of concrete forms (Garber 1997), no longer holds[16]. In rejecting the notion of essence and therefore of entities possessing an inner substance as distinct from fluctuating surface attributes, actants- humans, hurricanes, cyanobacteria, bird flu, the neoliberal paradigm, NATO, plastics- are instead conceived as concrete and specific (yet always uncertain) events in space and time, always completely present in the world (Harman 2009). The very nature of 'external reality' is surprise rather than the "simple 'being there' of objective matters of fact" (Latour 2004, pg. 79). All actants regardless of size or complexity are posited as concrete entities that affect and are

[16] Leibniz observes that, "I agree, sir, that there are only machines (that are often animated) in all of corporeal nature, but I do not agree that there are only aggregates of substances; and if there are aggregates of substances, there must also be *true substances from which all the aggregates result* (cited in Garber, 1997, pg. 334). In other words, aggregates or assemblages must ultimately be grounded in some unified substance in order for them to be 'real', a notion that is rejected by Latour's flat ontology.

affected by others on an equal playing field, wherein none are granted special ontological status. Thus, reality is conceived as a vast, pluralistic, horizontal network of ever-shifting alliances between various actants who co-produce one another, gain as well as lose power[17] through their alliances, and indeed *are* their alliances. The world is reconceived as a "series of negotiations between a motley of armada forces, humans among them, and such a world cannot be divided cleanly between two pre-existent poles called 'Nature' and 'Society'" (Harman 2009, Pg. 13). Interaction and negotiation are central to Latourian ontology, for actants must continuously and actively negotiate with others in their myriad strivings, in congenial alliances as well as clashes of wills with recalcitrant actants who often resist to varying degrees in their own strivings. The relative successes and failures of such negotiations are never established a priori but must be actively maintained, hence why the 'future-to-come' is no given but must actively and continuously be co-constructed (see below and Chapter Eight) (Harman 2009, pg. 19).

Latour (1991; 2004; 2005) is relevant to discussions around boundary construction and deconstruction, and post-humanist theorizations more generally as he dissolves human/animal, subject/object, and even animate/inanimate dualisms through his concept of an actant- which is essentially anything that has goals, can alter the course of events outside of itself and alter its course in response to changing circumstances (Latour 2005, pg. 72). Similarly, he undermines the very notion that there is a 'social world' as distinct from the 'natural world, and likewise a 'social' science as distinct from the 'natural' sciences. Thus, attempts at reconciling 'Nature' and 'Society' are futile because the supposed dualism between the two never was in the first place[18] (Harman 2009, pg. 58); instead, we have assemblages of agentic actants which are neither exclusively 'natural' nor 'cultural', neither subjects nor objects. The objective is to acknowledge the diffuse nature of agency, thereby undermining the aforementioned ruptures. The 'agency' exhibited by actants of myriad kinds is no attribute of conscious intentionality and reflexivity, and therefore not something that only humans or even most nonhuman animals possess. Rather, it is a property of matter itself (Bennett 2010), yielding a world full of entities with the power to make things happen, and to either thwart, evade or aid the ventures of others. Such a view would then complicate assignations of culpability for Anthropocene crises (Chapter Six), for as we are always in alliances with other actors, not even humans- influential though many of us have become amid the Anthropocene- act alone but are always 'coextensive' with myriad other actants such as carbon, glaciers, hurricanes, etc. (Cohen, 2015). The most radical contribution of Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (2005) and wider onto-epistemological framework is thus the significant strides it makes in dismantling the ontological foundations of human supremacy and the logic of dualism (Plumwood 2002) more generally. Humans, no longer situated aloft and disconnected from the rest of existence and other entities, are firmly re-situated within the vast assemblages that constitute reality, moving and striving alongside and in conjunction with other actants. Indeed, "without the nonhuman, humans would not last a minute" (Latour 2004, pg. 91). Latour

[17] That is, power not in the Machiavellian sense but as in the capacity to do and to make things happen.

[18] Latour's (1991) notion of time is equally non-modern; the Western concept of a linear progression from past to future is eschewed in favour of one of 'spirals and reversals' akin to shifts in inter-actant networks, wherein one's genetic code, nation-states, technological instruments, and the like are motley mixtures of different time periods (Harman 2009, pg. 68). Events in a given year can both be said to precede subsequent years while also having portions that are produced only *retrospectively*. In other words, "the more sensitive the chromatographer, the more realities abound" (Latour 2004, pg. 85).

will be useful for aiding subsequent discussions of the nature of ecotopian collectives (Chapters Seven & Eight), specifically deliberations around how humans ought to relate to their nonhuman counterparts, and the extent to which dualistic constructions of the human-nonhuman interface are dismantled by REA's (Chapter Five).

Utopianism and its Myriad Manifestations

"As always, we are trapped in our habits and fears, in the inertia of our minds and hearts. Over many years we have fashioned an external prison out of the diffuse material of these habits and fears, a great heap of external constraints and dependencies, into 'material constraints' which say to us: you can't behave any other way!" (Bahro 1994, pg. 64).

Bahro (1994) is alluding to the immense power of the 'Now' as presently constituted, which masquerades itself as immutable in a material and ideological sense and thus impedes our abilities to imagine and strive towards alternative worlds. The ancient force[19] that is utopianism in its myriad manifestations at its core entails a fervent disavowal of the notion that we as individuals and broader social collectives 'can't behave any other way'. It begins with the declaration that, 'things can be otherwise!', followed by the ethico-normative assertion similarly made by critical posthumanists that things *ought* to be different. Utopianism involves critical and creative projections of alternative social worlds that would realize the *best possible way of being*, "based on rational and moral principles" and "invariably containing criticism of the status quo" (Honderich 1995, pg. 892;3). Fueled by visionary thinking, utopianism requires a "vivid imagination' of the norms, institutions and individual relationships of a qualitatively better society than that in which the utopianist lives" (Pepper 2005, pg. 4; Hansot 1974). Thus, utopianism involves concerted critiques of a particular socio-political order and imaginative projections of better alternatives[20]. Dystopias, on the other hand, are not anti-utopias but rather the inverted mirror representations of utopias (Claeys 2013), whose projections of nightmarish alternative worlds serve the similarly critical function of awakening us to the potentially disastrous consequences of continuing along extant trajectories (see Chapter Seven) (Moylan 2000; Sargisson 2012). The etymology of the word 'utopia' stems from the famous early modern utopian work by Sir Thomas Moore of the same title (1516) and is derived from a pun on the Greek word *eutopia* meaning 'no place' (Firth 2012, pg. 11). The word *Eutopia* itself is a conflation of two Greek words, *eutopos* which means 'good place', and *outopos*, which means 'no place' (Kumar 1987, pg. 23;4). The character of 'non-existence' is paradoxically combined with *topos,* a location in time and space (Firth, 2012, pg. 11) (a good place) that is not fully realizable *under present societal conditions*. Utopia lives in relation between the past, present, and the boundless potentiality of its horizon- the Novum, the new or 'not-yet' (Bloch 1986; Davis 2012). As a vision of a vastly better world predicated on social critique of the 'Now', utopia always has 'one foot in reality' (Linkenbach 2009, pg. 3) and one in the terrain of open-ended potentiality[21], wherein 'reality' as such is never 'worked up' but always has

[19] As Manuel & Manuel (2009) remark on utopianism's longstanding historical-ideological roots, "Paradise in its Judeo-Christian forms has to be accepted as the deepest archaeological layer of Western Utopia…by the time Western utopia was born in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the belief in Paradise was present on all levels of psychic existence…" (Pg. 33)

[20] Notable early precursors include 16th-century Spanish priest and social reformer Bartolomé de las Casas, who advocated for the recognition of the rights and humanity of indigenous peoples in the Americas, and whose societies he regarded as 'utopian' (Sargent 2006).

[21] Bloch (1986) concedes that the nature of 'the possible' is prescribed by matter itself, wherein real possibility is the "logical expression for material conditionality of a sufficient kind on the one hand, for material openness (unexhaustedness of the womb of matter) on the other" (Pg. 206). Thus, under

something "advancing and breaking out at its edge" (Bloch 1986, pg. 197; Suvin 1990). Utopia embodies an ultimately unbridgeable though productive disjuncture between what *is* and what *could* or *ought* to be, which is the site of its transformative potential.

Suvin (1990) divides the utopian canon into two separate though related categories: the literary (or fictional) and the sociological (or factual, concrete manifestations by way of communities and movements) (pg. 71). However, Sargent (1994) offers a more expansive definition of utopianism as a form of 'social dreaming' (pg. 3) that manifests in three key modalities: the more well-known form of utopian literature, communitarian movements (or bioregional utopias/autonomous intentional communities)(Sargisson 2000; 2002), and utopian thought or theory (Bahro 1994; pg. 4; Barnhill 2011, pg. 128). Of course, the above are not categorically distinct, as utopian theory often influences literary and social movement utopias, and many social movement utopias have been directly inspired by literary and theoretical utopias. All utopias to varying degrees involve an element of critique, and imagine alternative worlds to those within which they're situated and seek generally to maximize wellbeing (Goodwin & Taylor 1982, pg. 208), thereby stretching conceptualizations of the 'now' by placing them in new and previously undreamt of contexts (Sargisson 2012, pg. 13) (see below). However, in their conceptualizations of 'the good life' and strivings to enhance wellbeing, utopias can be exclusive or inclusive; the danger lies in exclusive utopias- such as the free-market utopia of neoliberal capitalism- which reserve 'the better' for a select minority (Sargent 2006, pg. 12). Bloch (1986) notably conceptualizes utopianism even more broadly as a perennial human impulse, a 'reaching' towards better worlds seen in everything from dreams to fully articulated utopias (Sargisson 2012, pg. 15), predicated on hope and driven by a 'militant optimism' (1995, pg. 200) for the realization of the 'not-yet' (pg. 144). The latter alludes to Bloch's (1986, 1995) 'concrete' utopianism as distinct from what he refers to as abstract utopianism. Abstract utopias are described as compensatory, featuring escapism from the exigencies of the 'Now' (Pepper 2007, pg. 290) and wherein, crucially, only the dreamer's position is improved while lacking any further societal transformation. Concrete utopianism, on the other hand, is derived from critical social theory (Petersen 2010, pg. 18) and helps us sharpen our critiques of existing society through a critical engagement with the virtually unbounded horizon of possibility surrounding the real (Bloch 1986, pg. 223). Thoroughly rooted in a life- affirming praxis (against the necropolitics of advanced capitalism) (Braidotti 2013; Dinerstein 2017), it involves concrete action predicated on anticipation of a desired 'Not-Yet'; it is only this concrete form which embodies a distinctly political and transformative modality of hope (Bloch 1986) (see Chapter Eight).

For Mannheim (1939) there is a crucial distinction to be drawn between 'ideology' and utopia', wherein the latter is essential to humanity's continued capacity to 'shape and understand history' (1939, pg. 236). Those visions or sets of ideas which appear to transcend present reality yet ultimately integrate themselves into the present, perpetuate and reinforce the status quo- whose dominant ideology is the purported inevitability of neoliberal capitalism (Newman in Davis & Kinna 2009, pg. 208)- remain mere ideologies. Utopias, on the other hand, emerge when particular individuals or social groups envision and enact sets of ideas in practice, thereby shattering the existing social situation (Mannheim 1939, pg. 192); as such, for Ricoeur (1986) the liberatory utopian imaginary is the very antithesis of conservative ideological thought (Pg. 300). Such conceptualizations of utopia are akin to the Blochean 'concrete utopia'- or the prefigurative political modality denoted in the subsequent chapter-

more favorable conditions (structural, socioeconomic, etc.), 'the sculptor' can create 'more beautiful bodies' than the physical ones being born under a certain set of conditions (Pg. 207).

which provides 'free spaces' (Sargisson 2002; Barnhill 2011) within the existing actuality wherein one can enact utopian principles (Stillman 2000; Pepper 2005, pg. 4). Of course, in a sense every ideology contains elements of utopianism (Sargent 2006), and similarly, utopias risk losing their radical, critical function when they become part of existing systems and ideologies (Miéville 2015). Though there is an important ontological distinction between Mannheim's (1939) and Bloch's (1986) conceptualizations of the 'real', wherein the latter in particular, as previously denoted, conceives of the 'real' as a perpetual process of becoming and thus of utopia as an always-possible future(s) characteristic of the always-unfolding nature of reality (Levitas 1990, pg. 19). Some (Kumar 2003, pg. 69) see approaches to utopianism like Bloch's (1986) as too broad, contending that utopias, in dealing with possible rather than actual worlds, are always and only fictions that can be associated with a certain set of generic conventions (Sargisson 2012, pg. 15). However, along with others (Levitas 2003; Clark in Davis & Kinna 2009, pg. 23) this project maintains that to reduce the utopian imaginary merely to the realm of literary fiction is "to flatten out its richness" (Sargisson 2012, pg. 16); utopianism manifests in a multiplicity of forms, whose destabilizing functions- in the form of radical critique and imaginative projections- harbor considerable transformative potential. Much of utopianism's functional value lies in the putting forth of counterfactual experiments designed to critically "gauge the dispensability of various social factors" and thereby demonstrating that it is indeed possible to create societies without extreme socioeconomic inequalities and rampant environmental degradation (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982, pg. 211).

Utopia and its Discontents

"In a modern Utopia there will, indeed, be no perfection; in Utopia there must also be friction, conflicts and waste, but the waste will be enormously less than in our own world" (Wells 1905, pg. 176).

Popular conceptions and some anti-utopian academic discourses (Gray 2007; Popper 2014) have variedly posited 'utopia' as a hopelessly idealistic striving for impossibly perfect worlds. Utopianism is frequently dismissed as a mode of thinking or projection of alternate modes of organization that are so 'idealistic' as to necessarily reside beyond the bounds of practicability, a sentiment akin to fatalistic portrayals of human nature as too inherently and irremediably violent and self-regarding to be conducive to the implementation of better modes of being (Hobbes 2016). Thus, to be labeled as 'utopian' is often to be dismissed as delusional, hopelessly lost in a haze of imaginative speculation and therefore out of touch with how things actually and necessarily 'are' (Buber 1996). Others (Nagel 1989), on the other hand, claim that because humans are motivationally complex, often juggling self as well as other-regarding interests simultaneously, it is not feasible to expect them to be transformed into wholly other types of beings by mere moral arguments (for utopia) or radically new socio-political arrangements (Pg. 910). However, such a claim at least partially appears to be predicated on the frequently held- though largely erroneous- assumption that utopianism aims to yield individuals and societies that are perfect, unchanging, and unerring, which, historically and particularly in utopia's more contemporary manifestations, is often not the case (Sargent 2006)[22]. Having brought about social relations and structures that are considerably better than preceding forms, utopias understandably wish to preserve them overall and safeguard them

[22] As Sargent (2006) observes, "Thomas More did not pretend that the society in his Utopia was perfect; Edward Bellamy's eutopia Looking Backward is changing, and did change in that he wrote a sequel that had differences. H. G. Wells says that the eutopia in Men Like Gods is rapidly changing. The only utopias that I can think of that can be said to be perfect are some myths of an earthly paradise and some of the depictions of heaven that were popular in the late 19th century" (Pg. 13).

against radical alterations, but this does not mean that they are resistant to change of any sort. Whatever the extent (or lack thereof) of human and societal malleability (utopianism tends to be predicated on assumptions of the malleability of the potentialities in human 'nature' and communal life), and the varying influences of agency versus structure, the fact that individuals like REA's exist demonstrates that *substantially different* modes of being can be brought about. Utopianism is therefore a decidedly realist project which draws on the always-unfolding potentiality that characterizes reality as such (Bloch 1986); to deny this potentiality is the true exercise in unrealism. What's more, the disjuncture between empirical reality and a utopian ideal does not detract from the value of the latter (Derrida 1994, pg. 86); indeed, it is where its transformative potential resides.

Others, often alluding to historical examples such as the USSR and People's Republic of China, have claimed that utopianism's pursuit of human and societal perfectibility- in effect the attempt to impose a particular conception of truth or 'the good' (Berlin 1978)- bears the seeds of totalitarianism and intolerance of difference (Kolakowski 1983; Popper 2012). Such observations are problematic in their associations of impulses towards the better with intolerance, whereas what's at issue is the utopia that posits itself as the *only* correct form of living. However, the above rightly allude to inklings towards domination inherent within *some* totalizing/blue-printing utopias and their cultural-historical links to Enlightenment projects of universal conquest, namely the hegemonic 'utopias' of Western modernity (Latour 2017) and more recently of neoliberal capitalism (Clark in Davis & Kinna 2009, pg. 12). Among the most notable critiques of utopianism can be found in Marx and Engels' writings, particularly in the latter part of their *Communist Manifesto* (1848)[23]. Engels for instance acknowledged the great debt owed by German socialist theory to the visions espoused by classic utopian socialists such as Fourier, Owen, Morris, and Saint-Simon (Buber 1996; Day 2005, pg. 107). In some instances, Marx deploys decidedly utopian language when delineating an emergent communism that "proves its possibility in the teeth of the widespread notion of its 'impossibility'" (Buber 1996, pg. 87). Nevertheless, Marx and Engels appeared to be especially critical of utopian socialists whose imaginaries, despite containing notable critiques and insights into the nuances of the capitalist exploitation, were framed as groundless abstractions- or utopias of escapism- that were divorced from 'scientific' critiques of political reality and participation in the struggles of the working classes (Buber 1996; Engels 1999; Davis 2012, pg. 128; Manuel & Manuel 2009). Marx, Engels, and Lenin provided erudite political-economic critiques of the gross deficiencies of capitalism- the first step in utopian thinking- yet fell short of the second in a curious refusal to creatively delineate the contours of what *could* come next (Landauer 1978). Nor did they direct their gazes towards the potential building blocks of better worlds- i.e. producer and consumer co-operatives- that existed and continue to do so within the present. Lenin is purported to have remarked, 'what socialism will look like when it takes on its final forms we do not know and cannot say' (quoted in Buber 1996, pg. 115). Yet, while we may not know precisely what new societies will look like, we can more or less achieve a general consensus on what we *want* them to look like, and thither direct our efforts (Buber 1996, pg. 115).

Utopianism in all of its manifestations has often arisen during times of significant socioeconomic and political upheaval as a response to the concrete needs and experiences of segments of society most threatened by or most acutely aware of the dislocations wrought by deleterious social, economic, and political conditions (Goodwin & Taylor 1982). Likewise, the

[23] Even though one can detect palpable utopian-socialist elements in their works and an overall fluctuating and ambiguous relation to utopianism.

utopian socialism that blossomed throughout the first half of the 19th century was a response to the rapid development of industrial capitalism which led to uneven social dislocations, a burgeoning working class divided between a proliferation of occupations, and a steady erosion of traditional pre-capitalist social values (Bookchin 2005). The turbulent social climate of the time created a powerful, though by no means homogenous, impulse amongst utopian socialists towards a more harmonious social order, as evinced by the publication in 1890 of Morris' quintessentially Marxist utopian work, *News from Nowhere* (1890) (Saint-Simon 1966; Fourier 1971). The latter in particular is often categorized by those of anarchic traditions as a classic example of anti-authoritarian utopianism (Kropotkin 1908, 1972; Landauer 1978), as opposed to Marx's purportedly 'authoritarian' brand of utopianism which produced a vision of socialism that was fatalistic and ultimately plagued by the same institutionalized forms of domination seen in capitalism (Kinna in Davis & Kinna 2009). Most utopian strivings in their myriad forms can thus hardly be dismissed as mere groundless and idealist fancies; their articulations of alternatives, vital for guiding the move towards and implementation of a better 'Not-Yet', are always born in response to concrete experiences of lack and injustice. What has since persisted as rather intractable 'strategic dilemmas' within utopian socialism and utopianism more broadly, and which this project aims to explore with regards to REA's, surround not only its process but its content- whether the new social order is to be industrial, anti, or post-industrial, feature private or communal ownership of property, religious or secular, achieved gradually or through revolution (a key point of Marxist contention), or organized statist-authoritatively versus communitarian-democratically (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982).

Utopian Conventions of Critique

All manifestations of utopianism employ certain conventions and tactics for highlighting the inadequacies of the now and articulating alternatives, such as excess and play, which are characteristic markers of particularly of literary utopias. Excess[24] as the very *beyond-within* the living present (Derrida 1999) is often manifested by the individual or character 'playing the fool'. This character often sees what others cannot and thus exposes the 'truth' of the inadequacy of the now (Sargisson 2012), permitting the flow of "radical creativity" and allowing for the positing of wildly different alternatives. Through play (with conventions and norms of the society under critique, for instance) and similar transgressive devices, utopians "fool around with reality…like a dog with a rag…and tweak the nose of convention: transgressing norms, breaking rules and crossing boundaries" (Sargisson 2012, pg. 16), demonstrating the ridiculousness of life as it is and most significantly, that things could be otherwise. Another common convention is the presence of 'the visitor', a character who usually comes from the same spatial and/or temporal context as the author who can view the utopian or dystopian world through the unique gaze of the unfamiliar other. The visitor serves the vital function of contrast; he/she "permits dialogue to occur between the author's present and the radically different 'other place'. For instance, in Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (2000), protagonist Julian West who plays the role of the visitor finds himself in his native Boston 113 years into the future wherein a new socialist utopia has emerged. Upon asking what the basis of allotment for sustenance 'credits' for workers in various occupations used by the Bostonian utopian state, his host Doctor Leete responds: "His title…is his humanity. The basis of his claim is that he is a man" (pg. 60). Incredulous Julian then learns that all citizens receive the same level of basic sustenance regardless of their occupation (an early precursor of modern

[24] Just as the Earth and others are always in excess of- and therefore place limits upon- our own worlds (Oliver in Fritsch et al 2018, pg. 352).

universal basic income schemes) (Reed & Lansley 2016), a realization made all the more striking by virtue of its stark contrast to the capitalist Boston of his birth wherein scores squander in abject poverty while a mere handful revel in reckless extravagance. Thus, in the juxtaposition of the radically 'other'- and markedly better- utopian wolrd alongside the deficient society effected by the presence and contemplation of the visitor, the deficiencies of the old and the redeeming qualities of the new come into light.

The key convention of estrangement (Suvin 1990; Sargisson 2007) is of great significance practically as well as conceptually in both literary and non-literary manifestations of utopianism. Estrangement is not only a utopian method of critique but, crucially, touches on central dynamics such as self vs, other, inside vs. outside, etc. In its relation to other key concepts such as difference and alterity, and human-nonhuman relations more generally, it is also worth further discussion. The term 'estrangement', which contains cognate terms similar to distance and difference, traditionally has evoked notions of loss and sadness, as with an 'estranged' lover or family member with whom one has parted ways. Conceptually, however, the notion of 'estrangement' features a complex amalgamation of various modes of distance- normative, ideological, social, etc. (Sargisson 2007, pg. 394)- through which, particularly in the utopian mode, it evokes the stranger and the extraneous by willfully placing a person or thing 'outside' of the familiar. Estrangement is essentially what permits utopias in their myriad forms to function critically, as radical critique must to a degree be predicated on distance from the object of critique (industrial capitalism, for instance). However, it is worth probing more deeply into the notion of the 'stranger', which in the form of another organism, society, or mode of relations is, while irreducibly singular (Derrida 1994) in a sense, as Morton (2010) points out with his notion of the 'strange stranger', never entirely outside the bounds of familiarity. The latter is always to a degree also constituted by other 'strange strangers'; the new and the unfamiliar always contain within them elements and traces of 'the old' (see Chapter Eight), and familiars are constituted by 'others', just as all life forms are made up of other life forms. Indeed, when one proceeds down to the level of DNA, boundaries begin to dissolve (Morton 2010, pg. 275). That or he/she who estranges allows brief recognition, yet to a significant degree appears as unfamiliar. Through the distance generated between the stranger and the 'boundaries of the known', which can be spatial, emotional, temporal, ideological, political, cultural, or onto-epistemological, utopias create the necessary conceptual and physical space for critical reflection wherein critiques of the 'now' and radical visions of alternate worlds may spring forth. The transgressive nature of play, estrangement, satire, and the role of the visitor, utopias both in literary and in sociological form challenge the way we think by showing established institutions and conventions to be what they truly are: porous, contingent, always subject to change, and in Latourian (2004) terms, dependent on the strength of their alliances in order to remain viable.

The dynamic of estrangement with reference to relations across self/other, stranger/familiar, inside/outside, etc. is an essential feature of utopianism. However, it can also be problematic if excessively antagonistic or if otherness as such is construed as undesirable (Plumwood 2002). Put another way, ethically problematic is the dialectical approach to difference which construes difference or otherness hierarchically as mere object to be governed or exploited (Braidotti 2013, pg. 68). Moreover, Sargisson's (2007) groundbreaking work with green intentional communities reveals that estrangement in community form is also often physically (distance from basic amenities such as schools and hospitals) and emotionally taxing (due to the intensity of close-knit interpersonal relations within relatively small communities). Excessive physical-psychological estrangement of utopian spaces from the 'outside world' can engender a form of 'collective alienation' within the 'Otherness' of utopian spaces themselves

(Sargisson 2007). Herein, in response to the 'hostile gaze' of the world or modes of being under critique, the utopian mode or community in question becomes increasingly introverted, engendering a regressive parochialism wherein the initial vision can become further radicalized or distorted. Such mechanisms in turn risk heightening the utopia's sense of Otherness as well as ignorance and/or fear of the 'outside' (Sargisson 2007, Pg. 403). While this may strengthen in-group bonds, it may also heighten hostility towards 'outsiders' deemed threatening to the in-group's way of life. In other words, such a dynamic may ossify boundaries to the extent that the 'other' is regarded with hostility and utterly excluded (Derrida 2004) (see Chapter Eight), which is why some (Morton 2010) detect potentially fascist tendencies in the concept of a 'community' and its allusions to an 'inside' as fundamentally distinct from an 'outside' (Pg. 278). The necessarily finite nature of our ethical communities must always exclude an 'other' (Derrida 1995), and this is something one must remain critically aware of. While necessarily radically distinct from the 'other', the 'outside, and/or 'the now', and though estrangement is potentially a powerfully liberating force, utopian spaces must also avoid sliding into a regressive hostility towards the 'now' which may impede the very critical and constructive functions of the utopian imaginary. Estrangement in excess can be counter-productive; boundaries, while indispensable, must be selectively permeable, more mesh or membrane rather than concrete (Sargisson 2007; Morton 2010).

Ecotopia: The 'Utopia of Radical Environmentalism'

Ecotopianism or green utopianism, a long-standing part of the utopian tradition (Barnhill 2011), has its origins in religious and communitarian projects that can be traced as far back as ancient Greek antiquity (Wall 1994). A core premise of the green utopian tradition is that there is something fundamentally wrong with the way humans- or more specifically industrial-capitalist societies predicated on endless growth, commodification of Earth others, and profit-oriented exploitation- relate to the natural world and nonhuman life, and thus that far more ecologically harmonious attitudes, relations, and modes of subsistence are of the essence (De Geus 1999, pg. 210). Thus, of crucial significance in ecotopianism's myriad manifestations is the focus on human-nature-animal relations, particularly, in what ways and to what degrees they can be interactive and harmonious (Barnhill 2011, pg. 130). The tributaries informing green utopianism can be traced especially to the decades following World War II (the 'great acceleration'; see Chapter One) wherein the destructive potentialities of scientific rationality regarding the natural world dealt a blow to enlightenment beliefs in benign trajectories of historical and material progress (Linkenbach 2009). A burgeoning ecological consciousness thus emerged from the late 1960s and early 1970s onwards (see Chapter Three), underpinned by wider emerging trends in u(ecotopian) thought associated with the increasingly vociferous 'limits to growth' discourse (Meadows et al 1972) and the 'deep ecology' movement in eco-philosophy (Naess 1989) that were very much reactions against what were deemed to be increasingly volatile modes of capitalist expansion and accumulation. The new ecological consciousness stemming therefrom harbored fears of a planet increasingly imperiled by worsening human transgressions of planetary boundaries era via rapidly expanding human populations and consequent socioeconomic activity, loudly proclaiming the impossibility of endless growth on a finite earth system (Schumacher 1973; Garforth 2018). Unsurprisingly the aforementioned developments spurred the production of scientific eco-dystopias (Atwood 2003; Bacigalupi 2010) and ecotopias (Linkenbach 2009 pg. 5;10; Manuel & Manuel 2009) such as Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974) and *Always Coming Home* (1985), Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), and Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975). Eco-dystopian works warned

of the potentially disastrous consequences of endless material expansion, while ecotopian works creatively depicted worlds devoid of socio-ecological despoliation.

Similar anxieties over the perceived dangers of transgressing ecological limits through virtually unhindered socioeconomic expansion also strongly influenced the green movements in Europe and North America (Linkenbach 2009, pg. 9) as denoted in the Chapter Three. Hence Pepper's (2007) reference to ecotopia as the 'utopia of radical environmentalism' (pg. 289). As Dobson (2003) poignantly observes, the common argument detected amongst some reformist environmental discourses that the natural world and other species must be preserved either largely or exclusively for the continuity of *human life* is not an ecotopian argument. In failing to critique the structural underpinnings of the violent and reductive treatment of nonhuman others, and in failing to value the other as such, these approaches don't entail the fundamental transformation of human values and modes of relationality with regards to the natural world and nonhuman life. What's more, though it might appear that 'limits to growth' discourses that infuse radical green and ecotopian thought bear anti-utopian connotations (Dobson 2003), this is not necessarily the case, as among the sources of greatest contention within both traditions- particularly critical ecotopias (see below)- is unhindered material expansion and technological development for facilitating the former, not 'progress' as such. What the limits discourse does often lack is the imaginative component integral to utopianism, particularly the projection of alternative sensibilities and modes of being. Ecotopias seek the establishment of the awareness that societal and ecological wellbeing can only be achieved by observing the biogeophysical constraints imposed by the wider ecosystems in which we're embedded, limits that render large-scale industrial/growth-oriented socioeconomic systems ecologically nonviable as well as ethically problematic according to REA's and other ecotopian narratives. Moreover, a concern with ecological resilience and respecting wider biospheric dynamics doesn't necessarily translate into depictions of ecotopia as static and devoid of fluidity and change; observance of overarching biogeophysical 'limits' can and often do coincide with dynamic and fluid socio-ecological interactions in ecotopias (Dobson, 2003). 'Freedom' in Ecotopia is instead redefined qualitatively and along ecological lines, as expressed in the thousands of green intentional communities distributed globally (Federation of Intentional Community 2019) in the form of housing co-operatives, communes, eco-villages and co-housing communities (Sargisson 2012, pg. 131; Firth 2019) attempting to enact Ecotopia in the 'Now'.

The preceding discussions highlight an important division within the green utopian tradition that warrants further reflection: that between technocratic Sci-Fi utopias influenced by modern ideals of progress, and characterized by technological development and material abundance (within which the Venus Project and H.G Wells' utopian writings might be situated), and the 'deep green' utopias which approach technocratic means with greater skepticism and emphasize sufficiency for the maintenance of socio-ecological resilience (i.e., Huxley's *Island*,) (De Geus 1999; Garforth 2005). In the deep green utopia, as alluded to in the preceding discussion of 'limits to growth' discourses and deep ecological emphases on biospheric flourishing, notions of individual and societal wellbeing are decoupled from ceaseless material progress and acquisition, and reconceptualized so as to place greater emphasis on meaningful relationships and socio-ecological resilience (De Geus 1999). It is within the latter category that REAs' and the literary ecotopias being examined might be situated, as they tend to prioritize the wellbeing of ecosystems and other species and call for scaling back the human enterprise in order to ensure the former. Moreover, unlike (some) utopian socialists and technocratic utopians who have tended to believe in social perfectibility

through an almost dogmatic faith in scientific advancement, "the empathies of today's radical environmentalists are frequently quite different, often resonating with postmodern skepticism about such ideas" (Pepper 2007, pg. 291). For instance, in their seemingly anti-hierarchical and anti-anthropocentric orientations towards the human-nature relationship they deviate quite considerably (see Chapter Seven) from more anthropocentric and technochratic utopias such as Wells' *Men Like Gods* (1923). Though REAs' general opposition to the Western-industrial 'megamachine' (Bahro 1994, pg. 34) (Chapter Six) and its increasing infringements on the earth system does not equate to a wholesale repudiation of technology and science per se; rather, only the hubristic and deleterious use of technology for the exploitation and subordination of Earth others, as well as an excessive reliance upon technocratic approaches to ameliorating our socio-ecological woes (as traditionally deployed by reformist ENGOs) at the expense of more fundamental structural, socioeconomic, and cultural transformations.

Key Utopian Concepts: Hope, 'Reality' and Futurity

Hope is a central concept in the utopian tradition, with a decidedly complex relation to the 'Now' and 'futurity'. Hope can be defined as a future-oriented emotion or belief stemming from *concrete* dissatisfaction with life as it is at present (Lazarus 1999) and containing exhortations that things *ought* to change (Baumgartner et al, 2008). For Derrida (1994; 1999; 2005a), hope contains the 'invincible elán or affirmation of an unpredictable future-to-come'- as the very site of justice (1999, pg. 253)- whose paradoxical presence and non-presence is experienced as the singular urgency of a 'here and now'. This hope-as-emancipatory-desire, as the very 'undeconstructibility' of the 'it [revolt against the 'Now'] is necessary' (Derrida 1994, pg. 74;75)- serves an invaluable political function in the present by sustaining 'militant and interminable political critique' (Derrida 2005c, pg. 86). The future- like the 'other'- remains irreducibly heterogenous; that is, neither can be fully anticipated or known by finite and historically situated subjects. Thus, for Derrida and in relation to futurity, our responsibility[25] of absolute openness to the 'other' precludes any possibility of conceptualising or ascribing definite content to the latter in the form of an ecotopia-to-come, the nonhuman 'other', etc. His notion of 'messianic without messianism' refers to the very structure of the promise of a future which is always to-come, without determinate content, and whose radical otherness demands that we maintain a complete openness to and affirmation of it. Such a reluctance to attribute content to or strive for a particular conception of the 'good' is said to be necessary for preventing a descent into totalitarianism. The former is akin to some utopian modalities' resistance to closure around a broad set of desired goals and principles (see below), in a related resistance against ascribing definite content to the to-come. However, this can be deemed problematic in the sense that ethics demands *some* form of intervention in situations of intolerable injustice (i.e., biological annihilation) (Kochi 2002) (see Chapter Eight). On the other hand, Bloch's (1986) future-leaning ethic posits the need for at least a partial grounding for an ethical command. Justice for Bloch, unlike Derrida, cannot take the form of an empty messianic promise but must be brought forth by human striving (Kochi 2002).

[25] Responsibility' for Derrida (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004; Diprose 2007) is inherited; as a historically situated and finite being, the subject's inheritance of society's moral customs and norms are necessarily partial and unique. Thus, in contrast to the Nietzschean 'sovereign subject', for Derrida (1995) subjectivity *is* responsiveness to and responsibility for the other; however, though no one is wholly free or sovereign, ''a certain space of freedom is opened'' by responsibility that would allow something other to arrive, that would allow ''something of the future-to-come'' (Derrida and Roudinesco 2004, Pg. 52/53; Diprose, 2007, pg. 444).

The central concepts of messianism and messianicity and their relation to conceptualisations of futurity warrant further discussion within wider discussion of REA mobilizations. Messianicity for Derrida (1994) is a certain 'experience of the emancipatory promise', a messianism without religion unlike traditional messianism and, like justice, is "undeconstructible as the possibility itself of deconstruction" (Pg. 59). Walter Benjamin's (1996) 'messianic time' posits the passage of time and history in a quasi-dialectical fashion, not as linear, chronological order but as a tentative and ever-shifting assemblage wherein memories of the past flare up or 'crystalize' during times of social upheaval (Khatib 2013). Crucially, however, his 'messianicity' is an inversion of traditional messianism- which often denotes some future age of salvation- in its orientation towards liberating the past from objective time, not towards the future-to-come (Ware 2004). Derrida's (2005a) notion of a 'future-to-come', on the other hand, does not refer to a 'future present' that has not yet arrived but will do so at some point, nor does it have the form of a utopian ideal in the Blochean (1986) abstract sense. For Derrida (2005a), the structure of the 'future-to-come' is absolute futurity and irreducible singularity, yet it also- and somewhat paradoxically- has the 'hardness, closeness, and urgency' of the real' (2005, pg. 131); hence his understanding of messianicity as an eminently real and concrete event (Pg. 131). The experience of the 'to-come' is that of the 'singular *urgency* of a *here and now*' (i.e., REA's and the socio-ecological deficiencies of the Anthropocene) that is in a sense both with and without presence (2005b; 2005c). Thus, Derrida's *à-venir* (to-come) is, crucially, a paradoxical present without presence (because the 'to-come' always remains to come) (Morin 2015)- manifest in its alliance with those striving in the 'Now' for its realization. The urgency of the now- in the form of rapidly disappearing flora and fauna, worsening anthropogenic climate change, etc. is *real*, and exerts an irresistible pull on those heeding its calls for transformation. Furthermore, unlike the modernist's attempts to progress from complexity to clarity by extricating themselves from attachments to the non-human world and heterogenous others, the non-modernist (Latour, 2004, pg. 191) and messianist movement in space-time is one towards greater entanglement and engagement with heterogenous multiplicities in the Now. What fuels REAs' mobilisations, their approach to ethics, and how they construct and relate to the concept of hope and futurity will be discussed further in Chapters Seven & Eight.

Utopian Space-Time Dynamics: From Transcendent Visions of the Future Towards Immanent Disruptions of the 'Now'

Deliberations surrounding the immanent versus transcendent nature of utopianism are longstanding, and as denoted previously and subsequently, it is the former understanding that has proliferated in recent decades and which is adopted in the present work. As noted previously, many, including those sympathetic to the utopian tradition, have pedaled the largely erroneous notion that utopianism on the whole engages in the systematic blueprinting of perfect societies, depicted as static and even resistant to change, and therefore bearing the seeds of totalitarianism (Kumar 1987; Davis 2012). Many utopias (Campanella 1602; More 1912; Bacon 1915) have indeed been characterized by certain degrees of stasis, disembodiment from concrete transformation of their 'present', and have evinced a seeming disavowal of the unbounded potentiality of the 'to-come', a class that Davis (2012) refers to as 'transcendent utopias'. These often feature a dichotomous opposition to their present reality, depicting time and historical movement as linear successions of stages proceeding from an archaic past on through stagnant present and towards a future wherein the utopian ideal is seen as occupying a "fixed space outside time and history" (pg. 132). Such temporally 'transcendent' (Davis, 2012) or 'future-oriented' utopias marked the dawn of the modern phase of utopian thought,

originating in the seventeenth century alongside new theories of social evolution which coalesced into modern Enlightenment conceptualizations of linear historical progress[26] (Linkenbach 2009, pg. 3; Petersen 2010, pg. 15; Kumar 2003, pg. 67; Garforth 2009, pg. 12). Traditional notions of society and the human condition as irremediably war-like and antagonistic (Hobbes 2016) were considerably undermined by the Enlightenment underpinnings of modern utopianism, wherein faith in reason and applied science engendered a decidedly more fluid, 'evolutionary image of society-in-time' accompanied by 'the perception of society as malleable" and of social change towards the better as possible (Levitas 1979, pg. 26; Goodwin & Taylor 1982, pg. 143). This marked a crucial ontological shift which paved the way for nascent conceptualizations of utopianism as a catalyst for societal transformation, wherein the 'human' and the 'social' were no longer seen as inexorably hampered by an immutably corrupt human nature. The resultant sense of optimism in social, material and scientific progress, and emphases on humanity's growing abilities to manipulate the natural world spurred by burgeoning scientific discoveries in such fields as ecology in the twentieth century, is perhaps nowhere more palpable than in a number of Wells' (1905; 1914; 1923; 1933[27]) works published around this period (Alt in Canavan & Robinson, 2014, pg. 25).

The complex dynamics of spatial-temporality in utopianism often vary (Levitas 2003) between utopias of temporal process and utopias of spatial form- the latter often depicted as ideal cities dislocated in space, such as in More's *Utopia*[28], and which to a degree feature the exclusion of disruptive elements and which therefore become open to the aforementioned critiques of perfection and totalitarianism. For Marxist geographer David Harvey and his work, *Spaces of Hope* (2000), the social production of space is of central importance in utopian deliberations, not least because it is a fundamental feature of capitalism's instantiation- through its steady colonization of the commons, and its paradoxical production of limited spaces and the need for their destruction in service of its necessarily continuous geographical aggrandizement for capital accumulation. Similarly, capitalism requires a 'spatial fix' (Levitas 2003) in its externalization of the social and ecological costs of production, as well as in its generation of elite utopias in the form of gated communities and luxury doomsday bunkers (Dobson 2019) as refuges for the ultra-wealthy amid burgeoning dystopian surroundings. Hence, as explored below, the emergence of critical and grounded utopias intent on creating spaces of radical alterity within and against the spatial dislocations wrought by global capitalism as methods for disrupting the status quo and/or influencing it by way of embodying preferable alternatives. However, it should be noted that the spatial utopia also risks losing its radical and subversive potential through compromise with and cooption by the dominant society surrounding it (Levitas 2003, pg. 140), a fate not unlike that which has befallen many reformist environmental movements. In like manner, the merely processual utopia, of which the 'utopia' of the free market is a classic example (Harvey 2000; Gray 2015), "runs afoul of the spatial framings and the particularities of space construction necessary to its materialization" (Harvey 2000, pg. 141). However, as with previous categorizations (i.e. abstract vs. concrete) utopias never feature merely spatial dimensions with no traces of the processual, and vice versa. Hence the allure of a more 'dialectical utopianism' (Levitas, 2003)

[26] This distinctly Western phenomenon stems even further back, towards the end of the seventeenth century, with the introduction of the modern historical time periods 'ancient, medieval, modern'. Rather than existing in dialectical relation to one another, the past was newly conceived as a 'closed case' wholly separate from the 'present' and the 'future' (Davis, 2012).

[27] Wells' 1933 novel bears the decidedly modernist title, *The Shape of Things to Come*, evoking the decipherability of the future-to-come!

[28] This is largely because More's *Utopia* (1516) is an early-modern text preceding Enlightenment ideals of linear progress.

that neither exclusively prioritizes spatial form nor temporal process in the Marxist-Hegelian tradition but rather foregrounds ongoing processes of struggle in particular spatial localities and their relation to social structures, while also gesturing towards better alternatives. Or, perhaps a modality of utopianism that moves beyond binary opposites altogether and embraces the plural nature of reality and strivings for the 'Not-Yet'.

Time- Homogenous, Dialectical, Disjointed

For Latour (2004) the 'modernist' conception of time as a linear progression from an archaic past to the 'utopia of a radiant future' (Pg. 195) is predicated on the increasingly sharp- and untenable- distinction between Subject/object, Society/nature, and Facts/values (Pg. 188); without the help of Scientific rationality with a capital 'S', there was no hope for salvation from the dual threats posed by the brute necessity of an external 'Nature' and the barbarism of unsubstantiated beliefs (Pg. 188). Yet, conceptions of historical time as proceeding in a linear and unbroken fashion are far from ubiquitous in their presence and influence. Debates on whether or not there is such a thing as continuous time in any objective sense (Benjamin 1989) problematized aforementioned notions of 'linear progress' and engendered a resurgence of caesurist thinking which "eliminated the continuity between the present and utopia" (Levitas 1982, pg. 57). An illuminating early example of this can be traced to millenarian eschatological movements which, often arising in periods of sociopolitical precarity and uncertainty, expect the "'complete destruction of existing social, political, and economic order, which will then be superseded by a new and perfect society'" (Barkun 1986, pg. 18; McNeish 2017 pg. 1039). In more explicitly religious incarnations, the bringing forth of the new society after a radical break with the old often involved divine intervention (Levitas 1982), though with more secular versions this would be achieved by the masses themselves through concerted political action, or more problematically, with the aid of an informed group of revolutionary subjects. A cultural-historical corollary can be found in the ground-breaking theory in evolutionary biology of 'punctuated equilibrium' proposed by Stephen Jay Gould (Gould & Eldredge 1993). The theory of 'punctuated equilibrium' challenged a core assumption in Darwinian evolutionary theory by positing that species (and natural systems) evolve not only gradually but often through alternating periods of relative equilibrium 'punctuated' by periods of 'revolution' marked by significant upheaval in the form of mass extinction events and the like (Bak & Sneppen 1993).

Similarly, caesurist approaches to utopianism emerge not through a slow progression of temporal stages and alterations but after a radical spatial-temporal bifurcation with the present and its myriad structural, socioeconomic, political, cultural, and ecological deficiencies. Historical movement occurs, but along fragmented and unpredictable trajectories. Thus, teleological (Euro-centric) conceptions of historical 'progress' in a linear-temporal sense as well as its material, structural, and socioeconomic implications, and the uneven power dynamics that often determine what constitutes 'progress', are radically critiqued and reconfigured. Such utopian modalities as thorough disruptions in and of the 'Now', represent a departure from more deterministic conceptualizations as products of socioeconomic contradictions deferred to a distant futurity (Newman in Davis & Kinna 2009, pg. 208). However, a dichotomous opposition between the spatial and temporal elements in 'utopia' would likely be considered ill-advised by Derrida (2010), who conceives of space *as* 'in' time, wherein the temporalization of the 'Now' entails the immediate destruction of the 'Now' by another 'now', which cannot appear without the disappearance of the former (Morin 2015, pg. 29). As Morin (2015) rightly observes, if the former 'Now' were entirely destroyed there could be no passage of time: "passage requires that what passes also remains, be inscribed as *trace*

[emphasis added] in the new now" (Pg. 29). Thus, for Derrida (2010), time is essentially spaced via its inscription of the now through the trace that allows it to remain, and through the absence or space (exteriority) at the heart of the split-present which divides and relates, thus allowing time to pass. REA eschatology (Chapters Three, Seven, & Eight) and its ecotopian implications, by introducing radical alterity and exteriority into the 'Now', might be posited as a singular spatialization of the 'Now' as such rather than an exclusively future projection. Herein, the 'Not-Yet' (i.e., REA's) operates as the intrusion of heterogeneity into homogeneity (Morin 2015), a disruption initiated by the radical 'other' which effects transformation by virtue of its difference.

Another central feature of the temporally discontinuous utopia is the impending sense of doom and societal collapse one can detect therein, and on which such discontinuities are predicated. This is also a salient feature of the apocalyptic narratives that have often pervaded the radical green movement (McNeish 2017) (Chapter Three) as well as green utopias and eco-dystopias. Factors underpinning apocalyptic and disjointed conceptions of space and time may indeed be numerous and complex (Levitas 1982), but one significant factor is, as mentioned, perceived (and actual) precarity and perturbation in the forms of socioeconomic downturn, declining inter-generational equity, ecological degradation, war, and the like, which effectively enshroud the once luminous utopian horizon in a dark haze and radically reconfigure relations to hope (Chapter Eight). This seems to engender a fundamental spatial-temporal discontinuity between the collapse of the established order (or earth system in the case of radical environmental/ecotopian narratives) and a better world emerging from the wreckage. Thus 'time', rather than being segmented into 'past, present, and future', or proceeding in a linear fashion, proceeds disjointedly and unpredictably, disrupted by the intrusion of socio-ecological breakdown into the present. However, the apocalyptic narratives pedaled by REA's and eco-dystopiansim don't merely 'contribute to mythological fears' and thereby overlook the societal roots of ecological breakdown (Görg in Biro 2011, pg. 61); on the contrary, they harbor a sense of hope and possess considerable transformative potential (Garforth 2018) (see Chapters Seven & Eight). In shedding light on what horrors might unfold *if* current trends continue, they- like dystopian narratives- highlight the urgency of the deficiencies of the 'Now' and thus motivate desires for its transformation (Claeys 2016; Garforth 2018, pg. 35). The juxtaposition of dystopian nightmares alongside ecotopian visions, as in Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985) and Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1990), through the function of critical estrangement, serves to simultaneously highlight the alluring features of the former and the deleterious features of the latter. Crucially, however, pre-Anthropocene utopias were largely prophetic, alerting us to the notion that it still wasn't too late to change (Sargent 2006, pg. 14). Contemporary (green) utopian forms, which operate amongst such "pessimistic, apocalyptic or pragmatic tropes" (Garforth, 2018, Pg. 23), already exist within the eco-apocalypse; thus, the question becomes, what precisely happens to hope and conceptualizations of the 'to-come', and how are we to live well with Earth others amid the precarious 'Now' (Pohl 2019)?

As discussed, utopianism harbours intractable complexities and inconsistencies surrounding the presence and non-presence of the 'Not-Yet' in relation to actuality. However, how might the utopian striving- conceived here as an 'other-than-now-in-process', with its palpable traces of *en potentia*, inexhaustible latency, and otherwise post-structuralist inklings (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988)- be reconciled with an ontological framework that posits things as always fully deployed and lacking any hidden or underlying 'essences'? Indeed, Bloch (1986) occasionally refers to the tendencies present in the terrain of the utopian 'Not-Yet' along decidedly Deleuzian lines as the "accumulating pressure of different modalities of potentiality

and possibility on what has become" (Anderson 2009, pg. 700). Yet, for Latour, for instance, "to view a thing in terms of potential is to grant it something beyond its current status as a fully specific event" (Harman, 2009, pg. 28). Nevertheless, steps towards a general synthesis might be achieved if one posits utopianism and its manifestations (i.e., REA's) in the Blochean sense (1986) as discussed previously, not as an abstract or disembodied 'no place' (More 1516) but as a force (or actant in the Latourian sense) thoroughly immanent to- and concretely deployed within- the world. Bloch's (1986) conception of the heterogenous 'Not-Yet' encapsulates the type of utopianism that might not be wholly incongruous with an ontological framework influenced by Latour's radical realism: as the *presence* of a fragment of something better residing on "the front of the world process…of animated, utopianly open matter" (Bloch 1986, pg. 200; Anderson 2006). This is why the 'Not-Yet' as well as the 'Now' is always irreducibly 'other' to an extent (Derrida 2004), because one never exhausts their infinite potentiality (Bloch 1986) nor succeeds in 'mapping them out' in their entirety. This disjuncture between being and non-being, between things as they presently have materialized and as they *might* be, is the source of utopian refusals of the 'Now'; in this disjuncture emerges hope as the forward-pressing urge latent in every moment.

Blochean (1986) 'utopian potentiality' refers not to utopian strivings and ideals that pre-occupy some hidden layer of reality and are only subsequently unearthed, but rather the 'something better' that can always be co-created through new alliances due to the nature of reality as always as-yet-undetermined. And this is precisely the sense of open-ended potentiality that one can detect in Latour, wherein 'reality' as such is never predetermined *a-priori* but, crucially, *(co)produced a-posteriori* by actors via their multifarious alliances and strivings (Harman 2009, pg. 145). Thus, Latour (2004) rejects exclusively future-oriented utopian projects in their purported disregard for the complexity of the present, emphasizing the need to focus on co-constructing our common world in the 'Now' (Morin 2015). Bloch's (1986) concrete utopianism exhibits a similarly spatial rather than strictly temporal modality of utopianism which serves as an immanent disruption of the 'Now' while attempting to create radical spaces of the 'better' within it. Latour's (2004) decidedly utopian cosmopolitical proposal for the common construction of a 'democracy of all things' that includes human, non-human, and even non-living actants (discussed below) is of this very sort. Echoing Latour's actualist ontology, Bloch (1986) refers to the utopian horizon "continuously included in the reckoning", wherein "the real appears as *what it is in concreto*: as the path-network of dialectical processes which occur in an [always] unfinished world" (Pg. 223). The 'animated' and 'utopianly open matter' is developed through the concrete embodiment of hope through praxis for the instantiation of better alternatives. Utopianism conceived as the concrete unfolding of 'open matter' marks a shift from traditional notions of utopia as either abstract configurations located in a distant futurity or already latent in full within the 'Now'. Utopian ideals can thus be conceived as alive and fully deployed in the 'Now' via the strivings of actants- social movements, literary works, etc.- assembled on its behalf, whose mounting strength results in accumulating pressure on 'what has become' (Anderson 2009, pg. 700)- i.e, the 'Now' of global capitalism and anthropocentric hegemony. The utopian 'Not-Yet' as a 'placeless place' (Foucault & Miskowiec 1986) featuring the simultaneous presence and absence of hope (Anderson 2006, pg. 693; Bloch 1986) can be conceived as a concrete assemblage of affective materialities exceeding what has materialized in a given spatial-temporal context, to touch 'a horizon' [of potentiality] which is neither reducible to the present nor wholly disembodied from it (Anderson 2006, pg. 694). Utopian ideals, conceived variedly as pre-figurations, the novum, etc., thus disclose the "excess of an 'undisclosed Where To'", a beyond-within (Derrida 1999) that is as real as the corporeal objects or actants mobilized on

its behalf (Bloch 1986, pg. 18; Anderson 2006, pg. 695). Or, as Clark (in Davis & Kinna 2009 pg. 20) eloquently denotes:

> "The most liberatory utopianism affirms [the] existence of the eternal, the sublime, the marvellous, as a present reality and *an object of present experience*. It does not propose any 'metaphysics of presence' that posits an unmediated essential reality that somehow reveals to us its full being. Rather it is a *radical empiricism of presence* that allows what is present to present itself, to give itself as a miraculous gift".

