

Acknowledgements

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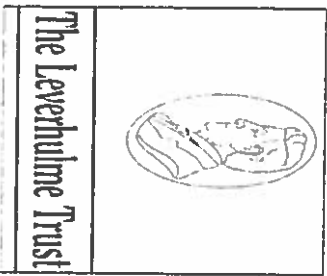
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After Cosmopolitanism

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'Becoming-world'

Rosi Braidotti

Cosmopolitanism as an economic and social phenomenon is the affirmative response to the processes of planetary interrelation which I want to examine in this chapter through the lenses of 'becoming-world'. My argument is that, given the multiple, complex and contradictory notions and practices of planetary interrelation today, cosmopolitanism can only remain relevant by undergoing a radical mutation. I will suggest that this shift of perspective starts by relinquishing the historical and conceptual attachment of cosmopolitanism to the idea of liberal individualism as a unitary vision of the subject, which entails self-correcting rationality and a propensity for moral and cognitive universalism. Cosmopolitanism needs to 'become-world', i.e. embrace diversity and the immanence of structural relationality so as to account also for the atrocities and structural injustices, as well as for the many benefits, of pan-human perspectives today.

I will explore this notion further with reference to the nomadic epistemology of environmental and social interdependence that I have developed elsewhere (Braidotti, 2006). More specifically, I want to emphasize the relevance for contemporary cosmopolitanism of the ethics of accountability that takes 'Life' as its main referent while avoiding the twin pitfalls of biological essentialism on the one hand and unreflexive anthropocentrism on the other. In order to implement this meta-methodological shift of perspective, classical cosmopolitanism needs to become-world, in the sense of developing a radical relational model of interaction. This is based on the awareness and the acknowledgment of a structural interconnection among subjects that are complex and material singularities in process. The notion of cosmopolitanism, in other words, needs to acquire increased respect for complexity, so as to evolve in the direction of Deleuze and Guattari's 'chaosmosis', that is to say being-one-with the vital processes of transformation alongside and with a multiplicity of human and non-human others. In this chapter I will play out the complexity by offering several, potentially contradictory, ways in which 'we' today, could be said to be in this, together.

Perverse planetary effects

The starting point for my analysis is the spurious and rather perverse form of pan-human interconnection that is engendered by the globalized economy of what is still called – for lack of a better term – advanced capitalism. This takes two major forms: one is market-driven homogenization and the other is shared vulnerability.

As for the former, the globalized world defined as a transnational space of mobility, borders, transitions and flows produces cross-border connections, world-wide travel and an enforced hybridization of culture, media and lifestyles. In this same system, however, humans cross borders far less easily. The commercialized forms of planetary transfer of data and capital in turn rest in fact on concrete global migration networks and flows of labour force, the displacement of uprooted people and other forms of mobility. These flows of human labour are racialized, although their itineraries do not run only from the South to the North of the world – as European scare-mongering populists like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, the Lega Nord in Italy and the national fronts across the European Union would have us believe. In her seminal work on the cartographies of diasporic social spaces, Avtar Brah (1996) argues that the global diaspora is truly planetary and that it affects as much the roots of indigenous people as the routes of the itinerant subjects in the post-colonial world order. The real-life conditions of itinerant subjects point to the exploitative and cruel aspects of the new planetary mobility. Their becoming-world therefore is of the inhumane kind, which is an aspect of global interconnection that is too often left unexamined. I shall return to it later on in this chapter.

One other crucial effect of the deep and constant interconnection bred by the globalized economy and technological mediation is the global spread of fear, insecurity and shared mortality. The accumulation and proliferation of threats to our well-being and stability engenders a political economy of fear as a central feature of the globalized world. Governance by terror is one of the features of our historical condition and this regime engenders a negative vision of pan-humanity (Franklin et al., 2000) as linking us all in shared vulnerability to viruses, environmental disasters and terrorist attacks by suicide and other kinds of bombers.

Closer to home, a global world economy linked by a thick web of transnational flows of capital and labour and marked by internal processes of migration and planetary mobility, also implies the flexibility or precariousness of work conditions, and the ubiquity of settlement camps and impermanent settlements. This proliferation of coercive uprooting movements intersects with layers of increasing social controls in a political economy of 'scattered hegemomies' (Grewal and Kaplan, 1994). This is a social system of centress but constant surveillance, which Paul Gilroy aptly calls 'securocracy', that is a form of governance which pitches the multi-located centres against the many

global peripheries in a complex logic of control and confinement that operates not only between the geopolitical blocks, but also within them.

Translated in the language of nomadic theory, global migration is a molar line of segmentation or reterritorialization that controls access to different forms of mobility and immobility for the sake of profit. Global flows get arrested and solidified – or 'de-territorialized' – in nodal points that function as structures of capital and data accumulation within the global economy. One of these is the global cities – megalopolises the world over that act as check-points for the global growth and, increasingly, the global crisis. The global city and the refugee camps are not dialectical or moral opposites: they are two sides of the same global coin, as Saskia Sassen has convincingly argued (1994). They express the schizoid political economy of our times (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). In the globalized world, massive concentrations of infrastructures exist alongside complex, worldwide dissemination of goods. The technologically driven advanced culture that prides itself in being called the 'information society' is in reality a concrete, material infrastructure that is concentrated on the sedentary global city. We have all become the subjects of bio-power, but we differ considerably in the degrees and modes of actualization of that very power. To argue simply along facile cosmopolitan lines that 'we' may all be in *this* together, therefore, amounts to taking a shortcut through the complexity of the global condition.

