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Brief research report

Back to Nature with Moscovici

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Abstract. The author attempts to present Serge Moscovici's original new look into the sex-gender *thêmata* within the context of what he called the “natural question”. As Moscovici argued, a return to nature was imperative, but hardly achievable given the lifestyles of our *hubris* societies. In commemoration of the centenary of his birth (1925–2014), this article aims to highlight Serge Moscovici's contribution to elucidating what he meant by the “natural question”, i.e., the complex relations between human societies and nature, not as opposites but as historically interconnected phenomena. Serge Moscovici was one of the first authors to draw our attention to the priority of preserving nature through degrowth turn as an imperative for our own survival. According to this long-term visionary perspective, we, humans, must completely abandon our predatory lifestyles and also implement profound changes in unequal social relations, in which the “second sex” could come to assume a decisive historical role. Although the concept of *ecofeminism* was not invented by him, it was Moscovici who first introduced the idea of relating the condition of women under domination to the natural question, not as a meritocratic version of the war of the sexes, but rather as a radical change in the role of the family as the fundamental traditional structure of society. Serge Moscovici's original interpretation of Sophocles' classic *Antigone* is an illustration of this movement, already noticeable in our time.

Key words: S. Moscovici, nature, culture, society, ecology, feminism, Antigone

Ce n'est pas l'individu qui invente, c'est le sujet,
plus riche que lui, et comportant, outre l'individualité
de l'être individué, une certaine charge de nature,
de l'être non individué'
G. Simondon¹

Images of Nature

I would like to share a few, albeit scattered, thoughts on a complex topic that keeps cropping up. I am referring to the relationship between nature and culture, which is currently at the center of our environmental concerns, and which runs

¹ It is not the individual who invents, it is the subject richer than the individual, and comprising in addition to the individuality of the individual being, a certain patch of nature, of the non individuated being (Simondon, 1958).

through the entire history of philosophy, as well as the history of science, as Serge Moscovici so aptly pointed out.

The thesis that I would like to submit, briefly, draws on the Greek proto-philosophers' concept of *physis*, suggesting that more than 2500 years later, it still retains its heuristic vitality. As early as 1935, in his lecture on “*Introduction to Metaphysics*”, Martin Heidegger wrote:

“What does the word *physis* say? It says that which unfolds from itself (...), the action of unfolding by opening up and in such unfolding, of making its appearance, of standing in this appearance and remaining there” (Heidegger, 1958, p. 126).

This is how Nature would be represented by the Greeks and, according to Heidegger, it is closely linked to the concept of *Being*, which should be distinguished from *beings*. This organic vision of Nature is in terms of emergence, of internal growth, and the process of cyclical reproduction, which we can observe using cinematographic techniques, for example, in the metamorphosis that transforms a seed into a flower or a caterpillar into a butterfly.

When I asked my students what image they had of nature, they almost never referred to the plane of immanence; rather, they responded in terms of a multitude of material beings, things that exist outside of us, obeying scientific laws, but are also sometimes capricious and dangerous. In the context of transcendence, they rarely mentioned the four elements of the Greek universe — Earth, Water, Fire, Air — each with its own *physis*, like animals, or even the animals that we are. We will have to wait for Gaston Bachelard to return to the poetry of the elements — *Water and Dreams*, *Air and Dreams*, *The Poetics of Space* — titles that once again take us back to this idea of matter, the roots of which go back to a time when poetry and philosophy were not yet separated (Bachelard, 1942, 1943, 1948).

This somewhat animistic image of nature, implied the word *physis*, is also related to the idea conveyed in Heraclitus' aphorism that “*nature likes to hide*” (*kruptein, kruptesthai*), which Pierre Hadot analyses in detail in his excellent essay entitled *Le voile d'Isis. Essais sur l'histoire de l'idée de nature* (Hadot, 2004). Heraclitus' aphorism has been the subject of scholarly philosophical interpretations, which I will limit myself to merely alluding to. The meaning seems to be that nature holds secrets, that the principle that animates natural elements as much as living beings is difficult to understand, and it is precisely this mystery that philosophers will later attempt to unravel, this veil of Isis that they will attempt to lift. Let us also recall Merleau-Ponty in his courses on Nature, presented “*as a stratum or layer of total Being*” (*feuillelet ou couche de l'Être total*) (Merleau-Ponty, 1995, p. 266).

