
Animals Are People Too: The Political Ecology of Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*

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Retailoring Ecological Imagination

Ecology is a particularly unpleasant creative exercise. To begin with, for people to think ecologically, they must recognize endless connections within species and across species, and how those connections affect and are affected by inorganic matter and ongoing processes. To borrow the language and tenor of Kurt Vonnegut's *Galápagos*, ecology requires us to use our very big brains. And not only must we use our very big brains to grapple with the limitless interrelationships among species, we must also come to see ourselves as incidental. We strive to understand the far-reaching and intricate details of the water cycle, global climate change and photosynthesis, but these processes continue without a care for our wellbeing—they continue as they always have, ahistorically and without sentimentality. That is, as lovers and protectors of the environment, we do not find ourselves at the receiving end of amorous poems from daffodils or shielded from our enemies by a squadron of squirrels. These images, along with the Ents from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and the self-protecting floral community in M. Night Shyamalan's *The Happening*, speak to the exceptional level of anxiety and creative imagination we humans exercise over the condition of our planet, but they do not represent ecology. Instead, they represent a human desire for a quick fix solution to environmental destruction and neglect.

Ecology, on the other hand, is a creative exercise which activates forward thinking and situates us in this very moment, striving to coexist and carry on into the future. And so, if the ecological thought is indeed “the full scope of the idea of interconnectedness” (Morton 3), then ecology should be understood as an amalgamation of science and imagination. Ecology depends on our imagination to fill in the gaps that separate time, space, networks, communities, and individuals. It asks us to hold in mind everything we know about the operations of the world, and then to multiply that *everything* ceaselessly.

It follows that creative writers are among the vanguard of ecological thought. While the field of ecology is relatively new,¹ Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology* has sought to reclaim the specifically ecological dimensions of writers such as Charles Darwin and William Wordsworth by exploring the former's observations on the non-human world and the latter's celebration of nature. Bate manages to retroactively apply the “ecological” label to writers by matching their works with current ecological methods and

imperatives, and filters out two distinct types of ecology: “Where the Wordsworths and Thoreau stand apart from the Darwins and Haeckel is in their emphasis on a symbiosis between the economy of nature and the activities of humankind. Erasmus Darwin wrote footnotes about photosynthesis, while Wordsworth wrote poems about how flowers may vitalize the human spirit” (39).

But the idea has not been brought far enough. The time has come to consider ecological writers based not solely on their scientific accuracy or their aesthetic sensibility, but also on their representation and conception of interdependence and on their capacity to recognize the world around them and other cohabiting beings.

Despite its self-professed commitment to exploring truth in terms of nature, Thomas Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* would have an especially challenging time fitting into Bate’s categorization of Wordsworthian and Darwinian ecology. Praised by Hitler and Engels, Emerson and Eisenhower, *Sartor Resartus*, not quite philosophy, autobiography, or fiction, evades almost any attempt to be squared away into any one category. The novel is allegedly the manuscript of an unnamed Editor who has become obsessed with the writing of Diogenese Teufelsdröckh, a German Professor of Things in General. Throughout the work the Editor speaks directly to the reader, using *Sartor* as a combined journal-essay. He pulls quotations from Teufelsdröckh’s written works and describes his alternating fascination and frustration with his subject. At the very core of *Sartor*, then, is the process of imagination, and specifically the process of imagining another person.² While this trope is carried out explicitly in the interchange between the Editor and Teufelsdröckh, it is reinforced by Teufelsdröckh’s deference to nature and the personhood of animals.

What defines an individual person? Teufelsdröckh offers a response, “Who am I; what is this ME? A Voice, a Motion, an Appearance;— some embodied, visualised Idea in the Eternal Mind. *Cogito, ergo sum*. Alas, poor Cogitator, this takes us but a little way. Sure enough, I am; and lately was not: but Whence? How? Whereto? The answer lies around, written in all colours and motions, uttered in all tones of jubilee and wail, in thousand-figured, thousand-voiced, harmonious Nature...” (53). Teufelsdröckh constructs individuation not as a process but as a state of perception, with nature as the standard against which persons can measure themselves. Teufelsdröckh repeatedly recognizes the activities of animals and their intimate connection to human life. By expounding animals’ kinship with human beings, he implies that they too can claim personhood and community through labor, creating a unity of the human and animal. This is the epitome of ecological thinking. Carlyle’s willingness to extend the field of industry to non-humans sets *Sartor* apart. That willingness, along with Carlyle’s Philosophy of Clothes.

