

Reverential Thinking and Co-immunity in Skolimowski's Ecohumanism

Myron M. Jackson

Philosophy and Religion, Western Carolina University, N.C.

mmjackson@wcu.edu

Abstract: This article updates Skolimowski's ecological humanism with the recent insights of Jonas, Sloterdijk, and Latour's environmental ethics. The first section details Jonas' reform of Kant's deontology with a call not to universalize, but to ecologize. Next, I introduce Sloterdijk's theory of general immunology as a basis for Skolimowski's ecohumanism. Ecological humanism attempts to address the demands of the twenty-first century anthropocenic crisis. By extension, Latour's ecological class consciousness is a response to the rise of green party movements and is treated in the third section. We cannot save the planet without working toward saving ourselves—we culprits on trial for continual mistreatment of Gaia. While eco-philosophy establishes eschatological meaning without the imperative of any messianic mission, restorative justice is at the heart of ecological humanism's reverential thinking. The focus on spiritual and ethical development establishes a reverential ethics through projects of *healing*, wherein the task of philosophy is to overcome attitudes of well-entrenched blindness.

Keywords: ecohumanism, eco-philosophy, co-immunity, reverential thinking, ecological imperative

Introduction

Bruno Latour famously declared we are at a crossroads in current times: “to modernize or ecologize,” that is the question. We find already in the work of Polish philosopher Henryk Skolimowski a willingness to answer the call on behalf of the latter. Skolimowski's began his vision of humans as *homo ecologicus* in the 1970s emphasizing a call to *reverential* development and thinking as the basis of an ecohumanism. Instead of embracing trans- or posthumanism, I argue that we would be better suited if Skolimowski's eco-philosophy were reformatted and updated with Hans Jonas' reverential imperative, Peter Sloterdijk's co-immunism, and Bruno Latour's ecological class.

One of the final projects to which Bruno Latour was devoted involved the task of redefining his proposed new climatic regime. Latour worked as an anthropologist of science, as well as an ecological moralist and diplomat. I will address the mood of our environmental crisis through this lens of what I call process ecohumanism. Relying upon the political ecology of Latour and the pragmatism of William James, it seeks to articulate a renewed vision for our future obligations to the planet and beyond. By recognizing as indispensable the need to analyze the creative advance of the universe in conjunction with evolution processes and the accretion of value, we aim to provide a richer account concerning the task at hand. There is an emphasis on intrinsic values within the arguments and discourses of natural ecology. In his classic article “Ecological Humanism,” Polish philosopher Henryk Skolimowski declares that there have been many brands of humanism throughout the centuries, and all have failed to live up to their promises. This was due to subscribing to “too narrow” of a conception of humanity and the

universe. This is counter-intuitive to our sensibilities about humanism, which is usually criticized for being anthropocentric and putting humans on an unnecessary pedestal.¹ “Traditional humanisms have cheapened our conception of life by reducing man to man himself” (1981, 10). Any humanism of the future demands that we confront humanity’s spiritual and ethical capacities as a remedy for apathy toward the environment. Humans are spiritually cosmic beings. *The world is a sanctuary*, to be looked after and invested in. This is the first tenet of Skolimowski’s eco-philosophy and the other four are: the guiding value is reverence for the living, find inner happiness through frugality, spirituality and rationality complement each other, and the enactment of cosmic healing demands self-healing. Earth-citizenship comes with the honor and burden of being “ambassadors of the cosmos.” Earth-citizenship is an alternative to stakeholder capitalism and corporate governance. Techno-lords of Silicon Valley are not committed to “[...] minimizing oil and gas exploration or containing resource consumption or even reducing the exploitative labor practices that have enriched them. Instead, the language of the tech elite often echoes settler colonialism, seeking to displace Earth’s population and capture territory for mineral extraction” (Crawford 2021, 233).

