

“Save the Arctic”

Anthropotechnic Greenpeace and their *Exercises* in Defense of Mother Nature

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Inspired by the thoughts of contemporary philosophy on the relation that human beings have with their natural surroundings, this paper proposes a re-reading of the discourses and practices of environmentalist movements, self-proclaimed “resistance” to current neoliberal global-industrialism. Specifically, this paper looks at the case of the *ecological* calls to take seriously the Arctic ice cap melting. Taking the issue further than conventional military-strategic or logistical-economic analysis of the issue, the paper claims that the various discourses and practices of resistance by the main ecological movements, indebted to the assumptions of “nature” as teleological *ecosystems*, are intrinsically promoting their own “technical” alternative. If their vision of “management of life” is inspired by Darwinian theory and concepts such as “tipping point” in Nature “ecosystems” instead of an explicit security logic, it nonetheless helps reproduce through their appeal to “risk” and “sustainable development” regional exclusions and the global capitalist logic they try to resist. With the help of Foucauldian thinkers and the German contemporary philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, this paper tries to overcome conventional security thinking about “the Arctic” while at the same time pushing further the analysis of “environmentality”. It will, in this matter, observe Greenpeace’s discursive position on “the Arctic”, offering a critical stance on mainstream environmentalism, as well as contributing to interdisciplinary thoughts between critical IPE and security studies, and political theory.

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For the last decade, there has been a growing interest for the Arctic in international relations literature. Unsurprisingly this literature is closely related to the end of the Cold war, which carried hopes for new cooperation between former enemies. However the most recent literature appears to be triggered by something slightly different: natural changes (Roussel & Fossum, 2010: 799-800). Indeed climate change constitutes the conceptual starting ground of the analyses made by political scientists and the said catalyst for the renewed interest for the Arctic by political actors.

The recent rise of global temperature induced by climate change and the consequent acceleration of ice melt has opened the northern frontier to globalization. Until then the Arctic was mostly seen as being out of human reach at the (significant) exception of scattered Inuit communities. In Western minds the Arctic was an ice desert, an inhospitable land beyond modern (Western) civilization where the most noticeable events were happening underneath ice shelves in the form of rival patrols and counter-patrols of nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered submarines (Fossum & Roussel, 2011; see also Huebert, 2011). But things have changed. The Cold war is now confined to history books and less ice means more accessible territories.

The renewed interest in Arctic focuses precisely on this new accessibility as it means: “access to Arctic waters and to offshore nonrenewable resources such as oil and gas; the opening of new Arctic sea lines of communication that might even become navigable year-round; and increases in tourism, human settlement, and *activity* in general” (Roussel & Fossum, 2010: 800; we emphasise). Of these three elements the first two, easier access to abundant unexploited resources¹ and new maritime routes², received most of the political attention. As these new natural conditions triggered by climate change transform the present political *environment* of the Arctic region, its new inclusion in the global world raises a series of political challenges and thus makes of Arctic a (more) relevant political object of analysis or, as we will see in the coming pages, object of polemic movements.

In the words of Simon Dalby, “[e]nvironmental politics is very much about the politics of discourse, the presentation of ‘problems’, and of who should deal with the concerns so specified” (Dalby, 2002: xxxii). Therefore, even if we inscribe ourselves primarily into “disciplinary boundaries” of International Relations, we propose an inter-disciplinary reading of this “environmental” question of the Arctic, from critical security studies to social “movements”, from global political economy to political theory. Hence we propose to understand “security” in

1 According to recent estimates the Arctic region conceals the largest remaining reserve of oil and gas. The numbers are astronomic: 90 billion barrels of oil, 1,700 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids (Bert, 2012: 6-7). Considering the multiple-digit dollar signs that may accompany the exploitation of these resources it is believed the ice melt will lure states and big companies into the Arctic.

2 The current and accelerating ice melt will, it is believed, also lead to the opening in summer of two distinct maritime routes that could shorten transport and assure safer routes that avoid the volatile Middle East. The Northern Sea Route passes north of Russia and is estimated to cut maritime journey from Western Europe to East Asia by a third in comparison to a regular journey through the Suez Canal (Bert, 2012: 8). Better known to Canadian public the (Canadian) Northwest Passage passes through the Canadian archipelago, although Canadian sovereignty over the passage is much debated. Once again this new route shorten maritime journey between Northern Atlantic and East Asia (Lasserre, 2011: 794-5).

the complex question of the Arctic through a “passage” in the ecological thought of Greenpeace, all this following the notion of “environmentality” forwarded by Luke and others of Foucauldian influence. Instead of “security”, understood more often than not on causal and statist grounds³, we follow the call of Peter Sloterdijk to pay attention to the “polemic movement” of “civilization” towards itself, in what he names *general anthropotechnology*. We look forward then to make, in line with the followers of Foucault (which inspired Sloterdijk), another necessary theoretical call to IR (therefore, other “disciplinary” fields).

To understand Greenpeace’s role as a socio-political actor on the Arctic situation, we must review some of our ontological assumptions, especially the ones on Humans and Nature. Sloterdijk offers a specific and very interesting reading. Humans are for him creatures that live in the voluntary (or nor) “paddock of disciplines” (*enclos des disciplines*)⁴. They are always self-crafted by various exercises that are understood following the concept of *anthropotechnics*. For Sloterdijk, under and beyond “labour and interaction” or “*vita contemplativa and vita activa*”, humans *act* on themselves, constitute themselves as *examples* where “actions act back on the actor, labour on the labourer, speech on the speaker, thought on the thinker, emotions on the feeler”. All these actions, Sloterdijk says, hold an ascetic character (*askesis*), an (in)visible and (in)formal character of *exercise* (2011: 160-161). And what for Nature? Nature - or, what’s left of it: we will understand it as a colonized Denature - lose its dichotomous stance in regard to humans. It is now the space of existence, understood as a *human park*⁵ of anthropotechnics. Therefore, our paper proposes a re-reading of an already complex question. As such it is not offering somewhat explicit and “policy-relevant solutions”. However, it offers an extra-usual analysis helping the reader to understand the theoretical underpinnings that fuel this work in progress.

The following is divided in four sections. In the first part, we look at the governmentality approaches as relevant theoretical framework for our analysis, framework that we then link in part two to “environmentality” discussions made by Luke (and others). “Environmentality” will be our bridge to analyze, in part three, the specifics of Greenpeace discourses on the Arctic. As such, Greenpeace offers an important case study on this blending of issues related to social movements, ecological thinking, governmentality-environmentality. Moreover, as we will see in part four, it offers a glimpse on the “limits” of the “environmentality” lens, where Sloterdijk’s discussion on the general anthropotechnology will allow us a necessary theoretical deep-sea diving ending, maybe, on somewhat un-expected sights at Greenpeace, the Human being and “the Arctic”.

Governmentality-Environmentality

The Foucauldian concept of governmentality offers an interesting way to understand the

3 We surely acknowledge the huge and necessary debate in the last twenty years or so on the re-conceptualization of “security” in IR and other fields in security studies. See for example Krause & Williams, 1997; Lipschutz, 1995; Walker, 1993; Huysmans, 2006; Debrix, 1999; Burke, 2002; Neocleous, 2002; Buzan & Hansen, 2009, and many others. Since we lack the space making a complete overview on how IR literature link “security” and “environment”, see for this issue on a “mainstream” side Homer-Dixon (2002) and its concept of ‘environmental scarcity’, and for a very strong answer from the “critical” side (Dalby 2002).

4 Even anarchisms and “chronical indisciplines” are disciplines in alternative paddocks (2011: 160).

5 Sloterdijk later says that we are in a park *and* a circus where humans look at the artists as an ascetic example.

power/knowledge relation hidden in environmental discourses in a non-dichotomic way. In Foucault's words, governmentality is: "the ensemble constituted by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculuses and tactics that allow to exercise this specific, although very complex, form of power which has for target population, for major form of knowledge political economy, for essential technical instrument dispositifs of security"⁶ (Foucault, 2004: 112-3). Seeing the "state" as an amalgam of actors holding rationalities (combining older ones, older amalgams of knowledge coming from the legal ("sovereignty") and the *disciplinary* fields) understood as the (neo)liberal governmentality in our societies, it is not surprising that this approach is cherished in studies of modern (and global) neoliberal capitalism⁷. In this context it offers an interesting frame to study the transformation, in opposition to reduction, of the role of states in managing the economy and to study the emergence of a new subjectivity of *individual responsibility* (see Massumi, 2009; Miller & Rose, 1990)⁸.