As the vehicle for Teufelsdröckh’s own philosophy, clothes become the driving metaphor in *Sartor Resartus*. This philosophy states that clothes obscure the authentic individual. The idea is extrapolated further: clothes obscure the individual, material obscures truth, structure obscures disorder, labor obscures providence, Nature obscures God. Also, just as our clothes get worn down over time, so, too, do the clothes of society. Antiquated religious and political systems must be replaced to make way for new ones. Teufelsdröckh explores how this philosophy operates: “So that this so solid-seeming World, after all, were but an air-image, our ME the only reality: and Nature, with its thousandfold production and destruction, but the reflex of our own inward Force, the ‘phantasy of our Dream’; or what the Earth-Spirit in *Faust* names it, *the living visible Garment of God*” (55). For Teufelsdröckh, his “ME” is the only authentic being. To ourselves, we are the only authentic being. Everything else is “the reflex,” a decoy that is as far removed from the truth of God as a “phantasy” within a “dream” might be from reality. In other words, Teufelsdröckh’s theory of phenomena states that we measure our experience of the world against our mind, body, and soul. Our experience of the external world is limited by our self-reflexivity. Consequently, the Philosophy of Clothes does not explicate a process whereby human beings become individuals. Instead Carlyle presents a process of thinking. He attempts to change how we think about one another and the boundaries between one person and another.

Yet the idea of the “individual,” the “person,” and the “ME” are all made suspect in *Sartor*. The Philosophy of Clothes comes to include “animals” as a category that should be discarded to make way for a modern understanding of the individual. Teufelsdröckh blurs this category in his explanation of man as the Tool-using animal. “Why, there is not a Man, or a Thing, now alive but has tools. The basest of created animalcules, the Spider itself, has a spinning-jenny, and warping mill, and power-loom within its head: the stupidest of Oysters has a Papin’s-Digester, with stone-and-lime house to hold it in: every being that can live can do something: this let him *do*” (199). Teufelsdröckh underscores production as the key to a healthy, spiritual life, as it emancipates us from the shackling consequences of our own human-bound experience. Yet Teufelsdröckh states that humans are not the only ones who must be industrious. Intriguingly, Teufelsdröckh recognizes animals as producers. The spider and oyster, too, are capable of (and compelled to) production. Quickly and quite impressive in its willingness to abandon humanity as the measure of personhood, the central query of *Sartor* opens up around the issue of subjectivity, the combination of identity with agency. What makes a person? How do we distinguish ourselves from others? These questions are contextualized (and confused) by Carlyle’s multiple depictions of nature.

The “nature” of the Philosophy of Clothes is undoubtedly one with a capital “N,” one which denotes the divine. Albert Pionke asserts that Carlyle perceives Nature as an agent, “the God-given arbiter of social relations” (9). He cites Teufelsdröckh’s interpretation of a battlefield to convincingly support the classification:

Nevertheless, Nature is at work; neither shall these Powder-Devilkins with their utmost devilry gainsay her: but all that gore and carnage will be shrouded in, absorbed into manure; and the next year the Marchfield will be green, nay greener. Thrifty unwearied Nature, ever out of our great waste educing some little profit of thy own,—how dost thou, from the very carcass of the Killer, bring Life for the Living! (qtd in Pionke 12-13)

Look at the many ways Carlyle transforms Nature into a subject through agency and characterization. Nature is “at work.” Unwearied, unassailable, Nature educes life by shrouding and absorbing the carcasses. Yet something has gone amiss. This image of Nature has become too distended: a garment with a Protestant work ethic and a conscience to boot. Tripping over nature is Nature. Teufelsdröckh’s Nature, a material representation of God’s will, must somehow make itself congruent with the more banal, lower-cased understanding of nature as the environment. It is at this troubling junction that Pionke discovers a puzzling ecological sentiment:

The Nature that can serve as the emblem of God must be at once sacred and perfect. In an important sense Nature is God... and as God it cannot suffer from flaws of design or require human “development” or “improvement.” In fact, such efforts to manipulate the environment would represent a direct attempt to manipulate God, a clearly unacceptable act given the submissive attitude that this vision of a remote, super-cultural Nature attempts to secure. (12)

Stalemate. What industry can function, or even operate, when an ideal vision of nature becomes grafted on to the idea that nature is a resource?