According to Pierre Hadot, this transition from the concept of '*physis*' to the concept of '*nature*' marks an attempt to create a scientific object, albeit a preliminary one, among the Presocratics (Hadot, 2004). But it was also in Greece, as we well know, that science made its debut, thanks to systematic observation and abstract reflection, which led from medicine to geometry, as well as to the deciphering of

celestial phenomena and the construction of temples. The holistic *'physis'* is fragmented into increasingly abstract entities, as will be the case with Plato's *Ideas*.

It was also at those ancient times that Man emerged as a subject of culture, opposed to Nature — an ontic distinction that would become increasingly distant. The triangle, the vertices of which are Nature, Culture and Science acquired its first configuration and laid the foundations for a dialectic that still exists today. One might also suggest that it was the modern Baconian science that primarily contributed to widening the gap between culture (or society) and nature. This triangular metaphor suggests that balance between these three poles will be the exception rather than the rule. In this triangle, the vertex occupied by the Science has replaced God. Science, as practiced since the 17th century, becomes possible only if we accept the fact that nature is stable and predictable, and that there are laws governing phenomena. And man, in turn, will become less dependent on the whims or secrets of nature, especially if he is able to follow the example of Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods and, in turn, succeeded in dominating them.

Man master of Nature

The contrast between the organic and the mechanical representations of nature was the subject of one of Serge Moscovici's first seminal works, *Essai sur l'Histoire Humaine de la Nature* (Moscovici, 1968), followed in 1972 by the equally famous *La Société contre Nature* (Moscovici, 1994/1972); he would return to this theme throughout his life. A few years later, in 1980, Carolyn Merchant published a fascinating book, *The Death of Nature* (Merchant, 1980), which similarly attributed the distinction between the organic and mechanical views of nature to the new modern post-Cartesian science. Both authors emphasized the consequences of this historical change in terms of the depletion of the planet's resources and the domestication of animals and humans.

Let us recall now the voice of one of the great Greek tragedians, Sophocles, in his famous *Ode to Man* (Sophocles, 2003/442 BCE), sung by the Chorus of Antigone. The *Ode* has been commented on many times, which is understandable, given the poetic and philosophical quality of this unique classical tragedy (for a review, see Steiner, 1984).

Among the commentaries on Sophocles' *Ode*, those made by Heidegger, again in his 1935 text (Heidegger, 1958), seem particularly revealing to me. Recall that this *Ode* represents the first intervention of the Chorus in the tragedy, introducing a kind of background that will permeate the subsequent tragic events. The Chorus sings the excellence of man. Man, in the broadest sense of Humanity (with a capital 'H'), is that prodigious being who has conquered nature by navigating the waters, tilling the soil, domesticating animals and, finally, by using language and winged thought, has managed to comprehend the rules that govern cities (Sophocles, 2003/442 BCE, lines 355–357).

For Heidegger, if I understand him correctly, the essence of Man, his *physis*, is contained in the Greek word *'deinon'*, which opens the poem and is rendered by him into German as *'Unheimlich'*, by the English translator as *'uncanny'* and by the

French translator as *'inquiétant'*. This Greek word — *deinon* — places us in the semantic zone of the strange, the *prodigious*, the supreme example of which is Man. The poem refers to the prodigious things over which Man has come to dominate — the sea, the land and the animals. These natural elements are presented here not as poetic and harmonious, but rather in terms of the violence, *'deinon'*, that they exert on Man. Heidegger uses the term *'prepotency'* here as an excess coming from this external nature, but which is also found in man, since he too is capable, in turn, of resisting it with his own violence. But there is a limit, *death*, from which man can never escape (Heidegger, 1958).