From bio-power to an affirmative politics of life

The bio-political economy of global flows therefore goes hand-in-hand with lethal political regimes of control and management of both survival and extinction. This is due to the fact that the notion of 'life itself' lies at the heart of bio-genetic capitalism (Parisi, 2004) as a site of financial investments and potential profit. The essential capital today is the life-codes of all species, starting from animals, seeds and plants, all the way to the Human Genome Project and stem-cell research (Rose, 2001). This emphasis on 'life' tends to flatten out the traditional axes of difference which, in earlier historical phases of capitalist production, were predicated along processes of sexualization (women, homosexuals and transsexuals); racialization (natives, colonized, non-Europeans) and naturalization (Earth others). The bio-genetic over-coding of these differences neither suspends nor does it automatically improve the social relations of exclusion and inclusion that historically had been predicated along the axes of difference, defined as negative 'otherness'. On the contrary, the focus of bio-genetical capital introduces subtler and more pervasive forms of control, exploitation and exclusion. Also denounced as 'bio-piracy' (Shiva, 1997), the ongoing technological revolution often intensifies patterns of traditional discrimination and exploitation.

Bio-power and systematic destruction are therefore two sides of the same cosmopolitical coin. 'Life' can be a threatening force, as evidenced by new

epidemics and environmental catastrophes that blur the distinction between the natural and the cultural dimensions. The spread of viruses beyond the human crosses into the post-human, travelling from computers to humans, animals and back. Illness is clearly not only a privilege of organic entities, but a widespread practice of mutual contamination. The concomitance of a bio-political management of the health and well-being of some sections of the world population with social practices of utter indifference for that of many others – foreigners, migrants, asylum-seekers, people in occupied territories and war-zones – is one of the paradoxes of the so-called 'advanced' capitalist system. In other words, the new bio-political practices of the management of 'life' mobilize not only generative forces, but also new and subtler degrees of extinction. Thus, contemporary power has to be 'vital', yet its paradoxical vitality encompasses distinctions between living and dying. In my own nomadic theory, I have referred to the notion of 'zoe' as a non-human yet affirmative life-force to define a vitalist materialism that has nothing in common with post-modern moral relativism, resting solidly on a neo-Spinozist political ontology of monism and radical immanence (Braidotti, 2006).

This notion is relevant to the contemporary debate on cosmopolitanism because it redefines the common ground on which a pan-human condition may be posited. In the post-humanist era of the displacement of the centrality of 'Man', what could possibly bind us together? The negative bonding of shared vulnerability is not enough to create alternative values. As I will argue later on, a shared post-anthropocentric idea of 'Life' as radical interdependence – which I call 'zoe' – may be part of a new response to this challenge.

The contiguity of bio-power and new practices of death and destruction, as well as the displacement of 'Man' as the alleged measure of all things, worries both the neo-liberal (Fukuyama, 2002) and the neo-Kantian thinkers struck by high levels of anxiety about the sustainability of human futures (Habermas, 2003). Their concern is compounded by the 'new' wars and the state of permanent global warfare we are caught in, with 'intelligent' weapons on the one hand and the rawness of the bodies of suicide bombers on the other. The highly mediated social space we inhabit is literally 'Killing you Microsofty', as an article in the UK daily *Guardian* recently put it.¹ The post-Cold War world has seen not only a dramatic increase in warfare, but also a profound transformation of the war instance as such. Achille Mbembe expands Foucault's insight in the direction of a more grounded analysis of the bio-political management of survival. Aptly re-naming it 'necro-politics', he defines this power essentially as the administration of death: 'the material destruction of human bodies and population' (Mbembe, 2003: 19).

The implications of this approach to bio/necro-power for discussions of cosmopolitanism are radical: contrary to the Enlightenment ideal, it is not up to the rationality of the Law – as the master code in our society – and the universalism of moral values to structure the exercise of power. Rather, the Law sanctifies the unleashing of the unrestricted sovereign right to kill, maim, rape and destroy

the life of others. This same power, following Agamben (1998), structures the attribution of different degrees of 'humanity' according to hierarchies that are disengaged from the old dialectics and unhinged from any political rationality. They fulfil instead a more instrumental, narrow logic of opportunistic exploitation of the life in you, which is generic and not only individual.

It is crucial for my argument to set the racialized nature of the process by which 'humanity' is attributed to different kinds of human beings. What exactly constitutes the basic unit of reference for the human within 'humanity' is the crucial question which, as I argued so far, splits open the classical idea of cosmopolitanism. Hannah Arendt, in her fundamental analysis of the roots of European fascism (1951), raised a similar query in relation to the alleged universality of human rights. She argued that the experience of the Second World War and the Holocaust requires – by ethical as well as logical obligation – an answer to the preliminary question: what is the status of people who do not even have the right to have rights? The political ontology of the human is foregrounded by Arendt's question, which she answers by re-universalizing this fundamental right to be considered as human. Agamben, on the other hand, develops this idea negatively as an indictment of modernity. The concentration camp or the colonial plantation of 'homo sacer' – vulnerable 'bare' life – and stresses the intrinsic links between modernization and violence, modernity and terror.