Carlyle—in a rhetorical move that seems ubiquitous throughout *Sartor Resartus*—does not try to resolve these two conceptions of nature. He uses each ecological scheme when it suits him. Perhaps, the two natures do not need to be resolved. Spinoza has said, “Nothing, then, comes to pass in nature in contravention to her universal laws, nay everything agrees with them and follows from them, for whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by the eternal decree and will of God” (qtd. in Torrance 915). The nature of Goethe and Carlyle can be understood as one inscribed by a Spinozan refusal to accept the possibility of miracles—a possible reality existing outside of the natural world. But Spinoza can collapse

the layers of divine nature and material nature because he elides Carlyle's problematic of production. It is Carlyle's fixation upon the individual's relationship to nature through labor which underscores the friction between Carlyle's two categories of nature. In actuality, by maintaining both categories, Carlyle emphasizes their incongruity.

Also, if nature is the garment of God, then the boundaries defining Nature are nonexistent. Where would the divine garment begin? Where would it end? Teufelsdröckh does pose one limit to the natural: Nature is not God. Nature is a divine Creation, but not a substitute for the Creator. Significantly, Teufelsdröckh's question "Or what is Nature? Ha! why do I not call thee GOD? Art not thou the 'Living Garment of God?'" is followed by "Fore-shadows, call them rather fore-splendours, of that Truth..." (188).³ For Teufelsdröckh, Nature is the starting place from which to understand God (as a site of "fore-splendour"). Teufelsdröckh's use of the interrogative mood is slippery, but it squarely states that Nature is not *itself* God but only *of* God. Possibly, activity becomes the limit of the natural. Whatever is not God's creation is unnatural: Art opposed to Nature. And yet, Nature is evidence of God's activity, a divine working conscience. Furthermore, Teufelsdröckh advocates, "Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name!" (197). Production and activity cannot oppose divine creation; they are means by which beings can become "no longer a Chaos, but a World, or even Worldkin" (197). Production recalibrates the individual with the divine. Indeed it is through this mechanism of production that the categorizations of the natural, the unnatural, the human, and the non-human all become pliable.

The slippage between capital "N" divine Nature and the lower-case category of the natural is consistent with Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy of Clothes. Teufelsdröckh declares: "...an acorn might, by favourable or unfavourable influences of soil and climate, be nursed into a cabbage, or the cabbage-seed into an oak" (94). Teufelsdröckh proposes that the material of a cabbage can transubstantiate into the material of an oak. An acorn is equivalent to a cabbage. These slippages evoke the possibility of infinite transgressions across boundaries. Species slip into one another, breaking down their material/biological essence, thus changing their relationship to their environment, *if we can still say that the environment does indeed persist as such!* Carlyle's acceptance of a divine Nature comes to refute a strict classification of the non-human as rigidly "natural."

Carlyle was not an ecologist in a modern, scientific sense of the word. He was not a writer actively seeking the glorification of a particular region or habitat, nor was he hoping to bring about the protection of a certain species of fish or of a particular grassland habitat. Teufelsdröckh never veers too far away from social criticism, self-absorption, or attention to the human side of things.

But that is the point. According to Teufelsdröckh's philosophy, we cannot escape the trappings of our species. Whether we enjoy it or not, and whether we recognize it or not, we are individual persons experiencing the world and our lives in our own individual way. Carlylean ecology is not about preservation or the picturesque but rather about a profound and egalitarian recognition of the non-ME—which might just happen to include non-*Homo sapiens*.

