

# Broader perspectives on biomass -

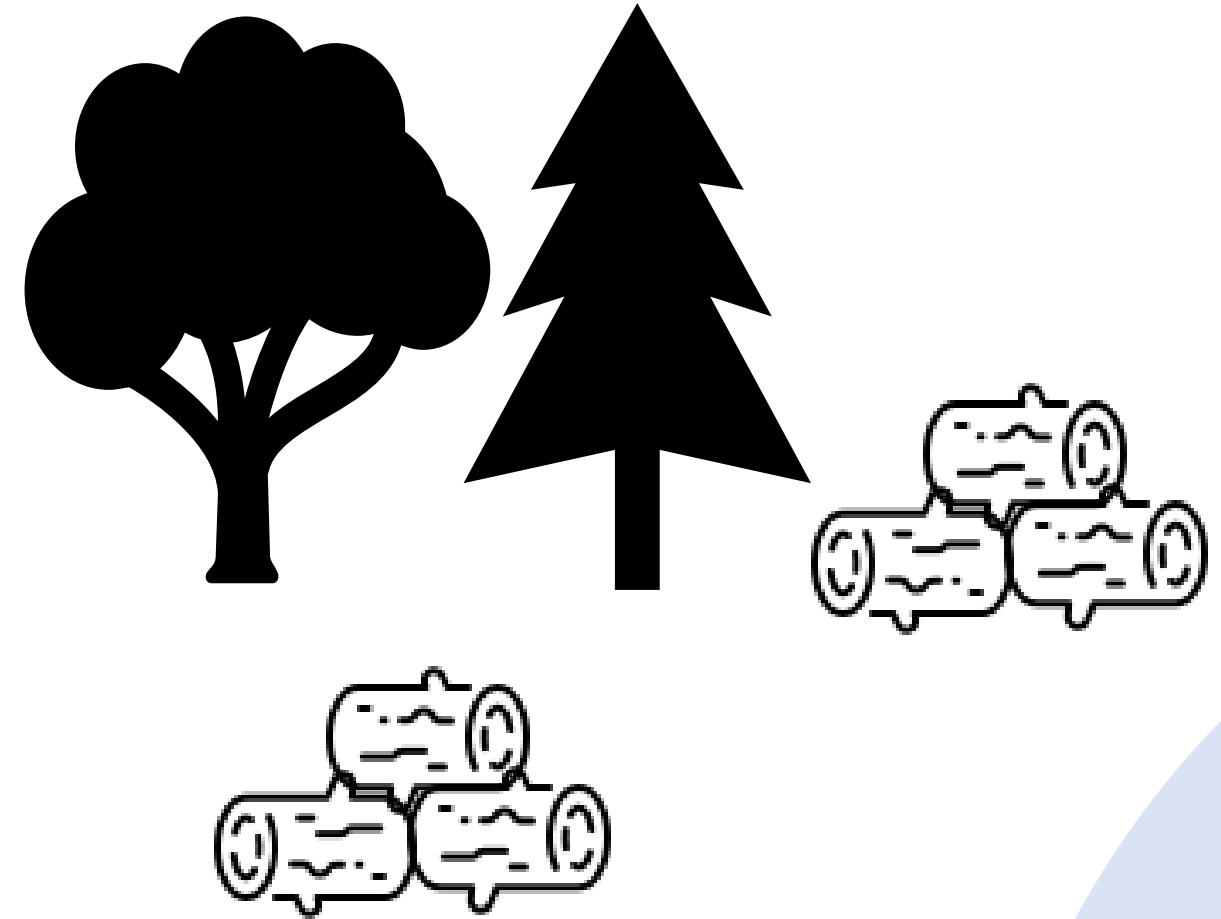
## The opportunity to change our conceptions of nature and energy

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Cross discussion with philosophy on biomass as a heuristic concept for a narrative change on nature and energy through the critique and limits of the resource concept.

