

## Critical Naturalism: Replies to the Critics of the Manifesto

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### Abstract

In this paper, we comment and discuss the fifteen replies that interpret, solicit, problematize, and further develop our *Critical Naturalism: A Manifesto* (Krisis 42(1)), that have been published in Krisis 43(1). In the paper, we address four overarching topics that we see emerging from the replies: Histories and traditions of critical naturalism; the relation between theory and praxis; the question of what is critical about critical naturalism; and finally the question of utopia. Additionally, we discuss three general types of attitudes that our critics take to the *Manifesto*.

### Keywords

First and Second Nature; Critical Naturalism;  
Critical Naturalism Manifesto; Critical Theory;  
Utopia; Freedom; Domination; Power; Affect

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Jeder Versuch, den Naturzwang zu brechen,  
indem Natur gebrochen wird,  
gerät nur um so tiefer  
in den Naturzwang hinein.

—Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*

### 1. Introduction

The fifteen replies that interpret, solicit, problematize, and further develop our *Critical Naturalism: A Manifesto* (Gregoratto, Ikäheimo, Renault, Särkelä, and Testa 2022) present a wide range of themes and issues, follow different strategies, and raise different problems. We are now confronted with the task—a both flattering and onerous one!—to welcome, dwell in, and do justice to a great variety of criticisms and constructive proposals. We expect that our replies are destined to disappoint each and every of our critics, since there is by far not enough space to do justice to the overwhelming richness of their contributions. Also, generally, the critics have targeted issues that go way beyond our more humbly *metacritical* aim with the *Manifesto*, which set out primarily to criticize contemporary critical theory for its blockages, blindspots, and prejudices with regards to nature.

In these reactions, we see four overarching *topics*: histories and traditions of CN; the relation between theory and praxis; the question of what is critical about CN; and finally, the question of utopia. The following four sections will tackle these four topics. Additionally, we believe we have identified three general *attitudes* that our critics take up in response to the *Manifesto*. In what remains of this Introduction, we will briefly discuss these attitudes.

First, many critics seek to make CN *interact* with other philosophical traditions or schools that are either not taken into consideration or not adequately considered by CN. CN draws on heterogeneous sources of inspiration, mainly Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Dewey, and early critical theory. Incidentally, all of these traditions converge in contemporary Frankfurt School critical theory at large. In this respect, critical theory is still, as it was at its inception almost a century ago, an attempt at producing an interaction between philosophical traditions and schools. However, the criticism directed at us is that there are other schools and traditions that CN should also interact with. Since CN is working toward opening new fields of discussion within critical theory, it is also an invitation to begin discussion with traditions of philosophical social critique at a greater remove from critical theory's initial remit. It would have been counterproductive to decide in advance who is to be included as a relevant interlocutor in these debates. Since we are convinced that we have a lot to learn from a broader field of discussion, we deliberately

avoided deciding in advance how to map all the possible affinities, or the overlapping consensus, with other schools of thought, and judging whether they are compatible or incompatible with the ideas and concerns we are advancing.

Second, some of our critics problematize what they see as Eurocentric roots of some of CN's core concepts (Teixeira 2023; Bergman 2023) and their indebtedness to progressive, teleological humanism (Kempen 2023). For instance, the notion of second nature perhaps reflects historical ideological formations (Carré 2023; Leeuwenkamp 2023) and has been instrumentalized as a racist apparatus with which first ("wild") nature is represented as something to be enslaved by human, Western spiritual activity. Now, from the immanent perspective of CN, the Eurocentric biases of critical theory and of some of its central concepts cannot be abstractly denied; rather, they must be subjected to immanent criticism. In this sense, CN is a reaction against those normative ideologies of second nature—and their related philosophical anthropologies—that tend to absolutize the shaping power of the human (Western) spiritual formation and deny its both historically and naturally contingent components. CN advocates for a critical reuse of such concepts instead of either their blunt dismissal or uncritical abuse.

