

*Posthuman, All Too Human:
The Memoirs and Aspirations
of a Posthumanist*

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PREAMBLE

Discussions about the human and, more specifically, what constitutes the basic unit of reference to define what counts as human, are not what they used to be. For instance, the question “What is human about the humanities?” is *not* one that we—humanities scholars—were accustomed to asking. The “human”—whatever that may mean—is that which we used to take for granted in order to do what we do in the humanities. Yet over the last thirty years we have witnessed, in public debates as well as in scientific research and academic scholarship, the exposure of the implicit assumptions, the images and representations of that “human.”

In these lectures I want to explore this phenomenon. I will argue for a definition of the posthuman as our historical condition, and not some future dystopia. Furthermore, I will approach the posthuman as an affirmative condition, not as a terminal crisis, with special emphasis on the qualitative aspects of this predicament. My aim is to provide a rigorous and accessible account of the philosophical assumptions and arguments that have opened up the posthuman horizon, so as to make it intelligible. This will be achieved in the first instance by giving my philosophical overview of the posthuman condition, pointing out its defining structures and the leading issues in the debates. I will then proceed to present a selective overview of the reshaped postdisciplinary terrain emerging after the impact of posthuman scholarship. Last but not least, I will explore the implications of the posthuman turn for the present status and the future perspectives of the humanities by highlighting the promises of the fast-growing field of the critical posthumanities.

In the first lecture, I will outline the defining features for the formation of the posthuman subject, and propose an ethics for the posthuman predicament. The thesis I will defend is that the posthuman subject is a materially embedded, multilayered, nomadic entity (Braidotti 1994, 2011), engaging in interrelations with human and nonhuman agents. Although such a definition inherits some aspects of the postmodernism debate, it moves beyond it, both in terms of concepts and of ethical and political premises. In the second lecture, I will work out the implications of the posthuman ethical subject for the theoretical foundations and the institutional practice of the critical posthumanities in the twenty-first-century university. In passing, I will also address the “unfinished business” of theory in general and French poststructuralist theory in particular, and assess how it impacts the posthuman moment and posthuman scholarship.

LECTURE I. MEMOIRS OF A POSTHUMANIST

WHY “MEMOIRS”?

I chose the term “memoirs” to start off my argument in order to suggest a personal narrative tone, but also to establish from the outset my credentials as a genealogical and neomaterialist thinker. For me, philosophy starts off with embedded and embodied, partial, and hence accountable cartographies of complex intellectual and social phenomena. It is less of an intellectual autobiography than the account of a nomadic crossing, a journey across texts, teachers, and traditions. I am a neomaterialist, grounded thinker of dynamic and complex social and discursive processes, with a keen eye for issues of social and political justice.

The fact that I studied with Foucault, Irigaray, and Deleuze in Paris in the 1980s does play a role in defining such an approach. These innovative thinkers taught me to respect the complexity of language as a material and semiotic structure that we inhabit but do not control, and based their critique of unitary identities and hegemonic power formations upon this insight. I feel deep and enduring respect and loyalty for my teachers, who belong to the tradition of French neomaterialism and Continental naturalism. This tradition avoids an exclusive emphasis on social constructivism on the one hand, but also on reductive essentialism on the other. The French poststructuralists are thinkers of processes and complexity. Knowing, however, that French theory is an exquisitely American invention, and that Yale played such a central role in it (Redfield 2016), I want to revisit it through a different spectrum: embedded and embodied vital materialism, which I shall also bring to bear on the contemporary recomposition of posthuman knowledge.

My cognitive and ethical compass to make sense of the posthuman condition is therefore constituted by this neomaterialist and relational vision of subjectivity, enhanced with feminist theory. Rejecting dualism—Descartes’s error (Damasio 1995)—I will question with equal conviction the claims of transcendental universalism. This philosophical line runs into French philosophy through Kant into Levinas and Derrida, and differs significantly from the line of immanence, which defines French materialism and runs through Spinoza and Nietzsche into Foucault and Deleuze. The embodied and embedded, affective and relational approach that is constitutive of bodily materialism makes for an ideal combination with the

feminist politics of locations (Rich 1987), also known as situated knowledges (Harding 1986; Haraway 1988) and nomadic thought (Braidotti 1994, 2011).

I take the feminist politics of locations as the historical and political manifestation of the immanence of real-life experience and the significance of corporeal or sensible empiricism. It enables one to account for one's position in terms of space (geopolitical or ecological dimension) as well as time (historical memory or genealogical dimension). Accountability is both epistemic and ethical: it is both a matter of producing knowledge in and for the world and of making it generate affirmative relations.

In other words: to understand the complexity and multilayeredness of the present, I want to start from the world. From there, I will construct the affirmative aspects of my philosophical approach. I will not privilege textual authority, but map out encounters and relay points, generative connections, and productive zig-zagging. This nonlinear spatial itinerary requires also renewed attention to the time factor: the present is not a static bloc, but a flow pointing in different directions at once.

To do justice to the complexity of our times, we need to think of the posthuman present as *both* the record of *what we are ceasing to be* (the actual) and the seed of *what we are in the process of becoming* (the virtual). Multiplying the present along these parallel plateaus of actual and virtual (Deleuze and Guattari ([1991] 1994) will prove crucial for these lectures, and I will return to it often enough. It is not a binary opposition, but the simultaneous occurrence of multidirectional processes: complexity is indeed the issue. As nomadic subject-in-process, in perpetual becoming, thinking about the present makes us confront but also exceed the immediate conditions we inhabit. If the present is a complex process, critical philosophy cannot stop at the critique of the actual (of what we are ceasing to be), but needs to move on to the creative actualization of the virtual (of what we are in the process of becoming). The interplay between the present as actual and the present as virtual spells the rhythms of subject formation.

This time continuum as a process ontology of becoming, supplements and supports the vital neomaterialism that I want to propose as the philosophical underpinning of the posthuman predicament. In attempting to describe the predicament we are in, therefore, the best we can do is to speak in the future past (*futur antérieur*): "It will have been the best of times, and the worst of times, but it will have been *our* time, though we were only passing through."

Memoirs of the present, then.

THE POSTHUMAN

Defining the posthuman predicament

Considering the state of the contemporary public debate and the general degree of cultural anxiety, I want to start by situating the posthuman predicament in the context of the Anthropocene. This is the geological time during which humanity's negative effect upon the planet's health and sustainability has reached empirically measurable levels.¹ The impact is multilayered and it mobilizes our multiple ecologies of belonging (Guattari [1989] 2000), triggering unprecedented problems of an environmental and social-economical, as well as affective and psychical, character. My position is that the posthuman condition includes, but also exceeds, the specific framework of the Anthropocene, which is a popular—albeit controversial—notion in the scientific community.

The crisis of the Anthropocene is compounded by the combination of fast technological advances on the one hand and the exacerbation of economic and social inequalities on the other, making for a multifaceted and conflict-ridden landscape. In some way, simply referring to the Anthropocene begs the question. Einstein taught us long ago that we cannot solve our *problems* with the same thinking we used when we created them.² New notions and terms are needed to address the constituencies and configurations of the present and to map future directions. We need more conceptual creativity—a renewed trust in the cognitive and political importance of the imagination.

Moreover, even as a relative neologism, the Anthropocene has already become another “Anthropomeme” (Macfarlane 2016), spawning several alternative terms such as “Chthulucene” (Haraway 2016), “Capitalocene” (Moore 2015), and “Anthroscene” (Parikka 2015). And there are yet others: “Plasticene” (*New York Times* 2014), “Plantationcene” (Tsing 2015), and “Misanthropocene” (Clover and Spahr 2014). The terminological vitality here reflects the speedy and self-replicating discursive economy of our times. It also expresses both the excitement and the exasperation involved in attempting to account for the posthuman predicament within the Anthropocenic frame.

I propose therefore to widen the picture and take a broader look. My focus throughout the reading of the posthuman in the Anthropocene will be on the issue of subjectivity—what kind of subjects we are becoming in this context. In order to approach the posthuman subject with some degree of complexity, I prefer to show you a few images that tell a story.



ILLUSTRATION 1. *Greenhouse, El Ejido Spain.* © 2013 Armin Linke. Used by permission.

Firstly, let us consider the state of our so-called natural order. To say that “naturecultures” (Haraway 1997) today are fully integrated into a technological apparatus that maximizes efficiency and profit is stating the obvious. But coming to terms—psychically, socially, and ethically—with this statement seems a problem of an altogether different order and scale. Eco-critics are writing eco-elegiac texts to define our changing relationship to the techno-natural-cultural continuum in which we now live. Others speak more bluntly of “eco-horror.” In any case, the response is affective, and these powerful affects call out for new languages: What do you call that haunting feeling of ecological memories of the landscapes of your youth, now transfigured by violent development? Eco-nostalgia? Remembrance of trees past? Geophysical semiotics? Portrait of a young wasteland? Colonial transfigurations? Scar wars? And how should we describe that sinking feeling at the thought of the unsustainability of our future? Post-anthropocentric nausea? Extinction-attraction syndrome? Terrestrial delirium? Global obscenities overload? No country for *any* human?

Biopower and necro-politics

The affective—or *zoe/geo/techno*-poetic dimension—embodied in literary, artistic, and cultural practices cannot be separated from broader geopolitical and theoretical considerations. The Anthropocene is not taking place in a void, but within the frame of cognitive, biogenetic advanced capitalism and media and information technologies. What constitutes capital value today is the informational power of living matter itself—the politics of life itself (Rose 2007)—its immanent qualities and self-organizing capacity. The biogenetic structure of contemporary capitalism enhances the ability to generate profits from the scientific and economic comprehension of all that lives. This creates as many problems as it solves, particularly if you broaden the picture to include the issue of anthropomorphic subjectivity. Thus, the greenhouses may look like moon stations, but their produce is mostly picked by unregistered migrants who move from one site to another during the harvest season, constituting the proletariat of today—economic fodder vulnerable to widespread vilification and xenophobic rejection. Disposable bodies, invisible but indispensable.