Puss In Boots 2.0

We grant ourselves personhood without much thought. Through our shared or similar languages, life cycles and experiences, we begin to understand how our individual experiences match or resonate with those of other human beings. But while these things may generate empathy among humans, they may also restrict our empathy toward other species. Once again, our human-centered experience disables us from authentically interacting with others.

Sartor mistrusts this brand of speciesism. Teufelsdröckh often subverts the species barrier, pulling

us out of our anthropocentric framework, by personifying non-human characters. And ultimately, while it may be going too far to say that Carlyle's animals are people too, his philosophical program extends beyond generating empathy between species. In practice, however, Carlyle actually equalizes human and non-human person-claims. He does this by modeling the process of salvation through labor as an *aesthetic* response. We, as human and animal people, individuate based on a common response to nature.

Carlyle often plays with the boundary between the "human" and the "animal." In Weissnichtwo, Teufelsdröckh "had become not so much a Man as a Thing" (18). Teufelsdröckh describes humans as the "two-legged animal" (23) and the "Tool-using animal" (41). Men and women are "like salted fish in their barrel...[and] tamed vipers" (23). Teufelsdröckh champions the body of a horse because he "is his own sempster, weaver, and spinner..." (56). Teufelsdröckh's Clothes-Philosophy makes the human/animal distinction explicitly arbitrary: "Clothes have made Men of us" (41). Teufelsdröckh declares that humans have detached themselves from the animal through clothes; humans have used material and social systems to obscure their identity as a part of the environment. Carlyle attempts to have us recognize that we are as environmental as rabbits and cacti. The clothes of society serve to perpetuate the fallacy of human exceptionality, the fallacy that we belong outside the egalitarian web of ecology. Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy of Clothes loosens, confronts, and maybe even erases the distinction between the "animal" and the "human."

Even so, *Sartor Resartus* neither convincingly asserts the primacy of anthropocentrism nor explicitly renounces it. Teufelsdröckh makes two very striking claims about the position of "man": "Well said Saint Chrysostem, with his lips of gold, 'the true SHEKINAH is Man': where else is the GOD'S-PRESENCE manifested not to our eyes only, but to our hearts, as in our fellow-man?" (66). Reading quickly, one can see how Carlyle centers the human as the true dwelling place of God. However, Carlyle again uses a question to "clarify" his point rather than make a declarative statement. In so doing, Teufelsdröckh opens up the possibility that there might be another location where "GOD'S-PRESENCE" might exist. The reader is allowed to challenge Saint Chrysostem.⁴

Carlyle later brings up the issue of the centrality of human beings through an allusion to Pope and a (mis)quotation of Goethe:

'But why,' says the Hofrath, and indeed say we, 'do I dilate on the uses of our Teufelsdröckh's Biography? The great Herr Minister von Goethe has penetratingly remarked that "Man is properly the *only* object that interests man": thus I too have noted, that in Weissnichtwo our whole conversation is little or nothing else but Biography or Autobiography...Biography is by nature the most universally profitable, universally pleasant of all things....' (75-6)

Pope quite infamously declared, "The proper study of mankind is man." Goethe makes a similar claim in *Wilhelm Meister*: "Man is ever the most interesting object to man, and perhaps should be the only one that interests" (qtd. in Carlyle 76). Carlyle confounds these anthropocentric claims on two points. First, Hofrath chooses to focus upon Goethe, not Pope. Goethe's claim is much more tentative; people "perhaps should" be the only subject that interests. Furthermore, the ones pondering the centrality of man, according to the Editor, are Hofrath, the Editor himself, and us, the readers. This list does not include Teufelsdröckh—the prophet and seer. Hofrath, the person making this claim, is also not particularly highly regarded. His "too long-winded Letter, full of compliments, Weissnichtwo politics, dinners, dining repartees, and other ephemeral trivialities, proceeds to remind [the Editor] of what [he] knew already..." (75). This man is not a heroic visionary like Teufelsdröckh; he is, instead, a man consumed by the urbane going-ons of his workplace. Carlyle mentions the preeminence of human beings, but by twisted and ironic means. He brings up the issue of the position of human beings only to subvert it.

