

Gary Snyder: notes for a denatured ecology

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Abstract | In a biographemathical approach, inspired by the biographic practice pointed out by Roland Barthes, we tackle in this text some aspects of the life of the poet, translator, anthropologist and ecologist militant Gary Snyder. Articulating Zen Buddhist philosophy, Amerindian mythology and beat movement, Snyder has given us hints to thinking in a denatured ecology that speaks on behalf of an intensive experimentation rather than preservation only. At the end, we make some connections between Snyder thinking and the anthropology of Bruno Latour.

KEYWORDS: Subjectivity. Nature. Beat Movement

Gary Snyder: apontamentos para uma ecologia desnaturalizada

Resumo | Numa estratégia biografemática, inspirada na prática biográfica indicada por Roland Barthes (1915-1980), abordamos neste texto aspectos da vida do poeta, tradutor, antropólogo e militante ecologista Gary Snyder. Articulando filosofia zen-budista, mitologias ameríndias e o movimento beat, Snyder nos legou pistas para pensarmos uma ecologia desnaturalizada que fala em nome da experimentação intensiva e não apenas da preservação. Ao final, realizamos algumas aproximações entre o pensamento de Snyder e a antropologia de Bruno Latour.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:
Subjetividade. Natureza. Movimento Beat.

Gary Snyder: notas para una ecología desnaturalizada

Resumen | En una estrategia biografemática inspirada en la práctica biográfica señalada por Roland Barthes, en este texto abordamos aspectos de la vida del poeta, traductor, antropólogo y ecologista militante Gary Snyder. Articulando la filosofía zen-budista, las mitologías amerindias y el movimiento beat, Snyder nos dejó pistas para pensar en una ecología desnaturalizada que habla de experimentación intensiva y no solo de preservación. Al final, hicimos algunas aproximaciones entre el pensamiento de Snyder y la antropología de Bruno Latour.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Subjetividad. Naturaleza. Movimiento Beat.

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Introduction¹

A relação entre história, verdade e narrativa vem sendo um campo de controvérsias desde a fundação das ciências humanas. Isto se dá no sentido de afirmar a insuficiência das versões diante dos fatos, como no caso da razão científica moderna que pretende uma dessubjetivação do conhecimento em prol do grau máximo de fidelidade aos fatos (POPPER, 1975). Isto se dá, também, no sentido de afirmar o fato como quimera e a prevalência das versões como único horizonte possível, como no relativismo, no qual sujeito e fatos históricos emergem como efeito de tomadas de posição mediadas por forças históricas (FEYERABEND, 1999). Isto se observa, ainda, como afirmação da própria história como produtora dos fatos, que não seriam senão o jogo histórico de suas versões, como no construcionismo social (BERGER e LUCKMANN, 1985). A suposta separação entre uma epistemologia, que dá às coisas a conhecer a um sujeito, e uma ontologia, que dá ao fluxo da natureza a possibilidade de existir como coisa, está na base destas controvérsias. Neste ensaio, não pretendemos resolver este paradoxo, mas cotejá-lo mediante as consequências políticas e ambientais dos conceitos de natureza e de subjetividade. Mais especificamente, buscaremos pensar possibilidades para a subjetividade, ou para experiência subjetiva, em sua relação com o meio ambiente, em que o conceito de natureza seja ausente ou, pelo menos, tomado numa versão fraca. Pretendemos, portanto, pensar uma experiência subjetiva desnaturada que poderia ser também uma forma de ecologia desnaturada.

Nestes tempos em que a natureza emerge, ao mesmo tempo, como ameaçadora e vulnerável e no qual o conhecimento mostra-se aquém das nossas necessidades de decifração do mundo, acreditamos que há pistas importantes na obra do antropólogo francês Bruno Latour e do poeta e ecologista estadunidense Gary Snyder. Por isto, o que este ensaio propõe é uma abordagem biografemática (BARTHES, 1989) da vida do poeta, cotejada criticamente a partir da singular perspectiva onto-epistêmica ensejada pelo sociólogo.

Bruno Latour afirmou que nunca se fez política sem falar de natureza (LATOURE, 2004, p. 58). Neste artigo, buscamos demonstrar que as modalidades discursivas sobre a natureza são também indissociáveis da política, mas de uma política que inclui e extrapola a disputa narrativa sobre a história. Uma política, portanto, que busca o presente como campo de experimentação, ou seja, como possibilidade de criar modos de existir. Uma política existencial. Em outras palavras, este artigo discute a relação entre éticas (e estéticas, como veremos) existenciais, na sua relação com o meio ambiente.