Finally, critics have suggested that certain aspects of CN must be radicalized, both substantially—as for example in its critique of capitalism, both in the West and in the Global South (see Bernstein 2023, Teixeira 2023)—and in its method of expression, whose experimental form could give more space to imaginative exploration instead of mere argumentative cogency within academic norms (Dege 2023). The radicalizing move is itself a common argumentative strategy in debates within the critical theory tradition, and certainly one that should not be rejected in these times. We adopt an experimental attitude towards this move, encouraging these critics to go for it, thereby hopefully disclosing further aspects of the CN project. As for the substantial strain of these critiques, however, the point of our manifesto was not to critique capitalist societies as such. Our aim was more of a meta-critical one: to criticize prejudices and blockages in *critical theory*. Now, we believe that the persistence of these very prejudices and blockages may, in fact, play a role in preventing radical critiques of capitalism from being heard in critical theory.

As for the *Manifesto's* method of expression, we chose a hybrid form, which mixes an argumentative approach, historical narratives, conceptual imagination, critical gestures, and works of art. The *Manifesto* has been published both as a journal article in *Krisis* and as a platform on [www.criticalnaturalism.com](http://www.criticalnaturalism.com). In the first publication format, the argumentative part is included and the artworks excluded. On the website, by contrast, the artworks are included alongside the theses and fragments and the argumentative part is excluded. Depending on later contexts and site-specific interactions, some of these aspects may well profit from radicalization. Still, while a hybrid approach to critical expression can be attacked from different points of view due to its standing between different fronts, its radicality lies precisely in the fact that it rejects the dichotomies between argumentative and historical, and conceptual and imaginative approaches. The form of the manifesto should not be judged on the basis of its textual components alone; these should be read against the background consisting of the artworks that the artists Mara Krichberg, Marta Kryszkiewicz-Pohlmann, Onerva Luoma, and Marina Ruffin have created for and published on the CN website.

## 2. Histories and Traditions of Critical Naturalism

Some of our critics (Andermann 2023, Kempen 2023, Sandnes Haukedal 2023, Suther 2023) have suggested allies of CN whom we had not considered in the *Manifesto*.

We agree with Kerstin Andermann that Spinoza can be enormously inspiring for CN and the engagement with his writings can offer great insight into many of our concerns. Spinoza offers not only a metaphysical reflection for naturalist social critique and a crucially anti-normativist account of human action based on a theory of affects, out of which many insights can be won, particularly in dialogue with psychoanalysis. Furthermore, the *gestural* character of Spinoza's *Ethics* should still be regarded today as a great example for any attempt at social critique that does not reduce itself to normative judgment but instead seeks to critically *disclose*. Spinoza has already been an important source of inspiration for some of us and we encourage further and deeper engagement with Spinoza in light of the climate catastrophe, as impressively exemplified by Andermann's article.

Hegel is an important source of inspiration for all of us. Hence it is easy for us to welcome the contributions by Rasmus Sandnes Haukedal (2023) and Jensen Suther (2023) for addressing Hegel-related issues that remained insufficiently clarified in the *Manifesto*. Haukedal rightly points out that our critique of "autonomy" is strangely at odds with autonomy as a biological concept, a concept for which Hegel's Philosophy of Nature provides valuable insights. To clarify matters, the target of our critique of "autonomy" was a particular conception of autonomy in terms of which Hegel has been widely read in recent decades. At their inception in the early 1990s, these Kant-inspired readings were a welcome antidote to reductive naturalisms, and they have contributed fruitfully both to literature on Hegel and to several areas of contemporary philosophy. However, they have also inspired a certain jargon of free-floating normativity that is both fundamentally non-Hegelian and seriously troubling for an understanding of the relationship of human civilization with nature.

The fundamental concept of freedom in Hegel is not a "Kantian autonomy socialized" but a concept more akin to what Haukedal usefully describes as the concept of autonomy in biology. Hegel's term for it is "concrete freedom." "Spirit's" freedom with regard to nature is, according to Hegel, not abstract freedom from determination by it, as the Hegelianized Kantian idea of self-administration by self-legislated norms suggests. As Haukedal acknowledges, we have elsewhere (Ikäheimo 2021) contributed to a reconstruction of the proper Hegelian way of thinking of concrete freedom for our life-form as both embedded in nature and irreducible to it. This reconstruction accommodates both freedom or "autonomy" as a biological concept, and autonomy as collective self-governance under a unified framework that is ontologically more truthful to the human condition.