More generally governmentality looks at "how governmental power works" and as such focuses on governmental practices and rationality (Lippert, 1999: 295-6). The interest then is not so much on the state, although it remains a significant actor, but on the distribution of functions between different authorities from the state to NGOs and social movements to individuals in accordance to the specific rationality of government that inform the practices of power and the management of the population. Here the population is the object of power, but it is also in a way a subject of power. Reduced to its simplest form the population as individuals play an active role in its own management for "each art of government entail[s] certain conceptions of the nature and obligations of those who [are] its subjects, those who [are] to be governed" (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006: 86; Sending & Neumann, 2006: 656-7; Crowley, 2003/4: 57-9).

The power/knowledge relation is thus central to governmentality analysis, and accordingly the use of *discourses* becomes a crucial methodological tool (see Campbell, 1998; Hansen, 2006 for methodologies in IR; Dillon & Neal, 2008 for an example of specific Foucauldian reading). As Dalby says, "political objects are [...] best understood as discourses: systematic modes of the specification of objects related to procedures for designating, studying and disciplining such entities. They are part of both the social practices of everyday life and international politics. The best way into these matters is often through an explicitly ontological investigation" (Dalby, 2002: xxv). For him, "[t]he most important ontological categories [are those] spatial structures through

6 For Amoore and de Goede (2008: 24), "dispositifs de sécurité" mean "heterogenous assemblages of discursive and material elements for governing social problems"; It is worth knowing technologies for Foucault mix diverse "techniques" (for example, the prison, as location and mode of bio-power/politic) of diverse rationalities. Hence, this brings easily to Sloterdijk later and his "anthropotechnics".

7 Strongly linked to the birth of economics (and utilitarianism), widely used by Malthusian thinking, this rationale of power combines, following the genealogy made by Foucault, that of judiciary binary, disciplines coming from the military barracks, and security devices to control the flow and "optimize" the population. Here the necessity to control the bios in an *anticipative* optic.

8 We will see later how this rationality works for Greenpeace too: on working on *equivalence* and *proportionality* in their cybernetic system of Nature, it proposes, itself to, a specific *ratio*. Indeed, in the *anthropotechnics*, it is more a question of the individual responsibility towards the *exercise of itself*. Greenpeace proposes itself as an *example* to lead the *eco-effort* of self of "society" (this aggregate). This pushing of actions after actions (in what Sloterdijk once said was "humans, the Avalanche *that thinks*"), creates the movement. A general auto-movement of any "subject". But the one they propose is deeply cynical and polemical, built on the polemical "reason" in an economical robe. Hence, our polemical, instead of our "security" question that Luke and Dalby would say is the matter of a "colonial imperial subject". In any case, it is catastrophic. But Greenpeace offers a catastrophic reading that cannot work: "humanity" is not a cosmopolitan "subject". It is an aggregate that cannot learn.

which people order their knowledge of the world” (Dalby, 2002: xxv). As we will see how one understands the space *and* the subject in it is indeed a necessary ethical exercise.

The power/knowledge frame (furthermore) allows to explore how the rationality of government defines the population that is to be managed in relation to its *milieu de vie*, the norms of maximisation/optimization (and corollary exclusions) following which power has to be enacted, and the active participants and their respective roles. In this regard the structure of behaviours that is expected from self-regulating subjects (managed under the holistic “population”) is the result of a permanent re-construction of subjectivities. As such it is not a passive relation where an “objective” subjectivity (or “identity”) is imposed top-down on paralysed individuals. Rather the construction of subjectivities is an active process in which meanings materialise in concrete practices that in turn solidify (or contest) previous meanings (Neumann, 2002: 632-7). Thus the relation between *rationality* (the “normal” social order and expected subjectivity for the governed subjects) and practice (the enactment of this subjectivity - we later analyse them as exercises under the discipline of the “environmental” anthropotechnics built on specific knowledge) takes the form of a continuously spinning circle (be it virtuous or vicious) fixed on a loose axle. This means the rationality is “evolutive” continuously reproduced and challenged by contradictory or divergent discourses and knowledge. It is in this context that one can understand resistance such as Greenpeace environmental activism. Resistance, and Greenpeace, intervenes in the dominant rationality proposing alternative rationalities and relevant subjectivities. As such it is never outside it.

What does this mean for us? First because of its inclusiveness the governmentality frame allows to interrogate the role of NGOs and social movements in the (re)production/support/contestation of the present *hegemonic* (as our neo-gramscian colleague might like it) rationalit(ies) of government, i.e. on the definition of who (or what) is governed and how it is to be governed. Second it offers tools to understand these constructions of subjectivities (and, specifically, the “subject” or as we will see, the Imperial Subject), eventually offering strong ethical orientations.

Foucault’s concepts then give us the means of understanding Greenpeace discourses and actions on Arctic as participation in the governmentality of the Arctic “environment”, or Arctic environmentality. Here a necessary precision is needed. In relation to the environment, authors such as Luke (1995; 1999) and Darier (1996; 1999) propose to complement governmentality with specific attention to the “nature-society interface” (Baldwin, 2003: 419). They do so in two ways. They remind us first that knowledge on “nature” and “the environment” is inscribed in the production of subjectivities and ethics, and second that what constitutes “nature” and “the environment” is itself the results of a particular historical, cultural and political context (Baldwin, 2003: 419-20). We need, having in mind Foucault’s spirit of studying a very *diffuse* power in which many actors follow governmental discourses, bring to the forefront the relation between human and nature. Finally, since “the Arctic” is not a place where “populations” are to be explicitly managed (but for the Indigenous and few other locals), the analytical security relationship implied in a Foucauldian model, where “freedom of movement” of self-responsible individuals is assumed as a corollary to “dispositifs de sécurité”, ought to be slightly sided for now, to offer another kind of general view of “security of the self” and “biopower”. This is why we focus here more on *earthly* “environment”/“*milieu de vie*”, where “the Arctic” is a specific object/subject of inter-*action* for the Western subjects. Bringing the “other” reading of Peter Sloterdijk while methodologically interpreting a case study of NGOs to understand the Arctic

“security” issue might appear beside the point for some readers. But the ethical dimensions of the ontological analysis done by him might offer some “other” (and maybe, not so *strange*) reading. What follows is, you will understand, a (theoretical and methodological) *exercise* of climbing *Mount Improbable* (but not *Mount Impossible*). With this in mind we can ask the questions: what does Greenpeace Arctic environmentalism imply for western subjects? That is how does Greenpeace define nature, who is the normal subject of this environmentalism, and what ethics is promoted?

Anthropotechnic activism: Greenpeace “saves” the Arctic: The dominant “preservational-conservational” environmentalism-complex

Since we look forward to deep-analyze “ecological” movements as part of an ethics quite polemic, we need to stop first in the ecological thought itself: to understand how its “environmentalisms” support and promote diverse “anthropotechnics”⁹ understood as “virtues”. Following Foucault’s “governmentalisms”/“environmentalisms” and their related discursive fields, we should from now on understand and analyze “social movements” on the Arctic as part of a “contra [not so contra] governmental *eco-critique*”: “challenging the ways in which the governmentality of the current economic and social regime enforces its destructive disposition of things and people in ‘the environment’” (Luke, 1997: 196). Social ecological movements might then be composed of many types of “environmentalisms” (i.e. different discursive fields, different problematization/solution, etc.). For the sake of this paper, we play freely with the typologies of Luke and propose that *we should deepen* our reading of the (quite frankly dominant, maybe *hegemonic* (?)) environmentalism-complex that we call “preservational-conservational”. We need to play with their ontological assumptions in order to read “the Arctic” issue and Greenpeace’s response.

Let’s be honest. This “complex” is artificially created for our purpose here. In one way, both sides of the expression can be separated by their own strategies, goals and even “ethics”. For example, Epstein (2006) offers a very useful genealogy on IR “norms” of “environmentalism” in which she explains the tensions between “preservation” (i.e. recreational/educational *use of land*) and “conservation” (i.e. controlled exploitation of *resources*). If we have to state the difference in a metaphorical nutshell, we would say that on the “preservational” side, we find some kind of museological (necrophilic) reflex, where the objective is to protect or hide part of “Nature” from human industrial activity in “parks”, “protected areas” or “natural reserves” (for recreational and educational use). On the “conservational” side, we have a (cybernetic) reading of the Nature-Human relationship, where the focus is on technocratic *management* of (a)biotic Nature in order to perpetuate the sustainability of the human socio-industrial apparatus through a controlled exploitation of (territorial) resources. In any case, both are similar and complementary: this environmentalism-complex presents Nature as an “outside” where the human being *needs to act* upon.