Eco-ethics begins with the “eleventh commandment” that all forms of cosmic life be respected. Hans Jonas’s reverential imperative, Peter Sloterdijk’s co-immunity, and Latour’s ecological class contribute to an expanded version of Skolimowski’s ecological humanism. Ecology is political which is why Latour called for a New Climatic Regime (2018). Social and environmental policies converge in many ways. Latour understands, along with Skolimowski and others, that repairing the planet will have to involve a change in thinking between the green parties and their reactionary opponents. An alternative path should be sought. One in which communities join forces to propose, ratify, and enforce beneficial inhibitions against exploiters of the planet. Ecological humanism, relying on reverential thinking and an eco-ethics of healing, calls us to this shared responsibility. “The degradation of our natural environment ineluctably affects us all. And yet, most people are effectively excluded from any say about this issue which, in the current state-centric model, is regulated by national governments unilaterally or through intergovernmental bargaining heavily influenced by huge differentials in economic and military might” (Pogge 2008, 61). Shared responsibility is a mandate given how difficult it is to hold responsible violators of human rights on an international scale. If we know who is violating our intellectual property rights we can, in principle, sue that party and seek to hold them responsible. But this is not the case with positive human rights. If you are starving or lacking healthy water, then who is responsible? What party can be held accountable for this basic negligence? Identifying culpability at the global level becomes difficult, if not impossible. Nevertheless, this does not upend the fact that those at the front lines of globalization will have a bigger share in owning up to complicating the environments of others.

Jonas’s Ecological Reverential Imperative

Nietzsche recognized before the twentieth century the human obligation to eco-ethics by writing, “Inexorably, hesitantly, terrible as fate, the great task and question is approaching: How shall the earth as a whole be governed?” (Nietzsche 1968, 501). In considering human ethical ambassadorship over the environment, one has to ask: have we not lost our moral authority to begin with? How can we legitimately claim to have moral grounds to honestly speak on behalf of the unheard and exploited? Such questions arise from our relations under the freedoms and obligations of Earth-citizenship. As earth-citizens we are forced to recognize that, regardless of

how we address these questions, we have become players on the planetary scale “It would be the Earth itself shared in common by mortals throughout its various regions, as Earth that is too real to play the role of traditional transcendence, but also too transcendent to ever become the property of a single imperial power” (2018, 23). A politics of Earth-citizenship informs Skolimowski’s ecological humanism. “The concept of ecological humanism explained by Skolimowski contains three important ideas, namely: the fact that the future age must be seen as an age of administration, the world must be conceived as a sanctuary, and knowledge must be conceived as an intermediary between us and the creative force of evolution” (Hategan 2021, 6). Evolutionary wisdom is not the handing down of age-old wisdom, but supports dynamic structures, capable of re-adjusting and re-building. Thinking should blossom into a reverence for the world as a sanctuary, which requires a re-wiring of our cultural expectation structures. In other words, “There is a feedback relationship between cosmology, culture and the individual human being” (Skolimowski 1981, 56).

“In the face of the imminent ecological crisis, in the 1970s, the philosopher Hans Jonas updated the categorical imperative by charging it with the futurist energies of a political ecology: act in each case in such a way that the consequences of your action remain compatible with the continued existence of authentically human life on earth” (2020, 190). Jonas’s imperative moves away from Kant’s obsession with universalization by aiming our actions toward cultivating a sustainable environment for the future. An ethos of solidarity replaces any need for a universal duty or law. This corresponds with eco-philosophers and social ecologists “are leery of accepting any absolute or objective values, for this smacks of old-fashioned religion” (1990, 47).² Steven Smith, in his book, *Full Responsibility* shows how Kant’s formalism becomes unhelpful for the efficacy of shared action since it puts the “fair procedure” in universalizing one’s actions. Smith concludes:

Kant believes that in practice we commonly determine right and wrong by applying the universalization test. Telling the truth and promise keeping are paradigmatic for universalizable policy. When one considers lying or breaking a promise, it is immediately evident that one would be unfairly exempting oneself from a necessarily universal rule. These are ‘perfect duties’ to which there are no exceptions. Some choices, however, are ethically sensitive without being deducible from a properly universalized rule. For example, we have choices concerning how to be helpful to others in need. It is demonstrable that we ought to be willing to help, since it would be unfair to deny to others what we would inevitably want from them, but it cannot be determined in advance to whom, when, and how we ought to be helpful except in urgent life-saving cases. Thus benevolence is an ‘imperfect duty.’ We have reached the limit of reason’s ability to prescribe the right action (2022, 166).

