

Chapter 21

Cultural Symbolizations of a Sustainable Future

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The world is a community of organisms; these organisms in the mass determine the environmental influence on any one of them; there can only be a persistent community of persistent organisms when the environmental influence in the shape of instinct is favorable to the survival of the individuals. Thus the community as an environment is responsible for the survival of the separate individuals which compose it; and these separate individuals are responsible for their contributions to the environment.¹

A philosophy of sustainability does not arise merely through efforts to conceptualize the material fact that there is an ecological interdependence between humanity and ecosystems of the earth, or the cosmos for that matter. It only arises if we also engage in a process of cultural symbolization that successfully articulates possible categories of mutual responsibility for a sustainable future of the interaction between humanity and ecosystems.² In his discourses on environmental philosophy – *Symbolism* (1927) – Alfred N. Whitehead indicates that no environment is a priori bound to be favorable either to the existence of organisms or to their happiness. Really, for Whitehead, any community of organisms can only become or remain self-sustainable (persistent) in their environment if its systems of symbolisms are successful in expressing mutual sustainability, especially in terms of the multiple layers of the environment that surround the organism's self-organization. Hence, the quest for a philosophy of sustainability would amount to the formulation of new visions of "happy symbolizations" that, in all constitutional uncertainty, would allow for humanity to serendipitously partake in the mutual transformation of all organisms and environments.

In this context, sustainability would express a discourse on *fortunate* life (and its recourses and transformations) that does not preclude humanity as an emergent evolutionary feature of the very same environmental complexity it has left, as a

contingent appearance of an intersection of environments by which it has been shaped, and as a creative transgression into unprecedented constellations of organisms and environments in the future of the universe.³ Nevertheless, sustainability will only name *happy* symbolizations of such a fortunate future if, as Gilles Deleuze reasons about Whitehead, we presuppose this world to be constituted by profound creativeness; that is, if we live in a “chaosmos” of unprecedented transformations of organisms and environments in the midst of their always uncertain structures – their unexpected appearances and their inevitable disappearances.⁴ Only if we understand that “nature” is not complicit with our existence and happiness, but that it is patient with our involvement to further our fortunate existence, will we be freed from any fate hindering us from appreciating this fortune that we *share* with the chaosmos. The first insight in sustainability is that of the shared contingency of humanity within the chaosmos.

Sustainability as Philosophical Problem

Sustainability is a notoriously elusive term like life, nature, culture, justice, or beauty. It is by no means neutral to humanity’s survival but rather is an expression of the very means of such a survival. It becomes only virulent in situations of its absence; that is, at points when the survival of humanity is imperiled; and its meaningful application involves a broad scientific understanding of the mechanisms of material cycles that hold together all inorganic and organic matter on physical, chemical, biological, social, and cultural levels. Sustainability has a hybrid identity; that is, it partly describes cycles of energy transformation and partly prescribes our understanding of the inherent mechanisms of natural cycles as mandatory for human survival. Moreover, it names the conscious and conscientious “development” of humanity within its environmental limits; that is, it is visionary in imagining ideal states of such a future entanglement of nature and culture in a smooth, complex cycle of cycles that activate us toward the realization of such ideal states.⁵

Sustainability is inherently scientific and philosophical; it concerns investigations in eco-cycles and raises questions of human involvement.⁶ Ideally, it is not just anthropocentric but ecological in nature, and not only geocentric but cosmological in scope. But even if it addresses the whole biosphere and, beyond that, the physical constitution of the universe as it immediately plays into the generation and disappearance of life-circles, it remains a human concept for reasons of human survival.⁷ Even if it focuses on humanity as the very problem and would wish humanity to disappear, this would be a *human* disappearance such that, if humanity does not deserve to live because of its destruction of nature, in the moment of its disappearance humanity would have *become* humane with regard to the ecosphere. It is a conceptualization of the very intertwining of humanity with nature that has been conceived of as a function of harmonious survival and life in myriad entangled eco-cycles.⁸

The current use of the term “sustainability” indicates a set of cultural symbolizations by which this entanglement is addressed in its descriptive, prescriptive, and visionary dimensions. This set includes facts of environmental sciences and discussions of sociology, it formulates quantitative and qualitative measures for survival over and against extinction, preservation over and against destruction, eco-justice

over and against suppression, and reparation over and against exploitation; and it envisions a new togetherness of earth and humanity in their mutual advancement.⁹ Its simplest description would be of the following: a *set of symbolic instruments* of analysis and rules of engagement for an economic, social, political, and cultural activation, which would allow for an *infinite perpetuation* of a “state” of balanced recycling of all forms of energy, matter, and ideas that *does not exhaust itself* in this process of being constantly transformed by natural and cultural metabolisms.