The second stanza adds something even more specifically human to the list of prodigies: the word, and this word will multiply man's talents, enabling him to build cities (*polises*) and, above all, to establish the rules and laws that govern them. Thus, within the *polis*, a different kind of violence will arise, a prepotency that stems from the conflict between the multiplicity of knowledge, *'logos'* and *'diké'*, usually translated as 'justice', but which Heidegger deems insufficient due to its associations with jurisprudence. The *'diké'* in question here, as he himself puts it, is associated with the "*structure generating order*" (Heidegger, 1958).

In a word, a *stasis* arises in the being of man and the societies he manages to create, *i.e.*, a conflict between the *'logos'* and *'diké'*, or in simpler terms, between creative power and invention. For Heidegger, or even Sophocles, this could also be seen as a form of violence, at least because the discovery of the new is always associated, on the one hand, with destabilization, with the transformation of the familiar into the unfamiliar, and on the other hand, with the desire for stability, for a return to an old or a new harmony. This view recalls immediately Moscovici's theory of social as scientific innovation initiated by active nomic minorities (Moscovici, 1979). Whenever these creative minorities become anomic or excessive, due to their pride and *hubris* voluntarism, they are not welcome in the city. So is the wise voice of the Chorus: "*A being who is like this (the most disturbing) must be excluded from the home and the city*" (Sophocles, 2003/442 BCE, lines 365–377). The Chorus here anticipates, if not announces, how the conflict opposing Antigone against Creon, as will be shown below, can lead to the disastrous consequence if it escalates to extremes.

The biunic society

I also found this reading of Sophocles' *Ode*, in which the essence of Man is seen as internally divided or, if you prefer, as a thematization of his *physis* in terms of an oscillation between violence and pacification, in Moscovici's texts, and particularly in the essays in which he examines the opposition between nature and culture, as well as between woman and man. Could it be that for him, too, once the veil of Isis has been lifted, what the Goddess hides is only violence? His 1972 book *La société contre nature*² (Moscovici, 1972), with the addition of an afterword in

² In English see: Moscovici, 1976.

1994 (Moscovici, 1994/1972), seems to point in this direction, but there are nevertheless nuances. In an interview with Erwin Lecoeur, when asked about the connection of this book to feminism, Serge Moscovici replied:

“C’était écrit pour cela. J’ai essayé de montrer les rapports entre notre rapport à la nature et nos rapports en tant que groupes humains, et en particulier le problème des femmes. Je dirais que c’est un problème naturel, au sens historique, puisque que c’est un des plus anciens de l’humanité, le rapport entre les hommes et les femmes. Et je pensais que le mouvement féministe pouvait trouver sa place dans l’ensemble, de la mouvance naturaliste, ou écologique”³ (Moscovici, & Lecoeur, 2006, p.31).

In 1974, two years later, he published *Hommes domestiques et hommes sauvages* (Moscovici, 1974a), the third volume of his trilogy, dedicated to what he called the ‘*natural question*’ — *the question of our time*, to which he would return on several occasions. Let us not forget the article *Nos sociétés biuniques* (Moscovici, 1974b), also published in 1974, in a similar vein. This new concept of the *biunic society* is a neologism that, as far as I know, has not generated much discussion, and Serge Moscovici himself never used it again. However, the idea seems to me to be close to the *Ode to Man*. The word ‘*biunic*’ refers to the idea that human societies have two sides — a positive and a negative one. The positive side is that of adaptation to (if not domination over) the outside world through invention and technology, although Serge Moscovici does put much emphasis on *hubris*, which for Heidegger is at the heart of man’s *physis*. Or, more precisely, for Moscovici, this *hubris* manifests itself only in what he calls the negative society, that other side of the dual society, the violence that society inflicts on itself expressed in the practice of differentiated hierarchization through forms of domination and production of injustice, whether between races, classes or genders.