Indeed, this environmentalism complex clearly follows the (neo)liberal rules of capitalist economy¹⁰. The explicit rationale is to balance “Nature” and the “economy” through *human*

9 Anthropotechnics (*anthropotechniques*) in Peter Sloterdijk’s thought, means looking at the means of production of man by man, in a philosophical and anthropological way (see 2000: 86)

10 Therefore, a *neo-colonialist* stance. See, for example, Burke 2002

actions seen through an instrumental rationality lens. Therefore, it is totally dependant on the (disciplinary) concepts of ecosystems, ecology and environment¹¹. These choices, as we will see, have important ontological underpinnings, and therefore, effect the political solutions on the issue of “the Arctic”. As such, two ontological formations seem at the same time to oppose and fuse. “Nature” is, on the first hand,

reduced to a cybernetic system of systems that reappears among the world’s nation-states in those “four biological systems - forest, grasslands, fisheries, and croplands - which supply all of our food and much of the raw materials for industry, with the notable exceptions of fossil fuels and minerals. In turn, the naturally self-regulating performance of these systems can be monitored in an analytical spreadsheet written in *bio-economic* terms, and then judged in equations balancing constantly increasing human population, continually running base ecosystem output given limits on throughput and input (Luke 1997: 81, our emphasis).

On the second hand, and intimately linked to the first ontological move, is the anthropocentric point of view on this “climate de-regulation”¹² issue of Arctic ice-cap melting. Therefore, if Nature is understood as a system of systems, human being’s own systemic survival as part of a wider whole occupies the center of attention. Hence human beings’ survival is *only* possible through its own *activity* in mastering the *bio*-sphere. The latter, composed by the amalgam of the various eco-systems, is reduced to human being’s vital environment dedicated to provide for its needs.

The solutions proposed following this “carboniferous capitalis[t]”¹³ problematization of “the Arctic” issue are rather broad and, quite frankly, known to everyone : “renewable energies”, “sustainability” and “green consumerism” as important via media of *production* (i.e. *productive action*) between offer and demand in a world inhabited by *homo economicus*¹⁴. Just think of

11 For Dalby, “[t]he study of ecology focuses on the interactions between biotic communities of organisms (animals, plants and microorganisms) and the nonliving (abiotic) environment that is in part shaped by the biota [...] There have been frequent assumptions that ecosystems are basically in a state of equilibrium if undisturbed [...] Good resource management practices, in theory, ought to allow the harvesting of biota with a sustained yield if care is taken to make sure that the carrying capacity is not exceeded” (2002: 128-129). Dalby therefore sees in this concept a strong analogy to *territory*: “semipermanent boundaries and a relatively stable mix of internal components” (2002: 129). Indeed, since *environment* is related to the “surrounding”, “this is consistent with the geopolitical practices of security provision premised on the spatial imagination of domestic community within containers threatened by all manner of external dangers” (Dalby 2002: 126); Luke views *ecology* as a discursive construct where nation-states, corporate capital and professional scientific organization have managed to formalize it in “bureaucratic applications and legal interpretations”. Again, the stated objective is to ensure the provision of natural resources by the rational management of centralized state conservation programs (1997: 78-80)

12 We lack here the space to talk about chaos theories underpinning this cybernetic system analysis. Here, the climate “change” (or “de-regulation”) is understood as a *natural* “tipping point”, an *event*, when/where the entire system (and our conception of it) deconstructs itself in an *un-predictable* manner. See, for this conception’s influence in contemporary “scientific” military thinking (Bousquet, 2010). We will see later how *events* are, as such, im-possible to “represent” in discourses, but in the “aftermath”, with heroic/masculine discursive attempts; For a critique of heroic recapture of the *event*, see Bleiker (2001, 2009) and his reading of the concept of “sublime”.

13 An expression of Lewis Mumford reported in Dalby, 2002: 73

14 Therefore, if economical thinking blurs its own ontological stances by giving the “subject” (understood as *mass-consumer*) a “passive” position (instead of being *mass-producer*). For Luke (1997), this focus on the “demand” side instead of the “supply side” de-responsabilize corporate capital and contributes to the lack of transformative potential of this environmentality-complex; Dalby follows on the same idea: “Malthusian arguments have also long

“eco-responsible habits” and all its corollary appeals to “recycling”. For Luke, that is a pure trickery: “[b]y providing the symbolic and substantive means to rationalize resource use and cloak consumerism in the appearance of ecological activism, the cult of recycling as well as the call of saving the earth are not liberating nature from technological exploitation” (1997: 134).

Let’s step back for a minute. Here we have all the elements of “governmentality”: eco-system as “milieu de vie”, neo-liberal subject *acting* following their “desires” understood as market-induced “demands”. In terms specific to “environmentality”, the entire planet is seen as a global political economy of “spaces” to be *used* (by *active subjects*) for “resource creation, scenery provision, and waste reception” (Luke 1997: 68). Then since there are no “virgin” spaces anymore, this environmentality does not preserve/conservate “Nature”, but following Luke, proposes a vision of “Denature”. “Denature” (that we later propose to link to Sloterdijk’s idea of “greenhouse”) is Nature that is workable by humans: nature as a *resource provider*, as system-sustainer, instrumentalized, controlled and dominated/exploited by rational human beings. In such a context the complex techno-industrial knowledge, which many in the Critical Theory and in Frankfurt understood quite well in their manner (for example Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, etc.), serves to analyse and ordinate the whole.

As an external (and feminized) Other to be dominated and controlled, “[c]oupled to positivist epistemologies and contemporary policy discourses based on the technocratic pursuit of knowledge and control, the idea of hostile nature has considerable ideological power” (Dalby, 2002: 125-127). Such a stance has an important consequence on “security” understanding. Indeed some like Thomas Homer-Dixon (1999) openly link “technical advances” as means to “prevent” spirals of socio-political violences (caused by untamed Nature itself, such as “imminent” ice-cap melting).

Two big problems appear from this. First of all the passage from Nature to conservationist’s “Denature” is coupled by the corollary “preservationist” urge to conserve “pristine preserved parts, like pressed leaves in a book, dried animal pelts in a drawer, or a loved one’s mortal remains in a tomb. Nature is dead, but long shall Nature live in the environmentalized forms of rare species, exotic biodiversity, land preserves, and threatened ecosystems” (Luke, 1997: 68). These ecologists’ moves resemble tomb registration and cryogenic picture-framing in what constitute attempts to “perpetuate” the *natural qualities* of what we find in the Denature (Luke, 1997: 71-72). In so doing they create some kind of museum of living (dead) things that could be associated to Agamben’s thanato-politics¹⁵. The concept of Denature as the advantage, as Luke has seen it, of saying the fact that no Nature is now out of human reach. Denature, by itself, opens to the idea that notions such as “park”, arch-type of urban colonial thinking¹⁶, can never

been used as a political strategy to avoid directly discussing the structural causes of inequality [...] It does so by naturalizing scarcity within a larger managerial mode of reasoning that obscures the political economy of both resource-use decision making and the artificial construction of commodity scarcity in many market systems” (2002: 24)

15 We lack the space/time to discuss in details this important concept from Agamben: instead of Foucault and his management of “life” understood as biopolitics, Agamben believes we face more than often the issue of “management of the dead”.

16 Indeed, it might even be thought, as Dalby proposed, as some kind of colonial thinking: “[i]f we are modern, and if modernity is inevitably an urban colonizing system, something has to give” (Dalby 2002:169). For Dalby, “[o]ne of the problems with the technological colonization discourse is that it short-circuits discussions of justice and equity and assumes that further colonization [of (de)Nature] is the human telos” (2002:175).

sketch a total ontological difference between human and nature. Even when it tries to separate culture from environment, urban from rural, civilized humanity from nature, the fence looks quite fuzzy between the “park”, the “creature” and the “park-ranger” (Dalby, 2002: 139-140).

The second problem is the twin ontological assumptions of *harmony* and *equilibrium*. In the words of Dalby, the “dilemma of conservation is that it is premised on preserving that which is changing. Conservation models based on stability of eco-systems or the possibility of precisely calculating sustainable yields are dubious tools” (2002:143). For him, “[a]ccelerating attempts to manage planet Earth using technocratic, centralized modes of control, whether dressed up in language of environmental security or not, may simply exacerbate existing trends” (2002: 145). On this issue, Greenpeace and other activists are more than often (in)voluntarily acting as *zealots* of colonial action, “balancing” to “conserve” man-as-economic-being in its socio-industrial complex.

After the next crucial empirical stop to look at Greenpeace in all its paradoxes, we will offer ways, thanks to Peter Sloterdijk, to theoretically deepen Luke’s and Dalby’s readings of ecological thinking. This will allow us, in the same *moment*, the various ethical thoughts of Sloterdijk: Greenpeace as promoter of Western imperial subject via anthropotechnics.