Smith goes on to assert that “imperfect duty” like benevolence is a “doorway from formalist ethics into other dimensions of responsibility.” Such versions of ethical apriorism are too abstract to give us a meaningful ground for action. The moral life is not grounded in universal validity but in my readiness to act, with concern, benevolence, and reverence. An ecological *metanoia* will not occur through achieving an idealist cosmopolitan orientation to serve as a justification for one’s policies. The universalist standpoint is more likely to generate complacency rather than urgency to get involved, with activist groups and social justice movements. Here, we must be mindful of Skolimowski’s efforts to go beyond this “Protean” moral conception: “I must

emphasize that Ecological Humanism is not just another fancy name for saying that we should be less wasteful, for it signifies a fundamental reorientation of the multitude of things. Not many people, Marxists in particular, are aware that traditional humanism, as based on the ideal of the Protean human and the idea of the appropriation of Nature (with the tacit acceptance of both present science and present technology) are simply incompatible with the ideal of harmony between the human species and the rest of Nature” (1990, 45). Ecohumanism’s eco-ethics rejects a “view from nowhere” morality. Jonas’s reverential imperative teaches to “act not destructively for future generations and the totality of their life conditions.”

Sloterdijk’s Co-Immunity as Applied to Eco-Philosophy

An existential crisis is at the heart of any questions concerning an uncertain future. During the Cold War when Skolimowski was formulating the principles of eco-philosophy, it was easy to blame communist culture as a great threat. This made it possible to neglect looking at ourselves. Populist movements today are driven by a similar politics of grievance and national and ideological self-aggrandizement, while neglecting personal culpability. Coming to grips with humanity’s failure to take climate change seriously is as urgent as ever. “We must change our life decisively because otherwise we are participating in an economic and ecological programme of self-annihilation. In the ancient history of humankind there also were stern authorities, gods, gurus and teachers who troubled their followers with enormous demands. Nowadays, we have to deal with an ungodly goddess called ‘crisis’ who demands that we evolve new forms of life. Human groups usually have a long-term project, a will to continued existence. But that project of permanence is completely incompatible with the present modus vivendi” (Sloterdijk, *Selected Exaggerations*, 226). Eco-cooperation is a necessary ethical imperative for the twenty-first century and no treatment of justice, fairness, and equality can fail to ignore these pressing concerns. None of the prevalent moral theories—virtue ethics, utilitarianism, deontology, libertarianism—are adequate to deal with the new demands. A pragmatist ethics of problem-solving is better suited to meet the tasks of the moment for three key reasons. First, Peirce’s pragmatic maxim admits how all moral values are fallible despite the tendency to appropriate them in an infallible manner. One can get overcommitted to virtue, pleasure, or duty as the highest ideals without being mindful of their limitations and inadequacy to treat all ethical problems and conflicts. Pragmatism is concerned with questioning and checking political inflexibility and unresponsive systems, running on social inertia. Unhealthy forms of cultural intercourse will not only fail to address and solve technical, ethical, and political problems, but will result in the absence of responsible agents. Without establishing shared responsibility there is no viable prospect for organization and collective action. The smaller and more intimate the group, club, or association—think of the family—the easier or more likely it is to hold oneself and others accountable. But what happens when we increase the number of participants? What becomes of responsibility when we must act as global citizens? Is it practically feasible for us to be responsible agents on such a grand scale, which appears to have an anarchic order?

Coming to grips with the fact that the world is growing more subversive and closed to the possibilities for open and vulnerable engagement. By risks, I mean the positive or constructive kind that do not work on behalf of self-destruction like the invasion of a democratic free society, such as Ukraine or Taiwan. The world still consists of multipolarity, but it is one prone to conflict rather than cooperation. Instead of embracing multipolarity it is now deemed as threatening as ever before, or not to be trusted when it comes to multinational alliances and