At times, Moscovici’s text seems close to Marxian theses (Moscovici, 1969) as is also evident in his book *La société contre nature* (Moscovici, 1994/1972), where the argumentation is more developed and, in particular, the theme of the struggle between the sexes is analyzed, which is absent in the text on *biunic* societies. In any case, the socialist path, at least in the only version implemented so far, does not seem to have accepted the alternative program of capitalism’s orientation toward economic growth. In his third article, *Hommes domestiques et hommes sauvages*, Serge Moscovici introduces the intriguing injunction that men (and presumably women as well) should be *rewilded* (*ensauvagés*), which can be interpreted in the context of Thoreau’s rural romanticism or, at least, as a call for a less predatory attitude toward natural resources (Moscovici, 1974a). I do not think this is the case

³ “It was written for that purpose. I tried to show the links between our relationship with nature and our relationships as human groups, and in particular the issue of women. I would say that it is a natural problem, in the historical sense, since it is one of the oldest in humanity: the relationship between men and women. And I thought that the feminist movement could find its place within the broader naturalist, or ecological, movement.”

here. As I understand this call for the rewilding of Man, it is more closely related to Simondon's perspective, which opens the present text, that men, like women, although largely domesticated by societies, still retain a certain element of wilderness, i.e., of freedom, which is the source of inventiveness. This Serge Moscovici's approach to wilderness seems to be rooted in a certain fascination with the libertarian-anarchist path, which he had always cherished, not only as a gift of exceptional individuals but also as a potential aspiration for creative change initiated by marginalized minorities (Moscovici, 1979).

For Serge Moscovici, there is no gap between animal and human nature — the boundaries between evolution and history are blurred. If we look for distinctive traits such as language, family organization, toolmaking and brain size, we come to the conclusion that each of these traits is also found in the animal kingdom. If we insist on human exceptionalism, we should rather place it within the rhizomatic net formed by the *decentered assembly* of these multiple dimensions. Serge Moscovici also points out that the production of material or human surpluses, as a kind of primitive accumulation, would likely have enabled growth, or even progress, to become geometric from a certain point, which can be attributed to the emergence of modern technoscience. A strong argument advanced by Serge Moscovici was what he called the loss of independence of science, the agenda of which became increasingly subordinated to the hegemonic priorities of politicians. “*The metamorphosis of science into factography, the art of fabricating facts, followed that of society in the art of imprinting them within our minds*” (Moscovici, 1990, p. 5). This exclusive focus on the negative society, which, I believe, characterizes Serge Moscovici's ecological philosophy, leads to the oblivion, if not the legitimation, of what he calls the positive society, where the violence against nature as a source of recourse would be no less cruel. Of course, there is no simple solution to the ironic paradox of *ecologism*. *The impasses of ecologism*, another neologism introduced by Moscovici to emphasize the political dimension of the *natural question*, are well known. The result is a kind of double bind to which human existence seems doomed. Growth cannot be stopped, even if we are aware of the risks to which it may entail. This brings us back to the *impossible possibility* of death, which cannot be excluded but can only be anticipated, individually or collectively, by delaying or alleviating it through palliative care.

The feminine thing

The *rewilding (ensauvagement)* of men or women, and now *Antigone* is on the horizon, will help us better understand the paradoxes linking nature and culture. Put it shortly, this paradox seems to lie in the need to simultaneously *naturalize and denaturalize human beings*: man must be torn away from nature, or even from *his* nature, but he must also be returned to nature. Nature is glorified, but it is also *stigmatized* (Moscovici, 2002), as we well know: *naturalization* is one of the sensitive topics in the social sciences. Nature becomes an ambiguous, polemical concept, a floating, multi-faceted concept, but always performative precisely because of its ambiguity.

Serge Moscovici offers us another illustration of such conceptual shifts in the third theme he introduced in *La société contre nature* (Moscovici, 1994/1972). This concerns the ‘feminine thing’ (*la chose féminine*), where he was also a pioneer, riding the wave discovered by Simone de Beauvoir (2015/1949), although he never accepted the return to this new duality of the “sex-gender system”. Feminism and ecologism are closely related themes, based on the dialectic between nature and culture: is sex, or rather sexuality, the *physis/hubris*, which must be dominated by culture? Is there a mysterious feminine specificity that “nature likes to hide”, like one of Isis’ seven veils? Or is Antigone a particularly vivid illustration of nature, that “patch of nature” suggested by Simondon (1958) in her *deinon*?