Suther rightly points out a potentially misleading formulation in the *Manifesto* which suggests that humans are born into the world as "mere animals" and afterwards, through socialization, "*become* 'social and cultural agents'." This is an "additive" picture rather than the "transformative" picture endorsed by Suther. We are in sympathy with Suther's proposal for a "dialectical naturalism" and look forward to seeing it being worked out. Let us raise here a potential concern that we hope Suther's account will avoid, so that

it will be compatible with a “critical” form of naturalism as we understand it. We agree that “we are born distinctively rational animals, with the *embodied* potential to learn to be self-conscious subjects.” Also, it is true that “our biological integrity itself hinges on our ability to give reasons for our actions and beliefs that other rational agents can share.” To use the familiar metaphor, living life with the human form essentially involves participation in “the space of reasons” with others. What we wonder about though is the following formulation: “our first, biological, nature *just* is our capacity for acquiring a second nature” (our emphasis). The concern is about this “just” and with the possibility it leaves open for reading it as implying a complete independence of the human life-form from normative demands that are not human made. Also, the proposal that “what counts as flourishing for animals like us is a matter of what we *take* to count as flourishing,” and the rejection that this would imply “free-wheeling ‘social constructivism’” by reference to “a historical process of *trying to satisfy our desire to flourish* (ultimately, our desire for social freedom),” could be read as merely suggesting a cross-generational free-wheeling social constructivism, a position too faithful to the socialized and historicized Kantianism to which Hegel’s view of freedom has influentially and in our view wrongly been reduced. To avoid this, we find it necessary to acknowledge genuine normative friction from principles or norms that are not human made but are nevertheless principles of the human life-form as biologically embodied (Haukedal 2023). Only thus can naturalism be genuinely dialectical, acknowledging a two-way relation between “spirit” and “nature.” We are genuinely excited to see the position Suther outlines developing—as a version of the kind of naturalism that is desperately needed. The questions raised above are meant merely as friendly sparring to help in its development.

What is crucially at stake in these discussions concerning the relation of CN to Spinoza and Hegel are the metaphysical presuppositions of social critique. CN aims notably at overcoming the metaphysical/post-metaphysical divide. It contends that given the challenges of the contemporary ecological crisis, it is no longer enough for critical theory to blatantly reject metaphysical speculation altogether, nor to only take seriously limited socio-ontological inquiry. What is required is also a discussion of the relationship of human social life to non-human social life and non-social realities, be they organic or inorganic. It goes without saying that these discussions matter also for social ontology, but they also raise issues that are irreducible to socio-ontological analysis. They require critical engagement with (the history of) philosophy of nature and natural sciences. As this has traditionally been of no significant concern in critical theory and critical social ontology, this requirement presents a concrete example of how CN goes beyond critical theory as it has been practiced up till now and offers a criterion for distinguishing CN from other critical theories and critical social ontologies. Drawing mainly on Dewey and Hegel, the metaphysics appealed to in the manifesto is neither monist or dualist, it rejects both flat ontologies and sharp contrasts between nature and the social; it embraces historical and plural nature in continuity with human society.

Other critics point to theories that have anticipated CN. Does this raise the worrying possibility that CN should be considered already obsolete at its inception? Was all our work in vain? The term “critical naturalism” is not new. The first use of this term known to us is found in Patrick Romanell’s book *Toward a Critical Naturalism* (Romanell

1958). Romanell argues there that a new conception of nature is emerging from the works of some contemporary American philosophers such as Woodbridge and Dewey. On the other hand, Roy Bhaskar's intentions and main references in *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Bhaskar 1979) are very different from Romanell's and our own. The term is used by yet other authors, with yet other intentions, including Daniel Andler in his *Les silhouettes de l'humain* (Andler 2016). It is striking that in these three books, "critical naturalism" is used as a tool to intervene in very different fields of philosophical inquiry: the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of human sciences, the philosophy of cognitive sciences, and, in our case, social philosophy. It is also notable that Bhaskar and Andler seem not to be aware that the notion has already been used before them, that is, by Romanell. All this made it possible for us to use this notion as a key to open the gates to another field of discussion. Our definition of CN also intersects with other concepts used in social philosophy such as "historical naturalism" (Randall 1958, Monferrand 2016, Särkelä 2018), pluri-naturalism (Burgat, Nurock 2013), and alter-naturalism (Hoquet 2016).

The difference between CN and the critical realism that Lindner (2023) picks up is metaphilosophically enormous and we must object to association with it. Critical realism is a school of theoretical thought. CN by contrast is primarily a negative project identifying blockages, blind spots, and prejudices of critical thinking, thinking that aims at social transformation.