Moreover, our culture has moved even beyond this biopiracy (Shiva 1997) and its global proletariat on to more advanced mastery of living matter—through synthetic biology, stem-cell research, gene-editing, robotics, and bioengineering. Today, we re-create lifelines by codes of a biogenetic and informational nature. Writing and editing code is what we do best. Technological mediation is our second nature—from de-extinction to genetically modified food, Facebook, and WikiLeaks. Our universities are in the middle of these phenomenal and exciting developments—we are motors of what has become known as “cognitive capitalism” (Moulier-Boutang 2012). Let me give you just one example of this.

Artificial meat was first made in 2013 at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, from real meat stem cells grown in a lab and mixed with calf serum. The first prototype cost \$325,000, but by now that price has dropped to just over \$11 for one synthetic burger (\$80 per kilogram of meat). The neural part of humans’ interaction with synthetic meat is not up to scratch yet, but the proteins are in place. All ecologically minded citizens, let alone vegetarian and vegan activists, should be delighted by these developments. Synthetic biology brings the exploitation of natural resources to an end, and even allows for de-extinction (Minteer 2015) and rewilding practices (Frasier 2010; Monbiot 2013), in a way that formalizes the de-naturalization of matter. Although this idea is in equal parts

liberating and problematic, I am struck by the slightly disgusted reactions it is often met with in public debates. What this contradictory reaction tells us is something significant about the complexity of our emotional responses to the capitalization of living matter. What are we missing exactly, now that matter has emancipated itself from bound organisms and meat is de-linked from the body? Is this another telling tale of eco-nostalgia? How do these affective responses interplay with the intellectual excitement so many of us feel at what is known as the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” and its advanced technologies?

In the contemporary political economy, where life generates surplus profits (Cooper 2008), informational data is the true capital. Knowledge about the vital power of matter gets transposed into data banks of biogenetic, neural, and mediatic information. Data mining includes profiling practices and risk assessments that identify different types or characteristics as strategic targets for investment, but also for our security and surveillance practices.

This has implications for posthuman subjectivity as well. The paradoxical result of mining the basic codes of life itself is that it induces, if not the actual erasure, at least the blurring of the categorical distinction between the human and other species, when it comes to profiting from them. Seeds, cells, plants, animals, and bacteria fit into this logic of commodification alongside various specimens of humanity, producing a functional form of post-anthropocentrism that spuriously unifies all species under the imperative of the market economy. The excesses of the Capitalocene threaten the uniqueness of *Anthropos*, as well as the sustainability of the planet as a whole.

The position of both nonhumans and humans is dislocated along multiple axes within these advanced yet brutal posthuman landscapes. This internally divided picture becomes even sharper if we look specifically at the dispossessed. The inhuman is a significant component of the posthuman predicament. And the contemporary world has more than its fair share of cruelty to account for. The brutality of new power relations has established a necro-political mode of governing, which targets not only the management of the living but also multiple practices of managed decline and dying. Consider the generalized material destruction of human bodies, populations, and the environment through the industrial-scale warfare led by drones and other unmanned vehicles. Think also of the global effects of migration as a result of dispossession, expulsions, and terror. The refugee camps and other zones of detention are multiplying, as are our militarized borders and humanitarian interventions. Whole sections of humanity are downgraded to the status of infra-humans, extraterritorial, like the refugees,



ILLUSTRATION 2. “Disposable Bodies” *New Degrees of Freedom*, Act 3: Water, 2014 © Jenna Sutela et al. Reproduced by permission.

trying to cross the solid sea that is the Mediterranean, by now turning into a liquid grave. They are the alien others, not meant to be here to stay.

The inhuman(e) aspects of the posthuman condition is one of the reasons why I want to foreground the question of the subject and subjectivity, so as to work out what the posthuman may mean for our collective self-understanding and ethical accountability. Let it be clear therefore that, far from marking the extinction or the impoverishment of the human,³ the posthuman condition is a way of reconstituting the human—for some as a return to neohumanist universalism, coupled with forms of enhancement; for others a downsizing of human arrogance coupled with the acknowledgment of solidarity with other humans. There are many dynamics of subject formation coming into being in this posthuman conjunction, as a result of the dislocation of the grounds on which the human used to be composed and experienced socially.

THE POSTHUMAN SUBJECT AS CRITIQUE

Overexposure and evanescence

Let me pause at this stage and strike a meditative note. The posthuman predicament is constructed by a major paradox, because there is widespread

production of knowledge and speculation both in the academy and in society about a category—the human—at the very time when this category has lost all consensus and self-evidence. I hope you will have noticed—here comes the future past again!—that the argument I am building is gradually constructing an embattled and endangered people—a “we-are-in-*this*-together” kind of people—that is vulnerable because of the times, internally fractured and not at all the same or universal, but also determined to adopt a critical and creative stance towards the great opportunities, but also the injustices and threats, of present times.

The paradox at work here is the simultaneous overexposure and evanescence of the “human” in posthuman discourses and practices: the category emerges as urgent just as it enters a terminal crisis. It does not even hold as a category, other than as an expression of anxiety about survival, plus the fear of loss of privileges. This paradox is not only logical but also ethical-political, and it can be put as a polemical question: Whose crisis is it? To what extent can one speak of an undifferentiated humanity (“we”) that is allegedly sharing a common condition of both technological mediation and crisis and extinction (“*this*”)?

Think, for example, of the classic posthumanist example of Michel Foucault’s (1970) image of the face of “Man” drawn on the sand by the seashore, which is gradually erased by the waves of history. Is it about extinction or renewal? Never mind the social constructivist point about Man being a recent invention—what matters here is how Foucault’s genealogical method grapples with this conceptual paradox: it is at the moment of its dissolution that Man becomes thinkable as such and emerges as a present concern. Up until that moment it had not surfaced to the critical eye, because it functioned as an implicit notion.

Maybe this is why, as I stated at the beginning, we were not trained to question directly the identity of the human in the humanities—this was simply not a question. It had to be recast and reformatted discursively within the protocols and methods of each humanities discipline, where it conventionally falls into a pattern of dualistic oppositions that define the human mostly by what it is *not*. Mullarky (2013) wittily observes, for instance, that the animal provides an index of death for Derrida, an index of life for Deleuze, and an index of dehumanization for Agamben, to name just a few. My point is that the posthuman condition encourages us to move beyond these representational habits and the philosophical anthropocentrism they entail: we simply cannot start from the centrality of the human and uphold the old dualities. But this acknowledgment

does not necessarily or inevitably throw us into the abyss of neo-bestiality or the terror of extinction. There has to be some other middle ground, another *milieu*.

This is where the conceptual distinction between the perception of what we are ceasing to be (the present as the record of the past) and that which we are in the process of becoming (the present as the unfolding of the virtual/the future) offers critical and creative margins of intervention upon the paradox of simultaneous overexposure and evanescence of the human.

This distinction allows us to think differently by opening up a new space—the space of the non-coincidence between the given and the critique of the given. This is another kind of middle ground, or *milieu*, which points to the future, that is to say to what we are capable of becoming in and out of what we are ceasing to be. On the basis of vital neomaterialism, a number of consequences emerge.

Firstly, there is no paradox in the simultaneous overexposure and non-existence of the “human,” because there is no linear time, but a thousand plateaus of possible becoming, each following its own multidirectional or rhizomic course. A nonlinear temporality requires and enables us to produce multiple complex and diversified lines of embodied, embedded, relational, and affective posthuman subjectivity. Secondly, there is no extinction/survival binary, because posthuman thought is not about dialectical oppositions, “either/or,” but rather about immanent relations of, “and/and.” By extension, this means that there is no justification for panic-stricken reinventions of a wounded humanity. What we rather need to stress is the urgency to provide adequate and differential accounts (cartographies) of multiple subject-positions that are in process at the same time, but not in the same manner or direction.

Thus I come to my first concluding proposition: the proper subject of posthuman enquiry is not Man, but a new collective subject, a “we-are-in-*this-together*” kind of subject. This can be understood as a process of becoming in its own immanence and not in binary oppositional terms. It is a becoming other-than the *Homo Universalis* of humanism or other-than the *Anthropos* of anthropocentrism. To cope with it, we need a subtler and more diversified affective range that avoids the polarization between mourning (apocalyptic variant) and celebration (euphoric variable) in relation to humanity as both a vulnerable and an insurgent category. What we do need above all is to develop a specific form of complexity proper to the humanities. The humanities are the subtle, *not* the soft, sciences.

Posthumanism

Let me now go on to offer my working definition: the posthuman is a convergence phenomenon unfolding at the intersection between posthumanism on the one hand and post-anthropocentrism on the other. Posthumanism proposes the philosophical critique of the Western humanist ideal of the “man of reason” as the allegedly universal measure of all things, whereas post-anthropocentrism rests on the rejection of species hierarchy and human exceptionalism. They are equally powerful discourses, but they refer to different theoretical and philosophical genealogies and engender different political stances, which encompass both forms of empowerment and, in many ways, new modes of entrapment. This convergence is producing a chain of theoretical, social, and political effects that is more than the sum of its parts and that points to a qualitative leap in new conceptual directions. Before further exploring the affirmative ethics of the posthuman and giving you an idea of what the posthuman subject is or can become, let me give a bit of background to the idea of posthumanism.