It is this decidedly vital materialist (Bennett 2010) approach to utopianism gleamed by the present reading of Bloch (1986) that would seem not radically distinct from a Latourian rejection of essence as a dangerous distraction from the here and now (Harman 2009, pg. 46). For Latour, actants are concrete, unpredictable, and fully deployed events, precluding the possibility of a 'becoming' or potentiality disembodied from actants and their alliances. The same in a sense can be said of utopianism as an ideal mobilizing an assemblage of actants deployed thoroughly in the 'Now', striving for further allies for bringing forth always unfolding and undetermined conceptualizations of 'the better'. Moreover, if one defines that which *resists* as real (Latour in Sheridan & Law 1988, pg. 188), then surely the utopian ideal and its visionary allies, which vehemently resist the 'Now' as constructed by the vast assemblage that is industrial-capitalism and its allies in the form of extractive machinery, the military-industrial complex, international financial institutions, socioeconomic stratification and the like, counts. Crucially, such strivings are ultimately immanent- not transcendent to- lived reality, and gather strength as they forge alliances with other actants similarly animated by a desire for more ethical worlds. The 'Now' is frequently accepted matter-of-factly as incontrovertible, like a black box, without concerted thought of its origins, tribulations and the often violent attempts that have been and continue to be made in order to maintain it (Latour 1987; Harman 2009). It is seldom viewed as a configuration of inter-actant alliances (tentatively) situated in a particular spatial-temporal context, which require enormous efforts for their continuation, and which in fact can be challenged and overturned. The pressure mounts as REA's and similar utopian expressions strive to open and shed light on the black boxes that constitute the 'Now' (neoliberal/industrial capitalism), boldly challenging structures and principles that have often gone and continue to go largely unquestioned by the majority, who've been (sometimes wittingly[29], sometimes unwittingly, often through coercion and force) entwined in alliances with the Now. This all entails great risks, at being dismissed as ludicrous, hopeless idealists and therefore losing allies, or worse, being actively repressed by the status quo. However, as in Bloch's (1986) always-unfinished world interrupted by the excesses of utopian potentiality, cracks always appear sooner or later, and it is in these spaces (as discussed below) where new alliances and assemblages can emerge and gather the necessary strength to displace the old.

<u>Prioritizing Pluralism: Critical Heterotopias of the 'Here and Now'</u>

*"For utopianism is above all about the **present**. The most utopian of utopianisms is also the most practical one. It demands Heaven on Earth and explores the extraordinary realities latent in the seemingly ordinary present" (Clark in Davis & Kinna 2009, pg. 20).*

[29] Latour (1987) alludes to some of the powerful methods for recruiting allies employed by dominant assemblages in a curiously suggestive manner, including: catering to actants' interests and providing what they need/desire, by convincing them that what they desire is not feasible and offering something else in its place, or monopolizing forces to resist the strivings of other actants/assemblages (Pg. 132).

Moylan's (1986) notion of 'critical utopianism', which emerged during the 'historic block' of political opposition that sprang forth throughout the 1960s and 1970s' (Breines 1989), marks another important shift within the utopian canon towards praxis and the essential 'Nowness' of critique and imaginative projection. This 'critical' strand of utopianism is fueled by a fervent opposition to the exploitation, and domination of people and the natural world increasingly characteristic of Western-capitalist societies (Breines 1989, pg. 25). This opposition is coupled with a utopian desire for mutual aid, ecological resilience, liberation, and peaceful living (Moylan 1986, pg. 11)- in effect, a longing for community (Breines 1989, pg. 26). The 'critical' in Moylan's (1986) conception of the 'critical utopia' is twofold: foremost (1) in the sense of *critique* through debunking and deconstructing the utopian genre itself, namely its colonization by capitalism towards the 1970s and infusion with technocratic dreams of material abundance through boundless economic expansion; and (2) in the sense of the *critical mass* required to effect fundamental societal transformations (pg. 10; Sargisson 2012). Furthermore, critical utopianism does not offer rigid blueprints of a fixed future but rather heads *towards 'the ideal'* by offering "a rich blending of creative fantasy, critical thinking, and *oppositional activism*" predicated on a demand for radically new relations between social and natural systems (Moylan 1986, pg. 27; Mohr 2007; Sargisson 2012, pg. 11). Though the strivings of critical utopias and ecotopias are not for a simplistic return to an archaic past purportedly marked by an unperturbed harmony between humans and natural others, or a potentially 'regressive or romantic fantasy of a rural idyll (Garforth 2018, pg. 86). Rather, they tend to focus more on process than a fixed ideal, exploring and articulating vibrant post-capitalist futures that are simultaneously amorphous, open-ended, and far more socio-ecologically resilient than the 'now' of late capitalism. Three of the five ecotopian texts featured in the subsequent analysis chapters variedly fall within the genre of the critical utopia: Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985), and Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1990) (Moylan, 1986; Garforth, 2018). Such texts to varying degrees subvert linear conceptions of time, feature fragmented narrative structures, unresolved dilemmas and tensions, and ambiguities around how the utopias in question came about.

Closely related in function and style to the critical utopia are the grounded (Davis, 2012) and transgressive (Sargisson, 2002) utopia, which variedly call for a utopian transformation of the present from within. The former, exemplified most starkly by historical grassroots movements for social transformation, emphasizes a greater 'imaginative awareness' of- and steps towards instantiating- "neglected or suppressed possibilities for qualitatively better forms of life" within the 'Now' (Davis 2012, pg. 136). Exhibiting a Blochean (1986) emphasis on praxis, these utopian modalities 'of the here and now' (Garforth 2009, pg. 14) tend to root their utopian visions in the "concrete material contradictions of existing states of affairs" (Pepper 2005, pg. 7-8). Moreover, they prioritize pluralism, diversity, and process over static blueprints, and constitute "zones of otherness" by virtue of their very existence (Sargisson 2002). However, while all utopias harbor transgressive potential, but not all can be categorised as truly 'transgressive' (see Chapter Five); the transgressive utopia similarly arises from 'profound discontent with the political present' yet goes further in rule-breaking, boundary deconstruction, challenging dominant paradigms and creating new conceptual and political spaces (Sargisson 2000, pg. 3). Through their "production and reproduction of spacings and orderings [in the Derridean sense]", they "shatter taken-for-granted discourses and representational systems" (Foucault 1994, pg. xviii; Garforth 2009, pg. 14). Akin to visions espoused by anarchist and post-anarchist thinkers such as Peter Kropotkin (1908), Murray Bookchin (2005), and Gustav Landauer (1978), transgressive and grounded utopias assert that just as important as the need to critique and resist further colonization of life by the state and

corporate capitalism is the need to create counter-spaces within the now (Day 2005, pg. 124; Foucault 1986, pg. 24). Thus, grounded utopias, as exemplified by the alternate traditions of anarchic, anti-authoritarian, and anti-perfectionist utopias (Huxley 2009; Le Guin 1974, 1985; Berneri 1982), feature complex spatio-temporal forms wherein living, breathing beings frequently engage in prefigurative modes of direct-action politics in order to realize suppressed possibilities and alternative visions from the past, present, and future in the 'here and now' (pg. 135;6). Grounded utopias resolutely challenge the purported inescapability of capitalist oppression and exploitation, and the perceived impossibility of eradicating capitalist exploitation within current generations, maintaining instead that already *now* one can- and must- work towards its abolition.

Foucault (Foucault & Miskowiec 1986) epitomizes the postmodern turn in utopianism through his concept of the heterotopia[30], which he distinguishes from the 'place-lessness' of the classical future-oriented or abstract utopia which for him runs the risk of merely extending the present through projections of existing structural, socioeconomic, etc. conditions. Exhibiting the simultaneous presence and non-presence of utopian ideals, heterotopias, on the other hand, are placeless places- 'counter-sites' at once within yet, through the gaze set towards other potential worlds, fundamentally spatial-temporally discontinuous with 'the real' (Pg. 24) and therefore gesture towards the possibility of radically new alternatives. As a result of such developments and novel utopian incarnations, much contemporary utopian theory has come to posit utopia not as a dream deferred to a distant time and place (Firth & Robinson 2014, pg. 381), but rather as something that can and indeed should be materialized within the present (Davis 2012) via the elucidation and co-creation of micro-exemplars as means of confronting oppressive macro-forces (Firth 2012, pg. 31). Thus, some utopian studies scholars have referred to the 'disappearance of the future' (Garforth 2009, pg. 12) altogether within contemporary utopian modalities- in part a reflection of the aforementioned intrusion of widespread socio-ecological disintegration into the 'Now'- and contending that utopia's function as transgressive, critical, and subversive of the status quo should be considered in light of how it works to disrupt the present rather than on its reference to an improved future society (Garforth 2009, pg. 12). Others (Jameson 1982) have gone so far as to posit that, as prisoners of our cultural and social totality, we are utterly powerless to project or imagine anything outside of it (Jameson 2005, pg. xiii). However, as Wells (1913) aptly observes, "along certain lines and with certain qualifications and limitations a *working knowledge* [emphasis added] of things in the future is a possible and practicable thing" (pg. 4). Some orientation towards future potentialities can coincide with the necessary creation of micro-exemplars within the 'Now', and as explicated below, need not equate to a disavowal of diversity and potentiality. What's more, Utopia may also be posited as a *method* for exploring the potential conditions of human and more-than-human flourishing (Levitas 2013) which might help guide us in a generally better direction (Suvin 1990, pg. 74) while not losing sight of the need to strive towards the creation of utopian spaces within the now.

The aforementioned have led some (Levitas 2003, pg. 144) to speculate on a gradual transformation from utopias of content towards processual utopias over the last thirty years reflecting the aforementioned post-modern shift in emphasis towards plurality and process over

[30] For Foucault (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), the ship is heterotopia 'par excellence', as a floating piece of space simultaneously closed in on itself while situated within infinite expanses of ocean (or potentiality), sailing from port to port "in search of the most precious treasures"…so much so that, "in civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates" (Pg. 27).

fixed end states. This new mode entails not necessarily a precise desire for more of a particular thing or for that which is different but a desire for ineffably *better* ways of being and living (Levitas 1990; Levitas 2009, pg. 57; Bloch 1986). However, utopia should not merely seek to embody, explore and articulate an educated desire but rather deploy an educated *hope* that contains the crucial element of praxis in the form of an active engagement in the transformation of society for enacting better rather than worse futures (Bloch 1986; Levitas 1990; Thompson & Žižek 2014). The post-structural/post-modern turn that prioritizes process and criticism of the 'Now' over imaginative projection (Levitas 2013), as well as the 'grounded' heterotopian disavowal of closure and celebration of irreducible alterity, must also be weary of falling victim to a 'pathological pluralism' that rejects "the challenge of literal criticism", thus failing to direct social change towards the better (Levitas 2000, pg. 40; Levitas, 2003, pg. 148). In other words, a complete rejection of closure amounts to 'political evasion' (Levitas 2003, pg. 142) and risks a potential descent into nihilism, which we can ill afford amid the present litany of socio-ecological crises. Negation- while essential and powerful- is insufficient on its own; indeed, in a sense one cannot negate without gesturing towards the possibility of an alternative. The decidedly utopian act of crying 'No!' to the established order (Cathcart 1978) already carries the 'Not-Yet' within it (Bloch 1986, pg. 307), as the very possibility of an alternative is implied in such a negation of existing actuality. Necessary emphases on the trials and potential pitfalls of the utopian process, on the inevitable muddying up of pure utopian ideals in the processes of conceptualization and instantiation should not come at the expense of some vision of *a potential* end result (Sargisson 2012). For Harvey (2000), intention is problematic because of its relation to closure around a set of desired ends. However, as Levitas (2003) poignantly remarks, "The idea of utopia as spatial play- or social play- may be appealing, but we do not have time to play with it" (pg. 150). The litany of mounting Anthropocene crises render critiques of the 'Now', and concerted steps towards better alternatives, of the essence. While we may be unsure as to precisely which alternate worlds to aim towards, and though conflict and discontinuity around precise details will always persist, what is becoming increasingly apparent is that the present socio-ecological order is wholly untenable.

Ecotopia Now!

Utopias in their myriad forms are the embodiment of negation, 'great refusals' (Breines, 1989) of the 'Now' born of concrete experiences of lack during an interregnum where the existing status quo, its dominant norms and institutions is dying, and new modes as exhibited by REA's and other ecotopian manifestations are struggling to be born (Gramsci et al, 1971; Thompson & Žižek 2014, pg. 2). Utopianism's imaginative component seeks the renewal of society's 'cell tissue' (Buber 1996); that is, a reconstruction of its essential building blocks- the individuals and modes of relationality that comprise the social (or socio-ecological) world- so as to transition from capitalism's 'hollowing out' and erosion of diverse socio-ecological assemblages towards life-affirming and all-embracing collaborations (Pg. 14). The utopian 'now' as the site of historical and revolutionary agency- embodied by those such as REA's, intentional communities, transgressive literary utopias and ecotopian novels- interrupts traditional homogenous empty time that is the defining feature of commodity capitalism. In so doing, utopian modalities generate a temporal breach which creates alliances with other moments and spaces in time, further "bursting open the closure of the present" (Firth & Robinson 2014, pg. 390; McNeish 2017). REAs' thorough-going and embodied disruptions of the 'Now' negate previous predictions of a world increasingly dominated by anti-utopian ideology and commodified socioeconomic relations associated with advanced capitalism, whose exclusionary vision of the 'good life' is reserved for an elite minority (Sargent 2006) while growing multitudes are left to grapple with the increasingly dystopian nature of the

present. REA's gesture towards better alternatives in their orientations and modes of relationality, thereby placing before us a 'distorting mirror[31] in reverse showing how good we could look' (Sargent, 1994, pg. 25), and demonstrating through their very existence that another world and other modes of being are possible (Davis, 2012). However, the extant climate catastrophe, biological annihilation, and biogeophysical transformations will likely engender profound transformations in the utopist's very capacity to imagine the future (Chapter Eight) given that contemporary utopian and ecotopian modalities are already living and mobilizing within the 'end times'- of environmental apocalypse and of 'the world' as we've known it thus far. This presents the vital imperative of 'becoming present again to the situation of terrestrial rootedness' (Latour 2017, Pg. 212) by learning to 'feel our responsibilities towards- and finding new ways to live well with- multiplicities of other terrestrials. For the purposes of this project, the interest is in how REA's as potential ecotopian manifestations conceive of the 'to-come' amid widespread collapse: do they ascribe content to it or do they wholly resist any form of closure around notions of the 'good'? What of the non-human 'other' in their ecotopian imaginaries, and to what extent to might the latter embody critical-posthumanist principles? What is their relationship to the central utopian concept of 'hope'? Some version of the good place might not be 'no place' after all but rather reside within particular embodiments and conceptualizations actively resisting the 'now'.

"We should hold a steadfast orientation towards the open ocean of possibility that surrounds the actual and that is so immeasurably larger than the actuality. True, terrors lurk in that ocean: but those terrors are primarily and centrally not (as the utopophobes want to persuade us) the terrors of the not-yet-existing, but on the contrary simple extrapolations of the existing actuality of war, hunger, degradation, and exploitation of people and planets" (Suvin 1990, pg. 81).

Chapter 3:
Insurgent Realities Amid the Anthropocene- Enter Radical Environmentalism

In this chapter I introduce my two principal groups of study, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) and Earth First! (EF!), with a further and brief discussion of the new civil disobedience movement Extinction Rebellion as many activists from EF! and related groups were involved in founding it. The subsequent sections feature a relatively brief discussion and analysis of where REA's such as SSCS and EF! activists might be situated within the history of modern environmentalism and social movement theory, some of the key historical developments that spawned their emergence (as an in-depth discussion of such topics are beyond the scope of this project in addition to having been covered extensively and adeptly elsewhere), as well as a critical discussion of existing literature regarding their politico-philosophical underpinnings. As with the previous chapter, which shed light on the essential biogeophysical and historical phenomena underpinning REA mobilizations, the purpose of this

[31] Foucault (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) alludes to the simultaneous presence and non-presence of utopia's mirror function, which allows one to be where one is not: "there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface…such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy" (Pg. 24).

chapter is to examine their social, historical, and political origins, as well as dialectical entanglements and recurring tensions with mainstream environmental groups. In other words, the fundamental questions to be addressed here are: what sorts of historical trajectories have led to the emergence of such heterogenous groups? How, why, and to what extent do they differ from mainstream environmental movements (ideologically, tactically, etc.)? What are their political and eco-philosophical inclinations? Towards the end of the chapter, gesturing towards the subject matter of Chapter Two, I suggest that via their radical critiques of the status quo, anti-anthropocentric worldviews, and calls for a radically new socio-ecological order, REA's as heterodoxical movement forms may be posited as potential expressions of contemporary ecotopianism, the ecological variant of the perennial utopian striving against the deficiencies of the now and towards the instantiation of better worlds.

Theorizing Dissent:

Theories regarding the nature and defining characteristics of social movements are as multifarious as the movements themselves. Green post-industrial utopian philosopher Rudolf Bahro (1994), for instance, conceives of social movements as developments in societal consciousness that are at least initially effected by a small, radical, active minority. Other, more sweeping approaches (Diani 2000), frame environmental movements as loose, non-institutionalized networks composed of informal interactions that include members and groups who are not formally affiliated with any organizations, as well as organizations of varying degrees of formality, all engaged in collective action that is motivated by a shared identity and/or concern about environmental issues (pg. 386; Rootes 2014). Diani's (2000) definition, which crucially emphasizes formal as well as non-formal organizations or collectives, and institutionalized as well as non-institutionalized, is especially useful as it paves the way for consideration of heterodoxical movement forms such as REA's. Though, Saunders (2008) rightly problematizes the conflation of movement and group levels when theorizing collective identity (Diani & Eyerman 1992), which in turn emerges through movement 'cultures', or the 'norms, beliefs, symbols, identities, stories and the like that produce solidarity, motivate participants and maintain collective actions' (Williams 2004, pg. 94). For Saunders (2008), a shared and relatively stable identity can exist at the group level but not necessarily at the movement level (as will be demonstrated with regards to reformist and radical EMO's), resulting in *collective identities* rather than a single or unified movement identity (Saunders 2008, Pg. 232). Social movements can perhaps best be conceived as fluid networks (Rootes & Berny 2018) or assemblages composed of multiple group and individual identities centred around a sense that something is amiss, a *shared concern* for ecological decline (in the case of environmental EMO's)(Saunders 2008), and shared desires for- yet differentiated approaches to- the latter's rectification. The term 'assemblage' or network is useful here, as social and environmental movements are neither reducible to individual organizations nor protest events but can only be said to truly emerge when all of these myriad components become linked and engaged through myriad alliances (Latour, 2005) for collectively mobilizing (Rootes, 2004) against the 'Now' (see Chapter Two).

There are roughly two distinct traditional approaches to the study of social movements: inductive empiricist accounts (Tarrow 1996; McAdam et al 1996), which tend to form theories based on particular cases they've investigated (focus on movement practices), and more deductive rationalist accounts (Melucci 1995; Della Porta & Diani 2020) which tend to conceive of movements as manifestations of wider social and cultural changes, and crucially, tend to be more concerned with uncovering their underlying *utopian visions*. With the

exception of the pertinence of Tilly & Tarrow's (2015) 'politics of contention' for shedding light on REA criticisms of the 'Now', it is the latter approach that is largely adopted in this chapter as well as throughout the project, as: (1) it appears to best encapsulate the radical environmental strain of environmental movements, and (2) my interest is in the utopian dimensions of REA worldviews and mobilisations. Echoing two of utopianism's most essential characteristics- criticisms of the present and projections of alternatives- Lofland (1996) refers to social movements as 'insurgent realities' of normative origins that provide "collective challenges to mainstream conceptions of how society *ought* to be organized and how people *ought* to live" (pg. 1). In this sense all social movements- from the Suffragettes (Pankhurst 2013) to the American civil rights mobilizations against racial segregation in the 1960s (Klarman 1994) and contemporary 'Black Lives Matter' movement (Taylor 2016)- are utopian manifestations in that they arise from profound dissatisfaction with existing affairs, desire and gesture towards more ethical and inclusive alternatives. As will be denoted, radical environmental groups, even more so than previous environmental movement manifestations, deploy particularly sweeping critiques of how we (predominantly growth-oriented Western-capitalist societies) presently live, exhibit a form of unrest that appears especially urgent, and crucially, demand fundamental socio-ecological transformations. Of interest with REA's- and to be explored in subsequent chapters- is precisely how they individually and collectively problematize the deficient 'Now' through diagnostic framing, conceive of and relate to nonhuman others, and how they propose to reconstruct the human-animal-nature relationship along more ethical trajectories.

A (Very) Brief History of Modern Environmentalism:

Modern or 'reform' environmentalism in the Global North[32] was born when over twenty million Americans flocked to attend the first Earth Day on April 22nd, 1970 (Hernandez 2007, pg. 295; Brulle 2000). This new environmental awakening proliferated across the Western Europe, the US, and Australia like wildfire, featuring campaigns for clean water, the safe disposal of sewage and waste, clean air, improved public health, and a growing recognition of humanity's increasingly deleterious impacts on its natural support systems (Rootes 2014). Throughout the 1970s, a series of key developments- mounting scientific evidence and popular understandings of environmental degradation, the establishment of ecology as a discipline in academia, world reports on the limits to growth (Meadows et al 1972), the proliferation of green movements in the West, the establishment of the UNEP (Jelin 2000, pg. 48), and crucially the "political space" opened up by the New Left, anti-nuclear peace and countercultural movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s- helped entrench reform environmentalism as the new dominant environmental discourse (Rootes 2014). As a result, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a 'rapid rise' in the growth, numbers, and influence of ENGOs, though with a penchant for natural science argumentation over trenchant political critiques (Berny & Rootes 2018). Major federal policies like the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy

[32] The focus of this project was restricted to 'Western' environmental movements as that's where the subjects under investigation largely operate and reside. A fascinating 'Global South' precursor to the proliferation of direct-action in the West is India's Chipko movement, founded in 1973 in Uttar Pradesh, wherein rural and indigenous people fought to reclaim control of the forests on which their livelihoods depend from commercial interests and colluding bureaucrats who sought to exploit the forest's resources by chaining their very bodies to trees in order to prevent them from being felled (Haynes 1999, pg. 227).

Act came into effect in the early 1970s, and 'reformist' environmental movement organizations (EMO's) such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (FoE) underwent institutionalization (Van der Heijden 1997). Institutionalization proceeds externally via the gradual acceptance by governments of ENGOs as authoritative actors and sources of key environmental expertise, as well as internally via rapid growths in membership and resources, professionalization and structural centralization, and, crucially, shifts in repertoires from direct-action and protest towards conventional tactics such as lobbying (Carter 2001, pg. 148; Berny & Rootes 2018, pg. 949).

Bureaucratization became a necessity in part because of the need to manage growing budgets, resources, and employees, though such increasingly legally incorporated ENGOs naturally lost some of their former radical zeal (Berny & Rootes 2018). Moreover, an emphasis on reconciling economic growth with environmental sustainability through a 'greening' of global capitalism took center stage with reform environmentalism, as well as an emphasis on cooperation with- rather than opposition to- government and industry (the focus of REA's, as denoted below) (Berny & Rootes 2018). Reform environmentalism generally tends to embrace 'sustainable development' or 'ecological modernization' (Huber 1985) approaches which maintain that there is no serious or inherent conflict between expansionist and profit-oriented socioeconomic systems such as capitalism and biospheric integrity; rather, the goal is to render industrialization, production and related modernization processes less ecologically destabilizing through technological and legal innovations, for instance (Spaargaren & Mol 1992). In emphasizing legal, technological, and minor consumptive changes as sufficient for curbing ecological decline, reform environmentalism thus lacked a sufficiently critical awareness of the structural underpinnings of environmental crises and consequently the fundamental transformations required for their alleviation (Rootes 2007). Partly in response to this as well as a host of other historical developments from the late 1970s and early 1980s- the rise of conservative (religious, nationalist, etc.) anti-environmental movements and political sentiment during the Reagan era, 'professionalization' and 'commercialization' of the broader environmental movement generated a bifurcation between preceding reformist EMOs and distinctly radical and oppositional environmental movement forms. In response to recent and mounting threats posed by climate breakdown, recent environmental movements have increasingly mobilized around fossil fuel resistance, specifically around anti-fracking and fossil fuel divestment campaigns (Ogrodnik & Staggenborg 2016), though often with reformist emphases on legislative change and other parliamentary modes of political activity. However, as denoted below, radical movement strains sought to uncover the very structural underpinnings of contemporary socio-ecological breakdown that mainstream EMO's purportedly neglected to address. Indeed, with these new movements the very concept of modernization as a distinctly Western metaphysical belief in boundless technological, socioeconomic and material progress (Weber 1975, pg. 118; Rostow 1990) rooted in the conquest and transformation of the nonhuman world, was deemed problematic.

Enter the 4th-Wave: On the Nature and Aims of Radical Environmentalism

The bifurcation point that emerged in the environmental movement around the mid to late 1970s was largely driven by mounting dissatisfaction amongst more radical segments with the perceived philosophical and political shortcomings of liberal reformist emphases on social conservatism and individual responsibility in stemming ecological decline (Rootes, 2007; 2014). Despite undeniable successes of reformist environmental movements such as the passing of the Animal Welfare and Clean Air Acts- and indeed increasing the salience of the

environment in the public imaginary- the conviction that environmental issues might necessitate profound psychological, cultural, socioeconomic, and structural transformations rather than merely legislative and technological alterations began to gain traction (Milbrath 1984, pg. 70). Thus emerged a new 'fourth wave' of environmentalism (Dowie 1995; Thiele 1999) known as 'political ecologism' or 'radical environmentalism' as exemplified by groups such as EF!, SSCS, the Climate Camp movement (Saunders 2012), and to an extent the new civil disobedience movement, Extinction Rebellion (Evans et al 2019). Radical environmentalism marks a "step change in the mobilization of environmental movements" (Rootes 2008, pg. 613) from a "consensual to a conflictual movement, from a concern with reform within a framework of consensual values to a radical challenge to societal values" (Cotgrove 1982, pg. 10). It is with elucidating such radical challenges and alternate visions that this project is most concerned. While some have detected an unreflexive nostalgia for pre-industrial modes of existence amidst contemporary radical green thought (Soper, 1998), of interest for investigative purposes is the degree to which REA's might in actuality gesture towards a 'post-industrial society' co-constructed with fellow earth kin amidst the uncertainties and exigencies of the Anthropocene (Garforth 2005, pg. 406). Moreover, though the reformist/radical distinction highlights key ideological, political, tactical, and organizational differences between the various strands of environmentalism(s), one must take care not to overemphasize simplistic reformist/radical binaries that override the productive interchanges that have existed and continue to exist between 'radical' and 'reformist' movement organizations.

As denoted previously, reform environmentalism typically features an "instrumental, imperial approach" to the natural world that maintains that our environmental problems, however severe, can be rectified via technological fixes and "without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption" (Bookchin & Foreman 1991, pg. 7; Dobson 2000). In other words, successful tactics for curbing ecological decline are those deemed compatible with Western liberal-democratic structures and which effect minimal disruptions in the economic status quo. REA's, as denoted, tend to view these as mere symptoms whose underlying systemic causes- corporate capitalism, its maxims of ceaseless growth, and the transformation of living beings into profit-enhancing commodities- must be uncovered, rectified, and/or eradicated[33] (Hernandez 2007, pg. 296). Thus, while mainstream environmentalism may be said to seek and effectively engage in 'first-order' changes from *within* the present system (i.e., recycling, voting for green politicians, changes in legislation, 'green' consumption, etc.) (Plumwood 1995), radical environmentalism to varying degrees seeks and engages in 'second-order' changes which entail the transformation of the system itself (Watzlawick et al 1974; Glasser 2011). It is in this latter sense that this project employs the word 'radical' with respect to REA's, as opposed to the pejorative sense in which the mainstream media, governments, popular discourse, and even some scholarly circles (Liddick 2006; Posluszna 2015) frequently employ the term (Vanderheiden 2005; Johnston & Johnston 2017), denoting senseless violence and extremism. This project employs the term 'radical' in its etymological sense denoting 'roots'; REA's seek to address the *root* causes- ontological, ethical, structural- of socio-ecological decline (Johnson & Johnson 2017), to bring forth a wholesale reconstitution of society, and thus adopt the requisite approaches and strategies. The other sense in which the term is employed is in line with the utopian theoretical framework

[33] Naess notes that a key characteristic distinguishing 'shallow' from 'deep' ecology is the former's tendency towards suggesting technical fixes for socio-ecological issues, thus suggesting an 'absence of philosophy' or willingness to assess fundamentals, the underlying 'why's' and 'how's' of socio-ecological decline (Naess 1973; Fox 1995, pg.94).

informing the project, wherein as purported expressions of ecotopianism, the 'radical' in radical environmentalism denotes a state of multidimensional opposition to the present state of affairs rather than engagement in 'piecemeal engineering' of the present (Popper 1960).

REA clothing, hairstyles, hobbies, jargon, and oppositional activism, products of their singular collective identities that in turn reinforce their bonds and shared concerns, constitute subcultural forms that reside within and in opposition to mainstream society and its perceived infringements on the nonhuman world (Szerszynski 2002; Taylor, 2008). Within these subcultural spaces, be they makeshift camps at a protest site or a week-long road blockade, alternative modes of living that pre-figure post-capitalist ideals are instantiated and experimented with (Gordon in Davis & Kinna 2009, pg. 266). Radical green worldviews and sensibilities draw inspiration from a mosaic of spiritual and philosophical traditions, particularly pantheistic and/or animistic worldviews that recognize sacredness in all aspects of the biosphere, as evoked by 'elders' in the tradition of environmental romanticism such as John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Gary Sneider (Taylor 2008). Their political ideology, though plural and internally contested, can largely be described as "an amalgamation…of the world's radical intellectual traditions", namely green anarchism and bioregionalism, and rooted strongly in egalitarian (especially anti-imperialist and pro-peasant) social movements (Taylor, 1998, pg. 2; Wissenburg 1997). As will be explored below, previous research has shown their ontological-ethical orientations to be characterized by a 'deep ecological' (Naess 1973) moral perception of the kinship and sacred value of all life (see below) that is closely intertwined with an "apocalyptic vision" of imminent social and ecological collapse (Taylor 1998, pg. 1;2). The latter notion is exemplified by the following phrase featured in a communiqué of the radical environmental group, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), a radical offshoot of EF!: "We are the burning rage of this dying planet" (Hernandez 2007, pg. 294). The influence of green anarchism is especially apparent within anti-hierarchical groups such as EF! who tend to be highly critical of the state as the embodiment of authoritative oppression, indeed of hierarchies of any sort (Bookchin 2005), exhibit a deep skepticism towards industrial capitalism, and possess a penchant for physical disruptions of the status quo (Goodwin & Taylor 1982, pg. 171).

The 'apocalyptic eschatology' that constitutes a core element of REA imaginaries and radical green thought more generally portends that the rapacious, unsustainable nature of industrial society must soon lead to its own collapse (Taylor 1991, pg. 261; Wissenburg 1997). Indeed, apocalyptic narratives[34] more generally have played key historical roles in framing green critiques of the ravages of contemporary capitalism and, as will be further elucidated, are to an extent vital for the articulation of utopian alternatives (McNeish 2017, pg. 1038) (see Chapter Seven). Hall's (2009) general definition of apocalypticism denotes an array of "beliefs, actions, and social processes centered on cultural disjunctures concerned with the 'end of the world'" (Pg. 1.2). The 'end of the world' is understood not necessarily as the end of all existence but as the end of the existing social order, though amid decidedly apocalyptic predictions of ecological collapse during the Anthropocene, the 'end of the world' is increasingly a possibility for ever greater portions of life's tapestry. McIntosh (in Skrimshire, 2010, Pg. x) discerns an 'eruption of hope in history' with the apocalypticism featured in the

[34] The apocalyptic narrative can be traced to the first millenarian prophet, Zoroaster, who suggested a view of historical progress as oriented towards a 'consummation' wherein the deficient present would be supplanted by a perfect new order (Cohn 1995, pg. 21). Herein, one can detect palpable links to the utopianism and the concept of hope (Bloch 1986).

Christian New Testament book of *Revelation*, wherein an emancipatory desire for a just and harmonious society kept hope alive amidst early Christians living under persecution by the Roman Empire. Yet, apocalyptic eschatologies extend far beyond the Judeo-Christian tradition; nor is the phenomenon exclusively associated with end-of-the-world imaginaries. Apocalypse's etymological origins, evident in the Greek word *apokalyptein*, denote the act of 'uncovering' or 'revealing' and thus can be read as signifying "a radical shift in consciousness as a foundation for transforming the self and wider social structures (McNeish, 2017, pg. 1036). This in part explains why, rather than engendering a fatalistic or nihilistic acceptance of 'impending collapse', apocalyptic eschatologies and the emancipatory desires they foster serve as the 'lifeblood' of millenarian social movements. Millenarian social movements, like the utopian imaginary, tend to surface in radical opposition to- and in the hopes of moving beyond- times of considerable political, socioeconomic, and socio-ecological upheaval (McNeish 2017, Pg. 1039; Clark 2016). Thus, the apocalyptic narrative understood in its original sense, and particularly in its post-millennialist manifestations, has been closely wedded to a revolutionary zeal intent on bringing forth a better' Not-Yet' in the 'here and now'. This decidedly utopian dimension of apocalypticism is something that appears notably present in contemporary REA movements; how the intrusion of ecological apocalypse-particularly the ubiquitous loss of nonhuman life- into the present influences REAs' relations to hope and their conceptualizations of the future is more thoroughly examined in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Challenging Anthropocentrism: Deep Ecology

While anthropocentric concerns with the state of the natural world typically involve the degree to which it remains a viable material base for the continuity of *human* life, more ecocentric and biocentric worldviews perceive 'Nature' and non-human animals as valuable *for their own sake* (Mrangudakis 2001, pg. 459) and as ends-in-themselves (Kant 2002). Thus, a significant philosophical underpinning of REA groups such as SSCS and EF![35] (Taylor 2008; Devall 2014) is the anti-anthropocentric environmental philosophy of 'deep ecology'. Deep ecology was born during the 'harbinger decade' of radical environmentalism (Taylor 2008, pg. 52) in the 1970s from which 'green utopias' (Callenbach, 1975; Le Guin 1985) also emerged (Kumar 1987). As previously denoted, deep ecological worldviews draw influence from such tributaries as the Arcadianism of Romantic naturalist poets and novelists such as Edward Abbey, John Muir, and Gary Snyder, and tracing back to ancient Greek Pagan, Amerindian, Australian aboriginal and indigenous animist, and Eastern religious traditions (Worster 1985). Arcadian approaches to the human-animal-nature relationship disavow instrumentalist approaches which posit the nonhuman world as mere resource for human use, instead emphasizing that the nonhuman world has intrinsic value and should therefore be preserved Coined by Norwegian eco-philosopher Arne Naess (Naess, 1973), deep ecology draws on aforementioned tributaries in eschewing the centuries-old predominance of anthropocentric orientations towards the human-nature relationship in favor of a '*relational*, *total-field* image' (Naess 2011). In direct contrast to the 'anthropocentric arrogance' (Dryzek, 2005) that has typically characterized traditional (and largely Western) human-nature-animal relations- including much mainstream environmental thought- deep ecology upholds the notion of 'biospheric egalitarianism' (Naess 2011) and asserts that the whole phenomenal world is "a spring of intrinsic value" (Snyder 1974, pg. 10), wherein all beings' equal rights to flourish and

[35] Conservation biologist and early Earth First! supporter, Reed Noss (1983), famously remarked that Earth First! is "the ecological resistance embodiment of Deep Ecology" (Taylor, 2008, pg. 49).

maximize their full potentialities ought to be respected (Naess 1979). The latter notion stems from Naess' writings on Spinozan[36] metaphysics, namely the concept of *conatus*, which denotes 'to try' or 'to strive for', the motivational force exhibited by all living organisms in their strivings towards the realization of their unique potentialities (Fox 1995, pg. 105).

In its formal sense, deep ecology refers to the search for fundamentals, the 'deepness' of philosophical inquiry such as the 'why's' and 'how's' concerning the human-nature relationship (Fox 1995, pg. 93), and crucially, the decidedly utopian exploration of possible and more ethical modes of socio-ecological being (Glasser 2011, pg. 57). However, Sargisson (2000) is "not entirely convinced that Naess succeeds in undermining the paradigms that structure the currently dominant Self-Other relations"; thus, for her deep ecology remains an "ontology based on affection for sameness" and therefore is not thoroughly transgressive (pg. 146). Plumwood (2010) relatedly contends that the deep/shallow division that deep ecologists attempt to erect is a 'pernicious false choice' that obscures human-non-human relationships by propagating rigid dualistic thinking (Self/Other, etc.). Moreover, deep ecology is still predicated on a binary between living entities that purportedly exhibit strivings towards flourishing and a deanimated world beyond the five living kingdoms that include plants, animals, fungi, protists and single-celled archaeobacteria. This mode of hyper-separation (conceptually as well as physically) is problematic for Plumwood (2010) not least because it precludes humans' abilities to empathize with and otherwise relate ethically with the non-human world. However, in its insistence on the value of diversity rather than sameness, and in its powerful critiques against the dominant paradigm of human exceptionalism, deep ecology may be posited as a theoretical utopia (Chapters Two and Five). Though, as will be explored in later chapters (5 & 8), to extend boundaries of ethical consideration still entails leaving boundaries intact rather than problematizing them altogether (Plumwood 2010). However, if one defines 'deep' as that which attempts to challenge human-centredness (Plumwood, 2010), as deep ecology and REA's do, then both can be said to offer considerable potential for informing more ethical modes of human-animal-nature relationality. In this sense it can be classified as a post-humanist (Braidotti 2013) or Post-anthropocentric (Ferrando 2016) mode of ethical and philosophical orientation towards the non-human world. In Chapter Five, the precise mode of REA valuation of and identification with earth others, and the extent to which they succeed in deconstructing dualistic constructs of the human-animal-nature relationship, are further explored.

Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: Direct-Action

"Disruption has always taken a variety of forms, from the attack on the wrongdoer's house and the assault on a miller's grain store in the eighteenth century to the barricades of the nineteenth century to the sit-ins and sit-down strikes of the twentieth century to the disruption of computer networks in our century" (Tarrow 2013, pg. 101).

[36] Although Spinoza, somewhat paradoxically, also seemed to exclude nonhuman animals from the realm of ethical consideration: "It is plain that the law against the slaughtering of animals is founded rather on vain superstition and womanish pity than on sound reason. The *rational* [emphasis added] quest of what is useful to us further teaches us the necessity of associating ourselves with our fellow-men, but not with beasts, or things, whose nature is different from our own…I do not deny that beasts feel; what I deny is, that we may not consult our own advantage and use them as we please…" (cited in Midgley 1998, pg. 10; Spinoza 1992).

REAs' 'politics of contention' (Tarrow 2013; Tilly & Tarrow 2015) manifests not only via their paradigmatic challenges to the status quo but also through their use of physically interventionist action repertoires designed to disrupt, slow, and ultimately reverse the tides of ecological destruction. Though sometimes employed simultaneously and complementarily, choices between pragmatism (reformist measures) and fundamentalism (direct-action) in strategies and tactical repertoires have been a source of contention within the environmental movement (Tarrow 2013; Dalton & Rohrschneider 2003, pg. 4). Direct action (henceforth DA), originally coined by anarcho-feminist activist Voltarine de Cleyre (1912) and long a part of the repertoire of social movements[37] (Plows et al 2004), refers to a specific kind of political action associated with anarchist praxis that is 'not beholden to the political tactics of the liberal state' (Heynen & Van Sant 2015, pg. 173). In the case of REA mobilisations DA takes a number of different forms- from civil disobedience, road blockades, and 'climate camps' (Schlembach 2011; Saunders 2012) to more controversial acts such as arson and dismantling of ecologically destructive machinery. Crucially, DA is a thoroughly disruptive strategy (Tarrow 2013) adopted when perceived as the only moral recourse, and when the stakes are so high- as they arguably are today- that nothing short of a total disruption of the status quo will suffice. DA is also prefigurative, wherein a key objective is to foreshadow the desired society and sets of relations (Breines 1989), and is characterized by an anarchic rejection of consequentialism, wherein the means of transformation must be consequent with the ends (Franks 2018). For instance, the radical Climate Camp movement that has erected camps around Heathrow's proposed third runway site, Drax power station in Yorkshire, and other extractive sites since its inception in 2006 seeks not only to oppose fossil fuel extractivism but, crucially, to live- even if only briefly- more ecologically resilient worlds (Saunders 2012, pg. 829). Unsurprisingly, the strongest predictor behind an individual or group's propensity towards engaging in DA is a perception of humanity as *severely* damaging nature (a common perception amongst REA's)(Milbrath 1984, Pg. 90). Thus, groups classed under the 'Radical ecologist' banner on the whole are significantly more likely to adopt direct-action strategies as these are commensurate with their apocalyptic eschatologies, aims of fundamental change, and 'anti-system' or 'radicalized' identities (Dalton & Rohrschneider 2003, pg. 16;7).

"There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part, you can't even tacitly take part. And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop…" (Draper 1965, pg. 98).

The memorable excerpt above from a 'Free Speech' movement rally by activist Mario Salvio in the mid-1960s alludes to one of the core objectives of REA direct-action repertoires- the need to 'achieve immediate redress from close-range opponents' (Tarrow 2013, pg. 98)- in this case the 'juggernaut' of industrial and unhindered socioeconomic expansion (see chapters Five & Six). What's more, DA often is intended to mobilize wider audiences, as direct-activists often seek to utilize the symbolic nature of extreme interventionist tactics in order to "interrupt, and thereby mark, for its mostly slumbering audience, the destructive impacts of our productive and consumptive habits" (Lipscomb, 2011, pg. 279; Saunders 2012). Recent mobilizations on behalf of Extinction Rebellion, which deploy galvanizing guerrilla theatre tactics such as painted slogans on government buildings and the physical blockade of main streets, are of this

[37] DA tactics received their formal theorization by Gandhian opposition to Apartheid in South Africa and British colonial rule in India, and evolved from the nonviolent direct-action strategies of civil rights and anti-war demonstrations of the 1960s and '70s (Tarrow 2013; Merchant, 2005, pg. 188).

sort. In response to such actions, many have levelled charges of 'eco-terrorism'[38] (Liddick 2006; Nagtzaam & Lentini 2007; FBI 2002; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Bondaroff 2014). However, as alluded to previously, acts of ecotage are profoundly political "acts of resistance [designed to create tension], not vandalism" (Devall 1988, pg. 125). This kind of resistance is often justified on moral grounds and as acts of self-defense, wherein it is maintained that the laws in place are often designed to protect corporate and state actors who benefit financially from the exploitation of the natural world (Taylor 1991, pg. 262; Johnson & Johnson 2017). Vanderheiden (2005) refers to ecotage as 'violence within circumscribed ethical limits' (Pg. 436) which, in entailing acts of *property* destruction in order to maximize economic damage and in no way aimed towards harming life or instilling fear, lacks many of the necessary criteria for a truly 'terrorist' act. Such an approach deems it morally problematic to equate the destruction of nonliving objects deployed for exploiting the nonhuman world with attacks against living entities. This is also the area where the 'us vs. them' dynamic exhibited by strong internal solidarity amongst REA groups manifests in relation to reformist ENGO's, wherein the former tend to be deeply dismissive of 'reformist' tactics such as lobbying as they are seen to be consequent with the status quo.

Dissensus political theory (Piven & Cloward 1999) distinguishes 'between those groups which follow conventional protest strategies (those that adhere to the norms of an advantaged group or mainstream society, such as lobbying) and more disruptive strategies (which violate the norms of an advantaged group or mainstream society, thus shedding a critical light on them). As discussed, the increased dependence by mainstream environmental organizations on external funding (Rootes 2007) has among other things influenced them away from protest, critiques of corporations and the state, and towards generally nonsubversive positions and practices (Dowie 1995, pg. 49-53). This to a degree might be said about SSCS, which is similarly dependent upon funding from an array of wealthy supporters, though as discussed below they have- at least historically- engaged in high-profile radical direct-action feats. REA politics of contention and dissent are posited as particularly essential for effecting fundamental social change precisely because they often polarize opinion through their radical and unorthodox strategies, thus helping to draw attention to the environmental cause at hand (Dalton & Rohrschneider 2003, pg. 2). REAs' radical stance makes groups such as the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth appear more centrist and 'reasonable' by comparison, allowing these more moderate groups to capitalize on the new attention in a way that the bystander public find more palatable[39] (a phenomenon known as the 'radical flank effect')(Stuart et al 2013, pg. 22; Berny & Rootes 2018). Nevertheless, though at times considerably more powerful and effective than protest-style activism (Tarrow 2013), activist as well as academic debates surrounding the relative efficacy of ecotage persist- namely concerns over its effectiveness at the macro-level, over potentially alienating the public, dangers from repeated transgressions of the law (Moffa 2012; Berny & Rootes 2018), logical inconsistencies with the aims of creating peaceful and non-hierarchical societies, and fears over inviting increased violence and repression from state forces (Doherty, 2005, pg. 179). On the other hand, when laws and state institutions themselves are complicit in widescale ecocide, when they are designed to uphold corporate-capitalist interests rather than socio-ecological wellbeing, the

[38] The term 'eco-terrorism' was coined by former leader of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise (CDFE), Ron Arnold, in a 1983 article entitled 'Eco-Terrorism' published in Reason magazine (Smith, 2008, pg. 545).

[39] Indeed, one of EF!'s initial goals was to "strengthen the hand of mainstream environmental groups" and make then appear more moderate in contrast to EF!'s 'radical' ecotage campaigns (Taylor 1991, pg. 262).

pursuit of extra-legal methods of transformation may indeed be justified (Vanderheiden 2005; Johnson & Johnson 2017).

Eco-Vigilantes of the High-Seas: The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

"We are revolutionaries. We seek to replace the present system of thought with a system that is more caring, more loving, and more logical about our role in the natural order of things. We believe in the sanctity of life and reverence for the Earth. Above all, we believe in justice" (Watson 1988, pg. 86).

'Gaia's Navy' (Nagtzaam, 2013) is the apt phrase that has been used in reference to the non-profit direct-action marine conservation organization, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (henceforth SSCS). SSCS was initially conceived as the 'Earthforce Society' in Vancouver, Canada in 1977 by its founder, Captain Paul Watson (SSCS 2016), a former Greenpeace co-founder who was purportedly sacked from the organization for his aggressively interventionist, vigilante-style direct-action tactics[40] (Watson 1982, pg. 153). SSCS and their fleet of twelve ships[41] have managed to accomplish what decades of formal international law enforcement mechanisms and litigation by more established environmental NGOs such as the Greenpeace have often failed to do: significantly reduce the illegal (and, crucially, from the perspective of SSCS activists, unethical) slaughter of whales and other marine life. Though they have previously contravened legality in their more physically interventionist direct-action feats, SSCS more recently have begun to engage strategically with institutional means and state actors, often calling attention to the legal violations of whalers and citing the global moratorium on commercial whaling instituted in 1986 by the International Whaling Commission (IWC). Whaling states such as Iceland and Japan have repeatedly taken advantage of loopholes within the moratorium's convoluted legal terminology which allow 'scientific whaling' for research purposes (Nagtzaam 2013, pg. 676). SSCS' mandate states that they act on behalf of sections 21-24 of the UN World Charter for Nature, which grants authority to individuals and groups to act in order to help enforce international conservation laws (SSCS 2017). Such efforts at 'law-invocation' and claims of direct law enforcement (Moffa 2012, pg. 203)- even though they have historically transgressed the law in some of their more high-profile actions- are geared towards minimizing political backlash and ensuring success by garnering the support of key state actors for SSCS' campaigns (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Bondaroff 2014, pg. 349). SSCS also have their own reality TV series, 'Ocean Warriors' (previously titled 'Whale Wars'), on the American TV channel Animal Planet which, somewhat paradoxically given their purportedly transformative objectives, relies on the 'commercial mass media distribution' of their actions and aims in order to effect changes in the public imaginary (Robé 2015).

In more recent years SSCS has more overtly defined itself as a global 'anti-poaching organization dedicated to operating within the bounds of international law' (Watson in SSCS

[40] Watson (1982) notes that the apparent final straw during his time with Greenpeace was when he tossed a sealer's club into the sea in order to save a seal pup from butchery (pg. 152), in addition to tactical and ideological differences with Patrick Moore, former president of Greenpeace's board (Heller 2007, pg. 123).

[41] In addition to donations from their numerous supporters worldwide, SSCS receive generous sums from their wealthier and more high-profile supporters such as former American TV show host, Bob Barker (after whom they named one of their vessels). Though, one could note the curious incongruity between their 'radical' and in some instances, anti-status-quo demeanor while they in a sense profit off of capitalism.

2019). One can argue that SSCS' attempts to merely enforce existing laws rather than radically reshape or even supplant them with new regimes constitute the most reformist, and therefore non-utopian, aspects of their movement. Thus, Pellow (2014) characterizes SSCS as not a 'radical' but rather as a 'progressive' group[42] which seeks change from within the present system and occasionally utilizes illegal tactics to do so, yet doesn't ultimately seek to supplant the current system with something entirely new (Pg. 57). Moreover, their alliances with celebrities for increasing publicity around their campaigns and reliance on funding by wealthy stake-holders casts further doubt on the organization's transformative- and therefore utopian-potential. More problematically, this can be posited as a symptom of the "intertwining of corporate capitalism and conservation that commodifies and commercializes environmental protection" (Brockington 2013; Robé 2015; Milstein et al 2020, pg. 9). Moreover, in contrast to groups like Earth First! (see below), SSCS- many of whose earlier founders were members of animal rights organizations- tends to focus on the preservation of particular threatened species (i.e., whales, dolphins, and other charismatic marine megafauna) and populations rather than 'ecosystems' more broadly, which constitutes an 'unfortunate blind spot' (Pellow 2014, Pg. 50) in their approach. Indeed, as Milstein et al (2020) observe, in its frequent positioning of cetaceans as central to its cause, the organization lacks a holistic 'ecological-individual' contextualization and "risks producing notions of whales as at the top of an oceanic and cultural hierarchy" (pg. 14) (see Chapter Five). SSCS' organizational identity representations have been described as nuanced and at times contradictory (Milstein et al 2020); SSCS emphasises compassion and nonviolence on the one hand while also frequently exhibiting a militant and war-like stance on the other (as exhibited by their logo which sports a skull and crossbones). Similarly, despite its critiques of anthropocentrism and desire to protect wildlife from rampant despoliation (see Chapter Five), the organization's very name, Sea *Shepherd*, evokes the decidedly anthropocentric activity of humans *herding* nonhumans, which carries the further implication that threatened nonhumans lack the agency to act on their own behalf.

Despite recent shifts in tactical repertoires, SSCS' formidable direct-action feats have been and are often more 'radical' than the tactics employed by reformist groups like Greenpeace, including- positioning their vessels between whales and harpoon ships, harassing and ramming whaling vessels in order to prevent harpooning and refueling (Nagtazaam 2013), the use of high-pressure water hoses and smoke flares in order to irritate and distract whalers, and ecological sabotage (ecotage) of equipment and property used to harm or kill wildlife (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Bondaroff 2014). Some notable examples include in 1986 when SSCS engineers Rod Coronado and David Howitt sank two of Iceland's four whaling ships in Reykjavik harbor and destroyed the whale processing station at Hvalfjodur, effectively shutting down Icelandic commercial whaling for 16 years (SSCS 2016). A more recent venture was their 10,000-mile, 110-day pursuit in 2015 across two seas and three oceans of an illegal fishing trawler called the Thunder, which landed them in maritime history for the longest pursuit of an illegal fishing vessel (Urbina 2015). SSCS' strategic physical interventions as opposed to Greenpeace's 'reform-style' activism, which as noted frequently involves litigation, lobbying, letter-writing campaigns (Moffa 2012, pg. 203), and a "constructive engagement with governments and corporations" (Rootes 2004, pg. 611), have seen some notable successes. For instance, their incessant harassment of Japanese whalers managed to bring Japan's 2010-2011 operations to a halt (Stuart et al 2013; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Bondaroff 2014), and reduced

[42] Pellow's (2014) three-part characterization scheme similarly includes 'radicals' who seek to entirely replace existing political-economic systems, progressives, and mainstream groups like Humane society who work towards slow incremental changes entirely from within the present system (Pg. 57).

Japan's 2012-2013 kill quota to 10% of its intended kills during their 9th Antarctic whale defense campaign, Operation Zero Tolerance (Nagtzaam 2013, pg. 667). Their last 10 Antarctic whale defense campaigns have purportedly saved the lives of approximately 6,000 whales, a significant feat given the protracted reproductive and developmental trajectories of these long-lived mammals, which render them particularly vulnerable to overexploitation[43]. However, on August 29th 2017 SSCS officially declared the end of their Southern Ocean campaign against Japanese whalers due largely to their inability to match Japan's military-grade surveillance technology, which tracks SSCS ships' movements in real time via satellite, as well as the passing of new anti-terrorism legislation which specifically targets REA groups such as SSCS. Indeed, SSCS' dramatic confrontations with Japanese whalers- which has led not to the nation's cessation of whaling but, on the contrary, its withdrawal from the IWC (Fobar 2018), a rise in nationalistic 'anti-anti-whaling sentiment and increased state militarization of whaling (Kato 2015; Milstein et al 2020)- demonstrates the unintended consequences that can arise with more aggressive modes of direct-activism that don't sufficiently engage with the myriad cultural, socioeconomic, etc. drivers of animal exploitation.

As noted, SSCS does not only engage in high-profile direct-action feats. Over recent years the organization has assumed more of a law-enforcement role, emphasizing cooperation *with* states and organizations (Milstein et al, 2020) over aggressive direct-action. Recent campaigns include their 2016/2017 Operation Albacore II, a partnership with the government of Gabon to stop illegal fishing in its coastal waters, and their 2017 Operation Milagro IV, a joint campaign with the Mexican government in a desperate effort to save the critically endangered vaquita porpoise residing in Mexico's Gulf of California. SSCS' increasingly frequent collaboration with state actors such as the military and government officials, skillful media manipulation and collaboration, and gradual shift into a law-enforcement role would appear to lend credence to Pellow's (2014) designation of the group as more progressive or reformist than radical. Milstein et al (2020) observe that as SSCS matures into organizational 'middle age' it is evolving in terms of tactics and self-representation. In line with novel radical movement forms such as Extinction Rebellion, Milstein et al (2020) suggest that SSCS should shift from the exclusive use of militaristic, '*against*' framing- with its violent and patriarchal undertones- towards modes of '*with*' framing that "communicate transformative ways of thinking and acting otherwise in working *with* wildlife, ecosystems, communities, organizations, and governments toward mutually thriving presents and futures" (Pg. 13). However, what of the identities and proclivities of the activists? Stuart et al (2013) have been instrumental in early investigations of SSCS activists' individual and collective identity constructs, noting that unlike more mainstream, litigation-based (and hierarchical) environmental NGOs such as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), SSCS activists generally exhibit a more 'radicalized identity' marked by a rejection of the "involvement of (or feel rejected by) mainstream society and with it "normative" methods for bringing about social change (Simon & Grabow 2011). In light of this, and given their history as a radical movement organization, they remain of interest in the context of the present research, particularly since SSCS- and especially the potentially utopian dimensions of the movement- has been the subject

[43] Dawson (2016) tragically remarks that, more than any other species of animal, the whale has endured the most vicious and prolonged attack by humans (pg. 52; Ponting, 2008, pg. 186). Species such as the North Atlantic Right whale and the Western Pacific grey whale have been reduced to such small fractions of their former abundance that many have yet to show signs of recovery (Baker & Clapham 2004). Early Industrial civilization was, to a considerable extent, built on the backs of whales (Hoare 2009).

of relatively few empirical studies (Hoek 2010; Nagtzaam, 2013; Stuart et al, 2013; Cianchi 2015; Robé, 2015).