In my nomadic theory perspective, on the other hand, the same query about the ontological status of the human is re-worked with post-colonial and feminist theories to produce a more affirmative answer. A new pan-humanity needs to be formulated – a new *cosmos-polis* – that rests on critical distance from the universalism of the past and on the acknowledgment of the atrocities as well as the contradictions of colonialism, fascism and European genocides, without giving in to despair. A nomadic form of reflexive cosmopolitanism needs to start from a more sober account of the world-historical events that show how the concept of 'difference' functioned as a term to index discrimination and exclusion. More specifically, 'difference' defined as a hierarchical notion – 'to be different from an often implicit norm' – distributed degrees of 'humanity' to categories of sub and infra-humans, in a scale of negative dialectics of otherness that often made mockery of European claims to the respect of universal human rights. Awareness of this historical deficit and of the silence that often surrounds the colonial and fascist past of Europe is a crucial prerequisite for a non-hierarchical model of cosmopolitanism to emerge.

Furthermore, this enlarged cosmopolitan subjectivity needs to take into account on the one hand the radical redefinition of the humans currently propelled by bio-genetic capitalism and on the other the ubiquity of neo-political instances of death and extinction. Contemporary neo-politics has taken the form of the politics of death on a globalized yet regional scale. The new forms of industrial-scale warfare rest upon the commercial privatization

of the army and the global reach of conflicts, which de-territorialize the use of and the rationale for armed service. Reduced to 'infrastructural warfare' (Mbembe, 2003), and to a large-scale logistical operation (Virilio, 2002), war aims at the destruction of all the services that allow civil society to function: roads, electricity lines, airports, hospitals and other necessities. It also aims at protecting mineral extraction and other essential geo-physical resources needed by the global economy. In this respect, the 'new' wars look more like guerrilla warfare and terrorist attacks than the traditional confrontation of enlisted and nationally indexed armies. As a result, as a political category, the 'population' has also become disintegrated into 'rebels, child soldiers, victims or refugees, or civilians incapacitated by mutilation or massacred on the model of ancient sacrifices, while the "survivors", after a horrific exodus, are confined to camps and zones of exception' (Mbembe, 2003: 34). Equally significant are the changes that have come over processes of mourning both as a private and as a collective practice, in response to the diversification of lethal weapons. The political practice of bearing witness to the dead has mutated into a form of activism, from the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo to humanitarian aid.

Arjun Appadurai (1998) has also provided incisive analyses of the new 'ethnocidal violence' of the new forms of warfare which involve friends, kinsmen and neighbours and involve mutilation, cannibalism, rape, sexual abuse and violence against civilian spaces and populations. The social reality of refugees and asylum seekers also becomes an emblem of the contemporary neo-politics. Diken (2004) argues that refugees are the perfect instantiation of the disposable humanity of 'homo sacer' and thus constitutes the ultimate neo-political subject. Duffield (2008) pushes this analysis further and makes a distinction between developed or insured humans – citizens of a functional polity – and under-developed or uninsured humans – subjects of dysfunctional states. The distinction and the tensions between these two categories constitute the terrain for the 'global civil war', which is Duffield's definition of globalized advanced capitalism (Duffield, 2008: 149).

I want to stress again the link between colonial violence and capitalist exploitation of groups and communities. Duffield argues that de-colonization created nation-states whose people, once enslaved, were now free to circulate globally. These people constitute the bulk of the unwanted immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers who are contained and locked up across the developed world. In a twist not deprived of ironical force, world migration is perceived as a particular threat in Europe precisely because it endangers Europe's main infrastructure: the welfare state. The global economy therefore exacerbates some of the features of the post-colonial condition.

On ethical accountability

In order to do justice to the complexity of the vital politics of our era and its neo-political implications, a neo-Spinozist framework is of great inspiration.

Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 1980); Glissant (1990); Guattari (1995); Balibar (2002); Hardt and Negri (2000); Braidotti (2002) are among the contemporary critical thinkers who emphasize the politics of life itself as a relentlessly generative force. This requires an interrogation of the shifting interrelations between human and non-human forces. The latter are defined both as in-human and as post-human. The project of a more radical understanding of cosmopolitan interconnection, aims to elaborate sets of criteria for a new social and political theory that steers a course between humanistic nostalgia and neoliberal euphoria about bio-capitalism. Social and political practices that take life itself as the point of reference need not aim at the restoration of unitary universalistic norms, or the celebration of the master-narrative of global profit, but rather at social cohesion, the respect for diversity and sustainable growth. At the heart of this political project lays an ethics that respects vulnerability but re-works it affirmatively, while actively constructing social infrastructures of generosity and hope.