### 1. Biomass makes the problem tangible

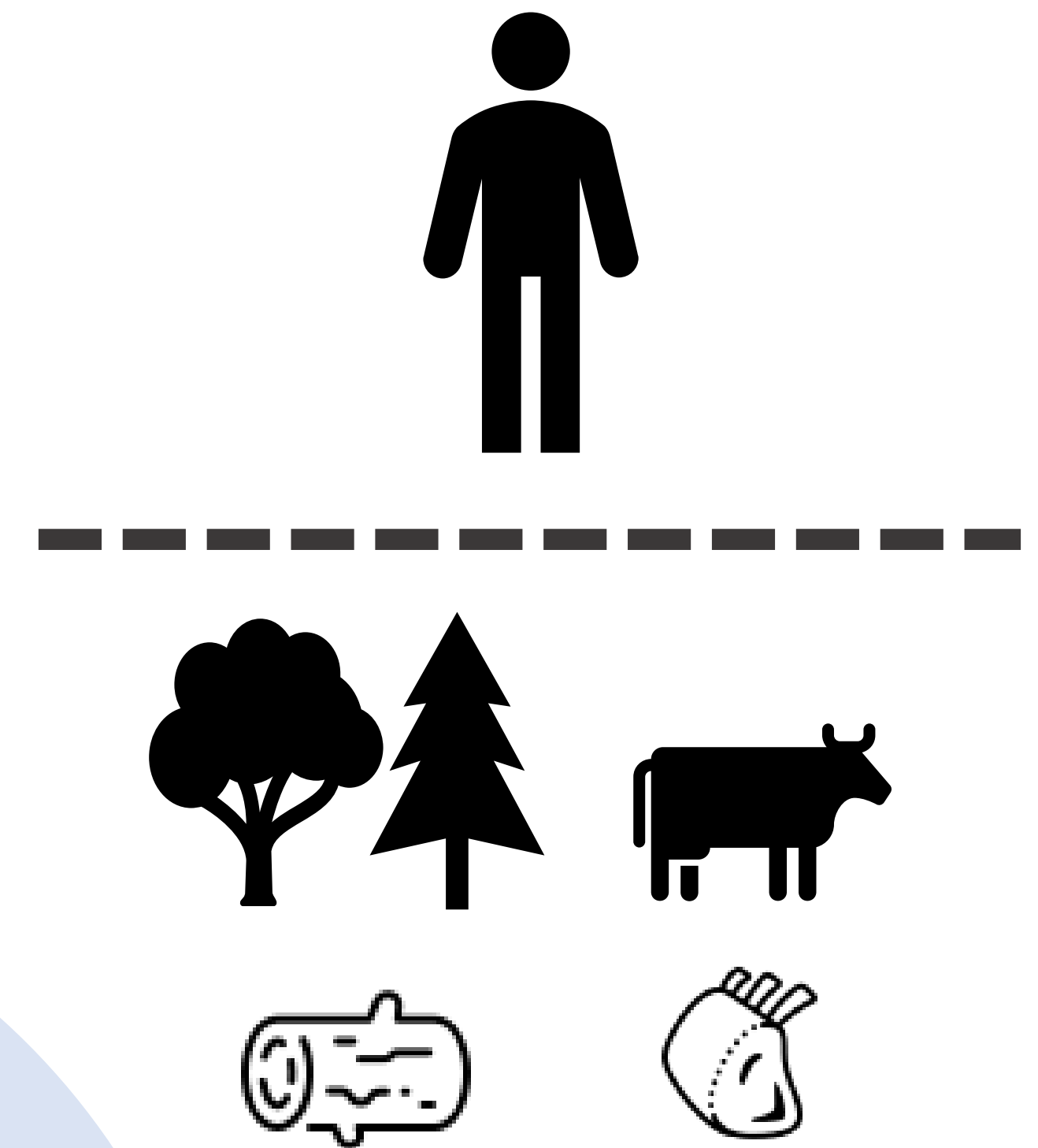
Biomass has this power to reconnect us to the materiality of our consumption - **it makes visible the fact that resources are not infinite means for human needs.**



### 2. The human-nature dualism is at stake

Biomass resources such as defined today is based on a **anthropocentric and instrumentalist vision of "nature"**. Here, the term *nature* illustrates the dualistic mindset that nature is a separate entity from human.

With the instrumentalization of nature, the resources become mere means → We see nature solely as a **stock of resources-means for human.**



### 3. The vicious circle of an instrumentalist vision of nature and energy

Amplifies the idea of the hegemony of humans over nature

**Anthropocentric and instrumentalist vision of nature**

Vision of non-human as a potential **resource – a neutral commodity, a pure means**

Exploitation of nature for *wealth* development **occluding systemic interactions & limits, and without clear discussion on final objectives**

Vision of energy as a productive force and as *"a subtle something that has the ability to make nature do work"* [1]