The relationship between history, truth and narrative has been a field of controversy since the foundation of the human sciences. This is in the sense of affirming the insufficiency of the versions in the face of the facts, as in the case of modern scientific reason that seeks a de-subjectivation of knowledge in favor of the maximum degree of fidelity to the facts (POPPER, 1975). This also happens in the sense of affirming the fact as a chimera and the prevalence of versions as the only

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possible horizon, as in relativism, in which the subject and historical facts emerge as an effect of taking positions mediated by historical forces (FEYERABEND,1999). This is also observed as an affirmation of history itself as a producer of facts, which would be nothing but the historical game of their versions, as in social constructionism (BERGER e LUCKMANN, 1985). The supposed separation between an epistemology, which makes things known to a subject, and an ontology, which gives the flow of nature the possibility of existing as a thing, is at the basis of these controversies. In this essay, we do not intend to resolve this paradox, but to compare it through the political and environmental consequences of the concepts of nature and subjectivity. More specifically, we will seek to think about possibilities for subjectivity, or for subjective experience, in its relationship with the environment, in which the concept of nature is absent or, at least, taken in a weak version. We intend, therefore, to think about a denatured subjective experience that could also be a form of denatured ecology.

In these times when nature emerges, at the same time, as threatening and vulnerable and in which knowledge shows itself below our needs to decipher the world, we believe that there are important clues in the work of the French anthropologist Bruno Latour and the American poet and ecologist Gary Snyder. PFor this reason, what this essay proposes is a biographematic approach (BARTHES, 1989) of the poet's life, critically collated from the singular onto-epistemic perspective offered by the sociologist.

Bruno Latour stated that politics has never been done without talking about nature (LATOURE, 2004, p. 58). In this article, we seek to demonstrate that discursive modalities about nature are also inseparable from politics, but from a politics that includes and extrapolates the narrative dispute about history. A policy, therefore, that seeks the present as a field of experimentation, that is, as a possibility to create ways of existing. An existential politics. In other words, this article discusses the relationship between existential ethics (and aesthetics, as we will see) in their relationship with the environment.

In a certain sense, we propose a political dispute that takes place, primarily, through the ontological path of the epistemology-ontology pair, that is, through the ways of constituting an experience, rather than through the grammar or semantics of its enunciation. We start from a romantic ethical position, that is, the belief that experience exceeds reason. But we articulate this premise to conclusions that depart from romanticism, insofar as they dispense with the belief in a necessarily good nature (which is an element always present in romanticism, even though this good nature is oppressed by forces that make its expression difficult). And, here, the term nature applies both to the environment and to subjectivity - both, in the romantic perspective, belong to the domain of a transcendent harmony.

We will argue, in this essay, that a subjective experimentation is possible that ignores the notion of nature, or at least, that conserves it as a fragile horizon, undecided whether good or bad, scary or fragile. In this perspective, subjectivity does not emerge as opposition or transcendence to the environment or the material world, but also as a thing, as a modality of being that is an effect of the compositions of matter in the world, as well as everything else. What Latour calls, in another text (LATOURE, 2012), an agency in a network of humans and non-humans, that is, as the possibility of an agency that does not have the human as a central element.

Our approach method for a problematization of the relationship between subjectivity, nature and history will be the biographematic essay. The biographeme is a type of approach to life history which Roland Barthes (1984) announced without deep theorizing, but which he carried out throughout his essayistic work, especially in the book "Sade, Loyola and Fourier" (BARTHES, 2005). In a brief effort of definition, the philosopher presented it as a type of narrative that maintains with biography the same type of relationship that photography maintains with history.

We can understand, then, that the biographeme does not despise the historical fact, but maintains with it a weak, precarious imagery and representational relationship, like a photograph exposed to time. The biographeme makes, in relation to the history of a life, a limited image, perspectived and subject to the interpretation of an observer, just as a photograph does in relation to the historical fact. There is truth in photography, but photography does not summarize the whole truth of the historical fact, it only adds elements to its imagination, complements and complexifies its possibility of narration. The biographematic essay differs from the biography in that it does not seek to produce the synthesis of a life, but to open its analytical axes, indicating what in a life enunciates not the living, but the field of possibilities of living.