No Compromise in Defense of the Earth: Earth First!

"So, from the vast sea of raging moderation, irresponsible compromise, knee-jerk rhetorical Sierra Club dogma, and unknowing (ok, sometimes knowing) duplicity in the systematic destruction of the Earth, a small seed of sanity sprouts: Earth First!" (Wolke, EF! Cofounder, cited in Manes, 1990, pg. 66).

Another notable strain of 'fourth-wave' environmentalism (Rootes 2004) is the REA group Earth First! (EF!) born in 1980 in the Southwestern United States (Manes 1990, pg. 82). It has since become the most widely known proponent of anarchic-style environmental direct-action in the English-speaking world (Rootes 2015 pg. 422). EF! was founded by Dave Foreman and four other 'disgruntled wilderness activists' (Doherty 2005, pg. 157) who were similarly disillusioned by the inefficacies of the national 'bureaucratic Big 10' environmental organizations[44] (Ingalsbee 1996) at stemming the tides of ecological decline[45]. EF!'s founders envisioned an environmental preservation force that would take uncompromising and, when necessary, militant stands against ecological despoliation while "refusing to let economic or political considerations water down its ecological agenda, even if that earned it the dreaded label of 'extremist'" (Manes 1990, pg. 69). The aforementioned is a direct reference to the perceived inadequacies of mainstream ENGOs to make meaningful headway in environmental protection. EF!ers along with social ecologists such as Murray Bookchin (2005), with whom they share a deep affinity (Tokar, 2008), posit that hierarchical social relationships and reductive modes of rationality lie at the heart of our socio-ecological crisis, and that as long as this is so, 'there is very little hope for creating an ecological society that will not seek to dominate or exploit the earth' (Bookchin et al 1991, pg. 3). Thus, EF!, in contrast to more traditional environmental movement organizations (EMO's) and even the more hierarchically structured SSCS, constitutes a dynamic assemblage of activists (Merchant 2005, pg. 182) who are united in their shared 'ecological' identities (Doherty 2005, pg. 155) and in their fervent passion for the protection of our biosphere and animal counterparts. In line with such views, EF! features an anarchic, non-hierarchical organizational structure (Day 2005, pg. 25) with no single national office, board of directors or administrative center, or any other form of national coordinating structure for groups in the UK and Australia, and only a "relatively weak central base in the USA" (Doherty 2005, pg. 155). Although, a marked limitation of anarchic activism is the difficulty in maintaining group identity outside of continued involvement by core activists (Berny & Rootes 2018).

EF!'s more aggressive direct-action strategies known as 'monkey-wrenching', inspired by Edward Abbey's famed novel, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), entail the "unlawful

[44] These include the Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Environmental Policy Institute, Izaak Walton League, National Audubon Society, National Parks and Conservation Association, National Wildlife Federation, National Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, and the Wilderness Society (Ingalsbee 1996, pg. 273).

[45] One notable event that ignited EF!'s frustration and thus helped mobilize this new strand of radical, confrontational environmentalism (Manes 1990, pg. 182) was the U.S Forest Service's RARE II (Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) survey. RARE II recommended the protection of only 15 million acres of old-growth forest- essentially the areas too high, dry, cold, and/or steep for logging- out of a total of 80 million acres that had previously been protected as a National Forest (Merchant 2005, pg. 182).

sabotage of industrial extraction/development equipment and infrastructure" as a way of attacking the earth's destroyers at the source (Doherty 2005, pg. 156)(see more below). Notable examples include tree sit-ins, 'siltation'- wherein abrasives are poured into the crankcases of road-building vehicles resulting in engine damage (Manes 1990, pg. 8), cutting cables that feed energy to machinery, arson of extractive machinery, and activists' use of bicycle D-locks in order to attach themselves to machinery as largely symbolic tactics intended to generate 'manufactured vulnerability' (Doherty 2005, pg. 168). Earlier and more controversial activities included their 'tree-spiking' campaigns wherein spikes were driven into trees marked for clearing in order to severely damage logging equipment upon their coming into contact with the spikes. This latter tactic was ultimately abandoned due to concerns over threats to human life after a worker at the Louisiana Pacific mill in Cloverdale, California was injured[46]. However, disagreements over strategies, tactics and overarching objectives have remained a recurrent tension within and amongst many EF! Groups. By the early 1990s, founder Dave Foreman along with a few other 'wilders' EF!ers lamented what they perceived to be EF!'s gradual retreat from biocentrism by some members' attempts at tying issues of environmental degradation to systemic ills such as socioeconomic inequality and the depredations of capitalism, ultimately leaving the group for good (Rootes 2015). Though, it was 'wilders' like Christopher Manes and Dave Foreman who largely perpetuated an elitist image of the white, heterosexual 'macho' male as the true steward of a pure 'Nature' under siege by a wayward humanity, at the expense of gender, racial, and class diversity (Pellow 2014). Similarly, it is such former strains of EF!ers who have espoused such misanthropic views as that withholding aid from those suffering from hunger in Africa and other developing regions, or that leaving lethal infectious diseases such as AIDS untreated, would constitute lamentable yet necessary methods for curbing human population growth (Doherty 2005, pg. 159).

By contrast, the 'Holies' faction represented by formerly prominent EF!ers such as Judi Bari and co-founder Mike Roselle launched more nuanced and thorough-going critiques of the myriad underlying drivers of socio-ecological decline. They maintained that a truly biocentric perspective must further challenge the system of industrial capitalism which is fundamentally predicated upon the ownership and boundless exploitation of the earth (Shantz 2002, pg. 115). As such, the 'holies' posited that a transition towards a more socio-ecologically resilient and harmonious society was only possible through a radical restructuring of global socioeconomic systems, namely from being oriented around ceaseless expansion and profit maximization towards ensuring the wellbeing of all living beings. Bari envisioned a future society that would be "entirely free from exploitation of any and all life forms, wherein the overarching goal would be to achieve "a stable state with nature for the benefit of all species" (Bari 1994, pg. 57). The Holies emphasized a move towards 'post-wilderness' (London 1998, pg. 161; Cronon, 1996) holistic perspectives that see the social and the natural as one totality, wherein social justice issues are viewed as intimately bound with issues of wilderness conservation. For them the exploitation of nature and of the working classes result from the same structural forces (Taylor 1991, pg. 263)[47]. These schisms during the earlier years of EF! between 'home-based'

[46] EF! insisted that they were not responsible for the incident, as they always notified timber companies about spiked trees, the point being to prevent logging and not to harm people (Manes 1990, pg. 11)

[47] Indeed, Judi Bari (1994) sought to build a society This EF! faction tried to build alliances with logging communities, for instance, in an attempt to highlight how the timber companies that were clear-cutting forests undermined everyone's long-term wellbeing- human and natural communities alike- for the sake of short-term profit maximization (Shantz 2002; Doherty 2005, pg. 158).

Holies striving for an inclusive community and the more nomadic Wilders working to preserve a wholly 'Other' nature can be seen as a "manifestation of the broader Western tensions between the rootless individualism of the frontier and the attempt to 'nest' or 'stick' in place, between nature as the Great Outdoors and nature as home" (London 1998, pg. 170). It will be interesting note the degree to which, if at all, the Wilder-Holie dynamic plays out amongst contemporary REA incarnations, and the degree to which they engage in analyses and critiques of the political-economic underpinnings of the ecological crisis. Though Berny & Rootes (2018) note a purported decline in prominence of direct-activism of REA groups and increased salience of litigation-based ENGOs such as Client Earth in the post-1990s context, REA's remain crucial if not more so (and therefore of interest for the purposes of this project) given the relative successes of their tactics at the microlevel (i.e., physically halting extractivist activities such as mining and logging) as well as the urgency of contemporary ecological decline.

Extinction Rebellion

Like the more long-standing REA groups discussed above, the novel UK-born decentralized mass movement Extinction Rebellion (XR) (2019) similarly emerged from a perceived lack of insufficiently urgent and transformative responses on behalf of the world's governments with regards to the extant climate and ecological crisis. Since its inception in 2018 it has spread around the globe, inspiring mass mobilizations engaging in civil disobedience, road and bridge blockades, and similarly disruptive (and non-violent) direct-action tactics in order to bring the status quo to a halt and force governments to declare a climate emergency. Curiously and somewhat problematically, despite the explicitly anti-capitalist narratives propagated by many of its members, XR refers to itself as an 'apolitical movement' (Extinction Rebellion 2020). Yet, it can be argued that the climate and ecological crisis, their driving forces and broader implications in terms of questions surrounding how we ought to live together, are distinctly ethico-political in nature, casting doubt on whether this new movement is truly radical in nature. XR is a novel green movement form still in its infancy, and thus there is very little empirical work to draw on in its assessment. However, recalling Pellow's (2014) categorization between radical and progressive movements, in generally seeking changes from *within* the present system by demanding that governments institute requisite legal changes for mitigating climate emergency (Extinction Rebellion 2020), XR might be classed more as a progressive rather than a radical EMO. Although, the movement does exhibit decidedly utopian elements through its more disruptive aims and in its calls for direct-democratic modes of political deliberation over crucial issues related to climate and ecological justice in the form of citizens' assemblies. Moreover, as many of the movement's founding members were and continue to be members of REA groups such as EF!, therefore exhibiting similarly 'radicalised identities' (Dalton & Rohrschneider 2003), they are of interest within the present study and will thus be included as participants.

'The Great Refusal': REA's as Utopian Movement Forms

"Our sense of ourselves as a community- the community that could be, the one we felt we had to be…was acute. And there before us was the vast engine that is in fact destroying the modern world" (Dennison, quoted in Breines 1989, pg. 34).

Within social movement theory there are the more traditional theorizations such as 'resource mobilization theory' (McCarthy & Zald 1977), which focuses on the relative availability of resources on which movements might capitalize on in order to take actions against capitalism

or the state. 'Political opportunity structure' theorizations (McAdams et al 1996) tend to emphasize the relative openness of states and the wider political landscape and how this might either pave the way for or hinder social movement activity. However, both to varying degrees have tended to conceive of social movements as seeking to transform capitalism and political institutions from *within* the 'container' of the nation-state (Price et al, 2008, pg. 130; Pellow 2014). What of the notion that we increasingly find ourselves amidst 'turbulent state re-composition' (Price et al, 2008 pg. 132) wherein the traditional model of Westphalian nation-state units is being gradually superseded by the concentration of financial and military power in oligarchic-corporate assemblages (i.e., prominent world actants such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and networks of offshore tax havens) (Price et al 2008)? What of the geographic re-composition being wrought by newly dominant global actants- rising seas, superstorms, infectious diseases, and multiplicities of other nonhumans- whose various actions respect no boundaries (Latour 2018)? Likewise, what of thoroughly contentious extra-parliamentary political manifestations (McAdam et al 2003) that, rather than seeking to 'green capitalism' and merely render the current system less destructive, or rather than merely seeking fair representation and recognition *within* the present system, call the entire order into question and seek to build potentially viable and resilient post-capitalist alternatives? How to conceptualize such political manifestations of radical difference that have taken centre-stage in response to decades of socio-ecological upheaval?

A more apt lens for capturing and analysing the emergence and development of REA groups is New Social Movement theory (henceforth NSM) (McAdam et al 1996; Ingalsbee 1996; Day 2005). NSM frames collective action and social movements along decidedly utopian lines as prefigurative and symbolic socio-politico-cultural forms of interaction that "present critiques of existing social orders and realities" (Ingalsbee 1996, pg. 266). A key focus with NSM theory is on collective identity formation (Polletta & Jasper 2001) and its relationship to the transformation of modern societies (Zald 2000), a phenomenon famously elucidated by Habermas' (1989) notion of modern society's 'colonization of lifeworlds' and the systemic crises that stem therefrom (Crossley 2003, pg. 290; Plumwood 2007 pg. 146). For Habermas (1989), NSM's constitute modern revolts against state bureaucratic and economic practices that increasingly permeate or 'colonize' every aspect of our lives. What inevitably results is, among other things, cultural impoverishment, commodification via the market's steady encroachment into areas previously beyond its remit, and a growing decline in the significance of the public sphere wherein deliberations of social, political and ethical norms have historically taken place. NSM's seek fundamental transformations of lifestyle and identity for the reconstruction of our lifeworlds as well as a revitalization of the public sphere (Crossley 2003, pg. 295); in the case of REA's, the objective is to transform the very structural foundations of the human-animal-nature relationship. A crucial aspect of many NSM manifestations such as REA's is their extra-parliamentary, prefigurative modalities of political engagement and participation (Boggs 1977) which seek to fuel mobilisation on behalf of the wider society for effecting fundamental structural, socio-economic, cultural, etc. transformations. More than this, prefigurative political groups- as their name suggests- seek to enact 'utopic alternatives' (Breines 1989; Yates, 2014) in the present, from a grassroots approach owing to their anarchic aversions to state-authoritative methods of social change (Yates 2015). At its core prefigurative politics is decidedly utopian, consisting of a 'great refusal' of the 'Now' via an upsurge of radical (utopian) hopes and ideas that anticipate and gesture towards alternative worlds (see Chapters Two & Seven) (Breines 1989, Pg. 19). It is such radical hopes and ideas exhibited by REA's- and what possible worlds they might offer glimpses of- that have since received insufficient scholarly attention and thus warrant further investigation.

Crying '*No'* to the Existing Order and Prophesying the Coming of the New

Cathcart's (1978) distinction between 'confrontational forms' (radical) as opposed to 'managerial forms' (reformist/progressive) of social movements adeptly captures the utopian alterity of REA's. The latter, as elucidated by mainstream ENGOs, deploy 'managerial rhetorics' designed to portray- or at least take for granted the notion of- the existing system as *the* true order in continual movement towards perfection. Thus, such approaches rarely if ever question underlying onto-epistemology and group ethic. On the other hand, the "*confrontational* rhetoric" such as that deployed by REA's[48] surfaces in rare circumstances such as during periods of societal (and ecological) breakdown or when society's moral underpinnings are called into question (Cathcart 1978, pg. 238;42), as we're experiencing today amidst the myriad socio-ecological dislocations of the Anthropocene. Confrontational movements embody "a kind of ritual conflict whose most distinguishing form is confrontation with the established order, its structural and ideological hierarchies, and its values" (Cathcart 1978, pg. 235;7)[49] (also a distinguishing feature of utopianism; refer to Chapter Two). In one sense all political movements can be said to be born when the multitudes say 'No!' to the 'existing structures and politics of the dominant society' (Breines 1989, pg. 23). However, this is even truer of the confrontational forms, which often perceive themselves as profoundly alienated from the prevailing order (estrangement as yet another key feature of utopianism). Such millenarian movement forms are "moved by an impious dream of a mythic New Order-…to rise up and cry *No* to the existing order…saying, 'You cannot go on assuming you are the true and correct order…'" (Cathcart, 1978, pg. 243) and further "prophesy the coming of the new" (Griffin 1969, pg. 460). The significance of the confrontational movement lies in its ability to engender the realization that the conflict is no mere realignment of the established order but a fundamental challenge to it, a striving for reconstruction rather than reform. As such, confrontational movements, like prefigurative political modes, are thoroughly utopian- they serve as pockets of radical difference designed to fundamentally refute existing systems and structures as presently constituted, and offer glimmers of a potentially better 'Not-Yet'.

Traditional conceptualizations of social movements, even NSM theorizations to a degree, have tended to neglect more utopian or 'prefigurative' movements of the periphery that seek to supplant existing socioeconomic systems and modes of relationality with better alternatives (Price et al 2008) (see Chapter Two). REA's represent temporary 'tears in the fabric of the present' (Khasnabish 2008), as spaces of alterity that are fervently opposed to the 'Now' of late capitalism and embody an ecological habitus of ecologically sensitive perceptions, relations, and actions (Haluza-Delay, 2008; Kasper 2009). REA's aren't mere counter-cultural 'hippies' covered in tattoos, sporting dreadlocks and bent on sowing chaos, as some popular conceptions might contend; crucially, they are "a concept, an act of rejection, a militant vanguard, a hope for the future" (Teodori 1969, pg. 363). The spaces of alterity they embody and seek to instantiate serve as 'parallel universes' (Klein 2002, pg. xxiv) wherein the

[48] According to Cathcart (1978), the proclamation of an alternate vision is where movements truly begin, because "up to the point of confrontation it is impossible to know that a radical or true movement exists" (pg. 241). In other words, according to Cathcart (1978) confrontation engenders and reinforces an emerging movement's identity, substance and form, and thus they cannot be movements for radical change without it (pg. 243).

[49] With special relevance to radical 'confrontational' versus reformist 'managerial' green groups, Cathcart (1978) poignantly observes that "many of the so-called 'types' of movements described in recent literature do not appear to be movements at all, but rather adjustments to the existing order" rather than rejections of it (pg. 239).

dominant norms of our individualistic, hypercompetitive, and ecologically rapacious socioeconomic systems and institutions lose their facades of immutability through their juxtaposition with arguably better alternatives (Anderson 2004, pg. 48). It is such spaces that warrant further exploration given the extant and looming socio-ecological crises of the Anthropocene, hence why REA's serve as such ideal subjects of further investigation. Thus, this project posits radical green groups as potential ecotopian expressions of an alternate socio-ecological order. To be further investigated are such queries as: to what degree do REA's dismantle traditional human-animal hierarchies? What do they designate as the profound inadequacies of the present? Yates (2015) alludes to a lack of clarity around the degree to which 'future projections' of prefigurative movements feature in the activists' and groups' overarching goals; thus, of particular interest is what their visions of a 'better' socio-ecological order consist of and how they relate to futurity more broadly, how these compare/contrast with the visions espoused in classic ecotopian texts, and what REA's as responses to the exigencies of increasingly precarious and unpredictable human-animal-nature relationships amid the Anthropocene might add to existing theorizations of ecotopia.

Chapter (4): Methodological Framework

This research begins from the premise that the exigencies of the Anthropocene are, crucially, ethico-political in nature, as they force us to reckon with such fundamental questions as how we ought to relate to and live well with myriad other beings during times of increasing socio-ecological precariousness (Latour 2018). These are queries that the subjects of study in question variedly attempt to address, and thus part of the present interest lies in uncovering what these arguably better modes of human-animal-nature relationality might look like from the former's perspective. In this chapter I delineate the project's methodological framework, recount early methodological challenges in the field, rationales underlying the selection of research methods and data sources, and mode of analysis: thematic-ecocriticism. The latter, especially in its material strands and heavily influenced by Latour (2004; 2005) and posthumanist theory more generally, is a non-anthropocentric analytical approach which seeks to critically assess depictions of human-animal-nature relations in myriad forms such as literary texts and interview transcripts. Traditional methodological constructivist and positivist approaches are eschewed in favour of a Latourian (2005) radical realist and anti-hierarchical empiricism because both in their purest forms to varying degrees tend to reduce reality and matters of significance to that which can be grasped by *human* knowledge. The former does so to the level of human discourse and socio-cultural perspectives, and the latter to that which can be empirically 'known' via traditionally objective scientific methods. Both require a human observer for the world and its other inhabitants to have meaning, and in effect, *to be*. Latourian ontology, on the other hand, posits a diffuse agency where things in themselves are concrete and lack nothing, whether humans are around to observe them or not (Latour in Sheridan & Law 1988, pg. 193; Harman 2009). Though the project's human subjects of study and the meanings they ascribe to their mobilizations and the nonhuman world are of present interest, they are posited as a set of unique perspectives amidst multiplicities of other agencies and ways of 'knowing' that are equally as consequential.

One might wonder the degree to which Descartes (1637), when uttering his famed dictum, 'I think, therefore I am', conceived of the possibility that his cherished 'I' might not precede or exist separately from the verb, that perhaps thought originated not from the 'I' but from a world where everything exists together non-hierarchically (Nancy 2000; St Pierre et al 2016, pg. 103). For Latour (1988), neither humans nor any others are the privileged shepherds

of being (Heidegger 2010). Humans can gain power by mobilizing other actants in order to 'construct' reality in a particular way, but then so can atoms, viruses, and orcas. Likewise, unlike with traditional realism, social movements, Shakespearean plays and, as we'll see, utopian imaginaries, are deemed as 'real' as mounting atmospheric concentrations of CO_2[50] because of their effects on other actors. Moreover, Latour's rejection of traditional materialist accounts of the world rests on the contention that we cannot know with certainty what actors *are*, any more than we can predict how they will behave. We may attempt to theorize and formulate a particular actant, its alliances with other things and phenomena, and gain a working understanding of the former, but no formulation ever fully approximates the reality of either. This amounts to a powerful critique of the traditional positivist as well as constructivist tendency to reduce reality to human conceptualizations about it. Similarly, I share an affinity with phenomenological approaches which see empirical research- indeed any form of human knowledge- as a complex and multifaceted undertaking that can only ever yield partial and provisional 'truths' which we approximate by being *of* and not *outside* of the world (Merleau-Ponty 1996; Barad 2007, pg. 185). I have delineated the aforementioned onto-epistemological assumptions that underpin my own outlook on the world and approach to the research process in the interests of transparency, so as to shed light on how the former influences the latter and vice versa. I firmly maintain that a researcher never exists within a theoretically, ideologically or ethico-politically neutral space (Becker 1967), and that good research proceeds from the researcher's understanding of their embeddedness in the world, and critical awareness of the potential strengths as well as drawbacks of their ideological, theoretical and ethico-political predispositions.

Latour (2004; 2005) serves as one of the key components of the project's theoretical and analytical framework, particularly with regards to analyzing core themes in the final chapter. However, for the purposes of this project, I have not engaged in an ANT-methodological approach; that is, I have not methodically traced the myriad and intricate meanderings of each potential actant in its alliances with REA's. This is because, as denoted, the present interests lie in what motivates and underlies *REA* strivings, ecotopian projections, and conceptualizations of/entanglements with nonhuman others. Nevertheless, an awareness of REA sensibilities and mobilisations as always situated within- and influenced by- wider assemblages of nonhuman actants is maintained throughout. Latour's theorizations are drawn upon largely because of their significance within the posthuman tradition as notable attempts to deconstruct dualistic and hierarchical constructions of human-animal-nature relations, therefore serving as key lens through which to assess REA strivings and worldviews. Methodologically, the posthuman onto-epistemology/radical realism of Latour and others (Braidotti 2013) is fused with idealist/interpretivist inclinations, since the project is interested predominantly in how REA's assign meaning to their actions, their understandings of ecotopianism, etc. so as to develop approximate 'explanations' of REA actions, motivations and worldviews. Though the 'explanations' produced are based on my always-limited understanding of the narratives produced by a particular group located in a particular time and space rather than any 'absolute' truth claims. Furthermore, the present work is largely deductive; it is maintained that knowledge of the world as well as approaches to research are always to an extent- whether implicitly or explicitly- theory-laden. Thus, I adopt a top-down approach to the gathering, organization and analysis of data, and the research process more generally, drawing largely on utopian and critical posthuman theory as an overarching

[50] For, the mere fact that humans created a thing doesn't make it any less *real*; Latour's peculiar brand of realism denies the traditional distinction between the 'natural' and 'artificial' as a prerequisite for the 'real' (Latour 1999; Harman 2009).

interpretive framework or lens for critically assessing and understanding REAs' worldviews, diagnostic and prognostic framing narratives, and activist motivations (Braun & Clarke 2012, pg. 58; Snow 2013). The general interest of research rooted in critical theoretical tributaries is the attempt to "deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice" (Shields 2013, pg. 21; Braidotti 2016; Ulmer 2017).

Overarching Objectives:

"The problem of the Greens everywhere is that they seem unable to tap the right sources of energy and strike the right chord of the multitude. If we are so threatened, why is it that ecologically minded people constitute no more than a minority?...A threat to a temple? A blasphemy somewhere? Everyone is up in arms. Millions move like one single man. A threat to the Earth system? A yawn, or a slow snail-like move to change our light bulbs" (Latour 2011, pg. 75).

This project aims, in part, to at least attempt to provide answers for Latour's (2011) poignant and timely query. Why is it that, given the extant and impending doom of climate catastrophe and the collapse of Earth's biodiversity, many do not appear to exhibit the sense of urgency seemingly warranted? More fundamentally, why do REA's as perhaps the most 'ecologically minded' among us risk life and limb for the protection of the Earth and its myriad inhabitants, rather than engage in a 'slow snail-like' move towards sustainability? As Kopnina (2012) observes, "Those committed to the struggle of 'radical environmentalism' or animal liberation are among the least understood of all contemporary opposition movements, not only in tactical terms but also ethically and philosophically" (pg. 236). It is particularly the latter ethical and philosophical elements of REA thought and behaviour that I seek to further elucidate. Threatened ecosystems and species appear to exert a curiously potent pull on the imaginations, motivations, and actions of REA's, the nature of which remains relatively underdeveloped and under-investigated (Pellow 2014, Pg. 30), and which is rendered all the more pertinent amid the current Anthropocene era of socio-ecological breakdown. Existing literature has laid the essential groundwork by investigating the general parameters, identities, historical trajectories, deep ecological orientations, tactics, and organizational dynamics of such REA groups as Earth First! (Lee 1995; Bragg 1996; Ingalsbee 1996; Wall 1999; Marangudakis 2001; Taylor 2008) and Sea Shepherd (Hoek 2010; Nagtzaam 2007, 2014; Stuart et al 2013; Cianchi 2015). Nevertheless, key questions remain that require further and more concerted elucidation, such as: what are their deepest motivations? Precisely what is the nature of/factors underlying their seemingly posthumanist orientations towards the human-nature relationship? Most importantly, how do activists from each group hope to reconstruct the human-nature-animal relationship in their projections of ecotopian alternatives?

In light of these investigative aims, qualitative methodologies, with their abilities to yield deeper understandings by revealing the nuances of experiences not amenable to quantitative investigations (Braun & Clarke 2013), were deemed most suitable. Among the core objectives of qualitative as opposed to quantitative methodologies is the striving to understand how research participants themselves understand the world, the *meanings* that *they* ascribe to particular phenomena, and how they conceptualize the motives governing their own actions- independently of how we as researchers understand such things (Dey 2003). Crucially, through such methodological approaches we are able to "expand on the 'what' questions of human existence asked by positivism to include the 'why' and 'how' questions asked by

constructionism" (Darlaston-Jones 2007, pg. 25). Moreover, qualitative methods are also especially apt for investigating the terrain of the 'ought' (i.e., how ought we relate to the nonhuman world? How ought human-animal-nature relations be reconfigured?), which seeks to shed light on how things might be rather than merely how they presently are. Lastly, the use of qualitative methodologies is especially appropriate when investigating groups and individuals who are notoriously difficult to access (Alberro 2019), and whose singularity and relative rarity renders them non-amenable to large-scale quantitative studies. Thus, the guiding and subsidiary investigative queries of the project are as follows:

→ *Overarching Thesis Query: To what degree may REA's be posited as contemporary manifestations of ecotopian principles and modes of relationality, and what might insights gleaned suggest about ecotopianism more generally amid the socio-ecological perturbations of the Anthropocene?*

> *i. Foundations - What are the nature, extent, and key factors underlying REAs' 'posthumanist' worldviews and modes of relationality with regards to the natural world and nonhuman species? Who/what do they value and on what basis? How do these worldviews influence their actions on behalf of natural others?*
>
> *ii. 'Diagnostic Framing'[51] - Which actors, socioeconomic, cultural and political forces, etc. do the activists identify as the key drivers behind socio-ecological decline, and how do they cohere with the diagnoses featured in key ecotopian texts? (The 'critique' aspect of utopianism)*
>
> *iii. 'Prognostic Framing'[52]- What are the activists' visions for an 'ecotopian future', and what are the contrasts and continuities between their ecotopian visions and those expressed in key ecotopian literary texts? What might REA's add to contemporary ecotopian theory?*

The above overarching and subsidiary project research questions, though to a degree distinct, each intersect and build upon one another in significant ways. As previously denoted, this project operates considerably in the ethico-political terrain of the 'ought'- how modes of human-animal-nature relationality *ought* to be (mainly according to REA's but also in dialogue with critical-posthumanist theoretical tributaries within which the project is situated), and which structural, societal, political, etc. changes *ought* to take place so as to facilitate the former. Posthumanist and utopian traditions are similarly firmly embedded within this normative ethico-political terrain (Chapter Two), interested as they are in deconstructing rigid human-animal-nature hierarchies and exploring and instantiating 'better' modes of being. Moreover, a crucial precursor to the ought is a thorough and critical examination of the 'Now' and its deficiencies, hence subsidiary research question *ii*; subsidiary question *i* is designed to explore REA posthumanist worldviews and valuation of Earth others in greater depth as these are thought to influence their criticisms of the 'Now' and ecotopian projections. Regarding the latter the interest is not in providing an extensive metaphysical or philosophical account of the origins of moral normativity in relation to the nonhuman world (Merleau-Ponty 2003; Fritsch

[51] This refers to social movements' "Identification of the source(s) of causality, blame, and/or culpable agents" (Benford & Snow 2000, pg. 616).
[52] This "Addresses the Leninesque question of what is to be done" (Benford & Snow, 2000, pg. 616)

in Fritsch et al 2018) but, crucially, how REA's approach the issue of who matters and why. Finally, query *iii* seeks to shed light on the ecotopian 'ought' according to REA's, featured texts, and the wider academic literature. The ultimate aim is to understand the precise nature of REA ecological worldviews, diagnostic framings, and ecotopian projections (as key actors mobilizing against the socio-ecological deficiencies of the 'Now'), how these inform one another, and- in dialogue with utopian theory and other relevant theoretical insights- what modalities of ecotopianism, if any, REA's might exhibit.

Early Encounters

I sought to uncover why members of radical environmental groups act and think in the unique ways that they do, and crucially, how they propose to reconstruct society along more socio-ecologically resilient and ethical trajectories. Thus, I had planned on utilizing the ethnographic method of participant observation (Spradley 2016) as a rich supplement to the semi-structured interviews that form the core component of the project's methodological framework. However, access to the groups and subsequent participant recruitment proved far more difficult than anticipated. For instance, I had planned on collecting data via interviews and participant observation while in attendance at EF!'s 5-day biannual gatherings- events consisting of skill-sharing sessions, workshops, direct-action planning, and networking- which take place each summer. However, key activist organizers ultimately decided that, due to the sensitive nature of their activities and the considerable trepidation born of numerous traumatic encounters with undercover police infiltration, they didn't feel comfortable having an 'outsider' observing them and taking notes on their activities. However, they still warmly welcomed my attending each gathering in a non-official capacity, and as I became further acquainted with them on more intimate levels they ultimately welcomed me as a trusted member of their collective. Although the numerous hours spent in the field with my participants are not featured as official data in this project, they do feed into my overall understanding of these unique individuals. Furthermore, soon after commencing field work I came to realize that Sea Shepherd don't host any large-scale activist gatherings on land, and that the only viable place to conduct participant observation would have been aboard one of their ships, though this proved ethically unfeasible.

Thus, I opted instead for document analysis (Bowen 2009) as a supplement to the semi-structured interviews (see below) which were carried out at various times and locations throughout the data-gathering stages of the project between August 2017-2018. After further involvement at numerous EF! gatherings, meetings, and the like, I came to realize that EF!ers, at least in the UK, though they identify with the label and philosophies of Earth First!, are also actively involved with other groups such as Reclaim the Streets (RTS), Riseup, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), Rising Tide, Extinction Rebellion (XR), and Frack Off. The label 'Earth First!' serves more as a collective form of identity with which activists associate rather than any kind of formal or enduring organization. 'EF!' as a body of activists consists of only a handful of relatively constant members who help organize events, fundraising and logistics, and who as a group identify themselves as the 'EF! collective'. Through more prolonged interaction with the activists I came to understand that the 'radical green movement' is far more diffuse, dynamic, and multifarious than I could have imagined. This nascent realization, in addition to aforementioned methodological difficulties surrounding access to the groups, prompted me to expand my initial selection criteria of activists who identified as either members of EF!, SSCS or any long-standing activists in the radical green movement heavily involved in contentious or prefigurative modes of political activism – i.e., through engagement in ecological direct-action and who express 'radicalized identities' (Stuart et al 2013). The newly expanded criteria allowed for the inclusion of an expansive array of activists from

diverse backgrounds, making for a truly unique body of data consisting predominantly of EF! and SSCS activists but also those from the Hambacher Forest occupation, Extinction Rebellion, and various Animal Liberation movements.

Methods:

Key Concepts:

The subsequent list features key concepts that have emerged throughout the literature (on the Anthropocene, environmental movements, green utopian theory, etc.) in relation to the project's three separate yet interrelated areas of enquiry: (1) nature and extent of REA ecological worldviews and action motivators, (2) Diagnostic framing (criticisms of the 'Now') amongst REA's and key ecotopian texts, and (3) prognostic framing (articulations of better modes of human-animal-nature relationality) amongst REA's alongside pertinent examples from ecotopian texts. The key concepts were used in order to guide interview query formulation, and inform code and theme development by delineating actions, behaviors, and narratives of particular interest amid the extensive data sets. Key concepts similarly aided subsequent analyses by serving as a link between existing bodies of literature, the project's main investigative queries, and the data. Key concepts/categories (Sarantakos 2012) developed from the existing literature include but are not limited to:

Ecological Worldviews and Behavioral Motivators:

- Ecological Worldviews (Deep ecology, critical posthumanism, etc.)
- 'Ecological Self' (Extend from the atomic to the biospheric level? What is the basis of identification, what line of demarcation between 'self' and 'other'?)
- Nonhuman agency
- Focus on individuals versus collectives (species → ecosystems →biosphere)
- Modes of valuation (inherent vs. instrumental, valuing of nature/animal 'others' on the basis of perceived sameness to humans vs. a valuing of diversity and difference in itself, etc.)
- Hierarchies, dualisms (Self/other, Society/nature, etc.), and similar approaches to boundary delineations
- Internal vs. external action motivators
- Conceptualizations of 'Nature' (dynamic, fluid mosaic that includes humans or static, 'pristine' entity separate from humanity?)

Diagnostic Framing:

- Attributions of culpability- From individuals to broader systems and structural forces
- 'Humanity' as such or capitalism and growth-oriented socioeconomic systems (alienation, exploitation, etc.)?
- Nature and degree of estrangement from the 'Now'
- Anthropocentric/human exceptionalist paradigms
- Apocalyptic narratives

Prognostic Framing:

- Conceptions of Ecotopia
- Modes of u(eco)topianism exhibited (Grounded? Critical? Heterotopic? Transgressive?)
- Conceptions of futurity

- Modes of human-animal-nature relationality in Ecotopia (i.e., rewilding, etc.)
- Inside/Outside dynamic of cosmopolitical collectives-to-come (what should they consist of? Who is to be included, excluded, and why?)
- Relation to hope

A. Semi-Structured Interviews:

Because I'm interested in uncovering underlying attitudes, worldviews, and motivations held by activists rather than shedding light on specific individuals or events, the method of semi-structured interviews, which allows for rich elucidation on behalf of the participants, seemed most suitable (Aberbach & Rockman 2002, pg. 673). Semi-structured interviews are an apt method for accessing participants' worldviews because they allow the researcher to explore the central themes of the project whilst allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate upon related issues of significance to them. Although such an open-ended approach helps to increase the validity of responses by providing respondents with more room for organizing their answers according to their own frameworks, one disadvantage is that it makes subsequent coding and analysis more challenging (Aberbach & Rockman 2002, pg. 674). Partly stemming from issues with access noted previously, both in terms of geographical location and the nature of the groups under study, the initial intentions of employing the 'gold standard' of face-to-face interviews (McCoyd & Kerson 2006, pg. 390) was largely abandoned in favor of synchronic online interviews (Deakin & Wakefield 2014). It is, however, important for a researcher to remain aware of the potential drawbacks of non-face-to-face interviewing- risk of failure to pick up on crucial non-verbal cues, difficulty in building or maintaining rapport with participants (O'Connor et al 2008), and crucially, the exclusion of participants of interest who don't have access to Information Communication Technologies (ICT)(Deakin & Wakefield 2014). Such difficulties as the building and maintenance of rapport were partially overcome through previous face-to-face interactions and familiarity with some of the participants, whilst extensive prior communication via email and social media platforms took place with those for whom face-to-face interactions proved infeasible. Regarding issues with access to ICT, the project proceeded on the basis of the notion that ICT is increasingly accessible to growing segments of the population, particularly in the Global North, as evinced by the fact that none of the activists approached for participation denoted a lack of access to/competence regarding use of ICT's. Lastly, for the purposes of this project, and as will be explicated further below, spoken and written text are the prime areas of focus, not non-verbal cues and other nuanced modes of communication.

Experience proved, as others had previously suggested (Madge & O'Connor, 2004), that the remote nature of online interviewing helped facilitate further reflection by participants on sensitive topics. Though online research is in its relative infancy, existing research has shown that the nature and quality of the data obtained through online interviews- in terms of pauses, repetitions, recasts, etc.- is very similar to that obtained through more traditional methods (Cabaroglu et al. 2010). Increasingly, the myriad benefits of novel interview mediums available to researchers in the technological age, such as Skype (Hanna 2012) and Facebook Audio (Deakin & Wakefield 2014), are becoming apparent: ease of use, flexibility and versatility for researcher and participant alike (O'Connor et al 2008), low to no associated financial costs, the ability to transcend barriers initially imposed by time and geographical constraints, and therefore the ability to access participants who initially might have been inaccessible. Such methods proved especially useful when interviewing Sea Shepherd activists as they often spend long periods of time on the high seas and in similarly remote locations during their various campaigns. Furthermore, ICT's that offer the option for a video call for

communication in real time, as opposed to merely audio, provide an advantage over phone and similar audio-only functions in helping to facilitate a more natural interaction between the researcher and participant (Deakin & Wakefield 2014). Each interview, which lasted approximately one hour on average, was conducted either via Skype or Facebook Video, was recorded via an audio recording app on my cell phone, and was then uploaded onto an encrypted drive for storage. Ethical concerns informed each step in the process, wherein each participant received a full information sheet and consent form to fill via email, with explicit emphasis placed on the use of a recording device prior to the commencement of each interview. Participants were also notified of their right to withdraw from participation in the project at any time. ICT's provided access to participants (a mix of English and Spanish speakers) not only in the UK but also across a wide array of countries including Australia, Canada, Germany, Spain, Uruguay, the United States, and the Netherlands. Participants from Spain and Uruguay were interviewed in Spanish and, during the transcription process, the interviews were automatically translated into English by myself as a native Spanish speaker. Recruitment of participants from non-English speaking countries adds a cross-cultural perspective to the data and thus expands its validity, yet is otherwise not deemed significant for the purposes of this thesis as of interest are the posthumanist worldviews of radical environmental activists as a unique subgroup of individuals, regardless of such characteristics as nationality, culture, or language. Indeed, such factors did not result in any notable differences in the types of answers given or views expressed.

Participants:

The final sample included 26 participants, composed predominantly of more committed and long-standing volunteers and organizers as such individuals are likely to have more developed and coherent belief systems than more casual members (Rao et al 2000). Because none of the REA groups have member registries due to their decidedly anarchic structures and radical tactical repertoires, participant recruitment proceeded initially via snowball sampling with the help of key gatekeepers in person and through social media platforms such as Facebook, followed by opportunistic/emergent sampling (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Snowball sampling proved a particularly invaluable access tool and method throughout with such difficult-to-access groups (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981; Noy 2008; Alberro, 2019). After prolonged interaction in person and via online platforms, trusted core members essentially conferred their stamp of approval which therefore helped build trust on behalf of other members. Though, as most of the participants were highly protective of their identities, the only information about them that was obtained throughout the project was of the sort relating to general demographic information such as their relative age, gender, and rough group(s)/organization(s) of affiliation. Most used pseudonyms in order to conceal their identities, and in listing them in the chart below I developed further pseudonyms of my own in order to further conceal their identities. As stipulated in the chart below, participants range from younger activists of around age 20 to more established 'veterans' in their mid 50s and 60s and who've been involved in radical environmental activism for decades. Participants were predominantly of British nationality, though of an array of other nationalities as well (i.e., the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, USA, Uruguay, Germany, Spain). Slightly more males were interviewed than females, although the imbalance is not deemed significant enough to result in any notable impacts on the quality of the data obtained. However, racial, ethnic, and to a degree socioeconomic diversity are starkly lacking, although efforts were made to include as wide an array of activists as possible. This can be regarded as a marked limitation of the present study. Exact reasons for this remain unclear, though it seems to lend some support to Inglehart's (1982) thesis concerning greater acceptability of the need for social-environmental change

amongst the middle-upper classes (who also presumably have greater financial resources for acting on their views).

Participant	Approx. Age	Gender	Group(s) of Affiliation
Bear	Late 20s	Male	Earth First!, etc.
Squirrel	Late 30s	Male	Earth First!
Goose (Gatekeeper)	Early 50s	Female	Earth First!
Horse	Mid 50s	Female	Earth First!
Meadow	Early 40s	Male	Earth First!, Animal Liberation
Koala	Late 20s	Male	ALF, Hambacher Forst
Badger	Early 50s	Male	Earth First!, XR
Fox	Late 20s	Female	Animal Liberation, Earth First!
Dog	Mid 30s	Female	Animal Liberation, Earth First!
Tree	Early 30s	Male	Earth First!
Grasshopper	Late 20s	Male	Sea Shepherd, Animal Liberation
Forest	Early 20s	Male	Hambacher Forst
Butterfly	Late 50s	Female	XR, Frack-Off
Stonehenge	Late 50s	Female	XR
Warrior	Early 40s	Male	Earth First!, Sea Shepherd
Tortuga Marina	Early 50s	Male	Sea Shepherd
Thunder	Late 30s	Male	Sea Shepherd
Delfin	Late 30s	Female	Sea Shepherd
Roo	Late 40s	Female	Sea Shepherd
Jellyfish (Gatekeeper)	Late 20s	Male	Sea Shepherd
Captain	Early 60s	Male	Sea Shepherd
Poseidon	Early 50s	Male	Sea Shepherd
Athena	Late 40s	Female	Sea Shepherd
Orca	Early 50s	Male	Sea Shepherd
Shark	Late 20s	Male	Sea Shepherd
Atacama	Mid 30s	Male	XR

Interview Queries:

The interview queries were arranged into three general sections, each aimed towards uncovering specific kinds of information relating to the project's core research objectives. For instance, the 'personal background' queries were designed to ascertain the potential origins of the activists' singular orientations towards the natural world and non-human species, as well as their views on why physically interventionist tactics (or more utopian methods of social transformation) as opposed to piecemeal strategies are necessary for helping to stem the tides of ecological decline. Other queries in this section were even more explicitly linked to posthumanist elements of the project's theoretical framework, being designed to further explore the activists' ecological worldviews, specifically their views of the human in relation to the natural world and to nonhuman beings, the degree to which their concerns are predicated

on notions of nature/nonhumans as either instrumentally or intrinsically valuable, and more generally a precise delineation of the nature and extent of their identification with nature/nonhumans. The second segment of questions entitled 'diagnostic framing' (Snow & Benford 1988) was designed to investigate the activists' views on precisely which phenomena, entities, etc. they deem primarily responsible for the current socio-ecological crisis. Whereas the queries in the first section were designed to generate a deeper understanding of the factors potentially molding the unique character profile of REA's, the queries in the latter two sections can be linked more explicitly to the utopian aspects of the project's theoretical framework. As previously denoted, diagnostic framing is an essential feature of the u(eco)topian imaginary, predicated as it is on radical critique of the present which in turn lays the groundwork for subsequent articulations of better modes of being. The final set of queries broadly sought to assess the degree to which REAs' ecological worldviews, modes of relationality, diagnostic framings, and future projections can be designated as 'ecotopian' and, if so, what modality of ecotopianism they might exhibit. Similarly, subsequent data and analysis chapters (Five, Six & Seven) are arranged so as to correspond to these three main sections:

Origins, Action Motivators, and Posthumanist Worldviews:

1. What drove you to get involved in this particular group/organization?
2. What particular role do you think radical/direct-action tactics as opposed to more conventional forms play in the fight to stem ecological collapse?
3. What sparked your passion for 'Nature'/nonhuman life?
4. What are your spiritual or religious beliefs/orientations, if any, and how do you think they influence your ecological worldviews?
5. How do you view humans in relation to the natural world and particularly to other animals? Picture a spectrum of views with anthropocentrism on one end and ecocentrism/biocentrism on the other…where do you place yourself and why? What is the basis of your ethical valuation of other beings/the natural world? (i.e., sentience? Life itself? The whole phenomenal world?)
6. To what degree do you identify with the notion of an 'Ecological Self'?
7. How do you sustain such committed and often risky actions for the preservation of nature and other species? What drives you? Are your motivations largely *external* (i.e., urgency of ecological crisis), *internal* (deep-seated ideological, moral, and/or ethical concerns and beliefs), or both?

Diagnostic Framing/Criticisms of the 'Now' (Snow & Benford,1988):

8. Who/what do you deem as the main aggressors/engines of socio-ecological decline?
9. Who, if anyone, is most culpable?

Prognostic framing (Snow & Benford 1988)- Radical Greens as Ecotopian Expressions?

10. What do you conceive of as your ideal ecotopia? Structurally and organizationally, politically, etc., what should ecotopia look like?
11. How should human-animal-nature relations be reconstructed/ what would more harmonious relations with earth others look like in ecotopia?

B. Documents:

Around four dozen documents in the form of commentary, pamphlets, articles, blog posts, and communiques in online and printed formats associated with each of the groups were selected for analysis. As this is a qualitative study employing thematic-ecocritical analyses (see below), the emphasis was placed "not on counting but rather on identifying meanings and indicators of categories that would explain aspects of the research topic" (Sarantakos 2013, pg. 318). Hence documents elaborating on or alluding to key concepts and themes denoted above were selected. The documents' particular role within the methodological framework was to supplement, contextualize, and corroborate the primary interview data, which were in turn compared and contrasted with data in the form of relevant excerpts from key ecotopian works. The intent was to fill gaps in information and elucidation from the interviews through analysis of key documents for the piecing together of a coherent image of REAs' posthumanist modes of relationality and ecotopian potentialities. For Bowen (2009), such are the many uses of document analysis, which "provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other data sources" (pg. 30;1). After methodically reviewing dozens of documents, relevant excerpts from each that deal explicitly with human-nature-animal interactions and related concepts that are central to the leading research questions were extracted for further analysis. Units of analysis included words, phrases, themes, and meanings which signify or allude to any of the key concepts delineated above such as 'ecological self', 'non-human agency', and 'ecotopia'. This was done within a broader interpretive analytical approach (Mason, 1996) which seeks to assess REAs' meaning-making with regards to the human-animal-nature relationship.

There were no specific temporal criteria for selection in the form of precise dates as all documents will have been produced within the relevant historical time period of the post-1940's 'Great Acceleration' (Steffen et al, 2015) era of burgeoning anthropogenic activity and mounting socio-ecological perturbations. Although REAs and the literary ecotopias featured arose and proliferated from the 1970s and 1980s onwards, and as such the relative time period of interest can be said to be from the 1970s up until the present point. Of course, as with any method, the use of documents is not without its pitfalls, most notably the issue of biased selectivity (Love 2013), wherein featured documents available as texts, online journals, blog posts, and the like are those which are most aligned with the organization's stated principles rather than reflecting the full breadth of positions of the various members (Bowen 2009, pg. 32). This is further complicated by the lack of identifying information for most documents accessed, in line with REAs desire for complete anonymity, wherein blog posts for instance will often be published on each group's websites under a pseudonym. The same can be said of the views expressed during interviews with the participants. As such, it is important to remain constantly aware and reflexive about potential advantages as well as limitations of methods utilized in research. In light of this, attempts were made throughout to incorporate anomalous positions for a more accurate reflection of the diversity of views available. However, as noted previously, the documents serve a supplementary rather than a principal role in the project, and therefore the greater concern is with the interviewees and the data in the form of interview transcripts.

C. Canonical Ecotopian Texts:

The selection of ecotopian texts featured in the analysis and discussion chapters alongside interview transcript data include: Ernst Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975), Aldous Huxley's *Island* (2009), Ursula Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985), Marge Piercy's

Woman on the Edge of Time (1976), and Kim Stanley Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1990). These particular texts were selected because of their specific engagement with matters relating to human-animal-environment interactions, hence their classification as canonical 'ecotopian' texts (Mathisen 2001). Huxley's *Island* (2009) is a curious outlier in the selection of works because it was published years before the limits-to-growth debates that shaped the emergence of subsequent green utopias as well as REA movements; it was selected because of its prescient concerns over the deleterious ecological consequences stemming from unchecked socioecomomic (particularly industrial) expansion (Mathisen 2001), as evident in its depiction of a decentralized, self-reliant ecotopian society observant of ecological 'limits' to the human enterprise. These are, after all, many of the same concerns shared by contemporary REA's. Indeed, Huxley's (2009) novel served as inspiration for subsequent ecotopian texts including Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975). *Ecotopia* (1975) was selected because it is the classic work that lent the ecotopian literary tradition its name, in addition to being distinct in style and content to critical ecotopian works such as Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) and Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985) (Moylan 1986; Garforth,2018), thus serving as a useful point of comparison. The latter is significant because it is regarded as a masterpiece in the literary utopian genre (Clark in Davis & Kinna, 2009, pg. 22) and, as an anarchist ecotopian work, serves as an ideal source for comparison and contrast with anarchic REA groups under investigation such as EF!.

Furthermore, these texts are especially pertinent because, as with selected organizational documents, they were written during and influenced by the historical context of the post-1945 'great acceleration' period that essentially kick-started the Anthropocene (Steffen et al, 2015). This same historical period and associated dominant discourses- of limits to growth, eco-apocalyptic narratives, and the like- that proliferate therein also influenced the rise of REA movements, as previously suggested. As cross-genre responses to the profound deficiencies that characterize the 'Now' the raison d'être of both REA's and ecotopian literary texts is a concerted resistance against- and articulation of alternatives to- our deeply troubled times. Hence why a comparative examination of key concepts and themes as they appear amongst REA interview transcripts and key ecotopian texts was deemed consequential for yielding insights into patterns, contrasts and continuities amid contemporary responses to Anthropocene crises. However, like the aforementioned organizational documents, the ecotopian texts featured serve more of a supplementary role in the project: shedding light on and assisting in the analysis of REA ecological worldviews and ecotopian modalities. Comparing the texts and REA groups assists in the more important objective (for the purposes of this project) of situating REA's within the wider ecotopian tradition. As the ecotopian literary genre is so significant and influential within the wider field of green utopianism, a discussion of novel ecotopian social movement forms would be incomplete without at least some reference to and comparison with the classic ecotopian texts that helped define the field. In the subsequent chapters, key excerpts relevant to each data chapter are selected from the texts that in one way or another allude to the project's core concepts, research questions, and key themes that subsequently emerged from REA interviews and documents.

Thematic-Ecocritical Analysis:

"In the eyes of our critics the ozone hole above our heads, the moral law in our hearts, the autonomous text, may each be of interest, but only separately. That a delicate shuttle should have woven together the heavens, industry, texts, souls and moral law- this remains uncanny, unthinkable, unseemly" (Latour 1993, pg. 5).

I utilized a hybrid thematic-ecocritical analytical approach (Braun & Clarke 2013) for developing, comparing and contrasting ecological themes relevant to the primary research questions and in the search for 'common threads amongst the varying data sets' (Sarantakos 2013 pg. 315). Thematic analysis entails the identification and analysis of patterns in data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2013); a 'theme' is a "coherent integration of the disparate pieces of data that constitute the findings" (Sandelowski & Leeman, 2012), thus capturing something important about the data "in relation to the research question" (Vaismoradi et al 2016, pg. 402). As noted previously, thematic analysis is a versatile method that can be combined with an array of theoretical and analytical approaches, such as ecocriticism. What the various strands of ecocriticism share in common are post-anthropocentric investigative and analytical approaches to depictions of the natural world and human-environment interactions (Iovino & Oppermann 2014, pg. 2). Originally a literary analytical method with deep ecological and social-ecological tributaries (Heise 2006, pg. 507), it has since spanned an array of disciplines in the natural and social sciences as a versatile theoretical tool that can be utilized in order to analyze the ways in which myriad actants- human and nonhuman- express their interactions in representation as well as in concrete reality (Iovino & Oppermann 2014). Thus, ecocriticism can be applied to depictions of human-animal-nature interactions in interviews as well as in key ecotopian literary works and, as with thematic analysis, it is concerned with elucidating patterns of thought and representation regarding age-old concepts such as 'Nature', 'the human', and 'animality'. Material-ecocriticism (Iovino & Oppermann 2014) goes further in its Latourian dispersal of agency, wherein the interest is in how matter itself functions as a wellspring of creative dynamism, and the ways in which myriad interactions between actants of all sorts produce 'configurations of meanings and discourses that we can interpret as stories' (Oppermann, 2018, pg. 11). Though the particular focus in this project is on REAs' 'meaning-making', the active role played by other actants in weaving the stories of the Anthropocene is acknowledged and the extent to which nonhuman agencies play a role in REAs' social imaginaries remains a point of interest.