The figure of Antigone in Sophocles’ tragedy, sometimes regarded as the first feminist, becomes paradigmatic here, and Moscovici cites her case as an example of rebellion against the law established by men, men of power, statesmen, and also as an example of what he ultimately meant by the “rewilding the humans”? Serge Moscovici was undoubtedly a pioneer in this regard, making statements lately taken up, among others, by Françoise d’Eaubonne (1974), who introduced the concept and theory of *ecofeminism* as a synthesis of Moscovici’s *ecologism* and De Beauvoir’s *feminism*. However, ecofeminism was received ambiguously by the feminist community, even in France, perhaps due to this original and radical attempt to establish a convergence between these two apparently incommensurable causes.

Floran Augagneur’s recent doctoral dissertation (2023) may contribute to honoring Moscovici’s unjustly forgotten role in drawing our attention to *la question naturelle*, arguably the central issue of our time (Moscovici, 1990). Serge Moscovici also foresaw the degrowth movement, which today has gained new momentum, contributing to a shift in feminism, which is less sensitive to the natural question or, even being conscious and concerned about the devastation of the Earth, still relies on green technological alternatives.

Susan Sontag, one of the most active and vocal feminists, wrote:

“The liberation of women has both short-term and long-term political meaning. Changing the status of women is not only a political objective in itself but prepares for (as well as constitutes part of) that radical change in the structure of consciousness and society, which is what I understand by revolutionary socialism. It is not simply that the liberation of women need not wait for the advent of socialism, so defined. It cannot wait” (Sontag, 2023, pp. 74–75).

However, one could respond, as I think Serge Moscovici would, that it is rather revolutionary socialism, not one oriented toward economic growth, but one that prioritizes degrowth, that cannot wait. Of course, in the worst case, *in the long term, we will all die*.

Nevertheless, I understand that the emphasis on the need for degrowth is not equally shared by all feminists, or even most ecofeminists. A review of a more spiritual and less political approach can be found in Carol J. Adams’ well-documented work, *Ecofeminism and the sacred* (Adams, 1993).

More recently, this radical shift, linking the concept of degrowth with ecofeminism, seems to have gained new momentum among authors and activists such as Ariel Salleh and Stefania Barca, and some others. As Barca noted quite clearly and succinctly:

“What ecofeminists and feminist political economists have in common is the identification of reproduction as a crucial terrain for anti-capitalist struggle and ecological revolution.” (Barca, 2024, p. 21).

In any case, this new wave of ecofeminism ignores Serge Moscovici’s contribution to formulating feminism and ecology within the framework of a visionary socialist heterotopia. While the contributions of the predecessors like Carolyn Merchant, André Gorz or Nancy Frazer have been recognized, the work of Serge Moscovici seems to have been completely forgotten.

Barca’s aforementioned reference to the reproduction work suggests a return to Sophocles’ *Antigone* and how this iconic character undermined the role traditionally ascribed to women in kinship families like the Labdacides.

The tragedy of *Antigone*, I believe, is well known, but I will briefly outline the main points. Oedipus becomes King of Thebes by unknowingly killing his father, Laius, and marrying his mother, Jocasta, and gave birth to two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, and two daughters, Antigone and Ismene. Eteocles and Polynices vie for the throne of Thebes and end up killing each other in a duel. Polynices, however, turns out to be a traitor, having allied himself with Argos, an enemy city, while Eteocles, who defends it, is a hero. The successor to the throne of Thebes is Creon, the brother of Jocasta, who survived, and the uncle of Antigone and Ismene. Upon becoming king, Creon issues a decree forbidding the traitor Polynices from holding a funeral, unlike the hero Eteocles, and punishing with death anyone who dares to disobey this decree. This is precisely what Antigone does: she disobeys Creon’s orders by burying Polynices’ body, an act she later revives and feels proud of.