Posthumanism drags us back to debates we may not wish to revisit—though I fear we cannot completely avoid them—about the unfinished business of the French and the postmodern critique of the human, namely the quarrel with Him, the *Homo Universalis* of humanist universalism: Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man. Considering the complex and polemical nature of this legacy, let me say just this: while the philosophical poststructuralist generation developed its own critique of humanism, multiple feminist waves, antiracist activists, indigenous and First Nations people, environmentalists, disability rights advocates, media activists, and LGBTQ+ theorists have always questioned the scope, the founding principles, and the achievements of European humanism and its role in the project of Western modernity. Their criticism is twofold: It targets the unfulfilled promises of the Enlightenment project, while also producing counter-notions of the human and of humanity—in nonmasculinist and non-Eurocentric terms. Moreover, it stresses that humanity is not a neutral term but rather one that indexes access to specific powers, values, and norms, privileges and entitlements, rights and visibility.

None of this is particularly “new.” In fact, critical questions about the limits of humanist universalism have been raised since the eighteenth century. For instance, the French feminist activist Olympe de Gouges—who wrote the *Declaration of Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*, in 1791—was critical of this ideal, arguing that it did nothing for women

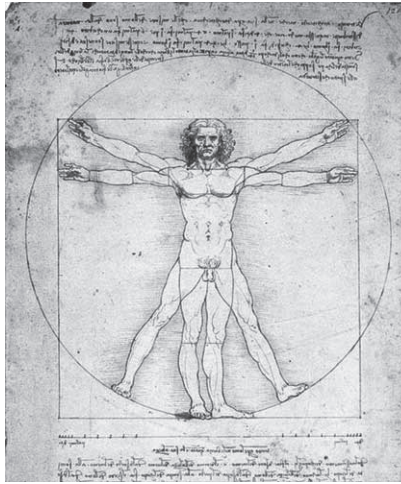


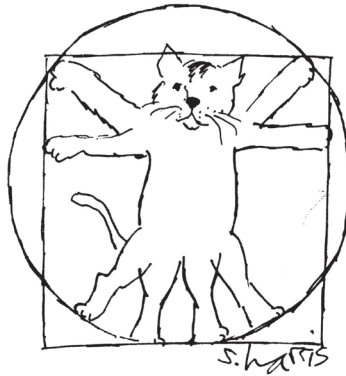
ILLUSTRATION 3. Leonardo da Vinci, *L'Uomo Vitruviano*, ca. 1490. Wikimedia Commons.

and other minorities. She campaigned and protested but ended up under the guillotine. François-Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture, the antislavery leader of the Haitian Revolution in Santo Domingo (which also started in 1791), attempted to apply the universal principles of equality to the status of slaves in the colonies. Toussaint L'Ouverture tried to establish an independent Haitian government. He almost succeeded but was put down violently by the French in due course.

These critical voices teach us that the fundamental social categories such as class, race, gender and sexual orientation, age, and able-bodiedness have functioned as markers of human “normality.” They still are key factors in framing the notion of and policing access to something we may call “humanity.” But who qualifies as a human in that view? The experience of the marginal and the dispossessed teaches us that “the human,” far from being a universal or neutral category, is a term that indexes access to entitlement and privileges.

The humanist ideal inflates the human to universal dimensions: it skillfully combines high standards of physical perfection with intellectual and moral values, turning into a civilizational standard. Foucault's critique linked this humanist ideal to a sovereign notion of “reason” that, since the eighteenth century, has provided the basic unit of reference for the human and for everything European culture holds dear. This exclusively human

LEONARDO DA VINCI'S CAT



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ILLUSTRATION 4. *Vitruvian Cat*. www.CartoonStock.com.

faculty allegedly qualifies our species for the pursuit of both individual and collective perfectibility, making it uniquely capable of self-regulating moral rational judgment. The boundless faith in reason as the motor of human evolution ties in with the teleological prospect of the rational progress of humanity through science and technology, positioning Europe as the cradle of that civilizing mission.

Thus, from the angle of posthumanism, the posthuman turn, far from being deconstructivist and relativistic, is materialist and neofoundationalist in the many dimensions that structure it. It stresses that “we” are not one and the same but are rather internally differentiated by power divides. Moreover, because this process of overcoming the limitations of both humanism and antihumanism is neither linear nor simple, many aspects of the poststructuralist debates are relevant for the current situation, but mostly as a cautionary tale.

Post-anthropocentrism

Now that we have an idea of how posthumanism came out of a critique of the human, let's look more closely at post-anthropocentrism. I see posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism as distinct genealogical lines rather than automatically linked. Assuming that most scholars in the humanities are fatally attracted to anthropomorphic objects of study, when they are not belligerently anthropocentric, can we even begin to imagine nonhuman

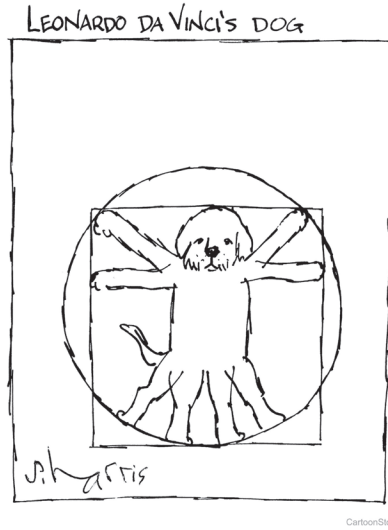


ILLUSTRATION 5. *Vitruvian Dog*. www.CartoonStock.com.

entities becoming “the measure of all things”? Post-anthropocentrism propels us forward to topics we may not feel a particular aptitude for: animals, plants, cells, viruses, bacteria, algorithms, etc. And yet, posthuman, but all too human, “think we must,” as Virginia Woolf eloquently phrased it in *Three Guineas*, on the eve of World War II—coining a sentence that will have proved foundational for feminist theory.

How do we go about thinking along these complex but interwoven posthuman lines of critique? For one thing, posthuman thought has resurrected the same anxieties and virulent rejection that previous generations reserved for French poststructuralist theory and its alleged postmodernist relativism. The analogy between the anti-posthuman and the anti-postmodern discussions is striking. But we also know by now that French poststructuralism is the preferred public scapegoat for all evils that befall us, so we should not take these allegations too seriously.

Other critical voices, however, display a distinct lack of enthusiasm for the posthuman predicament. Social thinkers from different political backgrounds, such as Habermas (2003), Fukuyama (2002), Sloterdijk (2009), and Derrida (in Borradori 2003), have expressed concern bordering on moral panic about the status of the human in our advanced technological times. Recently, Pope Francis (2015) joined this debate, supplementing Catholic dogma on Natural Law with Naomi Klein’s analysis of the destructive role of capitalism (Klein 2014). My argument is quite the

opposite: while it is undeniably true that the technological devices today are very alive, and the humans quite inert (Haraway 1988), the evidence provided by posthuman scholarship shows no “crisis,” but a remarkable upsurge of inspiration.

So let me repeat the question: Supposing “we” are in *this* together, who are “we”? Whose crisis is this? This is where I want to insist on adopting a philosophical stance that defies dualistic oppositions and sustains the material, embodied and embedded, interconnected nature of things both human and nonhuman. We need to connect critique to creativity and invent new ways of thinking, interwoven lines of posthuman critique, because we cannot solve problems in the same language we used to create them.

THE POSTHUMAN SUBJECT AS CREATIVITY

The posthuman subject produces a seismic shift of the grounds on which the humanist/anthropocentric subject used to be postulated. It is not, however, merely critical but also an alternative affirmative figure. The next step of my argument will be to think about a posthuman ethics for this subject that is not unitary but not postmodern either; it is dynamic but not antifoundationalist, it is well defined but in process.

In order to get there, let me start again from the line of immanence and my differential, but embodied and embedded, bodily materialism. This position mistrusts the metaphysical grandiosity of the line of transcendence; it grounds the activity of thinking in the mobility and fluctuations of an embodied mind that connects constantly, changes and yet remains stable—belonging and flowing at the same time. I have also referred to this materialist continuum as *zoe*, that is to say an intertwined web of humans and nonhuman living matter, as opposed to *bios*, the specific slice of material and discursive life traditionally reserved for *Anthropos* (Braidotti 2006).

How does a philosophy of immanence teach us to think differently? By situating the thinking subjects in the world, as relational, post-anthropocentric, mediated, and outward-bound. By extension, posthuman ethics is about interacting affirmatively in the world, together with a multitude of human and nonhuman others. The emphasis on immanence means that the posthuman subjects—as the effect of the convergence of posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism—are “we-are-in-*this*-together-but-we-are-*not*-one-and-the-same” kinds of subjects. That is to say they are not unitary but rather complex and multilayered. They are also immanent

and intrinsically connected to the very condition they are *also* critically disengaged from. The embodied and embedded, relational nature of this technologically mediated, globally interlinked, and yet internally fractured subject results in what I call “ontological pacifism.” That notion implies trust in our shared intimacy with and knowledge of the world and in our lived experience of it.

In this frame of thought, the differences that define us get constituted not oppositionally but as internal modulations within a common matter, that is intelligent and self-organized. For Spinoza, the ethical life consists of understanding ourselves as integral parts of the totality of being. It is the case, therefore, that not only are our bodies dynamically embedded in the interconnected whole that is the material world, but also so are our minds (Lloyd 1996). The immanent ethical subject apprehends itself—with ever increasing adequacy—as part of that interconnected totality of *both* matter and thought.

What this means for the task of posthuman thinkers is that we must be worthy of our times, in order to interact with them, in order to resist them, that is to say differ from them, especially when they perpetuate injustice and negativity. We need to detox our thinking from the poison of negative passions like resentment, envy, hatred, despair, but also sheer tedium. The ethical ideal is to aspire to the joyful affirmation of virtual possibilities, of what “we” are capable of becoming. We have to labor towards becoming a new kind of subject that is immanent to the world, that is to say confident about the world, but critical of its injustices and negativity. Such a subject can only become actualized together with others, in praxis, and through action in the world.