international institutions. Concerning the status of climate change and the ecological crises confronting earth-citizens, we are torn between two camps and responses. The first one is denial, which encourages the attitude of “business as usual” and complacency in the face of increasing natural disasters like hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, and record-high temperatures. In almost a mocking way, any forms of environmental conservation and protection are treated as needless regulation by the state. Such blanket denials of eco-trauma being the work of Globalists and other conspiracies are on the verge of committing malicious intent by, implicitly, at least, encouraging further environmental degradation. Alternatively, we have the opposite attitude advocated by progressive movements bent on “going green.” Environmental activists work as the new papacy of nature, who are ordained to govern according to her wishes like the clergy did with the Church. What is ironic is how the prosperous lands of Europe and America have not been invaded compared with places throughout the Global South. “To ‘ecologize’ an issue has in this context nothing to do with nature; it is, rather, the process of composing a common world among material, semiotic, real, imaginary, animate, and inanimate actors that must be taken into account by the parliament of things” (Blok 2020, 220). Given its wonders and surprises Gaia is a sacred place to dwell. Oftentimes we overlook the whole or take it for granted since we block out the penumbra of experience—the background—for the sake of highlighting the focal regions or what emerges in the foreground. We cannot afford to overlook the surplus of experience from this “parliament of things” while failing to learn from its lessons.

Echoing sentiments from British American poet W. H. Auden’s “the age of anxiety,” German philosopher and cultural theorist Peter Sloterdijk surmises that our prevalent moods and attitudes are similar to post-1945. In ages of anxiety, by analogy, Sloterdijk finds two key features mirroring each other: “an age of global concern and, what is more, an age of disorientation. At the same time, however, it must be interpreted as an age of constructive provocation, an era of the boldest opposition to the ordinary course of things” (2020, 189). Philosophical reflection can help one get his or her bearings in the midst of such “pragmatic confusions.”³ The task concerns “overcoming the climate of demoralization that has spread into the life of countless of our contemporaries.” Demoralization occurs when we lack motivation to take ecological and historical responsibility seriously, while lacking confidence in our political leadership and failing to discern meaningful benefits from sacrifices made in the present. In an age of instant gratification and impatience, it becomes more difficult to convince others to sacrifice in the now for the sake of a future that seems less guaranteed than ever before.

Sloterdijk calls for us to intensify Jonas’s updated, what I am calling reverential imperative through the tenets of co-immunity. “Act in such a way as to promote the emergence of a global system of solidarity, or at least not to hinder it through your action. Act in such a way that the practice of plundering and externalizing, hitherto common, may be replaced by an ethos of global protection. Act in such a way that what you do may not generate any further delays to the indispensable reversal that serves everyone’s interest” (2020, 192). As we integrate more into climatized living and spheropolitics, our co-existences and co-fragilities will be increasingly intertwined. This is why “[...] immunity should be seen as an environmental rather than a mere biological category. Its spatial and atmospheric dimensions in particular give the phenomenon a structural, relational, and mutualist character and spontaneously produce aggregate immunity complexes that both shape and reflect the broader and increasingly deterritorializing constellations of social and security systems” (Weinfurther 2023, 3).⁴

Sloterdijk sets out to reformulate classical metaphysics into a general immunology. There are three levels of immunity on this view: biological, social, and symbolic. “Biological immunity

protects the individual organisms from species-typical invasions and injuries, while social immunity is guaranteed by simple systems of solidarity (such as hospitality and neighborly assistance) and by the legal system” (2020, 192). Immune systems are not to be conceived militaristically, engaged in a perpetual hawkish operation with nature. Too often, we have thought of immune systems inelegantly rather than elegantly. They need not be seen as seekers and destroyers on the biological battlefield. What is missing in these more authoritative accounts is how immune systems are about protections and insulations.