The theme is fascinating and extremely profound, but I will limit myself to Serge Moscovici’s interpretation, which, as it seems to me, raises the question of Antigone’s feminism, or, if you prefer, the extent to which her disobedience is a matter of nature or culture, or, rather, of a dialectics, the synthesis of which is difficult to discern. Here we again encounter the conflict between *logos* and *diké* raised by Heidegger (1958). If it is true that the argument ignores the distinction between gender and sex introduced by Simone de Beauvoir (2015/1949) — “*One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman*”, — then, in my view, some ambiguity is implicit in Serge Moscovici’s interpretation of *Antigone*, which shifts the emphasis to incest, the original sin of the Labdadian family, at least beginning with Jocasta, who disobeyed her husband Laius, by sparing their son from sacrifice, the son who would become the parricide Oedipus and her future husband. Moscovici offers an original interpretation, suggesting that the incest arises not from a son’s desire for his mother, but from a mother’s desire for her son. Antigone, in turn, desires her

brother Polynices, the funeral rites represents nothing less than a kind of funeral wedding. But, I believe, Moscovici is not limited to a post-psychoanalytic interpretation. We are all familiar with Lévi-Strauss's thesis that the incest *taboo* is a kind of crossing the Rubicon from nature to culture (Lévi-Strauss, 1949). The taboo would be tantamount to the emergence of filial society and heterosexuality, which feminist philosophy would later emphasize. However, Moscovici (1994/1972) had reservations about the taboo theory. First of all, it would not be universal, especially with regard to incest between siblings. One need only look at Ancient Egypt. But even more significant for him would be the fact that the dominant classes proclaim rules for the subjugation of their subjects, rules that they do not apply to themselves. The Labdacides would then be the rule, not the exception. Here Serge Moscovici takes up the thesis about the negative side of biunic societies, where violence can be a constitutive feature of those who dominate over the dominated, and male domination is only one of the modalities.

In the dialogue between Creon and Antigone, we can see that what irritates Creon, what he absolutely cannot tolerate, is that a young girl, his own niece, opposes him by behaving like a man (Sófocles, 2010/442 BCE, lines 485, 525, 572, 680). It is Ismene who embodies this stereotype and reminds Antigone that “we women are born only to submit to men, not to fight them” (Sófocles, 2010/442 BCE, lines 61–65). But we could also ask ourselves whether the veil of Isis, alongside this stereotype of submission, conceals another *physis*, to which Antigone alludes, contrasting the contingent laws of men to the eternal laws not of the gods, but, as Aristotle observed eighty years later, “*natural law*”, “*for it is not of today or yesterday, but is eternal*” (Aristoteles, 1998/350 BCE, p. 13). *Natural law*, for the ancients, was a Truth superior to the gods. Perhaps it is this straightforward reading of Aristotle, quoting Sophocles' lines, that best renders its meaning:

Creon:

And did you indeed dare to transgress that law? (line 449)

Antigone:

Yes; for it was not Zeus who had published me that edict; nor did Justice, dwelling with the gods below, mark out such laws to hold among men. Nor did I think your proclamations of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes of heaven. For their life is not of today or yesterday, but for ever, and no man knows when they were first put forth (Sophocles, 2003/442 BCE, lines 450–456).

Contrary to Hegel's well-known seminal interpretation of the figure of Antigone (Hegel, 1951/1806; Kojève, 1947), for Serge Moscovici, the conflict between Antigone and Creon would appear not as a confrontation between *oikos* and *polis*, family law and state, private and public, but rather as the *hubris* of rebellion, dissent, and refusal, no matter how confused or obscure it might be. Antigone, in her lines that puzzled Goethe (Steiner, 1984) and made him doubt their authenticity, said that if she were dealing with the corpse of her husband or even her

son, she would not dare to disobey — you can always find another husband as a sibling, but not another brother, when their parents are dead (Sófocles, 2010/442 BCE, line 905). However, as has often been noted, it is possible that the name Antigone, in its literal meaning of resistance or refusal to bear children, conceals but also reveals either her nature or her culture, or a curious combination of the two.

No less paradoxical is the fact that, in order to confront the hubris that Creon also apparently embodies, Antigone must use the same language of *hubris*, perhaps the only one understandable to someone of his background. Is Antigone a rebel or a revolutionary? Perhaps a rebel, or even a rebel without a cause, in her insistence on isolation and denial of Ismene's complicity, even after she has become convinced of the truth of her sister's arguments.