Posthuman subjects assume not only the materialist totality of things (i.e., that all matter is One, intelligent and self-organizing) but also that this totality includes technology. This is important because it inscribes the technological apparatus as second nature. Do remember that this “life” the posthuman subject is immanent to is no longer bios but rather zoe: non-anthropocentric but also non-anthropomorphic. Zoe also needs to embrace geo- and techno-bound egalitarianism, acknowledging that intelligence, thinking, and the capacity to produce knowledge are *not* the exclusive prerogatives of humans alone, but are distributed across all living matter and self-organizing technological networks. This statement, which may seem self-evident or even a banality for science studies scholars, anthropologists of science and technology, or environmentalists, is more indigestible for philosophers and other humanists. The transcendental

nature of human consciousness is simply one of the foundational and cherished ideas that one relinquishes at one's risk and peril.

And yet, thinking does take place everywhere, not only within the anthropomorphic subject—if by “thinking” we do not mean the despotic eye of transcendental consciousness but also the powers (*potentia*) of embodied and embedded subjects, which are the same in their essential capacity to affect and be affected, and to express their unrealized, that is to say virtual, potentialities. But these powers obviously differ in what stuff they are actually made of, that is to say in the degree and force of their capacity to actualize the virtual potential. Thinking, in the sense of relational and collaborative co-construction of sustainable ways of persevering in our existence, is the task of producing adequate ways of understanding what is happening to us so that we can intersect productively with others. Thinking, thus defined, is what being alive feels like. Once this profound intimacy with living systems—organic and technological, born and manufactured, bred and designed—is established, we have posthuman, all too human, vital materialist subjects embedded in the conditions of their own historicity, but also contained (and hence limited) by the frame of what their embrained bodies can do.

As a consequence, posthuman critical theory needs to fulfill the multiple—and potentially contradictory—requirements of vital materialist ontology. What is new is the scale, the speed, and the structure of the transformations we are undergoing, that is to say of what is simultaneously ceasing to be and in the process of becoming. It is crucial, for instance, to see the interconnections among the greenhouse effect, the status of women and LGBTQ+, racism and xenophobia, and frantic consumerism. We must not stop at any fragmented portions of these realities but rather trace transversal interconnections among them. Species equality in a post-anthropocentric world does urge us to question the violence and the hierarchical thinking that result from human arrogance and the assumption of transcendental human exceptionalism. In my view, relational ethics stresses instead the more compassionate aspect of subjectivity.

It follows therefore that “we”—the posthuman subjects of knowledge people emerging from the humanities—need to change how we think about thought, thinking, and reason. We need to write the collective memoirs of how things will have come to pass, how it will have come to *this*. In other words, we need to embrace the posthuman condition as our chance to develop together an adequate understanding of the mutation we are undergoing, in all of its complex and confrontational aspects, and labor

together to compose a people who can—hopefully—steer the qualitative leap in an affirmative direction.

Posthuman subjects will have been all too human in that they are facing, right here and now, an inhuman present and an ahuman future. Learning to think differently about what we do when we think about the humans that we will have been enlists the resources of the imagination, of our deepest aspirations, of vision and trust. These qualities require a new understanding of the collaborative and interconnected “we-are-in-*this-together*” kind of subject. Ultimately, this leads us to the need for a new ethics, posthumanist and non-anthropocentric, materially grounded but differential, and, above all, nonrelativistic.

Which takes me to the next level up, namely what sort of ethics can help us then to think past the deeply entrenched anthropocentrism and the benevolent humanism of even the most emancipatory discourses?

ZOE-DRIVEN ETHICS OF AFFIRMATION

The need for a new ethics is due to the urgency of the challenges that “we” are facing.

Considering the scale of the convulsive and internally contradictory events that define the posthuman predicament and the painful, glaring degrees of injustice and violence they entail, standard values appear inadequate. What kind of ethical accountability can we develop in the aftermath of anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism? What does it mean to think in and with the world, when that world seems to be falling apart by the minute?

Remembering that reaching an adequate understanding of the conditions of our bondage is Spinoza’s definition not only of philosophy, but also of the ethical life, ethics means a life lived in the pursuit of the expression of our innermost essence. This essence being the joyful affirmation of our freedom, our desire to endure, to persevere, to survive. And with us, the rest of this planet. This ontological interconnectedness changes everything indeed, because the posthuman subjects of the Anthropocene simply cannot afford, in view of their specific historical condition, to restrict the ethical life to bios alone, let alone an anthropomorphic or anthropocentric one.

Posthuman ethics is about reinventing the connection to nonhuman, inhuman, faster-than-human forces. This “eco-sophical” dimension, as Guattari called it, resonates with the technosphere as well, in a movement that pushes the quest for an ethics of affirmation not only to

terrestrial and global but also to cosmic dimensions. Please follow this sequential argument: The traditional ethical formula of humanist subjects was the contemplation of their own mortality, balanced by the prospect of the eternity of their rational soul. The ethical formula of postmodern subjects, on the other hand, was deep skepticism about the foundational robustness of any category, including that of subjectivity itself. The post-nuclear subjects' ethical formula focused on extinction of their and other species as a distinct possibility that ought to be avoided (and please note that the Anthropocene is officially dated from 1950, the dawn of the nuclear age).

It then follows that the ethical formula of posthuman subjects may well be to learn to think differently about what they are in the process of becoming. But what does the "difference" of posthuman subjects mean? It refers to their relational capacity to elaborate adequate understanding of the interconnection to all matter, at a historical time when our science and technology have revolutionized our knowledge of matter in a multiscale manner. Posthuman ethics is about the pursuit of the unrealized potential of complex assemblages of subjects, at a time when the future seems rather to shrink dramatically.

To help steer a course through these complex ideas, let me bring back at this point the insight about the nonlinearity of time, notably the multilayered structure of the present as both the record of what we are ceasing to be and the seeds of what we are in the process of becoming. This means that the conditions for political and ethical agency are not dependent on the current state of the terrain: they are not oppositional and thus not tied to the present by negation. Instead they are projected across time as affirmative praxis, geared to creating empowering relations aimed at possible futures. One has to become ethical, as opposed to applying moral rules and protocols as a form of self-protection; one has to endure and to transform. Saying "no" to the unacceptable aspects of present conditions cuts both ways. It means both "I prefer not to" and "I desire otherwise." Ethical relations create possible worlds by mobilizing resources that have been left untapped in the present, including our desires, and they activate the virtual in a web or rhizome of interconnection with others.

What is positive in the ethics of affirmation is the belief that negative affects can be transformed. This implies a dynamic view of all affects, including the painful ones. Every present event contains within it the potential for being overcome and overtaken—its negative charge *can* be transposed. The moment of the actualization of its virtual potential is

also the moment of the neutralization of the toxic/poisonous effects of the pain. Ethics is the force that contributes to conditions of affirmative becoming. It is an ethics equated with ontological relationality, aiming at affirmative empowerment, that is to say the ability to increase one's modes of relation with multiple others, and to create a community that actualizes this ethical propensity.

The ethical evil is equated with negative affects, and what is negative about them is not a normative value judgment but rather the effect of arrest, blockage, rigidification that comes as a result of a blow, a shock, an act of violence, betrayal, a trauma, or just intense boredom.

This ethics consists not in denying negativity but in reworking it outside the dialectical oppositions because negative passions diminish our relational competence and deny our vital interdependence on others. They negate the positive power (*potentia*) of our ethical essence, of life as the desire to endure, to continue, by becoming other than itself. The black hole of narcissism and paranoia, the despotic glee in humiliating others—all this negativity hurts the victims but also harms the perpetrators' capacity to pursue the ethical opening-outwards. Negative passions harm and diminish the self's capacity to relate to others, both human and nonhuman others, and thus to grow in and through others in a vital form of interdependence.

Posthuman *zoe/geo/techno-bound* ethics is therefore also a praxis—collectively desired, upheld, and implemented—that aims at reworking and transforming negative affects and relations. In order to implement this, we need to de-psychologize this discussion about negativity and affirmation and approach it instead in more conceptual but also more pragmatic terms. The distinction between good and evil is replaced with that between affirmation and negation, or positive and negative affects. Thinking in posthuman times is a subtle art, requiring broader alliances with multiple subjects.

Saying that ethics is essentially about transformation of negative into positive passions—i.e., moving beyond the pain—does not mean denying the pain, but rather activating it, working it through, beyond the dialectics of recognition and the politics of resentment. The positivity here is not supposed to indicate a facile optimism or a careless dismissal of human suffering. It is about transcending the resignation and passivity that ensue from being hurt, lost, and dispossessed, and enduring so as to transform. The emphasis on the pursuit and actualization of positive relations and the ethical value attributed to affirmation do not imply any avoidance or

disavowal of conflict either. Of course repugnant and unbearable events do happen. Ethics consists, however, in reworking these events in the direction of positive relations. This is not lack of compassion but rather an oversupply of it, aspiring to an adequate understanding of the conditions of our relational dependency on the negative. Critical thought feeds on negativity, as Nietzsche sharply observed. To disengage the process of subject formation from negativity and attach it to affirmative otherness means that the ethical good is redefined not as recognition as much as the reciprocity of mutual specification within a shared praxis of co-construction of affirmation. This virtue is all the more valuable in posthuman times, when alterity encompasses a multitude of nonhuman others.