These gaps in clarity, especially about the "true" SHEKINAH, are consistent with the Philosophy

of Clothes and its non-hierarchical modeling. The conception that human beings are central in their environment is an illusion; it obscures the reality of interconnectedness between all individuals. Humans are not the measure of personhood. They are not themselves fixed within a biological hierarchy with other species, creatures, beings, *et cetera*, below them. In this regard, Tom Lloyd's explanation of the position of Teufelsdröckh as an example of Carlyle's "dual vision," or unification of inverses, is especially helpful: "... no houhyhnhnm, he is at once sacred and profane. By accepting the tension between these superficially hostile perceptions of himself as in fact beneficial to his spiritual development and necessary to his humanity, the professor is able to defy the 'Everlasting No,' that is, the spirit of negation, and work towards psychological reintegration" (487). In this way, Carlyle creates a form of proto-ecology in which no one species exists as the exception or as more highly regarded than another. It is necessary for human beings to realize that they are indeed of the clothes of God (i.e., of Nature) and that human identity requires an acceptance of what has heretofore been deemed the "animal."

Carlyle's rendering of the relationship between "animals" and "humans" parallels the relationship between the Editor and Professor Teufelsdröckh. The Editor attempts to understand Teufelsdröckh and his teachings, to understand Teufelsdröckh as a subject outside of himself. After reading the "Biography or Autobiography of Teufelsdröckh," he uses a bridge metaphor to explain the distance between himself and his subject: "Over such a medley of high and low, of hot, cold, moist and dry, is he here struggling... to build a firm Bridge for British travelers. Never perhaps since our first Bridge-builders, Sin and Death, built that that stupendous Arch from Hell-gate to the Earth, did any Pontifex, or Pontiff, undertake such a task as the present Editor" (79). Rather than jumping into the abyss of Chaos or chasing after myriad Miltonic implications, I want to emphasize the psychological significance of the bridge metaphor.⁵ The Editor indicates that he is on one side of the bridge and Teufelsdröckh is on the other. The Editor considers his work to be the activity that will make the psychological distance between himself and Teufelsdröckh legible and meaningful. In a similar way, Teufelsdröckh attempts to make the distance between animals and humans legible. For the Editor, the "sketchy, shadowy fugitive likeness" of Teufelsdröckh "rises up" but blocks his complete understanding of Teufelsdröckh the man (79). Whether the Editor knows it or not, this phenomenon becomes the *modus operandi* of the Philosophy of Clothes. For Teufelsdröckh, it is nature and the material world that "rise up," interfering with our knowledge of truth, divinity and other people.

The strangeness of other beings' consciousness has been considered in modern discourse as well. Thomas Nagel's *What Is It Like to be A Bat?* explores the challenge of explaining the what-is-it-like-to-be quality of another being. In a manner similar to Carlyle's own definition of the environment,⁶ Nagel focuses on the psychological facet of individualism: "Conscious experience is a widespread phenomenon. It occurs at many levels of animal life, though we cannot be sure of its presence in the simpler organisms, and it is very difficult to say in general what provides evidence of it...No doubt there are countless forms" (322). Nagel argues that the psychological markers for an "animal" are arbitrarily assigned. The line between what is "human" and what is "non-human" is being policed. This is what Giorgio Agamben has called the "anthropological machine" in his work *The Open*. It is impossible to know by whom this boundary is being policed, but any ecological model that removes human beings from the category of animal would seem an appropriate candidate. Nagel observes that the key to understanding the boundary lies in our ability to understand other beings. While one example might be understanding what it is like to be a bat, another might be understanding what it is like for me to be you, or for a Martian to be an Earthling. Yet Nagel says, "Even if I could by gradual degrees be transformed into a bat, nothing in my present constitution enables me to imagine what the experiences of such a future stage of myself thus metamorphosed would be like" (324). The Editor's bridge metaphor and Nagel's *What Is It Like to be A Bat?* coalesce in their consideration of the irreducible psychological distance between human

understanding and non-human understanding. And while this distance may be irreducible, the notion of what-it-is-to-be-like the non-human must exist. There is a bat-shaped world made by a bat-shaped mind. This recognition of an alternate mind leads to an egalitarian understanding of the “us” and the “them,” the “human” and the “animal.”