Greenpeace and the “sanctuary”: discourses on the Arctic

There is no need to present “what” is Greenpeace. With 2.8 million supporters worldwide and a presence in more than 40 countries the movement is a dominant figure of eco-activism that cannot be ignored (Greenpeace, 2013a). The protection of the Arctic region is one of its important struggles to which it dedicated a campaign named “Save the Arctic”. In this campaign Greenpeace invites individuals to sign a petition, which gathered about 3 million signatures (at the time of writing), demanding the establishment of a global sanctuary in the North Pole, and proposes to plant the Flag for the Future, which it did on April 15, 2013, in the seabed of the Arctic Ocean at the exact same place where Russia planted a flag in 2007 (Wilson, 2013).

Greenpeace’s discourse reads as follow. “The Arctic”, an already vulnerable region, is one of the Earth’s ecosystems most affected by climate change. The warming of the region temperature has accelerated ice melting in unprecedented way: “[i]n the last 30 years, we’ve lost as much as three-quarters of the floating sea ice cover at the top of the world” (Greenpeace International, 2012). The ice melt is highly problematic for local Indigenous communities and wildlife. The reduction of ice weakens the natural *habitats*, and eventually the *survival*, of a number of Arctic species among whom the most “popular” are polar bears, narwhals and walrus. By extension the threat to these animals constitutes a threat to some Arctic communities who depend on the local wildlife for food. But the ice melt is not only a devastating “death spiral” for the region (Greenpeace International, 2012). The whole planet is at risk. The Arctic serves as “the world’s refrigerator”, i.e. as a shield against sunlight. “Sea ice reflects light, whereas the dark Arctic Ocean absorbs light. [The problem is that as] sea ice melts, more of the Arctic Ocean is exposed, meaning more sunlight is absorbed. This causes more warming, which in turn causes more sea ice to melt and continues the process.” (Greenpeace, 2013f). In addition warming temperature threatens to melt the permafrost, the Arctic frozen soil. This could lead to the release in the atmosphere of methane captured in the soil. These two phenomenon risk to further accelerate

climate change and global warming and risk leading to the “Arctic Meltdown” (Page et al., 2009: 6). These problems are mainly caused by “dirty” industrial activities, namely oil drilling and industrial fishery. Each in their own way threatens the Arctic ecosystem: through oil spill and unsustainable fishing respectively. In addition to these the Arctic peace is also in danger. The race for resource exploitation led by Nordic countries risks to cause a new “cold war” (Page et al., 2009: 8). Thus countries cannot be trusted for the protection of the Arctic. What is needed is collective actions to pressure governments to sign a multilateral agreement that will create a moratorium over industrial development and global sanctuary to assure the protection of the Arctic environment (Page et al., 2009: 9, 15).

This position from Greenpeace is based on a specific understanding of “nature”, “humans” and the relation between the two that we will now explore in details freely playing with Luke’s environmentalities. In our understanding, Greenpeace’s discourse on Arctic constitutes one of the best examples of the complex amalgam of preservational and conservational *wishes*. Throughout this Greenpeace example, most of the elements linking environmentality thinking and the ethic of Sloterdijk are introduced. Hence, from the reading of Greenpeace on the Arctic, we can open a discussion with Sloterdijk’s ethic to complement a Foucauldian analysis, and therefore, back on the security issue.

Discourses of Greenpeace : Nature vs. Human or Human vs. Nature ?

What then is nature? The nature that Greenpeace talks about can be well understood in the terms elaborated in the definition of the preservational-conservational environmentality complex explored by Luke and others. Nature is both a cybernetic system of systems and Denature. These two faces meet in the construction of a global whole: the many parts of this mechanistic system are no more than dead tools as their existence is limited to specific roles in the larger function of maintaining (human) life. This reality is illustrated in the recurrent rhetoric of the millenary equilibrium. References to this equilibrium appear in positive as well as negative forms: in the composition of a coherent whole that last in time and in the narrative of rupture respectively.

In Greenpeace’s discourse the Arctic form a coherent equilibrium. “Natural” elements such as ice, land, temperature and animals, although all distinct from each other, form together something that is more than the sum of its parts: the Arctic ecosystem. Each element plays a positive role in regard to each other and the completion of their respective function ultimately assure the survival of the ecosystem as a whole, or in other words the accurate balancing of the equilibrium. Thus in Greenpeace’s discourse temperature assures ice and snow, which in turn offers a space where seals can give birth, seals that will end up food for polar bears (Greenpeace, 2013f; Allsopp, Santillo & Johnston, 2012: 3-7). Our argument here is not that these, taken individually, are erroneous observations, but that these “natural facts” are organized in a specific way to render their interrelations systemic. These elements are hierarchized, with the majestic polar bear sitting on the throne of the Arctic ecosystem, and organized in a metaphysical-cosmological mobile whose function, or at least one of its functions, is to maintain itself through time¹⁷. In this regard references to long-gone time such as “[f]or over 800,000 years, ice has been

¹⁷ A first clue of functionality appears with the many “health” metaphors that punctuate the movement’s discourse on Arctic (Greenpeace, 2013b; Greenpeace, 2013d; Greenpeace International, 2012; Page et al., 2009: 3). Health refers to a condition: the absence of illness. It is based on the assumption of the existence of a previous normal condition or “working order” (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). It is the existence of this order that allows

a permanent feature of the Arctic ocean” (Greenpeace International, 2012) reinforce the notion of eternity, continuity and naturality of “the Arctic” ecosystem, hiding elements of change and indeterminacy.

Beyond maintaining itself “the Arctic” ecosystem has a larger function in the global planetary system. As explained earlier “the Arctic” is “the world’s refrigerator”. It keeps the world temperature cooler. In so doing it does not only assure the survival of life on the planet, but most importantly it preserves “the Earth’s ability to sustain *life as we know it*” (Page et al, 2009: 3; we emphasise). “The Arctic” then appears as a system in a world system in which a telos of eternal reproduction of the present status quo is inscribed. In opposition to other narratives of progress that see the utopia in a far distant and much different future Greenpeace’s utopia conflates all time into one. The endpoint is no more than the permanent re-beginning of the present moment. In this context the role of humans is to assure this eternal present, to carry on their shoulders, just as Atlas did before them, the weight of the world.

However before exploring more deeply the relation between nature and humans some elements need to be highlighted. First “the Arctic” millenary equilibrium is delicate. “The Arctic” is characterized by “extreme environmental conditions” (Page et al., 2009: 3), it should consequently not be surprising that it is vulnerable to change (Greenpeace, 2013c; Greenpeace, 2013f; Greenpeace, 2013g; Page et al., 2009: 9). But in so doing Greenpeace acknowledges the vulnerability of the equilibrium hypothesis as the movement parallel the last developments in military-security reasoning, undertanding the idea of mathematical *chaos* as an indiscernible pattern (see Bousquet 2010). Second as a system “the Arctic” can (still) be known, i.e. the many parts, their specific roles and the relations between them can be analysed and dissected. It is for this intelligibility that Greenpeace proclaims the Arctic should be “dedicated to peace and science” (Greenpeace International, 2012).

Third, the balanced system of nature (“the Arctic”) can, and sometimes must, *be acted upon*. Unfortunately humans have already started to alter the equilibrium, introducing themselves, adding new parts, into the system without knowing the possible consequences. This is at the heart of the narrative of rupture that structure Greenpeace’s arguments in favour of a withdrawal of human industrial activity in the Arctic. It is only by tracing a “line in the ice” (Page et al., 2009: 9) from which point there will be a moratorium on industrial activity that this fragile ecosystem will be able to recover (Page et al., 2009: 15). This narrative of rupture implies, in a negative way, the previous existence of a now disturbed equilibrium.

The narrative of rupture is linked to another important one: *the narrative of catastrophe*. In a number of moments Greenpeace insists on the potentially “devastating” and “catastrophic” effects of industrialism for the Arctic ecosystem, be it from oil spill, industrial fishing or accelerated climate change (Greenpeace, 2013g; Greenpeace International, 2012; Page et al., 2009: 8). The idea of catastrophe and uncontrollability is further reinforced by the use of notions such as “death spiral” (Greenpeace International, 2012) and “Arctic meltdown” (Page et al., 2009: 6). Strangely however this narrative departs from the traditional idea of equilibrium and related assumption that ecosystems are able to recover by themselves when the intruder is

to state if things are right or wrong, if the order or system is smoothly (healthily) or roughly (sickly) functioning. The biomedical metaphors are quite common in security thinking : the health of the social “body” or the state as “functional organism” facing viruses and external Otherly threats. See for instance Campbell 1998

removed (Dalby, 2002: 128-30). According to Greenpeace things in the Arctic are not as simple anymore. The vulnerability of the equilibrium may lead, if severely disrupted, to tipping points from where things become unknowable and uncontrollable. As Greenpeace states in regard to the “feedback loop” of accelerating ice melt and climate change: “These are factors humans cannot control, and if we are to solve the climate crisis, *we have to do it before these feedback effects get beyond recovery*” (Greenpeace, 2013c, our emphasis).