Thus, we propose a biographematic essay on the life of Gary Snyder, in which the relationship between fact and narrative remains undecided, but in which interesting controversies are extracted to think about an experimental ecology in the contemporary. Snyder, poet, essayist, translator, anthropologist and ecologist, produces a biographematic image that provides interesting elements for a discussion about the ethical possibilities of ecology, from the point of view of the relationship between art, politics and subjectivity. At the end of the essay, we compare elements of his written and lived work (to the extent that life is also a work) in the sense of articulating bridges with Bruno Latour's analyzes about the relationship between nature and society, or between politics and the environment.

Amerindian Beauty

When nature appears as a threatening and unpredictable dimension, as it appears in contemporary times, would it be possible to think about an ecological practice situated at a point of overlap between subjectivity, art and politics?

The poet, translator, anthropologist and environmental activist Gary Snyder was born and raised in the period called the Great Depression, which lasted throughout the 1930s after the New York stock market crash. During this period of recession, the big unions, resentful of the disappointment of the 1920s and strengthened by the *Keynesian* policy of retaking investments, represented a stronghold of the thought of resistance to capitalism and the diffusion of a Marxist literature. The son of anarcho-syndicalist parents, Snyder was born in 1930 in San Francisco, California, but as a child he moved to rural Washington State, where his parents bought a cabin and made a living as lumberjacks.

In his childhood, therefore, he had contact with a series of violences that were at the base of the prosperity of the 50s. The unions, during the 30s and 40s, were objects of state repression. His paternal grandfather, of Scottish origin, would have helped to found a more critical and libertarian faction of the trade union movement, popularly called the *wobblies*, a name derived from the acronym IWW (*Industrial*

Workers Of The World). The movement was often repressed by police forces. On the other hand, large corporations gained more and more space and government protection. The allotment of the natural wealth of that continental country put at risk the subsistence of the logging activity practiced by his parents, given the advance of forest devastation carried out by the large conglomerates.

These impressions helped to create in Snyder an understanding that there is an aspect of domination, control and dispossession that is carried out by regimes of power and that applies to workers as well as trees, humans and non-humans.

The devastation of the forest has often been compared to the exploitation of workers. The poem "Logging" describes the *wobblies* who were beaten and murdered in state actions and the misery of those who lived in slums during the Depression. (ALMON, 1979, p. 41)

In addition to this home training in Marxist and anarchist thought, Snyder had an intense coexistence with indigenous people who lived close to his parents' farm. According to Luci Collin (2005), he would have spent time living in an indigenous village at the age of twelve. This fact may have motivated his later interest in anthropology, a subject in which he graduated from Reed College in Oregon with an emphasis on indigenous mythologies.

Life in the woods lacked, for Snyder, that intangible, bucolic serenity that is often foisted on the woods or countryside. The forest, from an early age, showed him the marks of conflicts and territorial clashes that underlie it.

Passionate about literature, Snyder majored in linguistics at Indiana University and in classical Chinese at UC Berkeley. Mastery of oriental languages allowed him access to the literature and Zen Buddhist philosophy in which he became an expert and practitioner. Like Ezra Pound, Snyder looked to the East for a way to build a critical look at the missteps of "America". However, unlike her, Snyder did not focus his criticism on the question of Western usury, but on the "greedy presumption that man can exercise a

dominion over nature" (ALMON, 1979, p. 13). Snyder, in this sense, sought the orientality that was subjugated by the glorious westernity of the USA, that is, it met its indigenous and Amerindian character. His most famous poem, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1975, was called "*The Turtle Island*" (SNYDER, 1974), the name by which many North American Indian tribes called the region. His poetic and political practice has both this Western revolutionary character of transforming the State, of seeking to activate the libertarian possibilities that are established within the state form, but also the Eastern revolutionary, anarchist form of abolition of the State, of seeking a *savage* relationship with the land.

It is true that the idea of revolution is itself ambiguous; it is western, since it refers to a transformation of the State; but it is oriental, since it projects a destruction, an abolition of the State. (DELEUZE e GUATTARI, 2005, p. 58)

It can be said that Snyder found in Eastern philosophy the possibility of thinking about political activism as a strategy for spiritual growth and spirituality as a practice in the world, as an intervention in matter. Snyder's orientalism, which

predates the explosion of Zen Buddhism in "America" which came with the *hippie* and *new age movement*, seems to fit perfectly with the character of social contestation and collective experimentation that marked him as a beat poet in the 50s.

To beat or not to beat

Between 1944 and 1947, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs, among others (with the exception of Snyder, who was doing his academic training and working as a forest ranger), were on the streets of poor neighborhoods in New York. Two decades before the free love of the *hippies* and the lysergic voyages of the counterculture – phenomena for which they served as inspiration –, these marginal poets “brought to the extreme a relationship between art and life that already existed in romanticism, in the symbolism-decadentism of the *belle-époque*” and in the vanguards” (WILLER, 2009, p. 26).