**Cheap and abundant energy sources**

**Increasing our power on nature**

**Energy is the vector of interaction between human and nature – the tool of exploitation.**

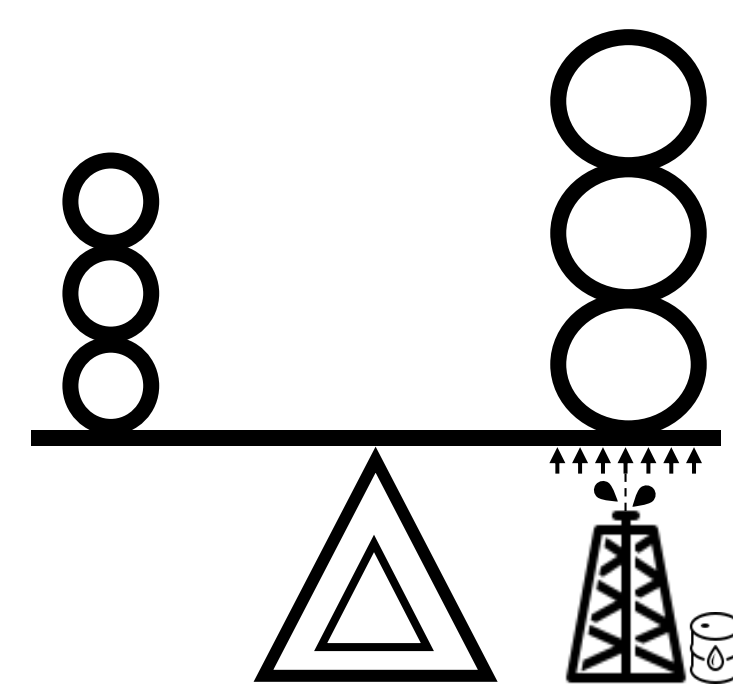
**Abundant energy has increased this dynamic and kept this loop artificially stable so far.**

**Nature and energy conceptions are linked and are both socially constructed** - as discussed by I. Illich for energy [1] and by P. Descola for nature [2].

→ **Possibility to change**

### 4. The energy transition confronts us with the imbalance of our actions

The energy transition puts us in front of our **dependence on abundant energy** that maintains the imbalance of our actions on ecosystems on which we rely.



→ **It is the opportunity to (i) switch from fossil fuels to renewables and (ii) reshape our conceptions of nature and energy**

Need to **overcome the dualism of human – nature**. It is different from falling into the extreme of nature sacralization which would only be the other side of the coin of the same human-nature dualism.

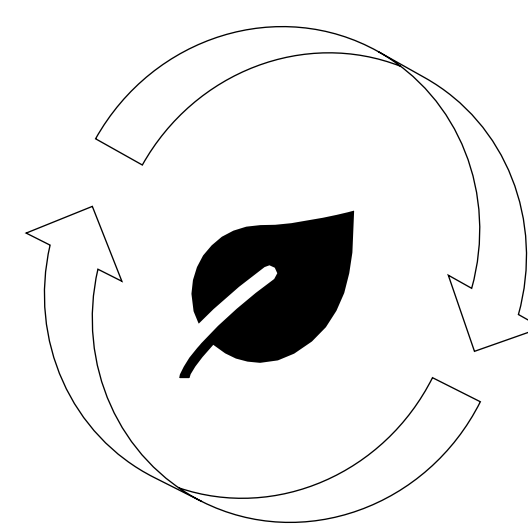
### 5. Biomass as a heuristic concept to overcome the human – nature dualism

Through the critique and limits of the resource concept

In its modern sense, a resource = a **pure means**;

➤ While from its etymology it once referred to the idea of the renewability and recovery of its subject.

→ **Biomass should not be reduced to a mere means as a resource.**



**Biomass confronts us with the limits of ecosystems.** It invites us to renew with the forgotten constraint of renewability in the resource concept, with the renewability of nature and its constitutive interactions, **not exclusively the productivist ones.**

Need to **redefine our sensibility to the non-human [3], the ethics of our interactions and of our own needs.**

→ **Necessary arbitration and debate on the useful and the superfluous final services for humans.**

### 6. Conclusion

Biomass can be a **strong ally** for a sustainable future as it represents an opportunity not only to contribute to the **transition to renewable energies** but also to **reshape our vision of nature and energy** to ensure a more sustainable equilibrium with our ecosystem. Biomass reminds us that there are no neutral means, means and ends are intertwined. Biomass is thus the opportunity to rethink our relationship to non-humans as means and as ends. **Non-humans** are not a decoration to be used for human consumption, but **allies for sustainable prosperity**. It is a **new paradigm** criticizing the modern resource concept and **that recognizes the interdependence within the ecosystems and its limits**, the same limits from which fossil fuels have blindly allowed us to break free.

#### References

- [1] Illich, Ivan. 2001. "The Social Construction of Energy." *Qualitative Sociology* 24 (3): 417–23.  
[2] Descola, Philippe. 2007. "À Propos de Par-Delà Nature et Culture." *Tracés*, no. 12: 231–52.  
[3] Morizot, Baptiste. 2020. *Manières d'être Vivant: Enquêtes Sur La Vie à Travers Nous* - Baptiste Morizot. Actes Sud.

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