Yes, we are in *this* together, but this togetherness is not given, it has to be constructed. We need to be ever mindful of the fact that the “human” never was a unitary term to begin with, but rather one that indexes access to rights and entitlements. No amount of universalism can conceal the fractures, the internal contradictions and external exclusions that have always composed a notion of the human. And leaving the question of the subject out of the posthuman picture altogether would just beg the question. In other words, being posthuman is not a mark of contempt for mankind. It rather expresses the belief that the human is its own overcoming, because the human is a relational entity that becomes in and with the world: “We are in *this* together but we are not one and the same.”

CONCLUSION

I have argued throughout this first lecture that the posthuman is our historical condition, which is multifaceted and affects all fields of human endeavour. It operates at all scales of constitution of our multiple ecologies of becoming-subjects, and it inhabits multiple and internally contradictory temporalities. The posthuman predicament points to a change of paradigm: far from being postmodernist, deconstructivist, and relativistic, posthuman thought is materialist, pragmatic, and neofoundationalist.

The posthuman knowing subject is a complex assemblage of human and nonhuman, ecological, technological, planetary and cosmic, given and manufactured, organic and technological relations. This subject is inscribed in the power formations of the current phase of cognitive capitalism and ubiquitous mediation, bio-piracy, necro-politics and worldwide dispossession, expulsions and migration. The posthuman subjects need to develop an ethics that combines the recognition of our collective belonging to the totality of a vital material universe with respect for the



ILLUSTRATION 6. *Vuilnis in het water*. Photo by David Bokuchava. www.istockphoto.com.

structural differences and inequalities that compose our social existence and the desire to develop a collective ethics of becoming.

The affirmative ethics of the posthuman subject is zoe/geo/techno-bound egalitarianism, based on respect for the nonhuman. It is postidentitarian and tends to run against the spirit of contemporary identity-loaded, consumeristic capitalism and its commodification of life itself. It favors instead nonprofit experimentations with what we are capable of becoming.

Posthuman subjects pursue an ethical praxis that entails a mix of humans and nonhumans, computational networks and earthlings, in a vital interconnection that is smart and self-organizing but not chaotic. However it may hurt, we need to inscribe the contemporary subjects in the conditions of their present predicament, in order to transform it affirmatively.

Everything starts with the composition of a people, a community that collectively recognizes that “we are in *this* together but we are not one and the same,” but are driven by a collaborative ethics of empowerment, affirmation, and social horizons of hope for yet unrealized futures. This is the ethical platform from which to confront the challenges of our posthuman times in their achievements, as well as horror.

“We are in *this* together” is the ethical formula *par excellence*, and all the more so in a posthuman vital political economy of becoming. The neomaterialist ethics of affirmation or joy is the stance I want to propose for posthuman subjects. This rests upon a vital-materialist framework that

foregrounds the relational elements of the process. This view of subjectivity does not condition the ethical relation on negation, or lack, but on vital generative forces. It also stresses that the subjects' ethical core is clearly not their moral intentionality but their relational capacity. The impact of their actions upon the world is the power to affect and be affected, meaning that power is always double-edged, both repressive (*potestas*) and positive (*potential*). Ethics is a process of engendering empowering affirmative modes of becoming. It is a pragmatics of affirmation. It is a form of *amor fati*, a way of living up to the intensities of life, so as to be worthy of all that happens to us—to live out our shared capacity to affect and to be affected.

The next step of the argument will be that we—teachers and thinkers in the humanities—need to embrace the multiple opportunities offered by the posthuman condition, while keeping up our other competences. If the proper study of mankind used to be “Man,” and the proper study of humanity was the human, it seems to follow that the proper study of the posthuman condition is the posthuman knowing subject itself. This question constitutes the core of Lecture II, which will apply these ideas to the development of the “subtle” humanities in the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. Nobel Prize–winning chemist Paul Crutzen coined the term “Anthropocene” in 2002 to describe our current geological era in terms of human impact upon the sustainability of the planet. The term was officially adopted by the International Geological Association in Cape Town in August 2016.
2. Albert Einstein: “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” Brainy Quote. Accessed August 3, 2017. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/alberteins385842.html>.
3. The literature of extinction is also proliferating. See, for instance, works on ceasing to be human (Bruns 2010), extinction of life on earth (Lovelock 2009), and extinction of the human *tout court* (Colebrook 2014a, 2014b).

LECTURE II. ASPIRATIONS OF A POSTHUMANIST

WHAT IS POSTHUMAN ABOUT THE HUMANITIES?

Maybe androids do dream of electric sheep, but academics tend to dream about unfinished sentences, half-baked ideas, and, of course, the latest review articles. My daydreams and aspirations will always have been about transformative processes, events, and concepts. It may be generational: born in the nuclear era, at the dawn of the Anthropocene, raised during the Cold War, for me it has always been “Apocalypse from now on!” And after the Cold War came global warming. So, I will have been postapocalyptic for most of my life. The posthuman being my historical condition, I will have been situated at the tail end of biopower, amidst the savage devastation of necro-politics, dying species, salinated earth, and toxic air. But also—and at the same time—I will have been a participant to and witness of the breathtaking scientific and technological advances of our times.

These opposite phenomena are not mutually exclusive, not outside some abstract logical scheme, given that they are happening all around us, right now. We—the all-too-human class of teachers and thinkers of these posthuman times—really cannot simplify our own lived complexities. The posthuman moment marks this fracture, this encounter with seemingly dissonant elements and events. And, to be honest, things seem to be getting worse, with growing economic disparities and the rise of illiberal governance. So there is nothing left for critical thinkers to do except to pursue the posthuman, all-too-human praxis of speaking truth to power and working towards the composition of planes of immanence for new subjects of knowledge. They are the missing peoples who can think otherwise and are able to generate knowledge by new methods. But at times, our hearts do fail.

Therefore, in this second lecture I will make a point of demonstrating the heartwarming vitality of posthuman scholarship and arguing that the fields of the subtle sciences that used to be the conventional humanities are already pointing in the direction of many inspiring new posthuman knowledge practices. The self-organizing energy of the field encourages us to go on with the task of learning to think differently about ourselves. The new horizons of knowledge being produced collectively, by human and non-human assemblages, are giving us a measure of what we are actually in the process of becoming. My point is that they support a qualitative change,

both in epistemic and in ethical terms, thereby infusing new energy into the humanities (Braidotti 2016).

Please don't get irritated by the occasionally specialized language—it is the fate of philosophers to ask ordinary language to do extraordinary things and work overtime, as Humpty Dumpty knew so well. Don't just dismiss it as jargon, but approach it as if it were a set of formulae, or a special code. We are dealing with the posthumanities after all!

THINKING THE POSTHUMAN

Posthuman scholarship approaches life not only as *bios*, the specific life quality of humans, but also as a *zoe*—nonhuman life. It celebrates the diversity of *zoe* in a nonhierarchical matter, recognizing the respective degrees of intelligence, ability, and creativity of all organisms. This implies, as I argued in the first lecture, that thinking and knowing are *not* the prerogative of humans alone, but take place in the world, which is the terrestrial, grounded location for multiple thinking species—we are all eco-sophically connected. *Zoe/geo/techno-bound* perspectives indeed.

I am aware that it is somehow counterintuitive—within the humanities—to acknowledge that being a knowing subject is not the exclusive prerogative of the human, but my argument remains that “we” need to move on from established habits of thought and learn to think differently about ourselves. To do this, “we” need to imagine and implement collectively new ways of thinking and of generating knowledge in a relational manner. Posthuman subjects sustain a pragmatic ethical praxis, which consists in experimenting with what materially embedded, biotechnologically mediated bodies are capable of “becoming.” As I argued in the first lecture, the pursuit of one's freedom to become is framed by an ethics of joy or affirmation, aiming at enhancing a relational bond to a multiplicity of others.

Thinking in the posthuman frame expresses the neomaterialist and vital ontological essence proper to all things, namely their relational force and capacity, that aims at pursuing relations and projects that empower our capacity to act, also known as *potentia*, and for Spinoza, as *conatus*. Thinking is about supporting what we are capable of becoming and realizing the untapped potentials of what our embodied brains and embrained bodies can do. In other words, thinking is about the creation of new concepts.

This definition of thinking supports the equal worth and value of philosophy, the arts, and the sciences as variations on the theme of enhancing our relational abilities. The parallelism of these three branches of knowledge—in itself not a new idea—does acquire different connotations when



ILLUSTRATION 7. *Vitruvian Woman*. Illustration by Jim Dowdalls.
www.sciencesource.com.

applied to the contradictions of the posthuman predicament in the age of the Anthropocene. To begin with, it calls for the definitive end of disciplinary purity and points in a transversal direction.

Being a practical philosophy, posthuman thought is like an online game in that it presents a strong metamethodological angle. It prefers guidelines to axioms and protocols to canonical truths, in order to set up the experiments with actualizing unrealized potentials. How do “we” go about composing new subjects, including nonhuman agents and technologically

mediated ones? We need transversal assemblages. We need to combine critique with creativity, enlist the powers of the imagination and uphold the equal worth and value of all branches of knowledge, in the hope of enhancing their mutual respect. Methodologically, we need to co-produce adequate cartographies.

A cartography is a materially embedded, theoretically driven, and politically informed reading of the formation of knowledge and knowing subjects in the contemporary world. Cartographies are a mixture of documents and monuments, networks and relations, set in the present—which is *both* the record of *what we are ceasing to be* and the seed of *what we are in the process of becoming*. A cartographic reading aims at tracking the praxis of affirmation and power both as entrapment (*potestas*) and as empowerment (*potentia*) in the production of thought and subjectivity.