In fact, in its philosophical inclinations the concept of sustainability involves a spiritual movement that, beyond all technical issues of environmental conservation and the adaptive management of ecosystems,¹⁰ wants to address the entanglement of humanity within this chaosmos as its inherent expression and, especially in its mental abilities, as a natural part of its fate. Eco-feminism and deep ecology, land ethics and holistic environmentalism, eco-justice, and the utopia of an eco-human peace stand for nothing less than a redefinition of humanity, its place in the eco-cosmos, and its possible future with the chaosmos; a future redirection of the parochial divisions (e.g., into sciences and humanities) in humanity’s endeavor to understand the world and to activate for a different future.¹¹ Sustainability names the painful absence of such a future, addressing the present as precisely not geared toward liberation from mechanisms of power employed by capitalism, consumerism, the fact–value divide, ethnic and religious wars, and ideological manipulations for special interest profits, as well as a general fatigue of utopias of peace as the result of such a redefinition and redirection.

The term “sustainability” entertains at least these three meanings. First, it names the ability of a form of life to survive on the basis of its material substratum such that it does not exhaust its recourses of energy transformation; this is the *external* self-sustenance of a group of organisms in their environment. Second, sustainability names the very ability to perpetuate the identity of a form of life so that, in its transformation, it does not exhaust its own existence by mere extinction or evolutionary adaptation such that one could no longer recognize its ongoing existence; this is the *internal* self-sustenance of identity. Third, sustainability names the mutual entanglement of organisms and environments in their ability to sustain their respective integrity, diversity, development, or balances through one another; this is the *universal* sustenance of divergent evolutionary developments, emergences, and relative independences of forms of life in their respective or shared environments.

Whitehead calls the first meaning the *self-grounding* of societies of organisms within a given environment.¹² Just as poststructuralists do later, he banishes the second one as misplaced essentialism.¹³ We can, with Deleuze, call the third one “a parallel evolution.”¹⁴ If we allow the second one—identity—to collapse, everything changes: sustainability would become a concept of becoming multiplicity; its direction would fail to find a measure of *permanence* and would instead embrace the value of *intensity*.¹⁵ Sustainability would become a concept that now asks how intensity, gained by organisms as internal environments of other organisms and embedded in wider environments that are their own organisms for ever wider environments (first meaning), can be sustained through the mutual movement of organisms and environments one through the other (third meaning).¹⁶ *This* – “seeking intensity, and not preservation”¹⁷ – I suggest, and *not* self-identical survival, is the philosophic problem of sustainability. If so, *external* sustainability is about a

harmonics of intensity (contrast),¹⁸ and *universal* sustainability will be about the very conditions of the possibility of a world that would allow for the mutual immanence of all organisms and environments.¹⁹ *Internal* sustainability, however, transmutes into “creativity”²⁰ – the promise of ever newly becoming multiplicity.

General Economy and Dispossession

Capitalist economy is, besides the obvious omnipotence of monetary means of exchange, based on two principles: first, that the sphere of energy transformation in which goods are produced and consumed is only externally related to that of the recourses used in production and the wasteland left behind by its consumerism; and, second, that the recourses and means of production as well as the means of distribution for consummation are locally limited and, hence, must be strategically controlled by mechanisms of displacement and war in order to secure one’s own recourses and to be able to expel the waste into the non-locus of an outside.²¹ These principles are paradoxically related: while *universally* the first presupposes an infinite depth of resources and an infinite space of outland for disposed waste, *locally* the second implies a scarceness of recourses, means, and places of production and consummation. Together they urge an external expansion of the realm of control over recourses and means through exploration and possession of new areas of exploitation, and an internal creation of exchange values for the maximization of profit in substituting possession with monetary means – as the very potential for possession.