Prange, van Gemert, van der Deijl-Kloeg, and Santori (2023) ask how CN relates to discourses concerning the Anthropocene and "Gaia," as elaborated by Bruno Latour and others. We are worried by the impression that the theory of the Anthropocene gives of an all-powerful human subject able to exert full mastery over its external object. As Horkheimer and Adorno pointed out in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the legitimate and important critique of domination of nature by human beings should not let us forget that domination of human beings by nature persists. The two are interwoven (as history and nature are interwoven, identical and non-identical at the same time—a dialectical configuration that flat ontologies fail to do justice to). The fear before nature's power over us that explains human needs for control and mastery continues and realizes itself in horrid forms in the various human practices of social domination. To paraphrase Freud: human beings have never been masters in their own house—when they think they can be, disasters happen (Freud 1917, 143). Another obvious difference with Latour is that CN holds onto the radically critical claim and emancipatory striving of critical theory and therefore rejects the former's post-critical excesses (cf. Latour 2004) and trust in "diplomacy" (Latour 2013).

Prange, van Gemert, van der Deijl-Kloeg, and Santori hint at CN's vicinity with the Romantic tradition. They are onto something here. CN does intend to partially call into question the deeply skeptical attitudes usually displayed by second, third, and fourth generations of critical theorists, in the wake of Georg Lukács, against (Early) German (or alternative) Romantic philosophy and literature. Meanwhile, many theorists have dispelled the prejudice that reduces Romanticism to a form of anti-rationalist aestheticism, promoting anti-democratic ideas and regressive tendencies. CN could learn something from certain Romantics, those who represent what Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre (2001) have called "revolutionary/utopian" Romanticism. For example, we could learn

that there are many natures, and that we can talk about nature in radically diverging ways (artistic, scientific, personal). It depends and it varies: on and because of the contexts, our interests, and the struggles we happen to navigate. We do not just want to talk about nature(s), to objectify ‘it’ (‘them’) in theories. We also experience natures, and do it from a plurality of standpoints, sometimes more than one at the same time. We can find different languages to talk about our experiences of nature, including artistic, literary, or experiential ones. “It is bombast to speak of one nature”, “the ways of contemplating nature are innumerable” (Novalis 2005, 29, 31; see Gregoratto 2023). Nature is beyond human domination, and as such it can teach us a number of lessons (e.g., to take seriously and to explore our affects and emotions, also as forces and motors of change).

### 3. Critical Naturalism as Theory and Praxis

It should not be controversial to state that one of critical theory’s main aims consists in detecting and challenging vicious forms of power (domination, exploitation, oppression). But where is the locus of power? CN locates power not just at the level of intersubjective, *social* relationships, but at the intersection between social and natural processes. The ways in which these two terms, “nature” and “society,” are signified, how they meet, intersect, and get hybridized, are themselves also matters of power. CN maintains that the relation between nature and society is ambivalent, being both one of identity and nonidentity: what we experience and regard as natural is dependent on our human, socially mediated dispositions. Individual, cultural, economic, and political perspectives are shaped by power, norms, and structures. Yet nature is not simply what society has made of it; we cannot know and control it fully: humanity is not omnipotent, and cannot become so. Even if we can, through social arrangements, intervene in nature, human societies are profoundly influenced and shaped by natural impulses and configurations from within and their environmental conditions from without. How and under which conditions can the power to modify nature be deemed as benign and desirable? In response to Bergman’s (2023) concerns, CN, we want to reassure, posits the question of power right before our eyes. People, groups, and associations are vulnerable to power in various ways and to varying degrees, and can exert power in various ways and to varying degrees, depending on intersecting factors like gender, sex, race, ethnicity, health, class, geography, etc. How can these factors be changed? (This is one of the questions that Prange, van Gemert, van der Deijl-Kloeg, and Santori 2023 ask.) CN suggests that the mutability of social norms and structures of power depends, among other things, on their naturalness. This might sound counterintuitive. It is not, however, if we move from and work with an idea of nature as always involving spontaneity, degrees of freedom, mystery, and elusiveness.