In this lecture I will use the posthuman subject as a cartographic device to highlight the specific forms of knowledge production currently ongoing in our world. The posthuman cartography I will present here assesses the extent to which the humanities, a field notorious for its devotion to the authority of the past and its own history and canon, can actually engage with the present by embracing the posthuman condition. My argument is that a nomadic exodus from monodisciplinary “homes” has created scholarship of the “outside”: thinking of, in, and for the world. This constitutes a becoming-world of knowledge. By “world” I mean a geopolitical and historical location, as well as a set of nature-cultural milieus. My aspiration is to go nomadic and situate our thinking in the world. And what we will find there should fill us with wonder and hope, such is its critical and creative vitality.

BECOMING-WORLD

Critical posthuman scholarship is a fast-growing area of enquiry that rests—in different ways and to different degrees—on a posthumanist and post-anthropocentric definition of the knowing subject. It assumes that the knower is not *Anthropos* alone, but a more complex, embodied and embedded, nonunitary, relational and affective, nomadic and collaborative subject. In other words, the objects of research and enquiry of the humanities have ceased to be focused exclusively on Man and his others, or any anthropomorphic entity. Today, we have animal studies, eco- and geo-criticism; the humanities are covering forests, fungi, and bio-hydro-solar-techno powers. We have hyperobjects and the hypersea, while “human/imal” and algorithmic studies ignite the imagination of our graduate students.

I see these new discourses as implementing a neomaterialist philosophy of immanence, which assumes that all matter is one (the material totality of all living things); that matter is intelligent and self-organizing; and that subjectivity includes relations to a multitude of nonhumans, both organic and techno-bodies. The expanded definition of life also allows for the inclusion of and interaction with technological artefacts and mediation (“machinic autopoiesis”). This idea discards the nature-culture divide and replaces it with the continuum: “naturecultures” (Haraway 1997) and “media ecologies” (Fuller 2008) to produce “medianatures” (Parikka 2015) and “terrestrial materialism” (Protevi 2013).

Posthuman thought rejects any form of nostalgia for the humanist “Man of reason.” Both in Deleuze’s philosophy and in the feminist epistemology that is so important for my work, this non-nostalgic approach is cultivated through the pedagogical tactic of de-familiarization. This entails unlearning humanistic and anthropocentric habits of thought, and the forms of representation they sustain, so as to make some room for the new. The method of disidentification from the familiar is also linked to cartographies of power that aim to account for and learn to relinquish unearned privileges.

In order to explore this point further, let me expand on my cartography of posthuman knowledge.

First-generation “studies”

The first building block of posthuman scholarship is only slightly younger than the Anthropocene itself. Over the last thirty years the core of theoretical innovation in the humanities has emerged around a cluster of new, often radical, and always interdisciplinary fields of enquiry that called themselves “studies.” Many of the thematic, methodological, and conceptual innovations in the humanities have emerged from these new and unexpected quarters. Gender, feminist, queer, race, and postcolonial studies, alongside cultural studies and film and media studies, are the prototypes of the radical epistemologies that propelled these innovative movements of ideas. Institutionally, they have remained relatively underfunded in relation to the classical disciplines, yet have provided a range of new methods and innovative concepts. Many of these studies—but by no means all of them—were activated and propelled by the incisive philosophical, linguistic, cultural, and textual innovations introduced by the French post-structuralist generation since the 1970s. These studies introduced both conceptual and methodological shifts, and expanded original institutional

experiments throughout the 1990s. They brought alternative perspectives and sources of inspiration to the posthuman moment.

The creative proliferation of studies is an institutional phenomenon that takes place across Northern Europe, Northern America, and Australia, but *not* as much in Catholic Southern Europe and not at all in France. It is known by now that the French poststructuralist theories had no impact on the institutional practice of French society and the academy, and that—especially in President François Mitterrand’s years—a specific French form of Republican universalism was reasserted. Notice also that my beloved nonuniversalist French teachers—Foucault as much as Deleuze and Irigaray—were very much philosophers. As such, they were not particularly interested in or supportive of the new interdisciplinary studies that emerged also in response to their own work. Their basic objection was that the change of scale introduced by these studies may not be enough to introduce a qualitative shift in discursive powers of inclusion and exclusion. Moreover, the studies ran the risk of promoting a quantitative growth of identity claims. Similarly, Edward Said himself was not very keen on the field of postcolonial studies that nonetheless celebrated him as a foundational figure (Braidotti 2016). They all preferred a classical humanistic education—the better to critique it, of course.

The conflicting and contradictory receptions of the studies do bring us reluctantly back to the unfinished business of the 1990s’ “theory wars.” The rather violent campaign against minority discourses—rightly or wrongly imputed to the masters of poststructuralism, but mostly made in the US—coincided not only with the rise of the political Right, the consequences of which we are all experiencing today, but also with the rise of digital culture, of biogenetic and cognitive capitalism. It also coincided with a profound transformation of the university structure, which included the creation of classes of both academic stars and the academic “precarariat.” This neologism merges “precarious” with “proletariat,” to designate the bottom social class in advanced capitalism.

Since the 1970s, when the first generation of studies sprang into life, the institutional landscape has changed so dramatically that even the question of interdisciplinarity has acquired a more critical edge. One asserts such matters with some trepidation here at Yale, but Western humanistic culture and its canonical texts no longer constitute a non-negotiable point of reference for a university education, let alone society as a whole. Generations of scholars have been questioning the strengths and the limitations of humanism, the legacy of the Enlightenment, and their connection to

the very epistemic structure of the academic humanities. Conservative political forces resisted these critical movements, but even they could not stop the cynical dismissal of the very mission of our field and the budgetary cutbacks we currently suffer in the humanities. Now, even more than back then, affirmative critical voices are needed to provide creative alternatives. The studies have just boomed on, offering qualitative shifts of perspective, not just a quantitative growth that can be perceived negatively as fragmentation, or identity politics. They constitute the first row of the building blocks of the critical posthumanities.

These studies share a number of theoretical premises: Firstly, they voice the critiques of the human I outlined in the previous lecture. They have often criticized the academic humanities on the grounds of structural anthropocentrism and “methodological nationalism” (Beck 2007). Not all the studies oppose humanism, but also offer alternative visions of the self, the human, knowledge, and society. Notions such as a female/feminist/queer humanity and black humanity are examples of this more inclusive kind of neohumanism. My notion of the posthuman subject argues quite a different case, for a leap forward towards a posthuman ethics of collaborative construction of alternative ways of “being in *this* together.”

Secondly, these studies emphasize the immanence of lived experience and are thus situated in the present and grounded in the world. They express original forms of bodily materialist immanence, which generates knowledge through sensible (Irigaray [1984] 1993) and transcendental (Deleuze 1994) empiricism. This means that they trust real-life events and experiences, even and especially the negative ones. By grounding their knowing practices and quest for adequate understanding, even and especially of negative events, into lived experience, the discourses of these studies also take power relations seriously. It’s crowded on the margins, so by foregrounding the insights and competences of marginalized subjects, we end up renewing our shared understanding of what it means to be human, to become posthuman, to confront the inhuman.

In this respect, the first generation of critical studies exposes the compatibility of rationality and violence, of scientific progress on the one hand and practices of structural devastation and exclusion on the other. This is not an antiscience stance, but rather a nonbinary, multilayered way of implementing the parallelism between science, philosophy, and the arts, and of redefining the relation between the different scientific cultures in posthuman times: it really is a matter of “and/and.” And it is a matter of pragmatism and loyalty to experience.

I want to insist therefore that these studies are well placed to develop a posthuman practice of self-renewal in a critical and creative manner, because they have already shown themselves capable of complexity, subtlety, and versatility in dealing with the negative aspects of the present, as well as its affirmative potential. They have adapted remarkably well to changes in both popular media cultures and science, as well as in the university structure.

Second-generation studies

The proliferation of studies accelerated with the posthuman turn in the Anthropocene, when Man came under further criticism as *Anthropos*, that is to say as a supremacist species that monopolized the right to access the bodies of all living entities. The anthropocentric core of the humanities was also challenged by the ubiquity and pervasiveness of technological mediation and new human-nonhuman linkages of biological “wetware” and nonbiological “hardware.” As I argued in the first lecture, decentering anthropomorphic thinking (let alone anthropocentric patterns of thought) has especially difficult implications for the humanities in that it positions terrestrial, planetary, cosmic concerns—as well as the conventional naturalized others, animals, plants, and the technological apparatus—as serious agents and co-constructors of collective thinking and knowing.

Of course, there is a qualitative difference between accepting the structural interdependence among species and actually treating the nonhumans as knowledge collaborators. But my point is that, in the age of computational networks and synthetic biology on the one hand, and climate change and erosion of liberties on the other, this is precisely what we need to learn to do, in addition to all that we know already. The conventional humanities suffer from a lack of adequate concepts to deal with the ecological environment, media-nature-cultural continuums, and nonhuman others—although we provide most of the metaphors and representations for them. There is a methodological issue as well: the social constructivist, oppositional approach that is also current in many studies areas does not always help to deal with the challenges of our eco-sophical, post-anthropocentric, geo-bound, and techno-mediated milieus.

What is emerging as a result is a second generation of studies, genealogically indebted to the first generation in terms of aims and political affects, but carrying the critique into new spaces and in a more transversal mode of enquiry. They address more directly the question of anthropocentrism,



ILLUSTRATION 8. *Concept of Disability*. www.shutterstock.com.

which had been left relatively underexamined, while remaining committed to developments in the real world. Consider, for instance, posthuman/inhuman/nonhuman studies; critical animal studies; green studies; critical plant studies; cultural studies of science and technology; secularism and postsecular studies; posthuman disability, fat, sleep, fashion, and diet studies; critical management studies; Deleuze studies; success and celebrity studies. New media proliferated into a whole series of subsections and metafields: software, internet, game, algorithmic, critical code studies; post-Snowden studies; and more.