Like utopian and posthuman theory, ecocriticism harbors a decidedly normative dimension, and is driven by a desire to answer fundamental questions about the human-nature relationship such as, "Would a shift toward an ecological perception of nature change the way humans inhabit the earth?" (Johnson 2009, pg. 7). As such, it is especially pertinent to the investigation of radical environmental activism, wherein such forms of 'ecocritical activism' are considered by many ecocritics to be essential for initiating ecological attitudes and fostering novel forms of environmental awareness (Oppermann 2014, pg. 306;7). Its overarching analytical aims include the critical investigation of interrelationships between 'nature' and 'culture' or the "cultural dimensions of humans' relationship to the environment" (Johnson 2009, pg. 8), such as ethical positions toward nonhuman nature (Johnson 2009, pg. 7), and the decidedly utopian desire to effect a radical redefinition of the human subject in relation to the nonhuman world (Heise 2006, pg. 507). Such aims are purported to be consequential in helping to transcend age-old nature/culture and human/animal dichotomies and all of the socio-ecological crises which might be associated with them, and for forging a 'future-to-come' with fewer violent exclusions. These are the fundamental activist and normative dimensions that unite ecocriticism with REA's, utopianism and post-humanism more broadly. All of the above in various ways engage substantially with the 'ought' regarding modes of human-animal-nature relationality, hence their compatibility in the present methodological framework. In sum, thematic-ecocriticism entails a search for and analysis of themes regarding modes of human-animal-nature relationality across an array of mediums.

Coding & Theme Development

Coding, theme development and analysis of data- in the form of transcripts, key documents (online articles and commentary), and texts- were accomplished electronically through the NVivo software program (Bazeley & Jackson 2013). Coding was largely manifest, as the interest was in explicit words, phrases, and ideas alluding to the key concepts and overarching research queries. However, an awareness of potential latent content was also maintained for a more robust thematic analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke 2013). I continuously perused the data for empirical indicators of the various codes, and later searched for 'conceptual patterns' or themes in the data. Codes were developed further into related categories, and then merged into fewer and more broadly encompassing codes for the purpose of ultimately synthesizing and comparing themes across data sources. The objective was to shed light on notable continuities, discontinuities, and patterns in diagnostic framings and depictions of a better socio-ecological order across the various data sources, thus helping to achieve data triangulation. The analytical approach- thematic ecocritical- was largely deductive or theory-driven (utopian & post-humanist theory), and thus input from key concepts denoted previously informed the processes of coding, categorization, and theme development throughout the various stages of data analysis. The notion that the researcher can and should prevent extant theoretical frameworks from 'muddying up' data analysis and theme development processes was deemed neither possible nor desirable (Becker 1967; Vaismoradi et al 2016). However, naturally, some codes and emergent themes were more data-driven (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006) in that they were developed after the commencement of fieldwork and engagement in preliminary data analyses. More often, however, distinctions between 'theory-driven' and 'data-driven' were far less clearly discernible than such neat categorizations would suggest; in practice processes of data collection, interpretation, and analysis are far messier and often more cyclical than linear. Theory and key concepts heavily informed my approach at the outset, though once in the process of assessing my findings, novel insights emerged and informed the continued refinement of codes, themes, and sub-themes.

Below is a table containing examples of codes, the overarching themes they're associated with, and corresponding data excerpts (for the complete list of codes and themes, refer to Appendix B):

Code	Example Excerpt from Data
AniNature agentic (theme: 'post-humanist worldviews') – A recognition of 'nature', non-human species, and the like as agents who make things happen rather than merely being acted upon by purposive human subjects	*"It was a long way I went before a spring let me find it" (Le Guin, 1985, Pg. 20)*
Participative efficacy (theme: external action motivators) – Visible effects of engagement in direct-action as powerful action motivator	*"we have the satisfaction of seeing the results of our interventions. Because of our interventions…6,000 whales are alive and swimming in the Southern Ocean" (Captain).*
Neoliberal capitalism (Theme: diagnostic framing- growth-oriented socioeconomic systems) – Exigencies of neoliberal capitalism (profit-oriented expansion, commodification, exploitation, etc. as core culpable agent in socio-ecological crisis)	*"Capitalists have an imperative that influences everything that they do: the maximization of shareholder profit and accumulation of capital. This overarching worldview means that animals- like everything else- are objectified and commodified" (EF!2017, Pg. 29).*

Critical Modalities of Hope (theme: apocalyptic-dystopian narratives) – Or 'critical modalities of hope' as explored in chapter 8; denotes an active repudiation of abstract hope and, rather than descend into despair, there is an access through misery and grief to revolt against the 'Now'	*"I'm also actively stepping away from the idea of hope...Hope projects something into the future, and right now I'm really focusing my energies on how to address how we live now, rather than how we might live in the future" (Stonehenge).*

A brief note is warranted on other potentially suitable methods and modes of analysis, namely the interdisciplinary approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Wodak & Fairclough 2013), and why a thematic-ecocritical approach was ultimately selected. What CDA's myriad theoretical tributaries share in common is an interest in critically examining "the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, and political-economic, social, or cultural change in society" (pg. 302). Another interest in CDA is the myriad subjective positions generated by discourses, especially how discourses and their underlying power structures influence, promote or inhibit particular ways of being in the world (Aguinaldo 2012). 'Discourse' in this case refers not only to speech but to the multifarious mediums through which language is expressed and communication takes place, including policies, political strategies, texts, films, and the like. In this way, CDA, like thematic and ecocritial analysis, can serve as an apt and versatile tool for analysing numerous forms of data. This project shares with CDA an interest in uncovering underlying power structures, particularly those that pertain to human-animal-nature relations, as well as a decidedly self-reflexive understanding of the role of the researcher in relation to the research process (Wodak & Fairclough 2013, pg. 303). However, thematic analysis was chosen because of its further theoretical and disciplinary flexibility as it is merely a method of data analysis (Braun & Clarke 2013), hence its commensurability with an ecocritical analytical approach which adopts an explicitly anti-anthropocentric approach to data analysis. More importantly, the present research seeks to uncover and critically assess *patterns* of meaning in relation to the project's research queries and guided by overarching theoretical framework. Moreover, CDA tends to adopt a firmly social constructivist approach to qualitative data gathering and analysis, maintaining that language does not merely reflect but actively constructs the social world (Aguinaldo 2012). Whereas, as previously denoted, laden within such onto-epistemological approaches is a neglect- and at times outright disavowal- of nonhumans as meaningful agents who construct and influence reality just as humans do. The thematic-ecocritical approach adopted in this project, though focused on eliciting common themes around REA meaning-making, motivations and worldviews, recognizes that they never act alone and are always enmeshed within wider assemblages of agentic Earth others.

Investigating Manifestations of Radical Difference

Of interest within the myriad perturbations and transformations that increasingly mark the Anthropocene is what drives those such as REA's who zealously and multifariously resist the 'Now', namely by seeking to subvert age-old logics of human exceptionalism that would reduce the whole non-human world to mere lifeless fodder for furthering the human enterprise. The unique methodological challenges associated with attempting to access such singular groups necessitated alterations in the choice of methods (Alberro, 2019) used, from ethnographic field work to semi-structured interviews and organizational documents. Though, such changes ultimately proved beneficial as the new selection of methods allowed for similarly rich insights into the internal motivations and worldviews of a wider sample of participants without rendering them uncomfortable through observation. Relevant excerpts from canonical ecotopian texts were selected as a further supplement to interview and

document data- whose selection in turn was guided by key concepts from the existing literature- for situating and assessing REA ecotopian proclivities in relation to the arguably more established tradition of literary ecotopianism. This was done in the hopes of elucidating notable contrasts and continuities across each. Thematic-ecocriticism was utilized as an analytical tool for developing and examining themes denoting REA and wider ecotopian literary articulations of ideal modes of human-animal-nature relationality because of the former's unique suitability and theoretical continuity with the latter, as well as with the project's overarching utopian and critical posthuman theoretical framework. In subsequent chapters I denote findings and analyses corresponding to the project's core research queries, followed by a final discussion chapter featuring more in-depth theoretical discussions of core themes elicited from the three data analysis chapters.

Chapter 5: Analysis (1)- Investigating REA Ecological-Worldviews and Action Motivators

As discussed in Chapter Two, the ecotopian imaginary seeks to supplant presently exploitative, reductive, and otherwise generally inimical modes of human-animal-nature relationality with substantially more ethical modes. As potential ecotopian manifestations, it is thus worth exploring in greater depth how REA's conceive of and relate to the non-human world, and from whence such orientations might originate. Therefore, this chapter features in-depth analyses of data on REA ecological worldviews and modes of relationality as a foundation for subsequent explorations (Chapters Seven & Eight) of their ecotopian proclivities and subjectivities. The chapter is divided into three main sections corresponding to core themes and subthemes developed with regards to (1) the origins of REA ecological worldviews, (2) complexities surrounding the nature and extent of REA ecological worldviews, and moral-ethical valuation of earth 'others', and (3) how the former relate to REAs' engagement in high-risk ecological direct-action. In other words, the focus of this chapter is on how, where, and why REA's erect, problematize, and deconstruct conceptual-ethical boundaries around who matters, and therefore who is worth mobilizing for, which is further explored in Chapter Eight. My aim has been to present the data in a manner that most closely approximates how the participants view and understand their histories, rationales for action, themselves and in relation to Earth others, and themselves as potential ecotopian subjects. As will be explored below, the activists seem to strongly through variedly manifest post-anthropocentric (Ferrando 2016) or post-humanist (Braidotti 2013) worldviews that disavow human separateness and superiority while often problematizing hierarchies and antagonistic dualisms. Though previous research with radical environmental activists has shown the above to be more or less the case (Taylor 1991; Lee 1995; Bragg 1996; Ingalsbee 1996; Wall 1999; Marangudakis 2001; Hoek 2010; Nagtzaam 2013; Stuart et al 2013; Cianchi 2015; Woodhouse 2018), considerable complexities, paradoxes, and inconsistencies surfaced, as discussed below. Namely, REA's don't merely tend to exhibit holistic, ecocentric appreciations (Woodhouse 2018) of Earth others but rather multifarious and at times contradictory modes of ethical valuation and relationality.

One particularly notable experience comes to mind that speaks considerably louder than what was elicited via formal data collection. The second day of the EF! 2017 summer gathering had drawn to a close when I decided to try one of the ciders from the camp's makeshift bar, the minor proceeds being directed entirely towards funding the event and the Earth First! collective. I received my pint and was about to take the first sip when I noticed that a spider had fallen in and appeared to have drowned. After painstakingly searching for signs of life I

concluded, somewhat prematurely, that it was too late for the unfortunate creature. As I sought to remove him/her from the glass, one of the activists intervened and determinedly attempted to revive him/her. This person's thoughtful efforts proved successful and the spider ultimately regained consciousness. Such efforts proved all the more incredible in light of the fact that the creature in question was one that many perhaps wouldn't give much consideration to, indeed, are often thoroughly hostile towards. A query that has guided the various investigative stages of this project is, what exactly are the activists' worldviews and values in relation to the natural world and non-human species? Where, if at all, do REA's draw the ever-shifting and perpetually contested boundary of moral-ethical valuation with regards to nonhuman others: Mammals? Beings who are self-aware, intelligent, exhibit intentionality, and are otherwise *similar* to humans? All *sentient* creatures? All *living* individuals, a position otherwise known as 'biocentrism' (Rolston 2012; Botar 2017)? But then, how does one define 'life', and what of the equally elusive and problematic life/non-life binary? Does one extend equal valuation/protection to a virus, or a 'red tide' algal bloom? The above-noted experience and subsequent accounts suggest that this line, though continuously internally contested, is decidedly further removed than has traditionally been the case (Regan 2004; Singer, 1995).

Origins of Affinity for Earth Others

Among this project's leading investigative endeavors is not only a more in-depth elucidation of the precise nature of the activists' purportedly deep ecological (Naess 1973) worldviews, as previous research has shown this to be more or less the case, but also a more in-depth examination of their extent as well as key factors molding their emergence and development. Thus, questions asked during interviews (see Chapter Four) with the activists invariably attempted to shed light on the origins of their deep 'ecological worldviews', such as whether their affinity for the natural world and animals was something they felt they had all their lives or whether it was something they felt had developed over time. Though definitive answers to these queries lie beyond the scope of this project, and indeed may wholly elude the researcher's grasp, some interesting and quite discernable themes emerged. As discussed below, their intense affinity for the natural world/animals was described as stemming either from early childhood through frequent exposure to natural spaces and nonhuman species, or as an orientation that developed later in life, typically as a result of increased knowledge of and exposure to the deteriorating state of the world which in effect engendered a sort of 'awakening' triggered by traumatic encounters with ecological decline (Pike 2016). For many, the positive influence of a parent, family member, or close friend concerned with the wellbeing of the natural world and/or engaged in environmental and political activism was consequential:

> *"my mother had a lot to do with this, because…I don't know, with the little things. For example, she would speak to me a lot about dolphins" (Delfin).*

> *"the thing that got me to join SS was my aunt's involvement with Greenpeace when I was a kid, and that tweaked my interest" (Orca).*

Perhaps more influential, however, was the catalyzing role played by first-hand exposure to ecological devastation, which is in turn closely linked to their decisions to become involved in environmental direct-action. Squirrel recounts:

"Something that's developed over time, I think. I traveled a lot, starting around, about 2000, especially outside of Europe and North America and went to a lot of…wildlife havens and national parks and places and kind of developed a real passion for it from that…like Borneo, for example, you go to Borneo and you just get ***these palm oil plantations just totally take over and there's not much rainforest left****…The travelling* ***woke me up*** *to sort of the wider corruption and the problems with society that was going on…".*

Similarly, Captain spoke of his passion for the natural world and animals as stemming from exposure to widespread 'waste and suffering', further bolstered by early childhood interactions with other-than-human beings and places:

"*Oh well, I've always had that, umm, empathy for them, you know, beginning with the beavers. I saw seals being killed back when I was young because I lived in the Eastern Canadian province, New Brunswick. I was raised in a fishing village, actually, so* ***I could see the waste and suffering from a very early age****." (Captain)*

The 'waste and suffering' that Captain observed as a young boy, like the degradation of forests observed firsthand by Squirrel, thus seem key factors in molding their perceptions of the human-nature relationship and in sparking subsequent involvement in direct-activism. However, Captain goes on to note that, in addition to prolonged exposure to 'waste and suffering', a particularly memorable encounter ultimately cemented his resolve to fight on behalf of threatened Earth others:

"In 1975 I had an encounter with a sperm whale that had just been struck by a Soviet harpoon, and that whale could have killed me but I believe he chose not to do so because I saw understanding in that whale's eye as it was dying, because it could have easily fallen forward and crushed us but instead it took great effort to go back and slide back into the sea and he drowned…and from that moment I said I would do everything I could to protect them against us".

Roo similarly recounts how she interacted with scores of animal species since childhood and on through adulthood, namely when fostering wildlife at her home that had been abandoned or injured. Like Watson, she designates a key 'trigger event' as the spark that reinforced her passion and ignited her commitment to direct-action: the stranding and subsequent euthanasia of a whale calf in Sydney Harbour. She had connections with an organization that provided milk for orphaned wildlife and, after pursuing various connections, including with Sea Shepherd, in order to arrange the transport of the milk to feed the stranded whale calf, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service decided to have the whale euthanized, despite it being illegal to kill cetaceans in Australia. As Roo laments:

"…what they had said was, you know, the animal was so unwell, blah, it was one quick injection…it was nine injections, and he fought. He fought so hard…I think that was kind of ***the trigger****…I became pretty set on the fact that that wasn't a good enough system, and that* ***we could do better****".*

Such emotionally charged accounts feature powerful and concrete moments of disillusionment with the status quo and its representatives. Roo's subsequent utopian revelation, a recognition of the present system as inadequate and followed by the realisation that we can 'do better', is typical of many radical activists' shifts into more direct and

interventionist campaigns on behalf of threatened natural systems and nonhuman species. Roo's account in particular closely parallels Dave Foreman and other early Earth First!er's disillusionment with the U.S Forest Service's perceived failures to adequately protect forests and wildlife. Indeed, Marangudakis's (2001) early study of the trajectories of EF! identity and worldview formation found that embracing more ecocentric values often does not transpire smoothly but rather is precipitated by a "painful personal transformation involving disillusionment with the status quo, a re-examination of their identity, a search for new alternative modes of thinking and being, and lastly the emergence of a new ecocentric identity (or the 'ecological self') (pg. 466). More broadly, however, it is interesting to note that a majority of the activists cite direct experiences with the natural world from and throughout early childhood, often centered around ties to a particular geographic location or bioregional community of emotional significance. This would appear to confirm a long-standing deep ecological ethical tenet that respect and love of the natural world, rather than being a purely or even largely rational phenomenon, often stems in large part from intimate and embodied experiential encounters with particular environments and places (Garforth 2018). Empirical research around determinants of pro-environmental worldviews has similarly documented the crucial role of childhood exposure to 'natural' spaces (Wells & Lekies 2006). Attachment to and fond memories of cherished beings and places then serve as fuel for radical activism when such places are deemed to be under threat of destruction (Pike 2016, pg. 424) (see Chapter Eight).

The Nature of REA Ecological Worldviews and Moral-Ethical Valuation of Earth 'Others'

The terms 'post-humanism' and 'post-anthropocentrism' best encapsulate the overarching themes uniting all subsequent variations in REA ontological and ethical orientations towards the natural world and other species (Taylor 2012; Braidotti 2013; Ferrando 2016). Indeed, one of the participants uses the term explicitly in reference to his own ecological worldviews. Virtually all REA's start from these basic post-humanist premises and further follow along the lines of some post-humanist scholars in their explicit interest in problematizing and deconstructing distinctions between humans and animals (Wolfe 2010), as well as interrogating and reconceptualizing humans' ethical responsibilities towards nonhuman others (Morton 2010). As will be further elucidated, however, though they fervently disavow notions of human separateness and superiority, species hierarchies per se are not entirely deconstructed. In the interviews I proceeded to ask the activists to envision an ethical-ontological spectrum ranging from thoroughly anthropocentric conceptualizations on one end to post-anthropocentric orientations on the other. Virtually all participants to varying degrees maintained a staunch repudiation of traditionally humanist orientations as defined above. Indeed, many participants cited such views as a key factor implicated in the deterioration of human-animal-nature relations (see Chapter Six). However, elements of a variety of related yet distinct ethical approaches including ecocentrism (Leopold 1970; Woodhouse 2018), biocentrism (Rolston 2012) and deep ecology (Naess 1973) were detected in their ethical reasoning. For instance, longstanding tensions within environmental ethical thought between a focus on individuals and a focus on wider 'wholes' such as ecosystems and the biosphere (Sideris, 2003) occasionally arose. This was especially pronounced along the seeming divide between participants who identified as 'environmental' and 'climate' (usually EF!ers) activists, and those identifying as 'animal rights' activists (usually SSCS activists). The former tended to identify and empathize with more abstract ecological systems and the biosphere as a whole, while the latter seemed more concerned with preserving the wellbeing of individual animals and species, particularly those deemed most threatened by human action. However, overall

most REA's seem to exhibit post-anthropocentric views which value individual organisms as well as populations, ecosystems and the wider biosphere intrinsically and irrespective of their instrumental use to humans (Eckersley 1992). Curiously, rejections of anthropocentrism, grief and resentment over the continued destruction of cherished earth others occasionally took the form of outright inversions of traditional human-animal hierarchies and a recategorization of the 'human' as separate and inferior.

The Indelible Marks of Hierarchy:

"Matters become all the more contentious when the notion of responsibility is circumscribed by rather slippery identity markers that are used to stake a claim on which entity or group one is obligated to have regard for. 'Should we', [Smith] queries, 'have care for dogs, cats, cows, and horses but not birds, snakes, or butterflies? For leopards and walruses but not lobsters or oysters? (Chiew 2014, pg. 53).

Curiously juxtaposed alongside REA claims of the inherent and equal value of all life were traces of hierarchical value classification, mainly amongst SSCS participants (perhaps to a degree a reflection of their hierarchically structured organization?). Differentiation emerged particularly around two traits: a species or individual's perceived degree of sentience/intelligence, and the perceived significance of a species' ecological role. For instance, the following are typical responses:

> *I said to myself, 'Here we are killing this incredibly **intelligent**, **beautiful**, **self-aware**, **sentient** being for the purpose of making a weapon meant for the mass extermination of human beings', and that's when it struck me, **as a species we're insane**. And from that moment on I said I would do everything I could to protect them against us. So I developed this sort of a biocentric point of view, and I've been fighting against this anthropocentric-dominated culture ever since" (Captain).*
>
> *"I very much value the life of an animal the same as I do that of a person, even though this might bother others. Neither will I value them less but, in principle, the same, though then one would have to see. If I look at it from a biological-conservationist perspective, a whale is far **more valuable** than a human because whales perform **vital ecosystem functions** in the seas, which helps maintain phytoplankton populations, and therefore more oxygen. Humans don't produce anything, they destroy" (Delfin).*

Captain, as often occurs in SSCS commentary, specifically references the species' perceived level of sentience as a particular justification for their preservation. The consequentialist emphasis on a species' sentience (Singer, 1976)- or the elusive capacity to be aware of oneself, one's interactions with the surrounding environment and other beings, and to experience pleasurable (happiness) as well as aversive states (pain, fear, etc.) (Broom 2007, pg. 100)- has long been utilized in order to substantiate calls for the ethical treatment of *certain* non-human animals. Similarly, Regan ([1986] 2004) notably emphasized animals' advanced cognition and their capacity to be self-aware as essential foundations for their moral consideration and categorization as rights-bearing individuals. His definition of 'subjects of a life', though at times expansive in including individuals who are agentic, have desires and perceptions, similarly prioritizes vague (and once again human-centered) criteria such as the ability to have beliefs, a sense of the future, memories, and emotional lives in order for a particular being to count as an inherently valuable and therefore ethical subject (Pg. 187). As

such, cetaceans (whales and dolphins) and the great apes, for instance, with their human-like capabilities of self-awareness and complex social relations, have been particularly cherished. While such a position undoubtedly serves to enhance empathy for species perceived to 'sentient', it still evaluates animals' relative ethical worth vis-à-vis the human. Such animals are valued primarily because they exhibit *human* characteristics.

Moreover, ethical valuation on the basis of arbitrary characteristics such as sentience and intelligence functions as a conditional mode of justice wherein beings are granted rights or consideration on the basis of their possession of 'morally significant characteristics' (Wolfe 1998, pg. 13). The focus on traditionally 'human' characteristics, namely the capacity for language[53] and complex thought, markers of an essentially and ontologically distinct humankind (Heidegger 1983), are arguably even more problematic as they have historically been ruthlessly denied to non-human beings and only gradually and begrudgingly granted to a select handful of species (i.e., cetaceans, primates, and corvids). This approach continues to exclude a multiplicity of lifeforms from ethical consideration, who are defined as 'lack' in relation to 'sentient' organisms (Plumwood 2002). Captain calls on others to be concerned for the plight of the whale, exemplar of the charismatic megafauna that have (understandably) captivated the public imaginary, because they are 'intelligent, beautiful, and self-aware'. But, what of the catastrophic global declines in entomofauna (Sánchez-Bayo & Wyckhuys 2019)- insects such as beetles, wasps, bees and ants? Thus, it can be argued that the aforementioned, still infused by aesthetic-based valuation (Rolston 2002; 2012), harbor inklings of ethico-ontological modalities 'predicated on affection for sameness' (Levinas 1989; Sargisson 2000) that have long characterized Western thought. As modalities of ecotopianism, though such post-anthropocentric views might to a considerable degree be critical (i.e., of human exceptionalism, etc.), they fall short of being truly *transgressive* (Sargisson 2000, pg. 146; 2002).

The excerpt above by Delfin represents another relatively common orientation amongst the participants wherein calls for equal valuation are curiously juxtaposed alongside hierarchical valuations predicated on a particular species' ecological function. Echoing similar sentiments to the excerpt above by Delfin, for Shark an organism or species' ecological function is what determines its relative degree of value:

> *"So, imagine the following thing: you have a button, and you either kill a fly or a whale. Which one do you press?' And no one would ever press the [button for killing] the whale, you know? And I mean, ecologically it makes a lot of sense if you think about it. I mean, if this would be the last fly on earth then it might be a different thing, but it's not. The reality is that we have too many flies and we don't have enough whales…and, even if we didn't have enough flies in this moment, they would reproduce so fast, and a whale needs so much time to get to a [full-grown] size, and they're ecologically so important and so valuable that, even when they die, they sink to the ocean and other lives, especially deep-sea organisms, can live on them. So, they have such a crucial role, and therefore, it makes absolute sense that we say, '**This life is more important than this life**".*

[53] The notion that humans have a monopoly on speech or communication is yet another expression of anthropocentric arrogance: "In fact, the Earth speaks to us in terms of forces, bonds, and interactions, and that's enough to make a contract" (Serres 1995, pg. 39).

Valuing others because of their relative significance within ecosystems is a curious approach seen within holistic ecocentric[54] modes of ethical valuation (Woodhouse 2018), though not necessarily a moral-ethical one. The concern being expressed in the excerpts above is not concern for the other as such, as a singular ethical being whose interests one ought to respect as one should those of any other being as members of a moral-ethical community. Rather, the focus is on *ecological relationships* and *communities* (Sagoff 1984, pg. 297), wherein individuals/species are valued only to the extent that they serve to maintain these relationships. The lack of explicit appreciation of singular otherness *as such* fails to entirely deconstruct entrenched anthropocentric paradigms that structure Self/Other relations along antagonistic lines (Sargisson 2000, pg. 132; Bookchin 2005; Gruen 2015) (see Chapter Eight). As with the issue of valuing others for their relative intelligence and capacity for speech, valuing a species for its ecological function paves the way for the exclusion of innumerable others not deemed ecologically significant yet to whom we might nevertheless owe ethical responsibility. Equally if not more problematic, perhaps, is the assumption that humans possess the epistemological assuredness to make such judgments regarding who is significant and in precisely which contexts. As Plumwood (2010) eloquently denotes, as human observers we "can never know a full story that matches the intricacy [in the more-than-human world] we observe" (Pg. 123). Indeed, we can never fully approximate or know the 'other', and ethics should be about respecting and valuing otherness as such. But then, the above approach is consistent with traditional environmentalist concerns with the wellbeing of ecological systems (Sagoff 1984) rather than with individual species or animals per se, as those concerned with animal rights tend to be. In the aforementioned, although the 'human' is dethroned, as Shark denotes, some lives are more important than others.

Inversions of Traditional Human-Animal Hierarchies

Some not only subverted but, in their deep dismay regarding their perceptions of deleterious human impacts on other species and the natural world, effected a misanthropic inversion of the traditional human-animal hierarchy (Nee, 2005). Such a notion is expressed by Captain when he emphasizes that humans are not superior but in fact are, "probably one of the least important species ecologically, but what we're intent upon doing is destroying all of those species that make it possible for us to live". At worst, humans are depicted as a hazardous blight upon the earth (for more on REA diagnostic framing see Chapter Six), wherein some surmise that humans are not needed for the sustained viability of the planet, that in fact we are the ones who are wholly dependent upon innumerable other species for our survival, and that the earth would likely greatly benefit from our absence or at the very least a substantial reduction in our numbers. In this vein, recall Delfin's previous remark that "humans don't produce anything, they only destroy". On the other hand, numerous other species- photosynthetic organisms such as phytoplankton and trees, and pollinating insects- are deemed vital for the continuity of life on Earth. Thunder, for instance, ruminates on what he perceives to be a stark incongruity between traditional presumptions of human superiority and humanity's purportedly destructive tendencies:

[54] "A thing is right [or in this case, a species is worthy of particular ethical consideration] when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong...when it tends to otherwise' (Leopold 1970, p.204)

"why would we really be that remarkably different from the millions of other species that are here? We say that it's intelligence, but intelligence is living in harmony with your area, like, we're the only species that shits in the waterhole, so to speak, we're the only species that pollutes the air we need to breathe, pollutes the water we need to drink, pollutes the soil that we need to grow the food that we need to eat…none of these are measures of intelligence, it's incredibly stupid".

These participants' misanthropic inversion of the human-animal hierarchy stems from a complex amalgamation of negative emotions such as grief and resentment at the utter scale of loss- of more-than-human species, biospheric integrity, a viable 'future'- that characterizes the Anthropocene (explored further in Chapter Eight). Furthermore, such orientations might stem from what Amis has referred to as 'species shame' (2001) for perceived culpability in contemporary ecological breakdown. Pike (2016) applies this concept in the context of her work with REA's in the US, denoting feelings that we have failed other species and the planet at large, that we are culpable to varying degrees for the widespread destruction taking place, and thus that the earth and other species might indeed thrive in a world without us:

*"I'd be **personally glad if the human species ended**. So, I guess that doesn't make me particularly anthropocentric. I think the human species is the most violent species that has ever existed…**our violence towards other species goes beyond anything that any other species is capable of**. You know, 70 billion land animals and trillions of fish every year. So, I think it would be a significant net benefit to the world if the human species ended tomorrow" (Meadow)*

*"Personally, I see **animals as more human than us**, because they regulate themselves, they're selective…" (Tortuga Marina)*

*"…if it came down to choosing between a human and a non-human species as far as, like, one-versus-other survival, **I would always, always choose the non-human species**. I mean, I don't hold one more valuable than the other, and in some ways I would hold a human life slightly less because, from a survival standpoint, I'm not necessary; I'm part of the problem just by living in the modern world (Warrior)".*

In these examples, profound disillusionment with the human enterprise and our tenure on this earth has less to do with the perceived inferiority of our ecological function than with the sheer extent of harm perpetrated by us onto other species and the earth system. Much of this can be seen within the worsening crisis that is biological annihilation or the sixth mass extinction. Herein, the widespread and premature loss of countless lives has resulted from the actions of one species who continues to expand while leaving increasingly little space for all the rest, something that the activists have come to deeply resent. Intriguingly, Tortuga Marina regards the capacity for self-restraint as a true marker of sagacity according to our own measures of what distinguishes humanity from animality, a characteristic that he sees as evidently possessed by other species and not us, effectively making them *'more human than us*'. Hence, it seems to Meadow that the best thing to do *for the benefit of all* (presumably humans as well) would entail the wholesale eradication of the wayward *homo sapiens*[55] so that other species and the earth itself might regain their capacities to flourish.

[55] By 'eradication' Meadow means via 'humane' methods, such as the hypothetical use of a button that could simply erase humans from existence, as utilized by the villain Thanos in the 2018 superhero film, Avengers: Infinity War. Thanos had a similarly misanthropic view of humans and

There seems to be a profound selflessness in such a willingness to sacrifice even one's own interests and desire for life for the benefit of others, one that seems to stem not from hatred of humans per se but from aforementioned feelings of shame, guilt, grief, resentment and despair over the extant tides of loss sweeping the globe. Nevertheless, such sentiments, like the former in potentially paving the way for the exclusion from moral-ethical concern of organisms deemed ecologically deleterious or insignificant, is similarly predicated on a hierarchical mode of valuation. The traditional mechanisms deployed in order to separate and position certain beings over others are not deconstructed but merely redeployed in a different fashion, with humans as the ones deemed *less than* other species. Moreover, from a Latourian (2004) perspective, the pitting of a destructive humanity and artificial social world against 'nature' results in a rehashing of the "modern constitution of two-house politics" that effectively denies their entanglement and the need for a progressive composition of our common world (Pg. 18). Similarly, some participants' references to an objective, 'natural law' as that which will once and for all silence and impose restraint upon a rogue humanity is redolent of the modernist distribution of roles between "the necessity of things [Nature] and the liberty of subjects [humans], either to chasten nature and elevate man, or to glorify nature and belittle man" (Latour 2004, pg. 81). In other words, traces of Western conceptions of an ontological hyper-separation between 'Nature' and the 'human/social' realm persist (Plumwood 1991; 2002), even though often only implicitly.

Deconstructing Hierarchies

"All nature forms one great fabric in which beings resemble one another from one to the next, in which adjacent individuals are infinitely similar to each other; so that any dividing line that indicates, not the minute difference of the individual, but broader categories, is always unreal" (Foucault 2005, pg. 160).

Despite the occasional resurfacing of hierarchy, others, in line with post-humanist tradition of skepticism and critique of pure categorizations (Latour 1991; 2004; Foucault 2005) and rigid dualisms that override the hybrid entanglements that constitute reality, rejected the very notion of a separation between the 'natural' and the 'social', or between 'human' and 'animal':

> *"For some reason we've separated the world into these three spheres where there's nature, there's animals, and there's us, and it's one of the most arrogant, kind of, separations in the world…So I think we need to reinvent that [notions of human separateness from the natural world]…**we are animals**" (Jellyfish).*

> *"I went out for a walk with some friends today, and we came across a massive tree that had fallen down, and we were talking about that saying, you know, that, 'If a tree falls in a forest does it make a sound if nobody's around to hear it?' And my friend sort of said, 'You know, that's just so bloody arrogant to think that things only happen if humans are there to perceive them.' And it's like, yeah, that's exactly where I come from on that, you know. Why do we always put ourselves at the center of these things?" (Horse)*

humanoid beings as incurably destructive, and therefore utilized his powers in order to eradicate 50% of them so as to alleviate pressures on existing beings.

Jellyfish reminds us that the rigid hyper-separation between humans and animals (Plumwood 2002; 2009) is a myth and that in fact we *are* animals. Elsewhere, Warrior rejects the Heideggarian (1962) call for humans to be as stewards over the rest of creation, instead emphasizing that we should conceive of ourselves as not 'lords over the universe' and other species but as 'one part of the cosmos as anything else'. As noted in previous chapters, the stewardship approach, though likely well-intentioned and arguably an improvement upon modes of being that would frame the more-than-human world as no more than mere resource for unhindered human exploitation, still amounts to a hierarchical positioning of humans as the privileged shepherds of being (Latour, 1988) while the rest of existence is reduced to dependence upon the attention of the former. In contrast to Shark's query, 'Who would value them?', if humans were not around to ascribe value to the more-than-human world, Horse critiques such anthropocentric reductions of non-human others to objects that are not *seeing* but merely *seen* by human subjects (Derrida & Wills 2002, pg. 383), lacking any agency or power to shape phenomena on their own (Latour 1988; 1991; 2004) without a human observer present to legitimize their existence. Most participants to one degree or another expressed deep ecological intimations of the inherent value of 'the natural world' and other species, as entities that warrant equal consideration independently of their extant or potential use to humans. In other words, the natural world and more-than-human life were regarded not as means but as ends in themselves (Kant & Schneewind 2002)[56]. Though, as demonstrated, much variation surrounds particular conceptualizations of value and hierarchies per se aren't always sufficiently deconstructed.

Towards Valuing 'Life Itself '

A common theme uniting all participants thus far is that of a post-humanist rejection of human supremacy, and of the instrumentalization and subjugation of Earth 'others', even though this manifests in rather different ways. Yet, what exactly do they value beyond sentience and on what grounds? What of organisms much further along the phylogenetic tree, such as insects, plants and fungi? What issues arise, and what is potentially excluded, when any lines of demarcation are drawn? It is precisely this search for clear and concise delineations that found little counterpart in many of the participant's responses. Consider the following careful ruminations surrounding exactly *what* should be included within spheres of moral-ethical consideration:

H: Do you draw a line, if any, around particular animals? Would you empathize with/mobilize for not just mammals but, say, jellyfish or insects, for instance?

> *"when I was on the SS ship and we were pulling up nets, there were jellyfish in the nets. Now, jellyfish aren't sentient, as far as I'm aware, and I was pulling them out and I cared a lot about whether that jellyfish was alive or not, and I was kind of rescuing jellyfish. Now for me, that's kind of, like, '**why would I rescue something that's not sentient?' But, it's alive**, and so I feel like, even if I don't recognize it as sentient, perhaps it is, and perhaps there's something I can't see. **We by no means have the***

[56] Whereas Kant in traditionally anthropocentric fashion regarded only *rational* beings as worthy of being treated as ends in themselves; non-rational beings (i.e., animals) had only "relative worth, as means, and are therefore called *things*" (Kant & Schneewind 2002, pg. 496).

***senses of a god that can tell what is sentient and what isn't**, but…**all life really should matter**" (Jellyfish).*

*"**we've become very nervous-system-[focused]**. Like, a lot of Animal Rights folk won't give credence or any time to any kind of theorizing or philosophizing, or experiential musings on the fact that plants, trees, etc. might have a **degree of being, or sentience and intelligence that we can't comprehend as yet** because they lack a central nervous system, in the same way that a lot of vegetarians will say, 'Oh no, it's alright to eat fish because fish can't feel pain', kind of malarky. And again, it's **this grading of superiority**" (Badger)*

Jellyfish and Badger are articulating a biocentric (Rolston 2012)[57] perspective while challenging the traditional epistemological assuredness around what and how humans 'know'. If trees aren't sentient, then they are at least agentic in the Latourian (2004; 2018) sense of having the capacity to make things happen, to affect and be affected by others in turn. Jellyfish are ideal candidates for assessing the parameters of an environmental ethic; as ancient, gelatinous invertebrates lacking a stomach, intestines, lungs, and even a face (Levinas 1985), possessing a diffuse network of neurons in place of a brain, and among the most rudimentary nervous systems known amongst multicellular organisms, few beings are less 'human-like' in their other-worldly appearance and constitution. Thus, they thoroughly challenge general conceptualizations of what classifies as an 'animal', and as such, what/whom should warrant moral-ethical consideration. Jellyfish and Badger further problematize the assumption that life is defined by what we as humans know, denoting our limited epistemological capacities to define the elusive concept of sentience, in addition to our very limited understanding of currently existing organisms. As such they gesture towards the ethical necessity to "remain open to the dizzying otherness of existents" and the myriad ways in which they inter-are (Latour 2017, pg. 36). We likely will never know what it's like to be a bat (Nagel 1987), whether a bat can dream, understand the nature of being (Heidegger 1983), or experience the world as we do, but this doesn't mean that their experiences are any less meaningful than our own. For these participants, difference does not equate to less than (Plumwood 2002), and to associate ethical consideration with characteristics such as sentience or intelligence amounts to yet another 'grading of superiority' that excludes as much if not more than it includes within its definition.

Meadow ruminates on the internal struggles he faces with regards to mosquitoes, who, like other 'vermin' and 'pests' often invoke feelings of repugnance and detestation. Perhaps more than most non-human animals, mosquitoes are often relegated to the realm of absolutely external, unwelcome, and vilified *other*. They are not merely unacknowledged as ethical subjects but actively despised and persecuted or, as with more recent developments, utilized as experimental subjects of annihilation via gene editing[58] (Kyrou et al 2018). Meadow notes:

[57] "The question is not 'can it suffer', but 'is it alive?'" (Rolston, 2012, Pg. 110)

[58] In *Men Like Gods* (1923), Wells anticipated such a development in his portrayal of a utopian (or, rather, dystopian) society wherein mosquitoes along with all other inconvenient and/or potentially threatening species have either been eradicated or significantly re-molded through advances in genetic biotechnologies.

"of course, I do inhabit a human body…like, I do find mosquitoes problematic, and I will instinctively swipe at them to get them away from me, and then I'll go, 'Oh!' and try to catch them in a glass jar and throw them out the window".

This sudden realization and consequent interest in the mosquito's wellbeing, in other instances, provokes further reflection, wherein Meadow reasons thus: "I'd like to sit still and let a mosquito just bite me and take my blood. It's like, 'Oh, poor little thing'. *I see its impulse for life".* A recognition and respect for other organisms' striving towards flourishing and wellbeing- or put another way, an affirmation of more-than-human agency- appears to exert a powerful ethical pull on activists such as Thunder:

"…we tend to get overly philosophical about things, like, about, 'Do animals have souls?' and, like, 'What is pain?' and 'How do you measure pain?' Everything living, whether it's a tree, or we're talking about a fish, or whether we're talking about you or me, if given the choice between living or dying, we choose to live. Every animal will avoid danger or threats to their lives. Trees will grow, like, out of danger zones. So, that clearly shows that each one of these individuals has an ***interest in wellbeing****, and because they have an interest in wellbeing, we should respect that interest".*

The examples above also constitute further intriguing examples of activist attempts at grappling with tensions surrounding pure categorizations, boundary construction and deconstruction, conflicting interests between 'self' and 'other', and tensions surrounding who/what matters and *why*. For REA's such as Thunder, an interest in wellbeing and the boundless potentiality for manifestations of that interest become the focal point. Meadow and Badger further remark on what they perceive to be a fundamental drawback of traditional animal rights and radical environmental activists' emphases on 'large' mammals (recall traditional environmental movement organization's emphases on charismatic megafauna such as whales and panda bears) while neglecting smaller creatures such as insects and other invertebrates. Crucially, Meadow notes that as a result of his veganism, which according to him no longer stimulates a cognitive dissonance between 'cute' or companion animals and animals designated as 'food', he has "started to see the life in the pig as beautiful, and that has then shifted to seeing the life in the insect as beautiful". Meadow's ruminations on the mosquito, and Jellyfish's idea that *life itself* should serve as the basis of moral consideration and valuation rather than a certain set of characteristics arbitrarily deemed of significance by humans, suggest a deep ecological respect for the propensity towards flourishing exhibited by life in its myriad manifestations. When referring to 'life' many REA's implicitly if not explicitly include not only animals but all carbon-based and water-dependent eukaryotes (or multicellular organisms) including plants, fungi, and protists[59]. Stonehenge sheds light on the limitations of rigid boundary delineations occasionally detected in mainstream environmental and animal rights discourses, which can result in a- sometimes witting and sometimes unwitting- disregard for organisms (i.e. plants and fungi) not traditionally conceived as rights-bearers:

"this is where, you know, other people within the activist circle have differences with me, in that I want some acknowledgment and engagement with the life in a stock of corn, where we recognize that in taking its life for us to sustain ourselves, that there

[59] The crude 'life/non-life' binary division was proposed by Stanier and Van Niels in 1962 in response to the purported structural differences between prokaryotes and eukaryotes (Sapp 2005). Following the work of Carl Woese (Woese & Fox 1977) it is now understood that there are at least three primary lineages- bacteria, archaea and eukarya- with no necessarily fixed boundaries between each.

is something given back…I can't get on board that veganism is the answer to save us, because we have done the same in our agricultural techniques of poisoning the very things that we see as sustenance- the vegetables and corns and grains that we grow have been tortured and poisoned to grow the way they do. Not cultivated and nurtured in the places they spring up, but forced to grow in places they were never meant to grow, on great, vast, water-sucking…you know, we've done the same to the life of flora that we have done to our animals".

In the above example, Stonehenge further directs our gaze towards non-animal others that are so often overlooked: plants, denoting that they've been subjected to the same violent and reductive practices that animals have yet rarely receive the requisite attention; in other instances she crosses the animate/inanimate divide and refers to stones as 'beings', refuting the Heideggarian (1995) designation of stones as wordless, animals as poor in world, and humans as the privileged world-formers. The aforementioned once again shed light on the issues that arise when one attempts to implement and police pure categorizations and boundary delineations; what of 'intermediate productions' such as polyps occupying the interstitial realm between 'plants' and 'animals' (Foucault 2005, pg. 160)? The boundary between life and non-life, like that between plants and animals, is porous and long-contested, as most starkly evident with borderline cases such as viruses. Traditionally relegated to the 'periphery of the living world', recent discoveries have revealed that viruses- the most abundant biological entity on the planet- have their own unique genetic history, and play a significant and active role in the evolution of cellular organisms and on major geochemical cycles (Suttle 2007; Forterre 2010); this at the very least classifies them as agentic (Latour 2004). Forterre's (2010) definition of a living organism as "a collection of integrated organs (molecular machines/structures) producing individuals evolving through natural selection" (pg. 158) includes viruses as well. However, queries surrounding how one defines life, what one ought to value and why are fundamentally philosophical and ethico-political in nature. For Gruen (2015), for instance, empathic entanglement and engagement can only occur with beings whose life-worlds we can imagine, a boundary that she draws at vertebrate life. Plumwood (1991;1993, pg. 193; 2002), on the other hand, seeks to transcend the inert/agentic divide by advocating a philosophical animism that sees both the sentient and more-than-sentient world as a wellspring of agency and intentionality, with whom we can and should attempt to cultivate mutual empathic interchanges despite the difficulties laden therein. To do so is not necessarily to effect a 'narcissistic projection' of our own interests and desires onto the 'other' (Gruen 2009, pg. 32). Plumwood's (1991; 1993) approach to ethics is one which Jellyfish's and Stonehenge's empathic encounters with non-vertebrate and non-animal life forms would seem to support. A recognition of and sense of empathetic connectedness with more-than-human agency is even more explicitly articulated in the quote below by Delfin:

"for me the ocean is ***alive…*** *it's a* ***great force of nature*** *that in reality is one of the more* ***prominent forces of our planet****, as it is the grandest ecosystem, however much we live our lives walking upon firm, dry land. And it's* ***a spirit****,* ***a force with which I feel deeply connected****".*

Here the focus is not necessarily on life, or on individuals such as trees, jellyfish, or mosquitos. The ocean, agentic force and assemblage encompassing a multiplicity of allied as well as competing actants, is depicted by Delfin in a quasi-religious sense. A sense of grandeur pervades her description of the ocean as a unified, living, and purposive entity with a ubiquitous reach that encompasses nearly three-quarters of the earth's surface and with the power to influence the earth's climate system, so that even terrestrial beings are inextricably entangled

with it. Yet, once again, it can be argued that the aforementioned approaches don't deconstruct dualism *per se* but merely extend ethical modes of relationality to include a wider class of entities: all that is *living* and/or agentic (Plumwood 2003). Though, the above excerpt does allude to a prominent recognition of and respect for more-than-human agency amongst many REA's. Similarly, the focus on more-than-human agency is evinced by the numerous graphic designs for EF!'s bi-annual gatherings that often feature animals actively joining together to dismantle industrial-capitalism:

The exhortation to 'respect existence or expect resistance' is a reference to resistance not only by REA's but, crucially, more-than-human life. Thus, at many EF! gatherings, many rejected the role of 'human saviour', referring to themselves not as saving species and ecosystems in peril but as co-participants assisting the latter in their struggles to free themselves from oppressive anthropogenic structures.

'Valuing Life in Ecosystems, and Even in Stars'

Some participants further explored and critically reflected upon the traditional animate/inanimate divide by entertaining the idea of *matter itself* as a source of valuation:

> *"…you could say I live a bit in two worlds, and this other world consists of living more than one lifetime, and valuing life in itself, life in plants, life in animals, life in ecosystems or even in stars, or like, matter that exists. And with all of my reflections, what I see is something more natural, like organic value, in comparison to artificial inventions- plastics, stone, concrete, whatever. Like, I'm clearly in favour of the more organic nature out there, and, like, when I see how the one is destroying the other, that's where my wish to resist comes into existence" (Forest).*

Forest's account goes even further in its new materialist (Bennett 2010) undertones, with the notion of matter itself as a potential seat of valuation, though he emphasizes a focus on organic life as of particular importance and as worthy of protection from 'artificial' forces

(presumably those created and unleashed by human activity)[60]. Though predicated on an organic/inorganic binary, and therefore redolent of the modern consigning of certain beings or forces to the external realm of an objective 'Nature' while artificial 'human' products are consigned to the internal 'Social' world (Latour 2004; Latour 2017, pg. 162), Forest's ruminations constitute a notable attempt at pushing the sphere of moral consideration into realms hitherto rarely trodden in traditional environmentalist and animal rights discourses. This paves the way for theorizing ethical relationality beyond individual species or even life itself but towards an elusive, living 'matter' and the potential (though messy) inclusion of viruses, algal blooms, and stellar bodies, though of course, establishing ethico-political relations with these beings is a decidedly complex endeavour. Moreover, previous excerpts have demonstrated the difficulties and inconsistencies that arise with most attempts at justifying valuation. Nevertheless, the aforementioned excerpts seem to suggest the presence of a unique onto-ethical orientation that makes concerted attempts at going beyond mere empathy predicated on sameness and towards inclusion of radical difference (Sargisson 2000, pg. 146). Moreover, in shifting the ethical focus to other entities such as insects and even matter itself, REA's create the space for challenging hierarchical orderings of importance that have traditionally underpinned conceptualizations of 'Nature', helping to further more collectivist conceptualizations of the cosmos (Latour 2004).

Inklings of Ecological Selves

"I began to feel the Valley behind me like a body, my own body. My feet were the sea-channels of the River, the organs and passages of my body were the places and streams and my bones the rocks and my head was the mountain" (Le Guin 1985, pg. 189).

The ecological self, a self-construct that perceives the self as interpenetrated and constituted by all components of the biosphere, is a concept that I set out to investigate in my interactions and interviews with REA's, as well as in the ecotopian texts under analysis. The emotive states associated with the ecological self, as elucidated previously and as evinced by the narratives and experiences of these activists, are often visceral and powerful, wherein they often refer to intense frustration and anguish experienced when witnessing the destruction of animals and natural environments, and conversely feelings of pure joy and elation when they succeed in saving them (Watson 1982). Watson (1982), for instance, recounts the 'hatred' he felt for pirate whaling vessels such as the *Sierra*[61] (pg. 211), being generally 'distressed' over the plight of the whale (pg. 214), and 'weeping' when he met the gaze of a dying bull sperm whale after he was harpooned in his attempt to attack the whaling vessel that killed his mate (pg. 41).

Most activists did not explicitly identify with the concept of an 'ecological self' (Macy 2013) as initially expected, and as previous studies had suggested (Ingalsbee, 1996). Perhaps

[60] Though how can one distinguish the 'organic' from the 'artificial' amid Anthropocene entanglements? As Latour (2017) aptly denotes, "At every point now we meet the 'Anthropos'…even following the course of rivers, you're going to find human influence everywhere. And if, in Hawaii, you come across rocks made partly of a new substance, plastic, how are you going to draw the line between man and nature?... Neither nature nor society can enter intact into the Anthropocene, waiting to be peaceably 'reconciled'" (Pg. 109).

[61] This notorious pirate whaler operated illegally for more than a decade before Watson and the Sea Shepherd rammed it; between 1968 and 1971 alone, it had slaughtered and processed 1,676 whales; its quarry consisted largely of legally protected whales such as highly endangered species, calves, and pregnant females (Watson 1982, pg. 214).

this is due to the decidedly abstract nature of the concept, thus rendering operationalization and understanding difficult. Though, there were a few exceptions; Goose, for instance, articulated a deep connection with 'nature', the biosphere, and other species, and spoke of humans as essentially 'compost' like all other living beings on the planet. This could be due to the radically anti-hierarchical and deep ecological underpinnings of EF! as a movement, whereas the more hierarchically structured Sea Shepherd Conservation Society may subtly influence activist perceptions of the human-animal-nature relationship in different ways. Nevertheless, in many of the aforementioned interview excerpts, ecological-self intimations are evident in the activists' post-humanist notions of the human self as inseparable from the wider biogeophysical mosaics within which they're thoroughly embedded. Herein, continuous interpenetrations between all things emphasize the mutual constitution between 'self' and 'other'. Witness Stonehenge's account of her loss of self when practicing voice therapy with a select group of trees with whom she deeply identified:

> *"at some point an event happened whereby I was no longer conscious of whether I was singing to the tree or the tree was singing through me. We became a kind of collaborative link… in the moment of connection, I'm not there…I don't feel anything; I'm lost in connection, you know, I'm completely, just…the sense of self isn't there. The sense of interwoven connectedness with another being doesn't really have space for ego as such, as me having power. It just feels like a longing has been fulfilled".*

Stonehenge is describing a powerful moment of entanglement with the tree, wherein their respective selves become so entwined that she loses sight of any boundaries delineating her own self. On the one hand such a mode of being might seem to serve a powerful basis for critiquing and dismantling anthropocentric hierarchies. However, the metaphysics of sameness inherent therein and in deep ecological worldviews more generally- wherein the 'Self' risks subsuming or collapsing into the 'other'- paves the way for the obliteration of distinction and appreciation of the singular alterity of the other. Thus, such an approach does not entirely succeed as in thoroughly dismantling traditional hierarchical modes of the human-animal-nature relationship, and does not sufficiently address the underlying structures of Western dualisms (Plumwood 1991, Pg. 13). This will be explored further in Chapter 8, but suffice it to say that the aim for those like Plumwood (1991; 2010) is not the obliteration of distinction, nor the disintegration of the self, but the dismantling of antagonistic dualisms that elevate one Master identity (i.e., Human, male, etc.) while subordinating the *other* (women, animals, nature). Rigid conceptual hyper-separations, as Plumwood (2010) compellingly observes, are problematic because they preclude empathy and ethical relationality with earth others, which require care, attentiveness, and equal consideration. As we saw with emphases on traditionally *human* characteristics such as intelligence, and with valuing species on the basis of their ecological significance, this leads to the framing of any being deemed to lack such a quality or capacity as *less than* in relation to those possessing it. Though, it is nevertheless telling that many REA's actively engage in problematizing and deconstructing boundary delineations of myriad sorts. How this relates to their conceptualizations of a future 'ecotopia' will be explored in subsequent chapters (Seven & Eight).

Motivators Behind Radical Activism

Previous literature has uncovered a general social and psychological profile of EF!ers (Manes 1990; Wall 1999) and noted a few common characteristics: members tend to be relatively young, between 20 and 40 years of age (due in part to the 'burn out' associated with years of

involvement in physically and emotionally draining modes of activism); they often follow alternative or 'countercultural' lifestyles, exhibit strong interpersonal solidarity and trust, publish their own magazines and newsletters, read the same literature and adhere to similar theories surrounding the underlying forces of environmental degradation, and many exhibit intense passion and commitment to the protection of the biosphere and its inhabitants (Marangudakis 2001, pg. 464). Marangudakis' (2001) study of American EF!ers from branches in California and Oregon and found that a member's transformation into a committed and thoroughly-involved EF!er typically involves a decidedly utopian trajectory: (1) a general dissatisfaction with perceived truths (anthropocentric worldviews, grow-or-die logic of capitalism, etc.), (2) a personal search for new meaning/rediscovery of self, and (3) an articulation of a new, ecocentric worldview aided through supportive networks of fellow EF!ers (pg. 465)[62]. Marangudakis (2001) made the important observation that ecocentric values are not enough to make an individual chain themselves to a tractor in order to protect a tree from being felled; rather, involvement in these radical forms of direct action "necessitates passion and a certain sense of personal sacrifice, which is quite uncommon" (pg. 466). Uncommon, indeed, and it is precisely this question of how such passion and self-sacrifice emerges or where it stems from, and crucially, how it is sustained, that remains of interest.