Sloterdijk’s sphereology locates us within the monstrous, which allows us to oscillate between micro- and macro-relations. Pluralistic spheres are *foams* encapsulating the controlled-environment conditions of “connected isolation,” experienced deeply in the modern apartment. The whole world is at your fingertips absent feelings of belonging or connectedness with the world. This has to do with how the global scale pervades human consciousness today over the local and organization, especially in the Western world. When we think of ourselves as global citizens it is easy to surmise a feeling of powerlessness compared with helping in one’s neighborhood or volunteering at a local shelter. How far does shared responsibility go when it involves global affairs? Crucial for Skolimowski’s ecological humanism and evolution is the prominence of “sensitivity.” “[...] the meaning of sensitivities is intimately connected with the meaning of evolution, [...] from the organic soup via the amoeba to the fish; from the fish via reptiles to primates; from primates via chimpanzee to man—this has been continuous and enthralling story of the acquisition and refinement of ever-new-sensitivities” (1994, 12-13). In a similar vein of adaptation and adjustment, co-immunity follows from the axiom that “all life is the successful phase of an immune system; here the term ‘life’ is applied not only to biological organisms but also to the historical existence of cultures, peoples, and institutions” (2020, 191). This is why environmental movements will suffer by relying upon a relational eco-Marxism for two reasons. First, by not addressing the spiritual configurations and interests of human beings we are reduced to being the products of material factors of production. Ecological humanism rejects such historical determinisms. The second issue concerns the Marxian weddedness to class consciousness. Co-immunity gives a more dynamic understanding of interrelated political and social action. Sloterdijk observes: “Where there were once hovels, there would now arise political movements, militant trade unions, interest-conscious class struggle associations—I would call them ‘solidary foams’ to express the fact that the oft-cited workers are, in systemic terms, neither historical subject nor a ‘mass,’ but rather an immunity alliance” (2016, 541). Human life is more meaningful, *to a human*, than a mosquito. But would there be human societies without such bugs, microbes, or insects? Not at all and we will be better served in recognizing that, despite there being differences between humans and nonhumans, there is no difference between animal and human pain or suffering. Human exceptionalism has no justification in ecological humanism. Humans are not the center of the world, nor are we necessary in the grand scope of things in the universe. But human spiritual and ecological needs coalesce through the formation of Earth-citizenship.

“In this regard, we still consider Hölderlin’s vision of the human being poetically inhabiting the Earth to be a compelling one: the concept of the Anthropocene includes a spontaneous *minima moralia* for the present age. It implies care for the cohabitation of Earth-citizens in both human and non-human form. It prompts us to work together on a network of simple and more advanced settings in which the agents of the current world will create their existence in the mode of co-immunity” (2018, 23).

Latour's Ecological Class

Against the claims of Deep Ecology, most articulated in the environmental ethics of Arnie Naess, eco-ethics cannot be anti-humanist because that would be the inverse rehashing of old paradigms. Just as the bifurcation of nature/culture is to be disbanded on Latour's account, so too must the difference between humanist and antihumanist. Human cultures have obligations to be actively involved in the sustainability and protections of environments, including themselves and their own well-being. Anti-humanists depict human interests as perpetually threatening and necessarily predatory on the natural course of events. This is not an inevitable outcome, but the fog of an all-encompassing capitalism gives the impression of eliminating all alternative ways of life. But we must not hastily conflate a sinister capitalism with human cultural activity itself because this is not only self-defeating, but fails to recognize the possibilities at our disposal to make reform and change happen. Relying upon relational process philosophy can help aid us in transcending abstractions and metaphorical thinking about nature and embrace the deep interconnection between and among actual entities. Latour relies upon his reading of James and Whitehead (through Stengers) as providing the pragmatic basis of the ecological class. Latour's mature philosophy attempts to map out what would constitute an ecological class, who enjoys a voting bloc of interested parties. Not merely a fashionable group or movement, but one with *skin-in-the-game* and who can have meaningful influence. Recently, U.S. President Joe Biden made strides in this direction by addressing the U.N. General Assembly declaring that climate change poses a greater threat than nuclear conflict. It is worrisome how leaders of developed countries have been slow to respond or too late for the emergency landing in addressing the environmental crisis. Biden warned that the current disasters is only a glimpse or "snapshot" that tells the "urgent story of what awaits us if we fail to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and being to climate-proof the world" (Madhani 2023).

We are only beginning to face and assess, either reluctantly or openly, the ecological crisis which has been unleashed. Without having signed up or knowing how, we have to be attentive and ready to care for the planet—we cannot afford to continue neglecting environmental imperatives. One of the ways we will confront this tragic situation lies in turning toward rituals found in indigenous cultures, and those ways in which they both empowered and were humbled by recognizing human existence within larger, more pluralistic nonhuman collectives. Unlike western metaphysics which assumes a nature/culture divide, a fundamental interconnectedness with the land, rivers, animals, and weather informs all our experience with other entities' being in the world. As Bruno Latour argued in his lecture during the 2020 lockdown entitled "The Parliament of Things," ironically enough, that the future will demand that we follow the humility of older traditions once we get over our modernity's depraved claim to capture, own, or possess nature. There is no need, according to Latour, to bestow "rights" onto nonhuman entities because their agencies and purposes were never dependent upon human prerogatives. Instead, we let communication (the universal language of Galileo, Newton, and Leibniz) take over our community with natural processes. But in the future, we will have to learn to "ask permission of the North Sea," for example, how we will interact with its passages and ways of being (Latour 2020). "The work of Bruno Latour and his allies on assemblages of concern shows how we can make sense of an unlimited range of meaningful relations with nonhuman beings, relations that are codetermined by all beings in their various ways of acting" (2022, 13; Smith 2009; Latour 2005).