In this vein, Nagel uses an example of sound that is remarkably like Carlyle's representations of “clothes.” When sound waves come into contact with the auditory receptors of bats and humans, each being experiences a phenomenon which English-speakers happen to call “noise.” But significantly—and this is the core of Nagel's argument—this phenomenon may be interpreted in different ways. How a bat interprets the sound waves is what determines what a bat “type” of mind must be like. It is arbitrary whether or not the bat's experience of the sound waves matches that of the human's: the sound waves are just as fully experienced for the bat as they are for the human being. The bat and the human will interpret the sound waves in different ways, but the quality of experience is equal. In a similar way, Carlyle equates animals and non-animals through the idea of nature, as humans and non-humans alike transform the “garment of God” into a site of production.

Clothes are the material phenomenon which masks—they must be interpreted. Humans interpret clothes in a number of ways, and it is their specific communal interpretation that generates, as Nagel puts it, a human “type” of mind. In *Sartor Resartus*, labor and production are one interpretation of “clothes.” But the similarity and centrality of interpretation for animals and humans extends beyond the static materiality of nature (as a unit which condenses animals with plants and whatever else is considered “natural”). Labor implies a shared subjective conception of nature for both humans *and* non-humans. In *Sartor*, animals are not automatons; they live on the planet bleating and foraging with an experience of the world as equally subjective as that of humans. And so, animals attain personhood transitively in *Sartor*. Industry activates personhood in humans by bringing us into contact with nature and the divine. When Teufelsdröckh claims that oysters and spiders are part of the industrial machine and that people must “Produce! Produce,” he is making this process clear. If human beings can claim a greater sense of personhood through industry, then it follows that animals can as well. Humans and non-humans share an interpretation of nature as a place of labor, generating an equally shared claim to personhood.

Interpretation, then, becomes essential to dissolving the human/animal barrier. To say animals are like humans (i.e., as in the textbook definition of personification) is not enough. According to Derrida's reading of Lacan, this process, of granting animals personhood through supposition, constricts the animal “within the snare of the imaginary, depriving it of any access to the symbolic, that is to say to the law and to whatever is held to be proper to the human” (Derrida 122). Personification keeps animals within certain bounds. The animal is human-esque, but this does not mean that the human is animal-esque. When animals are imagined by humans, personhood remains unchallenged. It still belongs—unequivocally and intrinsically—to the human.

Derrida outlines Lacan's division of the animal and the human through the opposition of the words “reaction” and “response” in his lecture *And Say the Animal Responded?*. For Lacan, “response” belongs to human beings through language, and reaction belongs to animals through coding: “When bees appear to ‘respond’ to a ‘message,’ they do not respond but react; they merely obey a fixed program, whereas the human subject responds to the other, to the question posed by the other” (125). Derrida problematizes the distinction between “reaction” and “response” by exposing the false alterity of the two. *Homo sapiens* do not always respond. They too use codes. Does this make them inhuman? Animals create tracks (or traces) in a manner quite similar to humans. Are language and codes completely dissimilar? Ultimately Derrida argues that Lacan has built up the distinction between “response” and “reaction” in order to manage Darwinian trauma: “The distinction might appear subtle and fragile but its fragility renders fragile all the solid oppositions that we are in the process of tracking down... this whole anthropocentric

reinstitution of the superiority of the human order over the animal order... [which] seems in its way to testify to the panic Freud spoke of...to its *second* trauma, the Darwinian" (138-9). It would not be surprising to Derrida, then, that Darwin is credited with the expansion of aesthetics to include animals by the *Oxford English Dictionary*.⁷

Derrida's challenge to any distinction between human and animal based upon linguistic grounds is quite different from Nagel's preoccupation with the mind-body problem. The human-mind versus the animal-mind is one of *many* barriers which are constructed to dichotomize animals and humans. And woe to any dichotomy laid at the feet of Derrida! Surprisingly, Derrida does not stress the utter arbitrariness of "reaction" and "response" as signifiers. This would be missing the point of the problem of the human/animal distinction. One must come to recognize that an animal reaction can be placed on the same spectrum as human response. To say that humans operate on one level and that animals operate on a completely isolated, other register is not only profoundly inaccurate, but also flies in the face of personal experience and runs counter to scientific observation. Lacan's reaction/response opposition must be challenged because it is yet another false blockade to understanding the shared experience of humans and animals. Part of this shared experience is interpretation, whether it be an interpretation of nature into a resource for production or an interpretation of codes, like moose tracks, bee dances, or Chinese characters. When the environment is interpreted, personhood loses itself from the "anthropological machine." The category of "person" becomes a title which can be *worn*.