These references to catastrophe do not invalidate the dominant equilibrium narrative, but demonstrate the limits of establishing a global sanctuary as a solution to the Arctic problem. Moreover these foreseen catastrophes reinforce the telos of nature. First the narrative restates the idea that humans constitute problems for the Arctic as they threaten the good functioning of the system. Second it recognizes to “the Arctic” a *subject(ivity)* and therefore a capacity for *action*. Indeed “the Arctic” gives warning-signs (Greenpeace, 2013d; Page et al., 2009: 3) about the coming disaster that too many humans are unable or refuse to see. In this strange inter-subjective context of Human-Nature inter-actions, Greenpeace appears as a *prophet*, able to read nature’s signs and entrusted to warn the rest of humanity. It acts as an *example*. But in a way this fearful relation to catastrophe is doubled by a twin relation to catastrophe where only its materialisation can prove Greenpeace right and makes catastrophe becomes a catas-trophy. This ambiguous relation is much developed by Sloterdijk later on.

If the Arctic nature is formed by the encounter between a cybernetic system of systems and Denature, how can we understand their definition of humans? What are their onto-theo-teleological assumptions? As examples of modern metaphysical *beliefs*, Greenpeace’s vision of humans is much dichotomised. Good men are separated from evil men *by their actions* toward the Arctic. As we will see, it should be read as an anthropotechnical *exercise-book* promoting the example of the eco-effortful-subject. As any kind of anthropotechnics, this exercise-book offers opposing poles of “truth”/“virtue” and “vice”: the knowledge of the technical experts face the greed of businessmen. But first of all, lets see a reading under Luke’s environmentalities.

On one side modern men appear as pests for nature. Their destructive industries destabilize the Arctic and planetary ecosystems. They exploit the Arctic in a way that goes beyond its capacity to give. Industrial men progresses by total destruction of its environment: it is only “[a]fter having fished out many of the stocks in temperate waters [that] the industrial fishing fleets ... [turn to the] Poles for new stocks to exploit” (Page et al., 2009: 6). The true problem with modern men is their greed that lead them to disruptive actions. Their insatiable desire for money pushes them to act irrationally: oil companies are ready to risk a catastrophe in the Arctic for “only three years’ worth of oil to the world” (Greenpeace International, 2012) just as “opening the area up to industrial fishing would be an act of madness” (Page et al., 2009: 6). Greedy men choose profit over the “health” of “the Arctic” and “the planet”, over the *survival* of life. But all hope has not disappeared.

On the other side rational men led by irrefutable scientific knowledge and a particular sensibility to the Arctic’s messages provide a positive model of subjectivity. This model that Greenpeace embodies (as an ascetic *example* - we come to that later on) acquires its quality by living in “symbiosis” with nature. In other words just as modern men proved wrong by their devastating actions on the Arctic, “green” men demonstrate their “goodness” by behaving in ways that do not threaten the Arctic and by working to assure its, as well as men’s, sustainability. However before

exploring the specific relation between nature and humans we believe it is important to look for a moment at the centrality of action in the distinction of both types of humans.

Greenpeace places a prime importance on ethic. As actions distinguish between good and evil men Greenpeace proposes a “conduct of conducts”. But how exactly is their eco-subjectivity envisioned? We believe Greenpeace promotes a masculinist and imperial identity, in the end reproducing in their action what it explicitly opposes. First it is masculinist because it fosters adventurous, heroic and militarised selves in opposition to “Mother Nature” who is feminised, acted upon and in need of protection. The adventurous self is apparent in the mediatic non-violent direct actions undertaken by Greenpeace activists such as the occupation of an offshore oil rig in north-east Russia (Bleau, 2012: 11). The North Pole Expedition offers another example of the adventurous character of this *green subjectivity*. To use Greenpeace’s words:

Our four young explorers on a mission with Greenpeace have planted a flag on the seabed beneath the North Pole ... After a gruelling week-long trek across the frozen Ocean, over giant pressure ridges and around icy pools of open water, we planted our ‘flag for the future’ 4km beneath the ice at the top of the world and called for the region to be declared a global sanctuary. We ran into some technical difficulties on the first go, and had to try again before lowering the pod by hand (Wilson, 2013).

Dramatic connotations emphasise the difficulties these explorers had to overcome concluding with the heroic release of the Flag, that is in reality a spheric titanium pod, by hand due to uncooperative technology. This expedition was accomplished at their own risk, accepting the sacrifice on themselves, but acting for the good of the Arctic “on behalf of all life on Earth” (Greenpeace, 2013d).

This adventurous rhetoric is accompanied by military references that position Greenpeace and green men in a war against modern men for the protection of the Arctic. It is a war of David against Goliath on the Arctic “frontline” where the solidary forces of eco-sympathisers face “the most powerful countries and companies in the world” in order to “creat[e] the conditions for a radical change in how [they] power [their] lives, accelerating the clean energy revolution that will fuel the future for [their] children” (Greenpeace International, 2012). The enemy may be strong, “[b]ut together [they] have something stronger than any country’s military or any company’s budget. [Their] shared concern for the planet [they] leave [their] children transcends all the borders that divide [them] and makes [them] - together - the most powerful force today” (Greenpeace International, 2012; emphasis in the original). This bellicose rhetoric is necessary as “the Arctic is calling” (Greenpeace International, 2012), in a strangely nationalistic-fashion, for help and protection. With this heroic oration Greenpeace calls to action an army of believers in defense of their common motherland: the Arctic and the whole Earth. In such a way, Greenpeace re-enacts resistance discourse *à la* war of position of Gramsci, inscribing itself in a dichotomous narrative. But, as we will see later with Sloterdijk, it exemplifies the case of polemical action: *battling* for a radical change of “truth”. There you find how any communicative action *à la Habermas*, any man’s heroic and patriarchal *production* toward emancipation, or the un-“servitude volontaire” of the masses *à la Boétie* all mean the same polemical action.

Second Greenpeace eco-subjectivity is imperial (i.e. blending territory and military. As it can

sound from the militaristic rhetoric developed by the movement, this imperial self is in part about dominating the dark face of humanity, replacing their subjectivities (since it is not about bodily individuals as such but modes of being and acting, i.e. modes of exercise - which are for now, “camp de base”) with environment friendly ethics. More importantly to us this imperial subjectivity is also about dominating nature. This eco-domination is *managerial* and works through knowledge and thus may seem less destructive. For all that, it is no less domination as it tends to control nature in order to assure its permanent sustainability and through this the eternal reproduction of present men. Greenpeace’s subjectivity then appears as an eco-Panopticon, monitoring “the Arctic”, and nature more globally, to better control its (a)biotic “behaviour” through *normation*. As such, they do not differ that much from what they oppose. It is in this perspective, we believe, one must understand the reliance on scientific knowledge and the many references made to this knowledge in Greenpeace’s discourse on the Arctic.

Human-nature ambiguous relation: the limits of the preservational-conservational environmentality

The human-nature relation conceptualised by Greenpeace demonstrates the contradiction that exist in the movement’s preservational and conservational environmentality-complex. Indeed the ambiguous relation of absence and presence towards the Arctic is manifest in the solutions they propose to the Arctic problem. While we should implement a global sanctuary over the North Pole and stop all industrial development in the region (Page et al., 2009: 9), “we [also] need an Arctic Ocean dedicated to peace and science” (Greenpeace International, 2012). Perfect formation of Derridean “metaphysic of presence” (*métaphysique de la présence*) as it appears in any teleological *discursive* construction of reason, here humans should be at the same time absent and present in the Arctic. Although some could answer that this ambiguous relation is easily solved by what can or cannot be done in the Arctic, we believe the distinction is not so obvious. Indeed it appears extremely difficult to separate modern science from industrialism. Both use similar techniques, calculate, plan, extract. Both share a similar logic of control and domination. Moreover modern science is, to a large extent, dependent on industrialism for its scientific tools and material and the fact that these are produced mostly outside of the Arctic does not guarantee they have no impact on the region since Greenpeace recognizes and warns against what they call “long-range pollution” (Greenpeace, 2013c).

In our understanding this ambiguity demonstrates Greenpeace’s inner contradictions. The preservation of the Arctic is assured by the establishment of a global sanctuary. Here the Arctic, “one of the most pristine, unique and beautiful landscapes on earth” (Greenpeace, 2013g), is reserved, spared from “normality”. The Arctic becomes still life exposed in an open-air museum visited by urban western males (academics, activists, or tourists?) looking for adventures. Life dies cryogenized in the forms it had at the beginning of this eternal present and exposed, to quote Luke once more, as “rare species, exotic biodiversity, land preserves, and threatened ecosystems” (Luke, 1997: 68).