Urgency of Eco-Crises and Grief at Widespread Loss

Interviews with REA's, in-depth analyses of countless documents in the form of communiques from each organization's websites, extensive and ongoing interactions with them corroborate previous findings while also illuminating the considerable complexity characterizing REA identities and motivational/behavioral drivers. Moreover, as alluded to in previous chapters, such complexity surrounding the activist's ecological worldviews and motivations for action can also be seen in the organizational dynamics of their activism. Their identities as activists are considerably transient in terms of which groups or 'organizations' they most associate with. When asked which group they were associated or most identify with, for instance, most (excluding SSCS activists, who tend to exhibit strong and well-defined identities as 'SSCS activists') struggled to identify with a single group (i.e., EF!, Hambacher, etc.). This stems in part from the long-standing green anarchic underpinnings of many of the groups surveyed such as EF! and the Hambacher forest occupation, wherein a strong aversion to formal hierarchies and associations of any kind persists. Rather, in decidedly Latourian (2005) fashion, many noted that they campaigned and participated in a multiplicity of different groups at different times as the need arose and as their passions and skills directed them. Any structured configurations that did arise within groups or in terms of interpersonal relations quickly dissipated, only to reconfigure anew along different lines. Key themes regarding activists' deep-seated motivations for involvement in direct-activism are closely linked with their post-anthropocentric worldviews, often including a strong, temporal sense of urgency engendered by the perceived severity of- and exposure to- ecological breakdown. This has in turn given rise to an intense desire to devote themselves solely to preserving what's left of the natural world and prevent further injustices against threatened Earth others, and grief over widespread loss of the latter (see below and Chapter Eight). Likewise, the sense thus far gleamed from why REA's frequently take such extreme measures to protect Earth others

[62] Cathcart (1978) similarly observes that through a symbolic rejection of the established order, seekers of fundamental change [i.e. REA's] achieve "transformation and transcendence" which "affirms the commitment of the 'converted' to the movement- to the new understanding…and hence it endows them with…a new identity, a new unity, a new motive" (pg. 243).

suggests the presence of a powerful, deep-seated, emotive/affective drive (more on this in Chapter Eight) that extends far beyond any mere rational, logical, or theoretical considerations. Jellyfish and Badger cite the profound urgency of the times and grief at widescale loss as a key motivating factors underlying their activism:

> *"This is the most important moment, because we are up against something that's going to wipe out 8 billion people, and there's not gonna be humanity, there's not gonna be the rest of life on the planet…"*

> *"In my own lifetime in what is one of the most privileged countries in the world, I've also seen the* ***creep of the absence of life*** *into this country, this island. So, hedgehogs, badgers, foxes, the birdlife…all these factors, again,* ***they weigh on me****"*

As alluded to in activist inversions of the human-animal hierarchy and as evinced in the excerpts above, grief at the sheer scale of contemporary loss of beloved co-evolutionary kin is a powerful factor driving conversion and especially sustained commitment to activism (Pike 2016; 2017; Taylor 2001). Indeed, occasionally during the interviews, tears were shed when participants recounted experiences with loss and degradation of beloved individuals, species, and landscapes. Grief appears to serve as both "an expression of deeply felt kinship bonds with other species *and* a significant factor in creating those bonds" (Pike 2016, Pg. 420). It is such keenly felt grief, made possible through the hypersensitivity to non-human death afforded by REAs' post-anthropocentric worldviews, that likely also explains their willingness to engage in such high-risk actions as occupying parts of an old-growth forest for years on end or interposing their bodies between whales and harpoons. When relaying his thoughts and emotional state when out on one of the Sea Shepherd vessels during an anti-whaling campaign, Jellyfish remarked: "My friends are dying!". In other words, Earth others are perceived not as distant objects but as beloved fellow beings, as kin. Similarly, recall Captain's significant encounter with the dying sperm whale, or Roo's similarly moving account of- and powerful reaction to- the stranded whale calf euthanized by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. Relatedly, Stonehenge refers to the transformative power of coming to terms with contemporary biological annihilation:

> *"There is no getting away from the lack of birds in the skies, and the lack of insects, and the trees still standing but dead…we are clearly in troubled, deeply troubled times… [What we need is] the recognition and acknowledgment that we are really where we are. No more disconnect, no more turning away, no more getting lost in the guilt and shame of it. We need to use remorse as a stepping stone into transformation".*

Grief and perhaps guilt stemming from 'species shame' over our complicity in the ubiquitous death and destruction that marks the Anthropocene thus appear to be powerful drivers of action. Yet, this and numerous other examples also suggest that another implicit and often unacknowledged motivator behind radical green activism appears to be the decidedly utopian notion that things *could* be otherwise (see Chapter Seven); witness Roo's observation that the 'Now' was not good enough and that '*we could do better*'. Though a multiplicity of motivational factors are at play, and though REAs' relationship to utopianism and hope more generally is a decidedly complex one (as explored in greater detail in Chapters Seven and Eight), REA strivings seem to be comprised of more than mere grief over what has already been lost and/or calls for stemming further decline. Perhaps, at times subconsciously and at others consciously, the conviction that not only might present rates of loss be stemmed but that

other modes of being might be brought forth lends them the necessary resolve to continue. Indeed, for Meadow, part of what motivates him is a 'hope' that 'maybe we can' be better; Dog similarly speaks of the need to create a new world 'in the shell of the old', and Tree notes that his primary motivator for action is "the belief that things can be much better".

'Avenger-Mania': The Need to Alleviate Injustice

Closely associated with their deep kinship bonds with other beings and subsequent grief over their destruction is a keenly felt sense of injustice, and an ineffable desire to alleviate it, as a powerful action motivator. Or, put another way, many REA's exhibit such a hyper-sensitivity to the perceived ills of the 'Now' (more in Chapter Six) that they feel compelled to resist it. Delfin refers to this feeling as 'Avenger-Mania', which for her encompasses…

> *"a sense of responsibility and justice, to do what seemed to me the right thing to do, and I don't know, this avenger-mania [lol] that things are not right and one has to take charge in order to make things right and not to remain still."*

Other participants similarly denote a 'need' to act in the face of widespread social and ecological injustice:

> *"**I hurt a lot because of inequality**, it makes me really sad. I can't comprehend why anyone would impose anything on someone else. I think I've done a lot of ego-breaking, although we all have an ego that we all feed, and see any sort of inequality or unjust action and can't keep quiet, even if that means risking my freedom or my life. So, I feel the need to act" (Koala)*

> *"it's about the injustice; it's about every day waking up, and going about your day, and confronting something that is still quite unbelievable in this day and age, you know, like starvation in Yemen, and wars, our government, Brexit, everything, it's like, it's a constant battle, and **I don't understand why it should be like this**. There is a level of social injustice that drives me and, like, I wanna fix it. **I wanna make it right**. And I know that's never gonna happen, that that is kind of what drives my aspect of environmentalism, but campaigns as a whole, it's just something that's intrinsic in me" (Butterfly)*

The excerpts above denote embodied responses rife with emotive affect to perceived injustices, wherein activists *feel* the weight of harms to others and thus feel compelled to intervene on their behalf. Their curious *need* to act, to alleviate suffering, and to deploy their agency for helping to stem tides of harm and destruction suggest a form of 'empathic distress' (Hoffman 1990) which often translates into an acute awareness of injustice and thus serves as a motivator behind 'moral behaviour'. Moreover, such inclinations are likely the result of their expansive modes of identification and deep kinship bonds with other species and the wider earth system. If the former, then one might assess REA activism as merely self-regarding wherein, with the self being identified as one with the other, the protection of the other becomes an essential pre-condition for protection of the self. This undoubtedly might be the case for some. However, as Shark denotes, motivations for action amidst many REA's goes much further than this:

> *"we're basically in very high debt to animals, because we are the reason for the mass extinction which is happening right now, and, yeah…we are in a debt, a huge debt to*

save as many animals as we can. But yeah, basically my motivation came from a friend of mine who basically said to leave the earth a little bit better than you found it".

A core aspect of REA activism, thus, appears other-regarding, alleviating injustice and harm because *others* suffer from such phenomena. It is concern for the wellbeing of the other that seems central here, and the ethical pull of the plight of the other is so powerful as to compel REA's to occasionally risk their lives on behalf of the former.

Support and Solidarity from Activist Networks

A final prominent theme throughout when asked what their primary motivations were for engaging in time-consuming and often high-risk activities was the strength gained in solidarity with other activists within 'communities of mutual support' (Grasshopper). For instance:

> *"…I have to devote myself to alleviating that suffering…now it's expanded to not only suffering for humans but suffering in terms of animals and the environment, in working with other people, in us developing collective visions, collective strategies, collective plans of action and carrying them out, it's really helped…my base motivation ties back to that need to work to alleviate suffering but then the ongoing motivation is the people that I've worked with to do that"* (Bear).

> *"they are my anarchist family, and that is big moral support when you have found blood on the cages of the badgers, or when you've seen another tree fall, not only because they support you and the fact that it's hard and they understand, but also on the fact that they spark your light to carry on fighting"* (Koala).

Radical green activism is often extraordinarily demanding not only physically but, crucially, psychologically and emotionally. The grief, rage, and resentment at the loss of their co-evolutionary kin can become so overwhelming as to discourage further activism and leave lasting emotional and psychological traumas, as many REA's repeatedly emphasized during the interviews. In such instances, the support gained from fellow activists is vital. Another potential reason for the animating strength derived by REA's from immersion in activist networks is the particularly strong sense of collective identity (Saunders 2008) and solidarity often exhibited by such groups that differ so markedly from mainstream societal norms. The strong 'us vs. them' dynamic between REA groups and the wider society (Saunders, 2008)- and the often clear location of an 'enemy' to be resisted (Chapter Six)- serves to strengthen bonds between REA members while also heightening their aversion to the 'outside', a phenomenon that was apparent in my investigations. However, I posit that this is further reinforced by their ecotopian characteristics which necessitate distancing from the now in order to explore and create alternative modes of being. Moreover, as denoted, much of the core motivational drivers underlying REA activism appear to be rooted in an other-regarding desire to alleviate perceived injustices against imperiled 'others', namely the natural world and other species, though this is unsurprising in light of their post-humanist worldviews which often- though not always- value the other *as* 'other'.

REA's: Post-Humanist Strivings

Though REA's might broadly be situated under the label of 'post-humanist' or 'post-anthropocentric' in their staunch repudiations of human supremacy, a significant degree of complexity and curious inconsistencies can be detected in their ecological worldviews and modes of human-animal-nature relationality. Within this broad categorization one can detect

an array of theoretical approaches- from biocentric emphases on life itself to ecocentric valuations of individuals to the degree that they serve to maintain the wider biospheric 'whole'- to the question of why and on what foundations one ought to value nonhuman others. Some consciously and unconsciously reproduce empathy on the basis of sameness in their emphases on intelligence, sentience, and the like as bases for ethical consideration of Earth others. Such approaches might be deemed to lack an ethical dimension as they constitute concern not for the singular 'other' as such but merely for others who are like the self or serve some other important function (i.e. fostering ecological resilience). Others move further in grappling with the drawbacks of erecting any lines of demarcation, such as in their attempts to include life and even matter within bounds of moral-ethical valuation, emphases on the need to value more-than-human agency as such. Most curious is many REAs' attempts to critically reflect upon and deconstruct boundaries as such, wherein they often denote the onto-epistemological and ethical drawbacks of delineating certain characteristics in order to justify valuations of nonhumans. Chapter Eight will feature theoretical explorations of some of these crucial themes in greater depth. Motivations initiating and sustaining REA activism seem to consist of a complex amalgamation of factors, though mostly (1) grief over widespread loss, mourning and the desire to prevent further loss (rooted in deep kinship bonds with earth others), (2) the strength and moral support offered by fellow activists, and (3) a resolute resistance to the myriad injustices of the 'Now' *as well as* an implicit a striving towards *the better* (though this latter notion is purely speculative on my behalf given the utopian undercurrents in many of their narratives). Moreover, many cited a sense of 'participative efficacy' stemming from immersion in and visible impacts stemming from their activism as a behavioral motivator, a concept relevant to utopianism as such a sense can arise even when the odds are stacked against the success of a particular goal or action (Fernando et al, 2019). The common expression used by many REA's, 'Love and rage', seems to encapsulate their motivations rather succinctly: love of the earth and its myriad inhabitants, and rage over their systematic destruction amid the deficiencies of the 'Now'.

Chapter 6: Analysis (2)- REA Diagnostic Framing and Criticisms of the 'Now'

"The high points of grand politics are at the same time the moments of vision, in which the enemy is recognized in concrete clarity as the enemy" (Schmitt, 1996, pg. 67).

Critiques of the 'Now' are an indispensable feature of the utopian imaginary, the essential foundation from which projections of alternatives must ultimately arise. Thus, Chapter 1 featured an overview of diagnoses of Anthropocene ills and drivers according to prominent discourses in environmental and political ecological disciplines largely in order to shed light on the historical context underpinning the rise of REA's as well as the publication of landmark ecotopian texts, and as a point of reference for the current chapter. Similarly, this chapter features an analysis of the continuities and contrasts between the 'diagnostic framing' (Snow & Benford 1988) or 'criticisms of the now' put forth by REA's and the ecotopian texts under examination. Of interest is who/what, within their diagnostic narratives and mobilizations, REA's and literary ecotopias regard as the 'enemy(ies)'; that is, the disparaged individuals, groups, phenomena, etc. viewed as threats to biospheric integrity and thus to whom culpability for Anthropocene woes is attributed. Overall, in contrast to earlier incarnations of EF! in the US and UK, REA diagnoses of the 'Now' have become far more intersectional in their tracing of the multifarious forces of exploitation and domination afflicting humans and non-humans alike (Witt & Taylor 2017, pg. 9). Amongst REA's, the varying backgrounds and focuses of

each- ranging from ALF and SSCS activists who focus more on individual animals and species to EF!ers who tend to focus on broader ecosystems- translated into similar distinctions surrounding identified issues, attributions of culpability, and diagnoses of their key drivers. However, strikingly similar diagnostic themes across groups and data sets nevertheless surfaced as will be discussed below. This is likely due to the tributaries of radical-anarchic green thought that have equally influenced the emergence and development of both, as most REA's interviewed were not familiar with the texts under examination.

As this project is heavily influenced by a post-humanist ontological framework (i.e., Latour), attempts are made in this chapter at tracing the causes, effects, and agencies implicated in the socio-ecological deficiencies of the 'Now' *as stipulated by REA's and ecotopian texts* [emphasis added]. As Laidlaw (2010) observes, attributions of moral blame and responsibility influence and are in turn influenced by an individual or group's specific judgments of an event or phenomenon. Thus, the location of agency, and attributions of moral blame and responsibility are complex endeavors due not only to their diffuse (Woon in Fritsch et al, 2018) and relational nature but also to varying interpretations of where the latter in particular reside. Am I, for instance, as culpable for rising greenhouse gas emissions when purchasing products from Amazon that must be delivered from afar as the delivery driver or the company's CEO? The latter- through the resource and carbon-intensive consumptive profligacy frequently enjoyed by the ultra-rich- might indeed be more culpable than, for instance, a Somali subsistence fisherman. However, inextricable entanglement with agentic earth others precludes the very possibility of a definite foreground or background (Morton, 2010, pg. 269), and complicates locations of culpability for the 'Now'. Indeed, even industrial capitalism emerged from and within earthly assemblages consisting of multitudes of actants- from humans to ancient algae and carbon (Davison 2015). The interest here is in REA and ecotopian texts' critiques and perceptions regarding who/what is responsible for the socio-ecological crisis that marks the Anthropocene. In other words, according to them, what are they mobilizing *against*? To what actants, assemblages, processes, etc. do they attribute moral culpability? Relevant excerpts from key ecotopian texts are juxtaposed alongside those from interview transcripts and organizational documents as a point of comparison. The primary focus and interest, however, lies in REA responses to the aforementioned queries. REAs' and ecotopian texts' ecotopian visions, and what the former might be mobilizing *for* or *towards* are explored in Chapters Seven and Eight.

A 'Machine Out of Control'

> *"We live in the shadow of a terrifying utopia and must search the shadows for those other utopias that have been eclipsed. The dominant utopia is the utopia of endless material progress, based on a fundamental utopian fantasy of infinite powers of production and infinite possibilities for consumption" (Clark in Davis & Kinna 2009, pg. 9).*

As has been previously noted, the utopian imaginary in its myriad incarnations often proliferates during times of precarity and instability. Huxley's *Island* (2009) was published during the height of the geopolitically turbulent Cold War era and the increasing ecological perturbations of the post-1945 'great acceleration era' of mass consumption and production. Like Rachel Carson's paradigm-shifting work *Silent Spring* published during the same year, reflection of the burgeoning ecological zeitgeist of the time, *Island* similarly echoes deep concerns over the mounting socio-ecological deficiencies stemming from unchecked industrialization (whether under capitalist, communist, or any other political system) and

overconsumption. *Island* was originally published in 1962, nearly a decade prior to the proliferation of the famed early-mid 1970s 'limits to growth' debates in green political thought that similarly influenced the emergence of radical environmental groups (Mathisen 2001). Thus, one can detect considerable continuities in diagnostic framing narratives across both genres. Mirroring dominant Anthropocene discourses, some REA's such as Meadow attribute culpability for widespread biological and ecological decline amid the Anthropocene to the *species* 'homo sapiens':

> *I think the human species is the most violent species that has ever existed…our violence towards other species goes beyond anything that any other species is capable of. You know, 70 billion land animals and trillions of fish every year" (Meadow).*

Meadow seems to suggest (quite problematically) that perhaps there is something in our evolutionary or genetic history that has caused us to be almost irremediably violent and destructive as a species. However, a stronger diagnostic framing theme prevalent throughout the interviews and ecotopian texts designate not to a blanket 'humanity' but more specifically to 'industrial human activity'- or the 'juggernaut of economic growth' at the heart of contemporary industrial societies (historically situated in the Global North)- as a key overarching driver of contemporary socio-ecological disintegration:

> *"Ben lost no chance to point out how Americans and their technology had been in the forefront of this tragic and irreversible process [biodiversity decline]. And indeed I hadn't realized how far it has gone: it is a horrible story. Our role in it was heavy, and thousands of marvellous creatures that once inhabited this earth have now vanished from the universe forever.* ***We have gobbled them up in our relentless increase*** [emphasis added]. *There are now 40 times more weight of humans on the earth than of all the wild mammals together!" (Callenbach 1975, Pg. 76).*

> *"Industrial civilization is quite blatantly showing its flaws. A billion people are starving, our soils are dying, the majority of the planet's species are in rapid decline, catastrophic climate change looms and even in the richest parts of the world most people are pissed off with the misery and monotony of everyday life. You have to spend most of your time working your arse off to make profit for someone you probably don't like doing something you don't care about, and then you struggle to pay bills while being pressured to buy more consumer crap and unnecessary technology" (EF! 2017, Pg. 21).*

Elsewhere in the EF! 2017 Summer Gathering pamphlet, a paradoxical conceptualization of human agency emerges. A reference is made to the aforementioned growth-oriented juggernaut as a "machine out of control" (EF! 2017, pg. 17), wherein "We are trapped in *machines built out of human beings*, over which *no one has any significant control*, not even our supposed leaders" (Pg. 17). On the one hand humans are depicted as the architects of the forces of ecological decline, yet these are forces over which many increasingly have little control. Similarly, Goose denotes:

> *"[capitalism] is the guiding force behind [the socio-ecological crisis]…and it's something that's out of control,* ***I don't think there is anyone in control****. I don't think it's, you know, even a bunch of people, I think it's just the machine has got out*

of control. We're in the swing of…you know, talking at the moment of robots, and it's like, that's kind of what we have, we have an out-of-control robot, basically. Not a robot, it's just ***a set of principles that are wrong****, and wrong for us, and not logical, and not ecological, and just not us. And this is what's wrong…people are out of control, governments are out of control, councils, everyone is out of control, there is nobody guiding this ship, which is actually more scary when you think about it. It's a* ***system that is broken****"*

The metaphor of a 'machine out of control' conjures notions of the monolith of ceaseless economic growth and its attendant 'principles' of hyper-competitiveness and ceaseless acquisition as ubiquitous to the extent that it complicates precise assignations of moral culpability. The crucial question of agency, culpability, and responsibility is one that we'll return to in subsequent sections. Nevertheless, it is curious to note the pervasive sense amongst some REA's that though humans created the 'machine' of endless growth, it has since acquired an agency of its own that is so powerful as to be able to coerce us into alliances with it for its maintenance (Latour, 2004). No single entity, not Amazon, the fossil fuel industry, NATO, Wall Street, or Jeff Bezos is in control, though as discussed below it can be argued that such actants and assemblages play a more significant role in driving the juggernaut of economic growth than others (Braidotti 2013). Goose makes a further observation regarding the [capitalist] system's irrationality, wherein the insatiable impetus towards growth and accumulation becomes an end in itself[63], continuing apace despite fuelling socio-ecological disintegration that ultimately undermines the conditions of its own continuity. The laissez-faire economic rationality (Gorz 2010) that has proliferated particularly since the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980's (Harvey 2007), predicated on an absolute subordination of the collective to the private good and the dubious maxim that the unhindered pursuit of self-interest can further human wellbeing, is designated as deeply problematic by ecotopian texts and REA's alike. This is why an overwhelming proportion of REA's designate modern capitalism as a key source of Anthropocene woes, as discussed below.

<u>The Socio-Ecological Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism</u>

[63] "The development of this economic system was no longer determined by the question: *what is good for Man* [and the non-human world, one might add]? But by the question: *What is good for the growth of the system?*" (Fromm 1976, pg. xxix).

Figure 1 EF! activists shut down a coal mine in Northeast England

A central diagnostic theme that has prevailed throughout REA discourses since their earliest mobilizations is the purportedly multifarious socio-ecological contradictions of advanced industrial society (Manes 1990; Taylor 2008; Saunders 2012; Marcuse 2013). Most activists interviewed as well as the texts under analysis articulated variants of such critiques, further designating not only rampant industrialization and growth-oriented socioeconomic systems more generally, as well as attendant over-consumption/over-exploitation, but especially capitalism (particularly in its industrial and neoliberal modalities) as a key driver of the current socio-ecological crisis (Bookchin 1987; 2005; Harvey 2007; Plumwood 2010; Strauss 2010; Foster et al 2011; Žižek 2011; Saunders 2012; Braidotti 2013; Marcuse 2013; Klein 2015). Referring back to Chapter One, a growing abundance of theoretical and empirical insights shed light on the increasingly visible consequences of growth-oriented and profit-seeking socioeconomic systems. Consider the following exchange with an EF! activist who, upon being asked what he designated as the key drivers behind socio-ecological decline, noted emphatically the predominant role that contemporary capitalism- and in turn multinational corporations operating under its logic- has in shaping our present predicament:

> *"The main contributing factor is called capitalism, and there is no doubt about that. I'm not going to pinpoint on who burns more CO2, who produces more plastic, who kills more animals, umm, all of that is just a symptom of the illness, and that illness is capitalism without a doubt. When greed is over everything, including ethics, and when we become so greedy that we can't see further away than ten-years'-time and even five-years'-time, that is a symptom of capitalism… Obviously, I wouldn't say that capitalism is good but, through capitalism we've had a lot of technological advancements, and it is probably now the time to detach ourselves from a rotten system that is destroying the whole world and oppressing human and nonhuman animals, as well as the whole environment..." (Koala)*

Many others expressed similar sentiments, designating capitalism and in particular the insatiable impetus towards growth on which the system is predicated, as overarching drivers:

> *"…this idea that we have infinite resources, and going back more into capitalism, this idea that profit is a good thing, that expansion and growth is a good thing…It's that capitalism has to expand in order to survive, GDP, blah, blah, blah, and we realize that we live on a finite planet, there's an automatic contradiction there. You can't expand infinitely on a finite planet…" (Bear).*

> *"we live in…a global capitalist economy now, that believes in…infinite growth economies that have to have infinite growth to survive and to function…" (Warrior).*

This of course is not a novel observation but influenced in part by limits-to-growth discourses of the 1970s (Meadows et al 1972) mentioned previously. However, contemporary crises- climate change, rampant deforestation, mounting scarcity of rare earth metals, fresh water, etc., pollution and toxification- as the inevitable consequences of a socioeconomic model predicated on the aforementioned imperatives render such diagnoses especially pertinent. For those such as Foster et al (2011) and Clark & York (2005), and post-humanist scholars such as Braidotti (2013), capitalism is inherently and irremediably ecologically incongruous, whereby accumulation necessarily proceeds via the endless commodification of 'nature', prioritization of exchange over use values, the alienation of humans from their essential material foundations, and from one another. Other REA's echoed similar sentiments, especially problematizing capitalism's post-1980s neoliberal manifestation:

> *"So my instinctual reaction to that [question] is capitalism. But then at the same time I wouldn't argue that socialism or any other system, maybe they would be worse, I don't know. But the problem is that this rampant neoliberal form of capitalism that we have is so driven by the top 1% having 99% of the wealth, and doing essentially whatever they like to create profit for themselves and screwing over everybody else, is what I would count as the main driver" (Jellyfish).*

> *"there's been this creep towards a sort of neoliberal consensus where (A) the money's funnelled to the people at the top of society, you get privatization, you get raiding of the pension pots, you get the deregulation of an economy so that a small country in the Global South has to open up its financial flows so that big investors can pile the money in and they can just move their money around, and capital is quite mobile, and (B) there's also this underlying political mantra where growth is necessary and is good, and I've yet to see a government win on a de-growth ticket or even on a sort of zero-growth ticket. I think these are the kinds of things that are driving the ecological destruction" (Squirrel)*

> *"Yeah, the main driver is money. We have multi-billion-pound industries, especially the fossil fuel, that are run by narcissists and psychopaths, or sociopaths. Umm, they live in their bubble, and the only way for them is just growth, growth, growth, and they are trying to extract infinite resources from a finite planet, and it just obviously doesn't equate" (Butterfly)*

For Meadow, the particular damage wrought by neoliberal capitalism stems from its perpetuation of the idea that profits are the sole raison d'être of socioeconomic activity:

"neoliberal economics that have actually, really, massively increased this idea that a company's sole purpose is to keep increasing profits to its shareholders, and everything else just gets pushed aside".

The ecotopian texts featured in the analysis of this project (Le Guin, 1985; Callenbach, 1975; Piercy, 1976; Robinson, 1990; Huxley 2009) in variegated ways similarly designate the rapacious logic, subsistence patterns, and modes of relationality engendered by neoliberal capitalism as primary underlying causes of our myriad socio-ecological woes. As denoted in the excerpt above by Meadow, over the last thirty years income growth for the bottom half of the world's inhabitants has been zero while the incomes of the world's wealthiest 1% have grown by a staggering 300% (Piketty 2017). It is estimated that the world's billionaires- a mere 2,153 people- now own more wealth than 4.9 billion of the world's inhabitants (Coffey et al 2020). The world's wealthy elite amass such excess wealth through, among other sleights of hand, tax evasion via intricate networks of offshore tax havens, and draw on their enormous political power (Mills & Wolfe 2000) to lobby to drive down wages and influence policies otherwise favourable to them (Piketty 2017). The Lockean proviso that rights to the acquisition of land, resources, and wealth hold only to the extent that 'enough and as good' is left in common for others (1690) has been grotesquely violated, with extreme acquisitions by the few increasingly predicated on theft of the future itself from existing and future generations. Socioeconomic inequality is not only ethically but also ecologically problematic, as it exacerbates ecological degradation through, among other things, placing pressure on the 'have-nots' to enhance their social position through increased material consumption (Wisman 2011)[64].

Some REA's cast their sights further back, noting that the present global socioeconomic order emerged from an extensive and violent history of Euro-Western colonialism, marked by the mass dispossession and at times the outright extermination of native populations. From these longstanding dynamics of domination and dispossession, some REA's claim that more or less clear aggressors (modalities of thought, socio-historical processes, etc.) and victims emerge:

"Animal agriculture has been, and continues to be, a tool of colonisation. The animal business steals food from the poorest, exploits the soil and pollutes water in poor countries to provide luxuries to the wealthiest" (EF! 2017, Pg. 31).

"property that got into the ownership of persons through violence, like long times ago, like kings and other rulers, bigger companies, landlords, like, there was a lot of violence involved in disowning peasant farmers, or first nations, and giving the property into the hands of multinational companies, or families, or other systems that still own them, and that still somehow create a lasting dependency around the whole humankind" (Forest).

[64] Thus, Žižek (2011) designates the 'four riders' of the apocalypse as: "the ecological crisis, consequences of the biogenetic revolution, imbalances within the system itself (problems with intellectual property; forthcoming struggles over raw materials, food and water), and explosive growth of social divisions and exclusions" (Pg. x). Similarly, Derrida in *Spectres of Marx* (1994) denotes 'ten plagues' associated with global free market triumphalism, including the depredations of the military-industrial complex, economic breakdown in the form of skyrocketing inequality, and the failures of democracy, rendering the articulation and creation of alternatives all the more pressing.

An image of complex and longstanding entanglements, hierarchies and structures of power and violence begins to emerge; that is, 'wrongs' that belong to no specific time or place but which are diffused across vast spatial-temporal distances. However, as Jellyfish observes, the 'what' to strive against and where to broadly assign culpability for Anthropocene woes can more or less be clearly delineated:

"…my attitude is to protect the vulnerable animals that we're destroying that have no role in this, have no…they haven't caused this in any way, they're just the victims of this, in the same way that a lot of people, like, in third-world countries are the victim of this".

An important though not always explicit critique in many REA and ecotopian literary diagnostic narratives is of the "dominion, ownership, entitlement of things that aren't really ours to take" (Dog). Particularly problematic, as alluded to previously, is profligacy amongst the elite few at the expense of extreme deprivation imposed on the multitudes, as in the following scene from Huxley's *Island* (2009), wherein the anti-utopian character, The Rani, notes:

"Bahu (Rendang ambassador, an area on the periphery of the utopian society of Pala) is the Last of the Aristocrats. You should see his country palace! Like the Arabian Nights! One claps one's hands- and instantly there are six servants ready to do one's bidding. One has a birthday- and there is a fête nocturne in the gardens. Music, refreshments, dancing girls; two hundred retainers carrying torches. The life of Haroun al Rashid, but with plumbing" (Pg. 49)

At which point Will Farnaby, the protagonist, sardonically retorts: "'It sounds quite delightful,'" while remembering the "villages through which he had passed in Colonel Dipa's white Mercedes- the wattled huts, the garbage, the children with opthalmia, the skeleton dogs, the women bent double under enormous loads" (pg. 49). Similarly, Tom, protagonist Kevin's grandfather in Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1990), ruminates on the stark contrast between the ecotopian society of El Modena and the previous order: "I hated capitalism because it was a lie! It said that everyone exercising their self-interest would make a decent community! Such a lie! It was government as protection agency, a belief system for the rich" (Pg. 56). Thus, for many REA's and ecotopian works, neoliberal capitalism appears as a deeply problematic paradigm and socioeconomic system, one whose boundless need to consume and expand generates unethical and ecologically disastrous inequalities and externalities.

The 'Having' Modality

A related diagnostic framing subtheme, and one which relates to REAs' general disavowal of ownership and possession, is a mode of being prevalent amidst Western-industrial-capitalism alluded to previously, which entails not only the insatiable desire to grow and consume but, crucially, the subordination of being[65] to having. The 'having' mode as described by Fromm (1976), and akin to the instrumental economic rationality theorized by Gorz (2010), is an ethos and orientation predicated on the avaricious acquisition of possessions, profit and power- and their related characteristics such as hyper-competitiveness and atomization characteristic of

[65] The 'being' mode, on the other hand, which involves being '*oned* to the world' and is characterized by interconnectedness with other beings and our wider natural support systems (Fromm 1976), is framed by REA's and ecotopian texts as the preferred alternative.

Western capitalist societies (Fromm 1967, pg. 57). This general orientation is seen to lie at the heart of social and ecological decline:

"this weird mentality where we've always got to get the next best thing, and we're making massive landfills, we're taking finite resources just to make more crap that we really don't need. We have everything already. These developing nations, they want everything that we've got and they have some of it already, and there just isn't enough resources on the planet for this mentality that we've all got to have TVs, cars, and god knows what" (Poseidon).

"He looked again at the motorbike, then back at Murugan's glowing face. Light dawned; the Colonel's purpose revealed itself. The serpent tempted me and I did eat. The tree in the midst of the garden was called The Tree of Consumer Goods, and to the inhabitants of every underdeveloped Eden, the tiniest taste of its fruit, and even the sight of its thirteen hundred and fifty-eight leaves, had power to bring shameful knowledge that, industrially speaking, they were stark naked" (Huxley, 1967, Pg. 134)

For many activists, the depredations of global capital intersect with and exacerbate a multiplicity of other oppressive and exploitative modes, which is why no amount of 'greening' or constraints upon its inherently self-destructive tendencies will be sufficient:

"Capitalism hasn't just brought about environmental destruction, it's also brought about lots of other things like oppression of women, oppression of children, oppression of outside groups, the third world or Global South. So, I want capitalism to end, not just for the environment, although that is the most pressing issue, but like, as long as we have capitalism we'll still have inequality, and hierarchy, and so on. ***It all has to go****" (Fox)*

"Think of capitalism and the current industrial civilization that perpetuates it as ***a massive gnarled tree****; it's very easy to atomize our grievances into single issue campaigns that don't share a common strategic goal. One campaign tirelessly hacking at one branch, another campaign tirelessly hacking at another- but* ***the trunk continues to stand strong and continues to sprout new branches****" (EF! 2017, Pg. 30).*

As with Bookchin's (1986) organismic metaphor of capitalism as a cancerous scourge that permeates and corrupts all, the interview extracts above suggest perceptions of capitalism as thoroughly incongruous with more ecologically resilient and egalitarian modes of being. As Warrior denotes, "You just can't have equality and capitalism at the same time, it's impossible". Therefore, detectable amongst many REA diagnostic framings is a powerful, and decidedly utopian, desire for a thorough uprooting of the entire system as a remedy for the socio-ecological crises that mark the Anthropocene. This is what differentiates REA's from more traditionally reformist environmental groups and movements, which tend to emphasize a tinkering around the edges of the current system rather than positing the need to wholly subvert it, as well as the purportedly insidious modalities of being it engenders.

Capitalism's Violent Reduction of Irreducible Singularity

Amongst REA and ecotopian literary diagnostic narratives, global capitalism thus appears as a particularly powerful assemblage during the Anthropocene, directing and commodifying flows of matter and bodies and extending its regime via a "limitless interchangeability of forces, products, agents or actors, meanings or values" (Nancy 2015, pg. 6;16) with no ultimate objective other than its own expansion. And herein lies what many

REA's regard as capitalism's most insidious and ethically problematic effect: the corrosion of interpersonal relations via the reduction of singular living beings to mere interchangeable and expendable commodities (Bookchin 1986; Buber 1996; Marcuse 2013):

> *"Capitalists have an imperative that influences everything that they do: the maximization of shareholder profit and accumulation of capital. This overarching worldview means that animals- like everything else- are objectified and commodified" (EF! 2017, Pg. 29).*

Animals in particular, traditionally rendered mute objects devoid of agency and subjectivity, are further reduced to mere living material for biotechnological agriculture, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries, and related profit-seeking enterprises (Berger 2009; Braidotti 2009, pg. 529). What is the lifecycle of a newborn female calf (unprofitable males are often immediately killed at birth) but a succession of inconvenient stages that must be quickly surpassed so that she is ready to be forcibly impregnated and produce milk for the agricultural-industrial complex? What good (economically), as Leopold (1970) poignantly enquired, is an undrained marsh (Pg. 100)? Such a logic transforms the earth itself into a mere 'apparatus of production' or 'standing reserve' (Heidegger 1977), the mere stuff of domination and for hyper-capitalist accumulation (Braidotti, 2009, pg. 529; Marcuse 2013; Schmidt 2013).'I-thou' interpersonal relations where respect for the irreducible 'other' might flourish are increasingly supplanted by 'I-it' relations (Buber, 2000). Such reductive modes of relationality, indeed the very notion of 'Nature' as "'objective reality' deprived of any meaning, as the domain of neutral facts opposed to our subjective values", are direct outgrowths of a society in which the commodity form is predominant (Zizek 2011, pg. 218; Fromm 1976, pg. xxx). Hence, Bookchin's (1986) apt reference to capitalism as a 'cancer', a metaphor similarly utilized by many REA's:

"My use of the word 'cancer' is deliberate and literal, not merely metaphorical. Capitalism, I would argue, is the cancer of society- not simply a social cancer, a concept that implies it is some form of human consociation. It is not a social phenomenon but rather an economic one; indeed, it is the substitution of economy for society, the ascendency of the buyer-seller relationship, mediated by things called 'commodities', over the richly articulated social ties that past civilizations at their best elaborated and developed for thousands of years in networks of mutual aid, reciprocity, complementarity, and other support systems which made social life meaningful and humanizing" (pg. 30).

The sense gleaned is thus of presently dominant socioeconomic order as among the prime drivers of the great unravelling of life's rich mosaics, not only through physical-material disruptions generated by the ceaseless quest for profits but, crucially, the corrosion of interpersonal relations. Discussions about industrial expansion and capitalist accumulation enter into the terrain of ethics, or how we *ought* to relate to others, because of its purportedly insidious effects on the former. Capitalist commodification amongst REA's is associated with the violent reduction of singular, living entities- regarded as kin as we saw in the previous chapter- to mere disposable objects, and as such is seen as thoroughly irreconcilable with more ethical modes of human-animal-nature relationality. It is against this backdrop that REA and literary ecotopian projections of better worlds (Chapter Eight) come to light.

<u>Towards the Dissolution of All Hierarchies</u>

However, though the designation of capitalism as a driving force of the socio-ecological crisis is prevalent throughout the works and interview data, it is interesting to note the recognition, particularly amongst activists and documents associated with 'EF!', of capitalism as merely the latest, if most grotesque, manifestation of more ancient and entrenched modalities of thought and relationality. In decidedly Bookchinian (2005) fashion, whose socio-ecological analyses and diagnoses REA's (again, particularly EF! due to their green anarchic roots) draw on significantly, the 2017 EF! Summer Gathering pamphlet muses thus:

"Fashionable though it is to blame the continuing devastation of the planet on capitalism, the reality is that these problems started much earlier…", namely, ***hierarchical modes of thought and organization****, and an 'expansionist culture' that "first found its outlet in militarism and empire building, and throughout history that has been the dominant means of overcoming resource limits…[until' a more sophisticated means of expansion and domination, based on money, trade and debt has emerged…this system (capitalism) builds the need for expansion/growth into the very fabric of the system…" (Pg. 18).*

EF!'s problematization of hierarchy as the structural underpinnings of subsequent expansionist and exploitative undertakings seen within neoliberal capitalism mirror the Bookchinian argument that hierarchy and stratification, though integral features of class society and capitalism, date much further back. Rather, the disintegration of 'primordial equality' into hierarchical systems of inequality along age, gendered, class, and species lines, the dissolution of tribal communities and rise of the city, and lastly the usurpation of social administration by the State… "profoundly altered not only social life but also the attitude of people toward each other, humanity's vision of itself, and ultimately its attitude toward the natural world" (Bookchin 2005, Pg. 68; 109). Hierarchy itself- structural, organizational, conceptual- as a force which predates and is subsequently exacerbated by capitalism, is seen as the essential foundation of the 'antagonistic structuring of otherness', wherein otherness (historically 'nature', women, animals, racial minorities, the non-Europeans, emotion, etc.), is defined as inferior and lacking in relation to the superior 'master signifiers' ('culture', men, white, Western-Europeans, rationality, etc.). The exploitation of the inferior 'other' (for profit, etc.) is thereby legitimized (Plumwood 2002). Most importantly, according to both Bookchin and REA's, true to the utopist's undying belief in the mutability human 'nature', hierarchical modes of relationality are not inevitable, and can be substantially diminished if not altogether eradicated with a radical reconstitution of our societies (see Chapter Seven). Therefore, for REA's eradicating capitalism is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the creation of more egalitarian and harmonious worlds. Hierarchy as a modality of thought and organization must ultimately be uprooted if thorough and lasting socio-ecological transformations are to take place.

<u>'We're All Complicit'</u>

"The people of the Valley did not conceive that such acts as they saw and felt much evidence of in their world- the permanent desolation of vast regions through release of radioactive or poisonous substances, the permanent genetic impairment from which they suffered most directly in the form of sterility, stillbirth, and congenital disease- had not been deliberate. In their view, human beings did not do things accidentally. Accidents happened to people, but what people did they were responsible for…The people who had done these things had done wrong mindfully. They had their heads on wrong" (Le Guin 1986, Pg. 159).

Echoing previous allusions to a 'machine' with no one particular entity in control, Meadow views agency and culpability in relation to Anthropocene decline as not associated with one particular actor or group of identifiable aggressors but rather as diffused across social systems, reproduced and reinforced in every interaction and transaction that we undertake (Latour 2012; 2017):

"We're all, well, nearly all of us are bystanders, ***and in our passivity we're actually active contributors. We're all consumers. We all other. We all deny****. You know, we all have a place within the matrix of oppression, you know,* ***we're all oppressed and we're all oppressors****. I think it's very easy to demonize individuals or corporations, or capitalism, but I would say all of those are emergent properties of a system. So, I would say, you know,* ***nobody is running capitalism****. You know, there are many hundreds of thousands of individuals with a larger stake in it than me, with more power than me, and so obviously they have more impact than me to maintain things to be cozy for them. But, fundamentally,* ***capitalism is an emergent property of billions of micro-decisions*** *that are made every day. You know, we're all complicit, we all do capitalism in our small way".*

On the one hand Meadow alludes to the notion that many of us are bystanders, passively looking on as socio-ecological upheavals gather momentum; yet he also, somewhat paradoxically, invites us to consider how this monolith known as 'capitalism', or the propensity to oppress and *other* others, isn't some alien thing *over yonder* that we can extricate ourselves from or that some can purport to be wholly innocent of. He echoes previous sentiments of a system or machine that is 'out of control' with no single entity in charge, while further emphasizing that its direction is in a sense dictated by millions and billions of micro-interactions. Meadow's response, in a manner similar to Morton (2010) and Latour (2011), as noted in previous chapters, hints at a recognition of how the necessary intermingling of nature-cultures and inter-actant imbroglios obliterates distinctions between inside versus outside, background versus foreground, and perpetrator versus passive or innocent bystander. In a world characterized by entangled multiplicities of human and non-human agencies who react to one another in complex and often unpredictable forms, separating one entity or group of entities and designating them as the source of all ills becomes increasingly dubious. Rather, amid the turbulent Anthropocene, "there are no more spectators, because there is no shore that has not been mobilised in the drama of geohistory" (Latour 2017, pg. 40). We are all implicated, albeit to varying degrees. Similarly, perhaps notions of capitalism as a disembodied actor that exerts deleterious impacts *upon* a seemingly separate and passive 'nature' should be reassessed:

> " *a difficulty emerges with the elevation of these 'singular abstractions' to the status of* ***actor*** *and* ***acted-upon****, foot and footprint, as the conventional metaphor would have it. In this metaphor, we see a symbolic enclosure (and alienation) at work, which effects an idealized separation of producer and produced, manifest in a purified social repertoire of agents and a purified bundle of environmental effects. It is an eminently Cartesian way of seeing, one that accounts for capital's depredations upon the 'environment' in the same way that capital surveys, accounts, and quantifies nature's utility for accumulation… It is a line of critique, in other words, that reproduces the very alienation of nature and society it seeks to transcend" (Moore 2011, pg. 3).*

It is not capitalism *and* nature but capitalism-*in*-nature, in the sense that it- and the myriad actants entangled in alliances with it- exists within and is defined by those very alliances. Culpability for the ills plaguing the 'Now' is thus disseminated throughout; we're all

complicit, though one can make the claim that culpability, while diffuse, is hardly evenly distributed. As previously denoted, although we can all be said to *do* capitalism to varying degrees, some 'do' it more than others. In other words, as many REA's assert, some individuals, groups, structures, policies, etc. effect more direct and severe harm than others. Nevertheless, the crucial point is that no one is wholly innocent of the crime of ecocide; no one can claim to be entirely free of some form of harm. We are always in-relation with others; as such, there is never a point when we can extricate ourselves from the interactions that constitute us in order to abstain from impacting others, whatever form these impacts might take. Actants/assemblages like 'capitalism' and attendant processes of rampant resource extraction are not alien entities descended from above but composed of and reproduced by multiplicities of other actants and innumerable micro-decisions. Most of us buy products containing palm oil and thereby contribute to the brutal purging of orangutans from their forest homes. Even when we are not directly implicated, in failing to act on behalf of imperilled others and against the current system we are indirectly responsible for the continuation of eco-crises. Capitalism, like any assemblage, derives its strength and power from its alliances (Latour 2005). If these are challenged and stripped away, then capitalism can fade into irrelevance and better modes of being might be constructed in its place.

Scaling Back the Human Enterprise and 'Giving Space Back to Nature'

Related to the concern with ceaseless industrial expansion and economic growth is the concern amongst the activists, and ecotopian texts with the 'exponential growth' of the human enterprise in the form of human population growth, which some designate as being incompatible with the finite nature of our planet:

> *"We're growing at an exponential rate. If you do the math it doesn't work long term as far as providing food and maintaining our ecology" (Roo).*
>
> *"to be honest, I think the planet will be way better off if there were fewer humans on the planet. Because we're way too much, I mean, 7 billion and in a few years 10 billion" (Poseidon).*

Overconsumption, overpopulation, overexploitation, and unceasing economic expansion are all subthemes of the overarching 'limits to growth' theme that strongly pervades social movement and literary forms of ecotopianism. With burgeoning human numbers come increased consumption, increased stresses on natural systems, and generally less space for other species to flourish, as the argument often goes. The long-standing population debate remains a site of vehement contention and deliberation, namely around its associations with more misanthropic and eugenicist elements. A crucial question that arises is: How much of contemporary ecological devastation is due to burgeoning human numbers and how much is due in fact to growth-oriented capitalist production and the intensifying socio-ecological inequities and dislocations it generates? The population question also features frequently in ecotopian texts, especially Huxley's *Island* (2009): "Electricity minus heavy industry plus birth control equals democracy and plenty" (pg. 144). Pala, the ecotopian society in *Island* is, as the title suggests, an island, rendering concerns over biophysical barriers to growth and excessive industrialization all the more pressing. As a result of geographical necessity as well as cultural, social, and spiritual transformations in Pala society, the average couple is said to have only two children, and birth control is freely and widely available, the idea being to never produce more children than could be housed, clothed, fed, and educated into "something like full humanity" (Pg. 145). Though of course, the equation likely could be reversed, as fertility and birth rates,

though complex and influenced by an array of factors, have been shown to correlate closely with not only availability of resources but, most importantly, female education, empowerment, and equality (Upadhyay et al 2014). So perhaps the equation should be rearranged thus: 'electricity minus heavy industry plus *democratic egalitarianism* equals birth control and plenty'.

The central concern underlying Pala's aversion to unhindered growth in human numbers and economic activity relates, as with many of the activists and other ecotopian texts, to concerns over sustained ecological resilience, as evinced by one of Pala's guiding philosophies: "'Do as you would be done by' applies to our dealings with all kinds of life in every part of the world. We shall be permitted to live on this planet only for as long as we treat all nature with compassion and intelligence" (Pg. 212). However, with the activists, concern over unhindered human population growth and associated increases in the human ecological footprint often seems to extend beyond mere concerns over preserving the vital ecological underpinnings of human societies:

"You know, the fact is that we are consuming too many resources, we have too many of us, and nature's going to have to take care of that problem. The only way we're survive is to learn to live within the context of the three basic laws of ecology as I mentioned, and in harmony with all other species, we have to recognize that they're all equal to us, and they have to be given the respect as living, sentient, self-aware beings" (Captain).

"I would, I don't know, think in terms of birth control and the stop of urbanization, and stuff like that, in order to give space back to nature and to animals. But that's something we have to be careful with, because, especially the society where we are now, like, it goes fast into telling countries in the global south, or like, poor people, what to do and how many children to have, and I see all of the problems, and discrimination, and all of the stuff that comes with that" (Forest).

Captain's remarks bear a striking similarity to the above excerpt from *Island* in the sense of imbuing the 'earth system' with the ultimate agency and power, to the point wherein our very survival is predicated on our ability live in accordance with natural 'laws', an observation that is problematic in its rehashing of the modernist division between a mute yet objective 'Nature' as the ultimate authority for imposing control on a wayward humanity (see Chapter Five) . However, of particular interest is Captain's attempt to cite the wellbeing of other species and not simply that of our own as a reason for curbing our disproportionate impacts and demands on the biosphere. Similarly, and in a slightly more nuanced way, Forest suggests the need to give space back to for the flourishing of natural processes and species, space that we've essentially stolen from them in our 'relentless increase'. Though, Forest alludes to an important point: simply calling for population reductions is insufficient on its own at best, and at worst, may further reinforce extant racial, socioeconomic, and geographical inequities. Moreover, as alluded to in Chapter 5, without fundamental structural transformations in terms of resource access and distribution, more equitable modes of relationality across all dimensions, and the like, one risks repetition of the Malthusian fallacy (Scanlan et al 2010). There is enough to a degree to nourish and support existing and future populations; the issue, fundamentally, is the wildly uneven distribution of resources and access to them. Hence why the ecotopian texts under examination, as denoted in the telling excerpt from *Island*, in addition to featuring substantially reduced human populations, also feature decidedly egalitarian socio-economic and political formations (see Chapter Seven).

‘Values Are Wrong’: Anthropocentrism & Widespread Apathy

Figure 2 Koala occupying a farm in Northeast England

In light of their overwhelmingly post-humanist orientations, it is perhaps unsurprising that another core ‘diagnostic framing’ theme problematizes decidedly ‘Western’ anthropocentric and speciesist orientations towards the human-animal-relationship. Many REA’s critiqued rigid classifications around the purportedly separate and superior ‘human’ or ‘social’ zone and the inferior ‘nature/animal’ realm (Latour 1993), which are deemed to facilitate the continued exploitation of the latter by the former (EF! 2017, pg. 30). Such phenomena are depicted as closely intertwined with and reinforced by aforementioned forces of neoliberal capital and hierarchical modes of thought and organization. In Bookchinian (2005) fashion, the EF! 2017 Summer Gathering pamphlet similarly problematizes the related issue of the ‘fiction’ of western conceptualizations of infinite material-technological progress (EF! 2017, Pg. 11), the effects of which have been particularly devastating because of progress’s historical association with the increasing technical subjugation of ‘nature’ to the ‘service of the market place’ (Bookchin 2005, Pg. 238). These socio-economic/onto-epistemological phenomena, according to many activists as well as ecotopian texts, have given rise to what is vaguely alluded to as a conceptual ‘disassociation’ or disenchantment, which serves as another key driving force of the imperilled human-animal-nature relationship:

> *“Most people don’t give a shit, and there’s that* ***level of disassociation****…I think one of my favorite things when I was showing that movie, Earthlings, the commentary that I got from people was, ’I can’t watch this, it puts me off my food’. If I had a dollar for everytime I heard that, honey, I shit you not…it’s like, ‘Yeah, really? Does it?’…So, we do tend to switch off and disassociate, and honestly if there was something that I thought would be, aside from capitalism, it would be,* ***the bringeth-of-the-endeth, it’s disassociation****” (Roo).*
>
> *“we have known this in the past, and it’s part of our indigenous oppression, that this kind of* ***engagement with life has been crushed out of us****, and* ***the disconnect with***

> ***the wind, and the rivers, and the seeds*** *has been so long that it's much harder to reclaim than it is with animals" (Stonehenge).*

Though once again suggesting the presence of a 'Nature/Society' binary, many REA's allude to the human-animal-nature 'disconnect' not only in a physical or geographical sense by way of increasingly inhabiting urban spaces and thereby being physically displaced from our natural support systems, for instance; crucially, it is also cultural and psychological 'disconnect'. Relatedly, many seem perturbed by what they describe as 'apathy' amongst the general population:

> *"There is an apathy, until things happen to us. That's the big thing I'm trying to say, I guess.* ***We're very apathetic to what goes on on this planet because we're so disconnected****, looking at our iphones and looking at the pavement everyday, disconnected from each other and disconnected from what makes us breathe and go around on this planet" (Orca).*

> *"apathy, I guess, has a lot to do with it.* ***Most people really don't care****, even if they're aware of the issues, you know; they're not going to change their lifestyles. Everybody's driving around in massive vehicles when they don't need to, or, you know,* ***they're just really apathetic****. They don't really give a shit. They're not prepared to sacrifice anything at all in the interest of trying to preserve the ecosystem" (Athena).*

As discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, REA's exhibit a decidedly complex relationship to the concept of hope (Duggan & Muñoz 2009) that features a dialectical interplay between an 'energetic hopelessness' and critical hope that empowers them to fervently resist the 'Now' by creating better alternatives within it. From the perspective of those embodying 'critical modalities of hope', the opposite of hope is not hopelessness (which can be critically redeployed towards transformation) but indifference and apathy. What REA's refuse to do in the face of widespread ecological degradation is *nothing*. Something- deep kinship bonds to Earth others, hyper-sensitivity to injustices committed against them, the ethical pull of a potentially liveable 'Not-Yet', etc.- mobilizes them to act. This is perhaps why they are so embittered by what they perceive to be passivity on behalf of wider populations. Many refer to the general population as existing in a trance-like state, either oblivious, distracted as they are by the pursuit of profits and material acquisitions or at times deliberately in denial of the current crisis, as seen in the pervasive and resolute 'climate denial' machine (Dunlap et al 2010).