The New York period preceded their consecration as writers and poets, which came only in 1955, after the *Six Gallery* soiree. The term Beat Generation, coined in a conversation between Jack Kerouac and journalist John Clellon Holmes, came to designate this group of authors who became the artistic reference for a generation of young people interested in jazz, poetry, and the streets; young people who did not adapt to the standard way of life of the time and who, at the same time, carried some suffering, something marginal.

In “The Illuminated Hipsters”, Kerouac (2004) narrates the famous poetic soiree at the *Six* gallery, using pseudonyms for everyone present. In the novel, Snyder is nicknamed Japhy Rider and is one of the protagonists, occupying the narrative role of inspiring master for a young man in search of freedom.

With the *Six Gallery* soiree, San Francisco became the seat of a new artistic wave that came to be known in the field of arts as the San Francisco Renaissance, and in the field of behavior and culture as the Beat Generation. Later, the term was disparagingly inflected by the media and added to the name of the satellite Sputnik, turning it into *beatnik*, to designate the crowd of young people who began to imitate the beats lifestyle. Thus, the jocular tone, the creation of the term *beatnik*, in 1958, already indicated “that something was happening: it no longer designated a group of authors, but a social event, as well as generational” (WILLER, 2009, p. 9)).

In the midst of the collective enthusiasm with the flowering of the consumer society during the 50s, these poets carried out a policy, in a way, much more dangerous to capitalism than the State communism practiced in the USSR. The *beats* were not seduced by the myth of progress. Beat poetry, hard and cutting, together with a lifestyle influenced by a growing orientalism and a nomadism of highways, proclaimed an ability to find the beauty of life in the open, in contrast to the neons of commercial facades and the aesthetics of the shelves of the department stores that delighted the average American. The *beats* were the resistance – in the sense of permanence, of not being carried away by the wave – of the multiethnic, multicultural, violent, creative, poetic and excessive aspect of the formation of the United States of America.

This vast and ambitious country, as diverse geographically and ethnically as Brazil, over approximately one hundred years as a colony and two hundred as an independent nation had been characterized, until then, by the coexistence, not

always friendly, not always peaceful, of a series of peoples: natives, africans, europeans, asians, etc. These differences, even if they did not coexist without conflict, found strategies of permanence and spaces of protagonism in the formation of "America". But post-war capitalism, with the new wave of industrialization, mechanization, production of non-durables and easy credit, came as a great equalizer. By placing the commodity at the center of the way of life, whether as production or consumption, the capitalism of the middle of the last century put into effect the process of continental conquest. Not only did it take possession of the territory, indexing and valuing humans for their working time and consumption potential and non-humans for their value in the production process, capitalism smoothed out the differences between humans and non-humans. The *American dream* emerged to overcome differences, smooth the edges, naturalize life and behavior around an average, a normality for which working and consuming become all that matters. It was against this massifying force of consumer society that the *beats* rose up.

By producing a decoupling of intellectual activity and the possession of cultural baggage, both from the academic sphere and from bourgeois "good taste", the *beats* carried out a practice that aimed to de-hierarchize knowledge. It is true that many of those poets came exactly from these circles, that is, from the academy or from the good education provided by their bourgeois families, but the ties they established through poetry, through music, through the lifestyle of renunciation of expectations of success in the competitive logic of American society were with people from all backgrounds: marginals or ex-cons, proletarians and *lumpens*, artists and non-artists; and also non-humans, landscapes, mountains, drugs, train cars... With the *beats*, we have the possibility to think of a collective as an experimental space in which the elements are arranged according to ethical-aesthetic principles, and in which intellectual capacity or acquisitions are just one more element in the whole. They desecrated intellectualism by removing its aura of asceticism or elevation. Beat intellectual practice was on the ground, in the same place where beggars slept; the floor on which the dust that soiled their clothes rested; the ground on which they roamed following an orientation very different from that of the ordinary coming and going of the worker's life.

Not that they didn't work or were against work. At many times they had jobs. More often than not, however, underemployment, which they could abandon without remorse. And abandoning jobs to indulge in periods of excess and creation was also a common characteristic of the *beats*. This alternation between a little work that would guarantee an income, but that would not seduce them to the bourgeois life was an implicit strategy, not dogmatic, which ended up being a hallmark of the movement; a kind of political activism, a way of being in the madcap capitalism of the 50s without being conquered by it.