Economism, Animism, and (Biological) Socialism

Carlyle's Philosophy of Clothes can and should be considered ecological. By dually accepting non-humans' and humans' equal proximity to "truth" and advocating non-humans' capacity to interpret their environment, Carlyle has deconstructed the categories of "animal" and "human" and foregrounded the fallacy of biological hierarchies. Carlyle unleashes them and us from the "natural." He does not say that humans and animals interact on a two-way street (and that it is this road or bridge that renders them equally "people"); he pushes the idea further, claiming that the street does not exist at all. Teufelsdröckh says, "All visible things are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, is not there at all: Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some Idea, and *body* it forth" (72). Carlylean ecology opens up personhood around signification and production, generating quasi-socialist egalitarianism for his subjects. Thus, while we can remain skeptical about Carlyle's ecological sympathies, we can reconfigure his search to understand community and equality across species as an attempt to grapple with some of the most pressing issues of the nineteenth century—the position of the individual in the context of industrialization and British nationalism.

Carlyle uses the Philosophy of Clothes to socialize all emblems: coats and pajamas, geckos and humans, coral reefs and governments, personhood and...and...? Despite its capacity to deconstruct false dichotomies like "animal" as opposed to "human" and "art" as opposed to "nature," the Philosophy of Clothes leaves us with the stalemate of what a person can produce inside Goethe's nature-as-garment. Teufelsdröckh's Spinozan conception of the natural world disallows the socialism of a non-material (i.e., spiritual or cognitive) community. Carlyle's biological socialism is not animism. Yes, all matter exists "spiritually," but only insofar as it is a part of God. Even though animals are people, they may not have souls or distinct spirits. In Carlylean ecology, there is only one true spirit, the spirit of God. What the Philosophy of Clothes can do is open up categories. It can equalize through reduction. It looks to the "truth" hidden behind things. But it cannot tell us how to proceed with our new-found knowledge.

This limitation, however, might be read in a very positive way. Whether we recognize it or not, all people exist in this material world together. We can claim the bounty of nationhood, by dismissing

the distinctions which divide “us” from “them.” In so doing, we dismiss the idea of the animal and the natural as external to ourselves, with no relationship to our day-to-day living. There is no resource called nature “out there” to use as such. *People are the resource.* “Nature,” the “environment,” the “animal,” the “human,” and everything else, all combined, make what we can call “us.” In a very profound way “we” are all in this together.

This vision of community should be scrutinized closely. For one thing, while it brings the Philosophy of Clothes to a logical end, it elides *Sartor's* protagonists—Herr Teufelsdröckh and the Editor. Where do these two characters fit into this biological socialist scheme? Their God-like stature situates them outside the egalitarian truth behind the clothes. I say “God-like” because they defy the clothes-program. They are not accountable to the transcendental machine, seen beneath, elevated, brought down, or dissolved. In the end, they do not find themselves as equals to anyone (or anything). And how do they see themselves? Not as a part of a transcendental metaphor, but as Teufelsdröckh says, with his “ME” as the only genuine reality. Teufelsdröckh converts the Editor to his philosophy and figuratively maintains his position in the tower above Weissnichtwo. The Editor continues his mission. In order for Carlylean ecology to operate positively, there cannot be super-natural entities; everyone must be on equal ground.

The hierarchy of individuals does not fade away in Carlyle's later works. The title of his chapter “The Captains of Industry” from his work *Past and Present* (1843) speaks for itself. Yet regardless of where Carlyle brings his discourse about hierarchies (be they biological or sociological), he brings with him a fixed understanding of the preeminence of economy. “Produce! Produce!” signals Teufelsdröckh's shift from “The Everlasting No” and the “Centre of Indifference” to “The Everlasting Yea.” Carlyle transforms animals and humans into people through their equal capacity to interpret the environment and produce something from that interpretation. Production and labor are the key elements (though not necessarily socialism or capitalism). Clothes have made men out of us, but where do we go from here? What can we make? What should we wear? If one can see that we are “we,” what rules can we use to make the next move? How do we end the stalemate?