This dead life is raised from its tomb by the conservational part of Greenpeace’s environmentality. However the Arctic does not regain life, but appears undead, or Denature. First Greenpeace recognises the Arctic is not totally pristine since men have been present in the region “for thousands of years” (Greenpeace International, 2012) altering (sustainably goes the argument) the “virgin nature”. Most importantly it is the interpreted centrality of the Arctic as

“the world’s refrigerator” in the sustainability of the whole planet’s ecosystem that gives it its significance. Greenpeace needs to know and control the Arctic in order to be able to maintain human life as it is. Then what was exposed as an *altruistic* sensibility towards nature becomes an instrumental, anthropocentric use of nature. *Ecosystems become tools*. The human habitat needs to be acted upon for human’s sake. For Sloterdijk, as we will see, the “greenhouse” of disciplines starts to appear in front of us.

The preservational-conservational environmentality frame that we adopted from Luke (and others) offers an interesting lens to analyse Greenpeace’s discourse on the Arctic. Still we believe there remain some elements that this frame cannot understand, starting with the narrative of rupture and the appeal to catastrophe that we briefly exposed. In addition it does not allow to understand the imperial subject that is promoted by Greenpeace. We believe there is something more to anthropocentrism. The objective is not to exploit nature for comfort, or for the sake of exploiting it, or to prove the supremacy of humans over nature. The imperial subject mobilises nature for its own reproduction. *Nature is violently turned into an eco-technical womb that assures the onto-production of humans*. Despite its many merits the environmentality frame is blind to this violence. We now turn to Sloterdijk to demonstrate that at the end the call to “Save the Arctic” is not so much about saving the Arctic, but about saving humans through the violent technologization of the planet for our own finitude. As such, it is the cynicism of the means, part of a wider cynicism, combined with eco-responsible.

Complementing environmentality: security re-thought with the help of Peter Sloterdijk¹⁸

As said earlier, one of our objectives is to shed light on the “hidden” security moves made by Greenpeace, and hence offering another ethical position on the Arctic. In this context, we still follow Dalby when he says “security is not just a signifier performing an ordering function. It also has a ‘content’ in the sense that the ordering it performs in a particular context is a specific kind of ordering. It positions people in their relations to themselves, to nature and to other human beings within a particular discursive, symbolic order” (Dalby 2002:12)¹⁹. But, as we said before, we need to go further. We do not only have to study the symbolic and discursive dimensions of “security”, understood for us in the context of specific environmentalities. We believe, as we were freely inspired by the contemporary German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, that discursive fields are indeed closely linked to an “exercise” or “anthropotechnic” dimension, *crafting* human habits inside a (Denature) “greenhouse” sphere of their own. This is where we can find the deepest roots of this imperial subject built on an ethic of polemic movement where ecosystems are tools (or weapons) in a box of self-production. Let’s say it directly, the reach of the thought of Peter Sloterdijk is immensely broad. What we will try here is to condense the most of three pieces: *Critique de la Raison cynique* (1983), *Mobilisation infinie* (1989), *Règles pour le parc*

¹⁸ In all what follows, Sloterdijk’s enormous thought will tentatively be ordinated for our purpose. Translations are from us.

¹⁹ Indeed, “security” of the fauna/flora combined ecosystems is again “understood as individual freedom from political violence and as the precondition for economic activity” (Dalby 2002:13); Again following Dalby, it is important to move away from the “assumptions of states as the containers of both politics and environment” (2002:68). Indeed, this “preservational-conservational” environmentality-complex still offers the state (or the international community) the prerogatives on the Arctic *territories*. Even more, “[t]he most basic concerns of the discourse on environmental change often betray their premises by posing change as a problem. This in turn assumes stability and the political status quo as the acceptable baseline for discussion” (Dalby 2002:79).

humain (2000). We certainly add important elements of his last one, *Tu dois changer ta vie* (2011), but the reader will already understand that our effort here is incommensurable with the space available in this paper.

For the “former” Sloterdijk, modern society is deeply cynical²⁰. Everything of existence is considered as information in a war for a superior “truth” after a battle on/of “crude facts”. A inferior “knowledge” should let space to the superior one. Modern realist-empiricism (virtually unlimited in *calculation, equivalence*, etc.) well exemplifies this: knowledge is not only a *tool*, but also a *weapon* against the dangerous/external that lies outside his fortress of truth. Following Nietzschean inspiration and the idea of “will of power”, Sloterdijk clearly sees the underline of Reason: what is outside is a scary *not-me* which is understood as an *against-me*. This idea of polemic engagement with the outside world, while analysing the “Cynical Reason”, will gradually be completed in Sloterdijk’s thought by the analysis of how, *generally*, this “outside” ought to be understood as deeply enmeshed with the “human” as such. Therefore, as in “environmentality” thinking and the concept of Denature, Nature and Culture should be understood in Sloterdijk’s vision as one totality “built” on various ontological moves. Hence, what he will later say on the “greenhouse”/“human park” or even “technical uterus” of human being will always be linked to what the environmentality lens have previously said: this uterus is the constant “camp de base” from which a *movement* of knowledge and mastery begins.

In his 1989’s book, he offers a very interesting reading of this *movement*. The basic idea of this is more than often named “progress”. For Sloterdijk, this means that modernity ought to free the self-movements of man from its limits. At the center of this, again, the oft-cited idea of “subjectivity”: the ability to turn on *new* chains of movements under the name of *action*. War and labour, for Sloterdijk, all mean the same in this vision. For Sloterdijk, “subjectivity” is an essential *ontological* element of modern metaphysics. Inspired by Heidegger in 1989, he will say that this “subjectivity” that we find everywhere comes from (everyone’s) deep trauma of birth. Subjectivity then is the group of behaviours linked together by the *effort of Self* to act in order to “stand up”. Every *action* is an expression of an *effort*²¹. Those “acts of management of the self” are, in a way, sort of self-holding of the unholdable promises that the society is giving to the newborn in its “arrival-in-the-world” which is by itself strange.

This is where the coined “anthropotechnic” appears in his thought: as devices of “promises-holding” through *efforts*. As he is deeply indebted to post-Marxian and post-Nietzschean thought, man is for Sloterdijk therefore a *self-creation*²². To understand well the “greenhouse”, we then need to make an *ontoanthropology*. Under Heidegger’s influence again, this lead him to view

20 Sloterdijk devotes an entire book on cynicism and modern Aufklärung, or Reason. It is a pain to jump over this that quickly. Let’s try : he offers three versions of cynicism: 1) as enlightened false-consciousness, “sad consciousness in its modern shape” ; 2) as historical dimension, as child of greek classical kunism, where reasonable human desire for auto-conservation face the semi-reasonable in its society. Cynicism is the answer of the dominant “class” to kunique provocation ; 3) as phenomenology, as polemic consciousness trying to grasp “truth” as “naked” (1983:278). Therefore, cynicism and kunism join on a self-preservation motive in time of crisis, and on a harsh and “dirty” realism, without moral inhibitions. In this order, for Sloterdijk, Horkheimer on “intrumental reason” only exposes the *cynicism of the means*, where the same can be true for marxisms and freudianisms (1983: 34-45). Modern theories of system are not looking at the artist behind the artefacts (2000: 109).

21 Again, he refers to the notion of combat: the proper of any enterprise comes from the fact that the potentials for combat are brought to possibility.

22 It is not strange in this matter, for him, that all modern philosophies of subjectivity lead to theories of *labor* (1989:167-169)

human beings as animals that “acclimate” the “world” with ontological moves (2000:116-117)²³. All the technics, the stone or “culture”, are therefore having on individuals deep retroactive effects. The effect of the “greenhouse” is therefore this one: allowing human ex-stasis (i.e. *movement* and *action*) (2000:119), hence allowing human capacity to “virtues”. What was seen originally by him as a movement of polemic Reason becomes a movement in a much more complex fashion. From now on, humans (re)create (in an infinite movement), with the use of the technics, an extra-uterine mechanical uterus to welcome this newborn in a climatized “globe”. It is this utero-mimetic “house” of man that allows moreover the notion of “existential time”, and, with it, the idea of “future” and its corollary “foresight” (*prévoyance*). This is, for Sloterdijk, *history*: ensuring this human luxury in a world that, *volens nolens*, seem more and more “unpredictable”.