In the Latourian vein, Steven Smith argues for a “fully extended responsibility” that “can also press on to become multigenerational, multispecies or holistically biotic, or (if this is thinkable) eternal” (2022, 146).⁵ Caring, in the widest sense, is related to Smith’s notion of “concern.” “[...] Latour succinctly formulated it, to leave off modernizing in favor of ecologizing, it is highly that we must *adopt*, [...] some of the modes of existence of other collectives, from among those that, in *reality*, have never been modern” (Castro 2016, 495, emphasis original). Against a “theory of values,” Smith articulates a “theory of responsible realization,” emphasizing the importance of concrete, practical action like *concern* and the intrinsic relationality between the demands of the community and communication. Any philosopher of responsibility will have to consider the following range of concerns: Attributability, Accountability, Liability, Capacity for Virtue or Reform, among other factors. Aside from theoretical appeals, Smith places emphasis on French philosopher Gabriel Marcel’s more open concept of “availability” to others (Smith, 22). Having *concern* and being *available* for others are prerequisites for practicing an ethics of care that “can be seen as a project of deriving ethical responsibility from pragmatic responsibility” (Smith 2022, 173). For example, I find it offensive how restaurants force their managers or supervisors to report anyone going through the garbage looking for the daily share of “waste.” Such ill-hospitable “policies” which say “we cannot feed you because we own our trash” is a case of eco-apathy and the emptying of values from cosmology. Only seeing one’s moral duties in terms of legal positivism is a denial of one’s pragmatic responsibility as well as a failure of caring for others as passers-by in their irreplaceable dignity (whether human or nonhuman). What is frustrating is that developed countries have the means to feed the world, but how come we have avoided attempts to solve this problem by turning away the hungry and homeless, like many of our favorite restaurants? Should one be held to a higher moral standard if you have the resources to remedy prolonged human suffering? Are my *local* duties more immediate and carry a greater moral obligation than my *global* ones? In abandoning the global category, such as Kantian universalization as discussed in the section on Jonas’ imperative, for an ecological one we can embrace a pluralistic interpretation which has a pragmatic basis in ecohumanism.

Transcending the traditional Western binaries is a main impetus of Latour’s philosophy and speaks to his judgment about the reality of alternative facts. In one of his last books *Down to Earth*, Latour recognized how the fruits or successes of political ecology have never been commensurable with the stakes at hand. “We must note in all fairness that ecology succeeded so well in transforming everything into vigorous controversies—from beef to the climate, by way of hedges, humid zones, corn, pesticides, diesel, fuel, urban planning, and airports—that every material object has taken on its own ‘ecological dimension’” (2018, 45). “Latour argues that we should replace the social in the surround of the physical: there are no people, practices, institutions, conventions, truths, without nonhuman things. Without nonhuman things, he points out ‘the social’ is an entirely inert mysterious powerless essence that doesn’t do or explain anything. (In this it is like ‘consciousness.’)” (Sartwell 2017, 197). Our philosophies are an intimate feature of the universe. “If the world is, as we experience it, unfinished and open to the human contribution, our adoption of a philosophy which not only holds that men are free but urges the full use of that freedom, will indeed change the shape of reality” (Dooley 1975, 176). Like James’ humanism as a unifying theme of his pragmatism, I read Skolimowski as arguing that a non-humanistic “objective” view of reality is impossible, especially while confronting the eco-traumatic. Latour’s ecological class moves across all divides in seeking to reformat the ecological infrastructure of societies. The new ecology of humanity is transdisciplinary and

pluralistic. Establishing an ecological class guided by Jonas's reverential imperative and Sloterdijk's spheropolitics of co-immunity aims to overcome the bifurcations of older humanisms. "The move that eventually will realign physical-material anthropology with cultural anthropology Latour casts as akin to the move that will reconnect the sciences to the humanities. Such is the case since, in Latour's view, all moves of this sort work across the *same* divide—the now derelict modernists divide between nature and culture" (Blok 2020, 214). Ecohumanism and eco-philosophy are compatible, so I argue, with Latour's envisioning of an ecological class.