Carlyle gives clues that point in multiple directions. He suggests that it will be necessary to look past the illusion of material to engage the divine. Materiality and production clothe the divine. People are animals. And yet, also, animals are people. Carlyle's use of production to radicalize personhood can be read both positively and ambivalently. About “man,” Teufelsdröckh says, “He digs up certain black stones from the bosom of the earth, and says to them, *Transport me and this luggage at the rate of five-and-thirty miles an hour*; and they do it: he collects, apparently by lot, six-hundred and fifty-eight miscellaneous individuals, and says to them, *Make this nation toil for us, hunger and sorrow and sin for us*; and they do it” (42). Carlyle pushes us. “Certain black stones” are people. Just as Lacan asked for, they respond. They make a train. But is this train a positive thing? Did their production truly bring them closer to God? Interesting how these stones are “certain” while the six-hundred and fifty-eight individuals are “miscellaneous.” They too responded. They made a nation function. Strange, however, that their production makes them less humane, and it takes them farther from God (the nation “sins for us”).

Yet no matter in how many directions Carlyle manages to point we become increasingly aware of how rapidly “they” become “us,” and how deftly Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy of Clothes manages to undo human self-extraction from the environment. We find ourselves authentically outside with a strange array of new brothers, sisters, neighbors, co-workers, and peers. We are all holding hammers, waiting.

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Notes

1. Strictly speaking, ecology finds its roots in the late nineteenth century: “ecology: 1) The branch of biology that deals with the relationships between living organisms and their environment. Also: the relationships themselves, esp. those of a specified organism. 1876 E. R. LANKESTER tr. E. Haeckel *Hist. Creation* I. Pref. p. xiv, The great series of phenomena of comparative anatomy and ontogeny, palæontology and taxonomy, chorology and cology” (OED).
2. I use the term “person” to refer to a category of individuals who are as fully subjective as humans consider one another but without the connotation that “person” necessarily refers to a *Homo sapien*. This is not Carlyle’s usage. I have borrowed logic and method from Timothy Morton’s *Eco-logocentrism*.
3. “How thou fermentest and elaboratest, in thy great fermenting-vat and laboratory of an Atmosphere, of a World, O Nature!—Or what is Nature? Ha! why do I not name thee GOD? Art not thou the “Living Garment of God”? O Heavens, is it, in very deed, He, then, that ever speaks through thee; that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me?
Fore-shadows, call them rather fore-splendours of that Truth, and Beginning of Truths, fell mysteriously over my soul” (188).
4. Furthermore, Carlyle seems to be misquoting *Tristram Shandy* which itself seems to fabricate the quotation (Goldberg 42-44).
5. Those interested may wish to review *Seventeenth Century News* article “A Note On The Bridge Of Chaos In *Paradise Lost* and Matthew XVI. 18-19”. Consider how the Catholic Church “rises up,” blocking the pathway from Hell to Heaven (Trefman 62-63).
6. “[Carlyle] coined the word ‘environment’ in the early Victorian period in order to record the psychological as well as the topographical impact of profound social and political change. His first use of the term occurs in his translation of a portion of Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1809-32; 1832) in 1828, where he describes the poet’s turbulent ‘environment of circumstances (Goethe, *Works* 26:222). The *Oxford English Dictionary* acknowledges his contribution to the language. By ‘environment,’ Carlyle signifies ‘the condition under which any person or thing is developed; the sum total of influences which modify and determine the development of life or character’ (OED)” (Sorenson 101).
7. æsthetic: A3) Of persons, animals: Having or showing an appreciation of the beautiful or pleasing; tasteful, of refined taste. 1871 DARWIN *Desc. Man* II. xiii. 39 Birds appear to be the most æsthetic of all animals, excepting of course, man, and they have nearly the same taste for the beautiful as we have. (OED)

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