Both conditions are wrong. The first is obviously vitiated since neither our recourses for production are infinite nor can we expand indefinitely into empty spaces to turn them into wastelands after consummation.²² Indeed, the very ecological recovery of cyclic processes as the natural behavior of matter has opened the capitalist closure of hermetic production–consummation to an ecological resource–waste cycle that demands the recycling of limited resources as a means of sustaining the economic basis of humanity’s survival.²³ As soon as it became clear that the law of the conservation of energy implies that the metabolism of energy is not based on an indefinite external expansion of resources and wastelands but on an exchange of forms of energy, ecological cycles became *the place* for economic production and consummation.²⁴ Since on no level of environmental complexity is there a “free lunch,” all transformation of energy must sustain its own cycles of generation and consummation. Even more importantly, in such cycles, nothing can be possessed that is not borrowed, that must be set into the flux of the ecological cycles, and that finally must always be “paid back” into these cycles.²⁵

The second principle is contested, not only by the logic of energy exchange, but by the way in which natural cycles borrow energy. Georges Bataille in his “general economy”²⁶ has reversed the prejudice of scarcity as an evolutionary urge for survival with his insight that the very source of all modes of energy exchange on earth is the abundance of the energy emitted from the sun and the evolutionary ways to transform this energy into all kinds of forms of eco-cycles. They sustain themselves from the overflow and excess of this energy transmission. While this solar energy is also “borrowed” insofar as the sun will eventually burn out, on earth it creates more energy than necessary and, hence, leads to strategies to store this

surplus such that “something” seems to become exempt from the ecological cycle of production, transformation, and consummation.²⁷ Bataille’s basic insight is that it is not scarcity but abundance that leads to the realm of *surplus* which may be utilized for the *possession* of energy (or money). This possessed surplus then defines the very power structures that generate the illusion of an infinity of resources and wastelands so as to direct themselves toward the maximum profit that enters the economic process only as a “gift” from this theft.²⁸

While for Bataille the excess of energy may be given back either in the form of the growth of the economy or its consummation as luxury, its consummation becomes a necessity when growth exhausts its “space” and becomes impossible, except in its own consummation through all forms of war. Since growth is bound to be doomed by the reversal of the first principle, that is, the exhaustion of expansion, consummation in the form of non-profit also becomes a necessity. In other words: the non-functional consummation of surplus energy as *art* and the non-profitable infusion of surplus energy in the form of *sharing* the processes of the transformation of energy with the environment without return become mandatory for the very self-sustenance of natural and human societies.²⁹ Since in this regard art and ecology become only two sides of this process of dispossession of borrowed energy and its transformation into values other than monetary exchange values, their very sustainability as *shared abundance* is not a matter of permanence for survival but that of intensities within processes of sharing.

Intensive values,³⁰ not based on an exchange in the realm of power over energy transformation but as dispossession of profit, bind art and ecology to aesthetics, ethics, and justice;³¹ they are virtues,³² or as Deleuze says, *virtuals*,³³ that cannot be expressed in terms of power of possession and its derivatives. In fact, these values, virtues, and virtuals are directed against the inherent violence of such powers of profit and functionality.³⁴ Bataille describes them in terms of the desire for (lost) *intimacy* with animality like “water in water”³⁵ that we have left behind in becoming human in terms of the creation of realms of objects of functionality of empty means for always new means – empty of values that, non-functionally, would grant satisfaction to our strivings and desires as aims, goals, or inherent ends that cannot be exchanged as means for other means.³⁶ Baudrillard has taken this thought to its utmost consequence: the world cannot be exchanged.³⁷

Conception, Perception, Affection: The Art of Valuation

Virtuals only appear in a different perception of the world that allows us to experience a *non-functional* access to organisms and environments, *dispossessive* of powers of subjection and objection when *in our experience* we can feel, conceive, and gain insight into a non-functional worth in itself – the dignity of art and of ecological cycles.³⁸ Four shifts in our conception of organisms and environments will establish the sensibility of a different perception and affection of their sustainance – not as a defense of possessive permanence, but as the recycling of intensity.³⁹

First, we must deconstruct enlightened substantialism, which has created a conceptual isolation of *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (Descartes), an isolation of sense-experience from the environment (Hume), and an isolation of projective subjectivity from “nature” and, hence, the “bifurcation” of aesthetics and practice from theory