Conclusion

Moving into a trans or posthumanism is akin to accepting a color-blind society when there is more work to be done in the areas of racial social justice. These are half-hearted measures at best. One is struck by the escapist attitudes accompanying such sweeping transitions into ahistorical, futuristic fantasies. This article has attempted to show how we are tasked with re-humanizing ourselves, as much as possible, given our complicitness in causing and suffering eco-trauma. Environmental conservation, protection, and sustainability involves a certain radical repair or healing of the soul. Without accepting a naive and presumptuous anthropocentrism, we can still take seriously renowned physicist Freeman Dyson who quipped: "Looking at all the 'coincidences' which have occurred in the evolution of the cosmos, we cannot escape the conclusion that the cosmos behaves as if it had known that we were coming." Unlike Heidegger's demand that philosophy turn away from the idols of humanism and be gripped by being-in-the-world and its "hardness of fate," Skolimowski takes the task of eco-philosophy to be about healing through reverential thinking. Philosophy's ultimate task lies in home-making, to make a home wherever one finds oneself. Home, in the Greek sense of *eco*, is more than a dwelling—it is a place of hospitality, friendship, and belonging. *Eco*-philosophy seeks a new concept of humanity beyond the rational and Faustian selves, which includes *Dasein*. Skolimowski's eco-philosophy is a being at home in reverential thinking while seeking not to take for granted the gifts or grace of Gaia's happenings. As an alternative to fundamental ontology, Heidegger would have been better served by adopting eco-philosophy for overcoming modernity's pervasive mood of homesickness. It may have been the non-romantic, less-ghostly alternative that he was searching for.

Not only do we not benefit from feelings of powerlessness and helplessness, but it is likely to ignore the power of repair, healing, and what Sloterdijk calls relief. Working on ourselves and the planet is not about self-torment but self-care. "Relief is thus an austerity mechanism: a way of stopping the temptation to overexert oneself. Its main effect comes from an immunization to immediacy—whether that of surplus energy expenditure in spontaneous actions or that of a flooding by dangerously de-automated perceptions" (2016, 660). Immunization to immediacy is compatible with eco-philosophy's warning that to rush always goes against grace. Our psychosocial co-immunity must respect and cooperate with the atmospheric immunological structures. No new technology, ideology, nor culture will provide a solution in themselves. Human cultures are unscrewing ourselves from what Charles Taylor called the "great disembedding" from nature and community to a new transcendence of re-embeddedness. An ecological class led by Jonas's imperative of ecological responsibility along with co-immunism's anthropology of Earth-citizenship gives us a more complete ecohumanism, without having to capitulate to the fashionable trends of post- or transhumanism.

Eco-philosophy embraces Goethe's wise counsel with its own twist. To treat man as he is, Goethe taught, is to debase him. To treat him as they *ought* to be is to in-grace him. Skolimowski extends Goethe's reverential thinking to the world as a sanctuary: "to treat the world as it is, is to debase it. To treat the world as it ought to be is to in-grace it." An ethics of passers-by is, therefore, demanded and provided by an ecological humanism of co-immunity. As ambassadors over an ecological-social-spiritual nexus involving the *use and abuse* of nature we will have to decide what it means to live in an all-too-human manner.