Michael Vickers (2008), an expert on Sophocles' tragedies, has proposed a controversial interpretation according to which Sophocles, like all the Greek tragedians, oriented his characters toward the political goals of his contemporaries. He then, even more controversially, argued that Creon was merely a replica of Pericles, with Antigone being a replica of Alcibiades. Alcibiades, as is well known, was something of a near-genius, as we see him in Plato's dialogues, whose bisexual orientation included relationships with his mother, sister and daughter. Accepting this comparison further reinforces Antigone's rebellious nature, which in no way detracts from the sublimity of her image.

Where does all this lead us? Perhaps, as mentioned earlier, to the suspicion that the denaturalization of women, so vigorously advocated by some feminists, particularly those who reduce women's rights to a mere set of professional roles, will mean their desexualization as subjects, rather than objects, of the man's desire.

Instead, if I understand Moscovici's position correctly, sex might be another example of the "*remains of nature*" (Simondon, 1958), which make both men and women asymmetric objects as well as subjects of desire, since it is not easy to distinguish between domestication and domination, who is the master and who is the slave, even though both subject to the rules of the city. Even Hegel seems sensitive to this aspect of the centrality of sexual desire when, discussing the *stasis* between Antigone and Creon, he parenthetically notes "*that femininity is the eternal irony of the community*" (Hegel 1951/1806, p. 41) Hegel's reasoning is notoriously vague, but in this case it seems clear that the "*irony*" he alludes to is connected to the fascination evoked by Alcibiades — "*The valiant youth, in whom femininity is so delighted, now reveals in the clear light of the very principle of corruption, and it is this alone that truly matters*" (Hegel 1951/1806, p. 42). The irony, as Hegel clearly notes, seems to lie in the *biunic* nature of our nature, both of men and women, not always under the spell of their "*better angels*". Moreover, as Hegel further notes, it is precisely this "*contradiction between the unconscious tranquility of nature and the disquiet tranquility of the self-consciousness of the spirit*" (Hegel 1951/1806, p. 43) that constitutes the historicity of the human existence.

No, the war of the sexes is not over, perhaps fortunately, and above all, it cannot be reduced to a meritocratic unionist conflict: how can strength, beauty or even intelligence be classified if not as attributes of nature? And so we return to this rhizomatic network, where *physis*, *hubris*, *diké*, but also *deinon* and *atè*, are inextricably intertwined. We are still returning to the origins, and perhaps Heraclitus' aphorism, like the Greek concept of *physis*, has acquired new relevance, given that modern science has for some time been abandoning the optimism of the Enlightenment, increasingly recognizing the role of the random and the improbable, which may mean that the most interesting events will be those that, even statistically, turn out to be improbable and elude the control of our forecasts.

Perhaps we should turn to Michel Serres' wise testimony *Le Contrat Naturel (A New Natural Contract)*, in which nature is no longer concealed by culture, as if culture were ashamed of nature that is not always connected to it (Serres, 1990). Or, as Serge Moscovici wrote: "*What is looked for is not an alternative society but an alternative to society*" (Moscovici, 1990, p. 8). In other words, a paradigm shift is required, to which the social sciences, unfortunately more *Babelian* than active, could make a unique contribution by deconstructing the hegemonic technoscience of our times:

"One thing, however, is certain: The trend toward universal intelligibility is pushing back the Babelian language games toward the margins of the social, even if there are still a lot of people who remain preoccupied with them" (Moscovici, 1990, p. 17).