(Kant) that Whitehead⁴⁰ describes in a similar way as Derrida: as the conceptual isolation of “presentational immediacy”⁴¹ justified by a metaphysics of presence.⁴² In rooting experience in consciousness and in viewing consciousness as the root of a self-sustaining unification, we obtain a logocentric presence of things that, in fact, hides, oppresses, and erases their own inherent environmental multiplicity, difference, and relationality, which actually constitutes this “sub-jective” (subordinating) consciousness, deconstructing it, at the same time.⁴³ Subjectivity and subjection are of the same essence: namely, that of the colonizing and all-pervading power (Foucault, Butler) over energy transformation (capital) that exchanges the world (Baudrillard) for the illusion of its control as “nature” through the possession of surplus production (Bataille). This “naturalization” of the power of subjection really creates a world of objects as material for manipulation (Bataille).⁴⁴ This has been the trick of substantialism ever since the division of the world into Ideas and sensible beings (Plato), form and matter (Aristotle), not to mention the bifurcation of environments and organisms from production and consummation.⁴⁵ For Whitehead, this bifurcation creates a “civilized” world from slavery – the “substratum” of the free world.⁴⁶

Second, the newly regained conceptual recognition of our own bodily existence within environments has taken on many different forms in current philosophical discourses: the reconsideration of the Platonic *khora* as the all-relational *Within* of Ideas and sensible things in Derrida, Kristeva, Bataille, Deleuze, and Whitehead – as the surname of *différance* that deconstructs unities of subjection into multiplicities of becoming;⁴⁷ as the pre-symbolic realm of bodily diffusion;⁴⁸ as the “water in water” of the intimacy with our own animality;⁴⁹ as the sieve of the immanent consistency of multiplicities;⁵⁰ and as a medium of inter-communication.⁵¹ In all of these approaches, which I view as essentially opening experience to the multiplicity of the entanglements of environments and organisms, we meet the paradoxical experience through which we transform sub-jective possession of conscious unity into dispossessed intensities of multiplicities. We cannot “possess” it (be united with it), since we experience *choric* intensities, multiplicities, differences, and connections only in the state of expulsion from innocence: as lost multiplicities, as lost orgiastic connectivity, as lost communication, as abjection and poetic inconsistency.⁵²

Third, the access to the realm of intensities can only be approximated through the dissolution of the sustainance of possessive identities. It is in this approximation that we gain access to values, virtues, or virtuals. Derrida’s *différance*, which acts as a spatiotemporal deferral of identities, opening the wound of multiplicity in the midst of logocentric possessiveness, is a conceptual witness to this contrast of the deconstruction of sub-jective unities and processes of liberating intensive multiplicities – so is Deleuze’s and Whitehead’s deconstruction of substantial, hierarchical, arboreal stratifications of reality with non-hierarchical, univocal, rhizomatic, multiplicities of spatiotemporal events and their differential interconnectivity.⁵³ The non-functional character of values, virtues, or virtuals of worth in the midst of the experience of spatiotemporal events is their very intrinsic characteristic insofar as it characterizes environmentally conditioned organisms and environments of other organisms as continuous in their transitoriness *in these events*. This fleeting, non-hierarchical, univocal, rhizomatic intersection is the place of intensities in events of spatiotemporality, an intersection that decodes these events

as a process of valuation.⁵⁴ Hence, “the element of value, of being valuable, of having value, of being an end in itself, of being something which is for its own sake,” must not be omitted in any account of an event as the “very texture of [intensive] realization in itself.”⁵⁵

Fourth, the conceptualization of intensities through processes of value-creation must, as its basic or transcendental condition, admit that ecological connectivity and diversification is not in any sense fixed, as suggested by the material mechanicism. Instead of Descartes’s reduction of the bodily character of material processes to a merely empty *res extensa* that legitimates filling this emptiness with our own possessions of space and time, we must (with Whitehead and Deleuze) suppose a basic or transcendental creativeness of the chaosmos.⁵⁶ It allows for connectivity as novelty such that cyclic repetition is never bound by repetition of the same but by articulation of the conditions of the sustainance of intensities in the repetition of novelty, difference, and divergence.⁵⁷ In fact, the very ecological appearance of logocentric consciousness, for Whitehead, is an evolutionary emergent of creativeness, a gift of advantage in the struggle for survival within changing environments – partly evolutionary pressure toward survival and, hence, sustainance of permanence, partly intensification within a self-sustaining nexus of societies of organisms and, hence, sustainance of intensity.⁵⁸ While consciousness “is the acme of emphasis,”⁵⁹ the reduction to simplification to the same, it is also a “product of art,” the surplus, the “morbid overgrowth of functions which lie deep in nature,”⁶⁰ that is, of creative artificiality (non-functionality) within the chaosmos itself.