<u>Anthropocentrism and the Objectified Non-Human 'Other'</u>

Another key diagnostic theme is that of human exceptionalist or 'anthropocentric' beliefs and worldviews, and the attendant speciesism that they foster. Particularly nefarious for REA's and many ecotopian texts is the quintessential anthropocentric conviction, characteristic of Fromm's 'having mode' (1967), that other species and the wider earth system are *for* us rather than *with* us (Le Guin 1985, Pg. 77), and therefore that we have the right to do with them as we please:

> *"I have absolutely no more right than any other animal on the planet, and that we place ourselves as a superior species, that's the whole problem. We really just think that we are allowed to use, and use, and eat them, make service animals out of them*

whatever, and it's not true. What gives us more right to live than a cow or a whale?" (Poseidon)

"Well, the main problem is anthropocentrism, which is ***this attitude that we can take what we want, do what we want, everything else is expendable****, that we're the only important species that matters" (Captain).*

The traditional Western Cartesian view of other species as mute objects lacking agency or the capacity to speak, and therefore as inferior entities to be utilized by superior and agentic human subjects, is wholly unacceptable according to REA's in a similar manner that the notion of private property is. Huxley similarly observes in *Island*, "mynahs [local bird species in the ecotopian society of Pala] are like the electric light…they don't belong to anyone" (Huxley 2009, pg. 15). In these instances, just or ethical treatment of nonhuman others is regarded as incompatible with the concept of ownership (Cochrane 2009). Delfin further denotes that, what's at issue is "The belief that some lives are worth more than others", which manifests in the language we use, reflecting the pervasive influence of socioeconomic systems that reduce irreducibly singular entities to mere objects:

"We need a value system where trees are valued for what they are, for what they provide, not for what we can make out of them. We need a value system where we recognize that fish have to stay in the ocean to maintain ecological integrity of the ocean, they're more valuable in the ocean swimming around doing what they do than they are on our plates" (Captain)

"Economies are all based on continual growth, that success is growth…and on a finite world, with finite, what we call, 'resources'…that's the problem, ***how dare we call other living beings resources*** *as if they are simply ours to exploit 'till they are gone? There's the root of it; we cannot continue treating other life on this planet as if it is something that has some economic value. It is worth SO much more than that" (Stonehenge).*

Stonehenge draws attention not only to the biogeophysical contradictions of the endless growth paradigm but, crucially, to the violence and profound arrogance of attributing the word 'resource' to the non-human world, and effectively reducing a multiplicity of irreducibly singular agencies to inert fodder for fuelling human productive and consumptive activities. Though one can detect traces of hierarchical valuation on the basis of ecological function in the excerpt by Captain (See Chapter Five), he similarly alludes to the ethical paucity of instrumental rationalities with regards to the non-human world, wherein the latter are often valued only as means rather than ends-in-themselves. Such approaches, though exacerbated by the instrumental economic rationalities of neoliberal capitalism, are rooted in the longstanding tradition of anthropocentric and speciesist orientations towards the non-human 'other', as explored further below.

Among the interview questions posed to the activists is one concerning whether or not they hold any spiritual or religious beliefs, and how they believe such orientations, or lack thereof, inform their views of the human-animal-nature relationship. The query was sparked by two considerations: the often scathing critiques of Western Judeo-Christian worldviews in ecotopian works, and the since empirically substantiated (Schultz et al 2000; Taylor et al, 2016) 'White hypothesis' by medieval science historian Lynn White (1967), who famously posited

the deeply anthropocentric foundations of Judeo[66]-Christianity, in conjunction with its faith in unbridled techno-scientific progress, as a key historical driver of the ecological crisis. In Huxley's *Island* (2009), for instance, the Palanese have "no established church, and our religion stresses immediate experience and deplores belief in unverifiable dogmas and the emotions which that belief inspires" (pg. 146). The elusive concept of 'religion' encompasses more than mere belief in supernatural deities or 'unverifiable dogma' and can also include the Weberian (1958) sense of humanity's search for order in a meaningful cosmos (Pg. 281). However, the above reference to 'immediate experience' or being grounded in the 'here and now' is telling in its elucidation of the Christian motif of eschewing all consideration for earthly pleasures (and in this case, earthly disasters such as climate change and biodiversity loss) in hopes of reaching paradise and eternal salvation beyond our world. Some activists either noted being raised in though no longer participating in organized religion, while most expressed disillusionment with or even a profound aversion to core tenets of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Roo, for instance, notes her lack of belief in the "angry sky fairy" and what she perceives to be orthodox religion's problematic reliance on external motivators (threat of eternal damnation and/or reward of salvation) for guiding moral action, a sentiment similarly expressed in Huxley's *Island* (2009):

> *"Perfect faith and the perfect peace that goes with it were to be forced into them. How? By giving them hell now and threatening them with hell hereafter. And if, in their devilish perversity, they refused to have perfect faith, and be at peace, give them more hell and threaten hotter fires. And meanwhile tell them that good works are as filthy rags in the sight of God; but punish them ferociously for every misdemeanour. Tell them that by nature they're totally depraved, then beat them for being what they inescapably are" (Pg. 115).*

However, the source of particular contention amongst REA's surrounds the deeply anthropocentric elements prevalent in Judeo-Christian belief systems, such as the well-known passage in the Genesis creation story wherein animals and the natural world are created by God for the sole purpose of being used and exploited by humans, while the latter of whom alone are created in the image of 'God' (White 1967):

> *"I don't believe in religion at all.* ***I think the bible, the Qu'ran, all these other books are the most evil things that have ever been written****. You know, it's just dominance over the natural world, and I think* ***these are the guidebooks for this anthropocentric-imperialistic dominance*** *that we have over everything, and so I completely reject religion. Every single religion puts human beings in front-and-center, everything was created for us, it's all about us, it all revolves around us, and that's just completely counter to a biocentric point of view where we're part of all of this, we're not dominant of this planet that's been around for 4 billion years, we've been around for like a minute fraction of it" (Captain).*
>
> *"I'm totally atheist, and I think religion and certain interpretations of the bible have got a lot to answer for in adding to the destruction, giving excuses to people to exploit*

[66] Though the relatively recent and largescale study by Arbuckle & Koninsky (2015) found that although they share the same religious lineage and creation stories, people of the Jewish faith, particularly Reformed and Conservative ones, exhibit greater environmental concern than Christians and non-theists.

animals and the planet we live on, basically. And I think it's completely unforgivable, and evil, and it makes me very angry" (Dog).

"I'm definitely not Christian. But again, having travelled and been to a lot of the Buddhist countries I kind of, I wouldn't say I'm Buddhist but I take on board some of the philosophy, and kind of, I think that Buddhism is perhaps more aligned with an ecological perspective you know, it doesn't harm animals, you know, kind of vegetarian/vegan diet, and yeah, it does sort of encourage looking after the natural world, whereas, I think… that sort of fuse the Christian ideas with ideas of empire, you know a few hundred years ago, it did lead to that sort of belief system where the world was basically plundered, and Christianity was kind of part of that plundering" (Squirrel).

For the activists who claimed to follow some sort of spiritual or religious belief system, the ones most commonly mentioned were paganism and Buddhism due to their non-dualistic and animist depictions of human-animal-nature relations. Attempts at 're-enchanting' the natural world and other species have been made on behalf of the 'stewardship school of Christian environmental concern' (Gottlieb 2006) and perhaps most notably by Pope Francis (2015), suggesting that traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs might not be entirely incompatible with pro-environmental views. Nevertheless, many Christian sects[67] have notoriously effected a rigid, dualistic separation between 'God the sacred, almighty creator' and thus reduced all else to mere property and resource with mere instrumental worth, or to the realm of the profane (in a manner eerily similar to the transformation of the earth and living beings into salable commodities with mere exchange value under capitalism). *Always Coming Home*'s (1985) protagonist and visitor figure, Stone Telling, muses that through such notions, one commits the fatal error of setting oneself apart from all existence, washing it from our minds and souls, and thus 'killing the world' (Pg. 201), a sentiment expressed by many of the activists. A related issue is the robbing of human agency and responsibility for crises amid the Anthropocene that such lack of concern for earthly affairs foster (Taylor et al 2016). From whence the motivation to work towards ameliorating climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss when one either cares not for the fate of the earth in the face of an imminent apocalypse and the intoxicating allure of a heavenly afterlife, or believes that mere repentance will prevent further ecological catastrophes? While far from the only or even most significant factor, it is nevertheless telling that there is a widely substantiated correlation between Christian worldviews (particularly socio-politically conservative variations) and low levels of non-anthropocentric environmental concern, and that non-theists and adherents of non-dualistic religions such as Buddhism tend to exhibit opposing orientations (Arbuckle & Konisky 2015; Taylor et al 2016).

Prognostic Framing: Towards Fundamental Systemic Change

"We wish to signify to the state, as well as to those that our movement scares, that together we are not only obstacles to their projects, but obstacles to their logic, with or without an airport" (ZAD).

[67] Indeed, it's important to keep in mind that there exists considerable denominational variability, wherein such orientations have been found to be especially prevalent amongst evangelical Christians and biblical literalists (Schultz et al, 2000; Arbuckle & Konisky, 2015).

REAs' radical critiques and designation of the 'Now' as woefully deficient constitute that essential first step of any utopian imaginary: the recognition of the way things are as deeply flawed and in need of fundamental reconfiguration. The second, in the form of exhortations that things can and indeed *must* be otherwise, as well as articulations of alternative modes of being, will be explored in Chapter Seven. As discussed, REAs' diagnostic framing narratives are multifarious, though they predominantly designate the 'cultural dominants' (Oppermann 2018, pg. 10) – capitalism and humanism – as prime drivers of Anthropocene decline. REA diagnoses of the present closely mirror those featured in classic ecotopian literary works published shortly before and alongside the rise of REA groups (from the late '60s to the present), perhaps in part resulting from the profound influence of the 'limits-to-growth' discourses of the 1970s in response to the proliferation of ecological perturbations. REA assignations of culpability were complex and occasionally contradictory, at times suggesting a diffuse culpability for the current socio-ecological crisis wherein all to varying degrees 'do' capitalism and at others attributing blame to particular actors. Some deployed the metaphor of a 'machine out of control' in reference to industrial or neoliberal capitalism and the ecological degradation associated with its imperatives of ceaseless growth. More often, however, REAs' intersectional criticisms of the 'Now' in the form of diagnostic framing echo Bookchin's (1991) emphases that adequately addressing and ultimately overcoming the myriad socio-ecological perturbations of the Anthropocene demand that one challenge *all* forms of hierarchy and domination (pg. 97). It is these forces that work to generate and maintain the 'antagonistic structuring of otherness' (Bookchin 2005, pg. 195) that envelops human-animal-nature relations like a poisonous fog. Moreover, in conjunction with the socio-ecological contradictions of neoliberal-capitalism, REA's problematized capitalism's commodification of earth 'others' and reduction of multiplicities of singular and inherently valuable entities to mere resources for fueling profit-oriented productive and consumptive activities. Relatedly, the diagnostic themes of anthropocentrism and disassociation from natural others ascribed culpability to deep-seated anthropocentric worldviews and narratives portraying humans as superior to a mute, objective 'nature', while the latter could be utilized and possessed at will. As explored in the next chapter, REA's utilize their trenchant criticisms of the 'Now' as a basis for articulating and gesturing towards post-capitalist and posthumanist alternatives (Oppermann 2018).

Chapter 7: Analysis (3)- Ecotopia Rising

"Right now [EF!] is a very small oasis in a very large desert. Let us drink our fill, and be more possible than they can powerfully imagine" (EF! 2017, pg. 20).

In addition to shedding a more critical light on their post-human worldviews, activism motivators, and diagnostic framing narratives, I had set out to examine the degree to which REA's might be deemed contemporary ecotopian expressions and what this might mean for contemporary ecotopianism amid the Anthropocene. However, the reality of the situation turned out to be far more complex than initially anticipated, particularly with regards to their relationships to the very central utopian concepts of hope and futurity, which will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter. In this chapter I assess the unique modalities of ecotopianism exhibited by REA's, and their ideals for more ethical socio-ecological modalities alongside those presented by the key ecotopian texts under examination. The purpose of

juxtaposing excerpts from the texts in the subsequent sections is, as before, to help highlight some key contrasts and continuities between REA and literary ecotopian expressions. The primary focus, however, remains on the former. Initially, a number of activists expressed apprehension at my use of the word 'utopia', as many maintained the pejorative understanding of utopianism prevalent amongst laymen's and some academic circles as a striving for totalizing perfection that is inimical to freedom and plurality (Gray 2007; Popper 2014). Nevertheless, further elucidation of the sense in which I employ the term- as multifarious strivings engaged in thorough critiques of the now and towards *better* alternatives- elicited more positive responses. REA's often exhibit a critical (Moylan 1986) mode of ecotopianism, namely in their attempts to extend traditional bounds of nonhuman valuation and occasionally deconstruct hierarchical human-animal-nature relations, but as we saw previously (Chapter Five) they don't always succeed in doing so and therefore cannot be classed as fully transgressive (Sargisson 2002) ecotopian modes. Their critiques of and attempts to wholly subvert industrial capitalism (Chapter Six), and the oppressive and exploitative modes of relationality that stem therefrom, however, more closely approximate this transgressive mode.

Overall, REA's exhibit a considerable degree of postmodern skepticism towards closure around any particular vision of 'the good' (Levitas & Sargisson 2013, Pg. 15), largely resulting from particular modalities of hope exhibited by REA's that stem from the decidedly dystopian times that characterize the Anthropocene, which render inklings of a benign and predictably delineable future increasingly opaque (a theme developed further in the next chapter). REAs' staunch critiques of and resistance towards the now, juxtaposed alongside a general skepticism towards blueprinting and complete closure around a particular set of ideas and norms, are characteristic features of the contemporary critical heterotopia (Moylan 1986; Foucault & Miskowiec 1986). As discussed in Chapter Two, this modality prizes multiplicity and fluidity, wherein notions of the ideal society often appear fragmented and contested, and with emphases on prefiguring "the world we want *now*" (EF!, 2017, pg. 22) rather than putting forth spatial-temporally displaced depictions of ecotopian structures and institutions (Williams, 1978). As will be further elucidated, though such shifts towards the critical utopian mode risk the loss of utopianism's transformative potential, wherein the will to assert the possibility of change towards the better- and the attempt to enact alternatives- is superseded by its critical function (Levitas & Sargisson 2013), REA's nevertheless consistently articulated a broad consensus on general features and modes of being that an ecotopian society *ought* to consist of. Earth First!'s 2017 and 2018 summer gatherings, described as "a chance to act out our vision", constituted physical-spatial, if fleeting, instantiations of a better 'Not-Yet'. The gatherings were furthermore marked by palpable utopian undercurrents wherein numerous activities and workshops such as one entitled, 'Seeing Beyond the Crises: The Role of Speculative Fiction', featured concerted attempts at embodying and delineating better alternatives. Similarly, the main informative pamphlet handed out at the gatherings emphasized the need to overturn oppressive behaviors in order to "create the *better world* that we all know is *possible*" (EF! 2017, pg. 7). The few anti-utopian or more reformist approaches that did surface were almost exclusively amongst SSCS participants, offering further empirical support for Pellow's (2014) categorization of SSCS as a more reformist rather than radical social movement organization (Pg. 58).

Utopian and Dystopian Undercurrents Amid REA's

Hope and Ecotopianism in the End Times:

As discussed in Chapter Three, apocalypticism has long been an integral feature of the radical green imaginary (Veldman 2012; McNeish 2017). Prior to the post-war 'Great Acceleration' era of near exponential increases in productive and consumptive activity, doomsday predictions often depicted the end of humanity via natural disasters; post-war apocalyptic narratives (particularly post-1960s following the publication of Carson's landmark work *Silent Spring*), however, tend to feature humans as the agents of their own destruction via human-induced ecological breakdown (Wagar 1982, Pg. 24), a diagnostic narrative very much prevalent amongst REA's (Chapter Six). Eschatological visions (Toadvine in Fritsch et al 2018, pg. 51) tend to harbour deep-seated anxieties over the litany of ecological crises proliferating amid the 'Now', moulding perceptions of the latter as well as of futurity. For instance, REAs' longstanding dystopian and apocalyptic (Taylor 1998) perceptions of a virtually irrevocably damaged earth on its final death throes are closely linked to their deep ties to beloved earth and animal kin (See Chapters Five & Eight). Such ties and their severing via the sixth mass extinction engender deep resentment, grief, and rage at perceived guiding forces of loss and destruction (Chapter Six), and misanthropic inversions of traditional human-animal hierarchies (Chapter Five) in their occasional attributions of blame to a purportedly irremediably destructive and homogenous humanity. Yet, as noted in Chapter Two the dystopian and apocalyptic narratives that pervade REA imaginaries are not merely commensurable with but closely linked to- ecotopian desire. Embedded within portents of nightmarish worlds is a fervent desire (and hope) for the opposite: a world devoid of widespread and systematic destruction (Sargent 1994; Moylan & Baccolini 2013; Garforth 2018). For instance, the following are indicative of a common theme throughout ('critical modalities of hope') wherein portents of doom are juxtaposed alongside allusions to the (utopian) potential for better worlds:

> *"Without people who will take a principled stand, tell it like it is and* ***have a vision*** *of a world which is not centered on the system that destroying it,* ***we are all doomed****" (EF! Pamphlet 2017, Pg. 20).*
>
> ***Social collapse is already happening*** *all over the world. The idea that we in the West can somehow wake up and change that is just another global spell. We actually have*

to engage with how we're going to face it, how we are going to live differently in these times when the planes will stop flying, and the lorries will stop delivering food, and everyone's idea that they can have an individual car is out the window… How do we deal with this that is not in a way that is protectionist and exclusivist, and ridden with oppositional thinking? ***There is another way****" (Stonehenge).*

The sentiment expressed is one that disrupts traditionally linear conceptions of time and historical progression: collapse is not merely on the horizon but is *already happening*. REA ecotopian modalities, in other words, exist in the end times (Latour 2017)…and yet, as evinced by Stonehenge's that other paths can be forged, the infinite potentiality of other worlds has not been exhausted. Crucially, the sense of finality encapsulated by notion of collapse refers to the 'present order', from whose ruins life and other ways of being might flourish once again. Stonehenge reflects further on what she refers to as an active repudiation of future-oriented modalities of 'hope':

"I'm also actively stepping away from the idea of hope, as it is traditionally espoused, for the reasons I mentioned. Hope projects something into the future, and right now I'm really ***focusing my energies on*** *how to address* ***how we live now****, rather than how we might live in the future".*

The perceived immediacy of contemporary crises compels many REA's like Stonehenge to focus most of their energies on resisting the now, particularly by creating micro-exemplars within the present for countering the onslaught of loss and disintegration. For them, a disembodied, predominantly future-oriented hope, or hope in the form of blind optimism (Treanor 2018), is a dangerous distraction. In this sense, such REA's more closely exhibit Bloch's (1986) praxis-oriented, concrete modality of hope. Butterfly alludes to what she perceives as the futility of attempting to create detailed blueprints of ideal worlds amid times of considerable upheaval and unpredictability:

"…as to a future of what it looks like, I'd love to be able to be that sort of solutionist where I could say, 'This is the model that is going to work.' Because, as time is changing, I just think it's pointless to try and put models into place when we're in such chaotic times…"

In other words, myriad and worsening ecological upheavals, and the general unpredictability of the times, preclude blueprints and future-oriented modalities of hope. Yet amid such bleak projections, many continue to insist that another 'way' is possible. Others, however, evinced far less optimistic views, though curiously still clung onto some modality of hope:

"Poseidon: 'to be honest, I don't think there's a solution. I think there would be a solution if the whole planet, so seven billion people, would change from today until tomorrow, change right now, but that's not going to happen. So, I think it sounds fairly pessimistic what I'm saying, but I think we are…excuse me for the word, but ***I think we're fucked****…*

H: If it's all fucked, why bother trying to save things?

Poseidon: Well, ***you must never lose hope****, so, of course, and every single animal is worth fighting for. So,* ***even if it's the last known animal it's still worth fighting for****.'"*

The above interchange with Poseidon is a telling one, as it alludes to a curious phenomenon wherein despite alluding to a sense of utter hopelessness, REA's continue to fight and strive (towards/on behalf of what exactly will be further explored in Chapter Eight). Poseidon notes one important reason, perhaps more powerful than any hope for futurity, why continuing to fight is crucial: for those cherished earth kin who are left and still under threat. This sentiment is even more clearly articulated by Atacama:

> *"…there's stuff today that is lost already, really, but there's also so much that's around that can be saved if we all put ourselves to the task…it would be really, really sad to just give up now and say, 'Oh, it's all fucked, it's too late', when actually, maybe it's not. I mean, it's definitely too late for a lot of things, but maybe for most things it's not".*

Alluding to the idea that it's still 'not too late' suggests that hope- for the continuity of life in some forms, a potentially better 'Not-Yet', etc. - remains. Similarly, Goose and Butterfly muse:

> *"we're trying to save every single tree, every single beetle, every single species that we can, until this empire finally dies a death".*

> *I'm going through a phase where **I actually don't have an awful lot of hope**, and people go, "Well, why do you continue doing what you're doing?' And if I had a garden where I had the last butterfly in my garden and I knew it was going to die, I would still do everything that I could to make sure that butterfly lasted as long as possible, you know? And so, it's just part of our makeup; it would be impossible not to look at our flora and fauna, us, and not want it to exist as it was, and as it **should** be".*

For Goose and Butterfly especially, the desire to preserve cherished earth kin plays a key role in keeping their motivations to continue fighting afloat amid the apparent hopelessness of accelerating Anthropocene decline. Yet, particularly in Goose and Atacama's observations one can still detect a utopian undercurrent, wherein hope for potentiality, for *something else*, persists in their admission that the current system *can* surely cease to be, and that it's not yet too late for new worlds to be forged. For Butterfly, despite seemingly relinquishing hope, intimations of an ecotopian *ought* are similarly present in her suggestion that the Now is insufficient and that things *should be otherwise*. This once again mirror's Bloch's (1986) own conception of reality, not too distinct from Latour's (2004; 2017), which is that it is essentially unfinished. Like the myriad actants that always have yet to be taken into account, reality itself is never wholly determined but rather characterised by boundless potentiality. Below, Warrior similarly alludes to what appears as a dialectic between hope and hopelessness (Duggan & Muñoz 2009), between fervent resistance to the 'is' and gestures towards the 'ought', and the need to defend every last creature despite such hopelessness through, for instance, creating spaces of radical alterity within the 'Now':

> *"I mean, if you look at what's really going on, **it's very hopeless in a lot of ways**. So in my mind, like, getting out there and saving that one individual stingray, or that one individual shark, or that one individual porpoise, like, that's the only thing in my mind that really, really matters. Like, **finding small pockets in the world** where you can help create a liberated space for oppressed groups and individuals".*

In these 'small pockets' amid the dystopian 'Now', desired alternatives that mirror a better 'Not-Yet' can be created and allowed to flourish. Across numerous examples, one detects such a dialectical interplay between ecotopian and eco-dystopian elements, wherein the purported hopelessness of the 'Now' is curiously juxtaposed alongside glimmers of hope and a desire for a better 'Not-Yet':

> *"I have somewhat of a **nihilist perspective** of how close we are to the revolution, but I also fight against my nihilist concept that the revolution is so far away. So, I don't think that everything is going to be beautiful, I think we're going to spit a lot of blood and sweat out of our mouths. Umm, and probably in the next generations, either humanity completely ends, or we'll have found the way, and **I really hope that we find the way**. I really do" (Koala).*

> *"…at least in the interim, I think we're going to see something more like Mad Max, you know, then we'll have to recreate something that's more sustainable and more tolerable" (Warrior).*

Koala and Warrior, as do many REA's, seem adept at denoting and diagnosing the many morbid symptoms- widening socioeconomic inequality, climate chaos, biological annihilation, etc.- that proliferate in the interregnum between the old ('Now') and the new (ecotopian 'Not-Yet') order (Gramsci et al 1971; Bauman, 2012). The necessarily radical transformation of the 'Now' that many long for at times seems too improbable in light of the severity and multiplicity of crises presently being faced; their repeated exposure to loss of cherished earth others further distorts their willingness and abilities to 'hope' in the more traditional sense. Yet hope they do, though in a mode that is very much a unique response to the traumas and exigencies of the Anthropocene (Chapter Eight). Critics denouncing the relative efficacy of apocalyptic narratives as a tool for spurring necessary fundamental transformations often note that the apocalyptic framing of such narratives risk promoting politically fatalist attitudes (O'Neil & Nicholson-Cole, 2009; Swyndgedouw 2010; Feinberg & Willer 2011). Yet, others rightly allude to the notion that apocalyptic narratives are essential for engendering the requisite sense of urgency over our deeply troubled times, a sense which some have found to be a powerful motivator behind activism (Thompson 2009; Veldman 2012; McNeish 2017). Indeed, negative emotions such as fear and despair have been shown to be 'strongly related' to mitigation motivation and feelings of efficacy (Hornsey & Fielding 2016). While the loss of a sense of agency undoubtedly might be the result in some instances and potentially amongst segments of the wider population, REA's demonstrate that the critical function of apocalypticism can also have a powerfully transformative effect.

'Creating the New World in the Shell of the Old'

> *"Concrete utopias can only exist as permanent and contradictory collective movements towards the opening and organizing of new horizons, in the here and now" (Dinerstein 2017).*

While excerpts in the previous section denoted more complex and ambiguous relationships to the central utopian concepts of hope and the Not-Yet, there are numerous other instances in interview and document data with more apparent u(eco)topian undertones. The title of a SSCS commentary post, for instance, proclaims: "An Iceland Without Whaling is *On the Horizon*".

Although, this constitutes more of an allusion to the classic future-oriented utopia rather than the critical and grounded form which disrupts the present that REA's tend to exhibit. Below are further examples of decidedly u(eco)topian REA imaginaries that unabashedly refute the 'Now' *and* proclaim the possibility of the 'Not-Yet':

> *"Beyond fighting, a holistic understanding of the problem allows us to* ***create meaningful, positive spaces*** *free from the contamination of domination, coercion and illegitimate authority that the rest of society is built upon" (EF! Summer Gathering Pamphlet, 2017, Pg. 30)*

> *"I think, you know, we should* ***take hope*** *because there is this sort of environmental women's revolution happening right now in Rojava, in the middle of a war zone. But I think at this behavioural level, like, it's not intrinsic to behave like this, like, it's not natural. Humans are meant to cooperate in how we survive, and there's a massive malfunction with our species, but I think if you look around the world you can see examples of where people are showing that* ***it doesn't have to be****, that* ***we can behave differently*** *and interact with each other in a different way" (Dog)*

The seemingly banal proclamation that things as presently constituted needn't be so and that we *can* be otherwise and organize our societies differently is a profoundly utopian act. Predicated on the refusal of the purported immutability of the 'Now' (i.e. industrial capitalist logics and modes of subsistence), whose matter-of-factness only holds as long as its 'support teams' remain in alliance with it (Latour 2017, pg. 164). REAs' 'refusal' (Breines 1989) of the 'Now' through oppositional activism and post-anthropocentric worldviews also carry with them the implication that other worlds can be brought forth. The above recall the Blochean (1986) assertion that the nature of reality itself is unbounded potentiality, always as-yet undetermined, and therefore that other modes of being can be instantiated. The EF! 2017 Summer Gathering pamphlet, echoing similar sentiments expressed by numerous REA's, calls on the need to create 'positive spaces' or 'counter-sites' (Foucault & Miskowiec 1986) situated firmly within the present system that might prefigure better modes of being. Dog alludes to the revolution in Rojava- a direct-democratic eco-confederalist movement inspired by the works of Murray Bookchin (2005) and being implemented by the Syrian Democratic Union Party (PYD), a sister group of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), in Northern Syria (Hunt 2017). Indeed, the Rojava experiment is often hailed by EF!ers and Hambacher Forst activists as an ideal 'ecotopian' manifestation, and they often host seminars about it at their bi-annual activist gatherings. Crucially, Dog denotes that such experiments and movements that can be found the world over refute the notion that the 'Now' has to be as it is, and that the very fact that others are living and organizing differently should be cause for hope. By enacting such alternate modes of being, ecotopian manifestations are effectively "creating a new world in the shell of the old":

> *"Every day we can experiment with and learn ways of dealing with each other without leaders or domination, with mutual respect,* ***building the world we want now****- in our relationships, our interactions and our resistance" (EF! Pamphlet, 2017, Pg. 22).*

> *"The aim of the Earth First! Summer Gathering is to* ***provide a space*** *for people and groups from across the country and beyond to meet up, share practical skills, learn from and inspire each other [to]…****build the world we want to live in****…it's also a chance to* ***act out a little of our vision****: organising non-hierarchically, supporting*

each other, celebrating diversity within community, living sustainably and a DIY culture that supports both individual responsibility and collective action." (EF! Pamphlet, 2017, Pg. 4).

The aforementioned examples and discussions shed light on how REA's might broadly be conceived as critical (Moylan 1986) and grounded (Davis 2012, pg. 136) ecotopian/eco-dystopian manifestations that seek to enact more liveable alternatives within the 'here and now' (Garforth 2009). That is, most emphasize the need to create spaces of radical difference within and in stark opposition to the deficient 'Now' rather than design precise blueprints for the temporally displaced implementation of ideal worlds. In this sense they are quintessential manifestations of the temporally discontinuous utopia, embedded firmly within the 'Now' through unique spatial rather than temporal modalities of estrangement (McNeish 2017). Recalling Chapter Two, they mirror Foucault's (Foucault & Miskowiec 1986) heterotopic 'placeless places' of radical difference situated concretely within and in fervent opposition to the 'Now', with their gaze at least partially oriented towards the potential 'Not-Yet' (see Chapter Eight). They 'head towards better worlds' through an emphasis on critical thinking and oppositional activism (Moylan 1986; Sargisson 2012). However, their modality of ecotopianism at times falls short of being truly 'transgressive' (2000) in their occasional reproductions of hierarchical valuations and classifications of Earth others (see Chapter Five). Yet, what of their prescriptions for a better 'Not-Yet'- in particular desired values, modes of relationality, structures and institutions? Though the aforementioned eschew perfectionism and future-oriented projections of ideal worlds, they still exhibit some degree of closure around a broad set of desired principles and characteristics. That is, they aren't wholly focused on utopianism's critical function but also occasionally gesture towards 'the better'. Below I further explore REA and literary ecotopian designations of better worlds alongside pertinent excerpts from literary ecotopias, specifically focusing on ecotopian reconfigurations of human-animal-nature relations.

Political & Socioeconomic Organization in Ecotopia

"Imagine a world where people are able to come together to create new, free societies, ***making their desires a reality****. Tedious useless work has become redundant and room has been made for play and productive activities we can enjoy. Crime is reduced drastically by a return to living in real communities where people look after each other. With a decline in profit-oriented industrial agriculture and economy, rivers run clear and forests grow again" (EF!, 2017, Pg. 21).*

O'Riordan's (1976) timely assertion that the 'classic ecocentric utopia' is the self-reliant community modelled on anarchist lines (pg. 307; Garforth 2018) continues to ring true in the case of contemporary REA ecotopian visions. The ecotopian texts under examination as well as the overwhelming majority of participants exhibit the green anarchic or 'post-industrial' utopianism advocated by the likes of Andre Gorz (1985) and Rudolf Bahro (1984) (Frankel 1987) in their calls for decentralized, anti-hierarchical, small-scale (approximately 500 to 1,000 people if communal familiarity and social bonds are to be maintained) (Hunt 1976), interconnected and egalitarian eco-communities. The emphasis on interconnectedness is crucial here, as place-sensitive bioregional approaches that too heavily prioritise a hyper-separatist self-sufficiency risk overlooking the extent to which communities always exist in-relation with others across different spatial and temporal scales (Plumwood 2008). Relatedly, and as previously denoted, their left-anarchist sensibilities yield profound scepticism of

hierarchical structures of any sort, particularly when imposed from above for coercing individual conformity. This is why, though virtually all staunchly reject capitalism (see Chapter Six), neither do they embrace communist centralism or ossified structures of any kind as ideal modes of socio-political organization. The latter is viewed as merely another version of absolutism, one wherein rather than subordinating the collective good to hyper individualism and the pursuit of profit as within capitalism, the individual is thoroughly subordinated to a monolithic, authoritative, oppressive and disembodied 'state' collective. For many REA's, the traditional nation-state and bureaucratic centralization more generally are deemed socio-ecologically problematic; what they seek are modes of relationality that are as devoid as possible of domination and marked by voluntary associations amongst equals (Buber 1996; Clark 2016). These desires in turn influence their prognostic framing narratives:

> *"it would definitely have to be egalitarian in the sense that these communities would be small, and not democratic but egalitarian in the sense that they would run on consensus." (Warrior)*

> *"Have you read anything by Bookchin? Yeah, I kind of like what he says about municipalism, like you live in smaller cities where you kind of have direct democracy and the area is actually run by the people, without hierarchies, and with more respect for the environment" (Fox)*

The emphasis in REA as well as literary prognostic framings is thus on public ownership and oversight, wherein individuals are directly implicated in the running of the community, which in turn would ideally be smaller in scale and rooted in a particular terrestrial locality (Latour 2017). In addition to being more ecologically resilient, Koala reflects on the qualitative shifts in interpersonal relations that such communal modes of life would engender, promoting a sense of intimacy among and fellow feeling amongst individuals that is essential for facilitating direct-participation and maintaining social solidarity:

> *"I can't really see massive communities working in harmony eco-politically speaking, because when there's loads of people in one community, there's a lot of discrepancies, and critical thinking is very important, but also reaching a standpoint at which more or less everybody would agree is also very important for a community to not vanish or break to pieces".*

Koala is also alluding to the difficulties that naturally stem from pluralism and a multiplicity of competing notions of 'the good', an observation characteristic of the contemporary critical or grounded utopia (Garforth 2009; Sargisson 2002) which doesn't posit utopianism as devoid of conflict. Extinction Rebellion has notably called for the establishment of citizens' assemblies modelled on direct models of democratic political participation (Biehl & Bookchin 1998). Herein, citizens from an array of cultural, gender, experiential, etc. backgrounds are randomly assembled (by a team of impartial coordinators) at the local or city level for listening, deliberating, and deciding on matters of key social significance (Extinction Rebellion Citizens' Assemblies Working Group 2019, pg. 7). Other REA's and ecotopian texts similarly reject representative political modalities characteristic of Western liberal democracies (Plumwood 1995) and emphasise the desirability of direct-participatory modes of socio-political organization, once again citing Rojava as an example:

> *"the best example we've got at the moment is Rojava [?] in the Middle East in West Syria, West Kurdistan, and it's an autonomous community of five million people that*

are organized along this sort of horizontal line, so there's direct-democracy and organizing by consensus, and also interesting that they're kind of like quite ecocentric, and also they have these sort of structures where you have these communes, and they're kind of small, and then you go up to assembly, and then assemblies might be like an environmental assembly or one that deals with healthcare, one that deals with education, and interestingly they have, like, mixed ones and female ones, and the female ones get the veto. And I think that's quite an interesting model in society" (Squirrel).

"And so the meeting rolled on, filling Wednesday night as so many meetings had before. A building permit battle that became a protest against town ownership of the land, a zoning boundary dispute, an ordinance banning skateboards on bike trails, a proposal to alter the investment patterns of the town funds…all the business of running a small town, churned out point by point in a public gathering" (Robinson, 1990, pg. 27).

As denoted in Chapter Three, REA's engage in thoroughly contentious and extra-parliamentary modes of political participation (McAdam et al 2003), and this is very much reflected in their visions of ideal political formations. Direct-democratic modes of political participation, as well as more communal family and group relations, serve to undermine traditional (largely Western liberal democratic) and rigid distinctions between the 'public' and the private' sphere (Plumwood 2007). Such responsive modes of democratic governance and participation, which emphasise equal (and unrestricted) communication and decentralised decision-making rather than entrenching power and influence in the hands of an elite minority (Plumwood 1995, pg. 137), are regarded as most congruent with social and ecological wellbeing. What's more, egalitarianism as an ethical and organizational principle desired by REA's and literary ecotopias extends beyond the political sphere towards the socioeconomic. As discussed in Chapter Six, many cite the rampant inequalities present in modern capitalist societies as inimical to social and ecological wellbeing; thus, many frequently allude to the need for strict income controls as well as a minimum level of income in a more 'ecotopian' society:

"look at all the money that multinationals are avoiding through tax evasion, tax avoidance, and redistribute that, and that could be how we get the basic income thing. People think, 'how are we going to have a basic income? We can't afford it', but it's all there, there's so much…trillions are off-shored and it's just stolen from society" (Squirrel).

In Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975) as in other literary ecotopias, vast income and wealth differentials have been actively dismantled*:*

"It is alleged…that there is no super-rich class in Ecotopia. It is admitted that certain occupational groups, such as artists and scientists and some doctors, have slightly higher incomes, though national training policies deliberately seek to keep such differences moderate" (Pg. 100).

REAs' political-economic critiques of contemporary capitalism (Chapter Six) and prognostic framings, namely the desire for socioeconomic and political egalitarianism, strongly echo those featured in literary ecotopias. *Island*'s (Huxley 2009) ecotopian society of Pala, for instance, is described as a federation of small-scale self-governing units wherein no denizen is

permitted to become "more than four or five times as rich as the average" (pg. 146). Moreover, in Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1990), citizens of El Modena are taxed more heavily as they approach the system's personal income cap, and funds amassed therefrom are used in order to support local services. Individuals or corporations that attempt to syphon their wealth to off-shore tax havens have their assets seized and redistributed within local communities (Pg. 91). Across genres there is an awareness of the destabilising and unethical socio-ecological effects of extreme inequities in wealth and access to resources. Relatedly, in line with their anarchic aversions to private ownership and control, many REA's express notions similar to Le Guin's poignant maxim with regards to the Valley inhabitants in *Always Coming Home*, that "owning is owing, having is hoarding" (1985, pg. 313):

> *"The concept of property is rejected, with working class appropriation encouraged- via land squats, occupations and more. In the long-term process of social change, there is a commitment to the recollectivisation of land 'ownership' and the creation of space for diverse patterns to be explored, suited to each community and bioregion" (EF! 2017, Pg. 33).*

In their 'diagnostic framing' narratives (Chapter Six), many REA's such as Horse and Forest alluded to the need for an extensive redistribution of not only wealth but land as well. For the activists and literary works, social and ecological justice are inextricably linked and thus must both be addressed if more socio-ecologically resilient worlds are to be brought about. Moreover, echoing the ideas espoused in the visionary excerpt above from the EF! Summer Gathering pamphlet, wherein 'tedious useless work has become redundant and room has been made for play and productive activities we can enjoy', work is similarly re-imagined by other REA's:

> *"People are working 40-hour weeks, and really, three days a week should be enough, and we need to perhaps automate what we can, and you need a universal basic income, appreciation of jobs like nursing and caring jobs which are very poorly paid, and a realignment of what's really useful to society" (Dog).*

> *"I'd like to see a breakdown of this fetishization work. People are encouraged to work long hours and they're encouraged to, you know, aim for the top, and work's kind of taken over. People are working 40-hour weeks, and really, three days a week should be enough, and we need to perhaps automate what we can, and you need a universal basic income, appreciation of jobs like nursing and caring jobs which are very poorly paid, and a realignment of what's really useful to society" (Squirrel)*

Squirrel's sentiments are expressed in more classic utopian works, such as in Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* (1898), wherein people are required to enter the workforce at age twenty-five, retire at forty, and work only twenty-five hours per week, leaving ample time for leisure, creative and intellectual pursuits, travel, socializing, and political participation. In *Ecotopia* (Callenbach, 1975), fundamental changes in forms of occupation, compensation, and working hours have led to the steady erosion of distinctions between work and non-work, or the "whole concept of jobs as something separate from 'real life'" (Pg. 173). Moreover, reduced work times and associated economic degrowth have indeed been shown to be associated with smaller ecological and carbon footprints (Knight et al 2013), hence REAs' and literary ecotopias' emphases on work as a key aspect of articulating more socio-ecologically resilient worlds. A radical reorientation of work, organizations, enterprises, and institutions more generally- from profit-oriented production and conspicuous consumption towards the provision of vital needs-

are deemed vital for the establishment of more autonomous, egalitarian and non-exploitative ways of being (Marcuse 2013). In Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975) corporations and all productive enterprises, composed non-hierarchically by equal partners rather than high-earning executives and underpaid employees, are taxed according to their respective levels of earnings, and the government more generally implements long-range economic policies which call for "diversification and decentralization of production in each city and region" (pg. 8). The ecotopian society of Mattapoisett in Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) is even more 'radical' in the sense that it has dispensed with monetary systems altogether. Nevertheless, the notion that minimizing extreme socioeconomic inequities via, for instance, a minimum as well as a maximum threshold for earnings and wealth acquisition, would yield substantial social and environmental benefits is far from a novel proposition, and has been widely substantiated (Wisman 2011; Twiname & Sharp 2014; Cushing et al 2015).

Towards Ecologically Resilient Modes of Being

REA and literary ecotopias' primary concern is with bringing about far more resilient and ethical human-animal-nature relations. Thus, they tend envision substantially altered modes of production, consumption, and overall subsistence patterns in service of this core aim in their projections of alternatives. Crucially, consumptive and productive activities are re-oriented around sufficiency (De Geus 1999) and that which enhances socio-ecological wellbeing. Many REA's as well as works such as *Ecotopia* (1975) delineate an ideal society organized along a 'stable-state' basis, wherein plastics, for instance, are derived from living biological sources such as plants, and the production of non-biodegradable and/or resource-intensive goods is severely restricted (Callenbach 1975, Pg. 83). Amongst REA's, the focus similarly shifts towards modes of subsistence that are far less ecologically deleterious:

> *"…no plastics. Those are the things that would have to be changed to have communities that can live in harmony with nature" (Poseidon).*

Similarly, for Atacama, communal control of- and active engagement in- local production and consumption is of the essence, while EF! proposes an 'anarchist agroecological worldview':

> *"Small-scale food producers, working with nature, oriented towards real needs production (not serving capitalism) are feeding communities all over the world…working towards an anarchist agroecology is a commitment to creating not only a different food system, but a different way of life that transforms social, ecological, economic, and interspecies relations" (EF! 2017 pamphlet, pg. 32).*

> *"…more people involved and engaged with their local production of food and energy, and consumption of it, and a kind of higher appreciation for it as a result, and a more local, circular economy with less negative externalities" (Atacama).*

The concept of a 'circular economy' noted above is a prevalent one through REA and literary ecotopian narratives, which entails the transition towards restorative socioeconomic systems that aim for the ultimate elimination of waste products and materials (MacArthur 2013). A core aim of the above is minimising the nonhuman world as a 'sink for residuals' (Andersen 2007); in other words, moving away from the notion that there is an 'outside' to which we may relegate the negative 'externalities' of human production and consumption, thus

constituting a move away from the Society/Nature binary. In many literary ecotopias, all that is compostable is composted (Piercy, 1976, pg. 55); all food waste, sewage, and garbage are "turned into fertilizer and applied to the land, where it would again enter into the food production cycle", and recycling is compulsory (Callenbach, 1975, Pg. 18-20). Callenbach's biodegradable vision finds its counterpart in Piercy's (1976) work wherein single-use festival garments are made of algae, self-mending fences made of living, single-celled organisms, and the few products which can't biodegrade are recycled and reused. When the incredulous Connie, visitor to Mattapoisett, asks Luciente, "Is nothing thrown away in your time?" Luciente tellingly responds, "Thrown away where? The world is round" (Pg. 261). Luciente's seemingly simplistic remark evokes an awareness of an entangled, interconnected earth system much like the concept of the circular economy.

Overall, however, a key emphasis is not only on structural reconfigurations but on shifts in attitudes akin to Fromm's (2013) emphases on the need to shift from modalities predicated on 'having' to 'being', or the desire for sufficiency rather than superfluous consumption (Marcuse 2013):

> *"for starters, what we need is, first of all, to not think that we need so much stuff. If you really think about it,* ***who really needs*** *three rooms?" (Shark).*

> *"I think maybe part of it as well is our reliance on grocery stores. Maybe the mindset has gotta be that we've got to start using our backyards to produce our own vegetables and things like that. You know, there's too much reliance on all of this imported goods because* ***we want pineapples 12 months of the year****" (Orca).*

The above allude to a common emphasis within the (deep) green utopian canon on qualitative reconfigurations of human-animal-nature relations, specifically a focus on forging meaningful interpersonal relations over material acquisition and expansion (De Geus 1999; Garforth 2018). Orca further denotes the need for a fundamental value shift in addition to structural reconfigurations, wherein people learn to desire only locally and seasonally available foods rather than seeking to import exotic goods across vast geographic distances and therefore contributing to excessive food miles. To be done away with are socioeconomic structures and norms oriented around the frantic pursuit of economic expansion for the sake of profit accumulation, which promote avarice, hyper-individualism and 'maximum efficiency' (Huxley 2009, pg. 148), the latter for its own sake in an increasingly instrumental relation to the world (Heidegger 1977). Rather, to be striven for and implemented are modes of relationality that prioritise fellow feeling, communal wellbeing, immersion in and appreciation of the rhythms and processes that structure daily life.

<u>On Ideal Human-Animal- Relations in Ecotopia</u>

Despite occasional tensions and incongruities, what makes REA's so valuable for investigating alternate socio-ecological arrangements and sensibilities is that they don't seek merely to reconstruct socioeconomic systems along ecologically harmonious lines but also, crucially, the ways in which we generally perceive and relate to 'non-human' others. Non-human others often feature more centrally in REAs' ecotopian projections than they do in many of the ecotopian literary works examined. As explored in Chapter Five, REA's largely exhibit post-humanist (Taylor 2012; Braidotti, 2013) or post-anthropocentric (Ferrando 2016) worldviews and modes of relationality, wherein humans are no longer posited as separate or superior, and non-human species are deemed inherently valuable, to whom we owe ethical

responsibilities as co-terrestrials. In their worldviews and projections of ecotopian alternatives, one can detect a continuous and active (though not always successful) striving towards the eradication of all traces of anthropocentric orientations towards the human-animal-nature relationship. In their articulation of better worlds, many hope that humans shall exhibit a generally enhanced awareness of and respect for the needs of the multiplicities of non-human 'others' with whom we share the earth. Captain summarizes his post-humanist Ecotopian vision thus:

> "*I envision a planet of Earthlings, some feathered, some scaled, some hairy, some leafy, but all living in harmony in a world that values beauty over capital, life over property, peace over war…" (1988, pg. 89).*

The above is similar to Latour's (2017) cosmopolitical vision of learning to live well together, through painstaking negotiation with multiplicities of human and nonhuman 'terrestrials', amid the Anthropocene. Modes of being that prioritize and derive happiness from respectful coexistence with equal Earth others are the ideal for many REA's, with a particular emphasis on the lived experiences and unique needs of more-than-human others:

> *"we really need to reassess our speciesist beliefs, and this idea about what is good and what is proper for animals, and maybe really check for their feelings and for their wellbeing (psychological, etc.)…" (Forest).*

> *"Humans were meant to take their modest place in a seamless, stable-state web of living organisms, disturbing that web as little as possible. This would mean sacrifice of present consumption, but would ensure future survival…People were to be happy not to the extent they dominated their fellow creatures on the earth, but to the extent they lived in balance with them" (Ecotopia, 1975, Pg. 47;8).*

REA's and literary ecotopias repeatedly emphasize the need to decentre the 'human' conceptually and thoroughly integrate ourselves into wider multispecies assemblages, whereupon more ethical- i.e., non-dominative and non-exploitative- ways of relating to the latter might be forged. However, a considerable degree of ambiguity and tension persists around discussions concerning 'ideal' levels of 'human intervention' in ecosystems and the lives of Earth others. On one extreme end of the spectrum lie the arguably undesirable anthropocentric feats of geo-engineering as can be seen in hubristic attempts to control climate change by enhancing the Albedo effect via stratospheric sulfur injections (Brovkin et al 2009). In the ecotopian society depicted in Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), insect life deemed 'irritating' to humans, such as mosquitoes, have been 'bred out' (Pg. 101). A related approach can be seen in the rather dystopian (from the standpoint of non-human animals) novel by H.G Wells, *Men Like Gods* (1923), where the 'utopian' society depicted therein has, through methodical manipulation and control (Alt 2014), engaged in a "systematic extermination of tiresome and mischievous species" (Pg. 76). Before doing so and subsequently in relation to any other beings further encountered, the utopians ask of each organism, "What good is it [*to humans*]? What harm does it do [*to humans*]? How can it be exterminated [*for the overriding benefit of human society*]?" (Pg. 76). For those species lucky (or unlucky) enough to garner the favour of the society's human inhabitants, particularly large carnivores, careful selective

breeding has ensured that any characteristics potentially harmful to humans have been eradicated[68]. It is such hubristic and anthropocentric approaches that REA's staunchly disavow.

In terms of what nature-culture entanglements in an ecotopian society might look like, virtually all REA's envision some variant of a global interconnected system of nature preserves and/or mass rewilding projects for the creation of spaces either largely or wholly devoid of human interference, where the planet's millions of species could flourish- a 'hands off' approach (Morton 2010). As denoted in an EF! document, a core objective should be to "recreate lost habitats and reintroduce extirpated predators" (2011). After assisting with the creation of rewilded spaces, the aim would be to let other species and natural processes 'be':

> *"I'd like to see more wilderness areas, and more areas re-wilded. I'd like to see an end of animal agriculture or at least a big scaling down of it, and part of that sort of dynamic would be taking cows and sheep in this country off the land, letting that land re-wild back, which would then increase biodiversity across the board. There's also this thing like the lynx reintroduction which, they were hopefully going to reintroduce six lynx into the forests of Northumberland, and if they do that the lynx will hunt the deer, and the deer will stop eating all the trees in the forest, and there will be more trees, and more birds, bees, butterflies, smaller mammals, and a massive increase in biodiversity then, kind of like, almost for free" (Squirrel).*

> *"like this half-earth idea, giving half the earth over to nature. You've got places, like where the Chernobyl disaster took place, rewilded incredibly. And making taboo again, like, tracts of land in which humans cannot interfere or exploit, is really vital" (Badger).*

> *"with some places that humans just aren't allowed to go, like, 'We don't get to get to go to this area because that's just where the animals live', and we don't get to bother them all the time…" (Fox).*

As a result of their experiences with the disastrous consequences of extensive human (or more precisely, industrial-capitalist-modernity's) interference in ecosystems and spaces of other-than-human habitation, many REA's thus call for spaces exclusively devoted to the flourishing of non-human life. Captain similarly calls for a radical descaling of human communities, to be interspersed between (and presumably separate from) vast wilderness areas:

> *"what we need to have is communities no larger than 20,000 people, those communities should be separated by large areas of wilderness, transportation between those communities, we have the technology for it right now, would be through underground systems, you know, between that, to allow as much of the surface of the earth to be controlled by wilderness…".*

[68] The disastrous ecological impacts of such callous and arrogant manipulation of the biosphere were not lost on one of the visitors to the society, who lamented that due to the extermination of the majority of utopia's insect life, "there were no swallows to be seen in Utopia, and there were no swallows to be seen in Utopia because there were no gnats nor midges" (Pg. 75).

Though rewilding approaches may indeed hold much potential for countering biological annihilation, some rewilding discourses- such as the 'Half-Earth proposal' (Wilson 2016)[69] and the similarly 'hands off' approach occasionally detected amongst REA prognostic framings- overlook the structural drivers (i.e. extreme socioeconomic inequality and growth-oriented production and consumption) of biodiversity and ecological decline (Holland et al 2009; Büscher et al 2017). Moreover, the 'hands off' approach is predicated on traditional human/nature and human/animal dualisms (Plumwood, 2002; Latour, 2004), wherein 'wildlife/wilderness' and the 'human/societal' realms are depicted as separate and/or irreconcilable (Cronon 1996). It suggests an implicit denial of interconnectivity, and more problematically, Western conservation initiatives predicated on this logic have been associated with the neo-colonial displacement of indigenous groups in order to make way for the creation of 'untouched' Nature preserves (Cronon 1996; Jørgensen 2015; Büscher et al 2017). However, if everything is interconnected, as Morton (2010) reminds us and as REA's continuously profess, then there is no background or foreground, no humans over here and nature 'over yonder', no place for any of us to step 'outside' of inter-actant entanglement (Collard et al 2015). Indeed, there is no place where we *are* and non-human organisms *are not*. We drive and fly "using crushed and liquefied dinosaur bones. You are walking on top of hills and mountains of fossilized animal bits. Most of your house dust is your skin..." (Morton, 2010, pg. 269). The goal then, perhaps, should be careful integration, co-habitation, and emphases on socio-ecological mosaics that respect the needs of singular earth others. As Latour (2011) rightly observes, surely the objective of political ecological movements during the increasingly visible nature-culture-material entanglements of the Anthropocene should be to embrace and learn how to harmoniously navigate such entanglements with myriad actants, not attempt to retreat from them (Pg. 21). Indeed, Shark initially considers the desirability of spaces wholly devoid of human presence, but then reflects on the potential difficulties with such an approach to human-animal-nature relations more generally:

"I actually think that there should definitely be some places on the planet which are not touched by humans, because in this way we can measure our impact…but how could we not touch an ecosystem? Because there's no such thing as ecosystems if you think about it, in like the broader term, because every ecosystem is connected to somewhere".

Rewilding for protecting and propagating biodiversity in an increasingly defaunated world is a curious case, one that, though ultimately seeking to minimize human interventions also often features considerable human involvement in the form of species reintroduction, the modification of river flow patterns and promotion of naturalistic fire regimes (Lorimer et al 2015). While the prefix 're' connotes 'back to', a notoriously nebulous concept as it is exceptionally difficult to discern what we are returning to since human alterations of natural systems and landscapes have been occurring for thousands of years. This renders conceptualizations of a pre-civilizational, pristine state of natural equilibrium more a myth than actuality, even though unprecedentedly volatile environmental paroxysms can be detected with the onset of the Anthropocene. Furthermore, natural systems are mosaics in states of constant flux rather than static entities, with shifting equilibriums, fluctuating population dynamics, and

[69] Wilson's (2016) call for converting half of the Earth's surface into a network of reserves for stemming biodiversity decline, however, is decidedly anthropocentric: "Only by setting aside half the planet in reserve, or more, can we save the living part of the environment and achieve the stabilization required ***for our own survival"*** (Pg. 3).

endless cycles of birth, death, and decay. However, crucially, much discourse around rewilding (particularly amongst REA's) is decidedly future-oriented, wherein the grand endeavour is to replenish, restore, reforest, and recreate what once might have been before the Anthropocene kicked into full swing through, for instance, reintroducing large predators and other keystone fauna in order to increase ecosystem diversity and resilience (Monbiot 2014; Corlett 2016). In other words, the idea is to radically scale back the human enterprise, to move beyond a world wherein humans and their livestock have usurped significant swaths of the planet for themselves alone (Bar-On et al 2018) and towards an abundant future.