Then there are the inhuman and inhumane aspects of our historical condition, namely the recurrence of mass migration, wars, racism, terror, conflicts, and economic inequalities. These questions have been taken up by conflict studies and peace research; post-Soviet/communist studies; human rights studies; humanitarian management; migration studies; mobility studies; human rights-oriented medicine; trauma, memory, and reconciliation studies; security studies; death studies; suicide studies; queer inhuman studies; extinction studies; and the list is still growing.

These discourses should be read in the framework of an ethics of affirmation that leads them to engage actively with instances of injustice and dispossession, pain and hurt, in a transformative manner. They are

institutional structures that combine pastoral care with both a healing and a critical function in relation to the negative charge they take on—compassionate and humane posthumanities for inhuman times. Although many of the studies mentioned still tend to voice the pain and hence express the embodied and embedded experience of humans, their post-anthropocentric tendencies are manifest. As I argued in the first lecture, I am not satisfied by the anthropocentric gesture that would consist in attributing “human” rights to all organisms and species. What I would like to do instead is to develop a posthuman ethics suitable to the complexity of our times.

Most importantly, I urge us to resist the negative pull of competitive claims to recognition and to acknowledge that nobody and no thing has the monopoly on pain. And that the task of developing a suitable ethical interconnection is a task “we” all share. It is not a case of “either/or,” but “and/and”: we have to acknowledge multiplicity and complex interconnection, while avoiding any form of relativism. I am aware that this is quite a challenge, but posthuman scholarship strikes a balancing act by stressing the relational and affective force of knowing subjects.

Both institutionally and theoretically, studies—which historically have been the motor of both critique and creativity, innovative and challenging in equal measure—have an inspirational role to play also in relation to the posthuman context we inhabit. Far from being the symptom of crisis and fragmentation, these discourses open up new eco-sophical, posthumanist, and post-anthropocentric dimensions for the humanities. And—crucial for my materialist cartography—these developments are empirically verifiable; they are already here.

In the next step of my argument, I will try to demonstrate that, at present, new transdisciplinary discursive fronts and alliances are growing around the edges of the classical disciplines but also across these—by now established—studies. They are crossbreeding nomadically and generating what I call the “critical posthumanities.”

TOWARDS THE CRITICAL POSTHUMANITIES

Today, the critical posthumanities are emerging as postdisciplinary discursive fronts not only around the edges of the classical disciplines but also as offshoots of the different generations of established studies. They rest on post-anthropocentric premises and a technologically mediated emphasis on life as a zoe-centered system of species egalitarianism, which is very promising for new research in the field. They embrace creatively

the challenge of our historicity without giving in to cognitive panic and without losing sight of the pursuit of social justice.

The critical posthumanities provide the answer to what the humanities can become, in the posthuman era, after the decline of the primacy of universalist Man and of supremacist *Anthropos*. The building block/plane of composition for the critical posthumanities is the materialist vitalism I sketched in the first lecture. This is driven by nomadic, embedded, embodied, and technologically mediated subjects (Braidotti 2011) and by complex assemblages of human and nonhuman, planetary and cosmic, given and manufactured forces. This zoe-centered framework is further enhanced by the analyses of power relations and the social forms of exclusion and dominations perpetuated by the current world order of bio-piracy (Shiva 1997), necro-politics (Mbembe 2003), and systemic dispossession (Sassen 2014).

Again, the terminological exuberance is telling, as shown by even a cursory glance at the diversification of the field. The humanities are currently advocated as inhuman humanities (Grosz 2011), digital (Hayles 1999, 2005), environmental, transformative (Epstein 2012), emerging, adjectival (de Graef 2016), and nomadic (Stimpson 2016).

Let me focus on two pillars of the posthumanities, namely the digital humanities and the environmental humanities—also known as “green humanities” if they focus on the earth, and “blue humanities” if they focus on the sea and water, and sometimes also referred to as “sustainable humanities.” And the series stays open. What are their defining features?

The first striking feature shared by the environmental and the digital humanities is that they both claim to be the real “new humanities,” and to be best attuned to the times—being immersed in urgent contemporary sociopolitical concerns. The environmental humanities are in the middle of the Anthropocene debate, and explore the social and cultural factors that underscore the representations and hence the public perception of climate change. The digital humanities—often close to the neural sciences—propose advanced reflection on new forms of technologically mediated sensibility and post-anthropomorphic, enhanced, and altered modes of perception, as well as issues of community and security. Both are pragmatic and materially based discourses, with a strong historical and literary component akin to the conventional humanities, but also a strong link to science studies and to cultural studies of science and technology.

The evolution of media studies is the best indicator of the shift that is happening, because the field posits human-technological relations as its core question. The position of media technologies shifts dramatically from

the postmodern to the posthuman era. Whereas issues of representation, surfaces, and images are central to postmodern discussions—down to the early debates on the simulacrum—today, the agenda is about data processing, code, and network circulation. This is a materialist shift, which brings information technology to the core of the posthuman discussion about intelligent, self-organizing non-anthropomorphic life forms (the *ontogenetic* capacities of networks).¹ The basic premise of the critical posthumanities, therefore, is the need to overcome the vision of a de-naturalized social order somehow disconnected from its environmental and organic foundations. They call for more complex schemes of understanding the multilayered interdependence among “naturecultures” today.

What is posthuman about the digital and environmental humanities? It is a question of thematic, methodological, and conceptual changes. Thematically, both of them deal with nonhuman objects/subjects of study: the digital, with network culture and new media; the environmental, with Gaia or the planet as a whole. Methodologically, both work through a mixture of empirical data, ethnographic observation, artistic experimentation, and theoretical framing. They are openly relational in their approach, and though they differ on the degree of disengagement from *Anthropos* that they endorse, both work with the vital immanence of non-anthropomorphic life systems.

Conceptually, the defining feature of the posthumanities—which makes them critical in the intensive sense of the term—is their “supradisciplinary” character. The driving force for their knowledge production is not the policing force of disciplinary purity, but rather the modes of relation and cross-hybridization these discourses are able and willing to engage in. They prosper to the extent that they show the ability and the willingness to move on. The strength of the critical posthumanities is the acknowledgment of the porous nature not only of their institutional boundaries but also of their epistemic core, which gets redefined in terms of relational capacity. This supradisciplinary sensibility allows for movement to be set in action within, between, and across the different fields of contemporary knowledge production. Whether this is subsequently reinvested into the existing disciplines, or whether it is operationalized in the rhizomic growth of more studies areas, the epistemic core of the exercise remains supradisciplinary. You not only need to reason, you also need to rhizome!

Again, the eco-sophical, geo-bound, and techno-mediated turn that sustains the critical posthumanities does not only take the form of a quantitative proliferation of new, fundable fields, but also of qualitative

and methodological shifts. The critical posthumanities represent both an alternative to the neoliberal governance of academic knowledge and a renegotiation of its terms. If I read the critical posthumanities with my immanent, neomaterialist, vital lenses, I would wager that the healthy hybrid offsprings are likely to go on, mutating into new heterogeneous assemblages, fueled by transdisciplinary forces, but plunging headlong into a postdisciplinary world (Lykke 2011). They are actualizing something that is not yet *there*, or not completely *that*: unprecedented modes of epistemic relations and knowledge production. The critical posthumanities are valiant and necessary responses to the present, propelled also by powerful financial interests and by large popular support. They do a great job of reminding us of what we are ceasing to be—exit the Gutenberg galaxy, and exit *Anthropos Rex*. Enter Dolly (the sheep, of course).

A Theoretical framework for the posthumanities

Although I am perfectly aware that the dominant institutional model of the environmental and digital humanities is a combination of corporate and academic interests, backed by public policies and support, I wish to approach these emergent studies as the seeds of what they are in the process of becoming. This “minoritarian” reading shifts the terms of the discussion. What kind of knowledge patterns may emerge if we start from the project of actualizing unrealized possibilities in terms of subject formation? What kind of knowing subjects are emerging here, whose potential for understanding and knowledge has not yet been realized?

What I aspire to is to combine the environmental and digital humanities—as prototypes of the critical posthumanities—with practices and theories of *subjectivity* that combine “species thinking” and “network thinking” with post-anthropocentric configuration of the subject of knowledge and affirmative ethics. This approach grants, respectively, to the earth and to the computational networks the same role and agency as the human subjects that inhabit them, while acknowledging embodied and embedded, relational and affective differences in degrees and intensity of what they are made of and what they can do. The transdisciplinary character of posthuman scholarship can be activated towards a culture of mutual respect between the humanities—the subtle sciences—and the life sciences, pushing their respective complexities to explore multiple shared visions. On the axis of becoming, the growth of posthuman knowledge takes the form of constant process, interbreeding and cross-pollinating through connections, contaminations, and assembling missing links.

Let us return to the environmental humanities for a moment. What happens if I pursue the posthuman subject to create an affirmative assembly? Let us say, for instance, the Gaia movement and other environmental activists, antinuclear and pacifist movements, and eco-feminists compose an assemblage. This embodied and embedded assembly meets the body of knowledge of the humanities—literature (poetry, novels, plays), cinema, art, video, and games—and together they encounter the corporate sector, notably corporate social responsibility, government sustainability policy and green economy plans, and broader public awareness of the Anthropocene. These multiple encounters produce what I would call the critical environmental posthumanities.

Similarly, let's take the digital humanities and set up a different, affirmative assembly. Let's say media activists—notably the digital commons movement and multitudes of networkers, makers, and programmers—meet the countercultural/hippie roots of the internet, which historically has always been linked to popular music, literature, poetry, cinema, the arts, and science fiction. Together, they encounter corporate interests, government infrastructural projects, and the entertainment/infotainment industry. Thus, they compose the critical digital posthumanities.