Here art and ecological connectivity coincide: as the conscious recourse of values, virtues, and virtuals, as creative processes of non-functional connectivity that sustains intensities instead of preservation. This perception of the chaosmos by a “conscious consummation” of the all-assuming power of “presentational immediacy” becomes the art of valuation.⁶¹ It accesses the pre-symbolic realm of *khora* (of multiplicities) such that we find ourselves in an indefinite and undetermined resonance between conscious immediacy and chaotic intensity.⁶² This is what Whitehead calls “symbolization” – the *arbitrary* process of signification within “presentational immediacy” and “causal efficacy.”⁶³ As in Derrida, we cannot escape signification, but in its very process of resonating symbolization becomes profoundly contingent, a process of infinite negotiation. By avoiding any counter-identifications of ecosphere and humanity, this symbolization is always *cultural* symbolization since it articulates the *artificiality* of the chaosmos in all of its events of eco-connectivity itself.⁶⁴ The *art* of valuation, then, is the ability to become the medium of communication between the ecosphere and humanity such that the self-sustainance of human and non-human societies alike creates, establishes, and negotiates values, virtues, and virtuals that can express their mutual creative connectivity as harmonics of intensities by avoiding an “unfortunate evolution”⁶⁵ through their mutual destruction.

Decomposition/Symbolization

Sustainability is the ability to always negotiate anew the arbitrary arrangements of concepts, percepts, and affects in such a way that they can express the connectivity

between consciousness and ecosphere as a *happy* coincidence of structural harmony and chaotic intensity, or between organic and orgiastic movements of chaotic bodies.⁶⁶ The art of valuation is the ever new creation, feeling, and praxis of values, virtues, and virtuals that allow the eco-connectivity to become *momentarily* transparent in the *event* of their spatiotemporal connection in the respective bodies, organism, environments, and ecosystems. In other words, while the symbolization between consciousness and biosphere is *arbitrary*, its *contingency* is not a mere fantasy (a subjective projection) – which would entrap us again in the artificiality of the sub-jection of “nature” – but expresses *the very connectivity* between them; and although the happy coincidence is always a matter of *creative invention* it is, at the same time, a matter of their *mutual intervention* as modes of perception, affection, and conception.

Sustainable symbolization always works only as a mutual decomposition of any substantial isolation *between* immediacy and intensity.⁶⁷ While the former creates the *intensity of immediacy*, closed within a logocentric reflex of subjection of the ecosphere under the seemingly independent “mind,” the latter lives in an *immediacy of intensities*, as “water in water,” as instinctive animality or material causality. Their *connectivity*, however, is haunted by *mutual expulsion* such that their cultural symbolization can only reach sustainable values, virtues, and virtuals of the intersection of humanity and ecosphere *in* places of the danger, places of mutual monstrosity, dissolution, and destruction.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, since values, virtues, and virtuals can only be gained by this connectivity, they must be gained *in the spaces* of this danger and by risking decomposition.⁶⁹ Kristeva speaks of the danger of insanity in the approach of the inconsistency of *khora* that not only becomes transparent in poetry but also needs its disguise;⁷⁰ Deleuze warns of the decomposition of the human face in becoming a “body without organs”⁷¹ (without hierarchical organization) through differentiation into pure multiplicity;⁷² Derrida cannot avoid the risk of utter meaninglessness of *différance* in its indefinite deferral of sense;⁷³ Bataille knows of the conscious consummation of consciousness as utter sacrifice.⁷⁴

Sustainability may only be addressed *from* this dangerous place and, hence, is *necessarily arbitrary* because of this *decompositional connectivity*. Accordingly, the art of valuation is a negotiation of fire: in this fire, values, virtues, and virtuals are created and dismembered. The *art* is to go through the fire of decomposition such that permanence, but not intensity, might be lost. Similar to Deleuze’s “body without organs,” Whitehead addresses the problem of sustainability as an “art of life”;⁷⁵ that is, the symbolic negotiation of the arbitrary eco-connectivity through the emergence of *orgiastic* bodies *within* organic bodies – of pure Life (novelty) within structures (identity).⁷⁶ Since in the complex formation of “cosmic societies” and their structural repetition of the same, a nexus might appear that cannot “be construed purely in terms of environmental obligations,” it would become so much the harbinger of novelty that in the “emergence of life”⁷⁷ it might lose its very social character, becoming an “entirely living nexus.”⁷⁸ Precisely this chaotic connectivity of pure multiplicity will eventually destroy the organism, which it harbors as its environment or the organism, or the organism will rid itself of this instability in favor of its own survival. Whitehead relates the mutual devouring in nature to the restitution of organic order in the midst of this orgiastic Life.⁷⁹