The reader will immediately think: so what of the previously said catastrophic? We lack the space to develop on Sloterdijk fascinating discussion of the “myth”, as the most successful system of exploration of the “world” of the human evolution (2000:149). A lot of Critical Theory, such as Horkheimer and Adorno, have highlighted the mythical origins of Reason, and its *domination* towards the “outside” or the external “Other” through *proportionality*²⁴. Sloterdijk, in this matter, continues and deepens the reflexion: myths are means of understanding the outer-greenhouse (the “environment”, the “surrounding”) for the continued stabilization of the “inside” while humans understand that, more it goes, more the world is never what we expect from it. As this outside “pops-up”, it more than often appears both in dramatic and fatal fashion. No wonder why myths are deeply linked to the *catastrophic*²⁵.

What interests us in Sloterdijk analysis of the catastrophic is the *answer* to it. Indeed, humans are not unaware that their “process of civilization” is itself an auto-didactical polemical movement that can itself lead to a natural catastrophe. Hence the cynicism he observed in his earlier thought, which was more a cynicism of the *means*. But in 1989, he looked at the universalist “pedagogical hypothesis” easily found in cultural/religious programs: built on the belief that *from* the catastrophes that *really happened* “humanity” will *learn*. If the problem is in part with the “representation” of the content of the catastrophe²⁶, the main problem is linked to the ontology of the “subject” : how to *act* in conformity with what is learned from the catastrophe ? (1989:96). Since “humanity” is not a “subject”, but an infinite aggregate, it cannot “learn”. This neutralizes any calls of moral *universalism*: any forms of *moral* judgement needs to identify an “event” as an action done by an actor (1989:102). Hence the tragic in this mode of thinking²⁷. The ontoanthropology of Sloterdijk aims therefore at the “motives of the human capacity of apocalypse” (2000:106) without being stucked in this cyclical pedagogical hypothesis centered on *a priori* “subject”.

23 See, for more detail on the various mechanisms, Sloterdijk 2000: 116-139

24 For Horkheimer and Adorno, the Reason took from the mythical its first principle: anthropomorphism, i.e. giving to nature a “subjectivity”, therefore reducing “object” and “subject” as comparable equivalents.

25 As the becoming-man is an effect of “hyper-insulation”, irruptions of the “environment” in the “greenhouse” often happen in a fatal and dramatic fashion (2000: 151). Bringing memories from past catastrophes is the usual business of religions (2000: 152).

26 Since, as other have said, the catastrophic events are naturally “possible” but never “appropriable”. See 1989: 95; there is, for Sloterdijk, an inevitable *aesthetic subversion* to the catastrophe: it can never be represented; (especially with the kinesthetic mass-media habits to present the world as a series of flying images (1983: 383))

27 In tragic action: the act is the product of the author, and the author is himself product of the successive actions. The dramatico-tragic consciousness is solidified in this sens only by the event *without* any learning.

As we said earlier, in his “greenhouse”, humans create themselves, not only by “labour” but, more deeply, by constant “exercises”²⁸. Living by the “catastrophic” force human beings to incorporate the anticipation of illness in their immune systems. In other words, incorporate “programs of protection and repair *a priori* (2011:21). Two complementary systems are therefore identified by him: socio-immunological practices²⁹ and symbolic/psycho-immunological practices, as “mental weaponry”.

This brings us back to a (reinforced) idea of “culture”³⁰: not in a classical dichotomy domination/submission frame, but more in a *internal* and *vertical* frame. In other words, from a theory of class society to a theory of society of discipline (2011:193-194). People are not oppressed in their search for freedom and self-determination by the disciplinary regimes. To the contrary, they themselves bring up this opportunity. Power is constitutive of *capacity* in all its modalities. Indeed, for Sloterdijk, Foucault was a pioneer of “anthropotechnic” reasoning. Sloterdijk believes then, as we have seen earlier, that the “overdiscussed” issue of the “subject” can be distilled to this compact sentence: a subject is one who is acting as vector of series of exercises (2011: 229). General anthropotechnology is then a general science of discipline³¹. All of “society’s” disciplinary fields possess an inherent “critical” dimension (therefore *vertical* tensions) between the just and the unjust in the execution of the discipline. For the “specialist of disciplines”, then, all of them are what is *Mount Improbable*. For Sloterdijk, we cannot criticise mountains: we climb or “get lost” (2011:232). Dimensions such as *verticality* or *horizontality* have indeed a strong ethical sense (not only geographics). For Sloterdijk, the horizontal is experience and ‘discursivity’ while vertical is hierarchy and capacity to decide. Ethics is not about “norms”, “values” or “imperatives”, but “elementary orientations in the ‘field’ of existence” (2011: 235). Indeed, for Sloterdijk, most of the (cynical and polemical) modernity is relying on a “camp de base” ethics: most of people think about being nothing but the same, in a more comfortable manner. Therefore, no expedition to the summits are expected since we stay in this “camp de base”. For him, Darwinism, Marxism, and, what interested us so far, *Ecologism*, all express visions of man/nature (as species and ecosystems) as status quo, as *final step* in the becoming. The problem comes from what most of 20th century philosophy could not see: for them, “camp de base” and “summit” amount to the same thing (2011: 258).

Rather, a thinking which is open to analyse “antropotechnics” will quickly understand that all the

28 Sloterdijk says in french here his definition of “exercise”: “[...] toute opération par laquelle la qualification de celui qui agit est stabilisée ou améliorée jusqu’à l’exécution suivante de la même opération, qu’elle soit ou non déclarée comme exercice” (2011: 15); Man is therefore the living creature born out of repetition.

29 Such as the juridical, solidarist, and military, with which man regulate in “society” all their confrontations with foreign beings (2011: 23)

30 Many “cultural technics” are crafting man. Sloterdijk talks explicitly about symbolic institutions such as language, marriage, family, education, normalization of genres and age, and especially the preparation for war. As he says, all those organizations, technics, rituals and other, with which humans take themselves their symbolic and disciplinary self-*formation* (2000: 145). Here you can find the continuation of the *polemic* and *movement* ideas previously presented.

31 General science of discipline gather around a variety of objects: 1) acrobatism and aesthetics (art); 2) athleticism; 3) rhetoric; 4) therapeutics; 5) epistemic; 6) applied arts; 7) machinistic technique; 8) administration; 9) meditation; 10) ritualistic; 11) sexual; 12) gastronomie; 13) and an open list of activities, all which are open to amelioration. For Sloterdijk, war is not a discipline as such, but a weaponized sophistic (as the continuation of the art of being right (avoir raison) by other means (!)) in which we gather elements from athetism, ritualistic, technics of machines. “Religion” is, on its side, not a discipline well delimited either but an [...] amalgam of rhetoric, ritualistic, admnistration and, sometimes, acrobatism and meditation (2011: 230)

automatic programs (affects, habits, representations) built on repetition are overcome when one sees that repetition is a double concept: repeated repetition and repeating repetition; affected affect and affecting affect; habit followed and habit inscribed; represented representation and representing representation (2011: 285-286). Original pedagogy and anthropotechnics where in that sense deeply “technical”: using forces of inertia to overcome inertia. *Mecanè*, trickery (*ruse*): using the lever to trick nature with its own means. In pedagogy, that meant using the habits for our own growth. Since “virtue” can be learned, it is not to stay in “camp de base”, but to move forward and climb.

The Sloterdijk’s *vertical* focus is crucial. In an internal pattern, the relationship between the trainer/manager/example of the “human park” and the trainee becomes quite interesting. As the last thirty years of post-structuralist work have taught us, from Foucault to Derrida, from Kristeva to Butler, “truth” should always be seen as a favourite pole of a (metaphysical) dichotomy. Sloterdijk takes up on that. For him, all “cultural programs” (i.e. anthropotechnics for the stabilization of the human greenhouse) propose cardinal poles with which the “fields of possibilities” of human behaviours are distributed: perfect or not (flawed), noble/vulgar, sacred/profane, courageous/cowardice, powerful or not (weak), superior/subaltern, excellence/mediocre, abundance/scarcity, knowledge/ignorance, illumination/blindness³². The first value, the superior (or the “truth”) act as an attractive pole, while the second is the repulsive one (2011: 29). Hence, we can say that all “social norms” are “vertical tensions”³³. Those holding the platonician “royal knowledge of breeding” in this power/knowledge relation that Foucault explored in much detail, the *managers* are then distancing themselves from the *managed* by their *understanding* of what is to be done. Managers/examples speak from above for the general (and absolute) imperative of the “greenhouse” of anthropotechnics: *YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR LIFE !* For Sloterdijk, this statement is *the* metanoïaque order *par excellence*, as if it was an other-life authority in the present-life, an absolute objection against my status quo (2011: 44). Hence the movement, and hence a “normalization”/“normation” as Foucault viewed it: normalisation through constant change (of the same). But instead of a simple technical definition for ordering behaviours thought in dichotomy (of the “truth”) and its spread in “dominant discourses” having ontological consequences, Sloterdijk explores and exposes this crucial ontological effect that *we are always thought* to try to be that “superior”.