Patrick Hanafin (2010) suggests that this transversal vision of subjectivity may help us provide a political and ethical counter-narrative to 'the imposed bounded subject of liberal legalism'. This involves a move from thinking of legal subjectivity as deign bound and always already male to thinking about singularities without identity who relate intimately to one another and the environment in which they are located. The result is a discourse and a practice of critical politics of rights. The majoritarian masculine legal social contract is built on the desire to survive. This is not a politics of empowerment, but one of entrapment in an imagined natural order which in our system translates into a bio-political regime of discipline and control of bodies. What this means is that we are recognized as full citizens only through the position of victims, loss and injury and the forms of reparation that come with it. Nomadic theory raises the question of what political theory might look like if it were not based on the negative instances of wound and loss. In other words, another fundamental binary of Western philosophical thinking gets uncoupled: that of a political life qualified by death, or a political philosophy which valorizes our mortal condition and creates a politics of survival.

This vital approach to a politics that also aims to think with and not against death is, not unlike Virginia Woolf, a mode of thinking 'as if already gone'. This post-humanist approach at de-centring the individual framework of self-interest may well constitute, as Hanafin argues, the ultimate threat to a legal system built on necro-political premises. The individual who refuses to accept law's prohibition to 'self-style his own death' (Braidotti, 2006) refuses to be styled by the coercive speech of Law. In accepting the proximity of bio-power and necro-politics, survival and extinction, a new cosmopolitical subject emerges: one who is choosing to affirm one's life – as *potentia* or affirmation – and hence the desire not to live a degraded existence.

William Connolly's 'politics of becoming' (1999) argues a similar case: an 'ethos of engagement' with existing social givens which may bring about

unexpected consequences and transformations. This ethics is based on the notion of propelling ontological empowerment. A new entity thus comes into being, out of injury and pain, by actively constructing energy and transforming the negative charge of these experiences.

Deleuze's monistic ontology is of great assistance in accomplishing this qualitative shift, in that it is more attuned to the virtual plane of immanence, to the generative force of a monistic universe, or 'chaosmosis', which is non-human and in constant flux. Deleuze calls the radical alterity of a mind-independent reality 'Chaos' and defines it positively as the virtual formation of all possible forms. The generative force of 'Chaos' is the source of its vital elemental powers of renewal and transformation – through endless processes of actualization of determinate forms. The first key element of this conceptual operation is the notion of a deep vitalist interrelation between ourselves and the world, in an ecophilosophical move that binds us to the living organism that is the cosmos as a whole. By extension this leads to a redefinition of the activity of thinking away from the rationalist paradigm to a more intensive and empathic mode. Thinking is the conceptual counterpart of the ability to enter modes of relation, to affect and be affected, sustaining qualitative shifts and creative tensions accordingly.

Second, there is the shift away from an epistemological theory of representation to ontology of becoming. By way of comparison, Lacan – and Derrida with him – defines Chaos epistemologically as that which precedes form, structure and language. Confined to the unrepresentable, this post-Hegelian vision reduces 'Chaos' to that which is incomprehensible. For Deleuze, however, following Spinoza, Bergson and Leibniz, Chaos unfolds/ unfolds the virtual co-presence of any forms. This produces a number of significant shifts: from negative dialectics to affirmative affects; from entropic to generative notions of desire; from a focus on the constitutive outsiders to a geometry of affects that require mutual actualization and synchronization; from an oppositional and split to an open-ended, relational vision of the subject; from the epistemological to the ontological turn in philosophy.

As a consequence, one can venture the conclusion that the main implication for the practice of a new cosmopolitical sense of planetary interconnection is that the political, scientific and juridical laws need to be returned according to a view of the subject as a complex singularity, an affective assemblage and a relational vitalist entity. This could also be described as a metamethodological shift from classical cosmopolitanism to what I described as 'a nomadic ethics of sustainable transformations' and Roland Bogue, quoting Deleuze, has aptly defined as: 'chaosmopolitanism' (Bogue, forthcoming, 2012). This approach highlights the need for new critical and creative modes of addressing subjectivity and ethics and, more specifically, it aims to de-bunk methodological nationalism (Beck, 2007). The latter refers to an established tradition of tacitly assuming a Eurocentric position in academic practice and discourse.

The nomadic subject as cosmopolitical complexity

Both the critique of a-historical Eurocentric cosmopolitanism and the quest for alternative genealogies of European universalism express a form of ethical and political accountability that requires adequate understandings of one's specific location, that is to say one's embedded and embodied perspectives. Michel Foucault's cartographies of power (1976) provide a conceptual and methodological example of this approach, as does Deleuze's concept of radical immanence (1995). The feminist method of the politics of location is also central to this debate, in that it provides both the means to explore and the creative force to experiment with alternative representations of the knowing subject. The politics of location, first developed (Rich, 1985) as a way of making sense of diversity among women within the category of gender of sexual difference, became the cornerstone of feminist situated epistemologies (Haraway, 1988). In its nomadic variable, it can be extended into a cartographic method of accounting for multiple differences within any subject position (Braidotti, 1994). These degrees of differentiation are explored and rendered as analyses of power-locations and power-relations. This method aims at achieving epistemological and political accountability by unveiling the power locations which one inevitably inhabits as the site of one's subject-position. A cartography is a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present. It accounts for one's locations in terms both of space (geo-political or ecological dimension) and time (historical and genealogical dimension). It also provides alternative figurations or schemes of representation for these locations, in terms of power as restrictive (*potestas*) but also empowering or affirmative (*potentia*). I consider this cartographic gesture to be the first methodological move towards a vision of cosmopolitanism attuned to the complexity of our era and to the diversity of locations and power relations that structures the global mobility.