Franciscan wealth

In addition to being one of the main ports on the west coast of the USA, San Francisco is separated from Japan only by the Pacific Ocean. San Francisco is at 43 degrees north longitude, Tokyo is slightly further south at 35 degrees north. There is a strong connection between the city and the Asian continent and a multitude of Chinese arrived in the USA through the port of San Francisco, between 1848 and

1900, either to work on the construction of railway lines or to pan for gold, which is why the largest and oldest *chinatown* in the US.

Like Los Angeles, San Francisco is located on the Santo André Fault and, in 1906, suffered a major earthquake followed by a fire that destroyed much of the city. Despite the size of the devastation, the city was quickly rebuilt following the same principles of small streets and high population density that were characteristic of it. Much more impactful than the earthquake in transforming the Franciscan landscape was the wave of suburbanization and expressway construction that spread during the 1950s and 60s. It is possible that back in the 1950s, when *beats* circulated around the city, a form of urbanity, of experimenting with the city closer to the European style, was becoming extinct.

When we, from the 1950s and beyond, went up there (on Telegraph Hill in *North Beach*), the keyword was walking. Perhaps nowhere else in urban America has a neighborhood that is so connected to the idea of walking: narrow streets, high bare walls and hills dotted with step walkways, and cheap white clapboard houses; clothes flapping in the wind and drying on top of flat-roofed houses even in the mist. (SNYDER, 1984, p. 46)

If the *beats* represented the resistance of America's ethnic and cultural diversity, San Francisco was the perfect city to welcome this movement. Unlike New York ghettos, San Francisco neighborhoods served more to bring different cultures into contact than to separate supposedly equals. Not only was the conceptual aspect of Zen philosophy striking in the life of the *beats*, especially for Snyder, but the daily life of cheap dinners in Chinatown and nights out in black-majority jazz clubs were components of the existential aesthetics they put into practice.

Later, when he began to dedicate himself more systematically to ecological militancy and essay production, Snyder left hints that his vision of this multiethnic and multicultural aspect of the *beats* is much more radical than the tolerant multiculturalism of post-globalization society. Ecological practice for Snyder must seek the biological experience that precedes man and culture. His Zen Buddhism is both an asceticism of man towards the divine, towards the enlightenment of the Buddha, and a return to the perceptual-sensory field of the primate that was moving over a primordial island-continent. For Snyder, ecology, as a proposal to problematize the man-environment bond, must be both beyond man and beyond the territory.

No wonder Snyder described *North Beach*, his favorite neighborhood in San Francisco, as the bow of a ship. On this western frontier of the continent, one can imagine Japan on the other side, removed by the many millennia of tectonic shifts that geographically separated the continents and by the few millennia of human civilization that deepened this separation through the notions of East and West. Snyder's militant and poetic path was to undo these naturalizations in language. Snyder's political struggle was, above all, the attempt to recreate the conditions of a "common" or a common that could abolish the human, since in it there should be no precedence of man in relation to other species, and which is also infranational, that is, it moves towards a sense of space and of inhabiting the world prior to the constitution of territorial properties and, consequently, of States.

This tectonic navigation from the American continent towards Asia is the poetic

image that demonstrates the pangeic character of Sneiderian ecology. It is not against nationalism that Snyder said that “we are disconnected from the international” (SNYDER, 1990, p. 44); it was, above all, to make this powerful image speak, which is the unified earth, a primordial island that isolates nothing and gives origin to everything. Fundamental stability that is a condition for the constitution of bodies. An interval of concreteness and duration that emerges amidst the dissolving and violent volutes of the primitive ocean.

Japhy Ryder: East will meet West anyway. Think what a great world revolution will take place when East meets West finally. (KEROUAC, 2004, p. 209)

Snyder's vagabond Zen Buddhism, unlike the usual imagery of Eastern philosophy, does not posit stillness as opposed to disturbance. As his character Japhy Ryder said in Kerouac's book: “my Buddhism is activity” (2004, p. 181). His spirituality was more a choice for the diverse as opposed to the same, which later in his ecological essays he called: *The practice of the Wild* (1990), as opposed to the domesticated, adequate and predictable life of the middle class. Like his fellow beats, Snyder made hitchhiking, climbing, encounters, and solitude an object of self-practice, of constant attention to subjectivity - this point of imbrication between the production of the subject and the world. Conquering spaces of freedom in the claustrophobic ordering of flows that vigorous post-war capitalism imposed was one of the main goals of his Zen practice: “Japhy Ryder: ...my karma was to be born in America, where nobody has any fun or believes in anything, especially in freedom” (KEROUAC, 2004, p. 35). And such freedom is less a search for an exteriority to regimes of power than an appeal to a pangeic and savage power in the world.