In avoidance of this mutual decomposition, cultural symbolization is the negotiation of humanity and ecosphere in their mutual connectivity of isolation or

expulsion. When the “obligations of social conformity” overflow into the arbitrariness of Life, the “secure instinctive response” of societies must find “various intricate forms of symbolic expression of the various purposes of social life.”⁸⁰ Such symbolic expression must find the surplus of artificial arbitrariness in the chaosmos and the surplus of chaosmic values, virtues, and virtuals in the art of symbolization such that they can negotiate purposes that allow for the ever new, creative, and “happy” mutual symbolic transference between humanity and ecosphere:

Thus mankind by means of its elaborate system of symbolic transference can achieve miracles of sensitiveness to a distant environment, and to a problematic future. But it pays the penalty, by reason of the dangerous fact that each symbolic transference may involve an arbitrary imputation of unsuitable characters. It is not true, that the mere workings of nature in any particular organism are in all respects favorable either to the existence of that organism, or to its happiness, or to the progress of the society in which the organism finds itself. The melancholy experience of men makes this warning a platitude. No elaborate community of elaborate organisms could exist unless its systems of symbolism were in general successful.⁸¹

Viral Intervals of Happy Transfer

Cultural symbolization is the symbolic transference of *such* arbitrary characters (values, virtues, virtuals) between humanity and ecosphere that successfully provide the disposition for “miracles of sensitiveness to a distant environment, and to a problematic future.” In this success, we become an elaborate community of organisms with the chaosmos that sustains its multiple intersecting environments as intensities within and between humanity and ecosystems.⁸² The measure for ecological sustainability, therefore, is this successful transference of the *characters* of cultural symbolisms. Although they are “characters,”⁸³ that is, values, virtues, and virtuals, they must *successfully* transfer between organisms in their mutually favorable organization such that, at the same time, they may harbor and further the orgiastic irruption of the entirely living nexus of Life (their characterless multiplicity) by hindering their mutual destruction.⁸⁴ The question, hence, is what in our time and as reflected by the invoked philosophies are such “characters” for a successful symbolic transference between humanity and ecosphere, general economy and universal ecology, consciousness and chaosmos, intensity of immediacy (presence) and immediacy of intensities (multiplicity)? Instead of providing a categorical list, I will – with Whitehead and Deleuze – suggest *four transcendental conditions of sustainability* for the elaborate community of organisms as multiplicities of intensities in their happy transfer.⁸⁵

First, cultural symbolization will be successful in its transfer if it *inverses* the substantialist conditions of the mutual isolation of humanity and ecosphere in the bifurcations of economy and ecology, consciousness and chaosmos, and presence and multiplicity.⁸⁶ Instead of the paradox of universal occupation of, and local competition over, resources and spaces of colonization, the happy transfer of the inversion constitutes *limited* resources and spaces in the form of eco-cycles of mutual

repetition and differentiation, and a *non-functional surplus* of values, virtues, and virtuals that always interferes and invents within the environments of organisms, organisms as environments, and environments as organisms in any event and nexus of their happening.⁸⁷ Their *diffusion* throughout these nexuses not only takes the risk of “an arbitrary imputation of unsuitable characters” as a condition of their “happiness”; but also, this diffusion is the very *risk* of trusting a cultural art – the *artificial intervention and invention* of values, virtues, and virtuals – to be the medium of happy transference.

Second, under the inversed condition, cultural symbolization must implement values, virtues, and virtualities that are *dispossessive* of the substantialist isolations and, hence, affirm the mutual immanence of all environments and organisms and their striving toward intensity of Life.⁸⁸ They will change the way in which our concepts, percepts, and affects relate to their own coming-to-be and creative responsiveness to their inclusive becoming from their environment. By inverting the colonizing violence of the substantialist isolation in our experience, such symbolization will allow for a mutual transparency by means of which we may “express in our actions, our hopes, our sympathies, our purposes, and [by] which we enjoy” ourselves and everything to be included in a “buzzing world, a democracy of fellow creatures.”⁸⁹ A symbolic *transfer* of values, virtues, and virtuals, such as actions, hopes, sympathies, purposes, and enjoyments, that is, *intensities*, to the various non-human multiplicities in the chaosmos is, hence, not an anthropomorphic reduction, but a viral subversion of anthropocentric colonization of the *res extensa* as dead matter. Such an “arbitrary imputation” – as attempted by Whitehead – is not a restitution of subjective subjections of the chaosmos, but – with Bataille and Deleuze – all the more suitable as a dispossessed, infinitive mode of “a life” beyond the life of subjects and objects.⁹⁰