The practice of ethical accountability (for one's embodied and embedded locations) as a relational, collective activity of undoing power differentials is linked to two crucial notions: memory and narratives. This is where a shift from liberal individualism to a non-unitary vision of the nomadic relational subject is necessary to sustain the transition towards a reflexive form of the cosmopolitical. Nomadic consciousness activates the process of bringing into discursive representation that which by definition escapes self-representation and can only be disclosed by the active intervention of others. The accounts of these 'politics of locations' are cartographies of power that go beyond genealogical self-narratives and express a view of subjectivity that is relational and outside-directed. In nomadic thought, this vision is expressed through conceptual personae, or figurations. These are ways of situating and framing the subject position and its political and epistemological practices, so as to produce an array of creative counter-images of the subject. Examples are: feminist/womanist/queer/cyborg/diasporic/nomadic/native — as subject

positions. These are figurations for specific geo-political and historical locations. To mistake them for mere metaphors would be to miss the point altogether (Braidotti, 2011a).

In this critical perspective, to stress the situated structure of philosophical discourse — and thus reject universalism — also means to recognize the partial or limited nature of all claims to ethical values. The critique of both universalism and of liberal individualism are fundamental starting points to re-think the interconnection between the self and society in an accountable manner. To apply this to the issue of cosmopolitanism: a new agenda needs to be set, which is no longer that of European or Eurocentric identity, but rather a radical transformation of it, in a process of rupture from Europe's imperial, fascistic and undemocratic tendencies. Ulrich Beck (2007) concurs with this view and even emphasizes the need to go beyond methodological nationalism and develop a genuinely cosmopolitan critical theory that would redefine cosmopolitanism for the third millennium.

If the fundamental question, as Deleuze teaches us, is not about who we are, but rather about what we are capable of becoming, then methodological nationalism must give way to self-criticism and nomadic transformations on the basis of accountability for our complex history. As Bailbar (2001) and Bauman (2004) have argued recently, contemporary European subjects of knowledge must meet the ethical obligation to be accountable for their past history and the long shadow it casts on their present-day politics. In a nomadic perspective, the new mission that Europe has to embrace entails the criticism of narrow-minded self-interest, intolerance and xenophobic rejection of otherness. Symbolic of this closure of the European mind is the fate of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, which bear the brunt of racism in contemporary Europe. Multiple counter-definitions of cosmopolitan values constitute the site of resistance to this mindset and a forum for ongoing discussion.

This process-oriented vision of the subject is capable of a universalistic reach, though it rejects moral universalism. It expresses a grounded, partial form of accountability, based on a strong sense of collectivity and relationality. The fact that 'we' are in *this* together needs to be qualified by the recognition of the structural differences that compose the complex context of the global condition. Only a grounded and accountable analysis can result in a renewed claim to community and belonging by singular subjects. This results in a proliferation of locally situated micro-universalist claims, which Genevieve Lloyd calls 'a collaborative morality' (Lloyd, 1996: 74).

One evident and illuminating example of this alternative approach is the brand of situated cosmopolitan neo-humanism that has emerged as a powerful ethical claim in the work of post-colonial and race theorists, as well as in feminist theories. Examples are: Paul Gilroy's planetary cosmopolitanism (2000); Avar Brah's diasporic ethics (1996); Edouard Glissant's politics of relations (1990); Ernesto Laclau's micro-universal claims (1995); Homi

Bhabha's 'subaltern secularism' (1994); Vandana Shiva's anti-global neo-humanism (1997); African-American spirituality, as bell hooks (1990) and Cornell West (1994) demonstrate, as well as the rising wave of interest in African humanism or Ubuntu, from Patricia Hill Collins (1991) to Drucilla Cornell (2002).

Thus, the anti-humanism of social and cultural critics within a Western poststructuralist perspective can be read alongside the cosmopolitan neo-humanism of contemporary race, post-colonial or non-Western critics. Both these positions, all other differences notwithstanding, produce inclusive alternatives – locations and figurations – that enlarge and go beyond humanist individualism. Without wishing to flatten out structural differences, nor of drawing easy analogies between them, I want to stress the resonances between their efforts and respective political aims and passions. Western post-humanism on the one hand and non-Western neo-humanism on the other transpose hybridity, nomadism, diasporas, creolization processes into means of re-grounding claims to connections and alliances among different constituencies. They bring strong evidence to support the claim that methodological nationalism and theoretical Euro-centrism are of hindrance, rather than assistance, in trying to redefine the cosmopolitan and interconnected nature of the contemporary subject. This alternative vision of the subject combines critical elements, like the rejection of Euro-universalism, with creative elements, like the re-composition of a new ethical sense of pan-humanity. In both cases the transformative element is of crucial importance.

The humanistic, unitary subject of Western modernity claimed to be structured and ordained along the axis of self-reflexive individualism and universalistic rationality, which are the legacy of the European Enlightenment and are indexed on a linear and progressive temporal line. I oppose to it nomadic subjectivity as a process-oriented ontology of the subject that moves beyond these categories and foregrounds complexity.