Prominent utopian works such as those by More (1890) and Bellamy (1898) have traditionally focused on societal renewal largely for the enhancement of *human* wellbeing. Where non-human animals are featured, as in More's (1965) classic *Utopia*, though often considerably more harmonious relations between animals and humans are depicted, the former still exist largely for human ends (McCutcheon 1998). In *Utopia*, animals are deemed possessors of immortal souls along with their human counterparts, though "not comparable to ours in dignity or destined to equal felicity" (1965, pg. 223). Anti-hierarchical and non-instrumental human-animal relations devoid of domination feature prominently in ecotopian texts to varying degrees, though even here traces of anthropocentrism are not always wholly absent. Consider the following telling exchange between Connie (the visitor) and Luciente, key informant from the ecotopian society of Mattapoisett:

> *Connie: "'All over Mattapoisett I see patches of woods, meadows, swamps, marshes. You could clear a lot more land.'*
>
> *Luciente: 'We have far more land growing food than you did. But, Connie, aside from the water table, think of every patch of woods as a bank of wild genes. In your time thousands of species were disappearing. We need that wild genetic material to breed with…'" (Pg. 298).*

This constitutes a poignant example of estrangement, wherein an undesired characteristic or mode of thought associated with the society under critique- industrial-capitalism and the imperative of ceaseless expansion and resource exploitation- is juxtaposed alongside an arguably better alternative, that of preserving natural systems and other species intact. However, implicit within Luciente's response is an instrumental concern with preservation of genetic material largely as means for *human* ends, not because countless other species' needs of habitats that are intact for their own wellbeing might be ends-in-themselves. Arguably more problematic is the positing of woodlands as mere 'banks of wild genes', as though such complex ecosystems constitute nothing more than 'standing reserves' (Heidegger 1977) for future human use, rather than intricate assemblages of living and non-living actants. Elsewhere in the novel Luciente, somewhat paradoxically, expresses such zoe-egalitarian (Braidotti 2013) sentiments as, "You might say our- you'd say, religion?- ideas make us see ourselves as partners with water, air, birds, fish, trees" (Pg. 132), and, "We're part of the web of nature" (Pg. 303). However, the word 'partnership' implies, among other things, equal consideration and standing amongst parties involved, whereas excerpts from elsewhere in the novel, particularly the above-noted phasing out of 'undesirable' organisms, subtly belie such a notion. Traces of anthropocentrism have thus been considerably, but not entirely, deconstructed. Moreover, while substantially more harmonious human-animal-nature relations are depicted in the ecotopian texts under analysis, *Island* (2009), *Woman on the Edge of Time*

(1976), *Pacific Edge* (1990), and *Always Coming Home* (1985), the singular and embodied experiences of other species are seldom explored in detail.

Beyond Ownership and Domination

Though ownership of others is disavowed by REA's and literary ecotopias alike, 'use' of others in the form of agriculture, etc. is a more complex and contested matter. In Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975), trees are often referred to as 'brother tree' and cattle, no longer confined within the sunless abysses of factory farms, roam freely throughout the countryside. In *Island* (1962), which paved the way for more detailed explorations of human-animal-environment interactions in subsequent green utopias from the 1970s through the 1990s (Garforth 2018), virtually unbounded interactions and intimate co-habitations between humans and non-humans are the norm, wherein the concept of animal ownership is subtly undermined by such statements as, "The mynahs [local bird species] are like the electric light…they don't belong to anyone" (Huxley 2009, pg. 15). Moreover, echoing REA kinship relations with nonhumans, the inhabitants of Pala are taught from early childhood that "snakes are your brothers; snakes have a right to your compassion and your respect" (Huxley 2009, Pg. 194). Lastly, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) features modes of human-animal-nature relationality that are decidedly non-hierarchical and non-binary, and devoid of possessive relations between 'self' and 'other'. Here, incredible strides in interspecies communication via rudimentary forms of sign language are the norm (as envisioned years later, in 1988, by Captain Paul Watson!), animals such as cats are portrayed as agentic subjects of a life, and a palpable bioegalitarian ethos pervades the work. Nevertheless, various species are still bred and reared for human consumption (though plant-based foods constitute the primary source of nutrients for the inhabitants of Mattapoisett) and, as denoted below, humans still have the right to decide the fate of other species. A rejection of relations predicated on ownership or domination of any sort features even more centrally in REA prognostic framings. The EF! 2017 Gathering pamphlet makes clear that in an ideal world, "Animals are not *ours* [emphasis added] to 'farm', enslave, control, cage, slaughter or accumulate wealth from" (Pg. 34). Thus, for many REA's, unlike in the literary ecotopias examined, domestic species- living legacies of human coercion and domination over the non-human world- would no longer exist:

> *"within the times of revolution, domesticated or 'domesicrated' animals, I believe that they will have to live with us but we probably should choose to not breed those animals purposely, so those lines of domesicrated animals would either eventually rewild or die out, which I am okay with" (Koala).*

> *"we don't get to have pets, we don't get to make animals do things for us; we don't get to, like, train dogs, they just get to do what they want and we just treat them in a very respectful way" (Fox).*

The emphasis, rather, is on free and uncoerced human-animal interactions, as evinced in the following scene in *Island*:

> *"A moment later a large green parrot, with white cheeks and a bill of polished jet, came swooping down from nowhere and landed with a squawk and a noisy fluttering of wings on Vijaya's shoulder…*
>
> *Will: 'You people seem to be on remarkably good terms with the local fauna.'*

Vijaya: 'Pala is probably the only country in which an animal theologian would have no reason for believing in devils. For animals everywhere else, Satan, quite obviously, is Homo sapiens." (Pg. 186)

In both Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1990) and Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985), exemplars of contemporary critical ecotopias, the focus on wild and irreducible natural others is central, hence their continuities with deep ecological and green anarchist strains of ecological thought (Garforth 2005) similarly exemplified by REA's. Palpable inklings of an ecological self (Naess 1995) can be detected in the following observation by Kevin, the protagonist in *Pacific Edge*:

"He knew the configuration of every dark tree he passed, every turn in the path, and for a long moment rushing along he felt spread out in it all, interpenetrated, the smell of the plants part of him, his body a piece of the hills…" (Pg. 32)

In *Always Coming Home* the Kesh's vitalist (Bennett 2010) cosmological system perceives even inanimate stones as containing worlds in themselves and rivers as exhibiting a powerful, purposive agency (Plumwood 2010; Latour 2018). The Kesh's aversion to the concept of ownership (see quote above), and the vibrant animism (Rose 2013) and zoe-egalitarianism (Braidotti 2013) which pervades their modes of relationality, have led them to substitute the word 'pet', with its 'patronizing and condescending overtones', with the word *commensal* which denotes 'people living together' (Pg. 419). Nevertheless, deer and quail are hunted, and domestic animals such as sheep are "used for festivals, sheepskin and wool used for various leather goods and such" (Pg. 414). The Kesh's use of sheep is curiously juxtaposed alongside the following observation: "The sheep was not a symbol of passive stupidity and blind obedience as it is to us, but rather was regarded with a kind of affectionate awe, as an intrinsically mysterious being" (Pg. 415). Overall, in *Always Coming Home* (1985) human-animal relations are marked by a general reverence and respect for other species as agentic components of 'the web of life'. Although, paradoxically, there is a 'scrupulous ordering' in place, wherein domestic species are conceived as categorically distinct from their 'wild' counterparts in the Kesh's varied 'houses of being' (Chapter Eight).

'They Are *With* Us, Not *For* Us'

Though human-animal relations characterized by ownership, oppression and exploitation are virtually absent in REA and literary ecotopian visions of ideal worlds, the question around which a considerable degree of ambiguity and contention abounds, particularly amid REA's, is whether use of others species in itself- for clothes, food, etc.- is at all commensurable with ethical modes of human-animal relationality. The EF! 2017 Summer Gathering pamphlet muses as follows:

"Veganism should be a radical shift in the way we view and interact with animals in our society. Humans' perceived dominance over all other species (plant and animal) is what allows exploitation to go unchallenged" (Pg. 29)

The sentiment is that a shift towards veganism would effectively bring about truly ethical modes of human-animal-nature relationality devoid of domination and exploitation of earth others. However, for Tree, a strict adherence to veganism is not what is needed, not least because consumption of others is an integral component of ecological systems and is therefore

not wrong in and of itself; rather, what's deemed ethically unacceptable are presently institutionalized modes of domination and exploitation in the form of industrial factory farming:

> *"I think there are some uses of animals I could support and there are some I wouldn't support, and there are some I've yet to make my mind up. I mean, using animals for sport and for circuses I think is completely unacceptable… I think in terms of our use of animals, just to elaborate on that, most, well, not most because there are animals that just eat plants, but many eat other animals, there are lots of those, and we're essentially one of them. But what distinguishes us from others is that other animals eat what they need."*

Herein, use per se is not problematic, but rather, exploitative and excessive use. Though at first glance the 'use' of animals for food might appear to perpetuate traditional human-animal hierarchies, consider the following poignant passage from *Always Coming Home*:

> "Come among the unsown grasses bearing richly, the oaks heavy with acorns, the sweet roots in unplowed earth.
>
> Come among the deer on the hill, the fish in the river, the quail in the meadows. You can take them, you can eat them,
>
> *Like you they are food*.
>
> They are with you, not for you.
>
> Who are their owners?
>
> This is the puma's range,
>
> this hill is the vixen's
>
> this is the owl's tree,
>
> this is the mouse's run,
>
> this is the minnow's pool:
>
> it is all one place. Come take your place.
>
> No fences here, but sanctions. No war here, but dying; there is dying here. Come hunt, it is yourself you hunt. Come gather yourself from the grass, the branch, the earth.
>
> Walk here, sleep well, on ground that is not yours, but is yourself" (Pg. 76'77).

The idea expressed here is akin to Plumwood's (2003) contextual theory of ecological animalism, which fundamentally opposes the exploitation and 'othering' of animals and seeks to dismantle human supremacy in the form of traditional human/nature dualisms more broadly. This is done by both resituating humans in ecological terms *and* more-than-human species in cultural and ethical terms by, crucially, affirming a universe of mutual use wherein animals *as well as humans* are equally available for *respectful* use (pg. 2; Cook 1977). An unyielding opposition to consumption or use of any kind as a moral wrong in and of itself rather than by virtue of its mode and extent (i.e. reductive forms that merely treat others as means to our ends) is a position referred to as ontological veganism (Plumwood 2003). Ontological veganism subtly reinforces human/animal and nature/culture dualisms that deny ecological embeddedness by deploying an exclusionary logic that ontologizes only beings within tenuously delineated bounds of ethical consideration as inedible. It also risks the demonization of predation more generally by positing consumption as an ontologically and morally unacceptable wrong. Yet, ecosystems and all living beings depend upon consumption of others in one way or another in order to function- wolves prey upon ungulates and rodents, some birds

prey upon insects and other small organisms, and we must prey upon vegetable matter at least in order to live and thrive. When we die, we become food for a host of microorganisms in turn. If humans are indeed animals who differ from other species only by degrees rather than kind, and therefore are components of the web of life along with all others, then like them, we are food- as well as so much more.

On the basis of the immeasurable cruelty involved in industrial factory farming, on its violent reduction of living beings to mere sellable commodities, and on its disastrous ecological impacts (see Chapter 1), however, calls for abstaining from or at least radically reducing/reforming contemporary modes of animal agriculture find firmer ground. Such examples constitute the exact opposites of respectful and mutual use. Thus, as many REA's often emphasize, any new socio-ecological order will need to radically scale back mass meat and dairy production and consumption for ecological reasons in addition to moral-ethical considerations around the cruel and disrespectful treatment of nonhuman animals in contemporary animal agriculture practices. From the standpoint of building more compassionate relations with 'more-than-human' life and the wider biosphere, perhaps the sentiment expressed by Le Guin's quote in the paragraph above, that animals are *with us*, not *for us*, that *like us*, *they* are food, is the truly non-anthropocentric one. Such a view situates animals and humans on an equal playing field, where all are food as well as wondrous evolutionary marvels and co-inhabitants of a shared planet. Horse and Tree ruminate along decidedly ecological-animalistic lines:

> *"I think the kind of completely animal-free systems, I think they're very much an ideal, but I suspect that they come from an ethical point of view rather than a purely ecological one…I don't have a problem if people want to keep two or three animals and kill them to eat them, but I just think the industrialization of animal food production is absolutely abhorrent on every front, and that's what has to change… it's just taking that industrialism out of the system, you know, it's the industrialism that has totally, totally broken that relationship we have with animals, really. I think it's absolutely abhorrent, and the sooner we can get rid of any form of factory farming, the better, really."*
>
> *"I'm not a vegan, for example, I'm a vegetarian. I think I would define myself as saying that we should be living more in harmony with nature rather than exploiting nature and conquering nature, you know, trying to just use it for our benefit…".*

The issue at the core of the debate over the use of animals in agriculture and the like thus seems to revolve around the extensive, industrial scale of such activities, which are seen as thoroughly alienating and otherwise inimical to ethical interactions. Hence the poignant observation in Huxley's *Island* (2009) that, "For animals everywhere else, Satan, quite obviously, is Homo sapiens" (Pg. 186). In other words, to be resisted and dismantled are exploitative, oppressive and instrumental modes of relationality that treat the 'other' as no more than a means to a particular end. The activists' myriad strivings and conceptualizations, which feature thorough problematizations of notions of animal ownership, of the notion of humans as separate from and/or superior to other species and the biosphere, of instrumental orientations towards species and the biosphere in some ways constitute even more radical conceptualizations of Ecotopia than many offered in the texts (apart from Le Guin's *Always Coming Home*), although hierarchies in their conceptualizations of the human-animal-nature relationship still persist to certain degrees (Chapter Five). Attempts to call for absolute abstention from meat consumption on ontological grounds results in yet another reproduction

of anthropocentrism wherein, by implying that only humans can and should abstain as opposed to the rest of the more-than-human world, removes the human once again from wider ecological assemblages.

Bringing the Spider 'Inside': On Coexistence and Cohabitation

Amongst some REA's and in many of the featured ecotopian literary works, despite the resurfacing of hierarchies and dualisms, there are consistent attempts at moving away from rigid hyper-separations and embracing messy entanglements by eroding conceptual-physical barriers and 'bringing nature inside' (further explored in Chapter Eight). Though some REAs' rewilding visions depict a rigid hyper-separation between 'Natural spaces' and 'human habitations', others envision a world wherein humans will "no longer throw the spider out of the house". Many emphasize the need to "learn to coexist with other species" (Grasshopper) and more generally shift from systematic annihilation and rigid hyper-separation to cohabitation. Similarly, the trains in Callenbach's (1975) *Ecotopia*, for instance, are filled with plant species of various sorts (Pg. 8), and architectural design in Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1990), wherein plant communities are incorporated into human homes and all-encompassing glass walls, render distinctions between the building's 'inside' and 'outside' all but indistinguishable. In Mattapoisett, human and non-human dwellings are seamlessly integrated:

> *"A vine ran all over the south side, with big velvet flowers that gave off a fragrance of cloves. Bird feeders hung from every protrusion, out of windows, on posts. The roof was studded with bird houses and a pigeon coop built in…" (Pg. 137).*

Similar ideas are espoused above by Grasshopper's remark that we learn to 'no longer throw the spider out of the house', which is an overarching metaphor for how overall human-animal interactions should proceed according to REA's:

> *"I think that we don't need a strict 'no' to co-living with animals, but we really need to reassess our speciesist beliefs, and this idea about what is good and what id proper for animals, and maybe really check for their feelings and for their wellbeing (psychological, etc.), and then we might find that most of the zoos are not good enough for animals, maybe even all of them" (Forest)*

> *"…if we build cities where we live in, sort of, very small land-footprints, and we then integrate into the ecology of the surrounding area, if we free that up for wildlife, we live in this very small footprint but we integrate with the wildlife and we try and support it as much as possible, try and increase biodiversity, try and create awareness about what we're doing and try and learn from it and do research, I think that's definitely a positive thing" (Jellyfish).*

The above excerpts allude to the intricacies, complexities and challenges that will attend the messy work of learning to co-inhabit our radically altered planet with multiplicities of other beings. However, as with the careful and concerted attempts at deconstructing conceptual boundaries, lines of valuation, and self/other dichotomies seen in Chapter Five, the excerpts above accomplish a similar feat: an awareness of the instability of such constructs and their ultimate failure at grasping the entangled and ever-shifting nature of reality (Latour 2004; 2005). A sense emerges in which ethical modes of human-animal-nature relationality are those which crucially emphasize respect for the needs and desires of others.

Radical Greens: Terrestrial Ecotopias of the 'Here and Now'

As will be explored in the subsequent chapter, REAs' critical and grounded ecotopian aversions to closure (Moylan 1986; Foucault & Miskowiec 1986) around particular notions of the 'better' is the result of a number of complex factors such as the decidedly eco-dystopian reality that marks the Anthropocene, which shatters notions of a luminous 'Not-Yet', and wherein the systematic loss of cherished earth kin engenders feelings grief and hopelessness. Yet hope they do, though in a decidedly novel modality attuned to the unique exigencies of the precarious 'Now'. Though the critical function of their particular mode of ecotopianism occasionally overshadows their imaginative abilities, and depsite their skepticism of closure, there is nevertheless a general consensus around the desirable traits, characteristics, and modes of being of the radically new world they wish to bring forth: radically decentralized and egalitarian communities that prioritize direct participation, social and ecological wellbeing. In this there are strong continuities between REAs' ecotopian visions and those espoused in literary ecotopias. Similarly, both genres are deeply critical of human-animal relations characterised by ownership and exploitation, and envision substantially more harmonious relations between humans and earth others. Although as in Chapter 5 and as further discussed in the final chapter, dualistic constructs in the form of humans being consigned to one area and 'Nature' and nonhuman animals to another surfaced in their prognostic framings around rewilding. Another curious dilemma arose around use of other species per se and its relative commensurability with ethical modes of human-animal-relationality. Many REA's and Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* in particular suggest that it is the reductive and exploitative uses of other species and treating them as mere means to human ends that is ethically unacceptable, not use per se. In an ideal ecotopian world, humans and animals would be '*with* and not *for* one another', and further characterised by a radical descaling of the human enterprise in order to allow Earth others the space to flourish. In the subsequent and final chapter, a selection of key themes from this chapter as well as the preceding two- REA relations to hope, the utopian 'Not-Yet', and human-animal relations in ecotopias-to-come- are further examined.

Chapter 8: Discussion & Conclusion

Among the greatest ironies of the Anthropocene era of socio-ecological upheavals is that they're marked by a seemingly ubiquitous and unprecedentedly destabilizing human agency, which has in turn given rise to at times violent retaliations by Earth others which belie long-standing notions of human supremacy. Yet extant crises are decidedly ethical in nature, as they result largely from our appropriation of ever larger portions of the globe- the common dwelling place of all Earthlings- for ourselves alone, which has in turn seen the steady and systematic eradication of nonhuman life. Researching REA groups mobilising against Anthropocene decline has been methodologically challenging while also revealing a number of novel insights into their ecological worldviews, motivational drivers and ecotopian potentialities. Their post-anthropocentric (Braidotti 2013; Ferrando 2016) worldviews are far from merely 'deep ecological' (Naess 1973) but rather feature a complex and at times contradictory mosaic of environmental-ethical tributaries. Though they staunchly reject anthropocentric framings of humans as superior to- and wholly separate from- nonhumans, some especially value species deemed to possess traditionally 'human' characteristics (i.e. intelligence); others still extend the bounds of ethical valuation further to include all sentient beings, towards all living beings (biocentrism), and even towards 'organic matter' on Earth and beyond yet left 'boundaries' more or less intact (Chapter Five). Traditional dualisms similarly surfaced in some of their

ecotopian projections, wherein some advocate for mass rewilding projects consisting of 'Nature' preserves wholly separate from and devoid of human interference (Chapter Seven). However, many critically reflected upon and sought to deconstruct hierarchies and neat categorizations altogether, namely around who matters and why, and in terms of human-animal-nature entanglements in ecotopias-to-come. Most curiously, contrary to mainstream environmentalist calls to 'save the Earth' as an often veiled injunction to save humanity (Wilson 2016; Oliver in Fritsch et al 2018, pg. 351), REA's predominantly exhibit concern for- and mobilize almost on behalf of- threatened nonhuman kin.

The diagnostic framing narratives (Chapter Six) of the participants featured in this project designate key driving forces- i.e. growth-oriented industrial capitalism, commodified/instrumental forms of human-animal-nature relationality, and more problematically, human population expansion- long known to feature in deep green and radical environmental discourses and diagnostic framing narratives (Wall 1999; Saunders 2012). However, as with their ecological worldviews and modes of valuation of nonhumans, many sought to critically reflect upon the aforementioned factors and otherwise expressed a decidedly nuanced approach to the question of who/what is most culpable for contemporary climate and ecological breakdown. Some were critical of simplistic portrayals of human population growth as a key driver of ecological decline, denoting that equally if not more important factors are extreme power and wealth inequities stemming from violent colonial expropriations and dispossessions, and culminating in the present stage of advanced capitalism wherein an elite minority possess a wildly disproportionate amount of the world's wealth. Many see social and ecological justice as inextricably linked, emphasizing the need to address the four interlinked 'tectonic plates of liberation theory' (Plumwood 2002, pg. 1)- class, race, gender and species- for a truly effective reconstitution of society along more ethical and inclusive lines. However, others avowed decidedly complex and diffuse narratives of harm, vulnerability and culpability for extant ecological breakdown wherein- though somewhat clear 'aggressors' emerge in the form of capitalism and Western colonial expansion, for instance- all to varying degrees are deemed to be implicated in the vast spatial-temporal entanglements that constitute the deficient 'Now'. As such, some REA's suggested the need for the formation of new (ecotopian) alliances which undermine support for- and mount resistance to- the current status quo. Their singular modality of ecotopianism, as discussed below, is one moulded within and in response to the exigencies of the turbulent present.

In this chapter I further develop some of the central themes that emerged within the previous data chapters- in particular REA relations to central utopian concepts of hope and the 'Not-Yet' amid the socio-ecological perturbations of the Anthropocene, their modes of relationality with regards to non-human others, and REA as well as literary ecotopian theorizations of the nature of the 'ecotopia-to-come'– through an explanatory framework constituted largely by Latour (2004; 2005; 2017) and Derrida (2000; 2005; 2016). In being so fully immersed in critiquing and resisting the present, REA's occasionally supersede utopianism's imaginative function, although as denoted in Chapter Seven they still offer glimmers- however fragmented and contested- of more ethical and life-affirming worlds. Their ecotopianism is largely of a critical (Moylan 1986) and 'terrestrial'[70] (Latour 2017)- or 'Earthbound' sort, situated concretely within particular spatial-temporalities and

[70] 'Terrestrial' in the sense of being on or relating to the 'Earth', not in the more restricted sense of 'dry land' as this would exclude multiplicities of marine and other actants. An Earth-bound ecotopianism is firmly rooted in- and co-created by- terrestrials living in particular localities or regions.

simultaneously prefiguring more liveable alternatives while mobilising against the deficiencies of the 'Now', despite often exhibiting an acute scepticism of universality (Foucault & Miskowiec 1986). In failing to wholly dismantle rigid binaries- Human/Nature, hope/hopelessness, etc.- REA's often fall short of the utopianism's transgressive modality (Sargisson 2002). Finally, I examine REA and ecotopian articulations of a cosmopolitical ecotopia-to-come through Latour's (2004) work on cosmopolitics, and Derrida's (1998; 1999; 2000; 2005; 2015) related writings on cosmopolitanism, hospitality, and the heterogenous democracy-to-come. The occasional resurgence of modern 'two-house' politics (Latour 2004; 2017)- which depict a dialectical interplay between an external, atemporal and objective 'Nature' as distinct and separate from the internal, subjective 'Social' world of humans- amongst REA post-anthropocentric worldviews and prognostic framings renders them just shy of truly transgressive utopian modalities (Sargisson 2000; 2002) which seek to undermine rigid boundaries and binary constructs. However, many REA's nevertheless strive to deconstruct antagonistic dualisms while approaching the heterogenous 'other'- in the form of the 'Not-Yet' and the nonhuman- as that which can never be fully known or approximated. Hence their reluctance to assign definitive content to the 'to-come' via implementing a blueprint of the ideal ecotopian society (Chapter Seven), as well as their critiques of our purported abilities to know what characteristics other species lack (i.e. intelligence) in deliberations of the latter's ethical consideration. Overall, theirs is an oppositional ecotopianism that seeks to deconstruct antagonistic structurings of (particularly animal) 'otherness' and deploys a life-affirming ethico-political praxis for the implementation of worlds without marginalised and oppressed 'others' (Sargent 2006, pg. 14; Braidotti 2015).

"I Am Hopeless, and Yet I Continue to Fight" (Haas 2016, pg. 293)

"The intrusion of environmental crisis into the present can be read as the erasure of spaces for utopian thinking and engagement- or as an urgent and immanent challenge to keep hope and radical critique alive and kicking back in the here and now" (Garforth 2018, pg. 158;9).

Western modernity has served as an apocalypse of sorts in the sense of putting an end, sometimes violently, to other civilisations and onto-epistemological modalities (Latour 2017, pg. 205). This, in conjunction with an inherited view of an immanentized, de-animated Earth, likely explains why so many appear unmoved by repeated alarm calls over widespread climate and ecological breakdown, all while the Earth continues to vibrate underfoot (Latour 2017). Yet, despite the intrusion of climate and biological breakdown (Ceballos et al, 2017) into the 'here and now', the stranglehold of global capital (Clark & York, 2005) which denounces radical alternatives as ludicrous fancy, and near paralyzing ecological grief (Cunsolo & Ellis 2018) stemming from the accelerating loss of cherished co-evolutionary kin, REA's continue to 'kick' vociferously in the 'here and now'. Since the start of this project, a source of considerable interest has been how and why REAs' eco-apocalyptic portents of extant, looming and catastrophic ecological collapse, rather than engendering escapist fantasies, a politically regressive fear or a passive acceptance of the 'Now' (Swyngedouw 2010), instead take the form of radical critiques of and fervent resistance to it in the form of direct-action tactics, anti-capitalist narratives, and ecotopian subjectivities. Curiously, though REA's exhibit grounded and critical modalities ecotopianism that seek to prefigure new worlds 'in the shell of the old', during other times they propagate depictions of an all-powerful 'Nature' that will soon rid itself of the human scourge, thus belying their sense of agency in bringing forth an 'ecotopian Not-Yet'. Yet, paradoxically, they also deploy their own agency to a considerable extent in their

various high-risk physically interventionist tactics for halting ecological decline and instantiating better worlds. Moreover, their individual and collective relationship to hope- a key feature of the utopian imaginary- is a decidedly complex one, wherein they do not merely appropriate hope as an affect-of-choice (Gerlach 2017, pg. 333). Rather, a notable portion of REA's exhibit a seemingly paradoxical form of 'hopeless activism' (Chapter Seven), often citing a profound hopelessness or relinquishing of hope in the face of the perceived inevitability of ecological collapse (apocalypticism) and the pervasiveness of global capitalism. They embody the 'critical' function of the utopian imaginary thoroughly in their far-reaching and multidimensional critiques- structural, socioeconomic, cultural, onto-ethical- of the 'Now', while exhibiting a complex relationship to its compensatory dimensions.

James Joll's (1979) observation with regards to the anarchist tradition aptly encapsulates the seemingly paradoxical nature of REA modes of thought and behaviour:

"There was simultaneously a sense of desperation, a feeling that there was ***something hopelessly wrong with the world****, and* ***at the same time there was a firm belief in the possibility of putting things right****, if only the institutions which hindered the doing of God's will could be destroyed" (Pg. 6).*

Of course, in reference to the above quote one would need to substitute the 'doing of God's will' with something along the lines of 'the forging of just and ethical modes of human-animal-nature relationality'. Yet this quote alludes to what will be described as a dialectic of hope and hopelessness amongst REA thought and behaviour, wherein hope and hopelessness appear alongside one another and intersect in complex ways. As will be denoted, their hopelessness is not to be confused with the utter lack of hope per se but is rather a modality of hope critically reconfigured by grief stemming from their prolonged and keenly felt experiences with Anthropocene losses- of cherished Earth kin, etc.- and the intrusion of crisis more generally into the present. This in turn has diminished and substantially altered (though, curiously, not fully extinguished) their abilities to imagine any future at all, at times 'framing the future' (Moazzam-Doulat 2008, pg. 76) as promising little more than wholesale ecological collapse. REA's often alternate between a messianic[71] openness to the unforeseeable 'future-to-come' (Derrida, 1994) via their aversions to closure while still expressing a desire for *some* 'content'- i.e., more egalitarian modes of human-animal-nature relationality devoid of the systematic eradication of life. However, their perceptions of themselves as key agents helping to bring about a better 'Not-Yet' are occasionally supplanted by deterministic portrayals of an all-powerful 'Nature' that will rid itself of most humans along with many other life forms, leaving a world of ruins from whose ashes new worlds will have to be built, and not necessarily by humans. This ambiguous approach to agency surfaced in their assignations of culpability for Anthropocene ills (Chapter Six), wherein humans as a whole were occasionally posited as the primary drivers of socio-ecological decline, although many further alluded to particular actors and modalities of being (i.e., the globe's plutocratic elite, industrial capitalism, etc.) as the key drivers (Braidotti 2018). The epochal transitions of the 'Now' and associated anxieties and traumas (Haas 2016) over a 'Not-Yet' rendered increasingly uncertain amid the looming prospects of biological annihilation have yielded a decidedly unique relation to the very concepts of hope and futurity amid REA's. Of interest, particularly regarding those REA's for whom annihilation is seemingly all that is promised by the 'future-to-come' (Derrida 1994), is,

[71] Not in the religious sense of prophecying the coming of a messiah but in the Levinasian ethical openness to the singular 'other', an inextinguishable faith or hope in the notion that *perhaps* a better to-come is possible (Derrida 1994; 2005b).

"why bother to strive for the good" (Atwood 2009, pg. 279)? If not beckoned by the ethical pull of a better 'Not-Yet', then what do they strive towards, and/or on whose behalf?

Neither Complete Closure nor Wholly Contentless Messianicity: REA Relations to 'Hope', the Other, and the Future-to-Come

"Hope is possible even in the face of the finality of death, even in the face, on a cosmic scale, of heat-death of the universe itself under the influence of the second law of thermodynamics" (Treanor 2019, pg. 8).

The quote above alludes to an important and timely query: that is, what happens to 'hope' amid the ubiquity and mounting severity of contemporary socio-ecological breakdown, particularly amidst those (REA's, indigenous groups, etc.) at the front lines of ecocide resistance? REA relations to the heterogenous 'other'- in the form of nonhuman life, the natural world, and the 'Not-Yet'- as post-humanist modes that to varying degrees problematize (though don't always succeed in deconstructing) hierarchies and rigid boundaries strongly echo Derridean deconstruction (2016). Deconstruction, though lacking a single or precise definition, crucially seeks to expose, reverse and displace hierarchies and binary opposites so as to 'pull them apart' (Spivak 1976; Sargisson 2002; Derrida 1995; 2016). Largely focused on embodying 'militant and interminable political critique' mobilizing amid and against the 'Now', REA's proceed with considerable caution towards notions of 'the better' and the 'future-to-come'. In this they share Derrida's and other post-structuralist (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) penchants for critiquing the 'Now' while simultaneously declining to offer precise utopian projections of better worlds (Patton 2007). Their aversions to closure (Gordon in Davis & Kinna 2009) seem to stem not merely from their generally anarchic underpinnings but, crucially, from their avowals of an irreducibly heterogenous future which, like the 'other' and notions of a complete society or fulfilled history, can never be fully anticipated by finite and historically situated subjects (Derrida 1994). Thus, as briefly denoted in Chapter Two, the heterogenous 'other'- nonhumans, futurity, etc.- to a degree forever reside beyond the bounds of full approximation (Lazarus 1999)[72]. Theirs is a utopian modality that in many ways rejects the Gnostic inclination towards assured knowledge in an openness to the uncertainties that proliferate amidst the Anthropocene (Latour 2017, pg. 208) which further obfuscate the irreducible heterogeneity and never-complete-approximability of the 'Not-Yet'. REA's further eschew transcendent utopian modalities that position a distant, idealised world in opposition to a terrestrial realm (Latour 2017, pg. 208), instead exhibiting an immanent and thoroughly terrestrial form, wherein they seek to dismantle the 'Now' as presently constituted and embody the unrealised potentialities of an animated materiality.

Because justice demands that one relate to 'other'- the future-to-come, etc.- as 'other' (Plumwood 2002), one cannot (and should not) attempt to wholly determine it, as this would negate the heterogeneity of the other and therefore eliminate the very *possibility* of something different arriving. REAs' frequent aversions to reducing the heterogenous 'Not-Yet' to the 'self-same' by ascribing definite content to it arises amid the unique historical context of the Anthropocene, a time that is thoroughly 'out of joint' (Derrida 1995b), plagued by proliferating uncertainties and hybrid entanglements, and wherein the extant and looming intrusion of

[72] Indeed, one can hope precisely because one is never wholly certain of the outcome, which is what differentiates hope from forms of optimism that proclaim the assured realizability of a particular desired end and therefore ascribe definite content to the 'To-Come' (Derrida 1994; Ware 2004).

collapse into the present (Garforth 2018) have utterly shattered traditional conceptions of linear historical and temporal movement, further obscuring any attempts to conceptualize and delineate the 'Not-Yet'. Hence REAs' aversion to blueprinting utopian modalities, as well as any conceptualizations of hope and the 'Not-Yet' which aim towards full approximation; such modalities are deemed untenable amid the present widespread uncertainty, laden as they have often been with deterministic conceptions of time, technological and historical progress. REA ecotopian modalities rather effect an absorption of the utopian horizon into the present, where 'ecotopia' is embodied via imperfect every-day practices rather than situated in a post-revolutionary future scenario (Gordon in Davis & Kinna, 2009, Pg. 261). As such, to a degree REA's evince a 'messianic structure of experience' (Derrida 1994, pg. 28) which awaits a heterogenous future as an abyssal desert devoid of clearly identifiable content or objects of desire, as an 'other' which we should approach- tentatively and cautiously- but never seek to fully appropriate (Ware, 2004). Theirs is a form of 'undetermined messianic hope' (Derrida, 1994, pg. 35), a messiah-less messianism that doesn't anticipate any single agent of history (Latour et al, 2018) but mobilizes in answer to the ethical pull of heterogenous, threatened Earth 'others' (discussed below) amid the exigencies of the now.

Somewhat paradoxically, however, neither do REA's evince a wholly contentless messianicity (Derrida 1994, pg. 35). At times, the enduring eco-apocalyptic imaginaries that pervade REA sensibilities serve to extinguish the undetermined messianic promise of the future-to-come by proclaiming the inevitability of wholesale eco-catastrophe, a move that effects a closure of the heterogenous 'Not-Yet' and denies the recalcitrant nature of reality. However, in other instances, their striving for 'justice'- not only for those presently living and those 'who are no longer', but also 'those who are '*not yet present and living*' (Derrida 1994, pg. xiv)- results in their attempts to assign *some* content to conceptualizations of the 'better' and the 'Not-Yet' (Chapters Five & Seven). Moreover, they are unequivocal about their concrete desires for an abundant future, and vehemently resist a 'Not-Yet' devoid of life in its multifarious manifestations, therefore ultimately affirming *a* desired 'future-to-come'. For Derrida (1994) attempting to do so instantly engenders a shift from heterogenous and irreducible justice towards 'law' which attempts to reify and codify relations, therefore undermining true respect for the irreducible alterity of the 'other' (Derrida 1998, pg. 18; Ware 2004). However, though we should remain open to the surprise of new alliances and the other's singularity, deliberations surrounding how to live well together require some degree of closure, otherwise we would never succeed in knowing what a better world *could* look like (Latour, 2004, Pg. 111). In other words, as denoted in Chapter Two, despite the limitations and violent exclusions effected by boundary delineations, the exigencies of Anthropocene crises render it existentially as well as ethically crucial for *some degree* of determinateness around desired alternatives without closing the door entirely on heterogeneity. It is not enough merely to think the *possibility* of the future as an event without thinking the event as such (Derrida 1995, pg. 49); indeed, this is what many REA's ultimately reject. Despite the lack of attempts at precisely delineating the indistinct 'future-to-come', the latter features prominently in REA conceptualizations and mobilizations- as a source of anxiety, mourning, as well as boundless potentiality. Below, the particular effects of loss and mourning of Earth kin on REA modalities of hope are further explored.

<u>Grieving the Widespread Loss of Earth Kin: REAs' Critical Modalities of Hope</u>

"To bear witness to ecological losses personally, or to the suffering encountered by others as they bear their own losses, is to be reminded that climate change is not just an abstract scientific concept. Rather, it is the source of much hitherto unacknowledged emotional and

psychological pain, particularly for people who remain deeply connected to, and observant of, the natural world" (Cunsolo & Ellis 2018, pg. 279).

Our perturbed times of climate chaos and mass extinctions have been linked to a consequent proliferation of mental health ills such as depression, anger, distress, sadness, anxiety, and hopelessness (Cunsolo & Ellis 2018, pg. 275) amongst increasingly wider sections of the global population. Hence the term 'ecological grief', denoting grief over actual and anticipated ecological loss- of species, whole ecosystems, cherished landscapes, times characterized by relative stability, and of once anticipated futures that might no longer be for many (Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018). Ecological grief seems to particularly affect REA's because of their uniquely profound kinship ties to the more-than-human world (see below), on whom such losses weigh continuously and keenly (Chapter Five). As such, ecological grief has further moulded their already strained relationships to hope and the 'Not-Yet' in complex ways. However, as previously denoted, those who claim to have disavowed hope or even actively resist it amidst widespread socio-ecological collapse nevertheless cite an ineffable 'something' (i.e., the demands of justice, the ethical pull of the threatened 'other', etc.) that continues to mobilize their actions and orientations towards a better 'to-come'. Others have documented this notable tension amongst REA's- a dialectical interplay between a form of contingent hope which vaguely speculates that *something better* might arise out of the ashes of the old and dystopian portents of apocalyptic doom (Taylor 1995; 2010; Lee, 1995; Pike, 2016). As explored in Chapter Seven, some REAs' active distancing from hope appears largely rooted in a rejection of its traditional association with the 'Not-Yet' as located in a distant futurity, of a disembodied or abstract as opposed to a concrete modality of hope (Bloch 1986), hence their repeated emphases on the need to live and embody alternatives within the 'Now'. Such an orientation is indicative of the grounded heterotopia's acute scepticism surrounding future-oriented projections that, in casting their gaze to distant eras wherein society's ills have already been resolved, lack the crucial element of praxis and risk losing sight of the necessity to resist the 'Now' by creating spaces of alterity within it where the 'Not-Yet' might be enacted'. Moreover, what many seem to be critiquing is not only hope's temporal displacement but the "taken-for-granted *tendency*" towards hope (Gerlach 2017, pg. 335) that can overshadow potentially more nuanced understandings of the deficient 'Now', as well as one's complicity in it.

"Instead of speaking of hope, we would have to explore a rather subtle way of 'dis-hoping'; this doesn't mean 'despairing' but, rather, not trusting in hope alone as a way of engaging with passing time" (Latour 2017, pg. 13).

Duggan & Muñoz's (2009) 'critical modality of hope' offers a useful lens for more thoroughly assessing REAs' relations to hope, the heterogenous 'other' and the future-to-come amid the Anthropocene. In hope's critical modality, hope and hopelessness are conceived not in a rigidly oppositional but rather in dialectical relation to one another, wherein crucially, the opposite state of hope is not hopelessness *per se* (Lazarus 1999) but complacency (Duggan & Muñoz 2009). When *all* hope fails, and being itself is perceived as meaningless, "there is *nothing but despair [italics added]*", which can in turn morph into complacency in the face of the looming prospects of climatic and biological annihilation (Lazarus 1999, pg. 654). Yet, REA's vehemently and unanimously repudiate complacency and passivity; many are hopeless, indeed, but hopeless in the narrow sense of recovering *specific* loss- of cherished and departed kin, of a benignly unfolding future, etc. (Lazarus 1999, pg. 660). Critical modalities of hope (Duggan & Muñoz 2009), on the other hand, are beyond complacency and denial, wherein grief- at widespread loss of life and the very loss of the 'Not-Yet' as previously conceived- is *actively* confronted (Head 2016) and of a 'collective and insurgent' sort. Belonging and

alliances on the basis of a shared dissent in relation to the deficiencies of the 'Now' (Chapter Five), coupled with shared negative feelings such as cynicism, despair, and grief, are 'critically redeployed' (Duggan & Muñoz 2009, Pg. 278; Pike 2016) towards a fervent refusal of the 'Now' and its myriad injustices. What's more, as some REA's suggested in Chapter Five, the 'depersonalizing effects' of exposure to trauma (in the form of the systematic eradication of cherished Earth kin) appears to engender an erasure of "ego boundaries, which is the source of both pain and potentially energetic reactions" (Braidotti 2015, pg. 51). Exhibiting a form of affirmative ethical subjectivity that is considerably non-unitary, relational and immanent (see below), many REA's disrupt negative emotional patterns of repetition and transform the 'negative charge' of grief and trauma into action (Braidotti 2015, pg. 51) in the form of resistance against the 'Now'. More than this, out of the endurance and critical redeployment of negative feelings comes not only action in the form of resistance but also the (utopian) creation of new social conditions and relations (Braidotti 2015, pg. 52).[73] [74]

Why is it that REA's grieve so intensely over the loss of badgers, foxes, hedgehogs, and myriad other life forms, when the extinction of non-human lifeforms rarely registers as a phenomenon of sizeable ethical significance for many of the world's multitudes? The following observation by Latour (et al, 2018) sheds some light:

> "When you have to defend your own life or goods you don't need a long time to be convinced by an argument, you just do it. Why is this not the case when you defend your Earth? Because you don't own it. It is outside you. The only question is figuring out how we can shift this from outside to inside; the former being synonymous with passivity, and the latter with energy and mobilization" (Pg. 358)

REA's exhibit unusually deep kinship bonds with Earth others (Chapter Five), wherein concern for their wellbeing appears to have been internalized to the extent that it fuels their fervent mobilizations on their behalf. REA's seem to feel so emotionally and socially 'at stake' in the lives of these Earth kin that their loss is experienced as no less than the 'severing of a social bond' (van Dooren, 2014, pg. 136). Recall Jellyfish's poignant observation during anti-whaling campaigns that his 'friends' were dying; such close-knit ties in turn translate into powerful emotional and physiological experiences of grief when they are destroyed (Rosaldo 1993, pg. 167; Cunsolo & Ellis 2018). Such grief is then critically redeployed to serve as a key factor motivating the activists' 'engagement beyond negativity' in their myriad strivings. A sense of being 'at stake' in meaningfully shared worlds (van Dooren, 2014 pg. 140) and conceiving of oneself as intimately implicated- socially, emotionally, ethically, existentially- in the lives of Earth others is what appears to stem from REA kinship bonds and the profound

[73] This would seem to support recent findings (Hornsey & Fielding 2016) that negative emotions help boost eco-crisis mitigation motivations and feelings of efficacy. Hope, though still positively correlated with mitigation motivation has been found to have a much weaker relation to it by reducing risk perceptions of eco-crises and thereby increasing complacency. The authors conclude that the findings "are consistent with one reading of fantasy realization theory (Oettingen & Chromik 2018): if people focus entirely on a desired future and do not contrast that future with a negative current reality the effect can be counter-productive in terms of working toward that future. An implication of this is that hope-filled messages about change would need to be balanced with active reminders of the negative current reality" (Pg. 32). Hence the indispensability of contrasts between utopian projections and the deficient 'Now'.

[74] Hope undoubtedly serves as a potent catalyst for social change through, among other things, heightening perceived efficacy to change the status quo (Greenaway et al, 2016, pg. 3).

grief experienced at the departure (deemed premature and unjust) of such cherished kin. Van Dooren (2014) further enquires: "What does it mean that, in this time of incredible loss, there is so little public (and perhaps also private) mourning for extinctions?" (Pg. 140). He suggests by way of a response that at the core of this pervasive apathy, which also featured as a core REA diagnostic theme in Chapter Six, is an inability to grasp the multiple connections between ourselves and Earth others, an orientation that can partially be explained by the still dominant paradigm of human exceptionalism (van Dooren 2014, pg. 141; Plumwood 2009). REA's, in light of their deep kinship bonds with other species and the wider earth system, categorically refute and, though they don't always succeed in doing so, strive to dismantle hierarchical and dualistic constructions of the human-animal-nature relationship. Lacking such human-exceptionalist views and bolstered by high valuation of- and a sense of intimate entanglement with- the wider nonhuman world, REA's feel compelled to go to extraordinary lengths to prevent its further decline.

The loss of singular earth kin seems to be experienced by REA's as not merely the end of *a* world but *an* end of *the* world in the Derridean sense (Derrida 2005b,e). That is, each living being- from mycelia to California redwoods and sperm whales- represents a singular origin of existence, a singular patterning that constructs our one and only world, and thus interrupts our own. Though we share in common with earth others a finite mortality and embodied earthly habitation, these singular worlds can never be wholly appropriated by us and, crucially, can never be recouped once lost. This is what distinguishes a tractor from a California redwood tree, particularly for REA's; The latter alone represents a singular and therefore irreplaceable patterning in the world (Fritjof 1996), hence the distinctly ethical pull that such singular entities exert on us. Precisely what is lost when an entire species passes from the world (van Dooren 2014, pg. 4)? Not merely the epistemological or quantifiable loss of biodiversity, or the mere departure of a 'fixed' population of organisms marked by the death of its last living member, as with the death of Sudan in March 2018, the last living male northern white rhinoceros, leaving his daughter and granddaughter as the final remnants of a doomed lineage (BBC, 2018; van Dooren, 2014, pg. 39). For van Dooren (2014, pg. 27), species are 'embodied intergenerational achievements', whereby individuals exist as singular entities situated in complex co-evolutionary spatial-temporalities that extend from their past descendants on through the now and towards futures of infinite potentiality and diversity (in a Blochean sense). In other words, a single individual spans inconceivably vast spatial-temporal distances as the 'knot' in time uniting all those who have preceded it, their uniquely embodied adaptations and modes of living in the 'Now', and those who might branch forth in innumerably possible assemblages thereafter. What the extinction of a species constitutes, then, is something far more significant than one might initially conceive: extinction entails the slow and irrecuperable unravelling of life ways and entanglements with a multiplicity of other organisms- situated in unique geographical spatial-temporalities- extending from the past on through the present and to-come. What's more, such loss effects a permanent disruption of their intricate entanglements with myriad other unique beings (van Dooren, 2014) situated in particular evolutionary communities, taking place within- and exerting immeasurable impacts upon- relations with others; it is the loss, in effect, of ethical-political relations, and as such, to mourn and act to prevent further loss is a profoundly political act (Stanescu 2012). It is the sheer enormity of this kind of loss, exacerbated by our common though differential complicity in it, that exerts a powerful ethical pull on us (van Dooren, 2014, pg. 39)- especially REA's- to intervene in order to stem the tides of contemporary annihilation.

Kinship ties to- and grief over- Earth others do not wholly vanish along with their departure from earthly existence. From an evolutionary perspective the very capacity to grieve the loss of an *other* is a biosocial achievement developed through millennia of co-evolving and living in intimate relation with others (Archer 2003; van Dooren, 2014). Similarly, from a psychological perspective, grief is no mere fleeting emotion but a complex and protracted process by which one engages and comes to terms with loss (Lazarus 1999, Pg.656). Traditional psychoanalytic accounts of mourning advise that we relive and then relinquish our memories of the dead (Freud 1984). However, as with van Dooren (2014), for Derrida (1995a) the death and mourning of *an other* (particularly beloved kin), and extinction more broadly, are distinctly ethico-political phenomena because they are thoroughly constitutive of self-other relations; that is, both life and death are thoroughly relational affairs that implicate multispecies worlds or assemblages (Dastur 1996; van Dooren 2014). Mourning in the Derridean sense entails not an abandonment of the departed, cherished other but an active affirmation of their unsubstitutible 'otherness', of our enduring connection with them, and our broader connection to some sense of a beyond (Derrida 1986, pg. 85; 1995a; Kirkby 2006, pg. 464). Herein there is no possibility of permanently severing ties to the dead in order to reconnect to the world of the living (Freud 1984) because death is the very "concrete structure of the living present" (Derrida 2016, pg. 70-71). In other words, the dead are simultaneously within and constitutive of us as well as beyond us (Dastur 1996; Nancy 2002), as our own speech and life-worlds are always laced with traces[75] of those who have lived before us (Kirkby 2006, pg. 467). As such the border between life and death always remains "open and ultimately interminable" (Derrida 1995, pg. 78). Similarly, for Bloch (1986) the tendencies of materiality are forever precariously suspended between better and worse modes of being, between the deficient 'Now' and luminous 'Not-Yet'. This yields an enduring connection to a sense of loss and suffering (Levinas 1998) and, crucially, an acute attentiveness (Bloch, 1986) to a simultaneous resistance against misery and access *through* misery to revolt (Anderson 2006, pg. 701). Through REAs' critical modalities of hope, grief and mourning over the lingering absence of presence- and presence of absence- of cherished and irreplaceable earth kin[76] are interpreted as a call to revolt against the 'Now' and primary forces that are fuelling the tides of loss.

REAs' strained relationships to hope's more optimistic dimensions might also be posited as the result of attempting to situate oneself and come to grips with the event horizon of our *collective* 'ceasing to be' that Anthropocene crises portend (Haas 2016, pg. 287). For Derrida (1976, pg. 5) the 9/11 terrorist attacks constituted a true event in the sense that they were without precedent, thus shattering notions of an ordered world and benignly unfolding future whose horizon could be more or less predictably delineated (Wood, cited in Fritsch et al 2018, pg. 38). Similarly, Anthropocene crises effect such a "disintegration of our horizons of significance and possibility", at times a "complete dissolution of meaningful horizons" (Toadvine, cited in Fritsch et al 2018, pg. 57; Treanor, 2018) and, crucially, embody a unique terror of the worst deemed yet-to-come. For REA's, this is widescale biological annihilation. Life in the form of extremophiles, for instance- organisms that thrive in places with extreme temperatures, anaerobic, and radioactive environments- will go on, as well as other organisms that adapt to the paroxysms and perturbations of an increasingly inhospitable world. But

[75] 'Trace' or *différance* is alterity as such, the differential, self-individuating, prelinguistic (genetic) structural condition of life itself- vegetable, animal, cultural- that precedes the very distinction between *being* and *beings* [emphasis added] (Fritsch et al, 2018, pg. 9) and which also remains as exteriority within the 'new' or other.

[76] "The first day after a death, the new absence is always the same; we should be careful of each other, we should be kind while there is still time" (Larkin in Muldoon 1998, pg. 158).

ourselves and, crucially, countless singular Earth others who are our co-evolutionary kin will likely no longer be. This is where the significance of grief and mourning over the actual and looming 'ceasing-to-be' of cherished Earth kin plays a central role in REAs' relationship to an ecotopian 'Not-Yet' and in motivating their continued strivings; what they mourn is the loss of a future devoid of life in its myriad manifestations. Put another way, and as alluded to in Chapter Six, what REA's actively strive against- not only for themselves but crucially for others- is 'utopia' in its pejorative sense, the good place that is no place, in this instance the 'ultimate nowhere of non-being' (Clark in Davis & Kinna 2009, pg. 9). In this vein, REA's frequently speak of an active engagement with and affirmation of grief, the departed, and those not-yet gone. This modality of mourning features an engagement with the externalized memory of the unsubstitutible 'other' and takes place via a future-oriented enactment of responsibility to the other (Derrida 1986; Kirkby 2006). One can posit REA's as engaged in a fervent resistance against a totally foreclosed futurity, in an ongoing effort to avow their responsibility to 'restore the other's futurity' (Diprose 2007, pg. 442) which, though never fully determinable, should consist at the very least of the absence of the systematic eradication of life's rich assemblages.

The aforementioned discussion suggests that hope and delineations of the 'Not-Yet' during times of extreme duress do not disappear altogether but, rather, are radically reconfigured- in this case into the critical, concrete modalities of hope exhibited by REA's. It is critique enacted via an embodied sense that the 'Now' is woefully insufficient, cannot be sustained, and that there are *other ways* (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009)- in the form of radical spaces of alterity within the 'Now'- that must be co-constructed and experimented with. Furthermore, a core element of this critical and concrete hope as shared revolutionary feeling is an 'expansive sociality' which draws on the energy of a shared collectivity (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, Pg. 279). Recall that in Chapter Five the support, animating strength, and powerful sense of solidarity derived from involvement in the REA community was a key factor sustaining their activism. What's more, the 'expansive sociality' in the case of REA's refers not only to their activist networks but, crucially, to their intimate kinship bonds with Earth others with whom they feel ethically, emotionally, and socio-politically entangled, and therefore whose loss is experienced as a profoundly moving phenomenon sparking an access through grief to revolt. They revolt against the 'Now' in order to "save what can be saved so as to open up some kind of future" (Camus & Macdonald 1972, pg. 5), ideally a 'future-to-come' devoid of widespread loss. Hence, it would appear that hope traditionally conceived is not the only, nor necessarily even the most powerful, resource protecting against a wholesale descent into nihilistic despair amidst eco-dystopian conditions (Lazarus 1999, pg. 656). Herein, the concrete and critical utopian impulse- in the form of a dialectical interplay between hope and a 'negative energetic' hopelessness- finds its refuge and draws strength to continue in its formidable challenges to the status quo. Ecotopia as manifested by REA's lives in the interstices, at the intersection of dread and hope (Kirksey et al 2013), wherein conceptualizations of the 'Not-Yet' can be enacted. Below REA ecotopian strivings and the elusive content of a potential future-to-come, in particular the desired nature of inter-actant relations in coming ecotopian collectives, are further explored largely through the lens of Latourian cosmopolitics (2004) and Derridean (1999; 2000; 2005d) hospitality.

Self-Other Relations in Coming Ecotopian Collectives

"Democracy can only be conceived if it can freely traverse the now-dismantled border between science and politics, in order to add a series of new voices to the discussion, voices that have been inaudible up to now, although their clamour pretended to override all debate: the voices

of nonhumans. To limit the discussion to humans, their interests, their subjectivities, and their rights, will appear as strange a few years from now as having denied the right to vote of slaves, poor people, or women" (Latour 2004, g. 69).