The encounters—that is to say the institutional, material, and theoretical connections among the parties involved in the composition of these critical environmental and digital posthumanities—are assemblages that, being multilayered, function in a zig-zagging, not linear, manner. They act on the assumption that they can benefit from the capital of knowledge of the conventional humanities—notably literature, music, poetry, science fiction, cinema, and media—but they also draw from the original sources provided by many generations of critical studies, which have grown all around and in between the disciplines. Together, this plateau of knowledge can help us understand and represent adequately the climate change crisis and the risks it entails for every dweller of the earth, or explore original sources of design along community-oriented principles of free access.

Moreover, the digital and the environmental humanities foreground the notion that posthumanities scholars across the generations, disciplines, and studies are motors of transformation in the very structures of subjectivity. We, the scholars of this complex and subtle field, are the cultural engineers of the social imaginary. Most people's awareness of an abstraction such as the Anthropocene or cyberspace is mediated through images and representations emerging from literature, history, and culture—the fields of specialization of the humanities. Therefore, the critical posthumanities

are uniquely placed to encourage people to reflect upon and possibly change their living habits in order to confront the current challenge. They can steer the process in an affirmative direction away from flat consumerism, in order to make the most of the posthuman predicament.

This approach opens up new perspectives and provides conceptual grounding for the emergence of the critical posthumanities as a supradisciplinary, relational field of knowledge that is contiguous with, but not identical to, cognitive capitalism. It functions at different speeds, moves on different timelines, and is fuelled by different ethical affects. Because of its transdisciplinary structure, the field of critical posthumanities involves social and cultural movements, new kinds of economically productive practices, and multiple curiosity-driven knowledge formations that do not always coincide with the surplus-value profit motive. In other words, the critical posthumanities design a horizon of becoming that the contemporary university and especially the academic humanities will benefit from.

Please note that this is not a relativistic scheme, but rather a multilayered and multidirectional account of what is already happening. The word I would use is “perspectivism,” different nomadic viewpoints from equally materially embedded and embodied locations, expressing the degree and quality of experience of different subjects. We need to acknowledge the multiple and internally contradictory aspects of our own knowledge practices by adopting a diversified materialist approach, which I would propose as the antidote to relativism. The difference is a matter of ethics. Becoming is the realization of affirmative, collaborative ethics, as opposed to the axiom of profit and maximization of consumers’ quantitative options.

Affirmative ethics must guide our politics.

THE EMERGENT MISSING PEOPLE

The last stage of my argument shows how the critical posthumanities, by tracing a different mode of relational subjectivity through affirmative ethics, help us to compose a “missing people.” By this I mean a “we-are-in-*this*-together-but-we-are-not-one-and-the-same” kind of posthuman subject of knowledge. This is a subject that acknowledges it is intertwined with the totality of things—including *zoe/geo/techno* “things.” A missing people is a people in the process of becoming *not-One*: a complex multiplicity held together by shared ethical passions for and a social imaginary supportive of affirmative alternatives.

But how does such a subject relate to the high degrees of specialization expressed by the critical posthumanities and the multiple planes of

reorganization of knowledge that are taking place within and across them? Again, we need to be both critical and creative. What are we to make, for instance, of the fact that so few institutional organizations have emerged around the minor discourses generated by emerging missing people? For instance, where are the programs and curricula that might privilege non-nationally indexed humanities or the feminist and queer humanities; migrant/diasporic humanities; poor/trailer park humanities; post/de-colonial humanities; a child's humanities; the otherwise-abled/disabled humanities?

Historically, all sorts of communities were already empirically missing. Whether we look at women and LGBTQ+, indigenous knowledge systems, at queers, otherwise-enabled, trailer parks, nonhumans, or technologically mediated existences, these are real-life subjects whose knowledge never made it into any of the official cartographies. Their struggle for visibility and emergence also affects the knowledge they are capable of generating.

But the other missing people are the virtual ones, those that can emerge only as the result of a neomaterialist praxis of affirmation, aimed at constructing the plane of composition for such an assembly. This composition requires affirmative relational alliances of a high degree of subtlety and complexity. These alliances need to go beyond identity claims, not by denying them, but by expanding them into diversified embedded and embodied materialist platforms of different "missing people."

The transversal alliance of the missing people today is technologically mediated, and it always involves nonhuman agents, such as land, water, plastic, wires, information highways, algorithms, etc. New border crossings are being set up in contemporary knowledge production that aim at actualizing the virtual knowledges and visions of these missing peoples. We are currently witnessing the complexity and subtlety of neomaterialist compositions of different missing peoples, capable of creating different methods to generate knowledge. The people who were missing—even from "minor science"—get constituted as political subjects of knowledge through such alliances. The critical posthumanities are in constant process, interbreeding through multiple alliances, topics, and missing links. Which does not mean that anything goes, but rather that rhizomic multidirectionality is the rule.

So the energy of the field is already providing some answers. Different assemblages are being formed, for instance one that composes an encounter between feminist, LGBTQ+, and gender studies; postcolonial, decolonial, and indigenous studies; critical legal studies; media activists; hackers

and makers; First Nations land rights activists. These encounters are transforming both the critical environmental and digital posthumanities. The assemblages they compose are as multiple as their lived experiences, producing new areas of research, such as the transnational justice postcolonial environmental and digital humanities.

It would be intellectually lazy to take the ongoing proliferation of new discourses as the mere expression of relativism—though I am aware this is a problem. And it may be tempting but fallacious to simply read the fast rate of growth of the critical posthumanities as self-generating. The fact that rhizomic knowledge production backed by the internet may be going viral does not make it spontaneous. The multiple hybrid connections among the established disciplines, the successive waves of studies that sustain these new developments in the critical posthumanities today, are the result of the hard work of communities of thinkers, scholars, and activists—alternative collective assemblages—that reconstitute not only the missing links in academic practices but also and especially the missing people.

These communities share the desire to redesign the contours of environmental and digital culture away from profit motives, and thus to activate a posthuman ethics of affirmation in the quest for alternatives.

These theoretically sophisticated transversal discourses combine attention to the zoe/geo/techno aspects of terrestrial materialism, with enduring care for the dispossessed and the disempowered, adding that many of those are neither human nor necessarily anthropomorphic.

This is where we need to go back to the ethics of affirmation. If the present is both actual and virtual, then “the missing people” is a constantly emerging category. It refers to a complex singularity, expressing the embedded, embodied, relational, and affective forces that generate patterns of becoming, of minor science, of intensive shifts. The activating factor in the politics of immanence is a plane of transposition of forces—in both spatial and temporal terms—from past to future and from the virtual to the actual. It is the actualization of a virtuality. The point of this actualization is to provide an adequate expression of what bodies can do and think and enact. Adequate to what? To one’s intensity—i.e., one’s ability to process pain and negativity, to extract knowledge from pain, to turn the painful experience of inexistence into relational encounters and knowledge production. The politics of immanence composes planes of becoming for a missing people that was never fully part of the “human,” whose crisis so preoccupies the “humanities” today. The human is a vector of becoming: we need to compose a new people and a new earth.

What does it mean, for us university people of the posthuman era? It means that we need to organize scholarly and critical communities around shared ethical passions and collectively drawn cartographies of the present that reflect and enhance an ethically empowering vision of the subject. Posthumanist, vital, nonunitary, and all the more ethically accountable for it. The plane of composition of “we are in *this* together”—a community of nomadic and accountable thinkers—constitutes the shareable workbench of critical posthuman scholars, bonded by an ethics of joy and affirmation, devoted to resistance against negativity and catatonia. They defend secularity without fanaticism, developing a collaborative research ethics by redefining a new form of empiricism based on relationality and affirmation. Critical posthuman scholars are collectively empowered to experiment with intensity, knowing that our political force lies in actualizing our “collective imaginings” (Gatens and Lloyd 1999). The critical posthumanities, by redefining the image of thought, also recast the image of the thinker and, notably, the critical intellectual function of thinking.

CONCLUSION

Throughout these two lectures, I have stressed the importance of subjectivity and subject formation. I wanted to demonstrate both the vitality and importance of the posthuman subject. I have situated this subject within a posthuman predicament that I see as our historical condition. As a materialist feminist and antiracist, mindful of the exclusionary nature of the category of “the human,” I prefer to foreground the posthuman as a multiscale, multilinear, internally contradictory feature of our present. As empirical evidence, I have surveyed the new forms of knowledge production that are proliferating around us, both in the university and in society. Posthuman scholarship is here to stay.

In so doing, I pursue the tradition of immanence, and position subjectivity in a continuum with the totality of things—both born and designed—but I inscribe in this picture also the multitude of missing peoples and marginalized others, whose humanity had to be negotiated through century-old struggles. I reworked all this with the ethics of affirmation, a trust in the mutual collaborative nature of our being in the world together. While acknowledging the brutal nature of our times, I have also argued for the need to confront them in order to change them—we have to be “worthy of our times” in order to resist them. We need to engage with the negativity, the better to transform it. We need to make our home in a world that is booming and busting *at the same time*.

This is probably the most demanding step of this posthuman ethical process: we may well be disgusted and have to fight back the tears, but this still is and remains our world, the only one we have. We are in the immanent here and now of this planet, which is the result of our shared efforts, aspirations, and desires, and therefore it is the best we could do—the best of posthuman worlds we managed to create. And the only way we can act upon it, in this difficult posthuman moment, is by composing multitudes of missing peoples, a “we-are-in-*this*-together-but-we-are-not-one-and-the-same” sort of people. They are the collective multiplicity, materially embedded but differential, that aspires to take its place, stumbling across the posthuman landscape—in this hypermodern and protoarchaic world of ours—so that we can play out the potentials for affirmative transformations.

In spite of our times and out of love for our times.

NOTE

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