Following the critical premises of post-structuralist critiques of humanism by Foucault (1966), Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 1980), Irigaray (1977) and Derrida (1991), nomadic thought questions the classical vision of the philosophical subject as the cosmopolitan European citizen. 'Europe' stands in this discussion for a tacit consensus about the self-evidence of the universalizing powers of self-reflexive and self-correcting reason. This flattening rendition of philosophical 'Europeanness' transforms Europe from a concrete geo-political location and a specifically grounded history, into an abstract concept and a normative ideal that can be implemented across space and time, provided the right preconditions are met. Europe as the symbol of universal self-consciousness posits itself as the site of origin of reason and self-designates itself as the motor of the world-historical unfolding of the philosophical ratio. This titanic sense of entitlement rests structurally on the claim to universality and also on a hierarchical and dialectical vision of Otherness or difference.

The nomadic vision of the subject as a time continuum and a collective assemblage implies a double commitment, on the one hand, to processes of change and on the other to a strong sense of community – of 'our' being in *this* together. Our co-presence, that is to say the simultaneity of our being in the world together sets the tune for the ethics of our interaction. It consequently opens out towards the issue of new forms of cosmopolitan belonging. Our ethical relation requires us to abandon individualism in the narrow sense of the term so as to get attuned to a shared planetary condition. A collectively distributed consciousness emerges from this, i.e. a transversal form of non-synthetic understanding of the relational bond that connects us. This places the relation at the centre of both the ethics and the epistemic structures and strategies of the subject.

Becoming-world, or the advantages of relative estrangement

Transformative projects involve a radical repositioning on the part of the knowing subject, which is neither self-evident, nor free of pain. No process of consciousness-raising ever is. Yet it is necessary to counteract the spurious and perverse mode of planetary interconnection engendered by our global condition. In post-structuralist feminism, this project has also been implemented methodologically through the practice of dis-identification from familiar and hence comforting values and identities (De Lauretis, 1986; Braidotti, 1994).

Dis-identification involves the loss of cherished habits of thought and representation, which can also produce fear, sense of insecurity and nostalgia. Change is certainly a painful process, but this does not warrant the politically conservative position that chastises all change as dangerous. The point in stressing the difficulties and pain involved in the quest for transformative processes is rather to raise an awareness of both the complexities involved and the paradoxes that lie in store.

Changes that affect one's sense of identity are especially delicate. Given that identifications constitute an inner scaffolding that supports one's sense of identity, shifting our imaginary identifications is not as simple as casting away a used garment. Psychoanalysis taught us that imaginary re-location is as complex and as time-consuming as shedding an old skin. Moreover, changes of this qualitative kind happen more easily at the molecular or subjective level and their translation into a public discourse and shared social experiences is a complex and risk-ridden affair. In a more positive vein, Spinozist feminist political thinkers like Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd (1999) argue that such socially embedded and historically grounded changes are the result of 'collective imaginings' – a shared desire for certain transformations to be actualized as a collaborative effort.

Let me give you a series of concrete examples of how dis-identifications from dominant models of subject-formation can be productive and creative

events. First of all, feminist theory is based on a radical disengagement from the dominant institutions and representations of femininity and masculinity, to enter the process of becoming-minoritarian or of transforming gender. In so doing feminism combines critique with creation of alternative ways of embodying and experiencing our sexualized selves.

Second, in race discourse, the awareness of the persistence of racial discrimination and of white privilege has led to serious disruptions of our accepted views of what constitutes a subject. This has resulted on the one hand in the critical re-appraisal of blackness (Hill Collins, 1991; Gilroy, 2000) and on the other to radical relocations of whiteness (Ware, 1992; Griffin and Braidotti, 2002; Blaggaard, 2008). Specifically, I would like to refer to Edgar Morin's account of how he relinquished Marxist cosmopolitanism to embrace a more 'humble' perspective as a European (Morin, 1987). This process includes both positive and negative affects: disappointment with the unfulfilled promises of Marxism is matched by compassion for the uneasy, struggling and marginal position of post-war Europe, squashed between the USA and the USSR. This produces a renewed sense of care and accountability that leads Morin to embrace a post-nationalistic redefinition of Europe as the site of mediation and transformation of its own history, which I discussed above.

The positive benefits aspects of this dis-identification are epistemological but extend beyond; they include a more adequate cartography of our real-life conditions and hence less delusional and pathos-ridden accounts. Becoming free of the topos that equates the efforts for identity changes with suffering results in a more adequate level of self-knowledge and therefore clears the grounds for more adequate and sustainable relations to the others who are crucial to the transformative project. They enact a form of relative de-territorialization which, in Deleuze's neo-Spinozist ethics, opens up a field of intensive transformations in the subject's ontological empowerment.

