



## **Ecology Of Intellect In The Age Of Capitalism And Understanding Nature: Both Human And Non-Human**

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### **Abstract**

There is an ecology of ideas that influences not only the human life and its relationship with the natural world but also the world of non-human nature. For a long time, people have been thinking that there is a dichotomy between man and nature but now many theorists have started challenging this notion because man is a product of nature that intervenes in the processes of nature. One of the major thinkers of the contemporary era, Felix Guattari adds a new dimension to the understanding of man-nature relationship when he talks about three different but interlinked ecologies-- mental ecology, social ecology and environment ecology. There exists a very complicated relationship between these ecologies even a slightest change in any of them brings out of a corresponding change in all. The Earth is undergoing intense transformation in all sectors including social, cultural, economic, and environmental etc. If no remedy is found to all these problems there is a clear danger that life will fled from this planet. It is not just the outer nature that is being deteriorated human modes of life; both individual and collective are deteriorating. Under these circumstances the only solution is that people should work towards rebuilding human relations at every level. The destructive influence of capitalism can be controlled by reshaping the objectives of production of both material and immaterial assets. This movement can be successful if it includes molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence and desire along with visible aspects.

**Keywords:** Infantilizing, De-territorialization, Mechanosphere. Capitalism, World Bank, Linguistic Genes, Western Civilization, Ecology.

### **Introduction**

There is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there is an ecology of weeds.

(Gregory Bateson)

For a long time people have been thinking that there is a dichotomy between man and nature but now many theorists have started challenging this notion because man is a product of nature that intervenes in the processes of nature. One of the major thinkers of the contemporary era, Felix Guattari adds a new dimension to the understanding of man-nature relationship when he talks about three different but interlinked ecologies-- mental ecology, social ecology and environment ecology. There exists a very complicated relationship between these ecologies even a slightest change in any of them brings out of a corresponding change in all.

At one time i.e. during and before Stone Age, there existed a metabolic process between human beings and nature i.e. humans consumed unprocessed nature products and nature consumed all the products of humans. However with the further evolution of humans an irreparable rift had emerged in this metabolism. This rift increased with the emergence of human society and further intensified due to capitalist relations of production which are "built on systematic alienation from all forms of naturally based need. Hence under the artificial regime of capital it is the search for exchange value (that is profit), rather than the servicing of genuine, universal, natural needs, which constitute the object, the motive for production" (Marx, Karl, 1981: 873). During the emergence of capitalism, mutation in socio-linguistic genes resulted in "epistemological fallacies" in the western civilization that spread far and wide through capitalism driven colonialism, which was both cause and product of capitalism. Capitalistic structures used the maximum potential of individuals for its own purpose by indulging them into different type of competitions. It persuaded them by using Charles Darwin's

theory of natural selection according to which the unit of survival was individual/ family or species. But in reality as Bateson argues, “the unit of survival is organism plus environment. We are learning by bitter experience that the organism which destroys its environment destroys itself.” (Bateson: 484) This epistemological error of choosing the wrong unit ends up “with the species versus the other species around it or versus the environment in which it operates. Man against nature.” (Bateson: 484)

### **Emergence of capitalism**

Once human beings started living together and invented language for the purpose of communication that also became storehouse of all kind of knowledge, various social forms appeared on this Earth. Capitalism was present in all those forms in very subtle forms. However a major turning point in the history of humankind came during Renaissance because a particular configuration of linguistic genes, when supported by external circumstances led to the emergence of a particular social form i.e. capitalism in various parts of Europe simultaneously. When the linguistic genes with this configuration reached more minds they manifested in specific social, economic and political circumstances in the society and simultaneously they led to the appearance and development of a new self, which was “expressive, oftentimes, violently willful bourgeois individual, who sought wealth and power in the evolving world of early market capitalism” (Rivkin, Julie and Michel Ryon: 239). Slowly this social form started dominating because it had the exceptional ability to adopt, adapt, and appropriate all social production.