The wild zen

“Wild” alludes to a process of self-organization that generates systems and organisms, all of which are within the constraints of – and constitute components of – larger systems that are against wild, such as manor ecosystems or water. The “wild character”, one might say, is the essential nature of nature. Its manifestation in consciousness can be seen as a kind of open awareness, full of imagination, but also the source of alert survival intelligence. The workings of the human mind, at their maximum fertility, reflect this wild, self-organized character. Thus, language does not impose order on a chaotic universe, but reflects again its own wild character. (SNYDER, 2005a, p. 270).

Connecting with wild forces is the hallmark of Gary Snyder's ecological activism. Unlike ecological movements that seek a great solution or reordering of the world capable of conserving nature for the next generations, Snyder asks us to abandon the point of view of survival and lead our practices towards the experimentation of the wild dimension that inhabits the language, the city, art and also nature. By “snyder to go beyond the idea of 'human survival' or 'survival of the biosphere'”, Snyder overcomes the pragmatic or utilitarian notions of the ecological movement and opens up a possibility for the ecological question to enter an ethical-

aesthetic domain: "Knowing that nothing need to be done is where we begin to move from." (SNYDER, 2005b, p. 200).

With Snyder, we overcome the opposition between savage and civilized. The Wild dimension is, more than uncivilized, not human. It is what in *homo sapiens* precedes the human, but which also remains as a (unconscious) power to disturb him, that is, what in the process of humanization is never completely appeased. Wild is also the non-human aspect that inhabits spaces. The possibility that the place preserves of not being totally inflected to the ways and interests of the man.

The strength of Snyder's ecology is, therefore, in his conception that the forest is not only an "ecosystem", that is, a defined space with predictable relationships, but it is also the place where nature tries and makes mistakes. "There is a world of nature in the realm of decay, a world of beings that truly rot and decay in the shadows. Human beings overvalue purity and are incompatible with blood, pollution and putrefaction." (SNYDER, 2005c, p. 266).

Ecology as a practice of the savage has nothing to do, therefore, with the rediscovery of a pure and virgin nature. Neither should the exercise of spirituality be confused with an absence of vices or impurities. Rather, it is about activating an experimental attention, an alert intelligence, which at times distinguishes and welcomes forms, at times surrenders to flows. "In the shaman's world, the uncultivated lands and the unconscious become analogous: he who knows and is comfortable in one of these will feel at home in the other" (SNYDER, 1984b, p. 16).

Snyder's ecological appeal in relation to a land without external divisions, lived with immanence, the search for the Wild aspect of spaces, harmonizes perfectly with his Zen proposal. In it, meditation and yoga practices are not attempts to deny material life or the world of illusions. His meditative practice is, rather, an engagement, an adhesion to a process that does not allow itself to be guided by the final goals, an experimentation more than the obsessed search for enlightenment. "The yogi is an experimenter. He experiments with himself. Yoga, from the root Yuj (related to the English "yoke": connecting link, mainstay) means to be engaged, to work" (SNYDER, 1984b, p. 15).

The enlightenment that Snyder's vagabond Dharma seeks is satori, that is, what Zen Buddhism calls instantaneous, unpredictable and fortuitous enlightenment, which occurs in the midst of nomadic processes and not as an effect of causalities. Snyder's yogic engagement is that of taking the whole of life, life itself, as an object of experimentation.

The *wild* state alludes to a horizontalization in relation to the planet. That point at which *homo sapiens* circulated over the earth without any kind of prevalence in relation to all other animal, mineral or vegetable beings. In which the planet itself had no name. A state of pure, pangeic immanence, without East or West, in which the experience of the land was not mediated by territory.

The utopian and mythological fiction of capitalism, *a man and an island*, supposed by liberal ideologues in their Robinsonades, according to Marx (1999), cannot function in Sneiderian ecology either; in it, this one island would be crossed by many forces, by tectonic slips and agitations that would form its wild aspect as a geological entity, and man, even if he were the only one, would be far from being a loner since he would commune with all other forms of the matter of the great experimental and wild process that the planet carries out in relation to the cosmos.