Defamiliarization is a sobering process by which the ethical, knowing subject evolves from the normative vision of the self he or she had become accustomed to. The frame of reference becomes the 'chaosmos' – the becoming-world of subjectivity itself – as an open-ended, interrelational, multi-sexed, and trans-species flows of becoming by interaction with multiple others. A subject thus constituted explodes the boundaries of humanism at skin level. For example, the Deleuzian unorganic body is de-linked from the codes of phallogocentric functional identity (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972). The 'body without organs' sings the praise of anomalies. It also introduces a sort of joyful insurrection of the senses, a vitalist and pan-erotic approach to the body. It is recomposed so as to induce creative disjunctions in this system, freeing organs from their indexation to certain prerequisite functions. This calls for a generalized recoding of the normative political anatomy, and its assigned bodily functions, as a way of scrambling the old metaphysical master code and loosening its power over the constitution of subjectivity. The subject is recast in the nomadic mode of collective assemblages. The aim

of deterritorializing the norm also supports the process of becoming-animal/woman/minoritarian/nomadic.

De-centring anthropo-centrism

In the process of elaborating a new cosmopolitical understanding of becoming-world, it is crucial to de-centre 'Man' as the sovereign image of the subject and to open it up to multiple others. Non-human others are no longer the signifying system that props up the humans' self-projections and moral aspirations. Nor are they the gatekeepers that trace the liminal positions in between species. They have rather started to function quite literally, as a code system of their own. This neoliberal approach to otherness begins to appear with the masters of modernity. With Freud and Darwin's insights about the structures of subjectivity a profound inhumanity is opened up at the heart of the subject. Unconscious memories drill out timelines that stretch across generations and store the traces of events that may not have happened to any one single individual and yet endure in the generic imaginary of the community. Evolutionary theory acknowledges the cumulated and embodied memory of the species. It thus installs a timeline that connects us intergenerationally to the pre-human and pre-personal layers of our existence. From the angle of critical theory, psychoanalysis propels the instance of the unconscious into a critique of rationality and logocentrism. Evolutionary theory, on the other hand, pushes the line of enquiry outside the frame of anthropocentrism into a fast-moving field of sciences and technologies of life. The politics of life itself is the end result of in-depth criticism of the subject of humanism (Rose, 2001). Pushed even further with philosophical nomadology (Braidotti, 2006), the metaphorical dimension of the human interaction with others is replaced by a literal approach based on the neovitalist immanence of life.

This deeply materialist approach has important ethical implications. In terms of the human-animal interaction, the ego-saturated familiarity of the past is replaced by the recognition of a deep bio-egalitarianism, namely that 'we' are in *this* together. The bond between 'us' is a vital connection based on sharing this territory or environment on terms that are no longer hierarchical nor self-evident. They are rather fast-evolving and need to be renegotiated accordingly. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theory of 'becoming animal' expresses this profound and vital interconnection by positing a qualitative shift of the relationship away from species-ism and towards an ethical appreciation of what bodies (human, animal, others) can do. An ethology of forces emerges as the ethical code that can reconnect humans and animals. As Deleuze put it: the workhorse is more different from the racehorse than it is from the ox. The animal is not classified according to scientific taxonomies, nor is it interpreted metaphorically. Rather, it is taken in its radical immanence as a body that can do a great deal, as a field of forces, a quantity of speed and

intensity, and as a cluster of capabilities. This is post-human bodily materialism laying the grounds for bio-egalitarian ethics, sustainable nomadic ethics or 'chaosmopolitanism' (Ansell Pearson, 1997; Braidotti, 2006; Bogue, forthcoming, 2012).

One of the great innovations of nomadic theory is the rigorous brand of methodological pacifism that animates it. The monistic ontology that Deleuze adapts from Spinoza, to which he adds the Bergsonian time continuum, situates the subject – be it the philosopher, the scientist, the artist, the ethicist or the lawyer – in a situation of great intimacy with the world. There is no violent rupture or separation between the subject and the object of her inquiry, no predatory gaze of the cold clinician intent upon unveiling the secrets of nature (Jordanova, 1993). An elemental ontological unity structures the debate. This non-essentialist vitalist position calls for more complexity and diversity in defining the processes of scientific inquiry.

The burden of responsibility is consequently placed on us to develop new tools of analysis for the web of relations with non-human others that characterize the formation of the subject. The nomadic vision of the subject as a time continuum and a collective assemblage implies a double commitment, on the one hand to processes of change and on the other to a strong sense of community – of 'our' being in *this* together. Our copresence, that is to say the simultaneity of our being in the world together sets the tune for the ethics of our interaction. Our ethical relation requires us to synchronize the perception and anticipation of our shared, common condition. A transversal form of shared relational bonding emerges from this.

De-centring anthropocentrism is one of the effects of the scientific advances of today – from biogenetics to evolutionary theories. This means that the naturalized, animals, or 'earth-others' – in fact, the planet as a whole – have ceased to be the boundary-markers of the metaphysical uniqueness of the human subject. Becoming-world is a post-human predicament. They have consequently stopped acting as one of the privileged terms that indexes the European subject's relationship to otherness. Otherness or pejorative difference has a long and established history in scientific practice. Scientific inquiry has historically been an outward-looking enterprise, framed by the dominant human masculine habit of taking for granted free access to and the consumption of the bodies of non-human others. The technologies to discipline these 'others' through specific practices, as Foucault teaches, are coextensive with the making of high scientific discourses and institutions. The technologies of control are both genderized and racialized to a very high degree, and historically they have harped with distressing regularity on the disposable bodies of 'others'.