One of the initial impacts of capitalism on European society was enclosure movement that converted the land into private property. It empowered the newly emerged capitalist class because, “a privatized, enclosed piece of land” was “a more efficient and cost-effective means of capital accumulation (and personal, moral development) than the Common-field system of land cultivation” (Forster, E.M.: 214). The beginning of enclosure movement can be “traced back as far as the dissolution of the monasteries”; that empowered the middle class. It “began to flourish at a time in history when the Dutch, the French, and the English were vying for sovereign control of the Indian subcontinent and the trade routes to the Far East” (Marzec, Robert P.: 2). It moved to other parts of the world, enclosed lands there, exploited both natural and human resources, which is evident from the letter written by Columbus when he reached America. He writes this island “is to be desired and very desirable....I solemnly took possession of all the others for our invincible king, yet I especially took possession of a certain large town, in a very convenient location, and adapted to all kinds of gain and commerce” (Christopher Columbus: 21). He enclosed the land without asking the natives and started colonizing them.

Almost the similar thing happened in India after the fall of Mughal Dynasty when there was a political turmoil they started enclosing land. They resorted to unrestricted exploitation of masses and squeezed as much money they could. The free flow of money further strengthened the capitalist machinery that reached its height “when the English government was concentrating on the transformation of the East India Company from a merchant organization into a political apparatus for overseas domination. It continued throughout the nineteenth century, adapting English citizens to new procedures of existence; while at the same time colonial subjects in Africa, India, and elsewhere came also to be governed by new sociopolitical schemas of land enclosure” (Marzec, Robert P.: 2). It did not stop with the independence of former colonies “in the twenty-first century sphere of a global world order, enclosures of a different kind continue: most notably the passage of transnational corporations into third world countries, with the politico economic organizations of the IMF and the World Bank setting the terms of development for these countries” (Broad, Robin, John Cavanagh, and Walden Bello: 88).

### **Impact of capitalism**

From the very beginning when evolution of human societies started “nature cannot be separated from culture; in order to comprehend the interactions between ecosystems, the mechanosphere and the social and individual Universe of reference; we must learn to think ‘transversally.’”(Guattari: 43). This relationship became more intense with the emergence of capitalist mode of production. As the outer nature is invaded by harmful chemicals so the psychological space is populated and saturated by degenerate images and statements that result in easy consent for this plunder. In the field of social ecology industrialists, capitalists, MNC’s are permitted to proliferate freely because despite all kinds of protests human beings want them to be there. They redevelop by converting people into bonded laborers. Further proliferation is evident in the savage de-

territorialization of the Third World. Capitalism destroys the basic human nature and converts them into mechanical instruments that is why “it is not only species that are becoming extinct but also the words, phrases, and gestures of human solidarity. A stifling cloak of silence has been thrown over the emancipatory struggles of women, and of the new proletariat: the unemployed, the marginalized, immigrants.” Felix Guattari: 45)

The most dangerous part of this capitalistic structure is that this increasing globalization of all areas of our lives is not being directed by one particular capitalist organization party or country. It is so pervasive that no part of the human society in this world can be called free of it. This “post-Industrial-capitalism-which Guattari calls Integrated World Capitalism (IWC)- is delocalized and deterritorialized to such an extent that it is impossible to locate the source of its power. (Gray Genosko’s: 24-30). IWC’s most potent weapon for achieving social control without violence is the mass media which links the whole world and in this way is involved in the creation of demand so there will always be a market for capital investment. If we look into the emergence of ecocritical theory, production of its discourse and more over production of ecocritical discourse’s consumption, we will find that it has less to do with individual’s need for rejuvenating environment and more to do with the profits of those who invest capital in all these ventures. It clearly shows that a new type of individual is being shaped and moulded by the unseen pressure of market forces. According to Guattari IWC is not only destroying the natural environment and eroding the social relations, but is also engaged in a far more insidious and invisible ‘penetration of people’s attitudes, sensibilities and minds” (Guattari and Negri: 53). Guattari goes even further and says that Human subjectivity in all its uniqueness what he calls its singularity’ is as endangered as those rare species that are disappearing from the planet every day.