Conclusions – Denaturing ecology

The planetary dimension has become an object of deep distrust, of colossal unpredictability. Both the world population is seen as a dangerous and unsustainable magnitude, as the planetary substrate itself, that is, the geological conditions for the maintenance of these lives appear precarious and unreliable.

This is, therefore, the plane in which ecology and politics come together in the contemporary world. This state of affairs in which there is a dysfunctionality in the very notion of value and beauty, a feedback loop in which the desperate search for the good life and for the enjoyment of a pleasant urban space generates an exacerbated consumption and indebtedness which, in turn, are at the basis of the formulation of an image of the good life that can never be achieved. And it is in this context that a good part of ecology will appeal to a natural one, that is, it will seek in the concept of nature an external and secure measure of value, a measure not influenced by the unfolding of politics. Nature appears to put back on the scene what would *really* matter. Nature becomes the balance sheet capable of correcting our civilizational paths. But is this the only way to do ecology? Or, then, would there really be this nature outside the political game capable of pointing us to ethics?

According to Latour (2004), it is not that now, when there is a strong perception that man's participation in nature has catastrophic effects, that nature starts to frequent political discourses, but that in the West, politics and nature have never been separated. "Never, since the Greeks' earliest discussions on the excellence of public life, have people spoken about politics without speaking of nature" (LATOURE, 2004, p. 58).

For the anthropologist, if there is a characteristic that - beyond any ethnocentrism - we do not share with the so-called native or autochthonous peoples, and which seems to be characteristic of this white western civilization which we have as hegemonic, it is the objectification of nature as a separate dimension of society or culture. It seems to be typically Western to create a division between social facts and natural facts and to use the latter to make politics. For Westerners, according to Latour (2004), the discourses that intend to order the disputes of force within a society have always made use of an alleged non-human exteriority, proper to objects, which we conventionally call nature.

With this, one of the central arguments used by a good part of the ecological movement that there would be a long escalation of dissidence between civilized man, always in struggle against nature, and savage man, who with the natural environment would have a relationship of respect and interdependence, a relationship of balance and learning.

Countless words have been written ridiculing the miserable whites who are guilty of wanting to master, mistreat, dominate, possess, reject, violate, and rape nature. No book of theoretical ecology fails to shame them by contrasting the wretched objectivity of Westerners with the timeless wisdom of "savages," who for their part are said to "respect nature," "live in harmony with her," and plumb her most intimate secrets, fusing their souls with those of things, speaking with animals, marrying plants, engaging in discussions on an equal footing with the planets (LATOURE, 2004, p. 80).

For Latour (2004), comparative anthropology, little by little, overcoming different stages of ethnocentrism, managed to perceive that this vision of a reconciliation between culture and nature is a notion impregnated with Occidentalism, that is, that neither these so-called primitive or savage cultures knew how to harmoniously reconcile the cultural and natural dimensions, and there was no confusion on their part between both dimensions. It is not that they mixed the cultural with the natural for not knowing how to classify each element properly, they simply "ignored the distinction" (LATOURE, 2004, p. 84) between culture and nature.

Therefore, to use some ancient cultures, as some ecological movements romantically do, to argue in favor of a moral deviation of civilized man in relation to the natural environment is only to have a distorted view of the fact that there are cultures that do not classify absolutely things or elements in two orders, two distinct chambers, one natural and the other cultural. For them, unlike us who "think it is essential to have two chambers to maintain our collective" (LATOURE, 2004, p. 85), everything is grouped in one order.

But this does not mean that we have nothing to learn from such "savage" collectives, but that the content of the lesson is completely different. Instead of finding this point of balance and respect between culture and nature, we can seek, in these societies, "since they, precisely, have never lived in nature" (LATOURE, 2004, p.82), some ways, some reflexes, some concepts that help us to "detoxify the idea of nature" (LATOURE, 2004, p. 82).

Latour (2004) is, therefore, an advocate of a political ecology that gives up this transcendent character of nature. It is a matter of maintaining the task proper to ecology, which is to evaluate and interpret our practices and our knowledge, to know their political dimension, that is, to distinguish their effects of power, their instituting character, without, however, resorting to an external dimension, transcending the game, which would be there to confirm or deny any conclusions.

Ecology is, in this sense, a field that combines scientific discoveries with political practice and, for this very reason, constitutes the privileged stage in which this task of horizontalization of knowledge can be carried out. It is not, therefore, a question of relativizing or seeking a social constructionism of the natural sciences, but of realizing that science must be practiced with rigor and reliability without the appeal of "making the voice of nature speak", and that political achievement can aspire to a greater guarantee for approaching nature, but that on the same plane of composition, science and politics can be combined in an ecology of relationships, compositions, immanence. An ecology that renounces the concept of nature and that can think of things as the relationships we establish with them and not as a desecrated treasure, led astray by humanity without virtues.