Generally speaking for Sloterdijk, orthodoxy aims at blocking mutations to stabilizing structures, periods of intense innovation (like contemporary neoliberal societies) are deeply convinced that we can stabilize our *modus vivendi* (our *movement*) towards beneficial ends. As such, we ought to stabilize our system of care (our “cultures”) offered to the *infirm*s, to the immature animal

32 Here you have it in french: “Les “cultures” ascétiques connaissent aussi la différence cardinale entre le parfait et l’imparfait, les “cultures” “religieuses” la différence cardinale entre le sacré et le profane, les “cultures” aristocratiques la différence entre le noble et le vulgaire, les “cultures” militaires, les différences qui distinguent le courageux du lâche [...]” (2011:28-29)

33 Openly following Nietzsche and building his thought on a review of 20th century existentialism, this last *effort* of Sloterdijk explores the world of askesis, “exercise” or “training”. What he sees in the contemporary world is simply, then, a de-spiritualization of ascetics combined with an informalization of spirituality. The idea of *verticality* (of the *effort* to “stand-up” in *Mobilisation infinie*) stay very much in presence in his analysis. Again inspired by the psychology underlying the event of the “birth”, Sloterdijk believes that in the *mother* or any adult, the child finds a pre-symbolic and supra-topological “altitude” where he should look at before learning to walk (2011: 167). This first psyché then is monarchical, a vertical dimension that kings, heroes and other “transmitter of knowledge” were actually trying to secure. Between the *manager* and the *managed*, the distance is long inscribed.

called “human” (2011: 89). When Foucault speaks about the dominant “governmentality” having the will of optimization of the flow of bios, Sloterdijk would more surely say: indeed! But the crucial point brought by Sloterdijk is that the very ontological lust held by any human beings, since their first arrival-in-the-world, instead of a Freudian *desire*, animates this *movement* framed by anthropotechnics (which can easily be compared to Foucault’s “dispositifs de sécurité” or any “disciplinary” technique). Another crucial dimension, is that it offers a deeper reading of Foucault’s “effects of power” which are diffuse in the individuals “subjected” (and “subjectified”) by dominant discourses/practices. Self-responsibilization means, for Sloterdijk, something way more complex than only a (neo)liberal security move.

In this condensed (and, for some, violent) review of Peter Sloterdijk thought, many ideas are catapulted to the front scene in relation to the Arctic and Greenpeace. What follows here is an indication of an analysis that, we hope, the reader will have already felt the deep connexions. Three are worth saying for now. First, following this idea of polemic movement, Greenpeace clearly shows that “the Arctic” *ought* to be understood as “ecosystems” (in danger) through the disciplinary lens (and followed by “an army of believers”) of ecology, and ecological tools/weapons, in their combat for the truth against “greedy capitalism”. This, again, brings the oft-cited need to master “threatening Others”, both as Nature and as alternative disciplinary knowledge.

Second, Greenpeace acts as the Atlas, trying to hold the promises of “all the living creatures of Earth”. Scared of “the future”, Greenpeace then works on holding “the present” *status quo* understood as eternal (teleological) reproduction of *what we know*. Therefore, it works at the “stabilization” of the “human park” (i.e. humans having the ability for action/movement towards a world which is ontologically acclimated for/to him). In this sense, it promotes a status quo in a strange ethic of *mobilisation* and movement.

Third, when Greenpeace calls to “act” in their “narrative of catastrophe”, where the tipping point might/not be crossed before the whole feedback effects lead to the beginning of the “Arctic meltdown”, one can find all of Sloterdijk. In our mind, Greenpeace not only calls some kind of “universalist humanity” to action while being *prophetic*, but they themselves, as good prophets, propose a scheme of action. In Sloterdijk’s term, they offer an *alternative* program of exercise, or another *askesis*. What we find here is Greenpeace focusing on “symbiosis with nature” while at the same time promoting “sustainability”. The eternal status quo of the “greenhouse” in view (and in a proxy-style “on behalf of all life on Earth”), the *ethic* is based on a “conduct of conducts” that is, as we said, masculinist and imperial. In one word, the vertical tension of “*green* is *virtuous*” is defended in (many) dichotomous and polarised relations, and Greenpeace activists ought to be seen as *examples* of their exercise-book to be looked at from below, having the “knowledge of expert” that might resemble more of a mythical (but quite modern and dominating) eco-shamanism.

Conclusion

From the beginning we explored Greenpeace’s discourses on “the Arctic” under a security lens. We tried to demonstrate that Greenpeace’s environmental discourse on “the Arctic” that calls for its protection under a global sanctuary is in reality a violent discourse in which it securitises

humans against a threatening nature. Luke's environmentality offered an inspiring but ultimately limited tool. It certainly allowed grasping the definitions of nature and humans and the ambiguous relation between the two that underlies Greenpeace's discourses. However through this frame we could not make sense of the violent nature of the proposition. It is for this reason that we turned to Sloterdijk's idea of polemic. Here polemic should not simply be reduced to controversy. Rather to understand it Sloterdijk goes back to the Greek roots of the word, *polemos* or war, to show that polemic is inherently violent.

This violence takes two closely related forms. First in knowledge, where rationality becomes a fortress of truths using knowledge as weapons to conquer the frightening unknown. Second in the relation to nature, where men subjugate nature to assure its own reproduction. This onto-production of men is the process of anthropotechnic. Here taking from Nietzsche but pushing further his critique of morality, Sloterdijk conceptualises the relation of humans with non-humans and the centrality of action in the construction of self-productive ethics. Following these propositions it then becomes possible to understand the violent transformation of nature in technical tools and the ethic of imperial exercise that accompanies this mobilisation.

Greenpeace presents itself as the breeder of a new *green* humanity, promoting some kind of a "green" askesis the *repeated actions* of a somewhat *homo viridis*³⁴ that opposes *homo economicus* while being cynically sharing much of their *tools*. This means inscribing into nature and humans a (new) telos: nature is to eternally reproduce itself as the present status quo and humans act as caretakers of nature and engineers of this eternal reproduction. This also means forging a new green subjectivity, determining the path of virtuous actions to accomplish in order to become sur-humans. In this context Greenpeace's altruistic call to "Save the Arctic" takes another sense. Its violent anthropocentrism resurfaces. The demand for the implementation in the Arctic of a global sanctuary dedicated to science appears as a strategic manoeuvre to launch rational assaults and conquer nature.

This analysis opens a large field of inquiry on the actual forms of exclusions that follow Greenpeace anthropotechnic. In parallel it brings forward the issue of ethics as it runs below the whole project of Greenpeace, and more significantly the proposed ethic of exercise as imperial actions of mobilisation in face of *possible death*.

Death, for Sloterdijk, is the ultimate test for any exercise, be they brought by life of askesis and/or by myths of living God. This is why for him, we should look at the acrobatics, *akro* (over there) and *bainen* (walk step by step): walking on the tip of the toes over the kingdom of deaths (2011:294). The acrobatic existence means, in the final instance: every step might be the last and every adventure is deeply *improbable*.

In this way, if humans create "zoological parks", it is at the very same time creating "circuses", another strong element of the "greenhouse" where the artistic motive can be found. Art always hold a will to intensification: perfection is not enough, less than impossible is not satisfying. It is the same will of the surreal that animates religious *askesis* (2011:102): "those who look for men find ascetics ; those observing ascetics discovers acrobats" (2011:93). For Sloterdijk, existence is an acrobatic prestation: no one can say with certainty which formation offers all what is needed

34 *Viridis* in latin means "fresh", "vigourous" and "young" : something not strange to activism, combat and "acrobatic"

to be secured in the face of possible fall (i.e. death), except permanent attention (2011:95). Therefore, artistic dimension do not stop at the border between Nature and Culture. Biological evolutionism is for him a theory of artistism of Nature, otherwise, it looks more like a “historical thanatology” counting the number of species that Earth had left behind since her conception (2011:172). “Survival”, instead of a general *thanatology*, then takes more a natural-acrobatic sense, and both survival and sur-humanization incarnate tendencies of a climbing from the probable to the less probable. Finally, what is needed, as the “camp de base” discussion led us to see Greenpeace as an eco-shaman of the status quo, is to look at the fact that they stick with “stabilized improbabilities”. At the end, for Sloterdijk, if both Nature and Culture are joined in a climb of *Mount Improbable*, only “culture” (whatever the *discipline*) can change the pace.

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