CN is in a sense strongly theoretical and “abstract.” In contrast to much of contemporary critical theorizing, it is openly speculative and honest about large parts of it being beyond empirical control, as Hans Radder (2023) notes. This “problem,” we believe, comes with a socially-transformative aim. We are aware that our contribution to social transformation can only be very limited. We are materialist enough to be aware that philosophical prose cannot bring forth social transformation by itself. Indeed, Marx’s and Engel’s *Communist Manifesto* played a role in deep social and political transformation precisely because it was *not* a philosophical piece of prose attempting to open new fields

of discussion and to criticize ontological, epistemological, and political prejudices. Instead, it was an attempt at elaborating a political program and a strategic consensus within an already existing, or emerging, social movement—the workers' movement.

#### 4. What's Critical about Critical Naturalism?

Particularly interesting for us are, of course, those contributions that seek to develop CN further by radicalizing it. Jay Bernstein laments that the *Manifesto* is too modest: “Critical Naturalism must be conceived as *the material a priori principle that provides the rationally necessary orientating horizon for the intelligibility of the present as a transition moment between a failed and failing form of life and a form of life to come*. Critical Naturalism is the critical self-consciousness of the emergence of: A.) the Anthropocene as a consequence of B.) the separation of economic production from social reproduction under capital—theses implicit in the *Manifesto*” that, he believes, “demand rational upgrading” (Bernstein 2023). Bernstein believes that CN could constitute “the necessary self-consciousness of humanity’s exile from Holocene nature and its habitation of a new historical deformation of living nature, the Anthropocene, thus practically and morally demanding the construction of a new form of life.” We have really nothing to object to Bernstein’s fascinating intervention. Rather, we welcome his radicalizing gesture as the very type of critical naturalist thinking that we wanted our metacritical manifesto to support and enable by pointing out blind spots and blockages and fighting prejudices in contemporary critical theory. In other words, we understand Bernstein to follow our invitation in the preamble of the *Manifesto*, and he does so in thoughtful ways that there is no room to discuss further in this modest reply to many critics.

Jensen Suther is worried that CN is not critical enough of capitalism (Suther 2023). We are convinced that critical theory needs social theory, and in particular social theory of *capitalism* (Renault 2023). But the CN *Manifesto* is clearly *not* an intervention into socio-theoretical debates. It discusses some of the metaphysical, socio-ontological, epistemological and political prejudices that make it difficult for contemporary critical theory to tackle the issues raised by the contemporary ecological crises and to elaborate broader views of social critique and social transformation. This is enough, probably already too much, to expect of a manifesto. Some of its the authors are attempting to elaborate a social theory of capitalism, but this indeed requires other methods of investigation and exposition than those deployed in the *Manifesto*.

As mentioned in our Introduction, Louis Carré and Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp have detected an ideological component in the notion—central to CN—of “second nature,” criticizing its compromise with Western ideology and also its use within racist discourse (Carré 2023; Leeuwenkamp 2023). The ideological use of such concepts is related to their reification, i.e., to the assumption that they describe ontologically always already fixed and static domains. Rather than getting rid of these concepts (or rather metaphors), it is instead necessary in our view to use them as placeholder concepts (see Testa 2017), that is, as notions that rather than describing given domains, act as proxy with respect to ongoing processes and contextually and temporally indexed events. In this sense, the metacritical use of the notions of “first” and “second nature” brings to light their metaphorical and iconic component. Their role is, then, both theoretical *and* imaginative



in critical discourse. Rather than reflecting an ontological dichotomization, they are to be conjugated in the plural, expressing that instance of the multiplication and pluralization of nature captured by the notion of “third nature” that emerges from German Romanticism, American Transcendentalism, and American Pragmatism.

CN embodies and expresses an interest in and desire for *care*: Prange, van Gemert, van der Deijl-Kloeg, and Santori (2023) as well as van den Heuvel (2023) solicit us to better specify its role and meaning. Are the world, the earth, or the cosmos a home for human beings? Can they ever be? Care, today, could mean a practice of acknowledgment of the multiple ways in which we struggle in our homelessness, alienation, displacement (which is more disruptive and serious for some people and groups than for others). It could mean the reflective sensibility towards our vulnerabilities that vary because of asymmetries and inequalities related to gender, sexuality, race, geography, class, health conditions, etc., driven by the awareness that vulnerabilities, and needs for care, are structured by relations of power and oppression. Care would then mean a project of sharing—sharing through various socio-natural dimensions. But who shares what and with whom? This question opens up fields of struggles. Care is imbued with conflicts. Desires to and for care are intimate with desires for power. Naturalist (self-)criticism should, as we see it, be (among other things) care. Care can also mean dropping the (self-punitive) desire for critique and giving ourselves a break: enjoying our sensuous nature, rejoicing in the thought of utopian images and figures.