Third, the success of symbolic transfer under the conditions of arbitrariness and creativeness of the chaosmos is always *unprecedented*; that is, it cannot be known before, and can only be won in, the risk of its very loss. The risk of symbolization implies that *cultural experiments of dispossession* become “characters” – values, virtues, and virtualities – of eco-societies as *condition*, not as consequence, of the new way we conceive, perceive, and are affected by the eco-chaosmos; they name non-functional diffusion of surplus energy into the ecosphere as investment into the potential happiness of a sustainable eco-society. In other words: The art of valuation consists in the cultural experiment of such characters of the non-functional surplus of the chaosmos in humanity and between all intersecting environments that, as values, virtues, and virtuals of transference, can be the very *medium* of the sensitiveness to distant environments (mutual intervention) and to a problematic future (creative invention).

Fourth, the sustainability as mediated by cultural symbolizations can address the mutual responsibility of an elaborate community of organisms *only from within* the spaces of ongoing negotiations between persistence and intensity. Sophisticated values, virtues, and virtuals of sustainable dispossession are *only* idealistic fantasies if they are not understood either as born out of the mutual abjection of our bifurcations or as the risk of the loss of identity, persistence, and the very “happiness” of an elaborate community of organisms. Elaborate eco-societies will, therefore, want to further the art and culture of *viral intervals* of valuing, become virtuous in, and being dispossessed by virtuals such as, cyclic communion, mutual dependence,

desubjectified multiplicity, polyphonic harmony, non-persistent intensity, tragic beauty, responsive non-violence, and a sense of peace in the midst of monstrosities of the chaosmos and power-possessed human societies.⁹¹

Cultural symbolizations of a sustainable future are transfers of characters, arts, and cultures of eco-connectivity within substantialist societies. This symbolic transfer is not directed toward an outside, a well of resources, a chaotic wasteland, an empty space for colonization, an external environment, or a vision of an upward evolution beyond humanity. Rather, it is a viral transfer *ad intra*, into the very interiority of societies in which they are always already constituted by, and as, communities of organisms. A culture of eco-transfer must become the multiplicity of viral intervals of Life *within and between* the powers with which we colonize them or abandon them into a nothing or a “natural” evil. The ancient philosophers were seeking this “way within” as a spiritual journey to the roots of our existence. If these “roots,” however, are only the multiplicity of multiplicities in their becoming (Deleuze) or the infinite becoming of events of multiplicities (Whitehead)⁹² that have no ground “outside” (above or beyond), this immanence of the manifold opens subversive concepts, percepts, and affects of viral intervals *in between* as the *intermezzo* of the environment⁹³ within power structures of isolation, subjection, and substantiation. Symbolic transfer *ad intra* is of such sophistication that any society interested, willing, and able to become sustainable, sustaining the intensities in the community of organisms, will need to experiment and experience the dispossession of the powers of colonization, subjection, and substantialization. With endless patience, it will need to become sensitive to the faintest viruses (values, virtues, and virtuals) of such a transfer in the midst of their constant erasure. It will need to achieve this level of sensitivity in order to sense in their non-functional reverence the decisive factors facing the always problematic future of sustaining the intensities of the chaosmos.

Notes

- 1 Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1985), 79.
- 2 Dale Jamieson, *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 1–160.
- 3 John B. Cobb, *Sustainability: Economics, Ecology, and Justice* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007).
- 4 Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1993), 81.
- 5 Andrés R. Edwards, *The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a Paradigm Shift* (Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2005).
- 6 Simon Bell and Stephen Morse, *Sustainability Indicators: Measuring the Immeasurable* (London: Earthscan, 2008).
- 7 Simon Dresner, *The Principles of Sustainability* (London: Earthscan, 2008).
- 8 Bryan G. Norton, *Searching for Sustainability: Interdisciplinary Essays in the Philosophy of Conservation Biology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- 9 William R. Blackburn, *The Sustainability Handbook: The Complete Management Guide to Achieving Social, Economic and Environmental Responsibility* (Washington, DC: Environmental Law Institute, 2007).
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