In the *Three Ecologies* Guattari argues that ‘Individuals are captured by their environment by ideas tastes, models, ways of being, the images that are constantly injected into them and even by the refrains that go round and round in their heads”(Guattari:8).

People should know that “a capitalism that does not exploit resources-be they natural or human- is yet unthinkable. A capitalism that is symbiotic rather than parasitic may never be possible”, because they have adopted and popularize capitalism’s maxim- survival of the fittest, which is taken to its extreme by free market competition; “whereas if humanity is to survive it must configure this goal into that of organism plus environment”(Gregory Bateson : 499).

### **Location of individual in the capitalist structure**

I am corrupted by the world, continually  
 Reduced to something less than human by the crowd,  
 .....  
 Corrupted by the world I must infect the world  
 With my corruption. This double horror holds me  
 Like a nightmare from which I cannot wake...  
 (Nissim Ezekiel: 7-8)

### **Is it possible to go back?**

It is quite absurd to turn back to past in search of solution because as Guattari says “After the data processing and the globalization the rapid development genetic engineering and the globalization of markets neither human labour nor the natural habitate will ever be what they once were, even just a few decades ago”(Guattari; 42). To symbolize this problematic I need only refer to an experiment once conducted on television by Alain Bombard.( Guattari, Felix: 42) He produced two glass tanks, one filled with polluted water - of the sort that one might draw from the port of Marseille - containing a healthy, thriving, almost dancing octopus.( Guattari, Felix: 37) The other tank contained pure, unpolluted seawater. Bombard caught the octopus and immersed it in the ‘normal’ water; after a few seconds the animal curled up, sank to the bottom and died.

### **How the problem can be resolved?**

In mapping out the cartographic reference points of the three ecologies, it is important to dispense with pseudoscientific paradigms. This is not simply due to the complexity of the entities under consideration but more fundamentally to the fact that the three ecologies are governed by a different logic to that of ordinary communication between speakers and listeners which has nothing to do with the intelligibility of discursive sets, or the indeterminate interlocking of fields of signification. It is logic of intensities, of auto-referential existential assemblages engaging in irreversible durations.

Social ecology will have to work towards rebuilding human relations at every level of the socius. It should never lose sight of the fact that capitalist power has become delocalized and deterritorialized, both in extension, by extending its influence over the whole social, economic and cultural life of the planet, and in 'intension', by infiltrating the most unconscious subjective strata. In doing this it is no longer possible to claim to be opposed to capitalist power only from the outside, through trade unions and traditional politics. It is equally imperative to confront capitalism's effects in the domain of mental ecology in everyday life: individual, domestic, material, neighbourly, creative or one's personal ethics. Rather than looking for a stupefying and infantilizing consensus, it will be a question in the future of cultivating a *dissensus* and the singular production of existence. A capitalistic subjectivity is engendered through operators of all types and sizes, and is manufactured to protect existence from any intrusion of events that might disturb or disrupt public opinion. It demands that all singularity must be either evaded or crushed in specialist apparatuses and frames of reference. Therefore, it endeavors to manage the worlds of childhood, love, art, as well as everything associated with anxiety, madness, pain, death, or a feeling of being lost in the Cosmos . . . IWC forms massive subjective aggregates from the most personal - one could even say infra-personal - existential givens, which it hooks up to ideas of race, nation, the professional workforce, competitive sports, a dominating masculinity [virility], mass-media celebrity Capitalistic subjectivity seeks to gain power by controlling and neutralizing the maximum number of existential refrains. It is intoxicated with and anaesthetized by a collective feeling of pseudoeternity.

The Earth is undergoing intense transformation in all sectors including social, cultural, economic, and environmental etc. If no remedy is found to all these problems there is a clear danger that life will fled from this planet. It is not just the outer nature that is being deteriorated human modes of life; both individual and collective are deteriorating. Under these circumstances the only solution is that people should work towards rebuilding human relations at every level. The destructive influence of capitalism can be controlled by reshaping the objectives of production of both material and immaterial assets. This movement can be successful if it includes molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence and desire along with visible aspects.

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