CN has not yet explicitly referred to and dealt with decolonizing, postcolonizing, or anticolonizing work. This is a shortcoming that we hope will be addressed and elaborated by future critical-naturalist inquiries, which will also have to be carried out by scholars who are experts in these areas. CN hopes to be one of the platforms facilitating this kind of critique, not in the least for this reason: CN is committed to a radical critique of the concepts of objectified, separated, “alien,” “wild,” “irrational” nature, which have been used, as Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp (2023) points out, to justify gendered and racialized practices. As Mariana Teixeira (2023) insightfully shows, the “margins” (in the colonized geography and spatialization of power) have been labeled as “natural” *par excellence*, placed outside of the “civilized” spheres, “villainized as barbaric or romanticized as uncorrupted,” and have thus been taken as “exploitable resources” (Teixeira 2023, 161f). Colonizers’ ideologies function on the basis of the double dichotomy between culture and its “other,” and between nature and its “other.” However, the main target of criticism remains, for us, a critical-theoretical discourse with a history in the old capitalist global North, which importantly has much to learn from the margins that Teixeira points to. In this sense, we also read Teixeira’s contribution as an answer to our invitation in the preamble to think CN further by radicalizing it, and find nothing to object to in her proposals.

#### **4. Third Nature(s) and Utopias**

CN’s dissatisfaction with the uncritical way the notion of second nature is being used within contemporary social philosophy—as a mere synonym of culture and the normative realm—and our reprise of the relation between first and second nature as dialectically intertwined placeholder concepts is motivated by a drive to come to terms in some

way with the problem of thinking *emancipation*. We believe that we cannot understand emancipation only in terms of either first nature, as Rousseau did, or of second nature, as most contemporary critical theorists, including Axel Honneth, tend to believe. In this sense, the question raised by Carré and Leeuwenkamp, concerning the ideology of second nature and the possibility of its critical use, has to do with the fact that the dialectic of first and second nature, aiming at a critical and transformative redescription of social life, is a disclosing one, and this openness involves an appeal to *third natures*. It involves not just historical, normative second nature formations, and their conceptual reconstruction, but also imaginative, future-oriented anticipation of the not already given. It is here that the role of imaginative exploration invoked by Carmen Dege (2023) plays a crucial role in CN, since third natures can be explored philosophically only as fragmented and contingent allegorical images or metaphorical gestures.

Reinventing natures as plural, contingent, hybrid orders, reimagining natures through cultural and technological tools, is a matter of keeping images of possible third natures alive in the dialectic of first and second nature. The reference to Benjamin's notion of "second technology" in the final fragment of the *Manifesto* opens up a space for a critical take on the processes of digitalization that, as Alexandra Colligs (2023) points out, is certainly inescapable for critical theory, but cannot be completed if the role of technology is simply equated with reification, as Radder (2023) points out; moreover, these processes do not in themselves speak to our imaginative dispositions. This also relates to the question of the aesthetic moment that our understanding of nature involves, as Tobias Heinze (2023) rightly elaborates while reminding us of early Romantic aesthetic naturalism and its relation to Adorno's mimetic understanding of natural history. The perturbed Anthropocene environments described by Gilles Clement as third landscapes (2022), and by Ana Lowenhaupt Tsing as third natures (2015), with their precarity, indetermination, and vulnerability, are also fragmentary disclosures of undecided orders of possibility and transformative alliances. But in order for these possibilities to become intelligible, we need to go beyond the conceptual grids that foreclose second nature's historical and normative formation. This is where the aesthetic moment is needed in a critical theory that calls for an imaginative enlargement of the present horizon of intelligibility, and this is where CN intersects with the critical aspects of the early Romantic appeal to aesthetic intuition as utopian anticipation of the future, as Schelling, Hegel, and Hölderlin assumed in their joint *Manifesto* also known as "The Oldest, Systematic Program of German Idealism" (Anonymous, 1996). The prefiguration of utopian, plural third natures, from Novalis' mutant blue flower up to Benjamin's transfiguration of nature and Dewey's aesthetic experience, is both in the past and in the future of CN.

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