Notes

1. Skolimowski writes: "Ecological Humanism is not a new label for old things, nor simply pouring old wine into new bottles. I must point out, in particular, that Ecological Humanism has little to do with traditional humanism; and it quite sharply separates itself from Marxist or Socialist humanism, which calls (along with other humanism) for the appropriation of Nature to man" (1990, 45).
2. Additionally, Skolimowski finds that absolutist and objectivist positions normally "hedge and opt for some kind of environmental/instrumental values: We must preserve environments because, in the long run, they feed us. This clearly is not a satisfactory philosophical eco-ethics" (ibid.).
3. Sloterdijk asserts that politics and philosophy are especially relevant in turbulent times since "each in its own way, are arts of worrying about the world as a whole" (ibid.).
4. "Immunity, in other words, is not merely a biopolitical objective or program, but also—if not more so—a result of spatio-atmospheric transformations under late modernity" (ibid.).
5. Smith remarks: "As an ideal for living humans, fully extended responsibility seems to dissolve into impracticality and go against the spirit of limitation in a responsibility system. Yet the agenda of responsible agents could evolve in this direction; in fact, we are now in the midst of a struggle to expand the circle of moral and political consideration" (ibid.).

References

- Amery, Carl and Hermann Scheer. 2001. *Klimawechsel. Von der fossilen zur solaren Kultur*. Munich: Kunstmann.
- Blok, Anders. 2020. "The Anthropologist, the Moralist, and the Diplomat." *Common Knowledge* 26(2): 212-226.
- Castro, Eduardo Viveiros de. 2016. "On the Modes of Existence of the Extramoderns." In *Reset Modernity!* edited by Bruno Latour, 491-495. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chagani, Fayaz. 2014. "Critical Political Ecology and the Seductions of Posthumanism." *Journal of Political Ecology* 21: 424-436.

Crawford, Kate. 2021. *Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Dooley, Patrick K. 1975. *Pragmatism as Humanism: The Philosophy of William James*. Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co.

Fesmire, Steven. 2001. "Ecological Humanism: A Moral Image for Our Emotive Culture." *The Humanist* 61(1): 27-30.

Hategan, Vasile-Petru. 2021. "Promoting the Eco-Dialogue through Eco-Philosophy for Community," *Sustainability* 13(8): 4291.

Jonas, Hans. 1984. *The Imperative of Responsibility. In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*. Translated by Hans Jonas and David Herr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kipnis, Andrew B. 2015. "Agency Between Humanism and Posthumanism: Latour and His Opponents." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5(2): 43-58.

Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

---. 2013. *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

—. 2018. *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Madhani, Aamer and Seung Min Kim. 2023. "Biden Exhorts World Leaders at the UN to Stand up to Russia, Warns Not to Let Ukraine 'be Carved up' | AP News." Accessed September 23, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/biden-2023-unga-us-leadership-trump-04b25cd42d03caf194def2862f6eb8d5>.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1968. *The Will to Power*. Edited by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books.

Pogge, Thomas. 2008. "Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty." In *The Global Justice Reader*, ed. Thom Brooks. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 51-72.

Sartwell, Crispin. 2017. *Entanglements*. Albany: State of New York Press.

Sloterdijk, Peter. 2013. *Bubbles: Spheres. Volume 1: Micro Sphereology*. Translated by Wieland Hoban. Los Angeles: Semiotexte(e).

—. 2016. *Foams: Spheres*. Volume 3: *Plural Sphereology*. Translated by Wieland Hoban. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

—. 2018. *What Happened in the 20th Century?* Translated by Christopher Turner. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

—. 2020. *After God*. Translated by Ian Alexander Moore. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Smith, Steven G. 2022. *Full Responsibility: On Pragmatic, Political, and Other Modes of Sharing Action*. Albany: State University of New York.

Skolimowski, Henryk. 1981. *Eco-Philosophy: Designing New Tactics for Living*. London: Marion Boyars Publishers.

—. 1990. "For the Record: On the Origin of Eco-Philosophy." *Trumpeter* 7(1): 44-48.

—. 1991. *Dancing Shiva in the Ecological Age*. Delhi: Clarion Books.

—. 1992. *Living Philosophy: Eco-Philosophy as a Tree of Life*. London: Arkana.

—. 1994. *The Participatory of Mind: A New Theory of Knowledge and of the Universe*. London: Arkana.

Stengers, Isabelle. 2011. *Thinking with Whitehead: A Free and Wild Creation of Concepts*. Translated by Michael Chase. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Weinfurter, Jaroslav. 2023. "Security beyond Biopolitics: The Spheropolitics, Co-Immunity, and Atmospheres of the Coronavirus Pandemic." *International Political Sociology* 17: 1-22.