Final remarks

In his 1972 essay *La société contre nature (Society against Nature)*, revised and expanded with a new preface in 1994, Moscovici (1994/1972) turns to Antigone — a kind of angelic androgyny in the sense of Lorenzi-Cioldi (1994) and, perhaps, surprisingly, the first feminist. The originality of Moscovici's interpretation lies in his apology for the almost romantic transgression represented by Antigone's gesture in confronting Creon as a symbol of the disintegration of the family. Because, in truth, everything happens in this private yet public space, where children are simultaneously their parents' siblings, and this is perhaps the most iconoclastic option of all. Antigone challenges patriarchal authority, not so much that of her father, Oedipus, her brother, but that of her uncle, Creon, who has seized power in the city of Thebes. And though she invokes the law of love, this love is no less forbidden — the love for her brother Polynices, whose body she intends to bury in defiance of Creon's decree, yet she explicitly declares that she would not have done the same had he been her husband or son. Antigone contrasts the verticality of hierarchy with the horizontality of fraternity and, in this respect, her cry and her sacrifice symbolize the yet-to-be-accomplished revolution that will lead to the re-enchantment of the world. In his 1994 postface, Moscovici, returning to the fine line

between order and disorder, between men and women, between parents and children, says that he is not sure whether:

“...Sophocles did not invent this cycle for the sole purpose of showing that... the central institution where the domination of men or the freedom of women is played out is indeed the family. It is only by changing the family and the prohibitions that underlie it that a significant change in the struggle between the sexes can be brought about. All other economic and hierarchical achievements are not specific. They will perhaps lead to nothing more than the assimilation of women into men, in a confusion of the sexes” (Moscovici, 1994/1972, p. 389).

Moscovici sees signs pointing to this trend towards a paradigm shift in the heterosexual family, perhaps already as a result of the feminist revolution, such as the expansion of single-parent families, the trivialization of divorce, and the practice of in vitro fertilization, which could lead to the disappearance of the father figure. All of these are symptoms of a possible return to ‘*affiliation*’ societies, which better serve the libertarian aspirations of the individualist ideology ultimately reinforced by various forms of feminism.

It makes no sense to speak of feminism in the singular, given that feminisms are numerous and diverse, which, on the other hand, can lead to fears, as Moscovici reminds us, of a drift towards narcissistic and elitist discourses, disconnected from the myriad of other inequalities in the increasingly multicultural, mixed and interconnected world in which we live. Ecofeminism — not the word, but something for which the classic tragic figure of Antigone is merely a metonym, — is based on a radical paradigm shift, which became especially noticeable only with the equally radical movement toward degrowth. Serge Moscovici stood at the origin of both movements, as well as many other alternative ways of perceiving the world around us. Paying tribute to the figure of Antigone, Virginia Woolf (2014) wrote that “*freedom is the essence of freedom*”.

Serge emerges in my memory as another such example.

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Краткое сообщение

Назад к природе с Сержем Московиси

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Аннотация. Автором предпринята попытка показать оригинальный новый взгляд, предложенный Сержем Московиси по теме пола и гендера, в контексте того, что он назвал «естественным вопросом». Как утверждал Московиси, «возвращение к природе» крайне необходимо, но трудно достижимо, учитывая образ жизни наших «высокомерных» сообществ. В ознаменовании столетней годовщины со дня рождения Сержа Московиси (1925–2014) статья призвана подчеркнуть его вклад в прояснение того, что он подразумевал под «естественным вопросом», а именно – сложных взаимоотношений между человеческим обществом и природой, не как противоположностями, а как исторически взаимосвязанными явлениями. Серж Московиси был одним из первых ученых, обративших внимание на приоритет сохранения природы посредством «антироста» как необходимого условия для выживания человечества. Для этого требуется полный отказ от хищнического образа жизни, а также глубокие изменения в неравноправных социальных отношениях, в осуществлении которых женщины («второй пол») могут сыграть решающую историческую роль. Хотя не Московиси создал концепцию экофеминизма, именно он первым выдвинул идею рассмотреть положение женщин, находящихся под господством мужчин, в контексте «естественного вопроса»: не как меритократическую версию войны полов, а как необходимость радикального изменения роли семьи как основополагающей традиционной структуры общества. Предложенная Сержем Московиси оригинальная интерпретация классической трагедии Софокла «Антигона» является иллюстрацией подобного движения, уже набирающего силу в наше время.

Ключевые слова: С. Московиси, природа, культура, общество, экология, феминизм, Антигона

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