Political and cosmopolitical discourses in the Western humanist tradition, in their denial of humans' ethico-political responsibilities to non-humans in light of the purportedly insurmountable ontological divide between them (Plumwood 2002; Rose 2012), have often excluded the non-human and posited humans as 'the centre of the cosmopolitan universe' (Pepper 2016, pg. 116). In contrast, many REA's along with others in the post-humanist tradition (Plumwood 2002; Latour 2004; Woolfe 2010; Rose 2012) variedly gesture towards the urgency of a nonhierarchically organized 'cosmopolitical interconnectivity' (Pohl 2019, pg. 71), and assert that it is our *ethical duty* to live *well* and *justly* with earth others. This task is rendered doubly challenging- yet all the more pressing- amid the widespread upheavals and entanglements that characterise the present, and it is what deliberations around the nature of self-other relations in ecotopian communities variedly seek to address. Both Latour (2004; 2017) and Derrida (2003a,c; 2005d) variedly critique and deconstruct boundaries in relation to potential ecotopias-to-come and the inter-actant relations that could (and should) constitute them. Ideal societies can never be fully actualized in any present because of the future's irreducible 'otherness' which can never be known in its entirety, and because exclusions- on the basis of race, gender, class, species, etc.- always remain and demand inclusion in an always-ongoing process of deliberation and expansion of the collective. Thought steps in the direction of the 'better' should nevertheless be taken, namely, by critically reflecting upon, deconstructing and expanding the collective 'we' that constitutes the demos in order to include actants that had previously been excluded, and to radically rethink the 'ought' of how we live together. Derrida's (2003a, c) conception of a 'democracy-to-come' features a striving for a global cosmopolitical alliance that "extends beyond the internationality of nation-states and thus beyond citizenship" (Pg.124). His concept of a 'democracy-to-come' serves the decidedly utopian critical function of highlighting the myriad ways in which present 'democratic' modalities remain 'inadequate to democratic demand'- specifically demand by multiplicities of nonhumans (Derrida, 2005c, pg. 86). Similarly, Latour's (2004) conception of the collective 'we' traverses multiple dimensions in its ceaseless aim to include previously excluded actants who must be treated as ends in themselves (Pg. 156), yet one that is always rooted in a particular territorial space. Two crucial and inseparable queries that follow with respect to coming collectives include the epistemological one concerning (1) how many actants there are to take into account, and (2) the ethical (or utopian) one of what the best of possible worlds *ought* to consist of (Latour 2004, Pg. 93).

The *ought* concerning 'living well' with others for REA's and many literary ecotopias is a site of deliberation and contention, wherein at times boundary delineations- between human and nonhuman dwelling spaces (Chapter Seven), animals and plants, etc.- are dualistically constructed. Yet more often than not, the alternative (and more ethically desirable) modes of relationality that they envision often entail posthumanist transitions away from ontologies of separation and epistemologies of domination towards dialogical interactions and partnerships predicated on negotiation and, crucially, marked by openness, tolerance, empathy and respect for the 'other's difference' (Plumwood 1995, Pg. 159; 2010, pg. 123). Hence their allusions to more direct-democratic modes of governance, political participation and interpersonal interactions more generally as most conducive to the development of the aforementioned desired characteristics (Plumwood 1995). Captain's vision of a world populated by multispecies assemblages of beings, some with feathers, some with scales, ad infinitum (Chapter Seven) recall's Donna Haraway's (2015) concept of the 'Chthulucene', which points

to how in this era of entangled spatial-temporalities the ethical imperative is to learn to collaborate and live with other terrestrials so as to make possible the flourishing of Earth's rich multispecies assemblages (Pg. 160); in citing the ethical imperative of making 'kin' with these myriad Earth others in the Chthulucene, Haraway (2015) gestures beyond the somewhat limited understanding of 'kinship' exhibited by some REA's who occasionally prioritise a being's cognitive, etc. likeness to us, and towards a recognition of the fact that we are all earthlings with a shared mortality and thus are all kin 'in the deepest sense' (Pg. 162). Proceeding from the recognition that we are all in a sense kin, the task then becomes to carefully and painstakingly chart who we find ourselves dwelling with in particular spatial-temporal localities, and how best to live with them (Latour 2004; 2017).

Derrida's (Derrida & Dufourmantelle 2000; 2005b,d) work on hospitality is useful for further unpacking underlying tensions regarding who is included in and excluded from the cosmopolitical communitie(s)-to-come, as well as ethical modes of relationality within and between them. Hospitality in the Derridean sense is no separate realm of ethics but *is* ethics itself manifest spatially as the conditions governing how we live together and relate to one another (Morin 2015). Yet hospitality harbours internal tensions and contradictions; there is violent exclusion implied in the supposed control and mastery over what one takes to be one's home in the act of extending hospitality. Hospitality as ethics in its unconditional or absolute form is an *a priori* promise in relation to the 'other' that is not tied to any conditional notions such as right, law, debt, or duty; in effect, it is bound by no laws or limitations (Derrida 2003c; Westmoreland 2008, pg. 3). However, 'absolute hospitality' is inherently paradoxical and self-defeating because ethics as systematic code inevitably "breaks down under the strains of singular responsibility", or ethics as necessarily practiced in particular contexts by finite and historically situated beings. As such, ethics "as singular responsibility (in the Levinasian sense), is impossible because it involves an unconditionality that is untenable" (Attridge, cited in McQuillan 2007, pg. 62). This aporia is what renders infinite and equal ethical responsibility to singular others ultimately 'impossible' in any political instantiation, as the latter necessarily entails a form of calculating responsibility that must take account of various 'others', weigh myriad various interests and concerns, and ultimately erect boundaries between a collective's inside and outside. Regarding the latter, hospitality therefore often manifests as a welcoming of expected guests and hostility towards the unwelcome or unanticipated 'other'. Though neither is complete closure possible, as there is always an unforeseen strange 'other' who arrives (or intrudes upon the self, the familiar, etc.) either by force, surprise, or deception (Nancy & Hanson 2002; Latour, 2004), hence the ultimately permeable and provisional nature of all boundaries. Ethical relationality and responsibility to the 'other' perhaps can never be indiscriminately open; in our necessarily finite interactions with singular others there is always some degree of violent exclusion, always someone who is left out (Westmoreland 2008, pg. 3). However, it is nevertheless necessary to strive towards instantiations of the ethical and political which most closely approximate justice, as REA's continuously assert. For Latour (2004), the vital task of the moralist is to continuously alert the expanding collective as to who is left out:

> *"For them [moralists], the collective is always trembling because it has left outside all that it needed to take into account to define itself as a common world. A spider, a toad, a mite, a whale's sigh, these are perhaps what have made us fall short of full and entire humanity, unless it was some unemployed person, some teenager on a street in Djakarta, or perhaps it was some black hole, forgotten by everyone, at the edge of the universe, or a newly discovered planetary system" (Pg. 158).*

This is precisely what REAs' and ecotopian text's deconstructive moves attempt to critically reflect upon on externalities and, crucially, the right of existing collective members to decide the fate of those not-yet-arrived. As denoted in Chapter 5, the who/what is taken into account and whose agency is recognised includes a great many more entities than has traditionally been the case. Though, like the open-ended utopianism of REA's that never reaches a final end state, the collective never succeeds in taking all into account, though it should never cease in its attempts to do so. In the spirit of utopianism, the aim is to strive towards and instantiate, as best we can, *better* modes of being, which is a never-ending process. In Le Guin's (1985) *Always Coming Home* one encounters a world brimming with purposive agency (see Chapter Seven), whose rich cosmological system referred to as the 'Nine Houses of Being' includes:

> *"the 'five houses of the earth', which includes the earth, moon, rocks, landforms, fresh waters, individual animals, humans currently living, plants used by humans, domestic and ground-living birds, and domestic animals (Le Guin, 1985, pg. 46); the 'four houses of the sky' include most birds, sea fish, wild animals not hunted for food, plants or animals considered as species or in general, the human race, the dead and unborn, beings in stories or dreams, the oceans, sun, and stars" (Le Guin, 1985, pg. 47; 307).*

As with many REA's, the abyssal ontological divide (Heidegger 1983, pg. 384) between human and non-human others is considerably bridged, and considerable strides made towards moving beyond the constitution of other beings through their perceived lack in relation to human Dasein (Plumwood 2002; Elden 2006, pg. 280). Even more intriguing, however, is the virtually boundless reach of the Kesh collective which spans across spatial and temporal scales from the past-present to the future-to-come. In Derridean fashion the Kesh include the departed, the ('to-come') unborn, spectral entities in 'dreams and stories' as members of the broader collective, who are welcomed unconditionally (as integral components of rather than mere arrivants) because one cannot fully anticipate the nature of spectral beings or beings to-come. Elsewhere, the Cartesian subject/object divide (Baker & Morris 2005) appears to re-emerge when certain beings are posited as *either* seen *or* seeing, thinking *or* thought, as with the division between 'wild' and 'domestic' animals into the 'Houses' of the earth and sky. Similarly, an ordering is clearly in place in the distinction between domestic and wild species, for instance, wherein one detects a sense of 'nature' as wholly 'other' (Garforth 2005). Nevertheless, in the novel non-human others are, broadly speaking, not conceptualized antagonistically or as lack in relation to humans, but as equally consequential, agentic (recall Delfin's ruminations on oceanic agency in Chapter Five), who are not merely acted upon or spoken to but who react and speak in turn. Moreover, humans often are the ones to be welcomed by nonhuman others: "I felt light, lying at the side of a small clearing under old bay laurel trees, looking up at the star patterns; I began to float, to belong to the sky. So Coyote let me come into her House" (Pg. 20). Thus, the novel's human characters are not the only ones to police borders, to decide who is welcomed and on what basis. In Huxley's *Island* certain kinds of animals, such as dogs and parrots, are welcomed unconditionally into human spaces of habitation, while the relationship to chickens, for instance, is far more ambiguous and qualitatively distinct, designated as they are as *mere* food (Chapter Seven).

As we saw in Chapter Five, some REA's cited an animal or species' possession of certain characteristics- intelligence, degree of sentience, or ecological function- as a justification for its inclusion within the community of ethical subjects and as a motivational driver fuelling their activism. This amounts to a mode of 'ethical' relationality predicated on

the logic of 'sameness' that lacks respect or appreciation for the other *as other* (Plumwood 1995; Levinas 1995). Moreover, it suggests the presence of a conditional ethics of hospitality akin to the traditionally conditional hospitality of the state wherein the citizen, on the basis of right and law, is defined in at times antagonistic opposition to the foreign 'other' (Westmoreland 2008, pg. pg. 2). Many REA's *extend* traditional boundaries around who is welcomed and who matters- in particular on the basis of cognitive, emotional, etc. capabilities, ecological significance, etc.- but boundaries often remain and are implicitly if not explicitly 'policed'. This would appear to contravene the law of absolute hospitality which requires that one give one's all to the other without the imposition of conditions, restrictions, or requirement of compensation (impossible though this may ultimately be). For many other REA's, however, the boundary extends all the way to that which is alive, therefore more closely approximating unconditional ethical modalities, even though the latter ultimately entails the erection of yet another untenable binary between life and nonlife. For considerations around distributive justice, and ethics as such, perhaps priority should be given to actants exhibiting a capacity for well-being and flourishing, with an awareness of the considerable epistemological and methodological difficulties of assessing such capabilities. Negotiating ethical modes of relationality with hurricanes, for instance, is considerably more complex and perhaps ultimately unfeasible, though such entities should feature as active agents in any negotiations of the coming collectives. Furthermore, unlike with traditionally conditional modes of hospitality accompanied by laws articulated via a shared language, ethical encounters between REA's and animal 'others' (and between humans and animals more generally in some of the ecotopian texts) don't necessitate linguistic exchanges as a condition for hospitality. Thus, a central component of the standard conditionality of hospitality as ethics is absent in many REA and ecotopian text examples. Many REA (and many literary ecotopian) ethical encounters with other species feature a somewhat circumscribed welcoming of the irreducible 'other' often on the basis of a shared mortality and socio-evolutionary kindship bonds, and often an exclusion of heterogeneity in the form of non-living entities.

The very act of 'welcoming' can harbour violent exclusion, wherein it is presumed that 'we'- whether humanity alone or a more expansive collective- are cast as the rightful inhabitants at home in a place, and who can thus treat the 'arrivant' as an always-temporary 'guest' who must bend to its terms of co-habitation (Derrida 1999; van Dooren, 2014). Latour's (2004) conceptualization of the cosmopolitical collective-to-come thus affords a little too much primacy to the existing collective's right, and indeed capacity, to decide, pending compromise and accommodation, who and on what terms is to be 'welcomed'. The latter is predicated upon the degree to which new arrivals can harmoniously mesh with existing actants by finding their rightful place in the collective, and on *condition* that they don't fundamentally disrupt the already-existing order (Pg. 107-110; Morin 2015). The query, 'Can we live together?', is posited as the sacred duty of those in the already-established collective rather than something that might be equally posed by external others; thus, the collective's perimeter, however tentative, is still policed by those on the inside (Morin 2015, pg. 37). Moreover, determining who is host, guest, inside or outside of the collective, as with rigid dichotomies between 'self-identity' and 'absolute alterity' is not only ethically problematic but also ontologically dubious. In one sense, the radical singularity of each being as a world unto themselves renders it so that there is 'no world but only islands' separated by an unbridgeable gap (Derrida 2010, Pg. 31). Yet in another, there is no such thing as an island. Prior to the 'Self' and 'other' (Levinas 1995) is the unatomizable and multifarious 'we' as a 'being-in-common' of singularities (Nancy 2000); in other words, the purportedly sovereign 'Self' is *always already* a 'We' (Braidotti 2015). Consider the countless microorganisms in our gut that aid digestion and compose part of our skin as the very barrier differentiating the inside (*oikos*) of the 'human subject' from the

outside, as well as the hundreds of thousands of fragments (or traces) of ancient viral DNA mixed with our own (Emerman & Malik 2010; Wood in Fritsch et al, 2018, pg. 43) (recall Chapter Five). In Latourian terms we *are* our alliances with others, and the human 'self' like all others is thoroughly constituted by multi-actant entanglements. Our DNA, the structure of our skin, and all other aspects of our 'selves' bear the traces of others, highlighting the extent to which the 'self' and subjectivity are always a relational. As such it becomes difficult to even speak of an 'outside', for the 'external is always internal to each entity' (Oppermann 2018, pg. 14). Likewise, the perimeter of the collective is similarly porous and unstable.

It is here where Latour (2004) as well as some REA's fail to direct sufficient attention to the undemocratic and unethical implications of exclusions resulting from boundary delineations (Watson 2014). When he ruminates on what obliges one to "reserve the water of the river Drome for fish as opposed to using it to irrigate corn fields subsidized by Europe", the answer doesn't merely lie in whether or not we've taken into account all entities affected by such an act (2004, pg. 198) or in considering how excluding fish, for example, will affect the existing collective. Latour (2004) notes that in such instances morality should change direction, from residing in foundational ethical precepts to lying ahead in a continuous process of registering the 'appeal of excluded entities' (Pg. 198). Yet, I would venture to posit that something is lost here that is essential to truly ethical modes of relationality (Plumwood 1995; Derrida 2003c; 2005b; 2005c): consideration for the singular, irreducible 'other' *as such*, with whom we co-exist in-relation and to whom we are ethically responsible, as well as for that/whom which might arrive without prior notice and therefore which surprises us. It is not enough merely to 'register' the 'appeal of excluded entities'. Such an approach doesn't go far enough in dismantling rigid 'Self/Other' and 'Us vs. Them' dynamics (Nancy 2000). Crucially, depriving the *other* (fish) of water, or excluding any appellant for that matter, constitutes an ethical wrong because the *fish* needs water in order to survive and thrive. This is precisely the message that REA's, pulled as they are by the irresistible ethical appeal of the other, strive to bring to the forefront: that truly ethical modes of relationality require that we attend to the wellbeing and perspectives of the other *as such* and on their terms, rather than on the basis of ultimately self-regarding concerns over whether our treatment of them might negatively impact *us*. Latour's (2004) cosmopolitics (indeed any articulation of the better), though gesturing towards more pluralistic conceptions of the 'we', would benefit from a more utopian openness to the heterogenous and unforeseen other, whose arrival, as the unanticipated excess that disrupts the 'Now', harbours vital transformative potential. Moreover, Latourian (2004) cosmopolitics perhaps should be supplemented with more nuanced ethical considerations such as those that arise from Plumwood's (2003) theory of ecological animalism (see Chapter Seven), which urges that we treat others as *with* and not *for* us, that others enable our lives and that without them, as Latour (2004) himself reminds us, we cannot be. Moreover, a Derridean overemphasis on the unbridgeable singularity of each being risks overshadowing the dynamic interrelationality that constitutes them and their shared terrestrial dwelling place.

Conclusion: Towards an Affirmative Post-Human Politics

"We need to actively and collectively work toward a refusal of horror and violence—the inhuman aspects of our present—and to turn this into the construction of affirmative alternatives" (Braidotti 2015, pg. 52).

Despite occasionally reproducing hierarchical and dualistic constructs of human-animal-nature relations and thereby neglecting to respect nonhuman 'otherness' as such, REA's go to great lengths in trying to fulfil their ethical responsibilities to Earth kin, and often affirm

a relational 'self' entangled with multiplicities of others. Their fragmented yet consistent references to *a* potential ecotopia-to-come allude to how some sense of futurity serves to partially structure their strivings in the 'Now', namely through their desire for abundant futures. They demonstrate- via the ambiguities surrounding the nature and extent of their 'other' valuation- the tensions and inconsistencies that inevitably arise when one attempts to articulate and justify ethical responsibility towards singular 'others' and, indeed, impose and police boundaries altogether. This project's findings reveal the importance of interrogating bounds of inclusion/exclusion- beyond the human, logocentrism, etc.- (Elden 2006) throughout the essential yet necessarily messy task of co-constructing "more vibrant, collective, ecological, and hospitable" common worlds (Watson 2014, pg. 86) amid the precarious present and future-to-come. What's more, the ultimate impossibility of fulfilling unconditional ethical responsibility, hospitality and precise delineations of the heterogenous future-to-come shouldn't be an excuse for not attempting to, however imperfectly, put ethics and hospitality into practice via ecotopian strivings towards the better (Watson 2014, pg. 83). Similarly, the deconstruction of exclusionary boundaries and hierarchies of power, though essential, isn't enough; utopian strivings (and ethics itself) must also engage in imaginative reconfigurations of socioeconomic structures and modes of relationality. Despite the particular indecipherability of the 'Not-Yet' amid Anthropocene ecological breakdown, REA's make concerted efforts not only at resisting further decline- driven largely by powerful bonds to Earth kin and critically redeployed grief over their unjust departure- but towards living and instantiating the 'better' within the 'Now'. Though featuring some exclusions- indeed, as discussed above, there will always be someone/something 'left out' of ethical and political delineations- REAs' ecotopian projections are still far more inclusive than, for instance, the 'utopia' of neoliberal capitalism which reserves 'the good life' for an increasingly minute proportion of the Earth's inhabitants (Sargent 2006). Amongst the novels examined throughout, Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985) offers a decidedly post-anthropocentric vision of an expansive ecotopian collective, wherein the Kesh no longer feature as the primary Earth movers but rather exist in a world populated by numerous agentic persons- human, nonhuman, living and non-living- with whom they must continuously interact and negotiate.

The themes and findings discussed throughout this project are especially pertinent in light of recent events such as the boundary-defying COVID-19 pandemic. This microscopic actant has managed to effect such widespread havoc in the form of mass deaths and socioeconomic upheavals as to bring life as many (particularly in the West) have known it to a virtual standstill. Some preliminary investigations into the origins of the virus suggest that it might have come from pangolins (Zhang et al 2020), the world's most trafficked mammal, highlighting the inextricable links between the systematic annihilation of biodiversity, ecological despoliation, and human health, and human-nonhuman entanglements more broadly. What's more, COVID-19 is likely to be the first of many new and potentially more deadly infectious diseases to emerge from climate and ecological breakdown. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 has had one curious and decidedly utopian effect: it has revealed the profound inadequacies of- and shattered faith in- neoliberal capitalism and market orthodoxy and, in light of unprecedented and highly effective state and community interventions in response to the virus, has catalysed a mass re-imagining of alternative futures (Mair 2020). As Anthropocene perturbations such as these in addition to droughts, wildfires, dwindling fresh water sources, declining crop yields, melting glaciers and rising seas- and the resulting socioeconomic and cultural blowback- intensify, 'living well together' will become increasingly challenging- yet all the more vital. How will communities and nations react to the arrival of hundreds of millions of human and nonhuman migrants on their shores in search of sustenance and habitable dwelling places? How will boundaries be reconfigured and policed,

and by whom? How, in effect, do we 'make kin' (Haraway 2015) amid these times? These are the sorts of queries that we will increasingly be forced to grapple with. As national and local boundaries become increasingly untenable in the face of rising seas, global pandemics, volatile climatic events and mass migrations, discussions surrounding who constitutes the collective 'we' and how we ought to relate to one another take on special significance and urgency. It is such timely considerations that REA ecotopian strivings, and the critical insights offered by post-structural and posthumanist scholarship (Braidotti 2013; Derrida 2016; Latour 2004; 2017; Plumwood 1995; 2002) help bring to the forefront through their varied allusions to the problematic and always-provisional nature of boundaries and hierarchies, and the necessarily relational nature the 'self'.

There are some limitations of the present work that future research might endeavour to shed further light on. As alluded to in Chapter Four, the participants featured are of overwhelmingly 'white' and middle-class backgrounds. This is something that has characterised environmental movements in the Global North for decades, and which remains a marked blind spot within them, wherein they still seem unable (and/or unwilling) to traverse and draw support from across class and racial lines, despite their intersectional critiques and awareness of the entanglement between social and environmental justice. REA's are of interest in part precisely because they exhibit deep kinship bonds with nonhuman others akin to those of many indigenous animist cosmologies (Plumwood 2002), and because they engage in such radical critiques of existing structures and onto-epistemological modalities of thought. Future research might seek to more thoroughly and critically investigate post-anthropocentric sensibilities and what 'living well together' entails for historically marginalised groups such as indigenous and working-class communities who often live at the front lines- and therefore bear the brunt of the effects- of ecological despoliation. Of particular interest might be the structural underpinnings of concern for/mobilisation on behalf of threatened nonhuman world, and especially contrasts and continuities between factors mobilising REA groups in the Global North and local, indigenous, etc. communities in the Global South (or variations of this as such neat categorisations don't hold in actuality). Within literary eco-critical studies, recent years have seen a proliferation of dystopian and utopian climate fiction ('cli-fi') works in response to the exigencies of climate and ecological breakdown (Milner et al 2015). Investigations of how such works frame the 'future-to-come' amid 'end times' of widespread upheavals, and how they construct nonhuman otherness and the concept of 'community' could prove especially pertinent.

Similarly, future research might seek more in-depth examinations (perhaps utilizing ethnographic methods in addition to interviews and document/textual analysis) of indigenous dystopian and utopian narratives, as groups that are not only thoroughly immersed within the 'end times' of Anthropocene climate and ecological crisis but which also have already lived through 'end times' imposed by colonial violence and Western hegemony. Future theoretical investigations might further seek to shed light on ways to conceptualise self/other and inter-collective dynamics in such a mode as to neither over-emphasize the singularity of individuals nor the interrelations that constitute each 'Self' and 'We'. However, tensions between the 'Self' and the 'other', the 'Now' and 'Not-Yet', and between the inside and outside of every collective will always persist. As such, as finite, historically situated subjects with necessarily limited perceptions of the 'world' and without full access to the 'worlds' of others, a suitable place to start might be to strive towards ways of living that are as devoid of oppression and unnecessary harm as possible, and which seek to respect and appreciate otherness as such, in addition to all that it adds to the quality of our collective existence. Utopianism amid the 'end times' is far from dead, nor has it exhausted its value; it continues to remind us that the shape of the to-

come is never wholly determined and that potentiality always abounds. On this note, I would like to close with an observation by Herbert Marcuse (1970): “Today we have the capacity to turn the world into hell, and we are well on the way to doing so. We also have the capacity to turn it into the opposite of hell” (pg. 1).

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Appendix A: Codes and Themes

Below is a complete list of themes, subthemes and codes with corresponding sample excerpts from the data. Within the graphic representations of data below, the size of the box corresponds to the strength/predominance of the code or subtheme in question. These are also layered hierarchically, so that the largest box corresponds to the most prominent subtheme/code.

Theme: Action Motivator- External (Network support & Wellbeing of Others)

Code: Participative Efficacy

- "And the other thing of course which motivates me personally a lot is to look back on the success which I already had. So, when I feel very unmotivated about it, when I feel like I'm not achieving anything, I basically just look at something which I have already achieved" (Shark).

Code: Support from Activist Community

- "...the badger cull is about to start and it's going to be really hard work, but I know that we'll work together and we've got each other's backs, like with sabbing there's such a feeling of comradery there, but it is meant to be beneficial for your overall mental health, being in activism, because it gives you agency and unity" (Dog).

Code: Urgency of Ecocrisis

- "I guess some of us see catastrophe; many people don't see catastrophe, and so that does give us a sense of urgency" (Meadow).

Subtheme1: Wellbeing of others (Nature & Nonhumans/Future generations)

- Code: Nature & Nonhumans- "…mainly I'm fighting for animals and for nature, and the rainforests" (Poseidon).

- Code: Future generations- "…if there are any future generations to look back at these times, what it looks like is that my generation don't fucking care about theirs. Like, we are just carrying on in our disconnect, enjoying our fucking privilege and our comfort, without any care for the fact that it's being stolen from their future. So, I am engaged with the possibility of behaving as if some people care about those yet to come" (Stonehenge).

Theme: Action Motivator- Internal (Need to Resist Loss and Injustice)

Code: Grief over widespread loss

- "It's scary stuff. In my own lifetime in what is one of the most privileged countries in the world, I've also seen the creep of the absence of life into this country, this island. So, hedgehogs, badgers, foxes, the birdlife…all these factors, again, they weigh on me" (Badger).

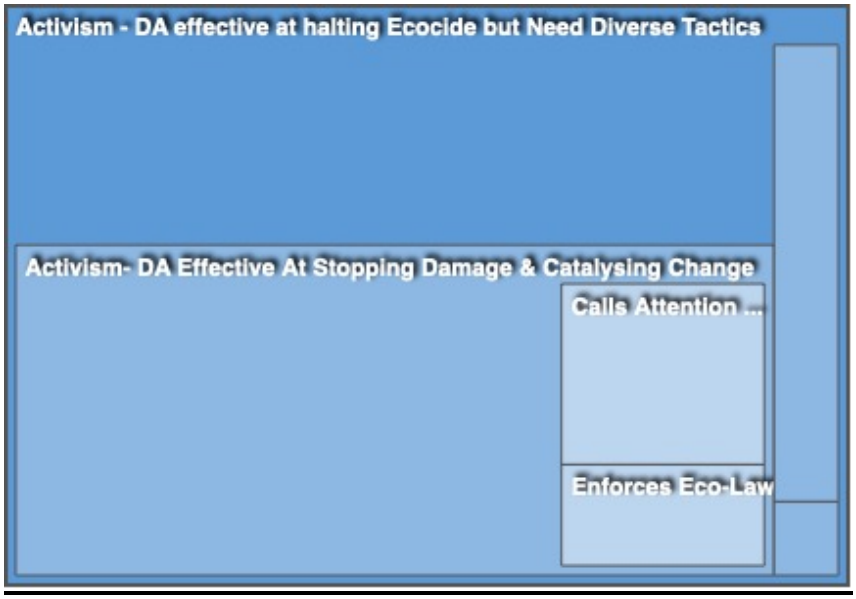
Code: Need to alleviate injustice

- "a sense of responsibility and justice, to do what seemed to me the right thing to do, and I don't know, this avenger-mania [lol] that things are not right and one has to take charge in order to make things right and not to remain still" (Delfin).

(Sub)Code/theme: Hope for a Better 'Not-Yet'

- "I just have to think about the beauty and the life that is and still can be saved, like, there's a lot of inertia in the system and positive feedback loops; there's stuff today that is lost already, really, but there's also so much that's around that can be saved if we all put ourselves to the task" (Atacama).

Theme: Activism- Direct-Action Effective but Need Diverse Tactics



Code: DA effective at halting eco-damage & catalyzing change

- "I prefer more radical campaign techniques. I understand it's a term we use [like] the Chinese proverb, 'Many fleas on a dog will bring that dog down', and if we didn't have people like Greenpeace who have staff in place that have the ears of MPs…and I think we need that structure, of course, to be able to get to the nitty gritty, because unfortunately we are run by a government with a voting system, and even though it's not entirely democratic, we realize that there is a lot of money that is pumped into politics to sway votes and to lobby, especially for, like, the fossil fuel industries. But, for me, I really do believe in non-violent direct-action. I actually think that we are past the point of campaigning on a less radical field. It really isn't getting us very far, you know. It's a journey that I think most activists will take, especially If I take the anti-fracking movement as an example. You start off thinking that you're going to change the world by going on a demo or signing a petition, and then when you see that all of these things that you do don't make a bit of difference, you kind of step it up, you know? You join a group, you go to meetings, you discuss about going around and having stalls, flyer-ing, and gathering awareness, and still it doesn't do anything. But then, when you start to lock-on to a machinery or you close down industries, or you mass-mobilize people, that's when people sit up and listen, and that's when the industries that are involved lose money. And that is what runs this whole planet, is money…and if you can attack that at the source, then you generally will start to achieve some winds" (Butterfly).

  (Sub)Code: DA helps enforce existing eco-laws

  - "…there's a need to get out there and police the oceans. The governments aren't doing it, you know? All of the science, all of the treaties, the agreements to protect the ocean are there and they're all in place, but there's nobody actually enforcing these agreements, and so that's where SS really has filled the void of being able to get out there and help countries, in particular on the continent of Africa where we're focusing a lot of our time now with illegal fishing" (Orca).

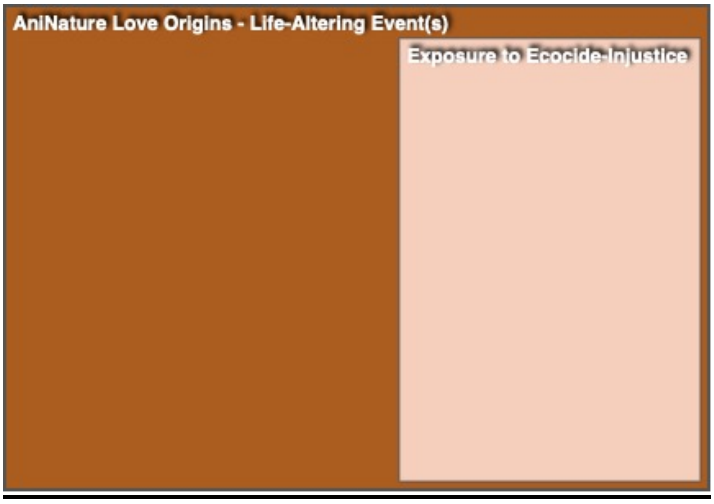
Code: Direct-Action (DA) limited effectiveness

- “I would say, of course, the movement needs everything- research to public work, to lobbying- but, like, having a direct-action part of the movement is something that can make it really, really multiply its effects and results” (Forest)

Code: From DA to broader social change

- “I do believe that fundamental change only comes about through mass mobilizing. I believe that change only comes about by a shift in public opinion, and that can be, like a very subtle, slow shift, but without necessarily activists driving it” (Meadow)

Theme: AniNature Love Origins- Life-Altering Event



Code: Exposure to ecocide

- “I then lived on and off in Africa for a few years, and saw first-hand first-hand the devastation from the gold mines in Ghana, and also the contamination of things like land mines all over Africa. I did bomb disposal while I was out there for a while. So yeah, it just snowballed, and snowballed, and snowballed…” (Badger).

Theme: AniNature Love Origins- Present Since Childhood

Code: Parent/family interest in Nature/politics

- “Really I became aware recently since around a year ago, that my mother had a lot to do with this, because…I don’t know, with the little things. For example, she would speak to me a lot about dolphins” (Delfin).

Code: Early exposure to Nature/animals

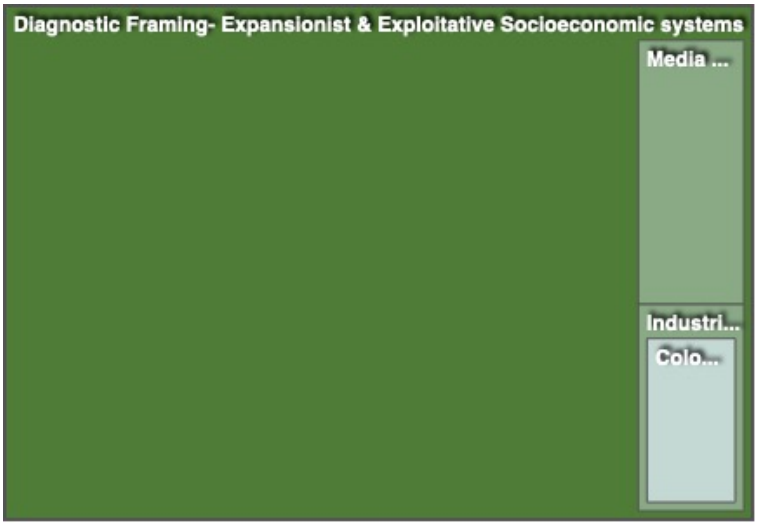
- “I have always fostered from when I was a very young child I had birds, I had animals, I had literally dozens and dozens of pigeons...and then I went onto [ ] I did macropods, amphibians, reptiles, birds of prey, parrots, what else, possums” (Roo).

Theme: Apocalypse Now

Code/subtheme: Critical modalities of hope

- “I made a conscious decision about four years ago to literally give up hope. I think it’s a bit of an illusion of the human condition. When you are in a position of hope you are literally hoping for something that hasn’t happened yet, it becomes a kind of mental theft or mental cog, and robs us of being present in the world. I think that’s incompatible with joy or optimism, but I’ve literally given up hope” (Badger).

Theme: Diagnostic Framing- Expansionist/Exploitative Socioeconomic Systems



Code: Industrial/Neoliberal capitalism

- "Capitalism. Uh, yeah. I mean, you can say anything, you could say patriarchy, but I think they all just feed capitalism, and capitalism depends on those things to keep itself going. In society you make money as you destroy the planet, and obviously capitalism is the rational pursuit of profit but not the rational pursuit of longevity or anything else, it's just about getting money. So yeah, it's going to keep hurting the planet until it can't, and that's what's causing it" (Fox).

  (Sub)Code: Lingering colonial inequities

  - "property that got into the ownership of persons through violence, like long times ago, like kings and other rulers, bigger companies, landlords, like, there was a lot of violence involved in disowning peasant farmers, or first nations, and giving the property into the hands of multinational companies, or families, or other systems that still own them, and that still somehow create a lasting dependency around the whole humankind" (Forest).

Code: Media misinformation

- "The present PIS ruling party has taken completely over the state media and turned them into a propaganda machine, removing any remaining if rather illusory separations of governmental power and the judicial branch, putting women's issues in the crosshairs, targeting and villifying gender and immigrants. In this reality of profiteering, hate and corruption segments of local population regularly respond to inflamatory state media reports strategically attempting to divide, destroy and profit" (Hambach Forst, 2017).

Code: Overpopulation

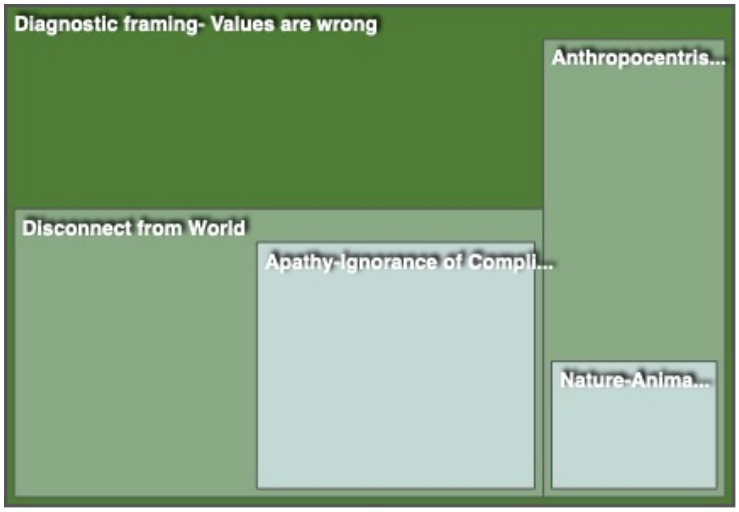
- "We're growing at an exponential rate. If you do the math it doesn't work long term as far as providing food and maintaining our ecology" (Roo).

- "Dr. Robert: 'Solving them wasn't difficult. To begin with, we never allowed ourselves to produce more children than we could feed, clothe, house, and educate

into something like full humanity. Not being overpopulated, we have plenty. But although we have plenty, we've managed to resist the temptation that the West has now succumbed to- the temptation to overconsume. We don't give ourselves coronaries by guzzling six times as much saturated fat as we need. We don't hypnotize ourselves into believing that two television sets will make us twice as happy as one television set" (Huxley 2009, pg. 145).

- Example of estrangement to highlight the socio-ecological endless expansion in a material and demographic sense: "As they kept breeding, having as many children as possible, they kept having to go farther to get food, and many tyon and hontik that had used to grow crops, or herd, or hunt, were employed on the great labours of making the Weapons and supplying them with fuel. Grain that animals and humans would have eaten was eaten by the machines" (Le Guin 1985, Pg. 351;2).

Theme: Diagnostic Framing- Values are Wrong



Code: Anthropocentrism/Speciesism

- "…the human individual has become the only unit of perceived value in the universe, which, yeah, is ultimately problematic" (Badger).

  (Sub)Code: Nature as standing reserve
  - "what we call, 'resources'…that's the problem, how dare we call other living beings resources as if they are simply ours to exploit 'till they are gone? There's the root of it; we cannot continue treating other life on this planet as if it is something that has some economic value. It is worth SO much more than that" (Stonehenge).

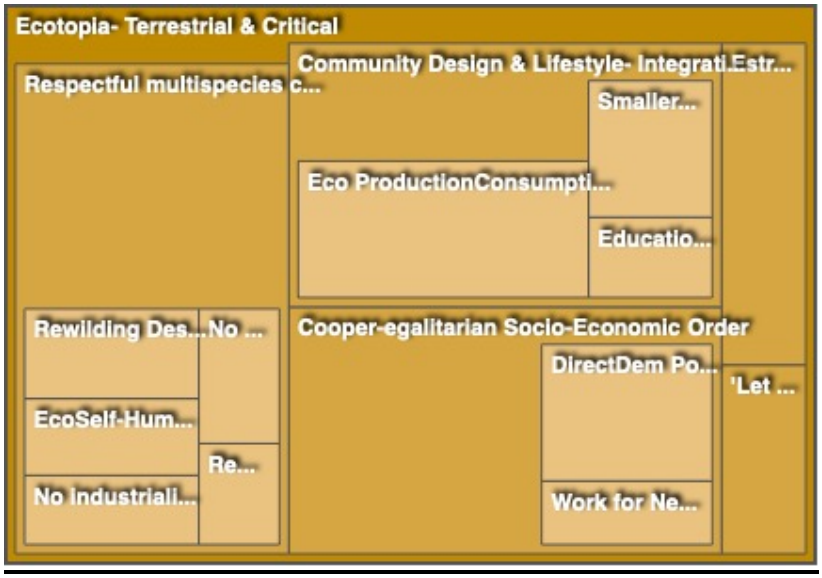
Code: Disconnect from the world

- "I think in Western civilization we need to create a much stronger connection to life and to that; so, I heard actually a lot of times already that people state that we are not dependent on nature anymore, and that all the solutions that we have will sooner or later be solved by science or technology…and this just shows how disconnected some people are from everything, basically" (Shark).

(Sub)Code: Apathy/ignorance of complicity

- "And there's always the money, and profits, and people just don't care about nature, and they don't care about mass extinctions, and they don't care about wars. And I think the biggest problem is, we have 7 billion people on the planet already, and I think 98% of that 7 billion just don't give a damn about what's happening" (Poseidon).

Theme: Ecotopia- Terrestrial & Critical



Code: Community design & lifestyle- Integrating with nature

- "sourcing things more locally, so like growing stuff in our back garden so there's less carbon footprint and you know that's more organic, and there's no pesticides and stuff like that. So just, like, more home-grown, more natural and green, which is better for our mental health as well. Umm, avoiding things personal transport, going back to, like, public transport, community-owned, just anything that we do to make the world more sustainable and, even increase human productivity, I reckon it'd be more beneficial and profitable for humans to work more entwined with nature and be more sustainable. So, yeah, it's so far away from what we've currently got" (Jellyfish).

- "They then reorganized the governmental structures of the states and counties, which they considered outmoded because unrelated to the organic structures of production and consumption, and also inherently inadaptable for dealing with regional ecological systems" (Callenbach 1975, Pg. 92).

(Sub)Code: Eco Production/Consumption for Sufficiency

- "There are alternatives to global industrial and animal agriculture. Small-scale food producers, working with nature, oriented towards realneeds production (not serving capitalism) are feeding communities all over the world…working towards an anarchist agroecology is a commitment to creating not only a

different food system, but a different way of life that transforms social, ecological, economic, and interspecies relations" (EF! 2017, Pg. 32).

(Sub)Code: Smaller human populations

- "Luciente: "After we dumped the jobs telling people what to do, counting money and moving it about, making people do what they don't want or bashing them for doing what they want, we have lots of people to work…we put a lot of work into feeding everybody without destroying the soil, keeping up its health and fertility. With most everybody at it part time, nobody breaks their back and grubs dawn to dusk like old-time farmers…Instance, in March I might work sixteen hours. In December, four…" (Pg. 136)" (Orca).

Code: Cooperative & egalitarian socioeconomic order

- "we've got a very male-dominated society, these men make a lot of the big decisions, and I think we need to try and move away from that as well somehow, and have more of a gender balance about who makes important decisions" (Squirrel).

(Sub)Code: DirectDem politics

- "I think community is a really important part, more sort of, like, autonomous communities all over the place deciding what's best in their communities, but then something overall governing that would say, 'okay, you're going too far with this, this is not, this is going against human rights or this is going against the rights of nature or something like that" (Jellyfish).

(Sub)Code: Socially useful and enjoyable work

- "I would envisage a more equal society, and I don't just mean in terms of financial wealth but also power structures as well, and also where we use less energy and that energy is provided by more renewable sources; and also where we actually have for each other, so I think we would actually work less than we work now, because a lot of the work we do now doesn't actually contribute to society really" (Tree).

- Luciente: "After we dumped the jobs telling people what to do, counting money and moving it about, making people do what they don't want or bashing them for doing what they want, we have lots of people to work…we put a lot of work into feeding everybody without destroying the soil, keeping up its health and fertility. With most everybody at it part time, nobody breaks their back and grubs dawn to dusk like old-time farmers …" (Piercy 1976, Pg. 136).

Subtheme: 'Let them be'

Code: No human intervention

- "I really want to see places put back that are not touched by humans, and I want to see animal populations grow larger that were in danger of getting

extinct; like, I really want to keep the diversity of species that we have at the moment" (Forest).

Subtheme: Respectful multispecies coexistence

Code: EcoSelf- humans components of Earth systems

- "Luciente: "'We're part of the web of nature. Don't you find that beautiful?' Connie: Like dumb animals? No! Dust to dust and all that?' Luciente: 'We have a hundred ceremonies to heal us to the world we live in with so many others'" (Piercy, 1976, Pg. 303).

- "…how are we going to teach ourselves and our children to unlearn that humans are the center of the bloody universe? So, I think a lot of that would be about adopting some very primitive models of looking at the universe…" (Badger).

Code: No industrialised animal agriculture

- "Suppose the world would go vegan tomorrow and all of the factory farming will be gone, there's way more than enough space to feed everyone on the planet. There's more than enough resources…" (Poseidon).

- "Beef cattle are common features of the landscape, though they are never concentrated in forced-feeding fattening lots" (Callenbach 1975, Pg. 63).

Code: No ownership/domestication of nonhumans

- "Animals are not ours to 'farm', enslave, control, cage, slaughter or accumulate wealth from" (EF! 2017, Pg. 34).

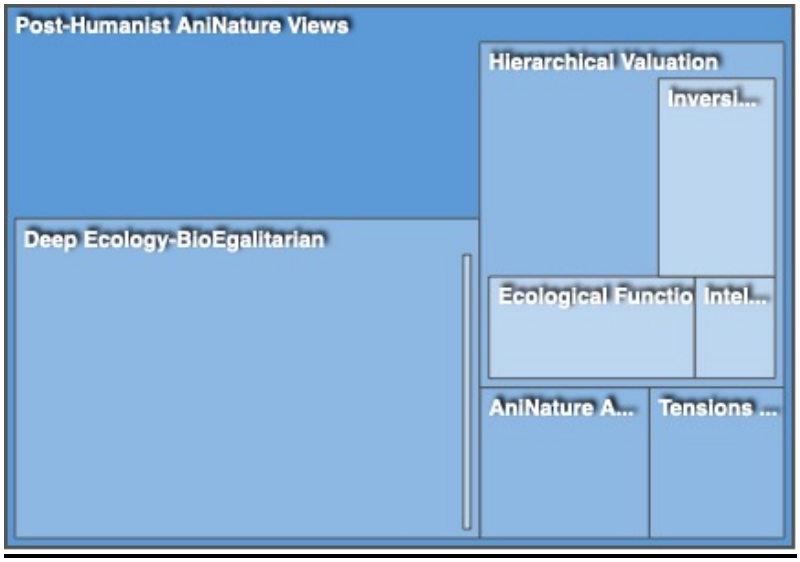
Code: Respectful use of others acceptable

- "I don't think I'd go so far as to say, 'we're all equal', in the sense of it being wrong for us to [use animals]. I'm not a vegan, for example, I'm a vegetarian. I think I would define myself as saying that we should be living more in harmony with nature rather than exploiting nature and conquering nature, you know, trying to just use it for our benefit…" (Tree).

Code: Rewilding desirable but complex

- "…with rewilding, it's weird because the cows and the pigs and the chickens that we have now aren't wild animals. If we just put them out and said, like, go be by yourselves on a mountain they'd probably all die pretty quickly because they're not wild animals. We could rewild them and train them to be in the wild, but that would still, for three or four generations, extend our dominance over them. So, what do you do? I think with a lot of these things we're not going to be able to find the ethical answer to every problem" (Fox).

Theme: Posthumanist AniNature Views



Code: AniNature agentic

- "…at some point an event happened whereby I was no longer conscious of whether I was singing to the tree or the tree was singing through me. We became a kind of collaborative link" (Stonehenge).

Code: Deep Ecological/Bioegalitarian

- "I think all life is equal, which is why I do hunt sabbing. I know that hunt sabbing is dangerous, but because my life is equal to a fox's life, I should risk my life to save the fox…" (Fox)

(Sub)Code: Eco-Self

- "in the moment of connection, I'm not there…I don't feel anything; I'm lost in connection, you know, I'm completely, just…the sense of self isn't there. The sense of interwoven connectedness with another being doesn't really have space for ego as such" (Stonehenge).

Subtheme: Hierarchical Valuation

Code: Ecological function

- "I don't view trees as any less valuable than animals. In fact, they're probably even more valuable because they produce the oxygen that we breathe" (Squirrel).

Code: Sentience & intelligence

- "for me it's about consciousness and the ability to be a sentient being, to like feel joy and pain, suffering, happiness, but also have memory of it and have an ongoing story, and also be able to communicate that in society as well. And, you know, so many other things we could say that make human life valuable, which I think I could definitely see quite a lot of that in, I mean, this is very

anthropocentric, but in the 'higher' primates. I can see it in some similar creatures like crows and magpies, parrots and dolphins…" (Atacama).

Code: Inversion of human-animal hierarchy

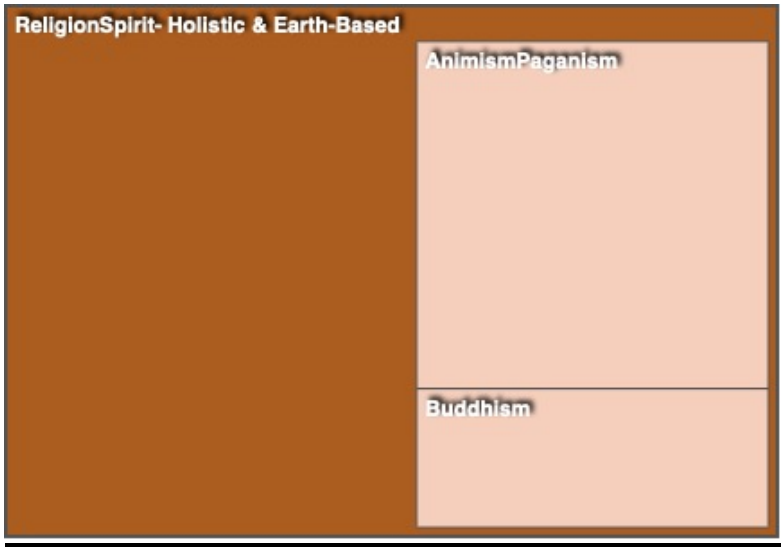
- "we're less important than pretty much a lot of the other species that are absolutely imperative for maintaining life on this planet, like phytoplankton for instance, like, you know, insects, trees, bacteria, really this planet is ruled by bacteria, they're the dominant living things. Higher mammals are really more…well it's hard to really say what their use is. I guess the only use for a human being is that if the planet is going to be threatened by an asteroid we probably have the technology in order to save the planet from that. But other than that I can't see how we're contributing anything really positive" (Captain).

Subtheme: Tensions around ethico-ontological boundaries

Code: Boundary deconstruction

- "in terms of, like, 'Do you have empathy with the tree?' Well, I can't empathize with a tree in the way I might be able to empathize with my own species or animals…maybe some people can, but I do think trees are, like, huge, complex…are they beings? I don't know. Tree sentience? I'm not gonna say that trees don't have sentience…I don't know. I know that they communicate with each other; they're such a rich habitat for so many animals that, how can you say, 'Oh, I empathize with a cow but I don't care if the tree gets cut down'? Because, there will be loads of animals living in that tree" (Dog).

Theme: Religion/Spirituality- Holistic and Earth-Based



Code: Animist & Pagan Views

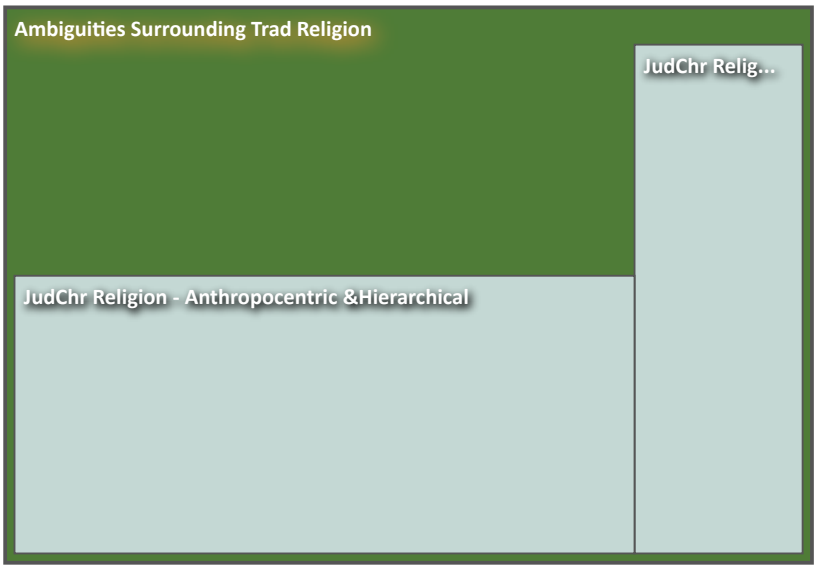
- "I always did have a connection with the cosmos and, in other words, I don't think life is so simple, or that everything I see I can touch. In actuality, all the time I observe that there are connections and things that could appear as magical but

simply respond to the notion that everything is connected, and that humans live in a universe that is quite small and limited by our subjectivities and ego-centrism, and the knowledge that we have" (Delfin).

Code: Buddhism

- "I'm definitely not Christian. But again, having travelled and been to a lot of the Buddhist countries I kind of, I wouldn't say I'm Buddhist but I take on board some of the philosophy, and kind of, I think that Buddhism is perhaps more aligned with an ecological perspective you know, it doesn't harm animals, you know, kind of vegetarian/vegan diet, and yeah, it does sort of encourage looking after the natural world" (Squirrel).

Theme: Ambiguities surrounding Traditional Religion/Spirituality



Subtheme/Code: Judeo-Christianity- Anthropocentric & hierarchical

- "…my sister is still a Christian and we've had conversations about this where she cites the bible like, you know, dominion theology, the idea that God gave us the earth and the animals to use as we will as long as we take care of them" (Warrior).

Code: Judeo-Christianity- Can discourage Nature destruction

- "I will give you an example of when religious beliefs tie in with the natural world. In a particular zone in Mexico, when the week of the saints arrives, we all know of the rite where you're not supposed to eat meat. And during this time there was a high death toll for sea turtles because people believed that once sea turtles left the sea, they were fish, not meat per se. So, what was done was to explain to them that turtles are indeed meat and that they're highly endangered. Since we had no success, we 'attacked' via the topic of religion, and so what we did was unite with all people around the world who work with marine turtle conservation issues and got in touch with the Pope, who then communicated to his faithful followers that marine turtles count as meat, that they're endangered, and that we were having

huge issues during saints week with overhunting of the sea turtles, and that's how the problem was solved" (Tortuga Marina).

Theme: Utopian Undercurrents

Code: Towards a possible and better 'Not-Yet'

- "…so yeah, it's important to do this blue-sky thinking, isn't it? On the one hand, yeah, get on the front lines at the fracking site wherever it is, but at the same time, we do need to be thinking big as well" (Dog).

Code: Utopias in the 'here and now'

- "Every day we can experiment with and learn ways of dealing with each other without leaders or domination, with mutual respect, building the world we want now- in our relationships, our interactions and our resistance" (EF! 2017, Pg. 22).