

## *Of Naturaphobia*

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Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen noted that human evolution is characterised by the discovery of ‘exosomatic instruments’, like clubs, which do not belong to the human body by birth. This turn in the history of humankind has arguably enabled the emergence of complex technological societies, such as the current neoliberal global capitalism. But why did the ‘endosomatic instruments’ preceding tool use not suffice to humans, as other species are mainly using their legs, claws, wings etc.? While the nature of this question is speculative and archaic, it can be considered a key in the search of root causes behind the on-going anthropogenic ecological destruction. As a method to gain insights on the question, it can be posed to the present age, as follows: why are the current exosomatic instruments still not enough today?

Through an eco-phenomenological lens, the study proposes that a major driver behind the technological lifestyle is an extreme fear of nature, or Naturaphobia. Deep in the collective unconscious, humans are afraid of dwelling in non-built environments, where they experience less control over the events of nature. Consequently, humans continue to seek to find more comfort and security by using as advanced exosomatic instruments as culturally possible, which in the case of Western societies, include broadly accepted use of synthetic materials (e.g. Gore-Tex) and navigation services (e.g. GPS). The tragedy with Naturaphobia, as with most phobias, is that it is an excessive reaction to a world or situation that is seldom relevant, albeit the current deprivation of skills to ensure meeting the basic needs (of finding shelter, water and food) could be seen as a good reason to fear life outside what appears to be a technological safe-zone.

As for implications, Naturaphobia should not be confused with mere psychological states of individuals to be altered and ‘fixed’ in therapy. It is profound to the biosocial fabric. Naturaphobia is an inherent, largely shared life-drive of beings, emerging from the will to live, or avoidance of death. Thus, and paradoxically, Naturaphobia can be considered very ‘natural’, even if highly problematic due to the matter-energetic consequences of technology development and use. Nevertheless, if the diagnosis is correct, then the proper response to the root problem of the ecological crisis would be to first acknowledge and then explore how to deal with this life-threatening fear of nature.