This mode of anthropocentric relation to one's object of inquiry is currently being restructured. As a result of the advances of our own scientific knowledge, a bio-egalitarian turn is taking place that encourages us to engage in an animal relationship with animals – the ways hunters do and philosophers can only dream of (Ansell Pearson, 1997). The challenge today is how to

transform, deterritorialize or nomadize the human – non-human interaction in ethical and social practice, so as to bypass the metaphysics of substance and its corollary, the dialectics of otherness, secularizing accordingly the concept of human nature and the life that animates it. With Deleuze and Guattari, I would speak of a generic becoming-minoritarian/animal as a figuration for the humanoid hybrids we are in the process of becoming. It is clear that our science can deal with this post anthropocentric shift, but can our cosmopolitan values rise to the occasion? Can a new cosmopolitanism account for non-human agents?

The displacement of anthropocentrism and the recognition of trans-species solidarity are based on the awareness of 'our' being in *this* together, that is to say environmentally based, embodied, and embedded and in symbiosis with each other. Biocentred egalitarianism is a philosophy of radical immanence and affirmative becoming, which activates a nomadic subject into sustainable processes of transformation. Becoming-animal/non-human consequently is a process of redefinition of one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space. It expresses multiple ecologies of belonging, while it enacts the transformation of one's sensorial and perceptual coordinates, in order to acknowledge the collective nature and outward-bound direction of what we call the self. The subject is fully immersed in and immanent to a network of non-human (animal, vegetable, viral) relations. My code word for this relentless elemental vitality of life itself is 'zoe', generative life. The zoe-centred embodied subject is shot through with relational linkages of the symbiotic, contaminating/viral kind that interconnect it to a variety of others, starting from the environmental or eco-others. This non-essentialist brand of vitalism reduces the hubris of rational consciousness, which far from being an act of vertical transcendence, is rather recast as a downward push, a grounding exercise. It is an act of unfolding of the self onto the world and the enfolding within of the world – a becoming-world that goes beyond the superficial planetary flows of global capital.

Affirmative visions

The conditions for renewed political and ethical agency and for a radical redefinition of cosmopolitan relational ethics cannot be drawn from the immediate context or the current state of the terrain in advanced capitalism. They have to be generated affirmatively and creatively by efforts geared to creating possible futures, by mobilizing resources and visions that have been left untapped and by actualizing them in daily practices of interconnection with others.

This project requires more visionary power or prophetic energy, qualities which are neither especially in fashion in academic circles, nor highly valued socially in these times of commercial globalization. Yet, the call for more vision is emerging from many quarters in critical theory. Feminists, for instance,

have a long and rich genealogy in terms of pleading for increased visionary insight. From the very early days, Joan Kelly (1979) typified feminist theory as a double-edged vision, with a strong critical and an equally strong creative function. Faith in the creative powers of the imagination is an integral part of feminists' appraisal of lived embodied experience and the bodily roots of subjectivity, which would express the complex singularities that feminist women have become. Donna Haraway's work (1997, 2003) provides the best example of this kind of respect for a dimension where creativity is unimaginable without some visionary fuel.

Prophetic or visionary minds are thinkers of the future. The future as an active object of desire propels us forth and motivates us to be active in the here and now of a continuous present that calls for resistance. The yearning for sustainable futures can construct a livable present. This is not a leap of faith, but an active transposition, a transformation at the in-depth level (Braidotti, 2006). A prophetic or visionary dimension is necessary in order to secure an affirmative hold over the cosmopolitan ideal, as the launching pad for sustainable becoming or qualitative transformations. The future is the virtual unfolding of the affirmative aspect of the present, which honours our obligations to the generations to come.

The pursuit of practices of hope, rooted in the ordinary micro-practices of everyday life, is a simple strategy to hold, sustain and map out sustainable transformations. The motivation for the social construction of hope is grounded in a profound sense of responsibility and accountability. A fundamental gratuitousness and a profound sense of hope is part of it. Hope is a way of dreaming up possible futures: an anticipatory virtue that permeates our lives and activates them. It is a powerful motivating force grounded not only in projects that aim at reconstructing the social imaginary, but also in the political economy of desires, affects and creativity. Contemporary cosmopolitan practices of interrelationality work towards a more affirmative approach to critical theory.

Beyond unitary visions of the self and teleological renditions of the processes of subject-formation, a nomadic cosmopolitan philosophy can sustain the contemporary subjects in the efforts to relate more actively to the changing world in which they try to make a positive difference. Against the established tradition of methodological nationalism, a different image of thought can be activated that rejects Euro-universalism and trusts instead in the powers of diversity. It also enlists affectivity, memory and the imagination to the crucial task of inventing new figurations and new ways of representing the complex subjects we have become. The key method is an ethics of respect for diversity that produces mutually interdependent nomadic subjects and thus constitutes communities across multiple locations and generations. This humble project of being worthy of the present world while also resisting it aims at constructing together social horizons of hope and sustainability. It expresses an evolutionary talent, that is to say a commonly shared commitment to

social infrastructures of generosity, which might enable 'us' to be affirmatively in *this* together.

Note

- 1 Cury Franklin: 'Interaction strangled by a simple click', *Guardian Weekly*, 10 June 2011.

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