Although with other words, that is, without completely discarding the term nature from his vocabulary, we will see that Gary Snyder's essayistic and poetic work follows similar paths to those of Latour. Snyder is not an author concerned with maintaining academic coherence, so there are moments in his work when he seems to claim a "respect for nature" and in others, as in the title of a book of his, he openly claims a "Non-nature" (1993); in some moments of his poetic essay he speaks of the reconciliation of the human with the environment, in others he explicitly declares that the object of his ecology is the search for overcoming the human, for a post-humanism.

But, at least in one aspect, his bioregionalism seems to point in the same direction as the political ecology proposed by Latour (2004). It is because in his problematization of contemporary ways of experiencing “place”, Snyder seeks an ecology that does not presuppose the conservation of the biosphere, or the protection of the natural, but mines in Amerindian mythology the evidence of a wisdom that does not distinguish humans from non-humans, which is another way of saying that there is no need to separate culture from nature.

An assessment of this archaic, and long-kept, intelligence and agility would have to form part of the foundation of a new humanism. This humanism would take into account the entire long experience of Homo sapiens, and eventually make an effort to include our non-human relatives. It would transform into a post-human humanism, which would defend endangered cultures and species alike. (SNYDER, 2005b, p. 221).

Anthropologist, specialist in Asian languages and Amerindian mythology, activist and militant ecologist, Zen master and beat poet, Snyder demonstrated that ecological practice need not be carried out in distinct compartments: militancy, science, poetry, spiritualism, etc. Beyond the romantic and tutelary approach that some militancy from different domains, including ecological ones, make in relation to “wild knowledge”, Snyder speaks on behalf of the cognitive power of the pre-human, of an anthropos-biosphere relationship that is intensive, long before of being of survival or control, a type of being in the world in which the being is produced in co-emergency with the territory. There we have clues for an ecology that is much more challenging than the rational or sustainable management of the environment. An ecology that upsets not only capitalism, but the very political centrality of the rational Enlightenment subject. An ecology that is neither reformist in the sense of improving what is there, nor revolutionary in the sense of replacing the state of affairs with a utopian model; but an ecology that is experimental in the sense that there are possibilities in the present to push limits, patterns and habits in the name of an interest in diversity, in the name of a taste for the infinitesimal and open character of the world.

“Magical rituals, ancient mythologies, hallucinogenic experiences, organic farming, rural life – all of this Snyder investigated, put into practice, disseminated. He is a multiple, fluid man with admirable karma” (BUENO, 1984, p. 10). His life and work are a synthesis of various interests and practices in which ecology is a strong vector for the horizontalization of knowledge and not the attempt to subordinate knowledge to the dictates of an ecological science that would know how to distinguish what is better and what is worse for the collectives. In Snyder's ecological proposal there is no opposition between the rural and the urban model. “For Snyder, bioregional awareness is as powerful/important in a city as it is in the countryside” (COLLIN, 2005, p. 12).

The life of Gary Snyder speaks of this possibility of dismantling the verticalizing and/or compartmentalizing organizations of practices. In this disassembly, the militant and the academic are side by side, that is, neither the academic has a knowledge that the militant lacks, nor the latter has an engagement that the former lacks. The poet is on the scientist's side; neither the scientist has the rigor that the

poet lacks, nor the poet the creativity that the scientist lacks. The activist is on the side of the spiritualist, because his spirituality does not imply a contempt for the practice of the world and his activism does not deny the crossing of limits that are aimed at by spirituality.

For Snyder, as for the other beats, the memory of the Great Depression was not a source of resentment or distrust, but the oxygen that allowed them to live a life not determined by the seductions of suburban homes, fast cars, and "dignified" work with which the average American was made.

Although Snyder's work in its a-systematicity has different places for nature and it is not possible to affirm a perfect symmetry between Latour's concepts and Snyder's proposals, we believe that the conversation between these two authors provides interesting ethical notes for us to think about os caminhos the paths of environments² and subjectivities that insist on not adapting to the roles delegated to them by modern western rationality.

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² Latour, Swchartz and Charvolim (1998) use this expression in the plural because they understand that it is impossible to unify the environments in a single concept, since the cognitive subject has no exteriority in relation to them in order to form a total image.

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